

abstaining; secondly, how *perishuth*, abstinence, is only a very early outer stage on the way to *chasiduth*, the highest. Do not therefore abuse the term *chasid* by applying it to men whom you know to have only *perishuth*, which, as already observed, even where it is pure, is only a disciple's stage on the way to the master's quality which is *chasiduth*—not to mention the case where what you perceive is not even *perishuth*, but the mere outward gestures of holiness.

15

HATRED

שנאה

Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart. LEVIT. XIX, 17.

- 113 Hatred is the feeling that the existence of any being is a hindrance to our own existence, and that the destruction of that being would make our own existence more complete. In other words, it means that we do not feel ourselves *whole* so long as this or that is still existing. This feeling is the death, nay, the complete inversion, of the human heart, which God has created for the comprehensive embrace of all beings, but which instead excludes one or all beings to the extent of desiring their non-existence, and embraces only itself—in fact becomes a stone. As soon, therefore, as you perceive hatred springing up in your heart against any being, know for certain that you have failed to attain your proper moral level.
- 114 It is a sad privilege of man that he is able to love and fondle every creature and yet to hate those of his own species! Hatred between man and man arises from the fact (1) that one has in fact injured the other with wrongful word or deed and so has really endangered his existence; or (2) that they come into conflict in the pursuit of the same objective, and so apparently frustrate one another.
- 115 This feeling should never remain in your heart against any man. He is, after all, your brother, a child of the same God, placed in the world by Him with the same claims on life. If you hate him and wish him away, then you hate and wish away the hand of God, which has placed your brothers next to you in order that you may esteem them as brothers. Even if he wrongs you, do not forget that he is your brother. Be sorry that your brother can make such a mistake, improve him—and forget.

But consider above all whether it is not altogether a delusion, a falsehood, that the existence of any human being can do harm to your existence, that his destruction is necessary to save you? Is it then your fellow-men, is it you yourself, is it he, who procures for you the means of existence? Can you do anything more than sow the seed with your industry and await the fructifying blessing from above? Is it not God Who distributes all the means of life, Who showers down blessings or curses on the labours of man? And is His hand too weak, His love too niggardly, to bring into life, to sustain and to give the joy of life to you and to millions more with you? Must He withdraw from you the blessing which He apportions to your brother next to you? And if your brother were eliminated, would not your well-being even then still depend, as it does now, on the same all-ruling providence of God? Ah, if you would but consider that you will still obtain such recognition as God ordains for you, that you will still occupy the place which God assigns to you, that you will still receive the sum of possessions which He determines for you, even though millions more along with you strive for the same thing; and that if you do not get something, it is not because another competes with you for it, but because God's wise decision has not ordained it for you. Do you not see that the greed for food, honour and fortune which makes you hate your brother is a denial of God, a denial that it is one and the same God Whose love covers all men equally and Who, as Supreme Ruler, determines the lot of each one? Lay the seed of your own good fortune alongside millions of others, and pray to God that they may all come to fruition for the good of all. He is rich enough in love and power to fulfil such an unselfish prayer.

But, you say, it is the sinful word or deed of your brother which, like a lighted torch thrown into a building, has shattered your life and fortunes; shall you not hate him for that? Hate? No! In this, too, pay homage to the providence of God, which, high above the comprehension of the human mind, makes the very crime of the wicked the punishment and discipline of the one who is to be improved, the testing exercise of one who is capable of being taught. Could the edifice of your fortunes be shattered if God did not allow it? Could it not equally have been destroyed even if no sinner had furnished his crime as the instrument? Accept this suffering therefore like any other from the hand of God and use it for your own improvement or ennoblement. Wait for God, Who leads from night to morning, from sorrow to joy, from death to life. Leave it to God to bring the wicked to account for his wickedness, but do not hate, do not sin through hate. Has he sinned against you, reduced your property to ruins? Has he not sinned against God and laid his sacrilegious hand on the holy things of God?

118 Hate wickedness, but not the wicked man. Only where a wicked man has so identified himself with wickedness that he is to you the very source of wickedness, where it is difficult to separate the wicked man from the wickedness, him you may hate, for you hate only the wickedness in him. Such a one is the criminal whom you regard as beyond redemption, as one who does evil consciously and deliberately, of whose incorrigibility and premeditation you have convinced yourself through repeated and fruitless warning and admonition. Worst of all is the seducer, who is not only wicked himself but sows the seed of wickedness in others and brings it to maturity, who sets himself to kill morality and godliness in the soul of even one man, nay, who makes this his only object. Such a one has the all-loving God Himself excluded from the love and the pity of the human heart. Such a one you may not love, for in him you love sin itself, the agent of which he has made himself.¹

16

LOVE

אהבה

Bear love to thy neighbour as to thyself: I am the Lord.

LEVIT. XIX, 18.

119 Love all that I have placed by your side, feel that its existence is necessary for your existence, its welfare for your welfare; feel even that your existence, your welfare, your vocation is completed only by its existence. Let your soul be linked with its being; I am the Lord, Who loves all, and calls upon you, man, to be the instrument of this love. With this injunction your God breaks open the seal of your heart, and bids you make a covenant of love with everything which bears the stamp of its Divine origin and has not itself given the lie to it (see para. 118). He bids you embrace all the children of God with a loving heart.

120 To see in your fellow-man something else than merely your rival for the acquisition of the good things of the earth, not to look upon his good as an encroachment on yours, to let your neighbour have the spot of earth on which God has set him—as He has set you on yours—and even to let him prosper on it—all this amounts merely to not hating him, not yet to loving him. To love your neighbour means to see in him the one condition of your own existence, of your own welfare, of

¹ *Sifri* on Deut. xiii, 9.

Love

your fulfilling your mission as man and Israelite, and so, in the desire for your own being and living, to include the desire for your neighbour's also.

The indispensable condition of your being, your welfare and your mission—who could be so dull as not to feel this? Imagine for a moment that all your fellow-men whom God has placed at your side have disappeared, and that you are alone on the desolate earth. What would be your existence, what pleasure could you have—still more, what would become of your mission, if you were not able to love and do kindnesses? You have been created to be a blessing—and you would have no one who would receive your blessing. You have been born to do kindnesses; you are meant to support, to sustain, to comfort, to instruct, to nourish, to make happy, to revive, and you would have no one for whom you could do all this. And do you not see that it is only in association with mankind as a whole that God endows your work with permanence? Mankind takes up the work of each individual and, itself undying, becomes the heir to it. Without it, your work would be but a dream.

But we can go still higher. I, the Lord, the personification of love, am Father of all beings around you, have called them all, like you, to life and well-being. If you love Me, and because you love Me, love My children; rejoice in their well-being, see in each My work, My child; in his welfare the prospering of My work and My child, in his woe the decay of My work, the suffering of My child. Love therefore the master in the work, the father in the child.

Finally, I am the Lord, the personification of love, Who has chosen man to be the instrument of this love. Do you, man, not see how this love is the finest flower of this mission? How do you raise yourself above the stone and the plant and the animal? Is it not through devoting yourself of your own free will to the welfare of the world around you? And this is just what love effects. Your whole activity belongs to God's world; first, then, belong to it with the source of your activity, with your heart. Carry in it love for God's world, above all for your fellow-man, the first and worthiest recipient of your beneficent activity. Carry love in your heart; it is this which makes you a man and an Israelite.

This love in you, if it is genuine, expresses itself in deeds with which, to the best of your ability, you promote the progress of the world around you to that state of welfare in which your love requires that you should desire to behold it. The rules that should guide you in the practice of this love, so that you should not do mischief under the