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PERMEATOR QUESTION

A certain permeator, bemused and weighted down by responsibility for the world came to Jesus and asked, "Master, of the 625 things I must fulfill this quarter, which has 1st priority?"

Jesus, looking directly at him said, "You shall first love God and the second is like unto it -- you shall love your neighbor as yourself. There are no other priorities."

The permeator was confused, because he had so many neighbors, and none of them seemed finally important. He could not think of one that could not be replaced.

So he asked, "Master, God I can love, but which of my many neighbors should I love?"

Jesus, understanding his real question, replied, "The next time you run into an individual past, absolve it--that it may be made newly authentic; and the next individual future you meet, open it that its creativity gets into the civilizing process; and the next individual life you meet disclose how it is part of all lives. In doing this you will discover the worth of your neighbor and also your own.

The permeator thanked Jesus and went away confused; but in his confusion there was a newness, and the world was slightly less burdensome.