

## Hate - Between Good and Evil

Virgil Guralivu

*PhD (c), University of Bucharest, Romania,  
The Roman - Catholic Faculty of Theology, Theology and Religious Studies  
vili\_guralivu@yahoo.com*

**ABSTRACT:** Is hate bad? Can hatred have good values for man and society? When it is born from deep, religious beliefs, is society entitled to question the source of this hatred, even if it is a religious system of any kind? Is Christianity a promoter of hatred? What does the Bible say and what did history say? How to harmonize the commandments that promote love, the care for ones neighbour with those that promote the opposite, namely hatred. Hate as well as love is not only a simple human feeling but also a choice that can become a way of life, that can shape destinies. Man is a sociable being, through his own construction he becomes a vector of feelings and decisions for those around him. For this reason, society can be loaded with love or hate and, in the end, can be characterized by one of them. But for the current analysis, the question is: can hatred be good?

**KEYWORDS:** hatred, religious hatred, hate crime (racial hatred), the valences of the word hate

### Legitimate questions

Just saying the word "hate" often produces reactions that are largely justified. In human relationships hatred has caused a great deal of irretrievable damage, whether it is interpersonal relationships or interethnic or state relations based on extreme national sentiment. Hate is unanimously condemned and history is a true witness in the accusers' side that justifies this position. In contemporary society, examples are as telling as they are sad. The Taliban's or ISIS members are a current example of the damage done by hatred based on religious hatred. Although the term "religion" from Latin has the meaning of relegating broken or weak ties, many times religion used more to intensify hatred between people and instead of bringing them closer, it separated people more. History has witnessed many scenes based on the same hatred: crusades that led to innocent deaths just because they did not have the same vision of the spiritual life; countless programs against Jews based largely on unfounded, unjust accusations, but animated by the same religious based hatred. Although the list of problems created by religious hatred based on sacred texts could go on, it is enough to raise a legitimate question: Did God Himself demand the killing of enemies or those who do not share the same view of life and eternity? Or did He ask us to hate those around us? At least *the New Testament* is full of commandments, exhortations, and counsels concerning the relationship between people based on love and other feelings derived from it. The example of the Lord Jesus was one full of love and not any kind of love, but a sacrificial one for the benefit of one's neighbour. Hatred and just plain bad thinking against one's neighbour were drastically instilled as toxic and evil in its essence. What is to be done and how can one then understand the Lord's command given to His disciples in the *Gospel of Luke*, the commandment that reads: "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, even his very life cannot be My disciple" (NTR Bible, 2010, Lk.14:25). Since this requirement belongs to the Lord who worked driven by sacrificial and perfect love, surely any reader of the text will ask pertinent questions. If Jesus Christ, considered the Savior in Christianity, chose to sacrifice Himself for the salvation of men out of love, how can He be reconciled to His request to the disciples? What would be the difference between His requirement and other religions that explicitly demand the destruction of those who do not embrace this religion? Or, doesn't this requirement have another meaning? The verb quoted in all the manuscripts is the same, namely, it appears  $\mu\iota\sigma\epsilon\omicron$  in Greek (*Nouveau Testament, Interlineaire Grec / Francais* 1993, 343).

In interpreting or finding the meanings of the word "hatred," it must be taken into account that the Bible is much like a library with 66-books written over a period of about 1600 years. In such a period, the language is alive and flexible, any word tends to take on new meanings, and hermeneutics must take into account all these aspects. For this reason, extensive biblical hermeneutics is needed to understand how the perfect and demonstrated love of the Lord Jesus can be harmonized with His requirement to hate those close to him.

### **Theological optics on the verb "hate"**

The New Testament was written in Greek, a language that has a long and rich history, and which has been loaded with so many meanings during it. Although the Greek language, compared to the Hebrew language, was much richer and more varied in terms of the words that compose it, it also has a greater variety of possibilities of grammatical expression and semantic meanings.

The Greek dictionary of The New Testament record the following: "There are many compounds with the "μῖσ" root. The idea of being hated by gods is very old... There is also an ethical imperative in the Greek world: hatred as a renunciation u,bsim meisei is already required in the precept of Delphica" (*TDNT* 1982, 684). An idea worthy of emphasis in the text is one of the semantic valences of the verb μῖσσω, namely hatred in the sense of giving up someone or something. You could say that a person hates another person if he gives up on her. The same meaning can be applied to a habit, especially a bad one, or to an object, when you give it up because it is not beneficial. This meaning fits perfectly from the biblical perspective if the required hatred of sin is taken into account, in the real sense of renouncing it. The use of the verb in classical Greek literature is also applied in the *New Testament* in certain circumstances, where God demands hatred of certain things or habits.

The translation of the *Old Testament* from Hebrew into Greek, with the original purpose of being accessible to the Jewish diaspora, who no longer knew the language in which the Bible was originally written, was also useful to Christian readers. This aspect is also valid to the analyzed verb. The authors of the dictionary mention the many valences of the verb in question, as it is in *LXX (Septuaginta)*: "The group of words μῖσσω μῖσσοσ μῖσσετοσ is also found in *LXX*, and μῖσσετον ποιειν is especially common for ανεν (ha,n.vi). This hatred or displeasure can be of several types and can be presented in various relationships or external connections " (*TDNT* 1982, 685). As normal, the first valence of this verb is that of enmity between people, murder or boredom of a person towards other people, in the biblical case wife and husband. The authors carefully note these aspects: "The word is used for the first time when people are at enmity. In a trial, it is observed whether a man who is accused of murder, killed out of hatred or if it was unintentional. Very often a man hates his wife or is bored with the one he lives with. The opposite of "hating" in the Old Testament is always "loving" (*TDNT* 1982, 685). To these a few other valences are added to the verb, as found in the Old Testament, depending on the context, namely, to love someone more to the detriment of another, contempt, unfriendly attitude: "Love for two women leads to the fact a man loves one and hates the other, or that love turns into hatred. *Jud. 14:16; 2 Sam. 13:15; In Is.54:6* it refers to the wife who is less loved, therefore the μῖσειν is used as in *Deut. 21,15*. To hate means to feel disgusted or contempt, to be unfriendly, not to love " (*TDNT* 1982, 685).

The passing of a person in the background, in terms of affection or attention, is recorded in the Old Testament as hatred. Not only the hatred between people is related and regulated in the *Old Testament*, but also the hatred of God, about which the Bible writes. It is necessary to analyze this segment because the verse from which we started in the analysis of the verb is one in which Jesus Himself asks for hatred as a condition of discipleship. For this reason, clear connections must be sought between *New Testament* and *Old Testament* concepts. This analysis could be more accurate if one considers not only the valences of μῖσσω in human relations but also of the same verb in God's vision and requirement. Here is what the same

authors of the biblical dictionary record: " In the *Old Testament*, the concept of God includes the fact that He can hate and can produce hatred. A basic element in the proclamation of the Bible is that He hates the worship of the Gentiles (*Deut. 12:31; 16:22; Jer. 44:4; Ezech. 23:38*) " (*TDNT* 1982, 686). The observation is that God can hate and it is normal and moral for Him to hate that which is contrary to His will and character. Then they add other valences of the verb: " God's hatred involves disgust and hostility towards sin, judgement, and punishment for the sinner. *Prov. 6:16-19* shows how representatives of mankind have become an abomination to the Lord, so He must hate them." (*TDNT* 1982, 686).

The authors note that God can hate and hate the wrong and disgusting things of man, and hatred for Him can mean, according to Biblical texts, disgust and hostility. His Holy nature cannot bear evil, sin, and for Him, the normal reaction is hatred of them, hatred with different valences depending on gravity. To God, hatred can also mean a lack of love for a person or a habit. For Him, hatred also means rejection of evil and falsehood, not being an emotion, as follows: " When in the righteousness of the *Old Covenant* evil is hated, this is not primarily an emotion, an experience of the soul; it is rather a passionate disappointment or evil in person, which God Himself has rejected " (*TDNT* 1982, 687). The same situation is transmitted from God to the faithful and wise man. What God rejects also rejects the wise man, although his perception cannot and must not be different from that of God's: "In his hatred, the wise man is on the side of divine judgement. In this holy and passionate rejection lies the distinction, the religious difference of the biblical ethos. Μισει τον εαυτου ψυκειν hatred has the meaning of rejection and denotes man's aversion to something that seems wonderful but false to him" (*TDNT* 1982, 687).

If God declares that He hates deeds, or people, or habits depending on the context, it can be interpreted as a clear rejection of God. The same nuance of the word hate is noticed by E. Riggenschach, who emphasizes the additional idea that love is in opposition to hate, both having positive values, even moral, if used correctly. Love for all that is good and hatred for all that is wrong and contrary to God's will: " God cannot love moral evil, but only hatred... There is no true love without anger; for anger is the reverse of love. God could not truly love good without hating and rejecting evil." (Riggenschach 1985, 16).

In the author's view, God cannot but hate evil, which is utterly contrary to His nature. The equivalent of hatred for Him is rejection. In the *New Testament*, the studied verb has several nuances, as the authors of the dictionary point out by the definition they give: " The wickedness (aversion) between people. The only μισεω appears in the *New Testament* (not μισος or μισετος μισετον ποιειν). Here, as in LXX (*Septuaginta*), it has different shades. The first denotes the personal aversion of man against man, without religious connotations." (*TDNT* 1982, 690).

In His teachings, the Lord Jesus came with the requirement of love (Rotaru 2010a, 465:7), referring to the relationship between people, when he contrasts hatred with love. Love becomes imperative for the disciple of Christ (Rotaru 2010b, 467:7), including in the relationship with the enemy, which makes it an ideological boundary between the requirements of the old covenant and the period initiated by the Lord: "Jesus places in His disciples the obligation to love all people but also enemies. He does not know hatred against people. It thus brings to light a problem debated in the *Old Testament* and especially in Judaism." (*TDNT* 1982, 690). However, the authors acknowledge that hatred can take on certain nuances, such as " to despise" and " to favour against", both of which have their roots in Biblical Judaism: "The antonyms αγαπαν / μισειν take on a special nuance in Matt. 6,24 and Luke 16,13, where, in connection with Deut. 21,15-17, they mean to prefer ("to be faithful") and "to despise" ("to disregard"). We have here a Judaism as a request for discipleship (Matt. 10:37: ο φιλων υπερ εμε, Luke 14,26: και ου μισει/)" (*TDNT* 1982, 690).

A valence that the Lord gives to hatred is contempt or disregard and preference to the detriment of another. As noted, the authors link the Lord's remark to ideas found in the Pentateuch. More specifically in defining one of the valences of the word hatred is recorded in the following passage: "Those who will become disciples of Jesus must be devoted, entrusted exclusively to Him; they cannot be attached to anyone else and anything. The term "hate" requires the separation of disciples and the warning not to love anyone and anything more." (TDNT 1982, 691).

If one wanted an idea synonymous with the word "hate" in the verse studied (Luke 14:25), without a doubt, the expression "not to love more" would be the one that would fit best; so this is another valence of the verb "to hate." The idea of divine hatred, or hatred as a divine requirement, is also repeated in the commentaries on the *New Testament*. In essence, God's hatred falls within the same semantic limits, namely hatred as differentiation and denial of evil, including judgement and punishment that belong exclusively to His attribute as Lord of all creation. There is a connection between the idea of hatred in the *Old Testament* and that of the *New Testament*: "The idea of willful divine hatred reminds us of the *Old Testament*. Jer. 9:13 and Mal. 1:2 is quoted in connection with the doctrine of choice: "I loved Jacob and hated Esau." Μισεῖν (hatred) of God belongs to the context of His service as Lord and Judge (TDNT 1982, 691). Although the Lord Jesus is the Lord of love, He also knows the feeling of hatred that is shared by His Church: "Revelations 2:6 refers to the hatred of Jesus and the Church of Ephesus: together they hate the work of the Nicolaitans. Hate here has a sense of differentiation and denial, punishment and judgement. In the name of the Lord, the Church rejects temptation. Jesus Christ recognizes justice and rejects iniquity" (TDNT 1982, 691).

It is well known that in his writings, the evangelist John uses fewer words compared to other *New Testament* authors: "We are reminded by the John concept that *misei/n* has an absolute meaning, not being the link of a chain" (TDNT 1982, 692). But for him, the words have a stronger load and are used without shades, but only in white or black without at least a shade of grey. For John, hatred is murder, and love is total and sacrificial attachment: "The contrast of ἀγαπᾶν–μισεῖν reaches its peak in John's thinking. The divine movement of love (ἀγαπᾶ) here also comes into conflict with the movement of cosmic hatred (μισοσ). Both are so unique and vast that they reveal the nature of God and the world" (TDNT 1982, 692). The values of God must also be the values of the disciples and the whole Church. What God hates must be hated by the Church, and what He loves must be loved by the Church: "In the hatred of the world for God, for Christ, for the disciples, and the Church, is true sin and murder. Light is here differentiated from the darkness. To hate means to live in the opposition to light, to reject it and to avoid its influence" (TDNT 1982, 691).

The semantic value of the word "hate" for John is murder, in this sense, John uses as an example of hatred of Cain, who changed from envy to murder. Another value of the word "hate" is very well underlined by the authors of the dictionary: "According to A. Plummer and J. Lagrange, the idea that "to hate" means to look like an enemy of the cause of God" (TDNT 1982, 691). This indicates an identification with God's values and man has a choice:

(1) To think like God, in the sense of assuming His values by knowing His will, which implicitly leads to the repudiation of anything that is not part of eternal values. Here hatred is also deepened in the sense of reforming the mentality.

(2) In the apostle of the Gentiles, Paul, is highlighted another valence of hatred that no other Biblical author has raised, namely that of rejecting the ego: "In describing the human situation of man under the Law in Romans 7:15. We find the statement, "For I do not understand what I do, for I do not do what I want, but do what I hate." Θελειν and μισεῖν here correspond. It is probably no coincidence that *misei/n* here means the rejection of the ego. According to the Law, man is led not only to discomfort but also to hate and rejection (μισειν)" (TDNT 1982, 692).

(3) In the *New Testament*, hatred also appears as a political antipathy: "The use of the  $\mu\iota\sigma\epsilon\iota\nu$  is more than secular in Luke 19:14 and Rev. 17:16, where it means political antipathy" (TDNT 1982, 692). The apostle Judas is the author who distinguishes between hatred against man and hatred only for the wrong, natural (carnal) deed that must be repudiated, but the perpetrator must be won: "The conclusion of the idea in Jude 23 has a strange ring: "... show mercy to others, but with fear, hating even the tunic stained with threads " (regarding the deeds of sinful nature - na) "(TDNT, 1982, 692).

Finally, the authors define the value of the word hate, which is best known and used, namely resentment towards a person and the desire to harm him, hate that is forbidden. The authors begin their argument by mentioning the interdiction imposed by the Lord and taken over by the apostles, who in turn transmitted it as a divine imperative: "Jesus forbade the disciples to hate. The proclamation of the apostolic manifestation presents hatred between brothers and hatred between men (1 John 2:9-11, 3:14, 4:20, Titus 3:3) as captivity in the darkness of the old age. Therefore, in the connections between people, whether general, national or religious, it is attacked from the root" (TDNT, 1982, 693). Also, hatred in the *New Testament* is recalled, but as a rejection of an act, usually, but not against man: "The *New Testament* also teaches us a holy rejection and repudiation of injustice, but this is directly against the thing and not the person. No challenge is offered to the supremacy of the law of love" (TDNT, 1982, 693).

At the same time, it is recognized that hatred, in its aggravating form, is forbidden, but that there are other valences of hatred, namely rejection. In this sense, it is worth mentioning the semantic meanings of the verb "to hate", according to the dictionary: "to hate, I hate, - to have a strong feeling of antipathy or enmity against someone or something; not being able to stand someone or something. To ruin a friendship with someone, to quarrel, to break it with someone; to get bored of someone, to get tired of something, to no longer feel any pleasure for someone or for something" (<https://dexonline.ro/definition>). According to the dictionary, "to hate" can be equivalent to a strong feeling of antipathy or enmity, not being able to bear someone, getting bored of someone, something, not feeling any pleasure for someone or something.

In another dictionary there is also one of the meanings of the verb which is its semantic extreme: "1. A strong, uncontrollable feeling that causes someone to want or hurt someone; 2. strong aversion to something" (Universal Illustrated Dictionary of the Romanian Language, 22). Here hatred is defined as the desire or even the act of harming someone.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the hatred that Jesus speaks of is just a correct set of moral values and priorities in life. Christ, through His requirements, asked His followers to love unconditionally all people, including enemies, to the point of self-sacrifice for the benefit of others. The hatred in the Gospel of Luke is just the right prioritization of the moral values of life.

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