

Day 8

excerpts from: **Martin Luther King's Letter from a Birmingham Jail**

I have gradually gained a bit of satisfaction
from being considered an extremist.

Was not Jesus an extremist in love -

"Love your enemies, bless those who curse you,
pray for those that despitefully use you."

Was not Amos an extremist for justice -

"Let justice roll down like waters
and righteousness like a mighty stream."

Was not Paul an extremist for the gospel of Jesus Christ -

"I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."



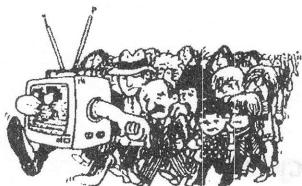
So the question is not whether we will be extremist
but what kind of extremist we will be.

Will we be extremists for hate

or will we be extremists for love?

Will we be extremists for the preservation of injustice

or will we be extremists for the cause of justice?



excerpts from: **Hatred in America**

The only thing we can be one hundred percent responsible for is our own minds. In the United States today, there is a widespread, malignant thought form that *other people are the problem*. Conservatives tend to blame liberals for our problems, while liberals blame conservatives. The media blames almost everyone, and almost everyone blames immigrants. Some people are convinced homosexuals are the problem, while others think that single mothers are the problem. Still others think the Christian Right is the problem, and far, far too many people think that our parents were the problem. The entire culture has become a hysterical blame session.

Yet a healthy, vital society is not one in which we all agree. It is one in which those who disagree can do so with honor and respect for other peoples' opinions, and an appreciation of our shared humanity. Without personal commitment to the attributes of fair play and integrity, the United States is in grave danger. Malice and intolerance stalk our society, staking claim to our minds, and not one corner of our social order is unaffected. This darkness is a significant threat to our national good, perhaps the most significant threat in our history, for it strikes at the heart of democracy. Where people are not free to disagree, there can be no democracy, since that is what democracy *is*.

Hitler could never have risen to power had it not been for vast numbers of people who gave him that power. Although they did not share his hatred, they did not have a solid, moral commitment to *not hate*. Only a society in which there is a widespread commitment to *not hate* is safe from hatred. A little hatred is like a little cancer. And who among us does not hate?