



The Betty Letters

My Dear Grandchild,

Blind obedience to religious principles or blind obedience to the mandate of a political movement, especially that blind obedience to the concept of the return to traditional principles, such as a return to fundamentalism, based on a literal interpretation of and strict adherence to doctrine, has been the main reason for widespread killing in the history of the world. Never, in the annals of history, however, has there ever been a situation whereby fundamentalism had the ability to destroy a large part of the population of the entire world in which man lives, today. The al-Qaeda terrorist network, headed by Osama bin Laden, whose tentacles have reached not just to the ignorant and the innocent in nearly every part of the globe, but, also, to the highly intelligent, as well as many of the budding intellectuals of universities, is, probably, the most-dangerous fundamentalistic group with which the civilised world has ever had to contend. It is claimed that al-Qaeda has 'sleepers' in at least one hundred and six countries of the world, all of whom, presumably, are willing to lay down their lives for tenets, postulated by the al-Qaeda hierarchy. It may boggle the mind of right-thinking people that one person could be able to persuade another to strap on a bomb to his or her body in the certain knowledge of the carrier of that bomb that it would certainly destroy the carrier as well as those people in the immediate vicinity of the bomber – and all in the name of Islam and/or the orders of those, heading the al-Qaeda network. It, also, should boggle the imagination of any woman, who has given birth to a child, to endorse, expressly or tacitly, that a child of hers should be the carrier of such a bomb, designed to destroy the carrier as well as the carrier's human targets. But, sadly, many Arab women have come out, openly and on television, to applaud the suicidal acts of their dead children, some of whom are as young as fourteen years of age. The horror of it all! What kind of logical person could believe that, in death, there is a better life? But that is the kind of fallacious logic, being employed by fundamentalists in recruiting suicide bombers. And, it appears that there are a great number of these prospective bombers, willing to die for a nebulous cause, or an ill-defined, quasi-religious mandate. The slaughter of the innocent people of London, England, on Thursday, July 7, 2005, when just four people, all al-Qaeda volunteers, murdered, outright, fifty three commuters, during the height of the London business rush hour, and injured and maimed another seven hundred-plus people, horrified the people of the United Kingdom, as well as people from most countries of the world, with the exception, one must suppose, of certain Islamic fundamentalistic countries. One has to ask oneself as to the lasting benefits that were derived by those four suicide bombers and those who planned this outrage. Since September 11, 2001, when the twin towers of the World Trade Center at New York were attacked by two commercial aeroplanes, piloted by Muslim fundamentalists, who had hijacked the aeroplanes under the direct orders of high-ranking officials the al-Qaeda network, masterminded by Osama bin Laden, himself, those attacks, claiming the lives of not less than three thousand innocent people, mostly office workers, and injuring countless others (the exact number is, still, unknown), not to mention those who gave their lives in trying to rescue the victims of those fundamentalists, there have been, up to July 8, 2005, at least nineteen other, major deadly terroristic attacks, all of which were aimed at innocent people. The total number of deaths, caused by these atrocities, was at least one thousand, six hundred and eighty, with another two thousand, nine hundred and sixty six people, being injured. Here is the list for the organisers of those deadly attacks to salivate, during their mealtimes:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Deaths</i>	<i>Injured</i>
October 12, 2002	Bali, Indonesia	202	330
October 23, 2002	Moscow, Russia	120	Not stated by the Russian Government

May 12, 2003	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia	29	200
May 12-14, 2003	Nadterechny and Gudermes, Russia	70	200
May 16, 2003	Casablanca, Morocco	41	Not stated
July 5, 2003	Moscow, Russia	16	40
August 1, 2003	Mozdok, Russia	50	80
August 5, 2003	Djakarta, Indonesia	12	149
August 7, 2003	Baghdad, Iraq	17	Not stated
August 19, 2003	Baghdad, Iraq	24	100
August 25, 2003	Bombay, India	52	167
August 29, 2003	Najaf, Iraq	100	200
February 1, 2004	Irbil, Iraq	109	Not stated
March 2, 2004	Karbala and Baghdad, Iraq	181	Not stated
March 11, 2004	Madrid, Spain	192	Not stated
August 24, 2004	Moscow, Russia	90	Not stated
August 31, 2004	Moscow, Russia	10	50
September 1, 2004	Besian, Russia	331	700
October 7, 2004	Egypt's border with Israel	34	Not stated
TOTALS		1,680	2,966

One must not, of course, maintain that fundamentalism is confined to Islamic beliefs, only, because there are quite a number of Jewish extremists, at large, also. In North America, it is widely accepted by Jewish hardliners that the only way to deal with the al-Qaeda network is to kill them all, as well as any Arab, who sympathises with the tenets of al-Qaeda, or is a known hater of the State of Israel. There is little sympathy in the minds of many North American Jews when it is reported that an innocent Arab is killed or badly injured in the West Bank, in a town in Israel, or in any other Middle-Eastern country. Germany, and, to some extent, France, for a large number of Jews of the world are still the enemies of Israel, and even the name of an ocean-going, cruise ship, with the name of 'Deutschland', is abhorrent to many a Rabbi. In the United States, it has had its fair share of fundamentalism, also. Rooted in the Eighteenth Century, primarily, American revivalism was as fundamentalistic in the Eighteen Century as is al-Qaeda, today. The only real difference between the two fundamentalistic doctrines is the course that American fundamentalism took. It was not until the middle of the Nineteen Century that the principle beliefs of American revivalism were centred on orthodox Protestant denominations, especially those of evangelical denominations. It, still, persists in the United States, today, but not to the same extent as when it was first introduced in a series of Bible conferences, held in the early part of the Twentieth Century. The idea of those early fundamentalists was the almost militant objections to try to reconcile traditional Christian beliefs with the doctrines of the then contemporary knowledge and experience; and, the acceptance of scientific evidence, which was, seemingly, at variance with the teachings of the Bible. So militant was the conservative members of certain sects that practised religious fundamentalism or this period in the history of the United States, based on the Christian ethic, that they tried to exclude within their own institutions, those members who were considered outspoken, or unyielding, to the religious hierarchy of the day. This is not unlike the hotheads of the Jewish race of the United States and Canada, today, as well as those hardliners in Israel, of course. In 1909, the fundamentalists of the United States published a series of twelve books, called, 'The Fundamentals.' Some three million copies of this set of books were sold. It was in the rural areas of the United States that Christian fundamentalism had its biggest converts. This suggests, of course, that the less-educated are more easily led by persuasive arguments, rightly or wrongly. Which is not unlike the situation, today, in Middle-Eastern countries where mothers praise their dead daughters for committing suicide by strapping a bomb on to their backs and detonating it in a market or on a bus, killing all within the vicinity of the suicide bomber. The fundamentalists of the United States of the early Nineteenth Century refused, completely, to accept that the teachings of the Bible could be fallible. Being the word of God, it was claimed, the Bible is correct to the extent of each and every comma. The Darwinian Theory of evolution dashed many a fundamentalist's belief in religious orthodoxy, especially in the deep south of the United States and in other English-speaking countries. The famous Scopes Trial of Tennessee was the tinderbox, however, that destroyed the faith for many a Christian fundamentalist. What took place was that Tennessee had passed legislation, banning the teachings in public schools of the theory of evolution because, in essence, it was said to be contrary to the teachings in the Bible as to how man evolved: From the quadruped primate to homo erectus to modern man. In 1925, Mr John Thomas Scopes, a high school teacher, was convicted of teaching evolution in defiance of Tennessee law, which proscribed such teachings. Since the successful defence of the actions of Mr John Thomas Scopes, fundamentalism in the United States lost a great deal of its credibility as more and more people accepted the truth of science and logic. But fundamentalism is far from being dead in this part of the world and there is, in some American states, a revival

of the type of orthodoxy of the period, prior to the early part of the Twentieth Century. Even in Lafayette, Louisiana, today, Catholic priests preach to their congregations to be wary of the witches and wizards, who live in the area. If a medium criticises a Church doctrine in the deep south of the United States, it is quite likely that the Church would issue an edict, banning the reading of that medium.

In conclusion, therefore, it is clear that fundamentalism in all of its myriad forms is as much a danger to man as is a cancer; and, it is apparent that a cure for this malady must be found before the disease wipes out most, if not all, of humanity.

Talk to you next week.

Chief Lady

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