

NAFIS IMTIAZ

Place: 2nd

"Hate" is a strong word, they say. In a country where so many trifle matters are considered taboo, it is ironic that "hate" still isn't considered one. We start learning to hate from our early childhood. We learn to hate that street-kid wearing filthy tattered clothes. We learn to hate that spoilt brat who refuses to study unlike us. We learn to hate the rich snobbish kid in school who has ten times as many Pokémon or duel masters cards as us or the "nerds" who don't have a life. We learn to hate the teachers who grade us poorly. Growing up, we start hating people who don't share the same ideologies or even support the same football club. We learn to hate the system. We learn to hate everything.

"Hate" indeed is a strong feeling. It is high time we replaced "hate" with "help". Hate begets hate. This is not just applicable for our country; rather the world as a whole. John Lennon urged us to imagine the world living peacefully and as one. Today we harmonize to his songs and put on his signature shades as one while we even forget to leave each other in peace. The world is torn between war and diplomacy. Neil Armstrong thought that his steps onto the moon were "(a) small step for a man, a giant leap for mankind". Little had he known that every leap forward would turn to a plunge into the darkness. We cannot help but ponder, "is the world living peacefully even an option?"

With the recent rise of global terrorism, the option seems highly unlikely. When the countries aren't at each other's throat, they are busy fending off terrorists conducting

cold-blooded mass shootouts or bombings as spectated with horror lately in Dhaka, Munich, Paris, Istanbul etc. to name a few. The essence of world peace is truly realized in these circumstances. So the question stands, whether achieving world-peace is possible or not. Surprisingly, the answer is yes, it is!

As Economics tells us, "Resources are limited; demands are unlimited". In Philosophy and Psychology's perspective "wants are never satisfied". Therefore, mankind will never be completely satisfied. But it is imperative that this unquenchable want be harnessed for the greater good instead of declaring war on each other. Sitting in the 21st century, we fortunately see infrequent incidents like these. The more threatening talking-point of the current tide is the influx of terrorism generated from conflict of interest and intolerance. However, just two *mantras* can solve all the problems:

"Don't hate" and "Care about lives over self-interests"

Instilling these two values is of utmost significance. A man guided by these codes always has his conscience showing him the righteous path. Even all the superheroes that we obsess over try to preach us these values.

Hatred is the root cause for deviance. Religious extremism, fascism, sexism et al. are generated from severe hatred towards dissimilar ideologies to the point that one loses all moral grounds. This is when one gets indulged in hate-crimes and terrorist activities. Only if the hate could be entirely erased, the world would be a far serene place.

As citizens of the world it is the duty for each one of us to take up the mantle and find a solution to intolerance and violence. Considering the statistics that 30% of our country's population is constituted by youth, it is hay time for our effervescent youth to take charge of the nation. Unfortunately, more and more of this demography are getting derailed from the path of illumination. This deviation mostly results from isolation, lack of human attachment or worse, being bullied. So it is our responsibility to ensure that our siblings, friends or relatives don't suffer from mental depression. No matter how different they are, they are one of us. We need to let them flourish and grow ourselves in the process by nurturing them with affection. This can be done by motivating each other to achieve goals and chasing noble causes. We need to approach those who don't know how to connect and let them know they are not alone. We can implement the "buddy-system" campaigns through digital media or even better, personal initiatives.

No matter how small an entity we are in the world, we can all make the world a better place together by doing everything in our part to enlighten our generation and the next. We need to shed off our hate and reach out to those in need of salvation. WE ARE ONE.

Let's mind our own business

UMRAN MUSTAFA

Place: 3rd

We are more than familiar with influential figures beginning their speeches with clichéd lines which reminds us of how today's world is plagued with conflict. We are told to stand together and unite; we are advised to forget our divides and live in harmony; but is it that easy to stop complaining about what others do which affects us in no way?

More often than not, we end up finding the causes of conflicts; some arise for our social stigmas. Some arise when we are prejudiced and can't help our urges to make a baseless comment at particular people; others are much more elaborate cases such as resource deficits or deteriorating diplomatic relations between countries. Let's not get into that and stick to the social issues.

Be it in the more liberal or more conservative nations, social divide is prevailing and does not seem to stop increasing. Hatred is discernibly on the rise when the world desperately seeks for love. It is about time that someone came up with a legit idea to bridge the divides in our community to establish peaceful coexistence. I'll take that opportunity and present what I have in mind.

My philosophy orbits around the core concept that, we, humans are really terrible at minding our own business. Take the recent hate crimes for instance and put yourself in the shoes of the ones who have a problem with people expressing their 'opinions'. Now stop and ask yourself, "do I really have to go on the offense or can I let them be? Do their opinions hurt my livelihood?" The frequency of hate crimes can really slump if we realized that someone's opinion, sexuality, race or lifestyle does not affect us. We can live in harmony if

we chose to fend for ourselves, not for others.

I am not asking the society to love and respect others right now. I believe that the build up to a peaceful coexistence is a multi step process and that 'minding your own business' is the first step we must take; love and respect is too much to ask for now. It is a shame that today we find it difficult to live a day without making a needless judgment towards individuals whom we barely know. If a man decides to wear, let's say, yellow pants in a gathering, no matter how much it may bother us, we must keep in mind that it does not hurt us in any way possible and therefore refrain from passing a baseless comment at him just to show him down. There is simply no need for it.

This brings us to analyzing another major aspect of my ideology; a paradox maybe. Although my call is to let people be, there are cases in which we need to take an initiative to meddle in what others do. Such cases

arise when a specific few deliberately act against the establishment of social harmony. We nose in circumstances which are not important and back out whenever attention is needed. We often see people getting jacked or women being harassed in public while bystanders simply stare. It is really not a rare scene. There are certain ones who find amusement in observing something unpleasant happening, for some odd reason. That is a perception we need to reform. It is vital that everyone builds up a willingness to act against vulgarities, which can inspire ten others to do the same. If such a multiplier effect is attained, dreaming of a society without divide will not be farfetched.

Lastly, it is more than essential, especially in more conservative nations such as ours, that we change the ways we bring up children. Not just in primary schools but also in homes. Instead of pointing

out flaws of other faiths in front children, we should instill within them the importance of mutual respect. Instead of shutting them down when they speak out, parents should encourage free speech. This is, of course, a long term execution but is definitely necessary for a social reform.

To sum up my plan for sustainable societal peace; we need to stop butting in others lives or go on the offense unless it harms our livelihood. Next we must take a stance against acts which disrupts peace and communal respect, inspiring others through the course. Finally, teach or enlighten the future generations about the importance of harmony, establishing a positive multiplier effect.

Keep in mind that if we start today, we can make tomorrow brighter.

