

Do We Have to Hate?

Hatred. Retribution. An eye for an eye. Is this normal for everyday life? That it leads to conflict, fighting, wars, is obvious. When hatred rules, no one wins. Hatred takes away freedom, security, relationships, wellbeing, infrastructure, allies, lives.

Few people delight in hatred. We want a peaceful existence, to get the best for ourselves and the world at large. Working together in peace is the best way for everyone to live safer, happier, more productive lives. So what is the problem?

Winston Churchill, Britain's wartime leader, said 'to jaw jaw is better than to war war'. Churchill understood the importance of negotiation. People do disagree. Disagreement is not wrong. It can be productive. But if we insist 'I am right and you are wrong', then conflict and its consequences follow.

Jesus of Nazareth taught that we should love our enemies. This love is not the emotional stuff of romantic novels, but treating your neighbour as yourself, listening to them, talking with them, respecting them, sharing with them. This applies nationally and internationally too. Mankind has to learn to negotiate on a level playing field. Pie in the sky? No. It is our survival, as individuals, groups, and nations.

'Where words are strange or disturbing to you, try to sense where they come from and what has nourished the lives of others. Listen patiently and seek the truth which other people's opinions may contain for you. Avoid hurtful criticism and provocative language. Do not allow the strength of your convictions to betray you into making statements or allegations that are unfair or untrue. Think it possible that you may be wrong.' This quotation from the Quaker 'Advices and Queries' applies universally, whether playground arguments, divorce proceedings, industrial action, or international tensions. It is the basis of negotiation. It is the way from hatred to peace and prosperity for everyone.