

The Betty Letters

My Dear Grandchild,

While many people in the world are applauding the assassination of Osama bin Laden, the founder and the (former) brains behind the al-Qaeda movement, which has been responsible for the deaths of many thousands of innocent people, around the world, by a crack team of US Special Forces, I, for one, cannot jump up with joy that we, that is the so-called 'civilised world', still resort to waging war against each other in order to settle seemingly impossible differences that separate one society from another. Throughout the history of the world, there has, always, been terrorism in one form or another, and, throughout the history of the world, the solution to such problems has, always, been the same: Might is Right. This proverb was first penned by Gorgias, (485-c. 380 BC), the Greek sophist, pre-Socratic philosopher and rhetorician, who was a native of Leontini. Homo sapiens, it seems, never seem to be able to live together for very long in peace and harmony. I think it is because man likes to kill. Only man kills for the joy of killing, you know. Other animals on this earth of ours kill mainly for food or for the propagation of the species. But man, sadly, kills for the simple joy of killing. When Osama bin Laden had a couple of his men trained to fly commercial jetliners so that they could crash into the twin towers of the World Trade Centre in New York and kill about 3,000 innocent people by so doing, I find it difficult that this man of God – as he claimed to have been – could have enjoyed, watching the horrible deaths of the innocents. Could not somebody have reasoned with Osama bin Laden to change his ways to a path that led to construction rather than destruction? Osama bin Laden was an intelligent man, by all accounts, and logic suggests that he would not have been averse to listening to reason. He loved life and he loved his children, of that there can be little question, so he was not all bad as some people would have us believe, today. The Christian say that one should love the sinner, but not the sins that he perpetrates.

I talked this over with Bo-Bo, my froglike husband. He looked at me, at first, as though to say: 'Are you completely cuckoo?' When I explained my point of view, he said that Osama bin Laden must pay the price for his sins and, if I wanted to love him, then, he would divorce me, immediately. 'Why then,' I asked, 'is death, reasoned to be the penalty for his sins?' The Frog said, only, read the Bible 'since you like to quote it so often ... An eye for an eye, remember?' I was ready for that one so I rebutted him, immediately: 'Lex Talionis, the law of retaliation, is said to be at the root of the principle that makes the claim of being at the foundations of modern legal principles whereby one of the canons of law is to balance the scales by equitable retribution for an offended party. However, my darling husband, should man not graduate from that which was written in the Pentateuch, more than 3,500 years ago, to a higher plateau? Is not the law of man accepted as being forever organic? That is to say, forever improving, forever taking into account the various stages of advancement into which man must pass on his passage to being completely civil?' The Frog looked at me and said: 'No! The laws of man are made by man; and man must abide by his laws for the sake of all. Without laws, there would be chaos. Man is such that he is incapable of functioning without rules and laws. Mans' laws are formulated for the sake of all men, not for some, only. Osama bin Laden broke man's laws and had to be punished in a manner which might seem barbaric to you, but the alternative is unthinkable: He would continue to kill because his hatred ran so deeply into his very being for a certain segment of the world's total human population. He had to be stopped and I am glad that he is dead.'

Of course, that which The Frog uttered to me makes logical sense in today's world, but that is, exactly, my point: If we continue to embrace the point of view of The Frog and others of his ilk, then, there is no way for man to change: Ideas that are ingrained in the bosom of man change slowly. But if one is to break the mould of centuries past, then, there must be one person who is willing to stand erect to say that it is time for change and, in that way, challenge the accepted mores of today's civilisation. Life is priceless. To save one life is the most precious thing that a man can do. To take a life is, sadly, much too easy. In the case of the attack on Osama bin Laden by specially trained, US forces, it took less than a millisecond: A one-pound squeeze on a trigger. And, then, a life was snuffed out in the same way that the flame of a candle can be extinguished by pinching the wick with the thumb and forefinger. It is too easy to kill; it is too difficult, sadly, to find a way to live without the requirement of killing.

Enough for today.

Talk to you, next week.

Chief Lady

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