

# Islamophobia in New Zealand: Hatred Across the Planet

March 18, 2019

I am sickened once again, by the human carnage caused by hatred. The massacre of fifty innocent Muslim people in Christchurch, New Zealand last Friday, simply because they ARE Muslim, is the latest such carnage which serves as yet another shining testament to hate. The response to such hate, in my opinion, needs to be three-fold.

First, authorities need to see, label and respond to the white supremacy ideology that is the root of the Christchurch tragedy, and the violence in which it results, for what it is - It is terrorism. The FBI and local police departments need to see, as the Southern Poverty Law Center, the Anti-Defamation League, and other hate crime watch organizations have reported many times over the past several years, the following two things. 1. White supremacist groups are indeed both domestic and international terrorists. (My use of the term "white supremacist" is intentional as the now popular "white nationalist" term is not, I believe, a straight forward and honest description of the ideology); and 2. White supremacist ideology and white supremacist groups (which have grown exponentially in numbers since Donald Trump began campaigning for President) pose a serious and extremely dangerous threat to both our society and indeed to liberal western democracies in general. The authorities need to be clear that those who commit horrendous crimes against humanity such as the one that took the lives of the fifty innocent Muslim worshipers in New Zealand last Friday are terrorists no less than Muslim actors who kill innocent people to advance THEIR ideology. The double standard of what actions and what actors constitute terrorism and terrorists benefits no one.

Second, the millions of us who are repulsed by white supremacy ideology and its resulting unspeakable violence, EVERY single time, in EVERY single instance, need to counter it.....We need to counter it with love. In this regard, Dr. King said the following:

"Returning hate for hate multiplies hate, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

The specifics of HOW we practice such love, the precise actions that we take do so, is a discussion for a later essay. Suffice it to say at this point, that while memorials of teddy bears, flowers and candles are sincere outpourings of heartfelt sadness and empathy, they lack the power of love to act as a countervailing force to hate. It is that powerful, countervailing "love force" that we desperately need in the immediate wake of every single hate-inspired tragedy.

Third, we need to understand the basis and the theme of my book, RACE: My Story & Humanity's Bottom Line - the profound truth that as a species, all seven-plus billion of us sharing this tiny, beautiful, fragile planet are members of one human family. We MUST learn about our common origin, the human DNA that we share across the planet, and the fundamental similarities shared by the majority of the world's great religions, among the numerous other ways that we are much, much more alike than we are different. Tragically,

until we learn and internalize that profound truth, we will continue to suffer atrocities such as the one which resulted in the death of fifty of our innocent Muslim sisters and brothers last Friday. Until we mature beyond all bias and bigotry, the world in which we presently live, our world of one bigotry-inspired hate crime after another, our world of war and threats of war, will CONTINUE to be the world in which we live. I know intuitively that in time, in the long run, this too shall pass. The only question is when. How much more suffering must we endure before we awaken? I do not know. No one knows.

This three-fold approach to hatred is long past due.

My thoughts, prayers and meditations are with the families who lost a child, a mother, a father, a brother, a sister, a niece, a nephew, an uncle, an aunt, a grandmother, a grandfather, a friend, last Friday. Their pain is immeasurable. I sincerely send them all my love.