"Walking on the moon, still warring on earth"

Fifty years. Fifty years from now, where will we be? What will we have discovered? What will we have lost? Fifty years ago, on the 24th of July 1969, the human race sunk their collective footprint onto the surface of the moon. It was an impressive feat; we pride ourselves in knowing that we achieved this level of space travel. However, fifty years later, what has this brought us? Undoubtedly, we have embarked upon even greater scientific endeavors since then. In 2001, Russia sent a tourist into space. In 2004, a private spacecraft, with no governmental ties, flew into space. These two events, among others, tell us that humans are becoming more and more confident in their understanding of space. Fifty years ago, the human race sat on the edge of their seats, holding their breath in anticipation as they waited for news of the incredible, brave 'moon-walkers'. Today, the human race smiles at the first ever photograph of a black hole, double taps their screens to 'like' the image, and swiftly moves on. So, space travel is officially 'old news'. Now, one may ask, what phenomenon has stolen our attention away from the vastly unexplored universe? What down here on Earth could be so fascinating that our attention is drawn away from the mysteries of the galaxy? Unfortunately, the answer to this question is a grave one. To put it simply, the destruction we have created down here on our own planet has finally taken priority over exploring the planets we are yet to leave a mark upon.

Fifty years ago, 250,000 people marched in Washington to protest the Vietnam War. Seventy-four years ago, the end of the Second World War was announced. One hundred and five years ago, the First World War commenced. If we were to timeline the most memorable events of the last few hundred years, how many of them would be based around conflict? How many months, years, decades, has the human race dedicated to fighting against members of its own species over arbitrary concepts such as control over land, governmental politics or made-up levels of development? The Oxford dictionary defines 'war' as "*a state of armed conflict between different countries or different groups within a country*" or "*a state of*

competition or hostility between different people or groups". Armed conflict. Competition. Hostility. The only word missing from these definitions is absurdity.

"*But wars are the only way to establish peace*". This ideology has become a widespread belief. In some ways, it's understandable. When people hear that a war in some far-off country has finally ended, they rejoice. They tell their friends and family. They post a tweet about the long-awaited end of the conflict and they look forward to hearing about how the country moves forward. For them, the end of a war is a celebration. But this culture of celebration creates something dangerous. Tucked away in their big houses, with rooves over their heads that are fully intact and untouched by explosives, these people have a tendency to associate 'war' with celebration. People hear about a war, in a country whose name they can barely pronounce, and they feel sad. But then they forget about this war. Until the war is over. Only then do they speak up about the atrocities of war, the consequences of conflict. But by then, it is too late. Praising the end of the Second Congo War does not bring back the millions of people who lost their lives in the 5 long years of conflict. Thanking God that the Somali Civil War came to an end in 2009 does not change the fact that 1.9 million people were displaced. More often than not, the outraged response to warfare is far too late.

At any one time, we can turn the television on and find out which countries are experiencing conflict across the world. Wars in the Middle East. School shootings in the US. Terrorist attacks in... well, everywhere. At this point, we have become desensitized to it. Asking someone "*have you heard about the insurgency in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa?*" is as common as asking someone if they have seen the latest episode of 'Game of Thrones', or the most recent Marvel movie. Sure enough, as soon as these topics come into the conversation, they are just as quickly replaced by another.

"*But what can we do? We have no power*". This exhibits the classic 'diffusion of responsibility'. It is far too easy to tell yourself "there is nothing you can do to change the world, but someone else will surely do it". We see people from modest, everyday backgrounds stand up and perform a 'TedTalk' on how they made a real difference

and we applaud them. Yet simultaneously, we tell ourselves that we could never do something like that. This needs to stop. We need to stop handing over responsibility to the next person in line, because soon enough the line will come to an end. There is no sole person on Earth who can single-handedly solve every conflict. Or feed every mouth. Or cool down the planet which sweats nervously as we continue to tear down the Amazon rainforest, despite every single one of us knowing we need to stop. There is no sole person on Earth who can embrace us and tell us that "*everything is going to be okay*". With the current global state of affairs, everything is not going to be okay. We are going to continue making the same fatal mistakes. Keep giving power to those who encourage rampage over the innocent. So, it is too late to stop this? Do we still have time to find peace? If you find yourself asking these questions, you have taken the first step. There is still just enough time for action towards the abolition of war. The human race has done some incredible things. But we have also done some terrible things. So, I'll ask you again. Fifty years from now, where will we be?

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