Fear leads to Anger. Anger leads to Hate. Hate leads to Suffering

Money is the root of all evil, so says the bible. Not so. Fear is the root of all evil. Our 20th Century nightmare is laced with fear; it is the strand connecting one atrocity, one crime against humanity, one war to another. Both world wars would have been avoided without fear; the Cold War in its entirety was a war of fear. Crucially, the Holocaust at its heart was a crime stemmed from fear, a fear we all identify with: fear of the unknown.

An estimated 11 million people were systematically murdered because they were irrationally, singled out because they were perceived to be different, not fitting with the Nazi mould and somehow less than human. It was ultimately however, a crime born of fear. The fear that, these Untermenschen, were better than the Nazis, the fear that they would oppose the Nazis and derail their dictatorship, the fear that they collectively were part of a world over plot to destroy the Nazi regime.

These fears seem irrational, but that is what fear does. It corrupts the mind. It turns a normally logical and even intelligent person into a wreck, prepared to do anything for their own survival. It is a primeval instinct, we perceive a threat and annihilate it. It is what we are programmed to do. But often the 'threat' is not a threat at all, just someone we misunderstood.

It is not only the Holocaust for which fear could be seen as the culprit. In Rwanda in 1994, fear of Tutsi control engineering their genocide. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, fear that the Serbian minority would be overcome by other races culminated in the genocide of around 200,000 Muslims. In Cambodia, the fear of counter-revolutionaries resulted in the genocide of an estimated 2,000,000. Again and again, these crimes have been committed and almost every time the UN and the international community has been blind to it, and the genocides have only been condemned once thousands or even millions have been needlessly killed.

So, what now? Now we have endured a 20th Century defined by murder, war and fear; what now? What have we learned? We vowed, 'Never Again' after the Holocaust. We were shocked and dismayed at the genocides which followed. Now, we enter the 21st Century and have made no great leaps in making the world a better place. Technology and worldwide knowledge has advanced, but our human sensibilities, our love of humanity it seems has not.

All we can do, in our new decade, in our new century, in our new millennia; is to learn that we are not individuals. It is never 'them' and 'us', we are a community. In the words of Michael Jackson: 'We are the World'. If only we could remember that, then there would be no fear of people who are seen to be different, there would be no fear of a false 'threat' and should a fear of someone, anyone escalate, then we should realise it is not someone else's problem. It is ours.

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