

You shall love your fellow as yourself – I am Hashem. (19:18)

The principal *middah*, character trait, on which one must work the most is loving our fellowman. If one truly manifests love, care and sensitivity, he has no place for any of the other character deficiencies. If we always think first of our fellow Jew, we cannot harbor anger, arrogance, lack of sensitivity. If we care for all Jews, then we have resolved our *bein adam l'chaveiro*, relationship between man and his fellowman; this will also resolve our *bein adam laMakom*, relationship with Hashem. **Horav Yaakov Moshe Charlop, zl**, derives this from the above *pasuk* and the manner in which it is explained in *Toras Kohanim* and the *Talmud Shabbos* 31a.

According to Rabbi Akiva, *Chazal* teach: *Zeh Klal gadol baTorah*, “This is a great principle of Torah.” Additionally, *Chazal* teach, *Man d'alach sani, l'chaverchecha lo saavid*, “What one does not want for himself, he should not do to his friend. The rest of the Torah is its explanation. Go learn and you will see how everything fits in.” *Chazal* are informing us that the *yesod*, origin, of all sin is one's lack of *middos*, his character trait deficiencies. One who is a *baal middos*, maintains refined character traits, will not sin – even behind closed doors. We sin because we are deficient, our *middos* lack refinement. Thus, we are subject to the inner evil-inclination which is never satisfied.

It all begins with the love we should manifest for our fellow Jew. One does not harm a brother, or, at least, it is uncommon and unusual. If one manifests true love, one cannot hurt, be jealous, arrogate over, manipulate, cheat. These issues occur when one does not embody love. All Jews are brothers. Thus, one who has failed in his interpersonal relationship is invariably unable to serve Hashem properly.

“Furthermore,” says *Rav Charlop*, “since *Kudsha Brich Hu, v'Oraisa chad hu*, ‘Hashem and the Torah are one unified unit,’ it is impossible to achieve *dveikus b'Hashem*, to cling to the Almighty, like we are enjoined to do unless – one fulfills the *mitzvah* of *ahavas Yisrael*, love for all Jews. This is the essence, the underlying motif of the Torah. Without it, one does not fulfill the Torah.” No Torah – no Hashem. They are one unit. It is as simple as that.