

# THE DUTIES OF THE HEART, GATE 10:5

*by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman*

"Very many things prevent us from loving G-d" we're warned," including -- though not limited to -- our not meeting the requirements for it we'd cited before.

For there's something else that foils the dream of loving G-d "so very mightily and powerfully that (your) soul so affixes itself to the love of Him that (you're) as absorbed in Him and (are) as love-sick (for Him) as someone who ... couldn't stop thinking of a woman (he was) in love with" (Maimonides, Hilchot Teshuvah 10:3).

What ultimately prevents us from loving Him so are any aversions we might have "to those who (themselves) love Him" and any respect we'd have "for those who hate Him", as Ibn Pakudah describes it. That's to say that if we either admire wrongdoers for whatever reason, or somehow or another are repelled by people who serve Him well and love Him truly, then we're unlikely to love G-d Himself, who's displeased with wrong and loves righteousness.

But don't minimize how real those feelings are. For as the sensitive soul knows only too well, there are times when something deep in the untoward part of our beings is somehow bothered by good people for one small reason or another and all but enamored with bad ones. Those who want nothing better than to love G-d would root that out of their systems and realize that -- despite any minor failings -- those who love G-d should be our heroes, and that we should deplore those who "hate" (better said, dismiss or ignore) Him.

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