

VIEW FROM THE HEIGHTS

November 2023

Greetings,

As war broke out in the summer of 1914, Sir Edward Elgar wrote, *"the only thing that wrings my heart and soul is the thought of the horses ...oh! my beloved animals."*

At a time when horses still played a crucial role in warfare, the great composer's first thought was for their suffering.

Animals have been drafted into battle throughout human history. Nature itself is a major casualty of every conflict. And, unlike homo sapiens (*sapiens?!"), animals and birds, the lands and the seas are powerless to halt the carnage. They must suffer until humanity lives up to its species' name.*

105 years ago this month, an Armistice was declared to end "the war to end all wars." Yet violence continues to rage. Presently, Russia is relentless in its attack upon Ukraine, and another cycle of bombing and battling has been unleashed on the Middle East. *"Oh! my beloved children," God cries. "Oh! my beloved creation,"*

Isaiah heard God's cry of pain and, within it, a hope and a promise: God *"will settle things fairly between nations. He'll make things right between many peoples... No more will nation fight nation."* ⁱⁱⁱ

God's vision, of course, cannot be actualized without human commitment and effort. And, every now and again, a man or woman stands up for God's way. He or she goes to the extremity of endeavour to make God's peaceable realm a reality.

Jesus was one such "peacenik"! And, most recently, Yocheved Lifshitz. Her turning back, her handshake with her captor, her benediction of *shalom*, made God's dream come one tiny step closer.^{iv}

*The wolf will romp with the lamb,
the leopard sleep with the kid.
Calf and lion will eat from the same trough,
and a little child will tend them.*

*Neither animal nor human will hurt or kill
on my holy mountain."*

Isaiah 11: 6, 9a The Message

Peace, Salaam, Shalom,
Brenda

ⁱ Sir Edward Elgar, in Galtrey, Sidney, Capt., *The Horse and The War*. Country Life, Tavistock, 1918

ⁱⁱ "wise" (Latin)

ⁱⁱⁱ Isaiah 2: 4 The Message

^{iv} "The Guardian view on the power of forgiveness: a freed hostage's gesture should not be forgotten,"
The Guardian, 10/24/23