

## *The Betty Letters*

*My Dear Grandchild,*

*For a war to last the best part of fifty eight years, one has to come to the conclusion that both feuding parties must be fools. Wars are fought by men; wars are a further advance in diplomacy, an oxymoron which I could never understand. History has shown that reason and reasonable and acceptable solutions to any seemingly impossible position between men, eventually, is found. One hears leaders of countries spout that they will not negotiate with regard to this and that, but, eventually, they do negotiate – they have to negotiate because, ultimately, man comes to the inevitable conclusion that wars are very costly diplomatic missions; and, wars are very destructive. One would think that the Jews and the Arabs – I wonder whether or not, really, there is a true distinction, ethnically, between the two groups of peoples – would be able to find a solution to their long-running altercation. But, No! When it comes to the Arabs and the Jews, they are as far apart from finding a solution to their problems, today, as when the State of Israel was founded in 1948. Interestingly enough, the Arab and the Jew are both Semites, you know, yet, the Jews refer to a person who hates them, the Jews, being descendents of ancient Hebrews, as being anti-Semitic. This term, actually, should mean somebody who hates all Semites, that is the Arab (Semite), who, for the most part, is an adherent of Islam, and the Arab (Semite), who embraces Judaism. Today, the Israeli Defense Force is battling both the Palestinians in the West Bank and the Lebanese on their home turf – and the Jewish fighters are winning, hands down. So: Is might right? The Jewish State of Israel is the best-equipped military force in the Middle East and the Israeli Defense Force fighters are among the best in the world. Is it not a pity that one of the most-gifted ‘races’ in the world cannot find an answer to what should be the simple question of how to live, peacefully, with one’s neighbours. The Arab claims that the State of Israel should be obliterated from the map of the world and that the Jew must be eradicated from the face of the world. In other words, the Arab favours genocide of all of the Jews as its idea of a solution to this political thorn in its side. The Jew states that, if the Arab cannot live, side by side with the Jew, then, they are quite welcome to move to some other part of the world. Alternatively, the Arab may come to terms with the existence of the Jew in the Jewish State of Israel. One side blames the other for the fifty eight year old conflict. They started it; we will finish it, the Jew/Arab claims. Iran, meanwhile, claims that the situation in the Middle East is fast escalating into a fight between Judaism/Zionism and Islam. Just last Thursday, Iran’s President said that, in the event that Israel attacked Syria, it would amount to a declaration of war between the Judaism and Islam. And, upon this event, Iran would join the fray. Charming!*

*A major problem, today, a problem with which future generations of Jews will have to contend, is that most, if not all, of the young Jews of Israel are growing up in an environment of bellicosity. As the young wife of an Israeli diplomat told me: ‘If an Arab strikes me on the face, I shall strike him twice, three times ... many times.’ On the other side of the divide, the mothers of the Arabs are teaching their children to be prepared to be (heroic?) suicide killers of the Jews. The hatred on both sides of this conflict runs so deeply that I wonder where it will all end. Israel, it is well known, possesses the potential to build nuclear armaments (if the country does not have a stockpile of them, already), but, thank God, the country has never used its weapons of mass destruction. Although not confirmed, officially, it is widely held that the French Government sold that technology to the Jews, some decades ago. While restraint in the use of such technology has been displayed by the Jews, in the hands of the Palestinians, the Hezbollah of Lebanon, the Syrians, and, especially, the Iranians, one has to ponder whether or not one may expect the same degree of restraint in the use of these horrible weapons of war if the peoples of these countries/territories were to come into*

*possession of advanced nuclear technology. If an Arab is willing to walk into a supermarket in Haifa, Israel, wearing a jacket, full of explosives, and, then, detonate himself, killing any and all people in his vicinity along with himself, may one expect that same Arab to carry a small nuclear device into that same supermarket in Haifa and detonate his nuclear device with a view to destroying himself and the entire city? It is a horrible thought, is it not? It seems to me that it will only be a matter of time before that horrible scenario could become a reality – unless some intelligent person, or people, find solutions to the current problems in the Middle East before it is too late. From a man's mouth to the God's ear, I sincerely hope that a solution to these problems may be found soon because the hypothetical Haifa scenario, as I have just suggested, could well become an attack, launched from Iran, Syria, Lebanon, or some other terrorist organisation, destroying an entire race of people. Then, who in which country would be safe? From my perspective, it matters not one iota which side, the Arab or the Jew, started this horrible conflict. What does matter is that the wars stop. The killing must cease because, eventually, the Arab and the Jew will destroy each other.*

*Death is inevitable to all living things on earth. We are born; we grow; we mature; we start to decay; and, then, we die. A person's life is, really, very short and, before one realises it, life has passed one by. I had a little silky terrier once. He was a beautiful little dog and used to sleep by my bed in a wicker basket. I hit him only once when he, accidentally, bit me on the nose. To this day, I regret my action because, clearly, the five-pound terrier did not understand that to bite me was wrong. It took me only a very little time to realise my error and, thereafter, we were inseparable friends. And, then, the dog contracted a tumor in his neck, one which was inoperable. Within one month, he could not walk, eat, or sleep. I had to euthanize the dog in order that he suffer no more pain. I cry as I think of that little, innocent dog which had filled me with so much joy for the best part of twelve years. All the dog ever asked of me was shelter, food, water and love. Simple things, are they not? They are all that a man should ever need, it seems to me. All else is simply decorative. For what reason has man to complicate his dealings with his fellows? Can a man not be as intelligent as my departed little silky terrier? Of course, dogs do not have religions and do not worship a god of any description, but, to my way of thinking, my little silky terrier had as much love in him as the most devout Christian/Jew/Muslim/Buddhist/Zoroastrian who ever lived and will, ever, live. You see, My Dear Grandchild, even at the age of twelve years, which is equivalent to about sixty years-plus in the life of a man, my silky terrier maintained his innocence and unbounded love as when I first saw him at the age of just three months. There would appear to be a great deal that man can learn from little, dumb life-forms which he takes into his home and call them pets.*

*As my grandmother used to say and we are still saying it, today: !!! (Revenge on Revenge: Will it ever end?)*

*Talk to you, next week.*

*Chief Lady*

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