IN MEMORIAM NICK CARTER

IN MEMORY OF NICK CARTER

*Hillel Avidan**

I first met Nick Carter in July 1974 when I assumed the position of rabbi in the Wimbledon and District Synagogue of which he was a devoted member. Already a veteran speaker and writer in the fields of animal welfare and environmental care, I was used to meeting polite indifference in my fellow Jews whenever I claimed that Judaism demanded positive action in response to any abuse of animals or of the environment. Not only was Nick far from indifferent but he had worked professionally in these fields for many years.

A former game warden in Kenya and in Israel, Nick was, in the early 1970s, a field officer for the International Society for the Protection of Animals (ISPA). I still possess reports sent by him from Cyprus in 1973 and from Thailand in 1974. I remember Nick working in Venezuela to relocate thousands of animals threatened by the damming of a river valley. By the late 1970s, Nick had become Research and Information Officer for the London headquarters of ISPA and much of his time then was taken up with a drawn-out, yet spirited, defence of *Shehitah* (Jewish ritual slaughter) in the face of a sustained anti-*Shehitah* barrage from his Gentile co-workers, both in his and in other animal welfare societies. In early 1978 Nick was seconded to the Boston office of ISPA for about six months. Later that year he was in the forefront of efforts to prevent a bullfight in Tel Aviv, and because of his persistence, the bullfight was eventually called off.

Nick was frequently to be found at Heathrow Airport assisting members of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) with sick, injured or dead animals arriving from other countries. The cruelty and callousness of so many people caused great distress to Nick but he never lost his equilibrium nor his ability to write detached reports and surveys.

At the end of the 1970s, Nick left ISPA to work for the People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES). Posted by PTES to South Africa, he was the first in that country to highlight the suffering of captive dolphins forced to

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perform in limited space for the amusement of the public. His main work in South Africa was in combating 'pirate' whaling, in which both South African and Portuguese entrepreneurs were engaged. Nick's deep commitment and incredible persistence led to court convictions and a temporary end to 'pirate' whaling.

In the mid-1980s Nick began to work for the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) based in London and, as always, threw himself into this work with every ounce of energy he could summon.

I lost contact with Nick after I came to South Africa in 1992, but often thought of his rare dedication to the preservation of our planet and its many creatures. His single-minded pursuit of justice (for people as well as for animals and plants) was in accordance with Judaism at its finest and, indeed, Nick never failed to regard his work as an extension of his Jewishness. His passing will have saddened many and deprived environmentalists of a remarkable leader.

A GREAT LOSS FOR INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION L A 'NICK' CARTER – AUGUST 1927–MARCH 2000

*Melanie Shepherd**

One of life's great environmentalists, and a dear friend and mentor to all of us at DSCF and conservationists around the world, Nick Carter died peacefully on 16 March in Zambia, at home with Bonar and Marianthy Noble and their family in Lusaka.

Born in England in 1927, Nick tried in vain to join the army aged twelve. He was conscripted towards the end of the war and afterwards joined the civil service. In Vienna he honed his investigative skills in his first job helping the Allied Control Commission to track down Nazi war criminals.

In 1956 he moved back to England, and, driven by his love for animals, joined the RSPCA. He worked at clinics all over London including quarantine at Heathrow airport, looking after animals in transit, principally from

* Melanie Shepherd's tribute published in April 2000 on *Wildlife Matters*, the magazine of the David Shepherd Conservation Foundation.

Africa and Asia. The conditions were appalling, with the largest volume being monkeys destined for medical research, particularly for polio vaccines, which Nick refused to use throughout his life.

In 1959 he first ventured to Africa, to work for the RSPCA in Tanzania, where conservation became more relevant than welfare. He travelled around the country, establishing relations between tribal chiefs and the Game Department in anticipation of Independence. He also started a community education project, designing teacher training for Inspectors and published the first children's wildlife conservation magazine.

Nick returned to London, where he worked for the RSPCA night clinic in Piccadilly. In 1972, he joined the International Society for the Protection of Animals, and spent the next six years travelling around Europe and the Middle East, investigating and alleviating animal suffering. He also went to the Far East to investigate wildlife trade, posing as a trader in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, India and Hong Kong.

Nick's interest in whales was sparked by a 1930s RSPCA leaflet against whaling and later through his friend, Harry Lilley, a ship's doctor to the British whaling fleet. On hearing tales of the horrific cruelty of whaling, he began to follow the issue.

In the late 1970s Nick started the first investigations into large-scale pirate whaling. He did the work in his own time, and, initially, out of his own pocket until, in 1979, he moved to the 'People's Trust for Endangered Species' to complete the work. Compiling a dossier over several years which led to the exposure of a notorious pirate whaler, Andrew Behr, living in South Africa. Nick's exposé led to huge publicity and the seizure of Behr's vessels, costing him £10 million. In preventing those ships going to sea, Nick saved thousands of whales and made pirate whaling an international issue, proving that far more whales had been slaughtered by ruthless operators outside the International Whaling Commission (IWC) rules than had previously been thought.

His other important contribution on whaling was the IWC's Register of Whaling Vessels which he started and maintained for many years. The information was essential as a basis for enforcement, the value of which has finally been officially recognised.

In 1980, Nick moved to South Africa where he worked on a variety of conservation projects, including the Dolphin Protection Group and investigating the southern African ivory and rhino horn trade. Six years later, he returned to England and worked with the Environmental Investigation Agency on a wide range of wildlife trade issues, particularly on the first campaign to stop the wild bird trade, and continued his pirate whaling investigations, which took him to all corners of the globe.

At the end of the 1980s, Nick returned to Africa, working first in Namibia on black rhino and desert elephant work for Save the Rhino Trust, amongst others. He then travelled to Zambia, which became his adopted home, doing consultancy work for the Government, David Shepherd Conservation Foundation and assisting the Zambia National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Nick found cooperation between organised criminals more efficient than among law enforcement agencies, rendering international conventions and much national law unenforceable.

In 1992, with colleagues and Zambia's Minister of Tourism, Nick initiated Africa's first conference of wildlife law enforcement officers, to tackle problems with cooperation across borders to combat illegal wildlife trade. The result was the drafting of the Lusaka Agreement to formalise a multinational African task force to fight wildlife crime – the first of its kind in Africa. Overcoming political inertia and meagre resources, with colleagues and officials from the Parties to the Agreement, Nick worked tirelessly on the project as Zambia's representative, under the United Nations Environment Programme. In 1994 the Agreement was signed by six African countries and on 1 June 1999 the Lusaka Agreement Task Force became operational at its base in Nairobi from where it has already carried out successful cross border operations.

A deeply religious man, Nick drew his inspiration from the Bible and his love of nature. Like his beloved Jewish scholars, he studied day and night, living out of a suitcase and staying with friends around the world. Totally uninterested in material possessions, latterly Nick continued to work for various conservation projects and organisations on a voluntary basis, including DSCF. Despite his failing health, he was adamant to the end that if he couldn't work he couldn't live.

Nick received many international awards and yet remained the most modest of men. He was totally committed to the conservation of our earth. His gentle words, true faith, integrity, insight and wisdom will remain an inspiration to those he touched the world over. The Lusaka Agreement will remain a living memorial to a remarkable man.

'All is given; we create nothing ourselves; the breath of life is one with natural law. We choose to serve or not. Conservation is learning how to do it ourselves that we and our children may live.' Nick Carter

January 1996

Dear Jonathan

Personal & Private

When received, this will be posthumous, kindly sent to you by Mr & Mrs M Noble who agree to do so when necessary. Nearing my sixty-ninth year, to write now may be timely. You may recall some time ago I asked if you might consider me sending some papers to you. The merit or

otherwise of the enclosed are for you to judge, if you choose. Thereafter perhaps others. No one else has seen them. If worth showing to others, my hope is to be anonymous; to all but yourself known only as Od Ha'am.

The hope to work for G-d's sake, there being none other, including oneself, 'worth' striving for came to me twenty-five years ago during some conservation work. Circumstances frustrated anonymity then, though not with a few later tasks. To be anonymous is less simple than I thought. When I stopped trying to write for a living forty years ago it was because it seemed no work is worth doing unless for its own sake. To be known, or aware one may be so, somehow 'got in the way'. A nuisance inhibition. That subtle, troublesome satan M. Buber calls 'I-ness' insinuate itself, with all the self deceptive rationalisations to which most are vulnerable.

With deep regard for your head and heart, should anything in these pages seem to you unworthy, of poor standard, amen. In G-d's natural world alike created of physis as psyche the 'fit' survive. So, to me, is the evidence of Torah, Mr Darwin and his disciples, and my own experience. If 'fit' yet is interpreted crudely, the failing is ours. Likewise our failure so far to consider or venture into dimensions of existence which, perhaps too severely self critical, I discouraged with myself despite experience of precognition and retrocognition. Unsought experience impossible to deny that intruded into my life, usually at stressful times. With cautious limited study of such phenomena I am unsure of its capacity to contribute to developing sapience – yet this may be among my errors. Like all things natural, it seems given, to discern and understand. Yet so much is given one dilemma is to find one's most productive niche so as to contribute most fruitfully to the whole. My efforts of groping heart and head leave me naked of any sense of adequacy to express even a jot of my gratitude for the privilege of life. So the pages I confide to you. If fit, then fit. If not, then not. How to make the best offering of which one is capable 'not unto us, not unto us'?

Circumstance has led me to much separation from the congregation; yet my hope is that all my work is as much for the congregation's as heaven's sake. With me always have been copies of the RSGB *Siddur* and *Machzor* for which I am unable to express my thankfulness to you and Rabbi Blue. May your continuing work bring fulfilment to you and your family. And this folder be not too much of an intrusion or imposition. It is not many pages, at least. Of your own writings I have read enough to recognise you are blessed with acute insight, and able to recognise the worth or otherwise of other ideas or perspectives. So I ask your consideration because I trust and am content with your judgement as to whether these offerings may be acceptable to someone.

There may be another piece somewhat longer, if given the time to do it. A small book about Job. If completed, my hope is that the anonymous pen name used for these poems would suffice to name the author. Unfortunately, perhaps, for you it may mean more pages, though at the time of writing it is hardly more than begun.

With thanks and warmest wishes for the future for you as your family.
Yours sincerely,

L.A. Carter

About Od Ha'Am

Born in England. Mother believed of assimilated Jewish family. Father, gentile. At eight, his mother and elder brother fled his father's uncontrolled rages whose physical and psychological force crushed the most resilient. OH saw not nor heard from his mother again; his brother for a few hours. They were gone. He knew why. In later life assured he 'must' have been aggrieved at 'desertion', he was not. He knew why. To assertions he 'must' have repressed grief into unconsciousness, he was silent, exploring it as best he could for some years. He found that, as in the 'wilderness', preconceptions may be a major handicap, and that as Frankl notes, textbooks err. OH instinctively defended his mother who he sensed wanted no second child. In some situations, grief is irrelevant. Those who have not 'been there' know not: as it is said, judge none till you have been in their place. She was small, dark and crushed. His father bewildered by what he called his 'brainstorms'; always provoked by others.

At nine, his working life began. After six years, made to work with rigour, OH too fled terror; long hours of hard labour; irrational beating; incessant dinning he was 'different', 'sub-human', like his mother. He learned we tremble not only by fear but also exhaustion. At ten, his father hired an Austrian housekeeper. She secured his trust, 'our secret', and he violated his father's absolute commandment to be silent on his mother and brother. Terrified of his betrayal, days later OH discovered she was a Nazi enraptured by Adolf Hitler. To silence him she threatened to repeat 'our secret' to his father unless he obeyed her absolutely. If known, he believed his betrayal would bring obliteration, death in a brainstorm. He obeyed in shame. She hated and held him three years in daily terror. An observer saw him 'curiously dull, unresponsive, distant'. Once beaten as he worked, OH raised a garden fork to bayonet his father if struck again. The blind violent act confirmed the terror he was like his father. Also guilty of betrayals: fear to defend his mother and brother from his father's execration; fear of the nazi; shame to be 'different', sub-human; daring to rebel; a potential murderer; knowing he could kill.

As life seldom is more precious than when one may lose it, OH enjoyed the Battle of Britain and year of night bombing, mainly alone, as his happiest youth, rejoicing to find himself unafraid. Compassion for the fearful

made the joy guilty, yet to be in the land alone able to resist nazi evil was an historic privilege lifelong remembered.

Two friends who persuaded OH to flee his father to them proved corrupt. The woman, with his ready cooperation, seduced him. Her husband, a ped-erast, tried but failed. OH discovered terrified violent rage in self-defence justified. And adultery's guilt deserved. He resisted efforts to prosecute his father for cruelty. Later, an infantry soldier, his father traced him demanding renewed relations. OH did not reply. No anger; no blame; no hate; no love; no regret. Later, he married a woman who neither wanted nor could bear children again. So avoiding possibility of fatherhood; any risk lest he, perhaps unwittingly like his father, afflicted another with childhood.

Neurasthenic for twenty years, OH dreaded sleep due to nightmares. In one, he saw his mother, a small, dark musselman in a striped dress in a nazi KZ; a bigger bony woman urged her not to give up. Beyond care, she was for the gas. Helpless, choking with grief, the KZ stench, he awoke guilt-broken. He sought to be worthy of love, trust. Alone, he fled to philosophy, history, biology, zoology, physics, literature, eastern, western and indigenous religion, psychology and anthropology. At forty, he went to synagogue. The idea of irrevocable commitment appalled. That first Sabbath eve, early, he stood alone, sweating with awe. Then underwent a visionary experience wherein he critically observed himself and the event. Incredulous, he saw the modern interior, ark, *ner tamid* and *bimah*, his actual surroundings, and at the same time an older Sephardic ark, *ner tamid* and *bimah* equally 'real', conscious the sight was visionary. Years later he was shaken to identify in a picture what he had seen was in Bevis Marks Synagogue. After the experience he first understood, existentially, what 'belong', 'home' and 'identity' mean. He was another Jew. With this his resistance to commitment vanished. As from earliest childhood he remained a-social: a character he carefully distinguished from anti-social, an attitude strange to him. On the old debate as to whether it is well humankind was created, he was firm in the view it is well. We are an interesting species that could 'do better if we tried'; or wanted to.

The degrading aspects of his life, as with such as Ka-Tzetnik 135633, OH suggested we do not forget. We all, the degraded, know potentially we may share the defiling nature of hate. We erase no shame of what we do to ourselves in experiencing cruelty or when witnessing it inflicted on others, however impotent, however driven apart into the last isolated corners of existence to survive, however much we try to conceal or avoid knowing it. The abomination of desolation in our souls born of human deeds defiles all. To hide from this recognition or deny, blame or project it on others is our habitual repetition of what may be symbolised as an Adam Syndrome, a

failure to see nothing is 'wrong' with existence whose demands or questions none but we are responsible to answer, however naked and afraid. Lifelong regarded as 'serious' his preoccupation was to discern order from chaos, within himself and existence, seeing 'chaos' as our individual and collective state of human mind, not as an 'objective' reality, and the human idea of 'wilderness' as a projection of this chaos. Among secular as religious friends he was seen, perhaps, as eccentric. He felt M. Buber and L. Baeck were main influences and saw what Buber terms 'I-ness' as the prime threat to us individually as collectively, since it corrupts and betrays the gift of consciousness and cripples, often fatally, the talent for life among the young. The most obscene shibboleth of his time he considered the counsel of slaves: 'learn to sell yourself'.

MY OLDEST FRIEND

My oldest Friend,
if, by reason of strength, there yet remain ten years
You know I do not ask for them. Not length of days
but the quality or worth lived unto You
is of consequence to me, an ageing Jew
whom some account old and quiet and wise
when You and I know I am a child
between Your agelessness and mine
so physicists guess
may not be less
than fifteen billion light years or so

Though the world is impressed with the latest measures of existence
You know whereas I merely apprehend
this infant, homo sapiens'
anthropocentric pretensions . . . dimensions
of existence unknown, dark in the head
while the petals of the eyes remain tight closed, unseeing
bud blind to the world
till You breathe or call
and the blossom of the heart unfolds
to the sun and nails of rain
seeds of light and knowing
beyond the small measures of our miser head
that counts the grains of knowing
to own, get, and calculate, possess
all freely given by You beyond measuring . . .

Pesach 5756

YAHREZEIT

(For Ernst Holzer and Charles Berg: Survivors and Progressive Jews)

Death is the destiny of our dead
with us oblivion when we are gone
none shall remember at evening or dawn
the mud wire blood guns rats and skulls
bones ovens and cause evoke no more
than a fossil of fern or a dinosaur

Yes, the destiny of all flesh is death
yet not oblivion for we are seed
here continuing deeds remembering them.
No vain oblation of our tears
nor solemn years of annual grief
keep faith with the dead and broken for belief.

Life or death we choose our destiny
serve the graven images of our lost and gone
or continue *bereshith* sowing our dead.
The blasphemy is not to grow, go on;
our sin to deny the Law: multiply in spirit, increase
with tradition be fruitful or choose decease.

We are the destiny of our dead
their issue this day choosing if we
shall bless and keep this garden of Earth.
Death we remember best that learn
to conserve all life is holiness
this day remembering One it is death to forget.

Od Ha'am
Av 5745

AN EPITAPH

So Od Ha'Am has written and moved on
nor all Earth's piety and wit
may erase a phrase or line
or change a word of it.

To edit other lives may not be done
be scribes diligent that hear
in the cool of days the voice of One
Editor of existence beheld by none.

To themselves idols fools demand to know
the answer to life that questions us. Likewise,
who feels that others need us to exist
seem blind that here or gone we'll not be missed.

Nameless the One and nameless I
soon to die, and grateful to have strived,
knowing, owning nothing of earth or sky
save our last enemy is I-ness with you as I.

Shevat 5756