

Another view on, “How we live and have our being.”

It is a common religious belief that it is through God that we “Live and move and have our being.” Another view may be taken. Namely that it is through Nature, through the natural process of being born, that we live and move and have our being. Through Nature we are not only born and live, we also have the means of “Being” and having relationships.

This very day, at every meal, every human being will survive by killing; plants, animals and fish. If we do not kill them ourselves, others will do it on our behalf.

On our behalf the Farmer in his field has killed the plants, the Butcher in his abattoir has killed the animals, and the Fisherman in boat has killed the fish.

It is through their activities that we live and move and have our being. The amount of killing that is done on our behalf every day is unimaginable. We live by killing: we have no choice; kill we must.

Yet this terrible system, of which we are an inescapable part, and which makes killers of us all, produces creatures that are capable of acts of heroism, of love and altruism that takes our breath away.

The soldier on the peace line lays down his life for his comrades knowing neither doubt nor hesitation. The Doctor, Nurse and the Teacher leave the cosy comfort of the western world to work in places of unbelievable squalor and danger because they love their fellow man.

Such folk can be found all over our world: -

- there is Student with his life before him who dares to take a stand for democracy and dies,**
- there is the Judge who refuses a bribe and is killed,**
- there is the lawyer, who Mandela like, speaks out against injustice and is imprisoned for years,**
- There is the honest the politician who dares to speak up for the crushed, the bowed down, and downtrodden, and finds him or her-self beaten to within an inch of their life.**

These men and women of all creeds, classes, colours, conditions and countries, take our breath away. We are left speechless at their courage, their bravery and their self-sacrifice. Yet we find that even they, who are capable moral magnificence, must kill something every day. Yes, every day of their lives.

Here we have the heart of the human situation: we find ourselves born into the midst of biological carnage on the one hand and human heroism on the other.

The biological carnage is the only means through which we can live, move, and be. The heroism is the only means by which we can lift our selves to higher and better things and better lives.

At the same time there is that in us which screams out against Nature’s system that makes Mankind killers and predators for millennia to come.

The truth is that it is not through God that we live and move and have our being; it is through Nature.

The question is what are we to do?

We simply have to have the courage to accept life as it really is. We have to accept that we cannot change it and have the courage, to be, human beings.

At the end of the day our life is about Being. It is about relationships; it is about Being in a relationship with the Natural world which, however unpalatable, endows our lives with the

experience of “being” through our ongoing relationships with our friends, our families, our communities, our past which moulded us, and our future which call us forward.

It is the process of being, which gives our lives content. As this is so, hopefully, humankind will continue

“To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bounds of human thought,”

if only because the courage to “be” becomes us in the midst of a horrific world.

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