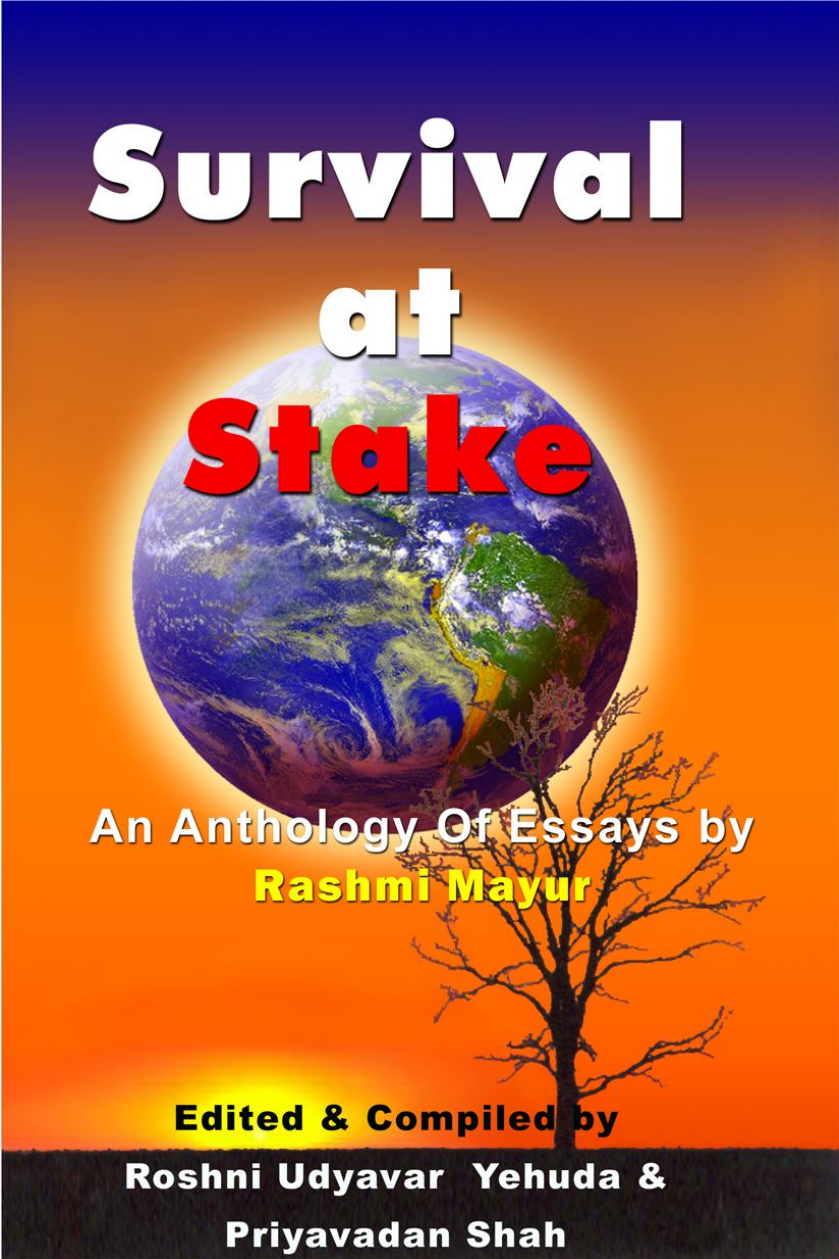


Survival at Stake



An Anthology Of Essays by
Rashmi Mayur

Edited & Compiled by
Roshni Udyavar Yehuda &
Priyavadan Shah

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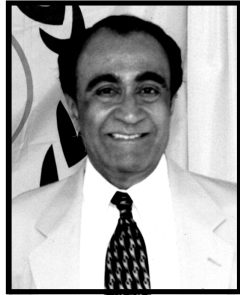
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Rashmi Mayur: A Light that Burns Eternally



Life is a moment to be immortal - the concluding line of his poem conveys the essence of the vibrant persona that was Rashmi Mayur - environmentalist, scientist, poet and much more. After traversing his earthly mission like a brilliant flash of light, he left on 11 February 2004 to continue his journey into the unknown universe. His spirit lives on in the souls of thousands whom he inspired to tread his path.

Popularly known in India as the “doomsday professor”, Rashmi Mayur prophesied that if human beings continue on their present reckless path of mindless development, the earth’s ecological systems would collapse and the human race will become extinct. “The consequences of the war that has been waged against this planet for the last 200 years by human beings, may be that we may have no human inhabitants in the future.” However, unlike many crusaders who relinquished hope and left the battlefield, and others who refuse to recognize the symptoms of a diseased planet, Rashmi loved it enough to see it with the eyes of truth. He was too optimistic to be biblical. “Nonetheless, we cannot be immobilized by the ugly reality. As long as we are alive, as long as we have vision and as long as we think of the future of the earth and our children, we must hope that sanity and wisdom will prevail.”

Armed with a doctorate and full of hope and enthusiasm, Rashmi returned to his country from the United States more than 30 years ago, determined to make a difference in the lives of millions of suffering and voiceless people. He was convinced that educating people about the outcome of their path and providing ecological alternatives would bring about a sustainable future. Ever since he has been on a relentless struggle: writing papers,

educating through seminars, conferences and producing live projects such as ecovillages. Dr. Robert Muller, former Assistant Secretary General, described Rashmi as a “one-person world organization”.

Having aligned and worked with intellectual giants like Arthur C. Clarke, Jean Paul Sartre, Paul Ehrlich, J. Krishnamurti and Donella Meadows, Rashmi had a holistic vision for the planet, one that embraced peace, humanity, justice and equality not only for humans, but for millions of species who share this unique abode of life. “We must live on the planet during our brief span with such care and concern and love that one day, when we are ready to go – because evolution must continue – let us depart such that our children will have another beautiful morning to enjoy the ecstasy of this earth and evolution will continue beyond tomorrow into eternity.”

Rashmi was a world citizen. The earth was his home. He was revolutionary in that he denounced redundant institutions and practices, even patriotism. Rashmi was a doer. At the same time, he had the ability to inspire and work with a wide variety of people. He was an inimitable orator. Equipped with the latest, most relevant statistics, an immutable logic and humor matched only by his passion, he almost always set the audience on fire, awakening people to the reality and bringing forth followers. His Program “Voices of the South” on WBAI radio broadcast from New York had a fan following of thousands of people. His voice had a simplicity and logic that appealed to friends and foes alike.

Rashmi did not limit himself to any particular group. He built alliances with activists, NGOs, professionals, academicians, businessmen, religious groups and all types of people with a singular purpose of realigning them to the goal of sustainability. He recognized the need to integrate all sections of society, to garner their support and goodwill and wisdom for the protection of the planet. He was versatile, one moment shaking hands with the President of a country, the next moment laughing and talking

to children from a slum in Mumbai.

Rashmi had a strength, purity of purpose, simplicity, objectivity and incorruptible judgment seldom found combined in one individual. He was always in search – of true love and eternal happiness. He had a rare combination of knowledge, logic and passion. He often expressed his deep grief through his poems. He was convinced that suffering was bad. He believed in human creativity and its boundless possibilities for civilization and evolution.

Rashmi was a giver. He gave off his material assets as easily as he shared his deep and pure love. His belongings were few – a collection of 13,000 rare books, a suitcase packed with his bare minimum requirements and mostly gifts for friends, a bulky passport which he lost innumerable times along with his wallet and some cash which often slipped through the holes in his suit pockets. Despite his hectic schedule, he never groveled over petty problems or cared to discuss his personal or financial problems. Nor at any time of his career did he vouch for high positions, which he could have easily attained. His mind was restless, always pondering about the welfare of humanity and the question of sustainability. Rashmi was a tireless workaholic. It was natural for him to get off the plane after a trip around the world and land up in office the next morning ready to send press notes and interviews.

Mark Dubois, a close friend and international coordinator for the Earth Day International once remarked of Rashmi: “I think genetic engineering is dead wrong given our collective human maturation, ethics and economics, yet the world would be better if he (Rashmi) could be cloned and his touching, motivating, awaking presence inspire more people of the world to act.” If but a small part of his character, devotion and intellectual genius remains alive or is transferred to the youth, our country and this planet will see a brighter tomorrow, or as Rashmi often phrased the conclusion of his articles: “The future of our children’s dreams”

- *Roshni Udyavar Yehuda*

Editors' Note & Acknowledgements

All articles published in this book are from published sources and have been taken from the records of the Action Group, Ahmedabad which served as the headquarters of the International Institute for Sustainable Future (IISF), Ahmedabad.

The Centre of IISF in Ahmedabad organized lectures of Dr. Rashmi Mayur on a regular basis and served as a base for Dr. Mayur's work in Gujarat. Dr. Mayur and the authors through the IISF, were intensively involved in the rehabilitation and resettlement of the victims in Gujarat during the Bhuj Earthquake of January 2001.

The poems written by Dr. Mayur provide rare insights into the mind of this genius scientist, who was a poet at heart. These poems are available with the records of IISF Ahmedabad (now Action Group).

We are deeply grateful to Mr. P.K. Ravindranath, confidante and associate of Dr. Rashmi Mayur, who helped proof read the text of this book. We have not altered the facts and figures in the articles although they may be outdated, as they are still relevant in the present context.

We hope that these essays will stir the readers to action in saving this fragile but beautiful planet from destruction by human beings; and that enlightened souls will take us to the next stage of evolution with planet earth.

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Preface

Since the Social Summit in 1995 in Copenhagen, where he visited our house and to his all too early departure from his dear Earth in early 2004, I have worked closely with Dr. Rashmi Mayur. For the first time, readers have a chance in one little book to get an condensed impression of the writings of this great, dedicated, elevated soul and learned scholar. Thanks to Roshni Udyavar for presenting his universe to an international readership. Equal emphases is here given to his cosmic poems conceived in meditation interchanging with his global, holistic and political thinking and writing.

His poems compare to those of the famous Sufi mystic Rumi. They arrived in a totally finished form when he was in a meditative state and shows a rare human being capable of letting his spirit soar freely and reaching the highest. His articles covering as many topics as he did in real life in his work in the UN, as advisor in many Southern countries and as an environmental campaigner in India, always had the Earth and Her evolution as the frame of reference no matter what problem were discussed.

He knew how to balance the environmental problems with social problems with questions of inequality and injustice and threats towards peace. He always spoke clearly without fear against even the mightiest opponent (enemy, adversary). He left more than 1000 articles on different topics, never repeating himself. I hope this will just be the first of many publications of his work.

**- Hildur Jackson, Vice President, GAIA Foundation, Denmark,
Copenhagen**

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“Life is a fire that burns eternally”

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The Eternal March of Evolution

“At the gates of the forest, the man of the world is forced to leave his city estimates of great and small, wise and foolish...Here is sanctity, which shames our religions, and reality, which discredits our heroes.”

-- Ralph Waldo Emerson

I dreamt once that I would live in a paradise, where everyone experienced Nirvana - ultimate liberation and salvation. At that time I was only a child, and daydreaming was my preoccupation.

Then, as I grew up, I discovered a different world – a world of cruelty, diseases, ignorance, exploitation, and death. As I traveled around the world and saw more and more of life, my dream became a nightmare. I became sad, pessimistic, and hopeless. I felt that no future existed for us or for our sacred Earth, which was being plundered, that one day it would devolve into a mass graveyard, its future dead – all by-product of human carnage.

Then, one day as I was passing through the Amazon forests, suddenly at dawn I had a vision. All life around me awakened. The sweet music of birds and animals filled the fresh air; the rays of the Sun peeped through the trees and everywhere life seemed to dance and sing in joy. Truth and hope became apparent to me. I discovered that even though the world has many ills, humans need not challenge truth. Truth is expressed in the laws of nature, which govern the earth, life and the future. Humanity is not an exception. I also experienced that within the larger design of the universe, we have a special purpose - a

responsibility to preserve all that has evolved through eons of evolution.

Since that day, life has been a perpetual challenge to me. True, the state of the world remains tragic, and human insanity is ubiquitous. After 16 tortuous days, a 14 year-old girl when given food, in Ethiopia died of malnutrition; millions of hectares of trees are cut to clear land for highways, cities, construction, and for agriculture, resulting in the extinction of some of the most beautiful species of plants, birds and animals. The litany of tragedies seems endless.

But life need not be tragic. We are here to make a difference. We can hope to build an earth from our fondest dreams and visions. Now I've stopped searching for utopia — an ultimate destination of life. Shangri-La does not exist. Our purpose of life is to dedicate ourselves to regenerating the earth and building a new human order of equity and justice. If we devote our energies to our common future, then we cannot fail to realize our dreams.

Our vision is to integrate ourselves with the larger web of life. For that, we must vanquish the arrogance to dominate or conquer nature. Technological prowess is only superficial and temporary; we are only a humble link in life's complex chain.

Nature teaches us the lessons of simplicity, reverence, and unity. Therefore, let us build a world of conservation, recycling, use of renewable energy, non-exploitation, sharing — for creative purposes. Such a world is not a fantasy, but is well within our means. It is a world worth dedicating our blood and tears to. Activists around the world already are devoting their lives to these noble causes. They are fulfilling the ultimate purpose of life. They, as I, envision a new earthly order one day, when every child everywhere will experience joyful existence,

26 August 1980

“Morals are necessary conditions of social living, but one does not need the fear born of religion in order to follow moral principles. To be good or kind, to care for suffering people, or not to steal someone’s property does not require the dictates of a religion – nor does one need monuments of worship. Marvelously designed stones near the seashore or in the Himalayan valley are more aesthetic and sacred than some of the ugly statues in churches or temples.”

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Time and Love

I have only moments
to be with you.
I have only a few moments
of my life to share.
Moments united with moments
will become eternity.

Wily nilly we meet.
Wily nilly we disappear.
Lo, my elements will
Search for yours
In the vast expanse
Of the space.
Moments united with
Moments will become eternity.

I live in this hurly-burly world
In search of an unknown –
lonely, forlorn and lost
in the strange universe.

Where are you, my love?
I am searching for your
few moments only
– to embrace.
For moments united
with moments
will take us to eternity.

Where is Dodo?

“The forests are incubators for all forms of life and the storehouse of the vast majority of species on the Earth. It is here that the drama of evolution was enacted. And when the forests go, the biodiversity must part along with the trees.”

— Rashmi Mayur

The Dutch landed in 1598, as the doors to the oceans opened to humanity a century before, on the island of Mauritius, located to the east of the African continent. They found it to be the land of ultimate beauty, grandeur, and, of course, bountiful resources. It was the resources that had impelled them to come here, and they were proliferating. The island ecology was rich in all forms of life.

Filling a niche here, for many, many millennia lived a flightless majestic, tall pigeon known as Dodo (*Rophus cucullatus*). It was one of the friendliest creatures ever created by nature, serving many ecological purposes. The Dutch dubbed the bird “Dodo” because it was commonly considered stupid, dull, even moronic. The innocuous Dodo became the butt of jokes, ridicule, harassment and hunters’ knives. They mocked it, but relished its meat. It was the easiest bird to kill. Many plants, insects, even bacteria and viruses, were harmonized with the Dodo. In fact, seeds of a fruit the Dodo ate used to be fertilized in its stomach, and when discharged, grew into plants. Such was the nexus of relationships among various forms of life in Mauritius.

The number of Dodos then were finite (as are all species), but there is no limit to human desire if left unharnessed, and as the Dutch onslaught of the island’s habitats intensified, total annihilation became a reality. The last Dodo died in 1680, after

less than 100 years of exploitation. With its disappearance, a large number of dependent plants died. This was human-induced extinction, the permanent end of a species, forever.

Since then, the Earth has become a stage for a pandemic of extinctions, both dramatic and invisible. This plague of mass extinction that has been occurring for more than 500 years is not unique. Not at all. Five times before, this planet was nearly stripped of its life. What, then, is so special about the present vanishing act? Will it be the last? Is our nemesis upon us? Maybe. Whereas the other extinctions were caused by natural disasters (meteorite impact and climactic transformation are the leading suspects), this is the first time a creature of the Earth is responsible. As far as we know, this is the first time an individual species has dominated and controlled the destiny of the Earth and is destroying entire ecosystems.

At the Rio Plus 5 meeting at the UN in 1997, a report estimated that approximately 50,000 species of flora and fauna were disappearing annually – that is 6 every hour – and despite the Convention on Biological Diversity approved by a majority of nations at the Earth Summit in 1992, the trend towards annihilation continues unabated.

There is a major trauma afflicting the Earth. A profound transformation is under way. Changes are stupendous and time is on a runaway path, as if the complete web of life is caught in a countdown. Most of the evolutionists are in agreement that nothing escapes the axe of human presence. Of the hundred thousand species of trees, about 9,000 are threatened, 10% of which are projected to be extinct before 2005. More than 11% of 10,000 birds are at the edge of the precipice. If the trends continue to escalate as they have during the last century, it is estimated that almost 70% of flora and fauna will be extinguished by the end of the next century.

There are many profound questions about the biological oblivion. Is evolution ending? If so, will it start a new episode? Will humans share the same fate as the other species, due to nature's own backlash? We must also raise deeper metaphysical questions. Why at this time? What has happened to human consciousness? Our divinity? Our spirits? And where is the Hindu and Jain ethic of ahimsa, reverence for life? In Vedic philosophy, *Taittiriya Aranyaka* says, "Dharma is the foundation of the whole universe," and, prophetically, *Manu Smriti* states, "Dharma", when violated, verily destroys. Dharma, when preserved, preserves. Therefore, dharma should not be violated, lest the violated dharma destroys us."

The practice of good living, in harmony, internally and externally, was the essence of Vedic philosophy. Good implies, as the *Vedas* admonish, self control, nonviolence and the Realization of the Self by means of yoga. This ancient wisdom of India is lost in the present cataclysmic turmoil.

In the third millennium, the human drama seems tragic. More than six billion people are on a march of materialism, which means that acquisition, accumulation, possessions and consumption of material goods is the ultimate "good" of life. This philosophy assumes that the material resources are unlimited. Further, it advocates this through all its marketing and advertising. The world spends approximately U.S.\$250 billion in advertisement, according to the Human Development Report 2000, of the UNDP.

Human beings are proliferating at the rate of 80 million a year and 90% of the growth is in the developing world. There, almost four out of ten people live at the edge of survival. In India alone, 320 million out of one billion are living marginally. It is not until 2100, according to the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), that the Earth's population may stabilize at 10.5 to 11 billion people.

The Human Development Report says that three billionaires (Gates, Buffett and Allen, together worth US\$156 billion) have wealth equal to the total GNP of all least developed countries and their 600 million people. The essence of the globalized world of technology – which has been converted into a marketplace, where you buy and sell goods and services in order to gratify humans at whatever cost - is to put man at the center of the universe. Everything exists for man – a few men, actually, who, in the economic struggle, accumulate the most.

The distribution of life on the planet is similarly imbalanced. According to Audubon, “More than half the Earth’s species are found in ‘hot spots’ covering only two percent of land. These areas also claim two-thirds to three-quarters of the world’s most endangered plants and animals.” For the last 300 years, but most blatantly during the last 100, the Earth has been put under siege by a human technological juggernaut. All the biological and human systems are under monumental stress: the climate change, threatening almost 35% of people on the coastlines of the world due to sea level rise, is real. More than seven percent of the ozone is already thinned, and every year a nine-million-square kilometer ozone hole above Antarctica threatens creatures, including humans, with cancer and immune deficiency and brings death to microorganisms.

More than 16 million hectares of forest, of which 11 million are biologically diverse tropical forests, will be cleared for human needs annually. Despite the Forest Convention of 1992, trees must go to make room for agriculture, human settlements, factories, highways and much more. The idiocy of the technological civilization is that most of the materials we need for food, for medicines, for the conversion of CO₂ [a greenhouse gas] for generation of O₂, for construction, are all in these forests. Do we know the mystery of our intricate web of life that our existence is interconnected with an innumerable number of species inhabiting the Earth – not to speak of

microorganisms, which are basic to our survival?

Forests are homes of indigenous people. There are only 250 million indigenous people left in the world, and they are disappearing so fast that at a Geneva UN conference on Indigenous People it was projected that at the present rate of depletion, most of them will be gone by 2025.

The Earth is endangered, according to a warning from the Union of Concerned Scientists in December 1992. A report states that: "Most biological systems, which have sustained life on the planet for millions of years, will collapse some time during the early part of the next century."

Everywhere, the human spirit is in revolt. Extinction cannot be the future of this beautiful Earth. The perversion of technological systems must be challenged – a society on the march towards doom must accept the wisdom of the ancients that all life is sacred and its existence rests on the harmony established by evolution in the total scheme of life.

Buddhism's *Suta Nipata* expresses it eloquently: "*All living beings whatever, without exception, weak or strong, whether long or high, middling or small, subtle or gross, seen or unseen, dwelling afar or near, born or yet unborn: may all beings gain inner joy.*" And the ancient Tamil scripture, *Tirukural*, advises in verse 324, "*What is the good way? It is the path that reflects on how it may avoid killing any living creature;*" and in verse 327, "*Refrain from taking precious life from any living being, even to save your own life.*"

Although Indian philosophers believed that the world goes through a cycle of evolution and decline, it always admonished reverence for life - respect for all forms of life and preservation of biodiversity – that is, continuation of evolution. The new philosophy of life challenges the arrogance of humans. The

Earth is not for humans only. It is for all life – life in its various forms and structures. While individuals have a short and transient existence, evolution continues inexorably. The consciousness and spirits are beyond material existence, beyond time and space. They are eternal, an integral part of Brahman.

Once we understand this philosophy, our life changes fundamentally. Our living becomes simple, we consume minimally, controlling our growth. We honor nature. We submit to it, along with all other species, to become part of evolution, moving with it towards a higher stage of consciousness, united in nonmaterial existence. Then humans will not be a scourge on the planet, nor would their lethal technologies be a threat to life. They will accept the Earth as a garden in which all the elements — wind, fire, space, soil and water—dance to celebrate life with children of the parrots, whales, deers, elephants and humans. Then, when the sun rises again tomorrow, there will be eternal joy in the carnival of life.

(Published in Hinduism Today, July / August 2000)

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“Our hope is that people realize that they are part of a large ecosystem of the earth - Nature - on which we are dependent, and if we want to protect the evolution of the earth, we must learn to become humble, modest, and dedicate every day of our life to the protection of the earth before it becomes too late.”

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O' Tiger

Yesterday, time died
when you were savagely
butchered – you the
king of the jungle,
you, so beautifully ferocious.

Die, my friend, die.
You, the monarch of the jungle, will
never perish.

You are living
in ruthless times,
when barbarians rule;
we the humans, determine
your destiny.
We have the earth under our siege.

For you, there is
no court of justice.
Nor is there anyone
to shed tears or to mourn.
Tomorrow, my comrade,
it will be your turn.
I bid farewell to you, my friend.

Please know that the drama of life
will soon be over.

Let the curtain fall.
Human bestiality will run its course,
and one day, when
Nature will be bloodthirsty,
it will, in madness
run amok mercilessly.

Then, your murderers,
will have met their end and
putrified in their own slime.
You, O the elegant one,
will return home
with the ravenous rage
and vomit on the vile barbarians.

Thereafter, you, the gracious one,
will be the potentate again,
in the wilderness,
and have the last laugh.

(5 February 2001)

(Eco Earth Magazine, Vol.1, No.2, February 2001)

Sustainable Energy for All

“No one is going to repeal the second law of thermodynamics. Not even the democrats.”

— *Kenneth Boulding*

At the Earth summit, most nations of the world proclaimed in their seminal document Agenda 21, “Energy is essential to economic social development and improved quality of life. Much of the world energy however is currently produced and consumed in ways that could not be sustained if technology were to remain constant and if overall quantities were to increase substantially.

The need to control atmospheric emissions of green house and other gases and substance will increasingly need to be based on efficiency in energy production, transmission, distribution and consumption and on growing reliance on an environmentally sound energy system, particularly new and renewable sources of energy. All energy sources will need to be used in ways that respect the atmosphere, human health and the environment as a whole.”

More than eight years have passed since the above declaration was put to the world. Now we are about to enter a new millennium, and we are in trouble more than ever before. The energy crisis has exploded during the last three months. Prospects for sustainable energy seem dim. More than two billion people are in the desperate state of energy deprivation and the number is escalating every day. At the same time, from all indicators, it is evident that global climate is in disarray; more than sixteen million hectares of life-sustaining forests are

disappearing; ecology is ruthlessly butchered; our earth is becoming a graveyard. Our survival is at stake.

This paper emphasizes the need for new and renewable energy technologies in the earthquake-devastated villages of Gujarat. Nearly 7904 villages were affected by the trembler of 26 January 2001. The conditions in these villages is the same as that of 600,000 villages in India. The majority survive on firewood — just to cook food — living permanently in eternal darkness. While nearly 1.8 billion people in the affluent countries of the world gloat in the surfeit of energy, consuming almost 70% of the fossil fuels, their demands proliferating at the rate of 11% a year.

That is the tragedy of humanity.

According to us, the present disparities, resulting in extreme poverty on the one hand and misuse as well as waste on the other hand, is criminal. Since transportation consumes more than 25% of CO₂, a major greenhouse gas, we must redirect our policies and plans regarding transportation, especially in the metropolitan areas.

In these circumstances, we are convinced that renewable energy sources like biogas, solar, wind, geothermal and even tidal offer challenging opportunities for our future. They must be explored and developed not only as substitutes for the finite depleting fossil fuels, but also as a solution to our looming energy crisis in the next century. For the poor in the developing world, probably, that is the only alternative for survival and development.

We are in search of an alternative to create a future for energy justice and equity, we are in search of survival in the long run.

(Summary of the keynote address at the International

*Conference on Energy and Environment, organized by the
International Institute for Sustainable Future and BSES
Ltd., in Mumbai August 17 to 19, 2000)*

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“Small solar-powered water pumps can bring potable water
to villages where women now walk for hours everyday to
haul it from far away. A single, small power panel also can
light a home for a few hours each evening.”

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The Full Moon

The eastern skies
were inviting.

The lake at
the horizon
was serene.

Far beyond,
the Moon arrived
in its majesty.

It was a night
of celebration.

The somnolent Sun had
gone home to sleep
and the birds were
on the way
to their abode.

Nearby, the trees
were in mirth.

It was a night
of celebration.

Suddenly, darkness
enveloped the universe.

The skies were

bejeweled with the stars.

It was a night
of celebration.

But the Moon was shy
and mischievous,
hiding behind the
dark clouds.

The rains danced
in madness.

It was a night
of celebration.

Then there was cosmic revelry.

The night was drunk.

The stars sang
the songs of passion.

It was a night
of celebration.

The Moon was drunk
enjoying the crazy
night of romance.

It was in
its ultimate glory.

It was a night

of celebration.
Alas the jealous Sun
was in fire
awaiting the morning
to awaken.
But the drunken time
slept forever.
The night was immortalized.
The Moon was
In ecstasy
It was an eternal
night of celebration.

Water: A Challenge for Survival

“He will manage the cure best who foresees what is to happen from the present condition of the patient.”

— Hippocrates

Cherrapunji in the north east of India receives the highest rainfall in the world during the monsoon. Ironically, when April arrives, most people in the region cannot even get 10 gallons of water per person. Cherrapunji is not an isolated example of water scarcity. Almost 40% of people in different parts of India live in water-stressed regions and the situation is worsening almost everyday. Population growth, urbanization, industrialization, increase in food demand, widespread pollution and deforestation are driving India, along with Sub-Sahara Africa, to the state of water desperation.

Two out of three Indians have arrived only since its independence (1947). By 2025, it is expected, India will have 1.5 billion people, outstripping even China. The number is staggering and the resources are finite – depleting at an exponential scale. Cities are exploding – small towns become cities, which become metropolises and finally megalopolises. A small balmy town of Pune with its salubrious climate, massive forest-cover and wildlife, only 52 years ago, is now a metropolis of more than 3 million people – polluted, barren, dirty, congested, industrial metropolis.

The story of water is the story of human numbers, which have crossed all boundaries. Already, India’s urban population is 270 million, the largest in the world, equal to the total population of the United States. While the real crisis of water seems to be in the rural areas, increasingly many towns and cities survive on

water provided from far away by tankers. In the villages, the grim situation can be witnessed by the amount of time spent on fetching water by women. There are 600,000 villages accommodating almost 700 million people. Totally, women spend 26,000 years of lifetime everyday just to provide hardly 500 cubic meter per capita of water to the family annually. Such is the case in the villages near Nashik, Kanyakumari, Saurashtra, Ratnagiri and in eastern Maharashtra. Almost 50% of Indians drink unsafe contaminated water. According to a recent survey, almost 1.5 million children below the age 5 years succumbed to water borne diseases. Worldwide, the number is 4 million, according to the Population Action International.

All the resources of India are under stress – land, water, air and soil; but no crisis for India will be more serious than the starvation of water in the new millennium. As it is, against the minimum requirement of 30 gallons a day per person, 35 million people living in the slums of Pune, Mumbai, Nashik, Calcutta and Delhi, survive on 10 gallons a day per person. By 2010, when the population of India will reach approximately 1.2 billion, 500 million people will have to survive on the availability of 5 to 10 gallons a day per person.

There is another disaster awaiting India's water future, and that is, the depletion of the ground aquifers. In Gujarat, Coimbatore and Tamil Nadu, the groundwater is depleted permanently. All through the millennia, Indian civilization depended on ground waters. The death of groundwater would also mean the death of agriculture. We shall need 250 million tons of food at the minimum by 2010. Examining the continuous decline of fresh water in the country, it is not likely that the small farmers will survive and the total food production by 2010 may not exceed 230 million tons.

Although the demand from industries for water has been hardly 2%, if the industrialization continues at the present rate and the

population growth remains unabated, the industrial demand for water will double by 2015.

There is a major catastrophe looming large at a planetary scale – that of climate change. If the greenhouse effect takes the runaway path during the next 2 to 3 decades, the earth will face a major shift in its climate. For the Indian subcontinent, the future will be that of floods and droughts – floods like the one which happened in Orissa and droughts like the one which happened in Ethiopia in 1979. Along with that, imagine the sea level rise of 4 to 6 feet by 2050, as projected by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The ingress of seawater up to almost 100-km inland will force almost 22% of the people on the coastline to leave their land.

In this doomsday situation, India needs to take some dramatic and drastic measures immediately if it is to survive as a civilization. I suggest just a few:

- India needs a total water development, utilization and distribution policy. Every possible water resource should be developed, but in a sustainable way.
- Since large number of techniques of the protection and treatment of water are now available, every effort should be made to protect reservoirs, groundwater and distribution sources. More than a billion dollars can be saved annually in health by providing clean and potable water to the public.
- Water conservation is key to India's survival. The Worldwatch Institute has estimated that almost 40% of water used in India in irrigation is wasted and 35% of water in urban areas is lost by leakage. Therefore, conservation of water will provide hope for a sustainable supply of water in the future.
- We must recognize that the urban water is very expensive,

- The great civilization of India arose because on this vast protected land, there existed bountiful water and food. Now, we are on a suicidal path to bring an end to this 5000-year-old civilization. Our hope is in challenging the past, burying it in the graveyard and building creatively and with determination a path towards sustainability through conservation of resources and by limiting our numbers.

(Published in Eco Earth Magazine Vol.1, No.3, June 2001)

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 “Our ecological malady is based on the
 philosophy of USE NOW, PAY LATER. But in fact
 there may be nothing to pay later”
 ಆನಂದಆನಂದಆನಂದಆನಂದಆನಂದ

Nature

O Mother!

Let me be your child
In all your manifestations
and countless expressions.

O Majestic One!

Let me join in your
endless voyages
to go beyond
the abyss of space.

O Glorious One!

Let me join
In your inexorable march
just to fathom
the mystery of eternity.

O Eternal One!

Let me be devoured
in the womb of time.
to be immortal.

O Dancer!
Let me join in your
ceaseless dance
to experience madness.

O Creator!
Let me, partake in
your countless grand performances.
of the unfolding drama.

O Dreamer!
Let me sleep with the night
and the stars
to be in reverie.

O Enlightened One!
Let me know all
the secrets of existence
to liberate myself.

O Sun!
Let me
see a ray of light.
to know truth.

O Singer!
Let me sing with you
to harmonize myself
with the music
of life

O Omnipotent!
Let me embrace you humbly
just to express my
reverence and love for you.

(Published in Eco Earth Magazine, Vol.1, No.2, April-
June 2003)

Avalanche and Doom

*There is a crime here, which goes beyond denunciation.
There is a sorrow here that weeping cannot symbolize. There
is a failure here that topples all our success.*

— John Steinbeck

Each day, everywhere, humans – one of the more than forty million species of life on this tiny spaceship – must rediscover their original relationship with the forgotten planet. Humans are products of more than 4 billion years of evolution of life; they live for a miniscule moment of time and disappear as all the other creatures do. During the last four billion years that Man has been on this unique, rich and beautiful planet, everything living and non-living has coexisted in harmony. Some species survived, many became extinct but evolution has continued relentlessly.

Almost 150 million years ago, great dinosaurs ruled the Earth. They were invincible, but suddenly because of a mysterious combination of conditions, they disappeared around 60 million years ago. Man, now, controls the destiny of this tiny solar satellite. What is happening to this only “home” we have is apocalyptic. The ecological state of our earth is in disarray and it is worsening day by day. The process of destruction of the environment has been going on for more than 400 years as a consequence of the industrial technological revolution. We do not know when and how this devastation will end.

In this age of “progress” and “development”, there are worldwide attempts to cast the Earth in the image of the humans as if the Earth is human property. If, in the process, what was created through evolution before industrialization began is eliminated or destroyed, that is of very little or no concern for the “modernizers” or “developers”.

In its primeval state, Nature exists in the wilderness where the living and non-living elements establish symbiotically harmonious relationships. In the universe, nothing is static; as Buddha says, change is the immutable principle of existence. The wilderness has its own beauty and it bestows joy, freedom and creativity.

Humans on the other hand, it seems, have been alienated from the natural processes on another planet independent of all other forms of life. For nature, time is infinite. For humans it is finite. Their unique characteristic, that is intelligence, is also finite. It cannot comprehend the long-term implications of incarcerating Nature and disrupting millions of years of its handiwork. That is why the destruction of the rainforests, the extinction of innumerable species, the systematic plundering of rivers and oceans, the pollution of air and soils and the annihilation of almost every natural system, have become callous acts of global ignominy. We consume endlessly – at any cost. Technology brings new products and goods, and the media reaches our gullible masses subliminally, converting the superfluous into the essential.

For many scientists / thinkers in the last century, and even today, the Industrial Revolution heralded the dawn of Utopia – the dreamworld for which humanity has been hoping for perhaps all of history. Science systematically acquired knowledge about the working of the physical, chemical and biological world and the application of this knowledge by developing technology, became the cornerstone of the new era – the era of development. In many of the poorer countries, in their yearning for industrialization, the mantra is ‘development at any cost’. You are charged with being primitivist if you challenge that dictum. You are not supposed to ask questions such as: “Industrialization for whom? Industrialization at what cost? What are the implications of industrialization for human society? What are its consequences on the total biological and physical systems

of the earth? Where is this rampant unrestrained development taking us?"

The Earth is under siege by us. We have been transformed into insatiable consumers. The issue before the Eskimos is not whether they need refrigerators, but how they can buy them and use them. For most humans, consumption is the central purpose of life.

The world has been converted into a marketplace, a place where we sell goods and services, a place where even miseries are bought and sold, a place for self-gratification, a place where the only things that count in our existence are material things – automobiles, televisions, videos, air conditioners, highways, factories, banks, guns, and the endless number of gadgets churned out interminably to meet the multiplying demands – demands aroused in more and more people insatiably. In this process, which is learning without questioning, wants are converted into needs, and what is truly needed is ignored. For example, a hungry child in Nairobi spends many hours watching TV. As the demands proliferate, the resources at the local and the global level needed to meet the secondary and tertiary wants, shrink as also the ecological systems deteriorate. In time, as is evident worldwide, increasing numbers of people, live in a state of deprivation.

The assumptions on which the technological civilization is based — that the resources are unlimited and that technologies can solve all the problems — lead us to the conclusion that Nature will continue to supply resources forever. If, in the process, the millennial rainforests are cut down along with all the treasures, which have taken millions of years to accumulate, well, that simply does not matter. If ozone is depleted, if climate changes, if millions of species are driven to extinction, if the oceans die and the soils are poisoned or eroded — that is no more than the price we must pay for the industrial civilization, which is

considered sacred, but, which, in fact, is a man-made 'air-conditioned nightmare', as Henry Miller, a great writer, once despaired.

Any intelligent person can witness the ravages inflicted on the earth because of the erroneous philosophy, which has guided our developments during the last 200 years. When the first report of the Club of Rome, *The Limits to Growth*, was released during the early seventies, to many arrogant developmentalists, it was a threat. They branded it as a 'document of doom'. Within a decade, President Carter of the United States directed the Council on Environmental Quality to prepare the Global 2000 report recognizing that the future of humanity was at stake. A monumental study, which was released in 1980, warned of the threats facing humanity, as Gerard O.Barney, the Study Director declared, "if very real problems are ignored." The falsities of the premises on which the present human civilization is based are clearly evident, requiring fundamental changes in the direction of our civilization. Even after 19 years, despite all the limitations of these reports, their projections remain valid.

Never before in human history, people from all over the world and from every walk of life discussed, shared, argued and prepared a final report – the Agenda 21 – at the Earth Summit in June 1992, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. It is a seminal document for us to study. It is a charter of hope. It has been bellied by the ruthless march of our failed civilization. Most people in the world are either ignorant or oblivious or paralyzed or living in denials while the advance towards doomsday continues. Common sense tells us that we cannot have unlimited number of people when the resources are limited.

Our concern is to change society by bringing the knowledge we have accumulated during the last several decades to the people everywhere. People must know and having known, they must

change the reality. During the last three centuries, the educational systems were designed to build and perpetuate the technological and human systems based on exploitation. Everywhere, people have submitted, uncritically to the monolithic, dehumanized, steel, cement and concrete civilization. It is an anthropocentric civilization taking us to a fatal end.

There are many who refuse to accept doom. Groups and individuals who are challenging the system exist all over the world at a grassroots, regional and even global level. Some of them are: Rain Forest Action Committee, *Chipko* Movement to save forests in India, Green party in Germany, Green Development Movement in Kenya, etc. They care for the future and understand the fundamental values of life and the earth. They challenge the arrogance of humans. They are seeking earth knowledge – the knowledge, which will help to challenge the environmentally harmful projects and assist us to harmonize with society as a whole and with nature. They refuse to be enslaved by the consumer society. They denounce the philosophy of a lifetime spent on superfluous production and unlimited consumption to fulfill pseudo needs.

The task confronting us is not easy. Those of us who are privileged have been paralyzed in the name of false security, but as we discovered at the UN meeting, 'Rio Plus-five', by failing to revolt against the forces of perpetuation, we continue to move towards the 'Rio minus'.

Life is a process of creativity. In humans, it is through learning that we develop and find purposes, by pursuing which we realize our dreams. For a long time we have lived in a tunnel of darkness. Now, our task is to release all our creative powers by developing a global movement for protecting the earth and bringing joy and happiness to every creature sharing the bounties of Nature.

(Chapter taken from 'Pedagogy of the Earth - Education for a Sustainable Future' ; Written and Edited by Carlos Hernandez and Rashmi Mayur, April 1999, ISIF)

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"The Earth cannot be reconstructed or made sustainable unless we control the avalanche of humans added to this finite planet."
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Eternal Journey

My journey commenced
on a pathless path
at the dawn.

When the sun rose,
I rode on the rays
to rendezvous with
the morning.

A shadow followed
me at the noon
As the sun set,
the moon kissed
the evening.

When the night approached,
your shadow embraced
my heart
and took me on
an eternal journey
through darkness.

Will the Earth be Venus?

“Man is certainly stark mad: he cannot make a worm, and yet he makes gods by the dozen.”

— Michel de Montaigne

It is nature's nemesis against humans – unleashing its brutal forces resulting in droughts, floods, violent storms and heat waves, all over the planet. During this century and beyond, this is the warning of the Inter Governmental Panel on Climate Change, which just concluded its meeting on 20 January 2001 in Shanghai. The voluminous report prepared by the Panel based on the studies of more than 123 leading scientists of the world warns us that what lies ahead for humanity, unless it changes its course of development immediately, is devastation's, miseries, deaths, the impacts of which will pale the destruction of last one thousand years of wars into insignificant damages. If the human-induced climate change due to the discharge of greenhouse gases continues at the present rate, the global warming will increase the average temperatures of the earth from 1.4 to 5.8 °C. Already the levels of CO₂ have been the highest in the past millennium.

But humanity refuses to heed the warning. For many, the hope of any significant change to reduce the release of CO₂, the main culprit for global warming, collapsed on 25 November 2000 in The Hague. The United States, which is responsible for discharging almost 23% of CO₂, the highest by any country, refuses to accept the reduction by only 5% of the 1990 level by 2012. The Worldwatch Institute, in one of its reports ironically, had suggested that the quality of life of Americans would improve if people use 50% of the energy they consume today.

If the rich countries of the North, with 1.8 billion people out of 6 billion in the world, continue to discharge 73% of CO₂ gluttonously, then there is no hope for climate stability. The consequences, as projected, will be dreadful: hunger, new diseases, submergence of island countries and the coastal areas around the world; melting of ice in the North Pole, the Himalayas and the South Pole, death of large number of species and much more.

There will be mass migration of displaced people along the coastlines. More than 22% people in Asia, where 3 billion people live, will be displaced. For example, besides most of the Pacific Islands, 40% of Bangladesh with 140 million people will be under water as if a biblical deluge has arrived. The last decade has already given us fore-warnings: the western Antarctica ice-sheet has already broken off; a few months ago a lake was found on the north pole; in the western coast of India, the ingress of the sea water up to 50 kms has eliminated the ground waters.

The warning has only one message: let us not convert Earth into Venus, which has a temperature of 865 °F. There is no choice. We need global policies to stabilize and then reduce the discharge of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere within the next 20 years. Otherwise, if the runaway temperature-escalation happens, we shall have no control over the catastrophic changes. We refuse to accept the 5% reduction of CO₂ by developed countries by 2012. It is too little, too late. The United States and other Industrial countries should reduce 50% of the discharges by 2012. At the same time, all the developing countries should have an easy access to cleaner technologies of energy production, especially India and China. The alternative is clear: plant 25 billion trees all over the planet, have people's plans for energy conservation, challenge the pernicious nuclear

energy development, develop alternative plans for ecological living and have a global agency for climate sustainability.

Too long, in the name of development, have we abused this Earth and disrupted its millions of years of stability because of our greed and arrogance. No wonder, at last, our existence itself is threatened. We are bringing doom to our future. Let us recognize and accept that nature is far above humans and all their technological might. If we want this earth to be a home for our children and their children, we must preserve the stability of climate, which has provided appropriate conditions for several billion years of evolution.

(Published in the War and Peace Digest, April / May 2001)

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*“We are caught up in gadgets, and every gadget
 imposes its own values and priorities. It creates a
 way of thinking. In the West, transportation
 means the automobile - even though it is taking
 more and more land for highways and suburbs,
 filling the air with carbon monoxide, and
 contributing
 to global warming.”*
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Flowers of Dream

It was all dark

When I arrived
in the morning
of life.

Soon I realized that
I exist.

It was dawn,
but still dark.

Then the world
Was revealed to me.
The sun had already
risen.

I was blinded
as if the night had
returned.

Suddenly I knew
and there was
lightning
at the end of the horizon.

I was enlightened.

I learnt

That it was
all dark
beyond the sun.

Then I learnt

that in the vast
ocean of knowledge,
I knew infinitesimal
I knew nothing.
I was only
Searching.

It thundered in the
cosmos.
Then it was light
everywhere.
The sun was no more.
Ah! Flowers bloomed
in full glory.
The stars danced
in ecstasy.
And life became
a creative dream.

(Published in Eco Earth Magazine, Vol.1, No.2,
Feb.2001)

Science, Technology and Human Civilization

“The fact of progress is written plain and large on the page of history; but progress is not a law of nature.”

– H. L. Fischer

More than 50 years ago, Daniel Bell, a great American sociologist and a thinker prophesied that human civilization would enter an age of information society some time by the end of the 20th century. At that time, little did he know about the breathtaking technological revolutions in computer microchips and electronics, nor did he realize our leap into space, which, together, have ushered in an age of digital humans.

Worldwide, there is a race towards chips with unlimited memory – biological chips, computers which can think, write poetry, create paintings and even make love. Such a surreal world of bits is not a fancy in the workshop of a mad engineer. It is already here. We live in a cyber world in which human organs have become redundant. A large number of our activities are carried out by “dotcoms” wirelessly. Recently, a friend of mine after seven years of old-fashioned search found a bride in 17 minutes through the Internet. The day is not too far when we shall have ‘cyborgs’, what Arthur C. Clarke calls “cybernetic organisms”. Beyond that, humans will become obsolescent in one or two millennia, bringing an end to the biological evolution. Machines will inherit the earth. In such a world, there will probably be a museum displaying fossils of an irrelevant creature, *Homo sapiens*, in an obscure corner. It will probably be frequented by robots.

The above scenario emerges from the trajectory of developments in science and technology during the last 500

years. Meantime, there is a nightmare. Today, by all accounts, humans are in charge of the earth and its evolution. They dominate and control its destiny. There is a quantum speed to the process, which is contradictory and pathological.

Billions of years of the stability of climate is disrupted. Storms roam the earth uncontrolled. Every hour, seven species of life-forms disappear to make room for humans. The age-old glaciers are melting. The Earth is in anguish. It is besieged by human insanity. Everyday, when the sun sets, trees, soil, rivers and oceans are drenched with blood.

In human terms, the story is even more farcical and tragic. The scientific and technological revolution has benefited only 40% of the 6 billion people. Except for the elite in the developing world, that is, about 25% of the 4.8 billion people, most of the beneficiaries of the cyber revolution live in Europe, North America, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. They consume 72% of the declining resources of the earth.

It is not only ecology, which is being brutalized, human barbarism pervades through the globalized world also. For most people in the South, life is a bad dream: Hunger (1 billion people), homelessness (1.2 billion people), poverty (1.3 billion people), diseases/death (55,000 children a day) and more are ubiquitous. For them, it is a long night of hallucination.

What have science and technology brought to us humans? What is progress? For whom? At what cost? Who do our educational institutions serve? What is the knowledge and information industry? Where are we going? Who owns this earth? What is this society which has converted this earth into a market place and humans into consumers? These are the critical issues of modern times as we prepare for the future.

But the vision for many of us is different as we prepare for a post – ‘information society’. If we value life, humans as a part of the larger living system, we would not ravage and pillage the

living system. We would revolt against the pathological, monolithic, inhuman, heartless “machine” of the technological civilization. We would demolish the creativity, which does not foster the values of co-operation, love and sharing, which does not instill imagination and exploration of the outer and the inner world, which does not teach sustainability, conservation and reverence for Nature.

We are in search of a new human order, which eliminates differences based on religion, color, nations, age, and gender. We want a society based on equality, freedom and justice. We live in defining times. We refuse to become obsolescent by the weight of technology. We believe in life. We worship it. We believe in love. We are in search of joy. We are human. That is why, we are revolutionaries. Our fundamental purpose of existence is to create a world of our children's dreams.

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଗପ ଓ କବିତା

“Life is not to be lived through gadgets and possessions. True human values lie in other things. We must replace technologies that create their own values with technologies that protect and enhance our values and give meaning to life.”

ਭਗਤ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ

Our Sacred Home

All things arise from home –
the Earth.
They are nourished by home.
They live in the womb of
home.
And all things return to our
home.

Nothing is more sacred than
home.
Nothing is purer than home.
Those who befoul it,
are its enemies.
They are criminals.
They transform their home
into a necropolis.

When all the human drama is
over,
Nature will speak the last
word.
And there will be no one at
home,
to shed tears for
the last man.

(2 March 1996)

How not to Develop a Developing Nation

“If a nation values anything more than freedom, it will lose its freedom; and the irony of it is that if it is comfort or money, that it values more, it will lose that too.”

— Somerset Maugham

The world relies on technology to usher in economic development to the emerging nations and to solve the array of seemingly intractable economic and environmental problems plaguing those countries. It's the right idea, but for the past two decades we've been relying on the wrong technologies.

The ultimate if often an indirect objective of the quest for development has been to improve the living conditions of ordinary people in poor countries: to guarantee them adequate food and water for basic health and to equip them with the knowledge essential to empower them to build a better future. However, for historical reasons, our technological context has led us to define “improvement” as large-scale industrialization—the kind of development symbolized by the giant oilfields, sprawling airports, huge factories, hydroelectric projects and highways.

Leaders of lesser developed countries and to a large extent, most international development agencies have been eager to see gigantic industrial projects migrating to emerging nations in order to accelerate development for their growing populations. But since the early 1970s, the world has changed in ways that render this concept of progress obsolete. As we are learning from Mexico's Maquiladora corridor and the sweatshops of Southeast Asia, this notion of development is antiquated and

irrelevant to poor countries with limited resources. It has little to do with building an infrastructure that will guarantee individuals in emerging nations the essential physical and mental nourishment they need to create a sustainable future.

Instead, presently available, simpler, decentralized technologies which are locally sustainable as well as easy to use and manage can promote rapid, significant progress in the developing world. However, leaders of emerging nations and administrators of international development agencies seem to ignore these simpler, more direct approaches to development. They do so, in part, precisely because the technologies are simple and small in scale, and also because they are not glamorous. Leaders of emerging nations want to display the symbols of industrial wealth like the stadiums, freeways, factories, skyscrapers and huge cities— in hopes of qualifying for membership of the developed world. Most of these leaders and officials also assume that making rapid and significant improvements in the lives of destitute, “underdeveloped” people requires large-scale, expensive technologies which need foreign investment and borrowed money.

That assumption is a part of the larger one: that the most effective and efficient model – perhaps the only model—for economic development is mass industrialization. This assumption is not only faulty and antiquated but also wrong and harmful. The forces contributing to the new global economy i.e. decentralization, individual empowerment, local management and a strong environmental ethic are shaping a new model of microenterprise that is superceding the old idea that large-scale technological development and industrialization are synonymous with progress.

The roots of the old model are easy to trace. The infrastructures that appear to provide abundance and self-sufficiency in Western cultures are huge. It’s easy to believe

that the presence of centralized utilities, a network of complex highways, or a ubiquitous technological superstructure employing a majority of the working population means wealth – “development”.

Many advocates of unfettered growth believe that creating prosperity must only be a matter of imitating that massive infrastructure: The way to change lives of large numbers of people speedily is to build things that can deliver benefits to tens or hundreds of thousands of people at once—e.g., a dam to supply electricity to millions, as Egypt’s Aswan, or factories that employ hundreds, as in Indonesia’s sneaker plants.

Fatal Flaws in the Bigger-Is-Better View

Advocates of this bigger-is-better view make six dangerously inaccurate assumptions.

First, a massive economic infrastructure is the culmination of a long process of gradual development and not its cause. Building a giant hydroelectric project or a centralized telephone exchange is one step along the path of economic development. That step is appropriate only when such large-scale projects can be supported economically by paying customers and maintained by an adequate number of trained technicians. When such projects must be sustained by subsidies from already impoverished (and indebted) governments or from scantily funded international agencies, the projects cannot fulfill their objectives of becoming economic engines. Building the symbols of prosperity will not create wealth any more than sending an unschooled person to a conference on advanced physics will instantly transform that person into a brilliant physicist.

Second, the view misreads history. Globalized competition and the shift to services as the new engines of high added value mean that it’s too late to initiate a process of industrialization as

a way to create a prosperous national economy.

During the first seven decades of this century, industrialization was the surest way to create economic value speedily on a large scale. Mass-market goods were in such demand that factories could produce enough wealth to enrich workers as well as owners. But that era ended in the early 1970s. As competition and trade agreements (reflected in the creation of the World Trade Organization) globalize production, wages for manual factory labor are pushed lower and lower for workers worldwide. The semi-skilled industrial jobs that created the middle-class in Western nations can no longer fetch the wages needed to sustain, much less create, a high standard of living for everybody.

Third, the long process of industrialization constitutes a “trickledown” theory of development. It does not directly address the needs of people in developing nations for adequate food, clean water, health care, sanitation, and basic education. In the past, enough revenue trickled down to low-skill industrial workers that they could create mass markets for goods and pay enough taxes to support infrastructure development. But industrial jobs no longer earn comfortable wages.

The new generation of low-skilled industrial workers in emerging nations cannot create or sustain mass markets for basic items, nor can they pay enough taxes to fund development. (The squalor of the Maquiladora “company towns” is evidence.) A nation pursuing an industrial future is merely wooing poverty. To improve the lives of the poor in emerging nations, requires new national and international strategies.

Fourth, advocates fail to realise that industrialization as a foundation for economic development can’t be done selectively. If a country building an industrial infrastructure is not to bankrupt itself with debt or depend on unsustainable outside

aid, it must have factories to make cables, concrete, and asphalt; it must have plants to produce gasoline and steel. The facilities to turn out this vast array of industrial feed-stocks must be built indigenously. That requires either or both of two things: enormous amounts and a variety of natural resources and massive amounts of hard currency (usually raised through the steady sale of natural resources such as minerals or timber) to spend abroad to buy the goods a country cannot make.

Few countries, even if they sell all their natural resources, could make the necessary investment in industrial infrastructure required to pursue industrialization as the foundation of national economic development. Also, such countries will have increasingly difficult struggles qualifying for loans to industrialize; the world already has too many low-price industrial competitors to make such loans anything but risky.

The fifth mistake is the failure to recognize that industrialization is simply not sustainable. It creates an economy of subsidized or unpaid costs. Industrialization consumes without replenishing, pollutes without restoring and depletes without replacing. It produces short-term economic gains, but as one can see in the nations of the former Soviet Union—the legacy of industrialization is degradation, exhaustion and human misery. In the world after the Rio summit, global leaders and agencies are finally agreeing on the urgency of solving environmental problems created in large part by massive industrialization. To encourage emerging nations now to industrialize is to aggravate the very problems that the world is desperately seeking to correct.

Finally, industrialization advocates err in thinking only of factories and employment. Industrialization carries with it a cluster of social structures that foster centralization of authority and decision making – not only in business, but also in education, social policy and governance. Those social

structures would accustom people to live in a world that, like an industrially planned economy, is rapidly disappearing. Traditional social structures and cultures disappear as the society becomes industrialized and urbanized.

An industrial economy finds efficiency in centralization: A few educated, high-level managers make decisions; millions of identical cars roll off an assembly line or uniform national laws are passed.

But in postindustrial, information based economies, the new source of added value is not mass manufacturing but personal services – and a service-based economy requires every worker to be able to identify problems and opportunities and to create and implement plans and solutions. As a result, business and governments in the developed world are decentralizing. They are pushing power and responsibility away from bureaucracies and to individuals. The devolution of authority forces the fundamental restructuring of institutions from schools and government agencies to the corporate executive suite.

Industrialization is a template for centralization – and, in a global economy that is increasingly service-based and information-driven, centralization has already been shown to be too cumbersome and inefficient to power a dynamic economy or society.

A New Conception of Development

In a postindustrial world, then, the idea of “development” needs to be reconceived and placed in a post-industrial context. For example, the global shift to services and away from mass manufacturing as the main way to create high economic value is forcing decentralization in almost every facet of societies and economies. This change has already been demonstrated in the American steel industry, where massive plants have been shuttered while small-scale “minimills” thrive by serving the

specialized needs of select customers.

In a global economy in which resources are declining and increasingly precious, decentralized enterprises are not just more efficient, they are also better able to respond to the subtle, rapid changes that characterize today's markets and society. Nimbleness and flexibility are essential for survival. In the new global economy, decentralization and economic prosperity are inextricably linked.

Decentralization also places new emphasis on the empowerment of individuals. In a global economy that places increasing value on personalized, professional services, the greatest economic productivity results when front-line workers are vested with the tools, knowledge, responsibility, and authority to direct their own work.

In an obsolete industrial economy, workers who pull levers and follow orders need not be educated or cared for; they are an easily replaceable commodity. In a decentralized service economy, workers are vital resources – repositories of skills, knowledge, and expertise – to be nurtured.

Consumers in our postindustrial society believe that other things must be nurtured as well. They are adopting a broader, sharper social and environmental ethic. As companies from Nike to Mitsubishi are learning, businesses that compromise the environment or abuse their workers face international boycotts of their products and bad publicity. Increasingly, a company, a technology, or a nation will find it difficult to achieve this targeted economic performance unless it embodies respect for this new ethic of human and environmental stewardship.

The new model for economic development, then, is not centralized industrialization. It is microenterprise – diffuse, small-scale ventures that can empower individuals to create their own sustainable futures, as every human being wants to

do. This new approach is exemplified by the businesses capitalized with small loans and technical assistance from microlenders such as the Grameen Bank; it is embodied in the local development initiatives and private–public partnerships initiated by the Washington, D.C.–based Solar Electric Light Fund. Through small, private agencies funding decentralized, sustainable enterprise and technology, emerging nations can begin to implement a new concept of development compatible with the emerging world economy of the twenty-first century, and its resulting values.

Postindustrial Technologies

Simple, sustainable technologies – cheap and easy to operate, embodying this new vision and definition of economic development–already are making their way into emerging nations through a number of aid organizations. But progress has been irritatingly slow. By focusing on these alternatives or “postindustrial” technologies, and by rethinking our approach to disseminating aid, we could mitigate problems plaguing the developing world much more quickly, saving natural resources, human lives, social disintegration, the extinction of entire species – including, perhaps, our own.

These technologies are available, cost-effective, and sustainable. But they are spreading slowly because the World Bank and other agencies underwriting international development are only now beginning to comprehend the obsolescence of the Western industrial vision. The aid agencies have begun to reconsider their support for massive-scale projects and to fund simpler approaches in some areas. However, as one non-profit executive recently put it, “The World Bank is an elephant that’s now facing in the right direction. How fast it is actually moving in that direction is another matter.”

These sustainable technologies will spread much more quickly if

governments in the developed world take two crucial steps:

First, they must shift a greater portion of their financial support away from agencies funding a massive development to smaller – and, in many cases, private agencies. For example, the Solar Electric Light Fund (SELF) not only brings photovoltaic systems to villages in developing areas, but also helps villagers launch their own solar service businesses through a revolving loan fund.

Second, governments must use their influence to forge partnerships between international financial agencies and groups working to implement the new vision. An example: SELF formed partnerships with the World Bank, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Global Environment Facility (a U.N. hybrid) to speed its work.

This approach carries an additional benefit as well. By bringing hardware and other forms of aid directly to people through private non-profit agencies, development initiatives are better able to ward off the graft and corruption that so often pollute cash-based, government-to-government programs.

Microenterprise lenders, such as Bangladesh's famed Grameen Bank and the Boston-based Accion International, accomplished similar results. The funds disbursed to individual loans of no more than a few hundred dollars to people in poverty who want to start or expand small businesses – weaving straw hats or operating pushcarts, for example. The interest rates are considerably below market, and the agencies are often administered by local groups in the regions where the money is lent.

Microenterprise funds report an average 98% repayment, higher than that for commercial loans in many First World nations. Although many such funds are now subsidized by non-profit groups, recent studies show that microlenders can rapidly become self-sustaining. These funds are one of the simplest,

most direct ways to underwrite an infrastructure of economic development that meets the criteria of a postindustrial world.

By taking up new technologies – and new ways of disseminating them—the developed world can foster sustainable, efficient, cost-effective economic progress in emerging nations. Those technologies are poised to begin to help solve the problems that for so long have hobbled economic and individual progress for half the world’s people.

(Published in The Futurist, co-author Benett Davis, 1993)

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*“Money, goods, services and people are traversing the world at a lightening speed, not recognizing continents or nations or regions. Air pollution migrates thousands of miles across the borders. We are in a global cottage, and it is overcrowded, over-exploited, polluted and sick. Its future is uncertain.”*

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Drinking the Ocean

It was a special morning
than usual.
And the ocean was cooler.
You offered me a glass
to drink the ocean.
How does one drink the ocean?
How does one drink
waters of such vast oceans?
You had your bowl.
There was no end-
on and on we drank
until the last drop.
You looked at me and
chanted: "Life is immortal".
The dry ocean smiled
mourning its emptiness.
The sun never set again.

(Written during the Eco-village conference at
Findhorn, October 1995)

Space Is The Place For Synergy

“Space by itself, and time by itself, are doomed to fade away into mere shadow, and only a kind of union of the two will preserve an independent reality.”

— *Albert Einstein*

In the world government parlours there is a saying that we need a new social contract. The resources of our world are diminishing and the timetable for disaster is closer than we care to state. The Third World has been denied access to economic advantage for 200 years and will not tolerate that much longer.

Therefore, our efforts to effect a better governance for the benefit of humanity everywhere, represents the most important activity of our time. Space is more serious an issue than we see. It represents a sort of governance salvation for little people and smaller economic systems. It is the void that we insist be filled with justice more than power, rather than armies, more money rather than less, and represent a synergy to cure people problems generally.

The dimension of society has changed during the past fifty years. In 1945, we experienced the atomic bomb. It is said that, “It changed everything, except how we think.”

A small but important step in our re-thinking occurred months later in 1945. The UN was created. The charter starts with the words “We the people of Earth...” We were only 2.7 billion then. Now we are 6.2 billion.

During these fifty years, we have developed new sources of power and abused them. We have satellite television and instant communications worldwide, but most of us find it difficult to

speak to ourselves, our families, and to our God. Society is at war with itself. During these fifty years, we have cataloged, understood, and photographed our environment. Satellites have added a new dimension to our view of Mother Nature.

However, we have not acted responsibly with regard to this atmosphere, precious as it is. The ozone layer is in peril. Our resources are depleting. Seventy percent of the people drink dirty water. Population is increasing everywhere and the earth is getting too crowded.

Twenty percent of the world has no steady source of food. Sixty percent of the world is illiterate and probably eight percent is essentially uneducated. Air Pollution knows no boundaries and oil and gas and coal pollute increasingly. Perhaps it is a blessing that oil reserves will be exhausted within the next fifty years.

In June 1992, during the International Space Year, 115 Heads of State and 35,000 concerned citizens of the world met in Rio de Janeiro to discuss and resolve some of these issues. This was a good faith effort but it did not produce any results (in the sense of measuring fewer births, more regulation of pollution or cleaner air). A larger awareness of problems resulted. I was there and I noticed the enthusiasm for these problems. I did not hear many practical solutions.

The principal thing not discussed in Rio de Janeiro was outer space. At some point I foresee the work of USIS maturing into new governance. Unfortunately, this will occur partly by default because there are no other viable large-scale solutions coming in sight. Please know that space is the place for synergy, worldwide.

Space governance is automatically tied to earth governance because the same people are involved. "Meta" nation means their space budgets and help build our new world, off the world. Financial commitments from the Third World are needed here.

By the third millenium, we can and will start a new world where “sense” prevails, instead of “cents”. Why is the U.S.A. spending U.S.\$300 billion on defense and only U.S.\$14 billion on space and even less on pollution controls? Why is India spending a constant 18% of its annual budget on a military that has no enemies? Why has India withdrawn from the weather satellite program (which could warn of floods or other natural disasters)? The ancient mythology of India includes spaceships and the living in outer space story.

Our hope is that a synergy will swell up around space governance. People can see from space, but no people on earth can be seen. There should be a resulting even-handedness whereby government is truly by policy and not by people against people.

The following suggestions are recommended for USIS:

- Use the UN and all its resources. Communicate with the Ambassadors of countries and with the Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. USIS needs to be an N.G.O. to solicit 185 UN Nations worldwide.
- Space Governance as a plan must be worked out by 2000 A.D.
- Package your space governance ideas for worldwide educational purposes. You can revive space as a place.
- Cater to the younger people. They will be the citizens of space.
- Set priorities not only for space, but also, for the whole of humanity.
- Subscribe to private industry as well as to the nations of the Third World. These have untold strength and resources.

- The year 2000 A.D. should be the time to do this in terms of Space Metanation.
- Remember, synergy in space means that humanity cooperates and collaborates for the common good.

*(Speech delivered at USIS - United Societies in Space,
September 1999)*

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“Today nine hundred million people go to bed hungry, eating less than one thousand calories a day. Hunger is only a symptom of poverty in a world where the quantity of food you get depends upon the free market.”

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Strike Against Slavery

“The people came to realize that wealth is not the fruit of labor but the result of organized protected robbery.”

— Frantz Fanon

The strike by the workers’ unions and nine political parties in Maharashtra, challenging the government of India’s anti-worker policies, was a total success. It was one of the most significant national events since the independence of India. Unfortunately, it was not a national strike, nor did most people understand its larger and deeper implications. The closure, in reality, was a protest against globalization as directed by the World Trade Organization (WTO). It was a challenge to the decade of government policies of liberalization, restructuring, privatization, global competition, free trade — all under the dictates of the World Bank and IMF. The strike, in short, was by the people for their survival, against the assault of the government for putting India on sale to multinational corporations, which, for all practical purposes, rule the world as David Kurten expressed in his book, *When Corporations Rule the World*, almost a decade ago. He revealed that the world was already governed by 350 mega-global corporations and not by the national governments.

During the last decade of the open-door policy of the present government, innumerable small factories in Maharashtra and all over India have closed down throwing millions of workers out of employment and struggling for survival. In an industrial society, no-employment means no-income, which means destitution, disease and death. Almost 35% of the employable people in India are unemployed or under-employed or seasonally employed, as against only 4.3% in the USA. And the situation is becoming more desperate each day.

On the other hand, India has become one of the largest dumping grounds for goods from around the world. Can anyone explain the following situation? India is one of the major producers of milk; yet in Aurangabad, Mumbai, Delhi and Bangalore, milk from Malaysia and Brazil is sold, successfully competing with milk produced in India. The imported milk is processed through ultra-heating process, which destroys most of its nutritional values and gives it a shelf life of six months. Now let us use our common sense: how can milk from Brazil traveling 12,000 miles, using large amount of fuel for air-travel from Brazil polluting the environment, be cheaper than milk produced in India? At the Crawford market in Mumbai, apples from New York, where farmers are paid Rs 500 (U.S.\$10) an hour, travel 10,000 miles to India. How can they compete with apples from Himachal Pradesh, where farmers are paid Rs 70 (U.S.\$1.5) a day? This is incredulous, but true. It is WTO combined with the wisdom of the Government of India.

In Pune, Chinese garlic is sold for 20% cheaper price than Indian garlic, after traveling through Nepal. There is only one Mantra - Free Trade- workers of India must become slaves. The Unions are obstacles. They must go. In a real sense, there is no globalization. The ultimate goal is to corporatize the world. According to WTO, there should be no boundary for the movement of goods, but the free movement of labor must be stopped. The software workers in Bangalore must provide cheap labor for mega-computer companies in Silicon Valley so that they could be billionaires. No developing country has ever objected to WTO about these distorted policies.

India has several large corporations – the smallest ones are either sold or have gone bankrupt and disappeared. The larger ones work as conduits of the global corporations supporting the elected governments financially and influencing their trade and

business policy decisions, which would benefit the transnational corporations. This is how the Enron Corporation of Texas, through its massive manipulations, lies, deceptions and violations of the laws of the country, succeeded in setting up its megapower plant. Has anyone estimated the total loss to the people, besides the environmental destruction, due to Enron? Do we know how much money is drained out of India by large number of useless multinational corporations dumping foods and colas we do not need and wiping out the local companies? In terms of nutritional value, hygienic *jhunka bhakri* sold by a small food shop in a neighborhood, is 10 times healthier than worthless McDonald Burgers and French fries. People of India need clean potable water - not Pepsi and Coca Cola - in a country where 40% of the people cannot even get adequate drinkable water.

Have we asked ourselves questions about the economy of a poor country like India, as to what horrendous damages are done to the people's survival and future, due to globalization? More than 60% of the workforce of India is self-employed, but somehow they survive earning less than Rs.100 (U.S.\$2) a day with 6 members per family. About 30% are casual workers earning hardly 6 months in a year. Nearly 10% are employed in the organized sector. It is here that we are talking about Unions, which the government is trying to wipe out. But who is fighting for majority of the people, who are either unemployed or are in the unorganized sector. This is the challenge for society in the new millennium.

A recent story of child slavery in West Africa is a precursor to what is about to come in India: On March 27, 2001, 250 slave children were taken on a ship from Benin on the Western coast of Africa, for sale to work on the Cocoa farms on the Ivory Coast. On reaching Gabon suspecting it to be a slave-trade ship, the passengers were not allowed to disembark. When the

ship reached back to Benin – only 24 children were left onboard. As of now, no one knows what happened to the rest. There is suspicion that the Captain, fearing criminal charges, dumped them on the high sea. A child is bought for U.S.\$ 15 to 20, sold for U.S.\$ 40 to 50 and is then made to work for 40 to 50 cents a day on the farm. If a child tries to escape, he is beaten or disabled. Some of these plantations are owned by multinational corporations, supplying cocoa for the chocolate industry in Europe and America. This is the real world of slavery, not only in West Africa, but right here in India. As the population grows (already 1 billion people) and the resources decline at a geometrical scale, the final consequences in desperation would be slavery. Such is the progress from colonialism to imperialism and final bondage.

The present strike is a call for a new era of restructuring our society and economy. The strike is only an event. Now the process begins, People all over India and the developing world must bring an end to the domination of the Europeans and Americans for the last 500 years. Never before, the story was as sordid and brutal as it is today. The story is well described in the Lugano Report by Susan George. Here, for the first time, she has exposed the white man's conspiracy to eliminate all the brown, black and yellow people (4.8 out of 6 billion in the world) by hunger, diseases and wars as revealed by Thomas Malthus' Population Report in 1798.

Our task, therefore, is to revolt against the conspiracy of the WTO, World Bank, IMF. We cannot be their colonies. We must denounce the media, which define our thinking and our values by brainwashing. After all, who controls the major media of the world? It is the Multinational Corporations (MNCs). Our task is to protect the local economy, destroy the feudal system, bring an end to the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few people; declare that as criminal; stop

worshipping Gates, Waltons, Jobs and Rockefellers. We must unite our workers and farmers — all the people, for a common purpose of bringing the benefits of development equitably to all. If we believe in future, then the only choice we have is to struggle against tyranny, even if we have to die.

Finally, the strike is for survival. Our people need jobs. Our economy must serve our people. Our workers must produce. Our people must unite to create a just, equitable and sustainable society.

(Press Release in April 2001, a day after the State-wide strike of workers' unions and political parties in Maharashtra, India, against liberalization and the Government of India's decision to scrap workers unions)

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“Today nine hundred million people go to bed hungry, eating less than one thousand calories a day. Hunger is only a symptom of poverty, in a world where the quantity of food you get depends upon the free market”

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Life - An Eternal Romance

Life is a dream.

It is fire.

It burns forever.

It is energy.

It is consciousness.

It is an experience.

It is timeless.

Life is a burning desire.

It is will to do the impossible.

It is spirit for soaring high.

It is a chance to realize
the potentials.

It is power to create.

It is struggle to reach the ultimate.

It is drive
to realise the dream.

Life is a purpose.

It is a cause.

It is determination.

It is courage.

It is will.

It is hope.

Life is an adventure.

It is a battlefield.

It is yearning to suffer.

It is willingness to sacrifice.

It is a kiss of blood.

It is an invitation to death.

It is beyond results.

It is joy of burning.

Life is a passion.

It is a challenge to nothingness.

It is manifestation of excellence.

It is liberation.

Life is romance.

It is the essence of vision.

It is a flame,
in which dreams
burns eternally.

Life is a moment to be immortal.

(2 February 1996)

A Footprint To the Future

“Accuse not Nature, She hath done her part; Do thou but thine!”

- Milton

An unprecedented transformation of the earth is under way. Never before in the 4.5 billion years of its existence have such profound changes occurred. Out of approximately 40 million species of various forms of life (humans included), only one species, that is, humans, controls and directs the destiny of the earth and its evolution. Homo sapiens have been on the earth since about 10,000 B.C. with the development of agriculture and the first human settlement in villages. It took 5000 years for towns to emerge and human numbers to multiply. But the greatest human directed revolution began in 17 century A.D. with the industrial revolution and since then, the earth and all its physical, chemical and biological systems have been undergoing quantum alterations. Most fundamental changes, however have occurred during the last 50 years, and it seems that there is no end to it. There is a runaway march towards an unknown destiny as we are about to enter a new millennium in less than 1000 days.

From all accounts, humans remain supreme today. There are 5.8 billion people spanning the whole planet; almost 50 percent of them living in industrial urban agglomerations. If this inexorable trend continues, almost 80 percent of about 10 billion people will be living in towns by 2050 A.D. This year almost 90 million people will be added, of which 92 percent will be in the overcrowded poor countries of the South. It is

frightening that the human numbers have increased six fold during the last 150 years.

But the fundamental question is not the number; it is the specific biological system of humans. There must be trillions of ants, but the humans are different creatures, particularly, modern industrial-urban people with gluttonous demand on finite resources of the earth.

Demands on material and biological resources continue to escalate exponentially as more and more people in the world rush towards an “American dream”. We are told that the world economy is growing at the rate of 3.7 % and it is estimated that the total gross world production has crossed U.S.\$21 trillion. Demands for goods and services continue to rise as the number of people increase, as more and more people join the urban society and as the consumption of the rich intensifies on a greedy path.

The tragic state of human society is that almost 1.3 billion people are consuming 73% of the basic resources while, as Dr. James D. Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank says, 1.2 billion people survive on an income of less than U.S.\$1 a day. As globalization heightens, obliterating the national boundaries, as the technological grip increases, as the market economics drive all the societies to insatiable consumerism, the mindless ravages of the scarce non-renewable and renewable resources put the earth in siege. The resource burden of an American in relation to an average person in Bangladesh, Peru or Nepal is approximately 60 times, of an European it is 40 times.

There is an immutable law of entropy driving the earth’s biological systems, on which all the species survive, to precipice, and a doom is not in too far a distant future, as warned by the leading 1500 scientists of Union Concerned Scientists a few years ago.

Here are some of the facts of entropy:

- The world's temperature has already risen by about 1° C and may rise between 3° to 5°C by 2040 A.D.
- Almost 11 million hectares of rain forests disappeared in 1995.
- Even today more than 200 species of plants, animals and birds become extinct every week.
- Eighty percent of the freshwater fish in Europe are in danger.
- Almost 85% of the fish within 3-km of Mumbai have disappeared during the last 30 years.
- Twenty six billion tons of topsoil was washed away in the world during 1995 – 6 billion tons only in India.
- Almost one-third of the area of India and China have lost their groundwater during the last 15 years.
- Ten percent of the stratospheric ozone is depleted.

The picture of the dismembered earth is so ghastly that even the numbers become numb. The reality is overtaking all our qualifications.

Looking at just one city of Mumbai, one can see how the second law of thermodynamics is functioning. Mumbai's population has reached 15.5 million today – a seven-fold increase in 50 years. The World Bank report a year ago called it an air-pollution-disaster city like Sao Paulo, Bangkok and Mexico City. Almost 68% of people live in miserable shanties as they do in Lagos, Nigeria. About 750,000 vehicles in the city have increased the travelling time four-fold to cover the same distance. Eighty two percent of the tree-cover has disappeared in 50 years. The noise level during the 12 hrs daytime has reached the deafening 72dB – 78dB. Eighty five percent of the sewage goes untreated in the sea. Life is a nightmare. The same

situation reveals itself in Shanghai, Manila and in other 200 cities.

This microcosm of human and the ecological scenario reflects the state of affairs of most of the cities in the developing world. The migration of people to cities continues unabated - almost 61 million people leave their villages every year to find survival in the holocaust cities. The carrying capacities of their ecological systems have been crossed by many factors. There is a total human and environmental anarchy.

In this circumstance the ontological question becomes normative because, when it comes to humans, all the numbers do not reflect the reality. The earthly existence is immensely complex and all innate aspects of it are only partially quantifiable.

How do we measure the intricate relationship among all the species of life woven in fragile relationships? How do we measure pleasures and pains, suffering and greed, beauty and ugliness, simplicity and obscenity, but all these deeper aspects of reality reflect what the human world is.

Nonetheless, as long as we are alive, as long as we have vision and as long as we think of the future - of the earth and our children - we must hope for sanity and wisdom. Our task then, is to bring another transformation of us as a human species in relation to the earth, on the bounties of which we can survive and create the future.

Our agenda for the future, then, is:

- To bring the skyrocketing human numbers to a halt through massive family planning programs to more than 380 fertile couples in the less developed world who have not been reached.
- We must challenge the disastrous mania for development at any cost which has gripped the South.

- The urgent task is to provide for the basic minimum needs – food, required energy, one hundred liters of fresh water per day per person, decent shelter, basic medical facilities and education – to 1.2 billion people living as ecological refugees.
- People of the developing world must challenge the widening gap between 15 percent of their own elite and 30 percent of the people living in the highly industrialized world. This struggle is necessary for protection of their own ecological base and for getting equal share of the declining resources of the earth.
- Looking at the larger issues of the earth as a whole – climate change, ozone depletion, soil erosion, oceans, Antarctica etc. – humanity now must have a global plan for protecting the earth.
- There is need for global co-operation of policy makers, thinkers, planners, and even people to work for a campaign to save the earth.
- Education systems everywhere should bring the philosophy of conservation for survival as the fundamental tenet for learning.

Our analysis of the earth's systems suggests that the present model of economic and political development as developed in the West, is dangerously unsustainable and will lead the earth and humanity to ultimate disaster. Therefore, in the new model, humans, as part of the complex and mystical evolutionary process of billions of years, must recognize that they must live and function within the ecological boundaries of the Earth. Therefore, they must deflate their arrogance, destroy their destructive technologies – pesticides, nuclear bombs, automobiles, etc., - and replace them with the benign technologies of recycling, renewable material and clean

resources. Our approach to sustainability should be total, holistic, encompassing all the humans and other species who share this unique, beautiful home of life. Our goal should be to leave a living footprint during our brief life span with such care, concern and love that the earth will become richer again, and one day when we depart, our children and flowers will have another beautiful morning to enjoy ecstasy and joy. And evolution will continue far beyond tomorrow – into eternity.

(Summary of a paper submitted at the Debate on the Ecological Footprints of Cities in Amsterdam, 14 March 1997)

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*“The most disastrous aspect of urbanization in the developing countries is the growth of megacities accompanied with the growth of abominable, wretched slums and shanty towns.”*

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Hiroshima or Bhopal

And Time stopped
at 8:15 A.M.
Death walked in
blood in Hiroshima
There was an eternal
light
scattered in nothingness.
Existence was obliterated.
Universe turned into
a corpse.
History disappeared.
Future went to sleep.
Corpses cried.
Truth dawned:
Human curse on Universe.
Children evaporated
while searching for water.
The bomb was intoxicated.
or
Was truth asleep?
Clocks stopped at 8:15 A.M.
And now memory sleeps
in the bed of roses

While new bombs
Vomit more blood.
Nightmare laughs again.

True.

Let all the bombs be
carried in a hearse or

Eternity will stop

forever

In the frozen arms of
human idiocy.

Creating a World of Hope for Children

“In every child who is born, under no matter what circumstances, and of no matter what parents, the potentiality of the human race is born again; with it our terrific responsibility towards human life.”

— James Agee

It was just after 11:15 one-day in January 1995 that I and my friend, Dr. Richard Odingo reached a hospital in Harare. We were informed that a child was born to a poor mother, whose husband had died of AIDS. She was also a victim and the child was HIV positive. Of 36 million people in the world suffering from AIDS, 25 million people are in Sub-Sahara Africa, 1.5 million are children below the age 15. Two days later we read in a Harare newspaper that 45% of the children in America are obese.

The first event and the second information seem disconnected, but they are not. They reflect the state of the world. A year ago, at a global meeting on AIDS at the United Nations, Secretary General Kofi Annan asked for U.S.\$10 billion to provide medical support for treatment. It was only a meager amount, but at the end of the meeting, we hardly had U.S.\$5 billion. The world spends an incredible U.S.\$800 billion annually on military, arms and warfare, U.S.\$13.8 billion by Africans. How is it possible that there is unlimited amount of money for the wasteful and destructive armaments and wars, and there is no money to take care of children, our links to the future? Isn't there something wrong with human priorities? What is this madness of the so-called civilized world?

It is now 13 years since the Heads of States from around the

world recognized the rights of children to live healthy and happy lives. Now, at the Special Session on Children organized by the United Nations, 8 – 10 May 2002, every statement of the Secretary General's report confirms that the dreams of the 1990 Summit, where the first Declaration of Children's Rights was made, have become nightmares. The UNICEF just announced that 150 million children in the world are suffering from malnutrition - that is almost 40% of the children in Asia, Africa and Latin America. We are told, there is no food for these children, because they are from poor families. According to the World Bank, almost one out of 4 people in the developing world lives in poverty, which means surviving on 80 cents to U.S.\$1 a day. Most children in America spend U.S.\$1.50 on chocolates everyday.

What are the implications of poverty for children when they lack food and suffer from malnutrition? Immunities decline, their bodies and brains do not grow and they succumb to diseases and death. Everyday, about 50,000 children leave this earth because of inhumanity. In the developing world, four out of ten children live in extreme poverty; consequently, they remain victims of illiteracy, all forms of social abuses and a lifetime of exploitation – working in toxic factories, seduced into the sex-trade and even slavery (as it is practiced in Sudan). Infants particularly suffer from diarrhoea, respiratory infections, measles and malaria. It seems that the problem of poverty is only in the developing world. That is not so. Almost 18% of the people even in the rich countries cannot find services for their children. There is another aspect to poverty, which should be recognized: female child in poverty. In India, the number of female children suffering from malnutrition is twice the number of male children. Then what about two million girl children in Africa subjected to genital mutilation?

Further, we must recognize that since 1990, almost 80% of the victims of wars and conflicts are civilians, mostly women and

children. Almost two million children were killed, six million children injured or disabled and 12 million became homeless during the last decade. Whatever the causes, let us clearly recognize that poverty is the worst curse for children in the modern world despite all the progress and development of this industrial civilization. But statistics cannot tell the real story of the miseries of poverty. As the State of the World Children's Report 2002 accepts, "Despite outstanding examples of children in the last decades, most governments have not lived up to the promises made in 1990."

At this meeting, as we prepare for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, South Africa, we are here to fulfill our promises to children. We want to assert again and re-emphasize that within the next 10 years, we must fulfill the obligations of protecting children's rights by reducing and eliminating poverty by no later than 2015. We refuse to accept the WSSD plans of reducing poverty by 50% by 2015. It is too late for children to find their rightful place thereafter. Therefore, we declare the following renewed commitment to children of the world:

- The employment of children in toxic factories, the sale of children in the sex market, the genital mutilation of the girl child and the use of poor children as soldiers – should be banned by governments around the world. If the governments fail to implement it, NGOs around the world should take up a global campaign on a war footing.
- A major educational program for children should be designed by governments and grassroots groups to see that all the 100 million children who have no access to school, are given at least primary education within the next five years.
- At the same time, despite poverty, special programs should be designed to provide the minimum amount of food, at

least 2000 calories, and clean potable water for every child through schools or special children's centers.

- No programs for children have any validity unless there are special health centers to prevent children from becoming victims of diseases.

Our program demands a total approach. There is no way to protect children from becoming victims of poverty unless we wipe it out at a global scale. The fact that the world has U.S.\$800 billion to spend on arms implies that there are sufficient resources to eliminate poverty. This decade should be declared as the decade of children. After centuries of neglect, it is only in 1990 that we accepted the rights of children. Now we must revolt against the wrong system and demented values, which have driven children to the ultimate state of decimation. What we are doing to children today is not only immoral, but is also criminal. If the adults fail to fulfill this abiding mission, then children have a right to revolt and create a society which gives them justice and a rightful place in society.

Recently, I saw a six year-old child caring for a two year-old baby and begging in the street for a meal. The question the little girl asked was: "What kind of world have I come to?" I only wish that the Prime Ministers and Presidents, you and I, rich and the poor, listen to the voice of the girl born to poverty only six years ago, five years after the world had promised her emancipation and rights at the United Nations. The Sun had already set; it was all dark. My friends, we have come here today to create a morning of hope, not for us, but for the generations to come because evolution must go on.

Some key statistics:-

- About 24,000 people die every day from hunger or hunger-related causes. Three-fourths of the deaths are of children under the age of five. (United Nations)

- In developing countries, almost a third of the children under the age of five are malnourished. (UNICEF,1999)
- Fifty-five percent of the 12 million child deaths under age five are due to malnourishment. Forty percent or 226 million children under age five living in the developing countries suffer stunting and wasting. (Hunger, 1999)
- Of the 33.4 million people living with HIV/AIDS worldwide, 1.2 million are children. (UNAIDS, 1999)
- According to UNICEF: Recent developments in warfare have significantly heightened the dangers for children. During the last decade, it is estimated that child victims of war have included:
 - Two million killed;
 - Four to five million disabled;
 - Twelve million left homeless;
 - More than one million orphaned or separated from their parents;
 - Some 10 million psychologically traumatized;
- Each year, some one million children enter the sex trade, exploited by people or circumstances. However, it is known to be a multi-billion dollar trade, into which each year some one million children are drawn.

(Keynote Address at the Fifth International Conference of The Child, Dorval, Quebec, Canada; May 24th, 2002)

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*“We need to establish a sustainable equation concerning the ecological future of our planet and that of our children in relation to poverty and hunger.”*

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Flower and A Bud

I did not bid
farewell to you
when you departed.

Then I realized
that you are
gone only on a
journey to an
ethereal world –
finally liberated.

But your spirits are deeply
imbued in my
hearts.

You will be with me
till the end of
time.

I never told you
of my love for you,
but you knew it –
ever.

You experienced it
as I did.

It has eternally been there.

The procession of
life
marches on immutably.

Tomorrow, I will also
leave from here and
join you.

Together, we shall
vanquish the corporeal.

Then we shall reach
that majestic existence
in spirits,
which can never be
extinguished.

Death and Time
will fear us.

One morning
we shall return again
together –
You as a Flower
and I as a bud.

* * *

(7 July 1997)

Ecological Resettlement in Gujarat

“The basis for optimism is sheer terror.”

– Oscar Wilde

This report is based on a two-week survey of all the devastated areas in Gujarat, India, due to the earthquake on 26 January 2001. Although we have studied and examined the overall consequences – human and material disaster—our picture is still incomplete. Many data are not available. We have also tried to understand the factors responsible for such incalculable devastation. We have interviewed victims, local people, experts and relief workers. Our findings are limited, but we hope that the present summary will provide some guidelines for reconstruction, resettlement, future-preparedness and planning, since disasters of one type or the other will remain an endemic feature of India, besides earthquakes.

Here are our observations and conclusions:

- Our overall analysis suggests that the catastrophe in Gujarat is by and large, human-made. Some devastation to material property would have taken place in Kutch, especially near the epicenter, Bhuj, due to the earthquake, but not to the level that has taken place. As far as Ahmedabad is concerned, we feel that 90% of the deaths were due to human folly. In most of the cities, towns and villages there were no disaster-resistant buildings – probably only a few in Ahmedabad.
- Almost all the survivors who were witness to the disaster admitted that they did not know what to do when the earthquake struck on the morning of 26 January. Everything was sudden. It was all over before long.

- There was no preparedness at any level – in any city, town, village, state or center. There was total chaos. Fortunately, immediate rescue and relief systems were set up by several NGOs and later on by the government, for assistance. It is tragic, however, that the availability of machinery and equipments was limited, resulting in a large number of casualties. In most villages, even today, there is no mechanism to remove debris and waste.
- Even after 10 days there was no order in the rescue and relief operations. A large number of NGOs carried out their activities of relief, in an uncoordinated and a haphazard way. In these efforts many local and international organizations played a significant role.
- With the relief and rescue operations completed under the Disaster Management Authority, the Gujarat government has now set up a special Rehabilitation Cell to plan and co-ordinate the activities of NGOs and other voluntary organizations in the resettlement program. By the end of February, the state government had prepared a relocation plan for four towns and 360 villages, which have suffered more than 70% destruction. Meanwhile, the Co-ordination Cell of the state government under the rehabilitation authority has invited NGOs to formally adopt villages for resettlement work in the 360 villages which are most damaged. So far, 203 have already been adopted by 40 voluntary agencies, most of them business houses. The state government has also clarified that all the resettlement and rehabilitation work will be carried out by voluntary agencies and NGOs. The government will only monitor.

Facts about Gujarat Earthquake

Epicenter: Bhuj. 23.3° North and 69.8° East (20 Km, N-NE of Bhuj, Gujarat)

Richter Scale: 7.7 M

Time: 8. 46 hrs (I.S.T), Date: 26 Jan 2001'

Death toll : 60,000 to 100,000

Injured : 1,66,836

Cattle death : 18,352

Affected Districts : 21

Affected Talukas : 182

Affected Villages : 7904

Total population : 37.8 million

Affected population : 15.7million

Structural Damage:

Structures destroyed: 1,622,188

Structures damaged: 7,25,802

Estimated damage: U.S.\$4.8 billion

Total foreign aid received: U.S.\$ 857 million

(References: National Earthquake Information center, Denver; www.gujaratindia.com (Web site of the Government of Gujarat); Directorate of Social Defence, Government of Gujarat, Gandhinagar; Directorate of Information, Government of Gujarat, Gandhinagar)

In the light of the above observations, it is pretty clear that the Gujarat earthquake was one of the worst calamities to occur in India and the world, during the last 50 years. We have made the following suggestions and recommendations to the Gujarat government:

- First of all, there should be a geo-ecological plan for development and reconstruction of the devastated areas, bearing in mind that the Western boundary of the Indian sub-continent, specially the region from Baluchistan in Pakistan upto Saurashtra in India, is high earthquake zone.

In reality, it covers the areas of Mumbai and beyond. The fact is that the Indian plate, which has now subducted under the Eurasian Plate is moving northwards. This movement will continue for millions of years, making Assam, Himalayas and adjoining areas, violent earthquake regions.

- The Gujarat and Maharashtra governments should jointly set up a special Ministry for Disaster Management.
- There has been enormous discussion about earthquake-resistant houses. Research in Japan, USA and many other countries have already developed technologies which can enhance the safety of buildings even if an earthquake of 7.5 magnitude strikes. But there is no safety as the magnitude goes beyond that.
- What we are planning and have suggested to the Chief Minister of Gujarat, is the construction and development of eco-villages based on the principles of ecology – simple, earthquake resistant housing, water conservation programs, massive tree plantations, use of renewable energy and education, with participation of people. Such ecological towns and villages are becoming common all over the world especially in the Scandinavian countries. Since Gujarat is facing two major problems – expansion of deserts and unprecedented shortage of water, ecological development is the only way for sustainability.
- At our institute, we are developing IT based eco-villages by setting up information kiosks in rural areas. Our task would be to use IT for information, communication and education – on ecology and environment, on family planning, health, agriculture, food and water and most importantly, disaster – preparedness and management.
- But, in the end, nothing will ever help the megalopolises like Mumbai and Delhi or metropolises like Ahmedabad unless we move towards decentralization of these gargantuan

agglomerations of millions of people.

- As in Japan, we must bring insurance to the people everywhere, specially in our villages, where there are very few securities. Even after all the aid and contribution by the government there will still be a large number of people who will have to live as refugees with limited resources. It is their future that we should think about.
- On September 1 every year, every Japanese must go through a drill in order to face an earthquake. We need such a drill for the whole of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Delhi and Eastern India.

Conclusion

Our earth is dynamic and in violent flux. It is not possible for us to control or stop the movement of tectonic plates. As our plate continues to move northwards, one day – maybe after about 40 million years – there will be no India. That is far away. At present, we must accept that we in the Western coast of India will face many earthquakes for millions of years to come and some of them may be even more violent than the one we experienced recently. We need trained disaster managers, who know how to coordinate the activities and efforts of different groups. We need earthquake and other disaster preparedness drills and education. We need a Disaster Management Ministry in the Central government, in every state, city and village. We must apply earthquake resistant construction technologies in our buildings and structures.

Even though the tremors in Mumbai were hardly 5 or less on the Richter scale, I am still phobic about the movement of the building where I live. What about my friend's two children (age 3 & 4) who were only 100 km from the epicenter, when they heard the deafening blast? They are living in a nightmare. How will all the millions of people in Gujarat, psychologically and physically be brought to normal life?

We have traversed a long night of tribulations, embedded in our yesterday. Our suffering cannot go in vain. If ever we want to free ourselves from the tyranny of millenia, we need individuals who have vision, courage and knowledge to take us to the morning of sunrise. We need leaders to help us construct a society of equality, justice and sustainability. A good society is built on the pillars of these perennial values, which have helped us to survive millions of years of catastrophe so that evolution continues immutably.

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*"Our earth is dynamic and in violent flux. We cannot predict when an earthquake would come, where and what its intensity would be. But, in our finite way, using our intelligence and knowledge from the past, we can prepare ourselves to reduce the destruction to the minimum."*

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Environment Education to Save the Planet

“The ultimate value of life depends upon awareness and the power of contemplation rather than upon mere survival.”

- Aristotle

Down below lies the solitary continent of Australia with inauspicious climates and inhospitable environment. During the last 60,000 years, it has been inhabited by some of the most pre-technological people known as Aborigines. A disaster occurred, so an Aborigine myth tells us, 10,000 years ago. Massive floods inundated the land and much of the life disappeared when famine followed, but some humans, birds and animals survived on the mountains.

When the disaster was over, the wise men and women began channeling themselves to *Baiame*, the great spirit about whom they had heard from their ancestors. They asked *Baiame* to ensure the survival of their race. *Baiame* listened to them with sympathy and asked his friends *Nungeena* (Mother Nature), *Punhel* (the architect of the Universe) and *Yhi* (Sun goddess) to assist the desperate humans to survive and continue their race. They all agreed to resolve the crisis of the Earth by instructing all men and women how to respect creation and live in accordance with the laws of *Nungeena*. Soon they found that the earth became a paradise — lush vegetation, abundant fruits, berries and fish and good life for everyone. They lived in happiness for many eons to come.

This myth tells the truth about our fundamental relationship with the earth. The Aborigines knew it. We have lost it. Our ignorance, or better, our arrogance, has put the earth under siege and us in jeopardy. Do we know who we are in relation

to the larger scheme of things and what we are doing? Do we realize that our existence on this unique planet is a rare opportunity? Do we know where our journey is taking us to? Despite all our claims to enormous knowledge, mysteries of life and earth abound. We are yet to acquire real knowledge of us and *Gaia*— Mother Earth.

The Aborigines knew because their experiences through the ages taught them to deal with their much simpler world. Laotse, the wise man of China, once said, “You can learn by seeing inside” — by understanding the laws of Nature, and when we understand them, we must live by them. In the end, actions change the world. Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator, emphasized that learning means becoming critically aware of our pathological reality and then bringing the positive changes. In short, we must learn in order to transform.

Those of us, who understand the state of Earth in its myriad complexities and crises, feel deep in our hearts that there is something amiss about life and the world we live in. We are saddened by its destruction. Wise American Indians used to ask: Do we know what will happen to our seventh generation? More profound question for us is: will there be a seventh generation? Many environmentalists agree with the warning of the Union of Concerned Scientists: If we continue on the present doomsday path, the earth will be liquidated sometime in the next millennium. The warning is based on the examination of the biological, chemical, and physical systems of the Earth, which have remained quite stable for more than four eons, when life originated. Humans are the first species during all these geological times to threaten the stability of the earth.

The Earth summit of the UN in 1992, a historical event, was the first effort of humanity to chart a path to mend the despoliation wrecked by our species, mostly during the last 300

years of technological revolution. But, how many people in the world know or have read its blueprint - the Agenda 21 - a global plan of action to bring sustainability? And how many governments, which signed the agreement, have implemented the Agenda? Meantime, as we emphasized earlier, many thinkers all over the world recognize that our Earth is dying, life is being threatened, humans in large parts of the world are becoming pathological or are suffering in miseries.

This is an age of science and technology. For the first time in human history, we have built a technological civilization, which pervades through every continent. The basic premise of this civilization is to bring development at any cost. It is only during the last five decades that the erroneous nature of the assumption has been understood and questioned. Now we understand the grim consequences of the runaway technologies evident universally. Add to that, the problem of the reckless multiplication of our numbers. We are already near 6 billion people and in 1999, seventy eight million will be added, and the growth will continue practically through the next century. Meantime, our consumption continues to expand exponentially. The ill consequences of all these malignant developments has brought us to the present brink of demise.

Too long, we have remained oblivious to these crises, although our knowledge concerning many of these problems has continued to expand. We have undertaken this task with a hope that knowledge and its application will change the path of despoliation of our environment and ecology. Great Greek thinker, Seneca said long ago, "I am glad to learn". Learning is what we humans do. In fact, we are the only learning creatures on the planet, and our survival depends on it.

For us the moot question is not about learning but what we should learn and know, and what we do with our knowledge. Many fundamental truths about our relationship with nature have

been known to us since time immemorial. People in almost all pre-technological societies always lived in harmony with nature. Most of these societies were based on preservation of ecology. It is only recently that our learning about ecology and our relationship with the earth has been neglected and ignored. Our values have been distorted. We are told that the main objective of knowledge is to increase the material wealth for progress. The distorted purposes underlying our civilization need to be corrected. Our search is to know the plight in which we are today and where we are going if we continue on the we have been pursuing blindly.

The Pedagogy of the Earth is a book of knowledge, of our understanding of the earth, of us as human beings and finally of our plans to create a world based on ecological values - a world of harmony and sustainability, a world which would be good for our children and their children until evolution takes us to the next stage. We are not thinking about building a technological utopia. Our task is more modest. We want to correct the aberrations, which have allowed us to build a celluloid world of deceptions. If pursued ignominiously, it is the sure path to extinction.

Therefore, recognising that all our knowledge ultimately has a normative purpose, we would like the people everywhere to build a new society based on intrinsic values of life such as simplicity, harmony, co-operation, conservation, equity, justice and love. *The Pedagogy of the Earth* expresses the voices of nature; it narrates ideas and philosophies; it articulates the voices of the voiceless in the form of poetry, myths and folk tales. It has stories from everywhere - not just from the West. In short, the book gives a kaleidoscopic panorama of the rich material, which, we hope, will bring a global transformation - a transformation, which will free us from the technological prison and bring hope by integrating humans with the grand design of

magnificent Nature. As an Aboriginal dreamtime story admonishes, “Let us go back home”.

Are we ready for such a profound transformation? Is it possible for our knowledge to bring hope? Do we want future? We do not know, but we can all try if we care for our children. If we succeed, we shall have a good earth to enjoy. We believe that the light of knowledge will bring a hope of a new morning so that the children will have tomorrow – to dance to the music of the rising Sun.

(Introduction of ‘Pedagogy of the Earth - Education for a Sustainable Future’ ; Written and Edited by Carlos Hernandez and Rashmi Mayur, April 1999, ISIF)

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“The rules that governed our societies in the past fill history’s wastepaper basket, and the present is becoming more and more irrelevant with every quantum leap toward tomorrow. The ground is littered with ruins of many of the institutions, which for so long have governed our lives. Now our task is to create simpler institutions, which can bring a new logic to global affairs, to human activities, to our relations with each other, to our security and survival, and to our own and our children’s dreams of a secure, peaceful, just, and sustainable world.”

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Millennium Declaration Of “We The People”

“We are locked into a system of “fouling our own nest,” so long as we behave as independent, rational free-enterprisers.”

- Garrett Hardin

The United Nations, established on October 24, 1945, as an organization of “We the people” through their 50 governments, may exist no more. On 8 September 2000, 189 Heads of the States representing almost 6.1 billion people, signed the Millennium Declaration of the United Nations at the 55th General Assembly Session. Through the Declaration, the governments of the world and the United Nations signed a “Global Compact” by which 80 multinational corporations have been legitimized as a new global power to reckon with in the future. Under this Compact, Nike, Royal Dutch Shell, BP Amoco, Rio Tinto and many other corporations will become partners of the United Nations, which is supposed to be an organization of the governments, to solve the problems of the world such as environment, development, human rights, poverty etc.

Since the Second World War, many developing countries became decolonized, but the borders among the nations for business and industry, markets and profits, disappeared in the name of globalization. During the last 25 years, global wealth and technologies have increasingly become concentrated in fewer multinational corporations, whose

ominous power directs and controls the destiny of the planet and its humanity. If the trends continue, within the next 25 years, the world will be governed by the corporations – not by governments.

The signing of the Millennium Declaration may have prepared the grounds for such a transfer. This is not only a challenge to the governments but also to “We the People,” – the NGOs, the people’s movement and the ideals of people’s democracy. For those who have emerged from three centuries of colonialism, the corporate imperialism is a great threat to the future. Those who have studied globalization of the last three decades, fear that there is no global rule of law or governance to keep corporations in order and bring justice to the people. There is also an alarm that a large number of transnational corporations have little concern for human rights, equity, justice or environmental protection. In fact, looking at the deteriorating conditions of life worldwide, one is shocked by the tyranny of the market-place, greed, massive profits and exploitation by the gigantic conglomerates.

Every year the Transparency International publishes a report of governmental corruption around the world. One reads in the media about how corporations purchase the governments in order to get special contracts. Therefore, let us ask some fundamental questions about the Compact. How can Shell Corporation, which has carried on the destruction of environment and violation of human rights, be a partner in the Global Compact? How can Nike, which is a symbol of the exploitation of workers through its cheap labor sweatshops around the world, be a protector of human rights? Perversion: the University of Oregon, a temple of learning, accepted U.S.\$30 million to fight for the rights of

workers. What about Novartis, another Compact partner, which, using its legal and police tactics, has forced its consumers and farmers to accept the genetically modified food? The number of these corporations is large and the list of their violations of environmental and human rights is enormous. Now that these corporations have joined in the Compact with the UN, would it not imply legitimization of their improper behaviors?

The corporate globalization has made the world borderless, but with the reduction of the powers of nation-states, there is anarchy. As we enter the new millennium, people all over the world are aspiring for democracy and world rule-of-law. Many thinking people wish that the United Nations may emerge as a world institution to bring world governance — the governance which would fulfill the purposes for which the United Nations was set up:

“To save succeeding generations from the scourges of war to affirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of human person, in the equal rights of man and woman and of nations large and small

People everywhere want peace, harmony and a good life. This is possible more now than ever before. The task before the United Nations, therefore, is to represent all the people of the world and align with them — and not with the corporations — so that one day there will be global democracy under world government.

*(Keynote address at the Call of the Time Dialogue on
Globalization, Peace and Love, organized by
Brahmakumaris World Spiritual University, (India), Mt.
Abu, Rajasthan on 10 February 2001)*

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*“Industrialists are products of the past. Their  
concern is to increase profits and status. Some are  
involved in do-goodism - fund-raising for  
hospitals and schools, or in religious activities -  
but none has taken a leap towards building a new  
society”*

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Of Learning and Immortality

Then they asked:

“Master, what is education?”

The wise man spoke silently,

“There is no master
and no education,
my people.”

People were bemused;

Master continued:

“Life is an opportunity
to realize ourselves.

We are the creatures
of learning.

To learn is to be creative.

To learn is to know
the root of our existence.

To learn is to preserve
Our sacred Earth.

To learn is to live
in harmony with the whole.

To learn is to give
birth to future.

To learn is to reach
enlightenment – Nirvana.

To learn is to be

liberated
from the finiteness
of Space and Time.

To learn is to be
Immortal".
Master was no more.

(Written on 15 April 1999 - Published in Eco Earth
Magazine, Vol.2, No.7, July-Sept.2002)

Terrorism and the Reichstag Fire

“The ultimate failures of Dictatorship cost humanity far more than any temporary failures of Democracy.”

– Franklin D. Roosevelt

It is universally recognized that September 11 is a turning point in human history in more ways than one. The United Nations Declaration of 5 October 2001 is not only a Charter to eliminate terroristic acts around the world, but also a manifesto challenging the Human Rights Declaration. To understand the implications of all the acts against terrorism passed by the United States government as well as by governments in other countries around the world, one simply has to read an eyewitness account of the Reichstag fire on 27 February 1933 – the arson of the German Parliament Building in Berlin, which changed the course of history.

Adolf Hitler was appointed as the Chancellor by Paul Van Hindenburg, President, Weimar Republic. Just a day after the fire, that is on 28 February, Hitler invoked Article 48 of the constitution suspending all civil liberties abrogating the constitutional protections.

- Free expression of opinion
- Freedom of the press
- Right of assembly and association
- Right to privacy of postal and electronic communications
- Protection against unlawful searches and seizures
- Individual property rights
- States' right of self-government

There is no agreement as to who was responsible for the Reichstag fire, but it was suspected that someone named van der Lubbe, a communist was responsible. He was charged and executed. But a large amount of evidence collected by a writer, Walther Hoter of Bern proved that the fire was planned by the Nazis themselves, by Reinhard Heydrich, and an official in the Prussian Ministry of Interior, Kurt Daluge. The most important consequence of the fire was: more than 4,000 communists, intellectuals, professionals, thinkers, opposition leaders, were arrested before the morning of the 28 February. The Decree was turned into a Law against any opposition to the Nazi Party. On 23 March 1933 Adolf Hitler became the supreme dictator of Germany, and from there on, he began his march to conquer the earth, a dream, which Alexander and Napoleon could not fulfill. What followed thereafter is a history of holocaust.

That was 1933. A new world has emerged since then – a new Millennium. At that time, Hitler's decree was only for Germany. The Terrorism Act of the United States applies to 189 countries around the world as George W. Bush, President of the United States, expressed it, "Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists."

Following is the eyewitness account of the Reichstag Fire by D. Stefan Delmer as published in the *Eyewitness Adolf Hitler*, 1979, edited by Allen Churchill.

'This is a God-given signal! If this fire, as I believe, turns out to be the handiwork of Communists, then there is nothing that shall stop us now crushing out this murder pest with an iron fist.'

Adolf Hitler, Fascist Chancellor of Germany, made this dramatic declaration in my presence tonight in the hall of the burning Reichstag building.

The fire broke out at 9.45 tonight in the Assembly Hall of the Reichstag.

It had been laid in five different corners and there is no doubt whatever that it was the handiwork of incendiaries.

One of the incendiaries, a man aged thirty, was arrested by the police as he came rushing out of the building, clad only in shoes and trousers, without shirt or coat, despite the icy cold in Berlin tonight.

Five minutes after the fire had broken out, I was outside the Reichstag watching the flames licking their way up the great dome into the tower.

A cordon had been flung round the building and no one was allowed to pass it.

After about twenty minutes of fascinated watching I suddenly saw the famous black motor car of Adolf Hitler slide past, followed by another car containing his personal bodyguard.

I rushed after them and was just in time to attach myself to the fringe of Hitler's party as they entered the Reichstag.

Never have I seen Hitler with such a grim and determined expression. His eyes, always a little protuberant, were almost bulging out of his head.

Captain Goering, his right-hand man, who is the Prussian Minister of the Interior, and responsible for all police affairs, joined us in the lobby. He had a very flushed and excited face.

'This is undoubtedly the work of Communists, Herr Chancellor,' he said.

'A number of Communist deputies were present here in the Reichstag twenty minutes before the fire broke out. We have succeeded in arresting one of the incendiaries.'

'Who is he?' Dr. Goebbels, the propaganda chief of the Nazi

Party, threw in.

'We do not know yet,' Captain Goering answered, with an ominously determined look around his thin, sensitive mouth. 'But we shall squeeze it out of him, have no doubt doctor.'

We went into a room. 'Here you can see for yourself, Herr Chancellor, the way they started the fire,' said Captain Goering pointing out the charred remains of some beautiful oak panelling.

'They hung cloths soaked in petrol over the furniture here and set it alight.'

We strode across another lobby filled with smoke. The police barred the way. 'The candelabra may crash any moment, Herr Chancellor,' said a captain of the police, with his arms out- stretched.

By a detour, we next reached a part of the building which was actually in flames. Firemen were pouring water into the red mass.

Hitler watched them for a few moments, a savage fury blazing from his pale blue eyes.

Then we came upon Herr von Papen, urbane and debonair as ever.

Hitler stretched out his hand and uttered the threat against the Communists, which I have already quoted. He then turned to Captain Goering. 'Are all the other public buildings safe?' he questioned.

'I have taken every precaution,' answered Captain Goering. 'The police are in the highest state of alarm, and every public building has been specially garrisoned. We are waiting for anything.'

It was then that Hitler turned to me. 'God grant', he said,

'that this is the work of the Communists. You are witnessing the beginning of a great new epoch in German history. This fire is the beginning.'

And then something touched the rhetorical spring in his brain. 'You see this flaming building,' he said, sweeping his hand dramatically around him. 'If this Communist spirit got hold of Europe for but two months it would be all aflame like this building.'

By 12.30 the fire had been got under control. Two Press rooms were still alight, but there was no danger of the fire spreading.

Although the glass of the dome has burst and crashed to the ground the dome still stands.

So far it has not been possible to disentangle the charred debris and see whether the bodies of any incendiaries, who may have been trapped in the building, are among it.

At the Prussian Ministry of the Interior a special meeting was called late tonight by Captain Goering to discuss measures to be taken as a consequence of the fire.

The entire district from the Brandenburg Gate, on the west, to the River Spree, on the east, is isolated tonight by numerous cordons of police.

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*“The question of the conversion of swords into
ploughshares is a question of ethics, the question of
profound changes, the question of the kind of
civilization humanity wants in the future.”*

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Love Is You

I love you because
“cause” has become meaningless

I love you
because you have given me
a purpose in this purposeless
universe

I love you
because, knowing that
I am a fool, you still love me.

I love you
because you are
my companion

On this lonely
path

I love you
because you have set
the snows of the North Pole
on fire.

I love you
because you have made
the waters of the Ocean
boil.

I love you
because you have sent
the fiery sun
to the coldness of night

I love you
because more than
anything else
you have beckoned
my heart
to the altar of joy.

I love you
because love is you.

(6 February 1996)

ECOLOGY AND PEACE

*“The aim of education is the knowledge not of fact
but of values.”*

—Dean Inge

If the people of the world demand demilitarization, control of the export of arms, conversion of the plants and factories producing armaments to manufacture environmental technologies and developmental goods, it is highly probable that the goals and purposes of building a sustainable world could take place some time in the twenty-first century.

Changes in human history are marked by the invention of the atomic bombs. The first atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on 6 August 1945 at 8:15 a.m. instantly killing 66,000 and injuring 69,000. Three days later on 9 August another bomb was dropped on Nagasaki leaving 39,000 dead and 25,000 injured. Almost 40% of the children, born to women affected by radiation, died. In 1953, the first hydrogen bomb was developed. Following the end of World War II, began the Cold War era leading to the armament race.

Now with demise of the Soviet Empire, there is only one super power in the world, the United States, the world must move towards total disarmament, ecological reconstruction and revitalization of development in the developing world.

The following are facts concerning the military state of the world at present:

- The world spends at present one trillion dollars a year on arms and armaments, military and war.
- The highest quantum of money is expended by the U.S.- U.S.\$ 295 billion annually.

- 40% of the world's arms export is done by the U.S.
- Every person in the world contributes U.S.\$180 per year to the military.
- There are 50,000 nuclear warheads in the world today.
- Despite the end of the Cold War, the total sales of arms to the developing countries was of the order of U.S.\$35 billion in 1992.
- The world spends U.S.\$2 billion every minute on wars and armaments
- The U.S. despite the fact that it does not face any threat to its security, plans to build a nuclear submarine at a cost of U.S.\$2 billion. Supposedly, that would provide employment to 10,000 people. The same amount of money could have provided primary education to 25 million children in Africa.
- Even in the poor countries, the military expenditures are disastrously high – China spends U.S.\$12 billion, India U.S.\$7 billion, Pakistan U.S.\$3 billion – and there is no cutback in their rising military expenditures.
- The Military is not even required to submit the environmental impact statements. The result: there has been more environmental damage due to military and armament productions as well as wars and conflicts than due to the 10 largest chemical industries.

Such a gross and criminal waste of resources has taken place and continues to happen, while the environmental conditions deteriorate and underdevelopment drives billions to desperation and destitution. I am disgusted with the fact that the Earth Summit refused to talk about the environmental deterioration due to the military and need for a global plan of action for total demilitarization. In the shrunken world of fast depleting resources and escalating poverty, the urgent task confronting the

people and governments of the world is to put an end to the madness of searching for security through barbaric means of armaments. I believe that the weapons and increasing number of military hardwares only accentuate the insecurity. The present stockpiles of the nuclear warheads was enough to blow up all the major populated areas of the world and more, not to speak about the impact of radiation subsequently.

The state of the desperate countries

- 1.3 billion people in the world live in a perpetual state of hunger and malnutrition.
- Almost 2 billion people drink unsafe water.
- On an average every person in the developing world owes U.S.\$400 to Northern banks and the World Bank.
- Seventy-two percent of resources of the Earth are consumed by 1.5 billion people, who contribute 80% of air and water pollution.
- Almost 55,000 children die of malnutrition every day.

Looking at such terrible human conditions, any one promoting armaments should be considered a merchant of death. The new world order demanded elimination of the conditions leading to conflicts and wars. Once these conditions are corrected, the world will automatically move towards an era of peaceful co-existence, environmental health and sustainable development.

Measures for a New Global Order:

- Total elimination of the nuclear warheads by 2005 A.D.
- Gradual plans of demilitarization - cutting the armoes by 50% by the end of the century just as China reduced its army by one million during the last eight years.
- Recognizing that the military is not the only way to generate

employment, large amounts of funds should be transferred towards the production of pollution-control equipments and environmental projects. For example, 1.4 million environmental jobs have been created only in the U.S.A and 1.2 million environmental jobs in Europe during the last two years.

- There should be an immediate comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty; the ABM Treaty should be reaffirmed; and the exports of armaments should be banned.
- As suggested by Mr. Benton Musslewhite, there should be a new world governance system based on democratic principles as against the archaic system of national governments.
- The U.N. peace keeping efforts for which hardly U.S.\$400 million are available today, should be so strengthened, without the control of any one nation, that it can assure resolution of conflicts anywhere in the world.
- For just solution to any conflict, the World Court should provide objective and fair judgment.
- The armies of the world should be Green Armies with a purpose of deploying their energies for social reconstruction and fighting the real enemies in the form of ozone depletion, deforestation, green house effect and other ecological threats.
- There should be a total monitoring of the armament situation in the world.
- There should be a massive grass-roots education movement so people will understand why we need to move from the armed world to a new ecological order.

Ultimately, humanity has only two alternatives: either the final doom or good life for all. The question of conversion of swords

into ploughshares is one of ethics, of profound changes, of the kind of civilization humanity wants in future. I feel a civilization based on bullets, bombs, clear cutting, bulldozing, drift-netting, slaughtering, ultimately ends in barbarism and tragic demise. As Einstein said, “In the end, our defense is in the law and order.”

If only we used one quarter of the world’s military budget, we could solve most of the major problems of environment and development confronting the world. Such a reduction will not affect anyone’s security. On the contrary, as the military hardware will be reduced and as more resources are available for cleaning the Earth and bringing development in poor countries, people will feel more secure and happier, thus charting a path for a new world order based on equity, justice, sustainability and freedom for all. It is only then that civilization will move towards a higher order of evolution – beyond arms, fears, death, destruction and suffering – to a world of happiness and joy for generations to come.

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*“We live on a fractured planet. We have inherited many political divisions which do not allow us to have total understanding, let alone a comprehensive plan to deal with global environmental crises.”*

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Bomb And The Lust For Life

When your tears reached
The roots of the fallen tree,
The branches laughed
at you in irony.
You said, " Tree was uprooted
Because of the downpour,
And it waited for me
to witness its departure."
The ageless trunk laughed.

The grand gulmohar is no more.
It was not a tree.
It was a festival of life!
Mornings used to be sumptuous
With birds on every branch
Singing, dancing, playing, mating,
But, above all, dreaming.
Everyday it was gaiety of colors and sounds
– a melody of life.

Now the red leaves lie
Scattered as if in graveyard.
The birds are gone – far away,
But they returned
to pay their last respect
to their fallen haven.

Birds do not shed tears.
They suffer in anguish.
They know that their home is no more.
The tree was on the ground.
Two yellow butterflies,
Which danced every morning,
Never came back.

After eons, the tree
Lay prostrate before progress.
Humans are on a march.
Development is ubiquitous
– Everywhere.

Armageddon has arrived
Nuclear bomb was developed
there.
Far away, the Sun has dimmed.
The colossus is gone.

My dear, do not weep –
no more.
The flowers will not bloom
And the birds will not sing again.
Don't you see that
Even the skies have not
Stopped sobbing!
The rains have become torrential.

Listen, they just announced that
the statue of Dr. Mrityu Raj
(King of the death), the scientist,
who invented the nuclear weapon,
will be constructed,
where the majestic tree stood.

Do not wail, my wretched!
The night has become somber, forlorn
and sleepy.
Soon you will also fall asleep
and have a dream.
Time will return from
The oblivion.

Another tree will grow in the sky,
Birds will chant a new
music of life.
The parrots will frolic
in mischief.
And two amorous butterflies
will be consumed by lust again.

(16 September 2000)

And Then Came People To Bring Hope

“Apocalypse may yet be canceled; let us dare to be hopeful.”

- Arthur C. Clarke

On April 22, 1991, more than 100,000 men, women and children had gathered to observe ‘Earth Day’, one of the largest assemblies of people from more than 150 countries. That was in San Diego, USA. I was invited to deliver the keynote address. My message at that time was simple: only people who care can make a difference. Then, next year, a major historical event, the Earth Summit was organized in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. More than 35 million people and 150 Heads of States agreed to make the earth sustainable by signing Agenda 21 as the “Declaration for Change”.

The following year, I was appointed as the International Advisor to the Earth Day International with a mandate to involve people around the world in building sustainable societies. It is now almost 10 years; I have been part of this major global event year after year – from China to the Philippines, Kenya to Brazil, Russia and elsewhere. Millions of people gather around the world linked by one purpose, that is, to save the planet – cities, towns, villages, local communities and everything else. For many communities I have been visiting, it has been a day of hope, inspiration and bonding, and finding a common purpose. The purpose is not as simple as we think – saving the endangered planet, endangered by us. It means transforming ourselves – an overwhelming task.

Each year everywhere, we call it a day of celebration, as the Americans called it initially. Who created the Earth Day in 1970? They were some of the environmentally enlightened Americans - among them Senator Gaylord Nelson, Denis Hayes and others like Dr. Gary Herberston. If you participate in these celebrations in large numbers of towns and cities across the USA, where it has become an annual ritual, or China, Japan, the Philippines, Australia, Brazil, you can observe that most people are in mirth – music, dances, discussions, bazaars, etc., while at the same time examining some of the critical issues facing their communities and the world.

On Earth Day 2000, there was concern worldwide about energy consumption and climate change. We supported the Kyoto Agreement; we recommended that the energy-gluttonous rich countries of Europe and America put an end to the devastation of the climate stability. Now, this year, we are observing the 33rd year of the Earth Day.

We have horrible news: the United States, which is responsible for 23% of the release of greenhouse gases, wants to falsify the science, studied and agreed upon by almost 85% of the climate scientists around the world. The US government has decided to subvert science unilaterally because the plan of action now being pursued does not suit major oil corporations of America. On 19 April 2000, the Chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), representing thousands of scientists from around the globe, Dr. Robert Watson, a leading climatologist of the world, was replaced ungracefully by Dr. Pachauri of India, no climatologist and known corporate apologist, to implement the dictates of the global oil and energy corporations. As someone from the Greenpeace said sarcastically at the UN, two weeks ago, “Where you cannot

remove science, remove scientists.” This is a classic example of the travesty of concern for environment on the part of governments around the world (if they still exist).

That takes us to ask the fundamental question: why Earth Day? What does it signify, and what is its purpose? At the time of the first Earth Day, Denis Hayes, its organizer and later, Chairman of Earth Day 1990 said: “The people heard the cry of the earth and came to heal her.” It is a day of evaluation as to what is wrong with the environment and ecology — locally and globally. What needs to be done? Who will do it and, finally, when governments fail, it is the people who must take the responsibility.

In 1997, the United Nations organized a meeting, “Rio Plus Five” and our main concern was: after the greatest event in Rio in 1992 — the Earth Summit, what have the people of the earth accomplished? We examined all the critical areas of human concern: climate change, poverty, desertification, deforestation, extinction of species, death and diseases and population. All the data are there for people to see. By 1997, 400 million people were added to the planet, 200,000 species of plants, animals and birds had disappeared and 1.3 billion people remained environmental refugees living in most wretched and horrendous conditions. Our accomplishments were dismaying. When we left on the last day, we should have cursed ourselves and tears of blood should have flowed if we had any sensitivity.

Ten years after the event of hope in Rio, the UN is planning another great event, the Second Earth Summit, from 25 August to 5 September, in Johannesburg, South Africa. Today, the sun has completed its 33rd cycle since the first Earth Day, for which we are gathered here. We are not here to celebrate. The party-time is over. We are here to challenge the governments and the corporations, whose prime concern remains power and

accumulation of wealth, which would all end into naught if we remain idle and submit to their gross crimes against the Earth. There will be no Earth to live on by the end of this century or at most by the next century if we allow the relentless rape and ravages to continue. Since we cannot examine all the major issues concerning our future, let us understand the implications of 2 or 3 recent developments, specially in India.

We have seldom questioned the madness of science. Most of us are impressed by the glamour of science and technology, not knowing its disastrous consequences to us and the earth because in this age of marketing, corporate marketers can sell anything to anyone – even refrigerators to the Eskimos. On March 26, the Government of India's Genetic Engineering Approval Committee approved the cultivation of Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) cotton, without knowing the implications of the genetically modified seed (which is irreversible) to the soil and to humans, the ultimate users. What next? Will India approve other genetically modified foods and crops? Do we know how many items are coming in to the country surreptitiously? How does a common man understand the long-term effects of all these technologically modified items of consumption?

Do we know what would happen to our grandchildren if we consume GM food? By that time, it might be too late. Do we know why the European countries have banned the cultivation and import of GM food so far? More importantly, what would Round Up Cotton* imply for rural areas, mostly dependent on agriculture, when they have to buy seeds after each harvest? An average farmer living on hardly Rs.50 a day, cannot afford to buy the cotton seeds at exorbitant prices from Monsanto or other companies which hold their patents. Today, we are here to prepare ourselves to challenge the government, because it is wrong.

Recently, it was discovered that there are 40 lakes in the Himalayas – in Bhutan, Sikkim and many other areas. Some of these have developed during the last 15 – 20 years, and other existing ones are overflowing, because of the melting glaciers. If the climate change continues at the relentless pace of the 1990s, it is projected by the mountain experts who are meeting in France in November 2002, that by 2060, the Himalayas' hydrological system will collapse. The consequences are horrendous. From Afghanistan to Bangladesh, almost 70% of the groundwater will disappear, endangering the lives of 1.3 billion people living there in 2050. Yet, India has not taken up a challenge against the American plans to decimate the Kyoto Protocol. It is time for people to take it up. That is why we are gathered here to celebrate Earth Day.

At the third PrepCom of the Earth Summit, which ended two weeks ago, in a session on the Future of Ecology of the Earth, a report from the Women and Children's Association pointed out that in poor countries, the worst victims of environmental degradation are women and children; 60% of the people in the developing world have no facilities for sewage treatment. In most of the megacities of the developing world, the air is so toxic that almost 40% of the children become victims of Asthma and Emphysema.

The WHO (World Health Organization) has declared that this year more than 1.5 million people in the developing world will die of Malaria, most of the victims would be children. The percentage of the malnourished women in the developing world is double the percentage of men. Hence, they are more susceptible to the ailments and early death than men. Almost 35% of people in the developing world depend on firewood for

cooking affecting the whole cardiovascular system of women, thus reducing their lives. Why is it that these governments cannot even provide kerosene to these people when the number of automobiles is increasing faster here than in the rich countries. How is it that gasoline for automobiles is available while kerosene for cooking is not? Therefore, our question is where are the women and the youth to challenge the wrong? This is the day to organize and revolt against the present disastrous situation and policies of the government.

As the 'Save Environment Group' in America has advised the Earth Day groups: "Please act now by urging the Bush administration to stop reversing decades of environmental and health protections." They have prepared the Action Plans to be taken up by people - people who care and people who recognize their power to make a difference. Too long have we ravaged our mother Earth, the only planet we have for us to live on. We will have to pack our bags if we continue on the present reckless path of suicide. Earth Day is the day of charting a new path - a path of reconstruction, a path to save our ecological systems and a path to recognize, in all humility, that this earth is not for us to consume it to death. We are here to express our reverence and conserve it as our home. Today, we are not going to celebrate, but organize, unite, here and everywhere in the world, to recreate the earth for our future.

(Presented at the Earth Day International 2002 held at the Convocation Hall, Mumbai University, Mumbai)

* *Round Up is the brand name of a systematic, broad-spectrum herbicide applied to genetically modified Round Up seeds. It is produced by the US Life Sciences giant, Monsanto. Round Up ready crops include maize, sorghum, cotton, soy, canola and alfaalfa*

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*“Our purpose must be to use life for creativity,
which means using the future as a tool to create
sustainable ways of living. People have the
power to change their attitudes and assumptions,
to realize that resources are finite and to
develop technologies and ways of living in
dignity and sufficiency that don’t damage nature
or basic human values.”*

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We Shall Come Again

When we heard
knocking on the door
after the midnight,
we thought that
it was wind
whispering through the door,

Then we heard
from the window
the sobbing sounds
of mourning-
nearby the trees
were crying.

They broke the door
and entered our
house-they were police.

We challenged them
and the sticks broke.

Then they came
en mass with
guns and bullets
we remained unmoved.

Now the birds were screaming.

Then arrived a battallion
with tankers and bombs.
They ordered: "No opposition.
Or be eliminated.
"Development or death".
"Submit."

One by one they
blew up our heads.
Butchered others
And the rest were
locked up in prisons.

It is the state order.
Opposition must end.
Development is a must.
Trees must go
Animals and birds
must leave.
Rivers must disappear.
We want development,
Soon, as the land
was cleared,
Chimnies arrived.
And from far away,
they returned

burning "progress"
and inviting trees
birds and rivers to dance and
sing

The sun rose again to smile
in the morning.

The high tides roared.

And we thundered
with our might

"We shall come
again,

and again and again-
even after

the Sun sets."

Let trees, birds and
rivers sing and dance-
even after eternity.

Manifesto for Human Survival

“I now understand that my welfare is only possible if I acknowledge my unity with all the people of the world without exception.”

—Leo Tolstoy

A profound transformation of the global political structure and international relations has taken place in recent years. The United States has emerged as the wealthiest and the most powerful military power in the world. Its supreme imperial power and unilateralism in the globalized world threatens the present rule of law, peace and security.

The recent invasion of Iraq by the United States was a violation of the United Nations Charter and international law. The United States has already withdrawn from the ABM Treaty after 30 years and is planning to build a national missile defense (NMD) system disregarding the 1967 Space Treaty. Besides, it has challenged several major international treaties such as the banning of land mines and chemical weapons, Kyoto Climate Change Accord and more. In short, the U.S. has emerged as a challenge to the integrity of the United Nations - the only organization with the mandate of settling international disputes and maintaining peace and law in the world. If unchallenged by the people of the world, this may result in global anarchy. The U.S. invaded Iraq, violating the U.N. Charter and international law.

Almost 30 years ago, “A Human Manifesto” initiated by the then U.N. Secretary General, U. Thant and signed by 86

luminaries warned:

“Human life on our planet is in jeopardy.

It is in jeopardy from war that could pulverize the human habitat.

It is in jeopardy from preparations for war that destroy or diminish the prospects of decent existence.

..... If these dangers are to be removed and if human development is to be assured, we the people of this planet must accept obligations to each other and to the generations of human beings to come.

We have the obligation to free our world of war by creating an enduring basis for worldwide peace.

We have the obligation to place the human interest above the national interest, and human sovereignty above national sovereignty.

We have the obligation to make human rights the primary concern of society.

We have the obligation to create a world order in which Man neither has to kill nor be killed.

In order to carry out these obligations, we the people of this world assert our primary allegiance to each other in the family of man. We declare our individual citizenship in the world community and our support for a United Nations capable of governing our planet in the common human interest.

This world belongs to the people who inhabit it. We have the right to change it, shape it, nurture it.

Life in the universe is unimaginably rare. It must be protected, respected and cherished.

Now, as then, we challenge unilateralism. We must launch a

global campaign to mobilize people in every nation, every community in order to uphold the rule of law, institute an international machinery to resolve conflicts among nations, bring total disarmament and evolve the United Nations as an institution of global governance.

These are momentous times. People everywhere should unite resolve and mobilize to influence legislators and the rulers in order to build a new world of universal law, justice, sustainability and equity. As former Secretary General U. Thant entreated three decades ago, “Let us pledge our energies and resources of spirit to the preservation of the human habitat and to the infinite possibilities of human betterment in our time.”

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“Our task is to build the U.N. as a true institution of global governance. No Security Council, but a council of World Security responsible for total disarmament, control of terrorism, dismantling of NATO before it becomes a world army under the supremacy of the US. Let the world court be the only instrument functioning independently for adjudicating with international conflicts.”

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A Dazzling Labyrinth

When the procession of men reached the gate of the
earth,
they joyously sang and danced together
in the midst of whirlwinds and storms.
There were glimpses of the fathomless universe:
stars, planets and galaxies,
moving aimlessly in vast emptiness.
It was the material truth of reality.
I found myself as master of this endless, vast kingdom.
I perceived --
far beyond the glimpses of my vision lay
darkness, void and ignorance.

But why am I here?
What am I doing in such a grotesque infinity?
I have a purpose.
I can shape the universe to my design.

Laws, definitions and theories reveal
the truth of all that is known.
I know and my knowledge is power --
to create and destroy.
All at my command.
I am the instrument shaping the images for Gods.
I manipulate the gene,

I conquer the space.

I love.

I hate.

I am happy enjoying the sunlight, food
and all that is delightful.

Many of my kind live in the long night of darkness -
in misery, suffering and perpetual death.

And what about my illness yesterday?

Today I am old and decrepit.

Perhaps soon to become worthless at the
edge of an evening.

“Fill it up!

Check the oil.”

“The engine needs to be replaced.”

There is one truth!

I must die one day.

I want to live – to live forever.

I want to hold eternity in my palm.

Let my existence span the course of infinity.

I want to find beauty.

And with goodness I shall bring
heavens to this immortal world.

There will be a Shangrila.

Yes, I love you.

I shall bring the stars to your feet.

And in that ecstasy we shall create fragrance

to the far expenses of space.

A couple died in an accident.
 An earthquake destroyed an advanced civilization.
 Millions died of an epidemic.
 The war between Chuchus and Pupus
 Wrought a catastrophe.
 The sounds of music swirled
 through the oceans.
 The fish danced to death
 in the environmental waste.
 Monoxides and dioxides rampaging
 through the streets of our cities and every
 corner of our lands.
 The wilderness has died.

It is a wedding night.
 Dinner, dance and drink
 delight my stomach and mind.
 I drink to everyone's health.
 How beautiful!
 delightful!
 happy!

Round and round, by chance or purpose,
 I travel for a short while or for eternity,
 to that destiny,
 where I dance to death

and live to the oblivion and entropy.
I am tired today.
I shall keep my appointment tomorrow.
I invented a great theory yesterday.
I missed the train today.
May I lock the door?
The earth is sleeping away.
Your kiss destroyed everything.
Now I am free to put the universe in my stomach –
in the blood and bones.
My mind reveals fire, birds and truth.

Trees are green.
The snow is white.
Strawberries are wild.
My child is born.
Oh! clothes are dirty.
There is no room to bury the dead.
All the leaves are dry in the forest.
Worms, pests and viruses are lords of life.
I am elected President of the universe.
With infinite power I make
and remake the system of things.
I love power.
It is beautiful.

Zoom, the Himalays have crumbled
to sublimity.

The madness has gone wild.
The genius is lionized.
The oceans cry in vain.
Gods are envious.
We smile in futility.

Intelligence and time are murdered.
Space is raped.
There is bliss —
happiness of the soul.
Sobbing, crying,
I eat the brood
and drink tears.
There is a procession of drunkards
moving in the darkness.

Roshni Udyavar Yehuda is an architect, environmental scientist and writer who was closely associated with Dr. Rashmi Mayur as a Research Associate; She was the Head of Sustainable Development Program at Dr. Rashmi Mayur's International Institute for Sustainable Future, Mumbai from October 1997 to March 2003.

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"Rashmi Mayur devoted his life to inspiring hundreds of thousands to join his fight against planetary genocide. Through his talks, writings, radio and television appearances, Rashmi used his passion and scientific analysis to examine what must be done to restore the health of our environment. Rashmi's insight and depth of knowledge was a bright light on a darkened world."

- Selma Brackman, President, War & Peace Foundation

"Dr. Rashmi Mayur was one of those rare human beings who should be called a person of genius. He was truly a "Renaissance man," with universal knowledge and interests. In this powerful collection of his writings, these qualities of greatness come through. He loved nature, human beings, and life. His great energy and hope shine through these essays and poems, leaving the reader more in love with life, and more committed to transform our world from a place of suffering and destruction into a place of beauty, peace, and freedom. This book will be of interest to all who care about the future of our world. It is also a wonderful testimony to the spirit of Dr. Rashmi Mayur."

- Dr. Glen T. Martin, Professor of Philosophy, Radford University and Secretary General, The World Constitution and Parliament Association.

Dr. Rashmi Mayur was a tireless crusader for billions of earth's people who are suffering from poverty, disease, natural disasters and the increasingly catastrophic disasters wrought by humans. In these writings, you will experience the breadth of his thinking and the depth of his sincerity. We at the World Future Society are proud to have had Dr. Mayur as a frequent speaker at our conferences. These meetings have provided Dr. Mayur's many admirers with an opportunity to meet and talk first hand with one of the great spirits of our age. All of us must respond to Dr. Mayur's hope that we will "create the world which our children dream of". I commend his words to your attention."

- Dr. Edward Cornish, President, World Future Society, Washington D.C.

The Anthology include Essays on Evolution of Life, Biodiversity, Sustainable Energy, Water, Population, Global Warming, Science & Technology, Development, Space, Privatization, Ecological footprint, Children, Disaster mitigation, Environmental Education, United Nations, Terrorism, Peace, People's movement, & World Citizens