



The Community

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Boruch Hashem

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Rabbi's Article

When Love is Everything

Upon the verse (-Leviticus 19:18) in our Torah-portion, "You shall love your fellow as yourself," Rashi (-[Link](#)) states, "Rabbi Akiva (-[Link](#)) says: 'This is a fundamental [all-inclusive] principle of the Torah.'" However, generations before Rabbi Akiva, we already have Hillel's (-[Link](#)) teaching (-Talmud, Shabbat 31a), "This is the entire Torah, and the rest is (but) commentary." Now, within the words of Hillel ("the entire Torah") is already included the words of Rabbi Akiva ("a fundamental principle"), as that of, "Within 200 is 100," hence, why does Rabbi Akiva need to give his teaching?

To understand this, let us see another teaching of Hillel (-Ethics of Our Fathers, Chapter 1, Mishna 12) on the matter of loving one's fellow: "Be of the disciples of Aaron (-[Link](#)) -a lover of peace, a pursuer of peace, one who loves the creatures and draws them close to Torah." The question here is, what does, "and draws them close to Torah," have to do with loving a Jew, when the *mitzva* of loving a Jew is, (a) concerning his physical welfare, as well as his spiritual, and not just his spiritual welfare, and (b) Rabbi Dovber of Mezeritch, the *Maggid* (-[Link](#)) states (-Sefer HaSichos 5700, Page 177), "To love one who is completely wicked as one who is completely righteous"?

One answer is that loving one's fellow cannot override the laws of Torah, in that we compromise our Torah standards for the other. However, Hillel says, "and draws them close to Torah," in which this statement is not just a guideline to the previous statements, but rather, a directive on its own. Hence, we must find a deeper understanding to the connection of, "and draws them close to Torah," to the previous statements of loving a fellow. Additionally, why does Hillel preface his directives with, "Be of the disciples of Aaron"?

To understand this, let us first understand a dichotomy between two teachings. (i) "Six things preceded the creation of the world... The Torah... (the children of) Israel... The thought of Israel was before everything (-Bereishit Rabba 1:4)," in which the Jew is higher than the Torah, while in teaching (ii), "Israel binds with the Torah, and Torah binds with the Holy One, blessed be He," in which the Torah is higher than the Jew, and only through the Torah is the Jew bound with G-d?! The reconciliation is that the soul as it is in its source above, is higher than the Torah. However, as the soul descends into the body here below, the Torah is higher, and it is only through the Torah that the Jew reveals within their soul below as it is above, higher than the Torah. It is because we each have within us these two dynamics, that we have, (i) (-Sanhedrin 44a) "Even when (the Jewish people) have sinned, they are (still) 'Israel,'" and, (ii) (-Tanya, Chapter 39) "For ultimately he is bound to do repentance... 'Because none is rejected by Him.'" More so, it is specifically because of the unconditional bond of the essence of our soul, that ultimately, we will all be brought to, "draws them close to Torah." For it is only through the Torah that the soul below reveals within itself the essence of the soul above, and is definite that the essence of the soul will not ultimately isolated from the soul below!

We now have that there are two levels of love to our fellow: (a) The essence of love, in which there is no different between whether one is *completely wicked* or *completely righteous*, and more so, the very distinction of righteous or wicked doesn't exist, for the essence of our soul is simply, "truly a piece of G-d," in which we are (-ibid, Chapter 32), "all of a kind and all having one Father— therefore, all Israelites are called real brothers." And in this arena, there is no different between our fellow's spirituality and physicality. (b) The Torah's commandment to love our fellow, and therefore, in this love, the love must be as defined within the laws and categories of the Torah. Therefore, Hillel tells us that the essence love ("a lover of peace, a pursuer of peace, one who loves the creatures") must ultimately express itself in the soul below ("and draws them close to Torah").

This is the deeper meaning of, "Be of the disciples of Aaron." Aaron is the embodiment of (-Psalms 85:11), "Kindness and truth have met," for Aaron is, the essence love of (-Exodus 34:6), "abundant in loving kindness," in which there is the power to bring the revelation of the *essence of the soul* within the soul below.

So too, Rabbi Akiva, who is the *Truth of Torah*, speaks of love as a *mitzva* of the Torah, as a "fundamental [all-inclusive] principle of the Torah," which drives all the action commandments of love to a fellow, while Hillel, who is the embodiment of *Kindness* and *Essence Love*, speaks of the *Essence Love*, of which, "This is the entire Torah, and the rest is (but) commentary."

This Week...

FRIDAY, MAY 6, 2022 ★ ה' אייר תשפ"ב

Shabbat Candle Lighting: North Miami: 7:37 PM · Mincha: 7:15 PM

SATURDAY, MAY 7, 2022 ★ ו' אייר תשפ"ב

TORAH READING: [Achrei](#) (Leviticus 16:1-18:30) · HAFTORAH: [Samuel I](#) (20:18-42)

Shacharit: 9:30 AM · Mincha: 7:15 PM · Shabbat Ends: North Miami: 8:32 PM