

Isaiah Berlin

Quotes

Men, Ideas, Choices, Liberty, Loss, Berlin, Perfect, Goal, Interesting, May, Law, Desire, Freedom, Justice, Ignorance, Habit, Cynical, Metaphor, Romantic, Race

Those who have ever valued liberty for its own sake believed that to be free to choose, and not to be chosen for, is an inalienable ingredient in what makes human beings human.

~Isaiah Berlin

Freedom for the wolves has often meant death to the sheep.

~Isaiah Berlin

The first people totalitarians destroy or silence are men of ideas and free minds.

~Isaiah Berlin

Liberty is liberty, not equality or fairness or justice or human happiness or a quiet conscience.

~Isaiah Berlin

True knowledge is knowledge of why things are as they are, and not merely what they are.

~Isaiah Berlin

To understand is to perceive patterns.

~Isaiah Berlin

The trouble with academics and commentators is that they care more about whether ideas are interesting than whether they are true.

~Isaiah Berlin

Only barbarians are not curious about where they come from, how they came to be where they are, where they appear to be going, whether they wish to go there, and if so, why, and if not, why not.

~Isaiah Berlin

Out of the crooked timber of humanity, nothing completely straight was ever made

~Isaiah Berlin

Few new truths have ever won their way against the resistance of established ideas save by being overstated.

~Isaiah Berlin

There is no a prior reason for supposing that the truth, when it is discovered, will necessarily prove interesting.

~Isaiah Berlin

All central beliefs on human matters spring from a personal predicament.

~Isaiah Berlin

Utopias have their value -- nothing so wonderfully expands the imaginative horizons of human potentialities -- but as guides to conduct they can prove literally fatal.

~Isaiah Berlin

Science cannot destroy the consciousness of freedom, without which there is no morality and no art, but it can refute it.

~Isaiah Berlin

We are doomed to choose and every choice may entail irreparable loss.

~Isaiah Berlin

The fundamental sense of freedom is freedom from chains, from imprisonment, from enslavement by others. The rest is extension of this sense, or else metaphor.

~Isaiah Berlin

Philosophers are adults who persist in asking childish questions.

~Isaiah Berlin

Lenin could listen so intently that he exhausted the speaker.

~Isaiah Berlin

When one is engaged in a desperate defense of one's world and its values, nothing can be given away, any breach in the walls might be fatal, every point must be defended to the death.

~Isaiah Berlin

No perfect solution is, not merely in practice, but in principle, possible in human affairs, and any determined attempt to produce it is likely to lead to suffering, disillusionment and failure.

~Isaiah Berlin

Liberty for wolves is death to the lambs.

~Isaiah Berlin

The case against the notion of historical objectivity is like the case against international law, or international morality; that it does not exist.

~Isaiah Berlin

The very desire for guarantees that our values are eternal and secure in some objective heaven is perhaps only a craving for the certainties of childhood or the absolute values of our primitive past.

~Isaiah Berlin

Life may be seen through many windows, none of them necessarily clear or opaque, less or more distorting than any of the others.

~Isaiah Berlin

One must look at what impiety hates, what puts it in a rage, what it attacks always, everywhere, and with fury - that will be the truth.

~Isaiah Berlin

The desire not to be impinged upon, to be left to oneself, has been the

mark of high civilisation both on the part of individuals and communities.

~Isaiah Berlin

When a man speaks of the need for realism one may be sure that this is always the prelude to some bloody deed.

~Isaiah Berlin

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