

Although hatred has been condemned by many religions such as Buddhism, Christianity and Islam, it has not stopped even those who claim to be closest to God from committing heinous crimes in the name of faith. Haters rarely hate alone. They feel compelled to convince others to hate as they do. Political leaders, religious extremists and leaders of hate groups often tend to sow abhorrence into a group of followers by exploiting their needs, frustrations and insecurities. They convince them that the source of their problems is the rival party, who are trying to take away their rights or are a threat to their safety. The support from their followers often gives the hater a sense of self-worth and at the same time prevents introspection and self reflection which often reveal personal insecurities. Instigating others to commit hate crimes on their behalf also helps diminish accountability.

In modern times, it has become easier to exploit people through media and social networking websites, to promote hate and recruit new haters, keeping this culture alive and strong.

Psychologists perhaps do not research the subject of extreme hate as much as they should, treating it as just an emotion rather than a distortion of the psyche. Many mental health professionals tend to believe that hate is a short term condition that cures itself with time. Nevertheless, there are some forms of counseling that can help overcome deep-seated hatred. "Unfortunately, in most cases of profound hate, the two parties are never willing to come to an understanding," says a psychotherapist who wishes to remain anonymous. "The key to overcoming hatred is understanding the person you hate, the way they think and feel, and that can be only be achieved through extensive dialogue over a long period of time, which requires willingness and dedication," he explains. "If the two parties are stubborn and believe they alone know best, they are unlikely to ever come to an understanding. They must at least be willing to co-exist peacefully if not on friendly terms. I believe they are reluctant to do this because it will require a certain amount of self reflection during which they may realise they have held on to their anger for so long, they either do not even remember the reason they started hating in the first place, or discover that they do not feel as strongly about the reason as they once did. Hate is such an emotion that can destroy not only the haters but those around them as well," he elaborates.

Haters rarely hate alone. They feel compelled to convince others to hate as they do.

Research shows that hatred can also cause health problems such as high blood pressure, increasing heart rate and at times, can weaken the immune system and aggravate existing health issues.

People who are overcome with hate often do incomprehensible things such as defacing religious idols, torturing, and killing. Hate can also drive a head of state to claim in a speech to the public that the opposition leader is a "blood sucking witch." Despite this, there are those who believe that hatred is not inherently evil. Some say it has the capacity to be used for good as well. Say for example, hatred directed toward a pitiless dictator or those who commit monstrous crimes against humanity can help create revolutionaries who will fight for justice. Therefore, intense aversion, when put to good use can be a positive tool for all of us. ■