

The Plight of Humanity Touches All Our Hearts. I Believe in the Good in People

Obedience Learnt in Childhood Also Makes Us Perpetrator

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Introduction

The following statements shortly before the Christian Christmas and at the turn of the year 2023 / 2024 are my unshakeable belief in the good in people.

Despite the daily horror stories, man is not a robot that kills indiscriminately. That does not correspond to their social nature. This could only happen with the help of artificial intelligence, because a machine that can make decisions based on its learning is not bound to make decisions as we would have made them or as would be acceptable to us. Influential IT executives such as Elon Musk are also in favour of limiting artificial intelligence because it is "one of the greatest threats to humanity" (1).

The plight of people touches every heart, even if someone is blinded or irritated by personal or collective prejudices and urgently needs to be enlightened.

Unfortunately, we have already learnt to obey from our fathers and mothers and at school and carry the problem of obedience with us into adulthood. The behaviour of the Germans during the Hitler years is an eloquent example.

Are we not also murderers and criminals if we live in a world in which war and crime are the order of the day? After all, the world is the way we have set it up or – in relation to existing conditions – tolerated it. No one can escape responsibility. We are always complicit, even when we are victims.

Since the research results of modern psychology, we have known that the character of a person is the creative product of the child, which has developed in the confrontation with the circumstances of early childhood – in particular the educational influences of parents and teachers. But we do not realise this.

Since a peaceful world does not come about by itself, but solely through human decisions, we must summon up the courage to use our own reason (Kant), because according to the findings of the human sciences, humans naturally possess a sound mind and natural judgement.

The Plight of Humanity Touches All Our Hearts

As an experienced psychologist and former psychotherapist, no one can seriously tell me that the never-ending wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, with their thousands of innocent dead and wounded children and women, do not touch the heart of every human being. This would only be the case if these people were completely blinded by personal or collective prejudices. Its enlightenment would therefore be of immense importance.

Many contemporaries report that they have not watched or listened to the news for a long time because they could no longer bear the indescribable misery of the people.

This is another example of the fact that human nature is social and that people can live without wars.

We Learnt to Obey as Children

The daily reports on the state of the world, which has gone off the rails, make me increasingly aware of the fatal problem we are still carrying around with us as adults.

From an early age, we learnt to obey in our families and at school. Whether it was the strict father or teacher or the spoiling mother, as children we had no choice but to obey.

Whereas in childhood we had to obey those who raised us, in later life it is the so-called authorities, such as statesmen and their politicians, whom we feel we have to obey. When they call, men abandon their wives and children and go to war. What a momentous mistake!

The German population under the “Führer” Adolf Hitler should be a warning example.

The “people of poets and thinkers” – all without exception – cheered him on. The workers, the scholars, the philosophers, the psychologists – all went along with Hitler and allowed themselves to be led to their deaths. And the pastor and the church blessed the weapons of war that killed the others on the other side of the border, also Christians. World War I, World War II and dozens of other wars: murder and manslaughter over and over again for nothing.

Acquiring Knowledge of Human Nature

When we get to know people – ourselves and others – we learn to see ourselves and others correctly; we learn to correctly assess our attitudes and opinions and those of others.

We then know whether it is only the others who instigate and wage wars – or whether we ourselves are also perpetrators.

Unfortunately, we are not aware of this problem because we act from our subconscious – a key discovery by Sigmund Freud.

Have the Courage to Use Your Own Judgment!

According to the human sciences of anthropology, sociology and psychology, humans naturally possess a sound mind and a natural capacity for judgement. This common sense works empirically, i.e. it makes concrete judgements on the basis of everyday life experience and observation. Mature citizens share these judgements. It is also more orientated towards practical application than abstract theory. Common sense also takes into account the judgements of all other people and is therefore beneficial to the community.

The Enlightenment philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) categorised common sense as more useful in everyday life than scientific knowledge. He set out three maxims for the successful use of common sense:

1. "Think for yourself"
2. "Think in the place of everyone else"
3. "Think in unison with yourself at all times" (2).

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He is a regular contributor to Global Research.

Notes

(1) <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/wirtschaft/kuenstliche-intelligenz/19286238.html>

(2) Hänsel, Rudolf (2023). Making the results of psychological research your own: Insights from an encounter with the psychologist Friedrich Liebling and his liberal psychotherapy. Gornji Milanovac, p. 54

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