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A just war?

‘Is there such a thing as a just war?’ is a question which a sixteen-year old of my acquaintance was asked to comment on in his preparation for a GCSE involving the study of Hinduism and Christianity.



What a question! Just saying these words draws us immediately, whether we are sixteen or sixty, into a powerful ethical debate involving a resounding conflict of concepts which has been around from time immemorial. War inevitably involves killing. Can killing be justified? Ever? Sometimes? Never? “As a means to an end”, might be the inevitable conclusion, for want of a better response.

Far easier to grasp in many ways, is the thought expressed in a prayer during last Sunday’s Mass: “Peace with Justice”, relating specifically to the current problems centred around Gaza. Peace with Justice is surely the only peace possible, not only in all the many areas alive with strife in the world, but also in our everyday lives. Here, too, argument between partners in the home or between colleagues in the workplace, could be, should be resolved fairly, with a willingness to see another’s point of view and on the right terms for the parties concerned.

We need to listen to and look at each other and shake hands on any promise: Shalom Aleichem. Assalamu Alaikum. Peace be with you