

ואהבת לרעך כמוך
Leviticus 19:18

Love & Hatred – A Primordial Asymmetry

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For ages, millennia, it was an integral part of the consciousness of the ancients, and then of the Western World that to be capable of really and deeply loving someone else, one must love oneself, as Leviticus 19:18 tells us, "**Love your neighbor as you love yourself.**"

This eternal truth stands, in my mind and flows from my earlier life experience in the USSR, in a stark contradiction to a short rhyme in Russian, strongly promoted by the Soviet Union's media and in their literature, "**Не умея ненавидеть, невозможно искренне любить**," which, in a direct translation reads like this, "**Without knowing how to hate, it is impossible to love sincerely.**"

A few days ago, this strongly nuanced difference struck me strong when I happened to read a poem recently written by my friend, Sy Dorfman. Although Sy in any way draws on his, obvious in my mind, familiarity with the Leviticus explicitly, it is permeated by its spirit.

This whole theme is in a strange sync with me trying to understand if and how hatred and love coexist in our lives, interestingly both in our private and social lives, and recently very much present in our political life.

On the surface, you may think that they are two totally polarized entities and everything that applies to one applies to the other with a minus sign. And yet, there is a huge difference.

Love is mostly intuitive. It does not need defense or justification – you just love, and when asked “why”, you almost startle. You point to this, but then to that, and then to that, never coming to one main reason or justification for your love. It's just there, it's built in... Hatred is very different. Hatred always has one, identifiable driver, with multiple minor derivatives. And in most cases people do their best in trying to mask that single key driver behind complicated logical constructs they build up.

One overarching driver that comes to my mind, of course you guessed it right – jealousy. And since jealousy of someone else – jealousy of his or her achievements in any sphere of human endeavor and life – comes from the hating person's hidden sense of inferiority. And since no one would admit this openly, the construction of those infinitely varied in content and style hate-justification constructs starts...

Ramifications, on a personal level, may be unpleasant and violent at times. This jealousy extends to the level of nations, entire countries, social groups, and religious entities. At this level, that primordial jealousy often spells into wars and terrorism, easily justified, leading to rivers of spilled blood and countless losses of human lives.

Now, would it be fair to accept jealousy, and thus, hate as unavoidable due to the built-in inequality in individual's capabilities in different physical, intellectual, and creative areas of human endeavors (loosely correlated to IQ metrics), and by an extension, in different native groups of people?

God providing an “infinite” scale (speaking the language of science where scaling of physical processes is a crucial tool) when comparing individuals and peoples to one make the results jealousy-free: we all are zeroes, and one zero is not much different from another zero. Realization of this may, and in many nations it does, drain people of hatred. Is it achievable? At least, we should try...
And here is Sy’s poem for your enjoyment! What do you say?

What is This Thing Called Love?
by Sy Dorfman

If you could make someone happy and brighten up their day,
and make them feel important in a very special way.
If you could look inside your mind and see them as a special star,
then you will know that you are accepting them for the way they are.

And when they realize that you really do care,
then they will try to always be there.
And that's when you know that their love is so true,
especially when they say, “I would do anything for you.”

When you make someone happy, you cheer and you shout,
and when you make them feel special, that's what love is all about.
And when they want you to do something, just go out of your way,
and try your best to please them so you could brighten up their day.

Your wish is my command means you're ready to serve,
and you're giving them that honor that you feel they deserve.
And that's when you'll know that their love for you is so true,
especially when they say, “I would do anything for you.”

I will always be willing to go out of my way for a special person like you,
and I will gladly do it, because I love you.
When you make me feel important and you show me that you care,
it feels so good to be needed and to have a love that we share.

I like who I am, and I'm happy you see,
and I always want to please you, because you mean so much to me.
It's nice to be needed and to be loved by you,
and to accept each other whatever we do.

So let me be clear and say what is true,
I really feel lucky to have a wonderful person in my life like you.