

I am the LORD

אני יהוה

Leviticus 19 vv 1-18 p121, I Corinthians 3 vv 10-23 p1146, Matthew 5 vv 38-48 p970

The reason given in our Leviticus reading for obeying Torah is *I am the LORD*. Torah is the Law of God and the reason for walking in the Law is that God is the LORD. Torah, God's Law, is not destroyed by Jesus. It is fulfilled in Him. Torah is summed up in love and Jesus is love in human form. To be in Christ is to be in love. To love is to fulfil Torah. It is natural for God's people to love because God is the LORD.

So why is *I am the LORD* the fundamental truth which requires the Law to be fulfilled? I can think of seven reasons.

The first is that it is God Who makes the rules. God is the origin of the Law as He is the origin of everything. Obey the Law because it is the Law of the One Who made heaven and earth.

The second follows from the first. Creation only works if we obey the Law of the God Who made it.

Thirdly, God is our judge. We must give account to God for the way we live our lives. We are judged by His perfect Law of Love and there are consequences for us when we disobey – in this life and the next.

Fourthly, and closely bound up with the first three, *God is love*. The essence of God is love. The Summary of the Law is love. Love is the way things are. To be less than love, to act unlovingly, to hate or to be indifferent, is to live in opposition to the way things truly are.

Fifthly, we are the people of God. To be God's people is to walk in God's Way. It is to be like God. *Ye shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy*. Given that God is love, God's people are bound to be love too.

Because we are the people of God, sixthly, God's reputation to a certain extent depends on us. People judge the Christian religion on what they see of Christians. They used to say *See how these Christians love one another*. People judge God by what they see of us. Our walking in His perfect Law of Love demonstrates what it means to say *He is the LORD*.

Seventhly, all human beings are made in the image of God. What we do for the least of them, we do for Him. Because He is the Lord, because He so loves the world, given that we are His people, we must love other people too. If we love the LORD our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, we must love our neighbour as ourselves. There is no limit to the inclusiveness of God's love. The Parable of the Good Samaritan shows that the neighbour whom we must love includes absolutely anyone. To be in Christ is to be one with the Son Whom God sent to redeem the world.

I am the LORD. God is love. God's purpose for the universe is love. As God's people our calling is to complete His purpose. It is our vocation to be people of love.