



LOVE YOUR FELLOW – MORE THAN YOURSELF Farbrenge – 10 Shevat, 5743-1983

In this week's Torah portion, we read the fundamental commandment, "Love your fellow as yourself."

When we are instructed to "love your fellow as yourself," we are being asked to do two opposites.

How should the love for "your fellow" be expressed? It must be appropriate to the friend's needs: Not more than he can handle; not something that will harm him, rather, it must be of help to his friend.

It is possible that a person's needs are the opposite of his friend's needs. He himself may be thirsty for water, while his friend is hungry for bread, and is not thirsty.

If, as a result of "love your fellow as yourself," the person who is thirsty takes away all the bread and gives his friend a barrel full of water, it is the opposite of "love your fellow!" It may be "as yourself," since you are thirsty and you gave him water.

But to "love your fellow" you must take into account the main point: What "your fellow" is lacking! And that may be just the opposite of what you need.

In a given situation you may feel cold, and you need to warm up. So you need something to warm you. But your friend feels hot. He needs something to cool him, and that is how to express "love your fellow as yourself." The same is true when "the leaders of your tribes" interrelate with "your woodchoppers and water carriers." First and foremost, he must give the woodchopper wood to chop to be able to support himself, and water for the water carrier.

If he is asked for simple bread and water, and he responds, "I'm willing to teach you Torah," since "I am 'a leader of your tribes' and Torah study is the most important of all;" that is actually the opposite of charity.

It violates the commandment in the very Torah he wants to teach! What will help a person stay true to Torah? When he knows the primary purpose is to love in a manner which unifies.

It makes him one with his friend, which enables them to be one with G-d, Who chose to create diverse worlds – "Alamot without count," "do not read 'Alamot' but rather 'Olamot' – worlds." But all of these countless worlds are permeated by a common essence, and therefore, are truly no different from one another.

This knowledge affects the person's private life, his life as an individual, as this is the unique mission of every Jew, when he meets another Jew, and he sees that "their faces are not alike" and "their minds are not alike," this shouldn't, Heaven forbid, cause divisiveness.



Rather, he should ensure that each of them complements and completes the other. Then, not only is there a "closeness of hearts" – love amongst Jews, but there is also unity.

He realizes that he is no more than "half a coin," and in order for him to become complete, he must unite with another Jew. Only then can he become a complete shekel, as explained at length in books of Mussar.

This, too, requires focusing on one's primary objective. The main issue is that which unites all of humanity and all of creation.

Although "their minds are not the same," they still all share one common denominator: Everyone and everything was created by G-d, and therefore shares the common factor of "I was created to serve my Master." They must use all their abilities – each one his unique resources, his own individual capabilities and his own potential – to make the world a dwelling place for G-d.

Either through fulfilling the Seven Noahide Mitzvos and all of their details and laws given to all mankind. And for Jews, through the 613 Mitzvot and all of their details, as well as the seven Rabbinic Mitzvos, etc.

And then there is unity. As it is etched and inscribed on this country's currency: Declaring its purpose, "E Pluribus Unum" – "From many, one."

