

“You shall love your fellow as yourself.” (19:18)

This *pasuk* has become the global standard-bearer for defining human inter-relationships. Love your fellowman as yourself. What does it mean to care about someone else as well as we care about ourselves? *Horav Yosef Zundel Salant, z.l.*, explains that the word *kamocho*, like yourself, applies to an individual who has the same vocation or position as you. It once happened that a Jew opened a grocery store on the same block as another Jew. One can imagine that the resulting competition brought about ill will. When the man who had been there first complained to *Rav Yosef Zundel*, the *rav* told him, “We are told to love our fellow as ourselves. This means that if he is a storekeeper like me, or a shoe-maker like me, or any profession similar to mine, I must love him, even though his chosen vocation infringes on mine.”

In another instance, the *Gaon m'Vilna*, while yet a young child, went out to play on a teeter-totter with other boys his age. After a few moments, he returned home. His father asked, “Did you play quickly? Why do you not continue playing with your friends?” “I cannot go against the *Torah's* command to love a fellow Jew as we love ourselves. I cannot play on a plaything whereby in order to raise myself, my friend must be lowered!” If this is the sensitivity of a young child, we can only begin to imagine what levels of sensitivity he eventually reached. Obviously, he was a *gaon* in *middos*, character traits, as well as all aspects of *Torah*.