



## FAVOURITE SHAKESPEARE MONOLOGUES AND DUOLOGUES OF PROFESSIONAL ACTORS

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One of my favourite speeches in Shakespeare's plays is this one in *The Merchant of Venice* Act 3, Scene 1, when Shylock stands up to a pair of antisemitic thugs who have just attacked him in the street:

*Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?*



Shylock isn't a straightforward victim here, although he starts out as one when he's attacked. After asking his questions to point out the common humanity between Jewish and Christian people, his thoughts turn to revenge - something that neither religion endorses. He's human, he wants justice for the wrongs put on him; and this is why I love this speech. He speaks for marginalised people in the face of injustice while having the sassiness to want payback - his grittiness prevents him from being a self-pitying victim or a sanctimonious preacher. His speech is moving, honest, direct and powerful. Most of all, it's human.

Above is a photo of me in rehearsals with *Barefeet Theatre* in Zambia, where I directed *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with a fantastic cast of actors who have all been homeless at some point in their lives.

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