

Moral Clarity

by Lyn Relph

Ever since the end of what were once called The Dark Ages, conservatives have been slamming liberals for questioning everything. Is a monarchy really the best we can do? asked some liberals of the time, and conservatives, as soon as they could stop their howling laughter, spluttered, "The national family needs to have a father. That father is the king. That's how it has always been and how it will always be, unchanging and certain." Take that away, "untune that string," as Shakespeare wrote for one of his conservative characters, "and perfect discord follows."

Conservatives need to feel that kind of certainty. Today they call it moral clarity, and King George Bush models it for us. We do not

negotiate with terrorists, for as the old cliché master laid down the law long ago, "There can be no compromise with the forces of darkness." Maggie Thatcher got famous for saying, "There shall be no U-Turn." No compromises, no deals, no diplomatic give and take, no appeasement. It's Us against Them, Good versus Evil: we'll accept nothing less than unconditional surrender.

And what else have we gotten for all this moral clarity? The Gang Who Can't Shoot Straight. Incompetence. Ineptness. Mismanagement. Fiddling with prayer in public school while the planet burns.

from every piece of decision-making machinery in the federal government. The president tells us he's vetoing the stem-cell research bill because it represents too great a risk of us slipping into moral

So now the conservatives have their reign of moral clarity. Flip-flopping liberals have been purged

uncertainty. Can't have that.

And what else have we gotten for all this moral clarity? The Gang Who Can't Shoot Straight. Incompetence. Ineptness. Mismanagement. Fiddling with prayer in public school while the planet burns. A misbegotten war stupidly waged because all we needed to know about our enemy is that they are evil. The U.S., a laughingstock worldwide. Former allies forming alliances against us because to them moral clarity looks an awful lot like fascism, nazism or Leninism.

OK, they've had their day, they've shown us what they can do with their moral clarity. They should ask me: I know what they can do with their moral clarity. I say bring back the misfits, the malcontents and the I-dunnos, the morally uncertain, the skeptical and the unborn-again.

Above all, give me someone capable of learning something from this and their own experience.

Being-Human

by Suzy Coffee

Growing up in 1950's America, I was programmed from the get-go to believe that the human race, that *mankind* was the superior life form on the planet Earth.

Because of man's higher intelligence, he was naturally endowed with the responsibility of "managing" other life forms less intelligent than himself. Even his personal God confirmed his moral duty to dominate nature, which was, unlike himself, inherently stupid, soulless and dead.

One look at the world today proves the pure fallacy of this bogus cultural claim. After five thousand years of living under the guidance and supervision of man's "higher intelligence", today *all* life forms on planet Earth are in serious danger of extinction. Endless war, environmental poisoning, global warming, nuclear proliferation and the ravaging and depletion of the planet's natural resources all add up to an insecure future for every inhabitant of planet Earth.

On the other hand, *nature* (the thing that is supposed to be stupid) operates on an ongoing process of deep connection. Within this concert of all life forms, sustainability happens, and life continually perpetuates itself.

So who is really stupid here? Is it the greedy corporate despots, that now personify the credo of male dominance, and are greatly responsible for the slow suicide of the planet? Or is it nature, a body, a process, that left alone, will perpetuate and sustain all living beings?

What good does all this human intelligence do us if we use it to bring about our very own destruction? Doesn't the true test of intelligence lie in the ability to survive? Looking at it this way, a jackass grazing peacefully on a hillside has more smarts than a Monsanto, a Lockheed, a Brown and Root or a Halliburton, (or the shareholders that give life to these harmful corporate spectors).

Though nature can be violent and offers no individual daily security, violence occurs for sur-

vival and for the perpetuation of species. There is none of this greedy accumulation of more than what is needed; wealth in nature can mean a full stomach and a nap in the sun.

The real security in nature (and thus, *human* security) resides in nature's ongoing process of connection. And if we humans are really as smart as we claim to be, then we will look to this great teacher, and let ourselves be guided into our own process of regeneration and healing.

Perhaps as we view and experience the inhumanity of corporate consciousness, we can in comparison see what humanity really is, what humanity really *wants* to be.

I believe this starts by grasping the fundamen-

tals: That nature's body, is *our own*

body. We are the same living being; the same organism. We are the identical essential substance that constitutes the entire universe. William Blake says, "Everything that lives is holy." I believe that no component of nature is holier than another, everything has its purpose and part to play in the great and infinite dance of *life*. Our humanity is inextricably connected to our earthly environment and home. The earth is our body. When we abuse and harm this body, we abuse and harm ourselves.

During the thousands of years humanity has been hung up on this supreme intelligence thing, it has come to live from its mind center; its reasoning, thinking center, and not from its heart. Living from the heart

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