

# YOUR SHOES

*by Rabbi Raymond Beyda*

I like me and you like you -- that is natural. The Torah commands that I love you as I love myself -- that is not so natural. Listen; there are a lot of people who are o.k. and there are many whom I really don't have an opinion about either for good or for bad. But I still have to look out for number one -- right?

Well, to fulfill the Torah obligation to "Love your neighbor as yourself" does not require that one care for another's needs as one cares for oneself. In fact it doesn't even seem possible.

The love we must have for another is to wish that others had all that I wish for myself. I want good, healthy children who give me a lot of pleasure and so I must wish that same thing for my neighbors. I want to make an honest, comfortable living without too much aggravation and so I must also wish that other community members had the same success. I want others to like and to respect me and so I must hope that others also are treated with friendship and dignity.

When one has a "good eye" one can really feel for another in a sincere manner just as one is concerned for one's own welfare. Reputation is a key element in one's life. Everyone hopes that others will judge him or her favorably. This too is an issue of "loving one's neighbor like oneself." If rumors were being spread that could hurt my reputation I would spend time, money and effort to clear my good name. There would be no limit to my persistence to disprove the negative information others were saying about me. Therefore, I must also do the same to judge others favorably and do all that I can to remove any stain from another's reputation.

Today, when you hear a juicy piece of information about another -- stop. Ask yourself, "Would I want people to say these things about me? What if it was false information -- how would I clear my name?" It only takes a minute to put oneself in another's shoes and begin the case for the defense that one would build for oneself. The process is easy -- it is a *misvah* -- and it could save another a lot of pain that you yourself would never want to suffer.

## **DID YOU KNOW THAT**

One is not permitted to say verses that are written in the Tanach by heart - - one must read them from print like a siddur or a humash. However, the verses which one repeats often, with which one is very familiar -- are permissible to recite by heart. For example, one may recite the verses of Shema or Bircat Kohanim by heart. [Source Shulhan Arukh, O'H, Siman 49:1]

## FROM THE TALMUD

The Gemara explains that one must wash a netilat yadayim before and after a meal. The first is called "mayim rishonim" and the second is called "mayim aharonim". Both are required but the washing after the meal is stricter. The Gemara explains that when one eats -- a "salt" (melah sedomeet) accumulates on one's fingers. The salt is dangerous to one's sight and therefore, the Sages require one to be scrupulous in rinsing one's fingers at the conclusion of one's meal. [Hullin 105a]

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