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Overcoming the shock

On September 11th, the world suffered a profound debacle when, beneath the World Trade Center's debris in New York City, not only many, many humans were buried, but also the artificially constructed feeling of security within many people. The shock, the feeling of helplessness and the sudden development of awareness obviously upset the people, especially by the fact that they can be befallen by a catastrophe at any time and at any given place and can be jolted out of their daily life and hurled into a new, unknown world with challenges that cannot yet be estimated.

Fright and naked fear is written on the faces of the people who can be seen in the TV reports, and everywhere there is talking of mourning and horror and immeasurable sadness. The events didn't leave me cold either, and the first shock became apparent in the pit of my stomach just like it did to everyone else. I too was feeling sorry for the poor people who were treated so badly by fate. I didn't even have to use my imagination in order to envision the terrible tragedies that befell so many people. And, in the first place, it is not the many who lost their lives who are concerned but rather those who remained and are still alive. Notwithstanding their moral involvement, these people were hit by a terrible blow that triggered a perceptible shockwave which extended around the world and whose effects will be felt for many days.

This will become all the more apparent because one continuously keeps getting at the people's condition in an irresponsible and stupid way, without the understanding and the ability to empathize, according to the motto: "Look here, how dismayed, how sad and how shocked we all are, and how badly we are suffering from these events and how much pity we have!" It is exactly this bickering (German = "Herumgehacker") which traumatizes those who already have problems correctly judging such a shocking occurrence, and in keeping the necessary distance in order to function normally again within themselves. Instead of leaving the people to let them digest their impressions, the terrible pictures were incessantly repeated from all possible angles so they could be anchored into the memory as deeply as possible. This is exactly the kind of behavior that doesn't help the people to come to terms with themselves after such a disaster. It would be better that they could be made to develop the awareness that neither such a terrorist act nor worse can change the fact that a person must satisfy his most primitive requirements, like eating, drinking, sleeping, clothing and warming, etc. It is especially within these kinds of things that life manifests itself in its most comforting boundlessness. Consequently it lies within the most primitive form of self-responsibility to do justice to those needs, since they are also helping -- through the inherent distraction from the misery -- to stabilize the psyche again in order for the suffering and

terror to gradually be overcome. In his daily tasks and his fair to middling and psycho-soothing distraction -- e.g. through beautiful music, well-done nature broadcasts or interesting documentaries, etc. which in no way remind the people of the shocking pictures -- the human beings could recover from the horror they experienced, in order to concern themselves with and ponder the happenings from a (Ed: mental) distance.

It is exactly this way of thinking that is circumvented and hindered, especially by individuals who show false sorrow rather than looking from a distance into these events and mechanisms that lead to such horrible deeds. Out of this pondering and thinking, all of the people could find a way out of their constant dilemma for themselves, (a dilemma) that is based on lust for hate and revenge and the cry for retaliation. In each and everyone, a change in thinking and feeling in all of humanity and a turn towards a dignified humanism must find its roots in peaceful thoughts and actions, so that it may endure throughout the whole world. This necessary turn-around rests in a sincere grief and has nothing to do with the grief put up for show by so many people that only ends in helpless pity and in nice and empty words. Truly-felt and processed grief helps individuals to build up the capacity for genuine compassion, out of which they can help those who are affected in a progressive way and with lasting support. The pity that is evident everywhere and is offered to the poor victims, and the resulting sadness, only pull people down further in their misery and mislead them into screaming and wailing for revenge and retaliation, because the people erroneously believe that by doing so they can relieve themselves of their helpless and miserable emotions and would, therefore, feel better again. However, these terrible happenings will neither be remedied with revenge, nor will they be reversed or processed. All of this extends deeper and deeper, and only ends in a complex and dangerous involvement (by the individual). Likewise, this grief paralyses the person's thinking, whereby the capacity for judgment is lost and irrational and inadequate actions are put into motion.

There is a very beautiful verse about the inferior value of sadness in the book "Ein Quentchen Wissen, Sinn und Weisheit" ("A tiny bit of knowledge, sense and wisdom"; in German only), that came to my attention in connection with the events of September 11th, and seems to me to be remarkable and worth striving for: "Sadness is a movement of the psyche, against which man should be protected and neither love nor value it, even when the majority of mankind considers sadness as kind and benevolent and as a feeling of prime importance. With this however, life as well as conscience, knowledge, consciousness, virtues and love, are artificially adorned to avoid the real processing of the facts and the given, necessary moments. In this way, people don't have to confront themselves with certain incidents and occurrences in an adequate format in order to recognize the truth. So grief degrades itself to a wretchedness that effectively counteracts any understanding and, therefore, makes it impossible for anyone to recognize and grasp the actual facts. From this results a condition similar to being at the mercy of a situation or matter etc.; (a condition) that has to be fundamentally controlled and understood. But because of false thinking and the resulting creation of false feelings, the situation leads to a psychic fiasco that ends in comprehensive sadness and leads all reason towards non-being and confusion."

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