

Critical Reflections

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Critical Reflections

by

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How improbable is it
to love thy enemy?
Improbable enough
that most of us
won't even try,
thus ending
in hate!



"Love Thy Enemy!"



I dedicate this book to my friend James D.
Lampard

My gratitude goes to my daughter Nancy,
and to my friend Pam Sigvaldason,
for their valued advice.
All mistakes remaining are entirely mine.

Preface

I renamed my first version of *Conclusions Volume III* to *Human Traits & Follies*, and I renamed the second version to *Critical Reflections*. These two titles better define the contents of the books. However, I am still planning to write a third volume of *Conclusions*.

The notion of love kept recurring to me as a worthwhile topic. I was obsessed by the idea that love is everywhere, even where hate exists, because people who hate simply *love* to hate. Therefore, I decided to write about love and hate relationships. Can you think of a better topic for the main reason of our existence? Without love, we may as well not exist, because we would be no better off than a plant in the field, although plant lovers claim that plants also flourish more with love from them.

I have previously covered the subject *love against hate* in my book *Thoughts in a Maze*, so I won't repeat myself. Suppose we take the Bible instruction, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Lev 19:18); what, exactly, does it mean? Some folks may not love themselves at all, in which case the instruction to love their neighbors as themselves may not mean much. Another instruction from the Bible, "Love ye your enemies ..." (Lk 6:35), is also hard to imagine, especially when trying to love vicious lions and deadly viruses.

Enemies, bad neighbors, or unloving spouses, it is hard to love any of them in the biblical sense, but whoever can accomplish it is better off.

Love definitely causes different juices to flow in our bodies than hate. I would not be at all surprised to find out how many sicknesses can be traced to feelings of hate; conversely, I would not be at all surprised to find out how many sicknesses were healed by feelings of love. Those who find they are unable to love should, at least, try to neutralize their feelings of hate.

The topic of love literally provides an author limitless material for a book, as my readers will soon realize, since many of our experiences are founded in love/hate relationships. Yet, since the concept of love is manifold, the material available for a book is also manifold.

While writing such a book, the question arises: what is the greatest and purest form of love known to us? I believe it is the love that Jesus Christ spoke of and demonstrated to us on the cross at Golgotha; also, it could be the love that God decided to bestow on us, by allowing His beloved Son to suffer and die for us. But we will probably seldom be able to give such love to our enemies, especially to the vicious or deadly kind of enemies.

Again, I have used and, give credit to, the Wikipedia, to assure the accuracy of most historical inclusions. For the front cover, I chose a sculpture of a naked woman, to depict the exposed love of human beings, and to emphasize that we leave as naked as we came.*

Arthur O.R. Thormann
July 2016

* See Ecclesiastes 5:15

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Introduction

Love and hate are opposite concepts. However, this does not mean that if one does not love something or someone one must hate it, him, or her. I talked one day with a friend of mine about people's favorite meats for Christmas. He said, "I love turkey." I said, "I love goose." The fact is, I don't *love* turkey, but I don't *hate* it either. If I'm invited for Christmas dinner and the hostess serves turkey, I will eat it.

There is a big area between love and hate – various degrees, as it were. One can almost love something or almost hate it, or neither love nor hate it. Very seldom do we just love or hate something or someone. One such example involves God and Satan. One can love God and hate Satan, there is seldom an in-between. The examples chosen for this book must be judged accordingly.

Take US President Barack Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu: Netanyahu, I think, made a political mistake accepting an invitation from John Boehner, the 2015 Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, to speak to Congress without notifying the White House. This was a slap in

the face to Obama. Netanyahu aimed to stop Obama's negotiations with Iran regarding a nuclear agreement. After Netanyahu made his speech to Congress, assuring Congress that he had the highest respect for Obama, Obama said, in an interview with the media, that his negotiations cannot be criticized until finished, and, at that time, he will convince the American people of its wisdom. As it happened, Netanyahu did not accomplish to stop negotiations; he only accomplished making an enemy of Obama. On the other hand, Obama proved, by his response in the media interview, that he is the more astute politician.

Where does love and hate enter in this incident between Obama and Netanyahu? It must be obvious that neither of them loves the other, but do they hate each other?

Of course, Israel is closer to Iran than the US and has more to fear if Iran should obtain nuclear weapons. On the other hand, the US is not the only nation negotiating a nuclear agreement with Iran – the other nations are France, the United Kingdom, Russia, China, and Germany. Even if the US pulled out of the negotiations, the other nations could still reach an agreement without the US. However, perhaps Israel believes that an agreement without the US would be meaningless.

To add insult to injury, a few days after

Introduction

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Netanyahu's speech to Congress, 47 Republican senators, led by Tom Cotton, wrote a letter to Iran's leaders, undercutting President Barack Obama's efforts to negotiate a nuclear agreement with those same leaders, warning them that any agreement reached with Iran by US President Barack Obama would have to have the support of Congress in the US, without which such an agreement would solely exist between President Obama and Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei. Peter Spiro, a constitutional law professor at Temple University, argued that the Republican letter is a case that "fits pretty neatly with the elements of a Logan Act violation." But he also agreed with Steve Vladeck, a constitutional law professor at American University, that there is no chance these senators would ever face prosecution.

The White House insists that an agreement with Iran does not require the approval of legislators. President Obama accused the 47 senators of interfering in his negotiations and making an "unusual coalition" with Iran's hard-line religious leaders. US Secretary of State, John Kerry, slammed the letter in a Senate hearing; he said his reaction to it had been "utter disbelief." Vice President Joe Biden also took strong exception to the letter. Even Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei joined top US officials in blasting the letter, but he also lashed out at the world

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