

Appealing for a better world

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We're hurting ourselves

Take a look at the earth - that is, where it is still untouched by people. Isn't it beautiful? Take a look at its diversity: from the minutest luminous blossom right up to the most powerful tree, from the tiny rivulet all the way to the mighty ocean, from the fertile plane with its bountiful vegetation from which we live right up to stark landscapes with imposing mountains and cliffs. The earth provides space for uncounted creatures to live on and they have gone forth from it as we have gone forth. All of us need one another - more or less. Curiously, although we need animals and plants, people are needed least of all.

And what do we do? We brazenly exploit nature. Instead of showing it respect, we are in the process of destroying it. The diversity of species has already declined alarmingly. Are we blind? What does the earth look like when people have come there? Where has its radiant diversity gone? - We encounter rubbish thrown away into the landscape and waters, trees that have died, more and more monocultures and erosion, less and less plant and animal species, a sky blotted out and waters poisoned by pollutants wherever we live and animals fed with nutrients that do not deserve the name. Even if it doesn't bother us that we are damaging our environment, we should begin to comprehend that we are hurting ourselves.

We have lost the measure of all things

In the meantime, nobody seems to be very disturbed about the destruction of our habitats. They want to do even more than that and they do not even stop at their own species. We humans have lost the measure of all things. We exploit the earth, exploit the animals and exploit our fellow human beings. Take a good close look what is happening right in front of our front door, in

our own country and in other regions of the world. If you take a real close look, you will see the (economically and culturally caused) injustices that could just as easily be called racism. Some of these injustices are hard to see at first glance while others stink to high heaven. Here is a little group that constantly gets richer and there is a mass of people who are always constantly getting poorer. They hardly have a place to sleep and have much too little to eat. Do we really want all of this?

We are only here for a short while on the earth. Shouldn't a visitor treat his or her host with a little bit of respect? What right do we have not to treat the earth with care? And what about other visitors? We should also treat them with decency and respect. Aren't those the rules that apply anywhere you are invited to? What do we do? We slaughter more and more animals because we want to eat more and more meat and we forget that they are really our relatives. The human embryo goes through all of the stages of evolution in our mother's womb starting from single-celled animals. Shouldn't we be more humble? Instead, we not only destroy nature around us, we fight one another - not only with words, but also with weapons. Does that make any sense? Unstoppable greed for riches, power and being ahead in the polls - why?

A life full of diversity

Have we forgotten that in the final analysis we all have the same origin, even if we do not have an exact name for it? Some say God, other say Allah. Some talk about divinity, other talk about Tao, while still others talk about energy. People have contemplated where they come from throughout their lives, which is why there are so many names and concepts for it. Who would be so presumptuous to maintain that his or her idea of God, the divine or where we come from was the one and only right idea.

We will never be sure if we have discovered the entirety of its substance. In other words, why don't we accept and respect the diversity of ideas on our earth and consider that the person you are talking to might also be right? We might be able to reduce the tension of living with one another.

We are not equal, we were never equal and we will never be equal. However, not being equal does not mean that we are not equivalent. We are all equal in value – each and every one with his or her individual strengths and weakness. Everybody has his or her own dignity that we should respect no matter what they look like, where they come from, what colour their skin is or what they believe in. Dignity also means a life in dignity: enough healthy food, a roof over your head, access to education and freedom from oppression. Is it so difficult to put this into action without forcing your ideas on other people?

We are one organism

There is also diversity among people. Why don't we celebrate diversity and learn from one another? Why are we afraid of the Other, of the supposed Unknown? We are not really different from one another. We all have the same origin - be it God who created the universe and us along with the earth - or an energy that exploded in the Big Bang and created an infinite number of fragments that we people and the nature surrounding us are only tiny particles of. Together with all particles and other manifestations we form the whole, even though the formation is different than at the beginning of time. We are one organism where everything is connected with everything else and in which everything acts and reacts to everything.

So, why do we exploit nature or other people when we all belong to the same integral whole and when we are actually all

one? Why do we fight one another? – Because we are driven by greed and are never satisfied with what we have? Because we want access to raw materials just for ourselves or our people? Because we believe we were the only one with the right attitude about God, life or society? Whatever we do, everything has an impact on the entirety, the organism we belong to. In the final analysis, that falls back on us. We often do not recognise this immediately. After all, certain things just take more time until you see the results. But nature shows us this in no uncertain terms.

Respecting human rights

What can we do? The world is large and it offers a home to wide range of cultures. Nature also teaches us that diversity is also a form of abundance. We should not underestimate it; instead, we should treasure it. Every person, group or country will have to find its own way based on values that unite us all. Article 1 of the United Nations' General Declaration of Human Rights from 1948 states that:

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”

In those days, 48 countries voted for this declaration while eight abstained. The 171 countries at the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, Austria – and almost all attended – unanimously professed their obligations in terms of human rights. This gives us a feeling of hope. Unfortunately, declarations alone just aren't enough, as we see time and time again. Selfishness always makes its way and more and more frequently. If we really want to change things, we will have to eliminate selfishness. How can we do that? It is obvious that just appealing

to people's conscience is not enough. We need to change our attitudes.

Vanquishing selfishness

The solution is love. It is said that people long for love. But, do we also give love? Do we give one another love going beyond the erotic and parental, the love that embraces everything and everybody? Love is the key.

We can only conquer selfishness with love because we will not hurt anyone or anything we love. If we really love nature, we will try our best to make sure it is sustained. If we really love our fellow human beings, we will see them with our hearts and without prejudice. We will accord them the same needs and rights we accord ourselves and we will act accordingly. We will put our hearts into a life with dignity for everybody, for equal opportunities, for justice and living together in freedom and equality.

Without force or violence

If we do this without force or violence, regardless of what the specific case is all about, our love will also come back to us. Every time you act, you create an effect that comes back to the person acting: He that soweth violence shall reap violence and that soweth love shall reap love. If we embrace this guiding principle, it means there shall be understanding among people and peoples, an end to injustice and exploitation and finally the end of wars. I know that this sounds idealistic, but does not mean that it is impossible. It is just a long and tiresome road.

Let us take the first step – each at their own door in their own land!