Eternal Bhoomi

For Earth Consciousness and Sustainable Living

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Good for Us...
Good for the Planet

Food Beautiful Food
SATISH KUMAR

A New Agenda
WENDELL BERRY

The Transition Initiative
JAY GRIFFITHS

"As within, so without."

- The 2nd of the 7 Hermetic Principles attributed to the Greek God, Hermes.

Illustration by Nidhi Aggarwal

9 Ways
Good *for* Us...
Good *for* the Planet

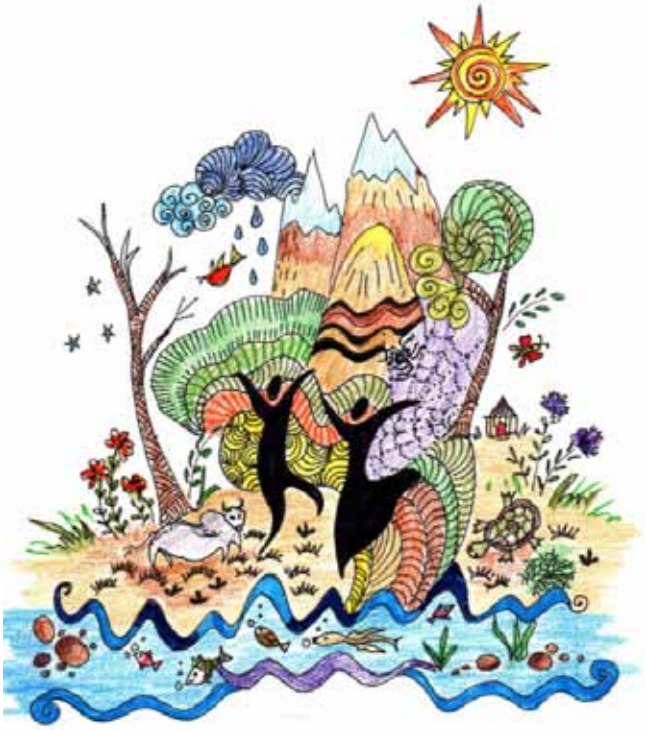


Illustration by Nidhi Aggarwal

From the early years of the 20th century, there have been several great visionaries who realized that our modern civilization was overstepping its limits of exploitation and consumption on earth. From Tolstoy and Gandhiji to Schumacher and the Limits to Growth report, there were several warnings that we were headed towards disaster, unless we changed course to a more sustainable path. The way these messages were received largely was that all the products of development we learnt to love and enjoy, the cars and the planes, the convenience foods and gizmos – these were all good for us but not good for the planet, but how can we give up development? Yes, we are trashing the planet, but sorry, it can't be helped!

Then in the last decade or so there has been a whole fresh approach that has emerged, supported largely by scientists and researchers in various fields, particularly health and medicine, psychology, neurology and behavioral sciences. These include findings about the connection between vegetables, fruits and building immunity and health; about communities, relationship and alienation; about brain science, studies on stress and dealing with it, and much more.

These findings seem to reflect the Hermetic Principle: As within, so without. While we have been romancing the 'good life' created by development, the hidden reality that many of its products are actually not being good for us has emerged.

The more well-accepted examples are about chemical agriculture and industrial food creating health hazards as well as degradation of land and water; instead, organic farming would be good for the land as well as for us. Industrial processed foods, particularly meat, causes a range of diseases like diabetes, heart diseases and cancers; instead, local, fresh and home-cooked foods help us build immunity and are highly sustainable. The message that is emerging is that in many, many aspects of our lives, what is good for the planet seems to be really what is good for us in the long run.

Even when it comes to political, economic and social processes, what is good for sustainability seems to be what is good for human communities. For instance, de-urbanisation and fostering a diversity of cultures seems to be better for people's need for a sense of belonging and happiness, and also for sustainable living; local communities where people can take charge of their needs and be interdependent, works better for managing the ecological commons than the centralized control by nation states that we now have.

In this issue of Eternal Bhoomi, renowned eco-philosophers, Satish Kumar and Wendell Berry share their views on food and human scale and locally adapted economies. The Bhoomi team has also elaborated on 9 ways that are Good for Us and Good for the Planet (which actually means good for us to survive as a civilisation!)

Now, we request you, dear readers, to join us in spreading the word about these and many other issues through introducing the Bhoomi Magazine to your friends. A great way is to offer gift membership to some of them.

Seetha Ananthasivan
Email: seetha.bhoomi@gmail.com

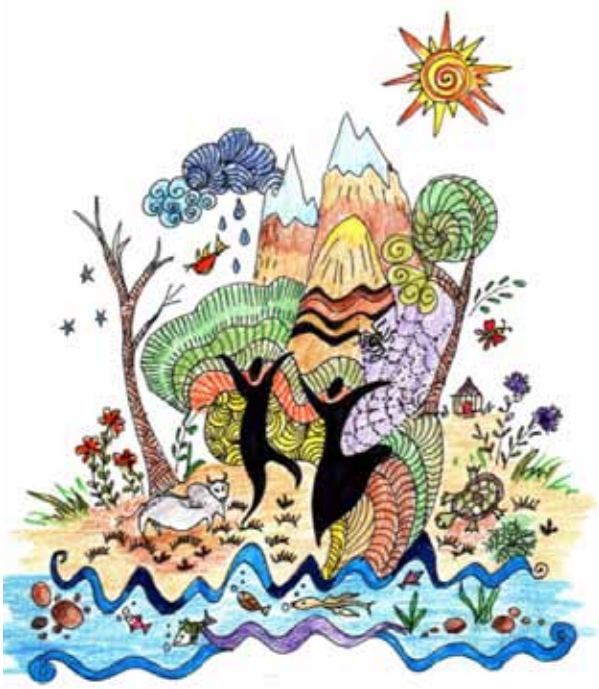
EternalBhoomi Issue No. 14 - April - June 2013

Eternal Bhoomi is committed to bringing you holistic perspectives from renowned writers and thinkers as well as practical ideas and examples of earth conscious living from people around the world

Good for Us, Good for the Planet:

The development dream has such a strong hold on us that even when its products have been harmful to us, we continue to be addicted to them.

Here are 9 ways that will be important in the future as ways to live more harmoniously on our Planet - with all the reasons why they would be good for us too. They help us re-imagine the future as well!



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FOOD *Beautiful* FOOD

Photos: Monal Shah

Food from the trees and vegetarian food grown organically are an ecological imperative.

- Satish Kumar

Big problems are consequences of small actions. Global warming and food insecurity are big problems but they are a result of the small activities we perform every day.

Conversely, the big solutions are also rooted in small actions; if we shop, move, eat, drink, work and live our everyday life with disregard to the integrity of the Earth community, we are bound to destabilise the finely balanced harmony of our home planet. On the other hand, if we perform everyday actions carefully and mindfully, we contribute to the wellbeing of our entire ecosystem.

Faced with the huge challenges of our time, it is easy to feel frustrated, depressed and powerless: "What can I do to address monumental crises such as climate change, consumerism, hunger and social injustice?"

"The answer is as simple as it is disconcerting," said E. F. Schumacher. "We can each of us work to put our own house in order." Putting our house in order starts with our dining table, our kitchen, our garden and our shopping. In other words, our food.

The first step towards preserving the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community is to eat only good, fresh, local, organic and delicious food every day, every week, every month and every year. In order to achieve this, we have to start paying attention to the whole process of growing, distributing and eating food. However busy we may be, if we have no time for gardening, cooking and eating together with our family, friends and guests, then we have no time to live, no time to preserve the beauty of the planet.

We eat every day but we hardly know how our food is grown and where it is coming from. For those who live in the fast lane, who buy ready meals from a supermarket, at a railway station on a return journey home, or on a commuter train, food is merely fuel for the body and nothing more. But for those who are ecologically minded and spiritually conscious, food is sacred and sustains the soul as well as our society.

According to the authors of the Upanishads, life is because food is and therefore we are taught not to denigrate food or show indifference to it. Food is the primary condition of all life; body, mind, spirit and soul. Food comes even before god. "You cannot worship god on an empty stomach," said the poet Kabir.

To demonstrate that the powers of the mind, and not just physical strength, are dependent on food, the philosopher Uddalaka asked his son Shvetaketu, who was a great scholar of the Vedas and proud of his mental capacities, to go without food for fifteen days. At the end of that period, Shvetaketu was asked to recite the Vedas but he could not. His mental powers and memory had become weak and feeble. He was then offered food, after which his mental strength slowly returned sufficiently for him to recite the Vedas once more.

This story illustrates that food is of the utmost importance for physical as well as spiritual nourishment and so, before we attend to business, politics, science, technology and everything else, we must get our food systems right, and we can start by choosing food which is wholesome, natural and grown without damaging the Earth.

With a rising population and the growing threat of climate change, vegetarian food has become an ecological imperative. We should also be deriving increasing amounts of our food from the trees; much of our oils, fruits, nuts, and medicines can and should come from perennial crops like trees. Thus we can reduce our impact on the land and at the same time increase carbon sequestration in the soil as well as in the trees. Trees are our latter-day angels. Food security, water security and climate security are guaranteed by trees. Trees are our only true food insurance policy.

Sometimes we get it right, but mostly we are getting it wrong and, as a result, we are contributing to the destruction of the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community.

Satish Kumar is the Editor-in-Chief of Resurgence & Ecologist Magazine and the co-founder of the Schumacher College, U.K. He is also a member of the Panel of Advisors of Bhoomi College and the Bhoomi Magazine.

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The Transition Initiative

Changing the scale of change

- Jay Griffiths

Art: Nikki McClure

Many people feel that individual action on climate change is too trivial to be effective but that they are unable to influence anything at a national, governmental level. They find themselves paralyzed between the apparent futility of the small-scale and impotence in the large-scale.

The Transition Initiative works right in the middle, at the scale of the community, where actions are significant, visible, and effective.

A while ago, I heard an American scientist address an audience in Oxford, England, about his work on the climate crisis. He was precise, unemotional, rigorous, and impersonal: all strengths of a scientist.

The next day, talking informally to a small group, he pulled out of his wallet a much-loved photo of his thirteen-year-old son. He spoke as carefully as he had before, but this time his voice was sad, worried, and fatherly. His son, he said, had become so frightened about climate change that he was debilitated, depressed, and disturbed. Some might have suggested therapy, Prozac, or baseball for the child. But in this group one voice said gently, "What about the Transition Initiative?"

If the Transition Initiative were a person, you'd say he or she was charismatic, wise, practical, positive, resourceful, and very, very popular. Starting with the town of Totnes in Devon, England, in September 2006, the movement has spread like wildfire across the U.K. (delightfully wriggling its way into The Archers, Britain's longest-running and most popular radio soap opera), and on to the U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. The core purpose of the Transition Initiative is to address, at the community level, the twin issues of climate change and peak oil—the declining availability of "ancient sunlight," as fossil fuels have been called. The initiative is set up to enable towns or neighborhoods to plan for, and move toward, a post-oil and low-carbon future: what Rob Hopkins, founder of the Transition Initiative, has termed "the great transition of our time, away from fossil fuels."

Part of the genius of the movement rests in its acute and kind psychology. It acknowledges the emotional effect of these issues, from that thirteen-year-old's sense of fear and despair, to common feelings of anger, impotence, and denial, and it uses insights from the psychology of addiction to address some reasons why it is hard for people to detoxify themselves from an addiction to (or dependence on) oil. It acknowledges that healthy psychological functioning depends on a belief that one's needs will be met in the future; for an entire generation, that belief is now corroded by anxiety over climate change.

Many people feel that individual action on climate change is too trivial to be effective but that they are unable to influence anything at a national, governmental level. They find themselves paralyzed between the apparent futility of the small-scale and impotence in the large-scale. The Transition Initiative works right in the middle, at the scale of the community, where actions are significant,

Keeping an eye on the prize (reducing carbon emissions and oil dependence), Transition communities have then looked at their own situation in various practical frames—for example, food production, energy use, building, waste, and transport—seeking to move toward a situation where a community could be self-reliant.

visible, and effective. "What it takes is a scale at which one can feel a degree of control over the processes of life, at which individuals become neighbors and lovers instead of just acquaintances and ciphers. . . participants and protagonists instead of just voters and taxpayers. That scale is the human scale," wrote author and secessionist Kirkpatrick Sale in his 1980 book, Human Scale.

How big am I? As an individual, five foot two and whistling. At a government level, I find I've shrunk, smaller than the X on my ballot paper. But at a community level, I can breathe in five river-sources and breathe out three miles of green valleys.

Scale matters.

We speak of economies of scale, and I would suggest that there are also moralities of scale. At the individual scale, morality is capricious: people can be heroes or mass murderers, but the individual is usually constrained by inner conscience and always constrained by size. While a nation-state can at best offer a meager welfare system, at worst—as the history of nations in the twentieth century showed so brutally—morality need not be constrained by any conscience, and through its enormity a state can engineer a genocide. At the community level, though, morality is complex: certainly communities can be jealous and spiteful and less given to heroism than an individual, yet a community's power to harm is far less than that of a state, simply because of its size. Further, because there are more niche reasons for people to identify with their community, and simply because there is a greater per-capita responsibility, a community is more susceptible to a sense of shame. Community morality involves a sense of fellow-feeling, is attuned to the common good, far steadier than individual morality, far kinder than the State: its moral range reaches neither heaven nor hell but is grounded, well-rooted in the level of Earth.

Community morality involves a sense of fellow-feeling, is attuned to the common good, far steadier than individual morality, far kinder than the State: its moral range reaches neither heaven nor hell but is grounded, well-rooted in the level of Earth.

Starting with a steering group of just a handful of people in one locality, the motivation to become a Transition community spreads, often through many months of preparation, information-giving, and awareness-raising of the issues of climate change and peak oil. In those months, there are talks and film screenings, and a deliberate attempt to encourage a sense of a community's resilience in the face of stresses. When members of the steering group judge that there is enough support and momentum for the project, it is launched, or "unleashed."

Keeping an eye on the prize (reducing carbon emissions and oil dependence), Transition communities have then looked at their own situation in various practical frames—for example, food production, energy use, building, waste, and transport—seeking to move toward a situation where a community could be self-reliant. At this stage, the steering group steps back, and various subgroups can form around specific aspects of transitioning. Strategies have included the promotion of local food production, planting fruit trees in public spaces, community gardening, and community composting. In terms of energy use, some communities have begun "oil vulnerability auditing" for local businesses, and some have sought to re-plan local transport for "life beyond the car." In one Transition Town there are plans to make local, renewable energy a resource owned by the community, in another there are plans to bulk-buy solar panels as a cooperative and sell them locally without profit. There are projects of seed saving, seed swapping, and creating allotments—small parcels of land on which individuals can grow fruit and vegetables.

"The people who see the value of changing the system are ordinary people, doing it for their children," says Naresh Giangrande, who was involved in setting up the first Transition Town. "The political process is corrupted by money, power, and vested interests. I'm not writing off large corporations and government, but because they have such an investment in this system, they haven't got an incentive to change. I can only see us getting sustainable societies from the grassroots, bottom-up, and only that way can we get governments to change." In the States, the "350" project (the international effort to underscore the need to decrease atmospheric carbon dioxide to 350 parts per million) is similarly asking ordinary people to signal to those in power. If change doesn't come from above, it must come from below, and politicians would be unwise to ignore the concern about peak oil and climate change coming from the grassroots.

The grassroots. Both metaphorically and literally. Transition Initiative founder Rob Hopkins used to be a permaculture teacher, and permaculture's influence is wide and deep. As permaculture works with, rather than against, nature, so the Transition Initiative works with, rather than against, human nature; it is as collaborative and cooperative in social tone as permaculture is in its attitude toward plants and, like permaculture, is prepared to observe and think, slowly.

One of the subgroups that Transition communities typically use is called "Heart and Soul," which focuses on the psychological and emotional aspects of climate crisis, of change, of community. Importantly, people are encouraged to be participants in the conversation, not just passive spectators: it is a nurturant

Photograph: Ananth Somaiah

To mend, to tend, and to restore all expand beautifully from textiles, vegetables, and furniture into those most quiet of qualities; to restore is restorative, to tend involves tenderness, to mend hints at amends. There is restitution here of community itself.

process, involving anyone who wants to be a part. Good conversation involves quality listening, for an open-minded, attentive listener can elicit the best thoughts of a speaker. Giangrande says that the Transition Initiative—which has used keynote speakers—is also exploring the idea of keynote listeners as "a collaborative way of learning how to use knowledge." When I asked exactly what that would involve, he couldn't be specific, because it was still only an idea, which is revealing of the Transition process, very much a work-in-progress. The fact that they were trying out an idea without being able to predict the results has a vitality to it, an intellectually energetic quality, a profound liveliness.

The Transition Initiative describes itself as a catalyst, with no fixed answers, unlike traditional environmentalism, which is more prescriptive, advocating certain responses. Again unlike conventional environmentalism, it emphasizes the role of hope and proactiveness, rather than guilt and fear as motivators. Whether intentionally or not, environmentalism can seem exclusive, and the Transition Initiative is whole-heartedly inclusive.

While in many ways the Transition Initiative is new, it often finds its roots in the past, in a practical make-do-and-mend attitude. There is an interesting emphasis on "re-skilling" communities in traditional building and organic gardening, for example: crafts that were taken for granted two generations ago but are now often forgotten. Mandy Dean, who helped set up a Transition Initiative in her community in Wales, describes how her group bought root stocks of fruit trees and then organized grafting workshops; it was practical, but also "it was about weaving some ideas back into culture."

In the British context, the memory of World War II is crucial, for during the war people experienced long fuel shortages and needed to increase local food production—digging for victory. In both the U.K. and the U.S., the shadow of the Depression years now looms uncomfortably close, encouraging an attitude of mending rather than buying new; tending one's own garden; restoring the old.

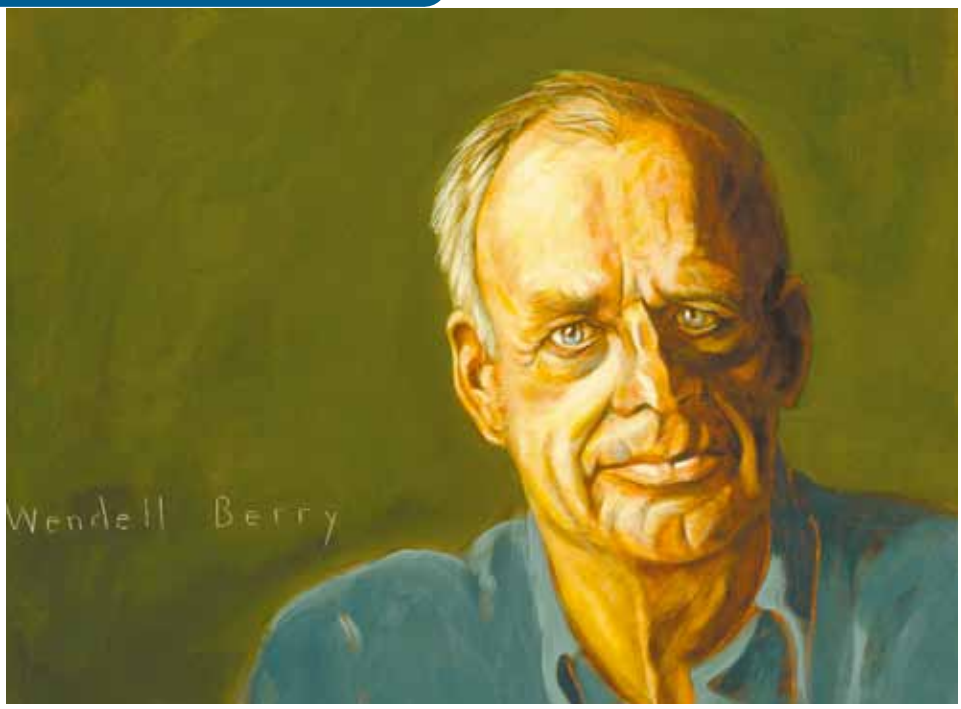
To mend, to tend, and to restore all expand beautifully from textiles, vegetables, and furniture into those most quiet of qualities; to restore is restorative, to tend involves tenderness, to mend hints at amends. There is restitution here of community itself.

For all of human history, people have engaged with the world through some form of community, and this is part of our social evolution. Somewhere deep inside us all is an archived treasure, the knowledge of what it is to be part of a community via extended families, locality, village, a shared fidelity to common land, unions, faith communities, language communities, co-operatives, gay communities, even virtual communities, which, for all their unreality, still reflect a yearning for a wider home for the collective soul. The nineteenth-century artist William Morris spoke of the gentle social-ism that he called fellowship: "Fellowship is life, and lack of fellowship is death."

People never need communities more than when there are threats to security, food, and lives. The Transition Initiative recognizes how much we need this scale now, because of peak oil and climate change. But beyond this concrete need, the lack of a sense of community has negative psychological impacts on individuals across the "developed" world, as people report persistent and widespread feelings of loneliness, isolation, dispossession, alienation, and depression. Beyond a certain threshold, increased income does not create increased happiness, and the false promise of consumerism (buy this: be happy) sets the individual on a quest for a constantly receding goal of their own private fulfillment, while sober evidence repeatedly suggests that happiness is more surely found in contributing toward a community endeavor. (The Buddha smiles a tired, patient smile: "I've been telling you that for years.") Community endeavor increases "social capital," that captivating idea expressing the value of local relationships, networks, help, and friendships. A rise in social capital could be the positive concomitant of a fall in financial capital that a low-carbon future may entail.

This is Part 1 of the article, originally published in the July/August 2009 issue of Orion magazine.

Jay Griffiths is an award-winning British writer and author of Wild: An Elemental Journey, Pip Pip: A Sideways Look at Time. She has also contributed to The Observer, the Ecologist, the London Review of Books, the Utne Reader, Wild Earth and Dark Mountain.



Painting: thegreenhorns.wordpress.com

A New Agenda

- Wendell Berry

For humans, local adaptation is not work for a few financers and a few intellectual and political hotshots. It is work for everybody, requiring everybody's intelligence. Which makes it work that is inherently democratic. This is a agenda that may be undertaken by ordinary citizens at any time.

Our fundamental problem is world destruction, caused by an irreconcilable contradiction between the natural world and the engineered world of industrialism. This conflict between Nature and human interest may have begun with the first tools and weapons, but only with the triumph of industrialism has it become absolute. Today the creaturely world is absolutely at the mercy of industrial processes, which are doing massive ecological damage. How much of this damage may be repairable by combined economic and cultural changes remains to be seen.

Industrial destructiveness, anyhow, is our disease. Most of our popular worries – climate change, fossil –fuel addiction, pollution, poverty, hunger and legitimated violence- are its symptoms. If, for example, we were somehow granted a limitless supply of cheap, clean energy, we would continue and probably even accelerate our destruction of the world by agricultural erosion, chemical poisoning, Industrial war, industrial recreation and various forms of 'development'.

And there is no use saying that if we can invent the nuclear bomb and fly to the moon, then of course we can solve hunger and related problems of land use. Epic feats of engineering require only a few brilliant technicians and a lot of money. But feeding a world of people year after year for a long time requires cultures of husbandry fitted to the nature of millions of unique small places – precisely the kind of cultures that industrialism has purposely disvalued, uprooted and destroyed.

Hard as it may be for a dislocated, miseducated, consumptive society to accept (and for its pet economists to believe), the future of food is not distinguishable from the future of the land, which is indistinguishable in turn from the future of human care. It depends ultimately on the health not of the financial system, but of the ecosphere. In the interest of that health, we will have to bring all the disciplines, all the arts and sciences, into conformity with the nature of places.

Like other species, we will have to submit to the necessity of local adaptation. I am sure that somebody will wish to remind me of the migration of birds, animals and insects, and also of migrations by humans from earliest times. Did these involve local adaptation? Yes: except for those of industrial humans using fossil fuel, all of these migrations have been made under the rule of local adaptation. The hummingbird successfully crossing the Gulf of Mexico is adapted, mile by mile, to the distance; it does not exceed its own mental and physical capacities, and it makes the trip, exactly like the pre-industrial human migrants, on contemporary energy. For humans, local adaptation is not work for a few financers and a few intellectual and political hotshots. It is work for everybody, requiring everybody's intelligence. Which makes it work that is inherently democratic.

So, what must we do?

- First, we must not work or think on a heroic scale. In our age of global industrialism, heroes too lightly risk the lives of people, place and things they do not see. We must work on a scale proper to our limited abilities. We must not break things we cannot fix. There is no justification, ever, for permanent ecological damage. If this imposes the verdict of guilt upon us all, so be it.

Hard as it may be for a dislocated, miseducated, consumptive society to accept (and for its pet economists to believe), the future of food is not distinguishable from the future of the land, which is indistinguishable in turn from the future of human care. It depends ultimately on the health not of the financial system, but of the ecosphere. In the interest of that health, we will have to bring all the disciplines, all the arts and sciences, into conformity with the nature of places.

- Second, we must abandon the homeopathic delusion that the damages done by industrialisation can be corrected by yet more industrialisation.
- Third, we must quit solving our problems by 'moving on'. We must try to stay put, and to learn where we are geographically, historically and ecologically.
- Fourth, we must learn, if we can, the sources and costs of our economic lives.
- Fifth, we must give up the notion that we are too good to do our own work and clean up our own messes . It is not acceptable for this work to be done for us either by wage slavery or by enslaving Nature.
- Sixth, by way of correction we must make local, locally adapted economies, based on local Nature, local sunlight, local intelligence and our own local work.
- Seventh, we must understand that these measures are radical. They go to the root of our problem. They cannot be performed for us by any expert, political leader or corporation

This is an agenda that may be undertaken by ordinary citizens at any time, on their own initiative. In fact, it describes an effort already undertaken all over the world by many people. It defines also the expectation that citizens who by their gifts are exceptional individuals still will not shirk even the most humble services.

This article is an edited version of a talk given at the Washington Post Live Future of Food Conference held in May 2012 at Georgetown University, Washington, DC. Wendell Berry is the author of The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture.

People are fed
by the food industry
which pays no attention to health

and are treated
by the health industry,
which pays no attention to food

- Wendell Berry

"You will never change your life until
you change something you do daily."

- Mike Murdock

"The past is our definition. We may strive, with good reason, to escape it, or to escape what is bad in it, but we will escape it only by adding something better to it."

- Wendell Berry

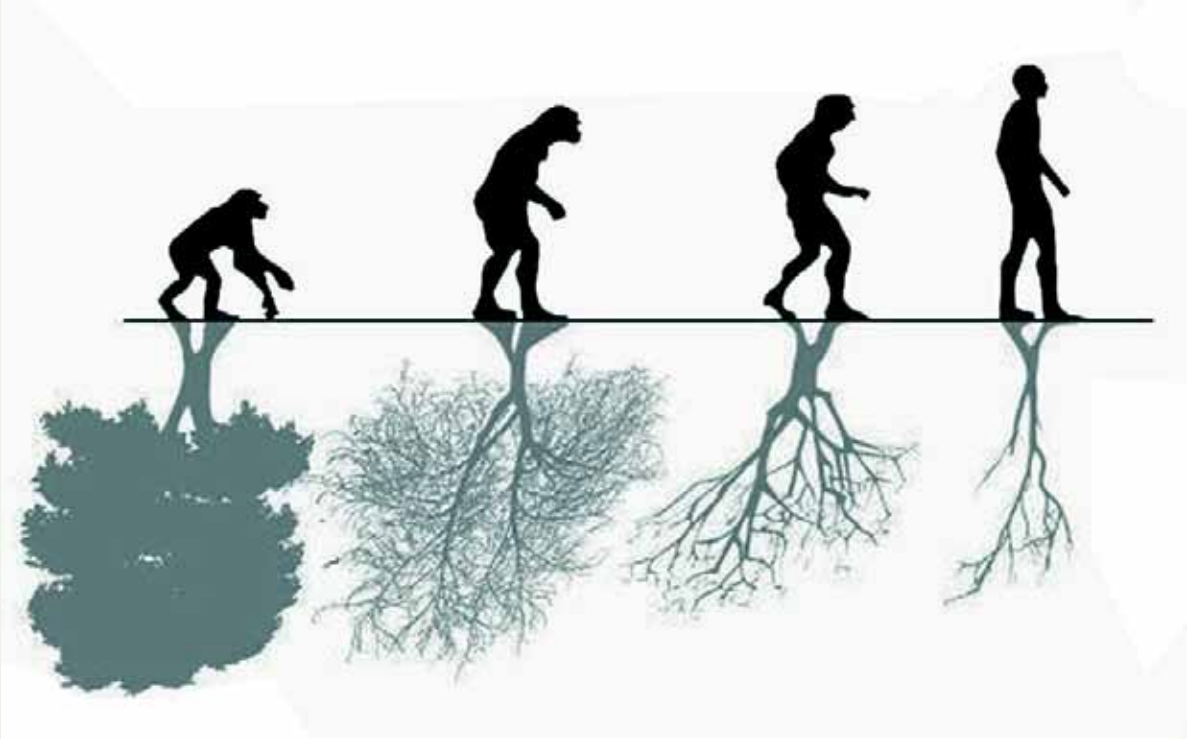


Image: sustainableman.org

9 Ways...

Good *for* Us
Good *for* the Planet

Carrying your Bottle of Water:

We may feel helpless to do anything about polluted rivers and oceans or later. But we can do something about the water we drink.

Going Vegetarian...

Vegetarianism was earlier about religious, ethical and personal beliefs. Today the issue with meat is related to climate change.

Real Foods: Fresh and Local

Waking up to the realities of real vs. deadened foods is more important than we may think.

Eat more Millets...

The 'coarse cereals' actually tell the story about how humankind has a propensity to get completely lost.

Walk, Cycle or Live near your Workplace...

Nothing new here. Just a prompt to live the good life again. Small step for mankind, giant leap towards sustainability.

Step out of the Mainstream...

This certainly calls for the transformation of head and heart – but once that has happened a really brave new world awaits us!

Volunteer for a Community Activity...

The old communities are dead or dying. Why not form new communities that will enliven and enlighten?

Start an Organic Garden in your Child's School

The school is a great place to create a multiplier effect – if that is not possible start an organic garden wherever!

Embrace Simplicity...

Freedom from our consumeristic world can set us on a magical path.

Real Foods: Fresh and Local

People around the world are waking up to the reality that food which is nutritious for us is also good for the planet, or rather, helps sustain our life on Earth.

If there is one thing that can make almost everyone's eyes shine and spirits lift up it is food, glorious food. Food is associated with so many wonderful things in our life – relationships, festivals, togetherness, fun and frolic and more. But what would we really consider as glorious food today? - To urban children, glorious food will most likely be pizzas or hamburgers or processed stuff of some kind. The kind that Michael Pollan 'best-selling author of 'In Defence of Food' calls "edible food like substances".

Most animals will agree that glorious food is fresh food – still almost-alive foods - freshly killed or freshly bitten off from plants. It's only certain bacteria, insects and scavenger birds and animals - which fulfil another part of Nature's grand plan - that eat dead or non-fresh food.

What's real about raw, fresh foods?

Let us first understand the fake foods or food-like substances: they are not 'real foods' that Mother Nature meant for us to eat – they are the factory-processed stuff with chemicals, heated up to high temperatures during processing which kill all useful enzymes in them, and packaged with more preservative chemicals to have a long shelf life in supermarkets. The best real foods are organic too - not doused in pesticides or grown with artificial fertilizers.

But why should we eat fresh foods and what are fresh foods? There are two kinds of real and fresh foods – freshly cooked and raw fresh foods. The freshest foods we can eat are raw foods – and what we can eat raw are fruits and vegetables and nuts and seeds. The first reason to eat raw fresh foods is that they are delicious! And they have so many enzymes and micronutrients that those who eat a good amount of raw foods rarely fall ill and live to a ripe old age.

Research findings make it clear that there are several benefits to eating fresh vegetables and fruits:

- *Our body's health depends on the health of our cells – which makes our tissues and organs healthy; and cell health depends on a slightly alkaline environment – which can be fostered best by about 60 % alkalizing foods and 40% of acidifying foods. And the alkalizing foods are the fresh ones – fruits and vegetables. All other 'real' foods like grains, pulses, milk, fresh eggs and meat leave acid residues in the body .*
- *Fresh plant based foods have a high water content and they have more fibre apart from all the other goodness they contain. Most of the diseases that have become common today – from heart disease and diabetes to neurological diseases and cancer – can be treated better if our diets include fresh vegetables and fruits. Hence they should not fill more than half our plates.*
- *As for fresh cooked foods – home cooking will help us avoid the chemicals; but let us remember that cooking in temperatures above 116 degrees C destroys enzymes, the living catalysts our bodies need, and hence we can steam some of our foods apart from eating raw salads and fruits.*
- *Fresh eggs and meat – these should come from farms or range-fed animals and not from factory farms which pump them with antibiotics and artificial foods. If the whole world were to avoid factory farmed meats, the amount of meat we consume would automatically come down and we would be a less sick world of human beings. But for more on this go to page 18.*

Why Local and Organic for a Sustainable World?

The short answer is this: over 35% of carbon emissions comes from food processed and packaged with chemicals in factories, grown through fossil-fuel, land and water intensive agriculture, and often, transported long distances to supermarkets. We need to add here that 2/3rds of the crops grown are for livestock (see page 17).

We are living in a world dominated by giant food corporates which control a large part of the food economy. They stand to profit most in a globalised world where increasingly people get dependent on addictive foods that are cheap and convenient. (Refer to Food Politics by Marion Nestle, Fast Food Nation by Eric Schlosser). In this globalised food system, business as usual means transporting wheat to India from the US or Australia, sending rice, fruits and vegetables from India to Europe and generally getting food to travel by air, sea, rail and road all the time.

And the food industry has focused on quantity for its profits, not quality. Hence industrial agriculture gobbles up 70% of the planet's freshwater resources and relies on petroleum based fertilisers and massive amounts of pesticides. According to the National Academy of Sciences in the US more than 80% of the most commonly used pesticides are potentially carcinogenic.

But then the question often asked is, can organic foods feed the world? Modern Organic practices denote not just an absence of synthetic chemicals or going back to 'primitive' farming – it is knowledge intensive farming which uses a sophisticated understanding of biological systems to build soil fertility and manage pests and weeds by applying ecological principles.

In one of the largest studies to analyze how agro ecological practices affect productivity in the developing world, researchers at the University of Essex in England analyzed 286 projects in 57 countries. Among the 12.6 million farmers followed, who were transitioning toward sustainable agriculture, researchers found an average yield increase of 79 percent across a wide variety of crop types.

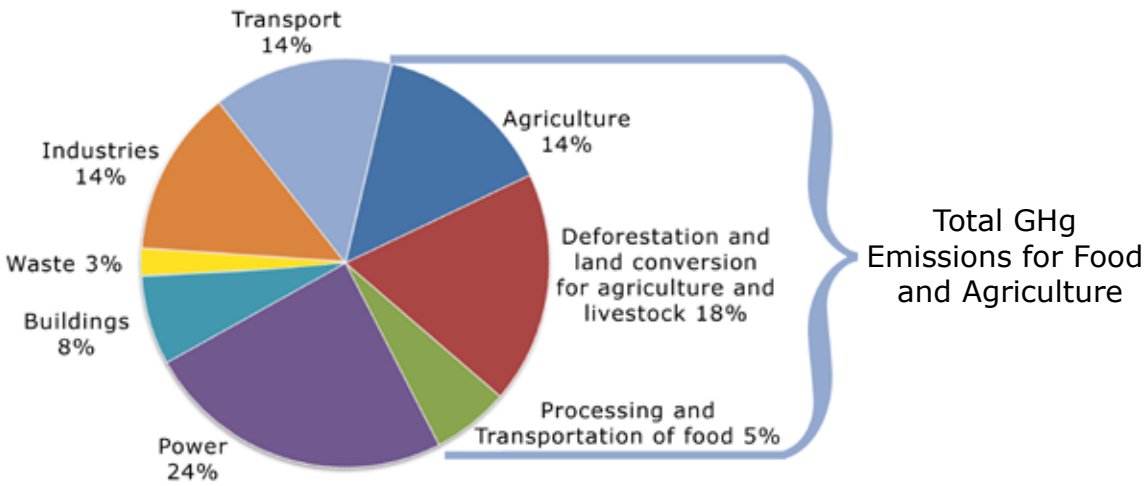
A 2008 U.N. Conference on Trade and Development report concluded that "organic agriculture can be more conducive to food security in Africa than most conventional production systems, and ... is more likely to be sustainable in the long term."

The evidence of the importance of local and organic foods has become incontrovertible. Yet vested interests in the corporate world will not change easily. A bottom up movement is essential therefore to apply pressure on the powers that be at least over a period of a few decades.

We are living in a world dominated by giant food corporates which control a large part of the food economy. They stand to profit most in a globalised world where increasingly people get dependent on addictive foods that are cheap and convenient. (see Food Politics by Marion Nestle, Fast Food Nation by Eric Schlosser). In this globalised food system, business as usual means transporting wheat to India from the US or Australia, sending rice, fruits and vegetables from India to Europe and generally getting food to travel by air, sea, rail and road all the time.

Cuba is the first 100% organic country; Bhutan is another nation that aims to be 100% organic

Global Green House Emissions from Food

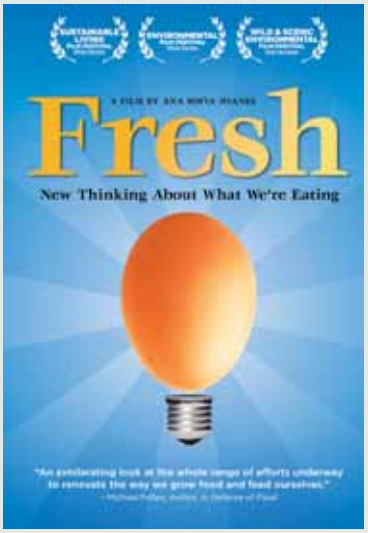


Steps we can take

People around the world are waking up to the reality that food which is nutritious for us is also good for the planet, or rather, helps sustain our life on Earth. But we are yet in an early stages of a movement for healthful foods and sustainable agriculture, and we need to keep learning how to do our best for ourselves and our eco-system. In this complex and confusing scenario, here are some steps to get started:

- *The first step is to commit to and choose what is local for you – food that is grown within a 50 km, or say 200 km or 500 km radius, or a region that is called one's "foodshed". This may not be possible to adhere to, given that we do not know where most food comes from, but serves as a parameter to keep in mind.*
- *Next, you need to locate shops that sell organic foods or keep asking neighbourhood shops if they have organic groceries and vegetables. Over a period of time the demand will create its supply. Most organic farmers and suppliers are small and a google search will yield some good sources of organic food.*
- *Be prepared to pay more for your organic foods – if you don't you may anyway end up paying more medical bills. (The US which eats 93% processed foods, has 42% incident of cancers, 33% diabetes and heart disease, and over 65% are overweight.) Check out this Ted talk in which 11-year-old Birke Baehr presents his take on a major source of our food -- far-away and less-than-picturesque industrial farms: http://www.ted.com/talks/birke_baehr_what_s_wrong_with_our_food_system.html*
- *You can also track down organic farmers' markets in your region. In the outskirts of cities you may also find village 'santhes', where a few farmers may sell uncertified organic vegetables and fruits – they can often be identified by their smaller size and more irregular shape.*
- *Identify the seasonal and indigenous foods that can grow without pesticides anyway – like millets, papayas, guavas and chikoos, all kinds of gourds, in many regions. Rule out the non-seasonal foods – (like watermelon in winter) and 'foreign' stuff like Washington or Australian apples.*
- *You can of course get your best local food if you grow some yourself – especially the greens and herbs.*
- *When it comes to anything processed – it is best to go extremely local – cooked at home! Anything processed in factories has often collected lots of 'food miles' – and contains chemicals, fats, excess salt or sugar, all calculated to help us develop a range of lifestyle diseases over the years.*
- *Local foods support the local economy – the concept of CSAs – Community supported agriculture is a fueling a slow movement towards people in cities connecting with farmers for mutual benefits. Urbanites can be sure of organic, sustainable and local foods, while farmers get a better price and satisfaction, without being subjected to an often merciless free market system.*
- *Get your family involved. Note that this is the last point – but possibly the most important one. Several documentaries and clips (you will find many in this and other Bhoomi issues) that you can get on the youtube and other sources can help you more than personal lectures!*

A simple rule of thumb to get started with: Begin with plenty of fruits for an early breakfast well before your regular one (if you need it); Include plenty of raw salads with lunch and dinner; and add raw nuts, seeds and dry fruits to your evening snacks. And don't forget to find co-travellers for your journey.



http://www.freshthemovie.com/

Fresh

This documentary is a reflection of a rising movement of people and communities who are re-inventing the food system. It celebrates the food architects who offer a practical vision of a new food paradigm and consumer access to it. Encouraging individuals to take matters into their own hands, this documentary is a guide that empowers people to take an array of actions as energetic as planting urban gardens and creating warm composts from food waste, and as simple as buying locally-grown products and preserving seasonal produce to eat later in the year. The documentary tells the stories of 'real people' rediscovering 'real food'; it represents a powerful way to educate oneself and one's community on living a healthy, local and sustainable life through food.

HOW TO BUILD COMMUNITIES

TURN OFF YOUR TV
STEP OUT OF YOUR HOME
KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOURS SMILE
GO TO THE PARK HONOUR ELDERS HELP
HAVE POTLUCKS AND GARDEN TOGETHER
ORGANIZE A BLOCK PARTY DANCE
MAKE EXTRA FOOD AND SHARE
SHARE YOUR SKILLS TOO OBSERVE
SIT ON YOUR DOORSTEP OPEN YOUR MIND
START A COMMUNITY GARDEN ON EMPTY LAND
BUY FROM LOCAL MERCHANTS SHARE INFO
BARTER GOODS HOLD FAIRS SING
TURN UP THE MUSIC TURN DOWN THE MUSIC
LISTEN MEDIATE CONFLICTS UNDERSTAND
CELEBRATE FESTIVALS TOGETHER
HOLD MARATHONS WALK TO THE PARKS
START A BOOK CLUB PARTICIPATE
COMMON-UNITY COMMUNITY

Carrying your own Bottle of Water

If 50 years ago, you would have told anyone that water would be sold for money, he or she would have been truly perplexed. But that's exactly where we have arrived. Shrewd advertising campaigns by companies and the resulting fear psychosis have given birth to the toxin called Bottled Water. We seem to have forgotten that water, like air is a common human need and ought never to be a commodity. India is now the tenth largest bottled water consumer in the world with business tipped to reach 10,000 crores in the coming years. Some might call it convenient, but it's nothing short of a menace.

Good for you

The alternative to plastic bottles of water is simple - carrying our own glass or metal bottles of water and getting schools and other public places to instal water fountains - this is a movement that is now taking root in the US and other countries.

Carrying our own bottles of water is good for us for many reasons - they contain less bacteria as per research studies. Also we avoid all the problems elaborated below.

There are important reasons why bottled water is bad for our health - the fact that these problems manifest themselves slowly and imperceptibly is what has made us get addicted to them in the first place.

If kept in a car under sunlight, the heat in the car and the plastic of the bottle have been found to release cancer causing chemicals. There is also overwhelming evidence of adverse health effects tied to Bisphenol A (a component of the bottle) including reproductive problems, infertility and cancer.

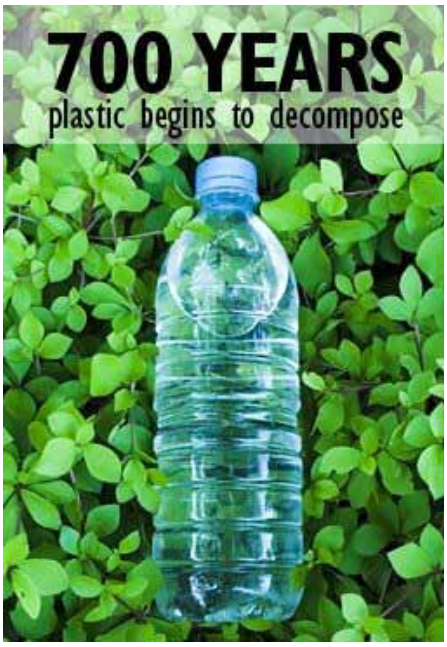
Bottled water is not tested for e.coli, and the companies that make them don't have to reveal where the water came from or produce quality reports.

When plastic bottles are incinerated they release toxic by-products such as chlorine gas and ash laden with heavy metals. Health impacts of chlorine gas varies from sore throat, coughing, and skin/eye irritation to difficulty in breathing, chest pain, and nausea, to death in the case of extreme levels of exposure.

Bad for the Environment

- ***It Uses a lot of Oil:*** *17 million barrels of oil are used in the production of plastic water bottles per year in the US only.*
- ***Tons of Toxic Waste:*** *While plastic beverage bottles are recyclable, over 90% of them end up in landfills. Plastic breaks down into smaller and smaller toxic bits that contaminate our soil and waterways and ultimately end up in the ever-growing Great Pacific Garbage Patch—the world's largest floating landfill.*
- ***Effect on Marine Life:*** *It has been estimated that over a million sea-birds and one hundred thousand marine mammals and sea turtles are killed each year by ingestion of plastics or entanglement. Each year, over 500 billion disposable bottles and cups end up littering our soil, rivers, lakes and oceans, killing countless fish and animals.*
- ***Tons of Carbon Dioxide:*** *An Earth Policy Institute study found that the British bottled water industry annually generates about 30,000 tons of carbon dioxide.*
- ***Uses a lot of Energy:*** *According to the European plastics industry it takes 3.4 megajoules of energy to make a one liter plastic bottle.*
- *Companies also take the groundwater out, bottle it, and then ship it all over the country and the world. This water never goes back to where it came from. Groundwater depletion thus impacts lakes and wetlands by either disrupting the water flow to the lake or wetland, or by increasing the rate at which water moves from the lake or wetland into the aquifers.*

Resources: Story of Bottle Water hydralife.org



So chuck bottled water, buy a reusable bottle, a water filter if needed, and drink tap water. The safest and most eco-friendly reusable bottles are made from glass or stainless steel. Doing this would ensure you don't jeopardize your health or the health of the planet.

Photo Courtsey: Climate Action

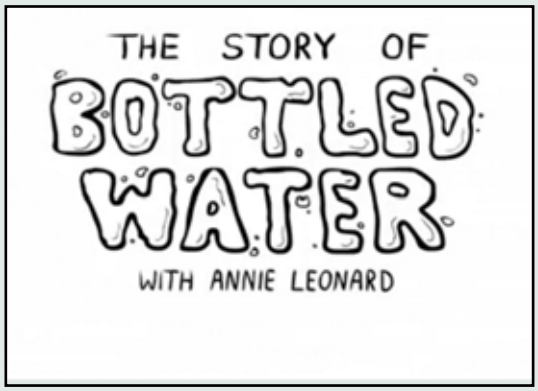
It has been estimated that over a million sea-birds and one hundred thousand marine mammals and sea turtles are killed each year by ingestion of plastics or entanglement. Each year, over 500 billion disposable bottles and cups end up littering our soil, rivers, lakes and oceans, killing countless fish and animals.

Over 60 billion plastic bottles are dumped into landfills and the oceans every year.

The Story of Bottled Water

This is a 7-minute animated film, hosted by Annie Leonard, the creator of the internet hit *The Story of Stuff,* telling the story of manufactured demand for bottled water, specifically how consumers are lured into buying billions of bottles of water when they can get it almost free from a tap.

Over seven minutes, the film explores the bottled water industry's attacks on tap water safety and its use of seductive, environmental-themed marketing to cover up the mountains of plastic waste it produces. The film concludes with a call for viewers to make a personal commitment to avoid bottled water and support public investment in clean, available tap water for all.



www.youtube.com/watch?v=Se12y9hSOM0

Going Vegetarian...

"Nothing will benefit human health and increase chances for survival of life on Earth as much as the evolution to a vegetarian diet."

- Albert Einstein

Is a vegetarian diet actually good for health?

According to several scientists and doctors like Dr. Neal Barnard, D. Dean Ornish, Dr. Charles Eistensien, who have been working on reversing diseases like diabetes, hypertension and heart disease, the route to good health is largely through plant based foods. A bit of meat will not be terribly harmful, but the habit of plenty of meats everyday definitely is risky.

Numerous studies have shown that vegetarians are less obese and have lower rates of heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and other sicknesses than heavy meat eaters.

The problem with meat, in a nutshell, is to do with climate change and the way our bodies digest food, and the way our digestive system is constructed.

The carnivorous vs. herbivorous body

The human digestive system does not seem to be an efficient meat digester. To begin with, the length of the human digestive tract is about 12 times the length of our spine as against the carnivores whose digestive tract is about 4 times the length of the spine. The longer intestines enables us to absorb a variety of micro and macro nutrients from plant foods. However, meats in the human body can putrefy and leave more toxins since they stay in our long digestive tract for a longer time.

The two types of digestive juices the stomach produces to break down food are alkaloid and acidic. Foods such as fruits, vegetables, breads and grains use an alkaloid - largely ptyalin from our saliva - for digestion, but strong hydrochloric acid is needed to digest meat. To neutralize these digestive acids - if they are often in excess, the body utilizes its internal resource of calcium and other electrolytes. This sometimes results in osteoporosis. The cause of osteoporosis is not always insufficient calcium intake. For example, the U.S. is one of the highest dairy (calcium) consuming countries but has one of the highest rates of osteoporosis. This is because excess protein in meats reduces calcium in the body.

True carnivores likes cats, dogs, tigers etc., secrete ten times more hydrochloric acid than humans do. Their digestive tracts are shorter and smoother, aiding in the rapid expulsion of fibreless flesh. They can easily eliminate copious amounts of cholesterol and possess sharp teeth for ripping flesh, all of which humans do not have.

Don't we need meat for proteins?

Traditionally, countries like India which have been largely vegetarian have used pulses, beans, nuts, and seeds as sources of protein. These sources are not only easier on the waistline, but on the wallet as well. Meat is far more expensive than beans or pulses.

We rarely hear of protein deficiency - that is because most foods, including rice and wheat have some protein. It is only those suffering from lack of food itself or severe malnutrition who also suffer from a lack of protein.

What are the risks of a meat based diet?

It is tough to check the quality of meat. Toxins concentrate and accumulate in meat faster than in plants (because of its higher position on a food chain), making it a less healthy option.

Cases of mercury and arsenic poisoning in fish, Avian Flu in chicken and the recent case of horse meat found in burgers in the U.K. bring into question the standards and methods followed in the meat industry.

Another major risk concerning factory farming or industrial meat is the huge amounts of antibiotic residues that chicken, beef contain. These residues are toxic to the body and can make us immune to antibiotics when we really need them. About 60% of all antibiotics manufactured in the world are used on livestock.

Saturated fat present in meat also raises the amount of cholesterol in the blood. To compensate for eating meat, poultry, eggs, and other animal foods, the body requires more oxygen and alkalinity in the bloodstream. The breathing rate rises as a result, making one vulnerable to various heart ailments.

The human digestive system does not seem to be an efficient meat digester. To begin with, the length of the human digestive tract is about 12 times the length of the spine to better digest the plants like herbivorous animals. Carnivores have a much shorter digestive tract - just 4 times their length.

Meat Production and Climate Change

The FAO 2007 report explains that globally the livestock sector is "one of the two or three most significant contributors to the most serious environmental problems," including climate change, air and water pollution, land degradation, and biodiversity loss. The report estimates that livestock accounts for 18 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions, significantly more than transportation. Cows produce methane, which has 23 times the greenhouse gas impact of carbon dioxide. Globally, livestock contributes to more global warming than 33 million automobiles!

Despite meat's large contribution to climate change, environmentalists in the past have ignored it, preferring to concentrate on land preservation, the impact of automobiles, and alternative energy. Environmentalists have been cautious in encroaching the most personal of lifestyle choices, people's diet in the fear of being labeled alarmists.

I hear you, but I really really love meat!

Well, If you find it difficult to altogether give meat up, simple acts like planning meatless meals once a week, like the concept of 'Meatless Mondays' popular in the west can make a huge difference. If everyone in a country like U.S. ate no meat or cheese just one day a week, it would be the same as taking 7.6 million cars off the road. It would be the same as taking millions of tonnes of greenhouse gases off our atmosphere. Or taking millions of animals off factory farms like the ones you can see on www.meatvideo.com.

After watching the video though, if you still want to eat meat, be sure to practice proper food-safety measures, preferring to buy local range-fed or farm raised meat.

If not for personal, health or economic reasons, a food connoisseur would give up meat for purely aesthetic reasons. A plate filled with a variety of colourful vegetables and fruits is certainly more attractive and nurturing for one's palate. It is also a novel way of discovering new foods from around the world.

The FAO 2007 report explains that globally the livestock sector accounts for 18% of all greenhouse gas emissions, significantly more than transportation.
It is a major contributor to other serious environmental problems as well, such as air and water pollution, land degradation, and biodiversity loss.

Confessions of a meat eater

- by Adil Basha

I have stopped eating meat. I have stopped eating meat many times. The first time was when I watched young chicks being de-beaked, pigs struggling in narrow metal stalls barely large enough to fit them, and cows' throats being slit while still being alive in a documentary about animal abuse. My knee jerk reaction was to quit eating meat, forever. I ate mutton biryani the next day.

The second time I quit was when I saw a live chicken being de-skinned at the local meat shop. The dismal condition of the cages, the emotionless approach of the butcher, and the blood soaked flesh made me nauseous. I gorged on chicken kebabs the very same evening.

The third time I gave it up for health reasons. I stayed honest for a month, before eventually succumbing.

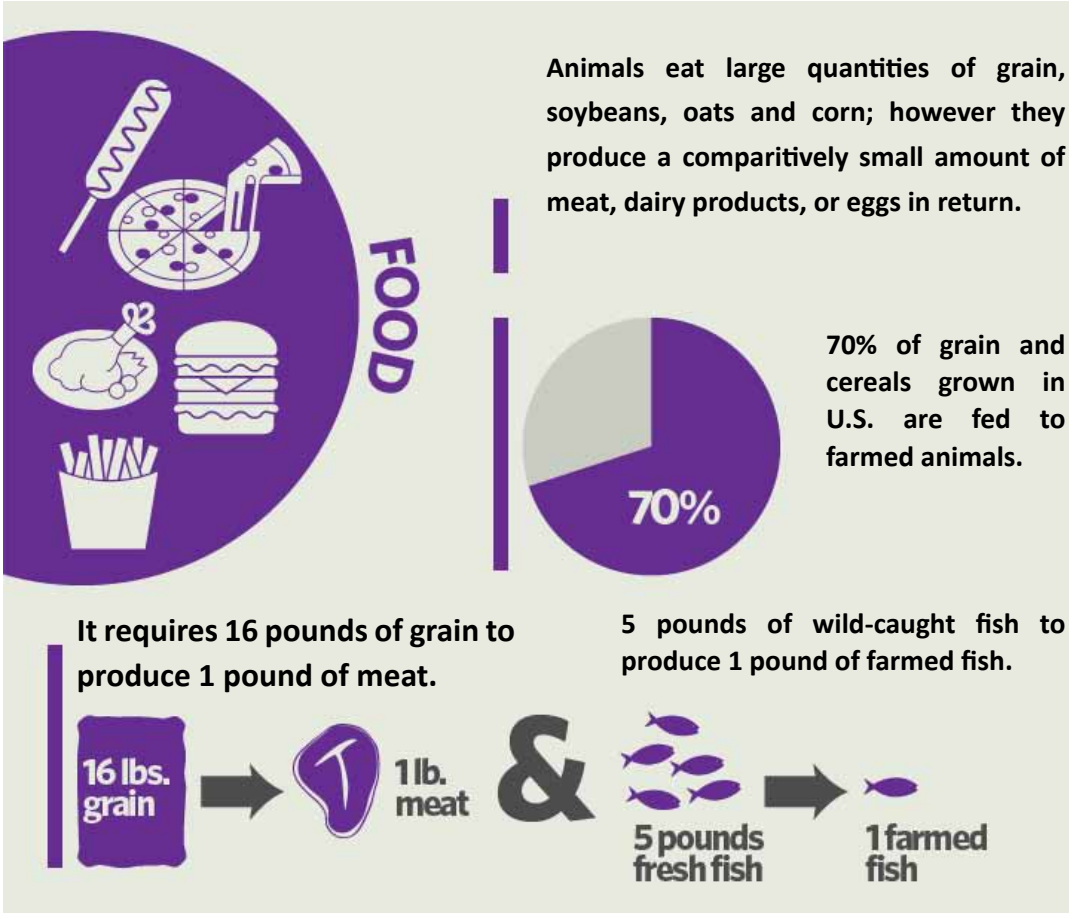
If addiction is defined as the inability to consistently abstain or an increased hunger and craving for 'rewarding experiences, consider me guilty as charged.

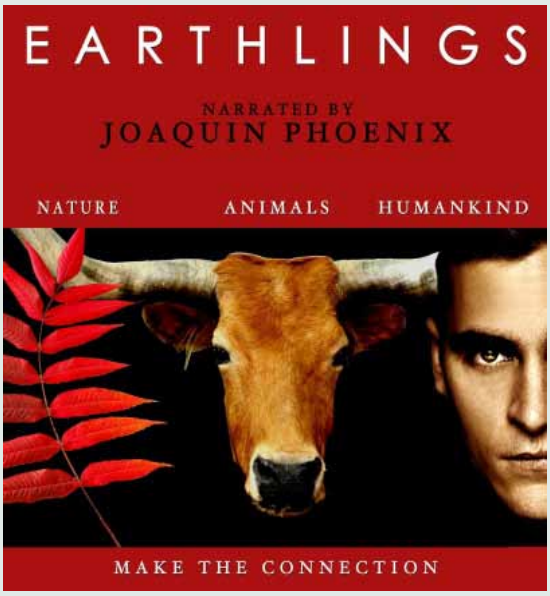
The first stage of de-addiction though would be admission of the addiction itself. Admission, of the fact that I am addicted to meat. To get to the stage of admission would require me to exhaust all possible defenses for the continuation of the consumption of meat. Defenses behind which I might have buried my conscience for ages. Some feeble attempts at rationalization like "humans have consumed animal meat for millions of year", "human body 'needs' meat", or that "life begets life, hence it isn't immoral to kill animals for food". Defenses which at their best are narrow and unfounded.

Firstly, historical evidence of consumption of meat does not validate the continuation of the tradition. Slavery, untouchability, genocide and war all have historical precedence, yet we feel no desire to pursue them collectively as a society. Secondly, if the human body needed meat, it wouldn't have such a poor digestive system to deal with the highly acidic nature of meat. And thirdly, there is a difference between killing and exploiting. Animals in the wild kill, they do not exploit. They kill mainly for sustenance, and not abundance.

Once this inner debate was won and all defenses lowered, I could begin to consider the health and environmental costs of eating meat. But does it mean that I haven't consumed meat since? I have. I confess to having my moments of weakness. I have chewed on meat, but now I spend more time chewing over it. Reflecting on it. De-addiction can sometimes be a slow and cumbersome process.

Why is Raising Animals





http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ce4DJh-L7Ys

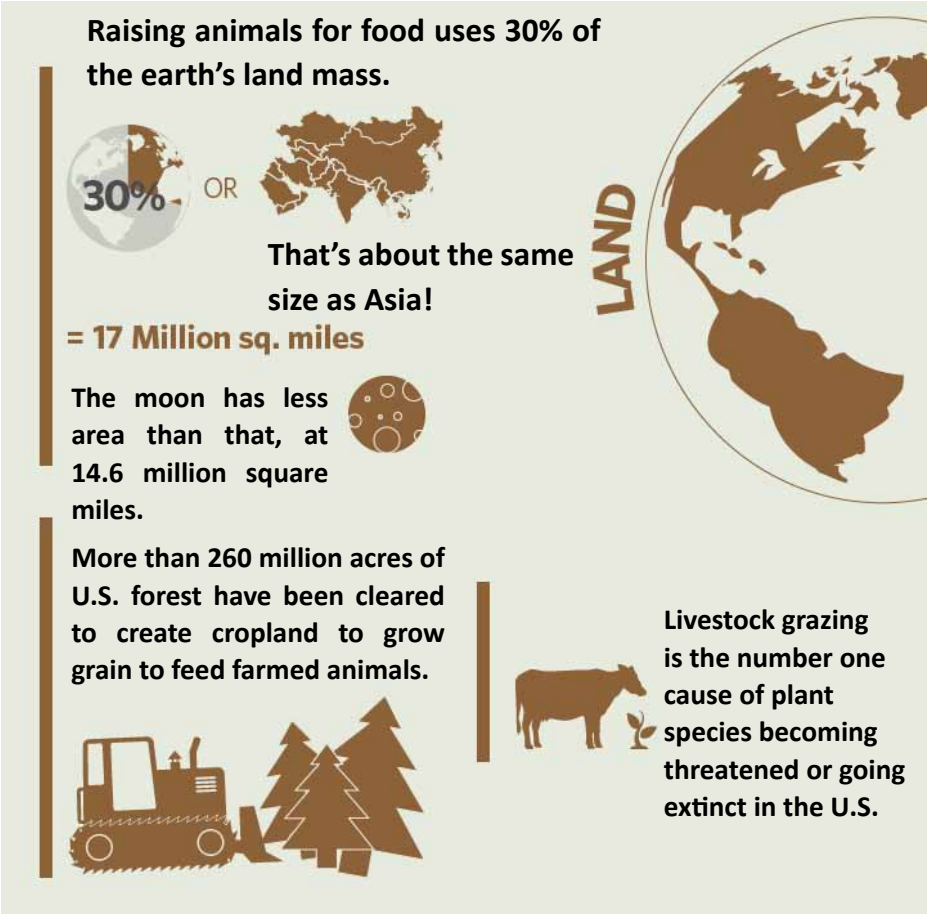
Earthlings

Since we all inhabit the Earth, all of us are considered earthlings. There is no sexism, no racism, or speciesism in the term earthling. It encompasses each and every one of us, warm or cold-blooded, mammal, vertebrae or invertebrate, bird, reptile, amphibian, fish, and human alike.

Humans, therefore, being not the only species on this planet, share this world with millions of other living creatures as we all evolved here together. EARTHLINGS is a feature length documentary about humanity's absolute dependence on animals (for pets, food, clothing, entertainment, and scientific research) but also illustrates our complete disrespect for these so-called "non-human providers." Earthlings uses hidden cameras and never before seen footage to chronicle the day-to-day practices of some of the largest industries in the world, all of which rely entirely on animals for profit.

Powerful, informative and thought-provoking, Earthlings is by far the most comprehensive documentary ever produced on the correlation between nature, animals, and human economic interests. Earthlings cries to be seen. Highly recommended!

s for Food so Inefficient?

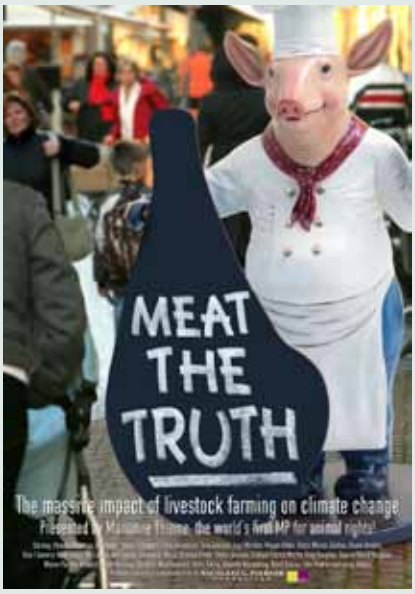


Sources: Choose My Plate.gov Harward Medical School, FAO, USDA
American Journal of Clinical Nutrition
Institute of Medicine of the National Academics nutritiondata.self.com

Meat the Truth

Meat the Truth is a high-profile documentary, presented by MP Marianne Thieme (leader of the Dutch party for the Animals), which forms an addendum to earlier films on climate change. Although such films have succeeded in drawing public attention to the issue of global warming, they have repeatedly ignored one of the most important causes of climate change: the intensive livestock production. Meat the Truth draws attention to this by demonstrating that livestock farming generates more greenhouse gas emissions worldwide than all cars, lorries, trains, boats and planes added together.

The calculations used in the film derive from and have been validated by the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the UN (FAO), the World Watch Institute, the Institute for Environmental Studies of the Free University Amsterdam and numerous other authoritative sources. A range of international celebrities participated in the making of the international version of the film.



http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2uTJsZrX2wI

Eat more Millets...

Millets are better – how and why?

Today, nutritionists all over the world agree that millets are a great food for us because–

- *They are highly nutritious, non-glutinous and non-acid forming foods unlike overly acidic foods like meats and other protein rich foods. Hence they are soothing and easy to digest.*
- *Millets are a remarkable source of protein and minerals like iron, magnesium, phosphorus and potassium.*
- *Each kind of millet has more fibre than rice and wheat – some as much as fifty times that of rice.*
- *Compared to polished rice, millets release a lesser percentage of glucose and over a longer period of time, thus lowering the risk of diabetes.*
- *Finger millet (Ragi) is the richest in calcium content, about 10 times that of rice or wheat.*
- *Lignans, an essential phyto nutrient present in millets help combat breast cancer and reduce the risk of heart disease.*

How did such a valuable food get so neglected?

The last few centuries have transformed many things in our lives, including food habits. The disappearance of millets from our plates has been one of them – because wheat and rice were promoted extensively and intensively by various vested interests, including governments, particularly as part of the green revolution.

Millets are one of the oldest foods known to humans & possibly the first cereal grain to be used for domestic purposes. Unfortunately, like peanuts were once scorned as "Slave Food" in the United States and potatoes were considered "Irish Food" in England, cultural biases have downgraded millets as coarse cereals or poor man's food especially during the last hundred years or so.

The fact that the 'coarseness' of millets is actually its virtue of high fibre content was neglected and the human tendency to get addicted to what is soft (and white) made polished rice and wheat the preferred staples. Other common misconceptions include being considered 'minor crop' (as against major) and being called 'Famine food', ie., good only for being eaten to avoid starving.

The focus of the green revolution on rice and wheat as monocultural crops and the lack of subsidies and support prices for millets made it difficult for many farmers to continue to grow millets except in marginal and degraded soils. In spite of such governmental neglect, millets still form over 10% of the cereals eaten in India – mostly in rural areas where farmers are aware of the goodness of millets.

There are over 6000 kinds of millets in the world. The more common ones in India are:

- Barnyard Millet (Hindi: Jhangora)
- Finger Millet (Hindi: Mandua)
- Foxtail Millet (Hindi: Kangni)
- Kodo Millet (Hindi: Kodra)
- Little Millet (Hindi: Kutki)
- Pearl Millet (Hindi: Bajra)
- Proso Millet (Hindi: Barri)
- Sorghum (Hindi: Jowar)

Millet Facts:

India is the largest producer and consumer of millets - and hence can play a significant role in transition to sustainable agriculture.

Millets are produced in our country on 13.95 million hectares with production reaching 10.7 million tons. There are nine species which form major sources of energy and protein for about 130 million people. About 80% of the world's millet is used as food, with the remaining being used for stockfeed (2%), beers (local and industrial), other uses (15%) and bird seed.

Why are Millets better for the eco-system?

Millet is an ancient seed, originally cultivated in the dry climates of Africa and northern China since the Neolithic Era. Millets spread throughout the world - and in the Middle Ages the millet was more popular than wheat. Today, millet continues to be a staple for a third of the world's population. It is nutritious – the plants poor people grow are usually robust, productive, self-reliant, and useful - the very types that cannot be ignored when we are faced with a food insecurity situation in the future that is likely to be caused by climate change.

Different kinds of millets are indigenous to various parts of the world, and over centuries have adapted to their climates. Hence most millets are easier to grow with the minimum of inputs unlike the monocultural crops like rice, wheat, sugarcane etc.

Specifically, millets are hailed by many climate scientists as important for combating climate change because:

- *Millets need 70% less water than rice, banana or sugarcane – and water scarcity is looming large indeed.*
- *We use 4000 litres of water to grow one kg. of rice whereas millets are rain-fed crops that need no irrigation.*
- *Millets are indigenous crops that are hardy – they can be grown organically very easily with no fertilizer or pesticides. The high chemical requirements of rice, wheat etc., contribute significantly to the 14% carbon emissions from agriculture.*
- *Millets can be grown on poor soils and in rain-fed areas. Certain millets like Jowar (Sorghum) can withstand wildly fluctuating water availability – which may become a reality in more and more areas as a result of climate change that we are beginning to witness already.*
- *Millets are inherently bio-diverse. 6 to 20 different crops can be grown together at the same time.*

Sources: Millet Network of India, DDS and FIAN, India

Millets, the Miracle Grains

The film Millets, the Miracle Grains, made by the dalit peasant women filmmakers of the DDS Community Media Trust is an eloquent video tribute to millets, undermined by the dominant grains and the politics that surround them. This film is unique in the sense that the farmers who made it are themselves cultivators and consumers of millets. Therefore, from their authentic understanding of the role of millets in food and nutrition sovereignty, the film-makers pan across the millet landscape to press home the point that the humble millets are not so humble after all. Millets show us the way out of our food, fodder, nutrition and water crisis, because they are sturdy enough to grow on the poorest lands of the very poor people. They alone can withstand the harshest of climates in the arid and semi arid regions, and continue to offer food and fodder security for the multitudes of our population.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vvHLPzb2e6A

Walk, Cycle or Carpool to work

Two roads diverged in a wood. And I -
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.
Robert Frost in The Road Not Taken

Living near your place of work – localization fully in place – may become inevitable when oil runs out, say within a century or less. But well before that we can find ways of traveling less and traveling differently…

There are about a 100 million vehicles in India today... Try and imagine them running, crawling or zooming around on our thousands of roads. Now close your eyes, enter a time machine, and land in 2020 with an estimated 450 million vehicles on road – more than 4 times the vehicles we have today!

Every year, millions of new cars hit the Indian roads. And most of the vehicles are added in the urban areas with the maximum density in the major metropolitan cities. Not surprisingly then, our cities are also the most congested, where one rarely drives but crawls to work! Ironically, recent studies show that in most of these metros, the average occupancy rate of private cars is 1.3 persons. Seventy percent of cars have only one occupant in Mumbai.

Now close your eyes again and imagine the number of vehicles reducing to one fourth their present numbers. That's exactly what would result if everyone decided to use public transport or join carpools. While public transport is great and essential, carpooling may be a second option. According to Commuteeasy.com who have more than 20,000 active users and poolmycar.in, India's first corporate carpooling service, the concept of car-pooling is slowly catching on in India largely due to awareness of climate change and growing traffic woes.

If you have become resigned to getting stuck in traffic jams every other day, read ahead:

- *Carpool participants can beat the stress by sharing the driving and conversing, which helps diffuse tension.*
- *Carpoolers will be able to considerably reduce their commuting costs compared to driving alone. A commuter with a 60-km daily commute saves Rs.40,000 annually in a 2-person carpool versus commuting alone! And this is based on the assumption that you commute for only 265 days of the year. Surveys have also shown that people save an average of Rs. 1,500 per month by joining carpools.*
- *Carpooling will reduce the no. of automobiles on the road. Especially in Indian cities where public transport is not always reliable and commuting distances large, carpools can prevent accidents and injuries which occur when vehicles jostle for every inch of space on the roads.*

Carpooling and Earth Cooling

The transport sector is the fourth-largest sector for CO_2 emissions, and emissions from road transport are expected to increase two to three-fold between 2008 and 2025.

An average car emits around 287g of carbon dioxide per mile. This is greater for short journeys, as cars use more fuel when the engine is cold: a journey of 1 mile emits almost double the average – over 550g of carbon dioxide.

If you are reading this article you are well aware that automobile emissions are major pollutants and contibutors to climate change. Unfortunately for the human race, awareness just does not convert easily to action… but hope arises eternal in the human heart, and after reading this article, perhaps you will do a google search for the car-pool services in your city…

Embodied energy and Chain of energy

'Embodied energy' is all the energy that goes into the manufacture and delivery of a product. This includes energy for mining, refining and transport of materials and manufacture of the goods. At each stage the energy used produces greenhouse and other pollution.

Cycle and be Blessed

A few decades later when the irresponsibility of excessive driving are an embarrasment to all, you can look forward to your great grand children being so proud that you walked or cycled to work! Be sure to take photographs or better still, form groups who walk or cycle with you…

- *Every time you cycle instead of drive, you significantly reduce emissions of pollutants and toxins into our environment. There is also evidence that as a cyclist, you breathe in less, not more pollution. Look up this website for more information: www.cyclingpromotion.com.au*
- *Walking or cycling to work is an easy and enjoyable way to get your recommended 30 minutes of physical activity a day. Significant health benefits range from reducing the risk of strokes, diabetes and heart disease to improved fitness and weight control.*
- *It's an economical way to travel.*
- *You can discover smaller roads to cycle along and minimise the hassles of traffic jams.*
- *You save time – you do not have to go to a gym or go for walks in the evening or morning for your daily exercise.*

Walk : Be less Speeded up!

"Walking is the great adventure, the first meditation, a practise of heartiness and soul primary to humankind. Walking is the exact balance of spirit and humility"

- Gary Snyder

Walking to work is a great alternative way to relax, gives one more time to enjoy urban spaces and improves one's work-life balance. Walking is low-cost, doesn't need more than a pair of footwear, and reasonably good health.

With a major chunk of the work being sedentary, done on computers and smart phones, physical activity is at a premium. It is believed that physical inactivity causes around 5.3 million deaths each year.

A recent study of 400,000 people found that just 15 minutes a day of moderate exercise (which includes brisk walking) can add up to three years to life expectancy. It goes without saying that it offers significant health benefits, through preventing a range of lifestyle diseases.

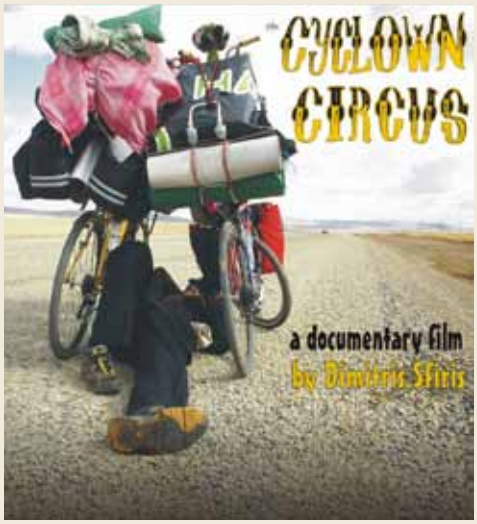
If walking was a way of life, acknowledged as essential by the governments and citizens, we would insist on better street hygiene, more parks and walkways. Walking gives streets vitality and personal security. And in turn brings with it health benefits that come from cleaner air, less traffic noise and fewer road accidents.

When we walk, our field of vision covers 180 degrees. We see things completely, as they are, when we walk. When we ride a bike or drive a car, our field of vision is restricted, making things blurred and hence inconsequent. We see fewer things, observe and experience less when we ride or drive.

Resources:
TravelSmart Workplace
Scotland's 2020 Climate group
IvDM/TNO report

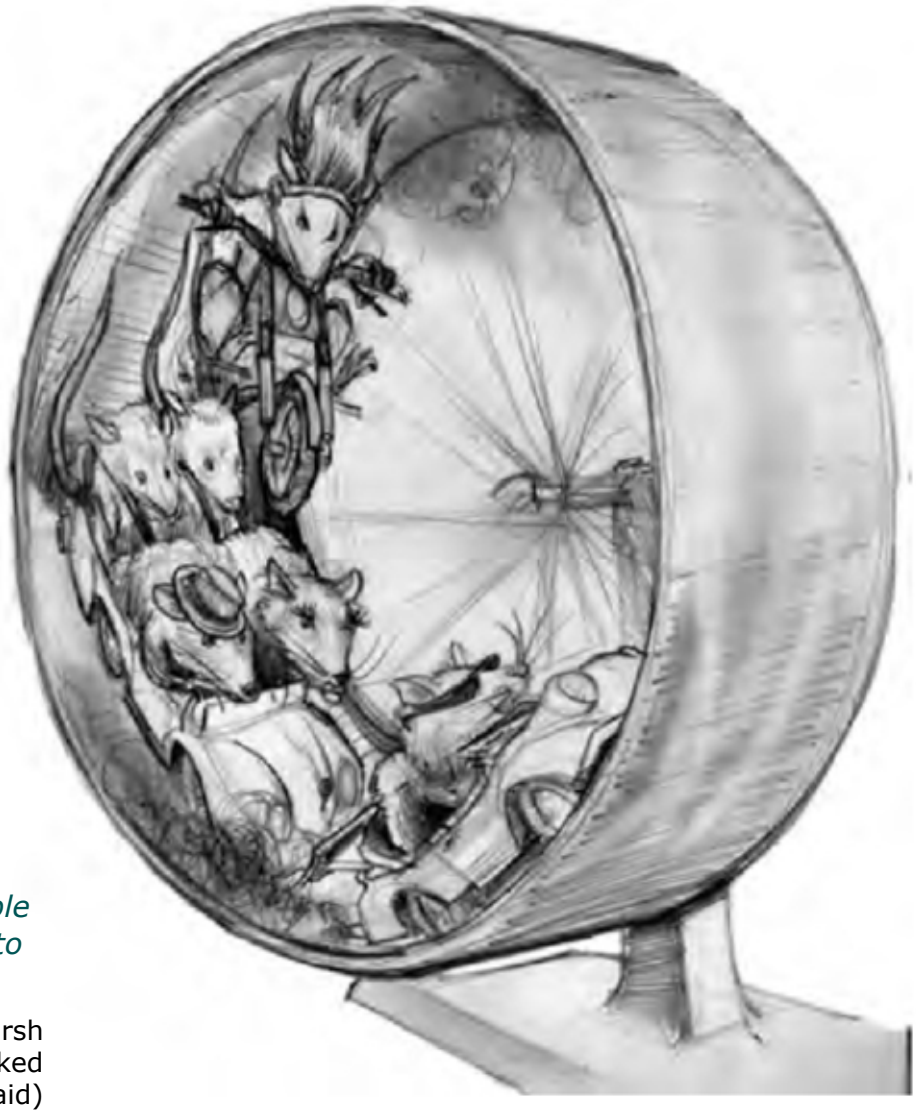
Cyclown Circus

Though they could have made a brilliant career in show business, as mucisians and acrobats, they prefer to travel from continent to continent, from country to country, and from town to town giving open-air performances. On their way, they draw in others interested in living out the same experience. For the last six years they have traveled 40,000 kilometers, through 27 countries in four continents, on bikes as tall or taller than they are and weigh sometimes twice as much. They make their own bicycles from parts of discarded bicycles, which they find on their way. They are the "Cyclown Circus." The film documents their performances in parks, squares, and schools, discussing with them their experiences, viewpoint, and philosophy.



http://cyclowncircus.blogspot.in/

Step out of the Mainstream...



"There are thousands and thousands of people out there leading lives of quiet, screaming desperation, where they work long, hard hours at jobs they hate to enable them to buy things they don't need to impress people they don't like."

-Nigel Marsh
(Author of the book Overworked and Underpaid)

Good for the eco-system

Modern civilization must be credited with (or faulted for) creating the technology, politics and social structures which have been most successful in getting human beings to keep running and chasing - possessions, power, achievement or whatever they wish for. Moreover, this kind of a rat-race is made to appear as a great virtue, with an all pervading cultural endorsement of joyless hard work, material success, nation building, contributing to the GDP and so on.

Hence, getting off the rat-race is not easy. First of all the question arises – ***what's wrong with the rat-race?***

It seems now, that there is a fairly large section of people who have 'won' the race– with money to spare, good spaces to enjoy and live in a family that is still family. This picture of the happy, rich, hardworking family and the 'complete' man or professional corporate woman are projected by media as the ultimate in achievement. Added to this we have millions of youngsters coming out of an education system that prepares them to enter the world of work, eager to get the highest pay packet, no matter whether their job is meaningful, ethical or destructive of the environment.

Unfortunately there are two phenomena that have emerged that are playing spoil sport to this dream of the happy rat race.

- ***Climate change*** *– and the thought leaders in sustainable living who are saying that the rat-race, more consumerism, more growth and money are the culprits that lead to more exploitation and destruction of our eco-systems that are essential for life, and*
- ***Terrible inequity*** *in distribution of resources; the poor are poor because their land, labour and natural resources are being exploited by the capitalist system, leading to political unrest, terrorism and even war, it is also some conscience pin-pricks with some sections of people.*

While most of the exploitation of natural resources happens away from the city, most of the earning and spending happens in the cities – where people are more disconnected from Nature, unable to be sensitive to the land, the hills, the forests and the rivers, and hence little concerned about their degradation. We can put our heads under the sand about these issues, but certainly it would be better for the planet if we slowed down the mad race for earning and spending. People who are not in a rat race are more likely to be more connected to the Earth.

School and college going students taking to drugs, committing suicide and taking to bullying or other forms of violence are all indicators of the rat-race becoming oppressive in educational institutions.

Better for Us

How do I know if I am in a rat race and if I would be better off if I step out of it? Here are some indicators – even a couple of them can be pointers that I need de-stressing and a new outlook to life:

- *If I am not enjoying my role or my work most of the time*
- *If I end up working more than 10 hours a day (especially work I do not enjoy)– which means I am at a higher risk of coronary diseases, more likely to suffer from obesity, diabetes and clinical depression. Many people who work overtime are also prone to sleep disorders and suffer from fatigue and irritability.*
- *If I have physical symptoms of work-related stress such as fatigue, sleep deficiencies, skin disorders*
- *If I have psychological symptoms of stress, including depression, irritability, pessimism, feeling overwhelmed and unable to cope.*
- *If I show behavioral symptoms that include: aggression, diminished creativity and initiative, a drop in work performance, problems with interpersonal relationships, mood swings and irritability.*

The average person's work and life-style has undergone a huge change after the Industrial Revolution began. Earlier, people worked in the context of a community which supported them in many ways, but most of all with a network of relationships and interdependent economy. Today, however, increasing numbers of people in cities particularly, suffer from a sense of alienation or from various illnesses related to economic anxieties.

School and college going students taking to drugs, committing suicide and taking to bullying or other forms of violence are all indicators of the rat-race becoming oppressive in educational institutions. Even a housewife with no job often gets into a rat race, when her aspirations for herself and her family involve a perpetual chasing of money, possessions, marks in exams and so on.

Mahatma Gandhi said,"Work for four hours a day and live within what you earn in those four hours."

Amazing wisdom indeed. If we can actually get off the rat race and the world's consumption would halve, possibly and we would also be doing our bodies and souls a remarkable favour.

While most of the exploitation of natural resources happens away from the city, most of the earning and spending happens in the cities – where people are more disconnected from Nature, unable to be sensitive to the land, the hills, the forests and the rivers, and hence little concerned about their degradation.

A Grain of Sand

This is the story of one man and an island. Brendon Grimshaw purchased the island in 1962 and set about making the island habitable. He did this with the help of one other man, Rene Antoine Lafortune.

Brendon Grimshaw, a British national, was editor to some of the most important newspapers in Africa. But in 1972, he gave it all up to go and live on Moyenne Island, which he purchased for ten thousand pounds.In the thirty-six-years that he has lived on the island, Brendon and his friend, Rene Lafortune, planted sixteen-thousand trees, built 4.8 kilometers of nature paths, and brought and bred 109 giant land tortoises, creating an island of incredible beauty.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jd-oqN6EB_I

Volunteer for - or start a community activity...

This is the step that may require you to get out of your comfort zone – especially if you are the kind who likes leading a quiet life with a minimum of interaction with the world. But it is the one that will be the most important – where communities form and begin to care for their own local environments.

"Blessed Unrest"

Are you troubled by happenings around you – the drying up of lakes, the junk food that children eat or pesticide ridden foods, by the inefficient disposal of waste or anything else? Do your concerns about the environment or other problems often crop up in your conversations with others? Do you wish you could do 'something' but feel helpless? Well, you can feel blessed that you are not complacent – you are then actually a part of a huge network of people bringing hope to a civilization battered with its own shortsightedness.

Paul Hawken in his much acclaimed book "Blessed Unrest" says that the world is witnessing unprecedented and spontaneous coming together of people, in small or large groups, to take initiatives and find solutions to a range of problems concerning the environment and human communities.

He likens our Planet Earth to our human body, and much as white blood corpuscles take it upon themselves to fight illness in the body, people are acting as white blood corpuscles unto Mother Earth, as individual, NGOs or as groups of some kind.

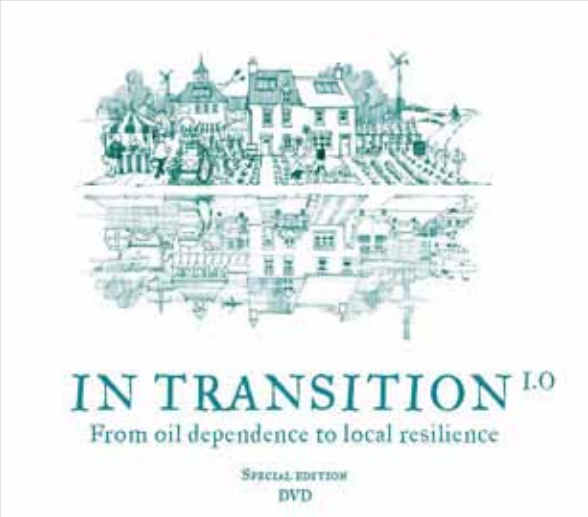
Good for the Eco-system

Localization: Apart from a sustainable economic and development paradigm, localization in multiple ways and organic agriculture are considered essential for our modern civilization to survive beyond a few more centuries. Forming more effective communities again which can care for their local environment is an essential part of localization and sustainable living.

In Transition 1.0

'In Transition' is the first detailed film about the Transition movement filmed by those that know it best, those who are making it happen on the ground. The Transition movement is about communities around the world responding to peak oil and climate change with creativity, imagination and humour, and setting about rebuilding their local economies and communities. It is positive, solutions focused, viral and fun.

In the film you'll see stories of communities creating their own local currencies, setting up their own pubs, planting trees, growing food, celebrating localness, caring, sharing. You'll see neighbours sharing their land with neighbours that have none, local authorities getting behind their local Transition initiatives, schoolchildren making news in 2030, and you'll get a sense of the scale of this emerging movement. It is a story of hope, and it is a call to action, and we think you will like it very much. It is also quite funny in places.



http://vimeo.com/8029815

If people care for their own land and eco-system (be it in a rural or urban area), they need to form communities and start community activities. In a way it is simple logic - communities are to local environments what family is to house and home. Management by governments and corporates far away will never be good enough.

With this conviction, innumerable communities are emerging, informally or formally - to re-cycle wastes, to share organic produce, to support the underprivileged, to clean rivers, care for local lakes, parks and common spaces and much more. In the U.S. and Europe many new concepts of Community Land Trusts, Community banks, Local currencies etc are gaining ground.

If people care for their own land and eco-system (be it in a rural or urban area), they need to form communities and start community activities. In a way it is simple logic - local environments and communities are an extension of house/home and family. Management by governments and corporates far away will never be good enough. The internet and social media today are also playing an important in connecting up people and communities for envieonmental and social action. While the intention is often to "do good" for the environment or for other people, communities and community activity are great for those who engage in them as well.

Good for Us

While a few people, bless them, have the temperament and strength for activism against bad governance, corruption and environmental destruction and so on, there are many who are happier to do what they can in their neighbourhood or some limited chosen space. Such community activity definitely gives a "good for us" feeling for all these reasons:

- ***Sense of Belonging:*** *Charles Eisenstien, author of Sacred Economics (see page 46 of this issue) says in an article in "Yes" Magazine, "Wherever I go and ask people what is missing from their lives, the most common answer (if they are not impoverished or seriously ill) is "community."*

  Modern life with money as its governing principle makes people dependent on money for all their needs rather than be interdependent on each other. *What is lost very often is a sense of belonging – and that is what a community which directs its energies to any meaningful work provides.*

- ***Sharing and Caring:*** *Caring for something we hold in common can lead us to care for each other and share skills, time, resources and more. Building relationships of co-operation and collaboration will certainly be good for us, even if that is something we do not reach out for.*

- ***Physical Exercise:*** *Community activities (not the virtual kind in cyber space) often involve being physically active – running a marathon or cleaning up a lake can give you excellent exercise and help burn up a few kilograms of unwanted fat.*

- ***De-stress and have fun:*** *Climate change or problems in your area may be depressing stuff if we keep talking and thinking about them. But get a group of people together – particularly if you get young, old and middle-aged people and perhaps some children too, and get them all involved in various ways – it can be a sure recipe for fun and enjoyment.*

Start an Organic Garden

- in your child's school (or anywhere else)

"To forget how to dig the earth and to tend the soil is to forget ourselves."

- Mahatma Gandhi

Take a few very young children into a vegetable garden with vegetables, and you will find that naturally they are joyous and curious; and if they have not been schooled into feeling 'mud is dirty', they want to immediately work with the soil. Veggies on the plate however seems to evoke a very different response from most of them. When children make a fuss of eating vegetables, are they reflecting a disconnect with the land that modern life has brought about?

It is heartwarming that there is a gradually increasing number of schools around the world trying to re-connect children with Nature through school gardens.

In the UK, the NGO, *Garden Organic* has helped start organic gardens in over 5000 schools, where children can learn the skills of gardening which often their parents have lost. In the US, the Centre of Eco-Literacy has pioneered school programmes which teach organic gardening as well as the making of healthy school lunches. Such organisations are coming up in practically every country. In Bangalore, *the Garden City Organic Farmers* have helped many schools start organic or square foot gardens.

People woke up to the importance of Organic gardening in the UK, because it imports 90% of its food - and understandably. there is a concern about sourcing food in times of food insecurity which may be engendered by climate change in the future. In India, we have 42% of farmers and their children wanting to opt out of farming according to one survey.

The Madhya Pradesh Government has been the first in India to declare farming a compulsory subject in schools. It is time that with or without government intervention, schools took their responsibility of teachng what is important for real life rather than only for exams. And interestingly, in schools which do involve children in gardening, they do not seem to be losing out in terms of academics which is the basic fear of teachers when they take on new activities. Instead, children invariably feel more enlivened as they always do with 'real-life' work.

The Delicious Revolution

Says Alice Waters, founder of the Edible School Yard Project, Berkeley, USA, "What we *are calling for is a revolution in public education – the Delicious Revolution. When the hearts and minds of our children are captured by a school lunch curriculum, enriched with experience in the garden, sustainability will become the lens through which they see the world."*

Yes, we need a delicious revolution – when our children can have fresh, live delicious foods and actually be able to enjoy them. Unfortunately, fresh and healthy foods have gotten a bad name since excito toxins and plenty of fats, sugars and salt in processed or junk foods have dulled our taste buds; A great way to start the movement towards delicious foods is to start a garden in your children's school. Children will not only learn about enjoying healthful foods they will be exposed to rich and multifaceted learning which can never be possible in the class-room.

The Organic School movement

There are three major reasons why all over the world there is a movement towards organic food and farming:

- *Chemical Agriculture that is the norm today, along with processed food and meat account for over 35% of green house gas emissions that are causing global warming and climate change.*
- *It is now established that pesticides in foods can cause cancers and other diseases.*

What we are calling for is a revolution in public education – the Delicious Revolution. When the hearts and minds of our children are captured by a school lunch curriculum, enriched with experience in the garden, sustainability will become the lens through which they see the world.

- Alice Waters, Founder of the Edible School Yard Project, Berkeley

- *Pesticides have polluted rivers, underground aquifers and combined with fertilisers have degraded and acidified lands in many places.*

The Industrial agriculture and the global seed and food trade is in the grip of a few mammoth corporate houses; and governments in cahoots with them are not inclined to pay heed to the problems caused by chemical agriculture. But concerned groups around the world are passionately taking up organic farming and gardening, determined to bring bottom-up transformation rather than agonize over the lack of top-down change.

How to get started

- *To start with either you have to be passionate about gardening or you need a partner who is.*
- *The next step would be to take the support of an NGO or anyone else who has set up a garden in a school in your locality. Then learn, learn, learn!*
- *Your children's school may or may not be open to the idea of gardening classes – but you can try persuading the principal. You may have to learn how to get the management to be convinced of the powerful positives that can come from gardening classes.*
- *You may need to start small, say sessions only for class 7 or just a bit of square foot gardening or terrace gardening for students in an eco-club if there is one. Sometimes, a school may be willing to spare a little space if you can start a garden there (at your own expense, or get a sponsor) for children to merely visit. And gradually getting children involved may be possible.*
- *Look up websites which support organic garden start-ups like Navdanya.org, DaanFoundation.org, conservationcortsnorthbay.org and gardencityfarmers.org*

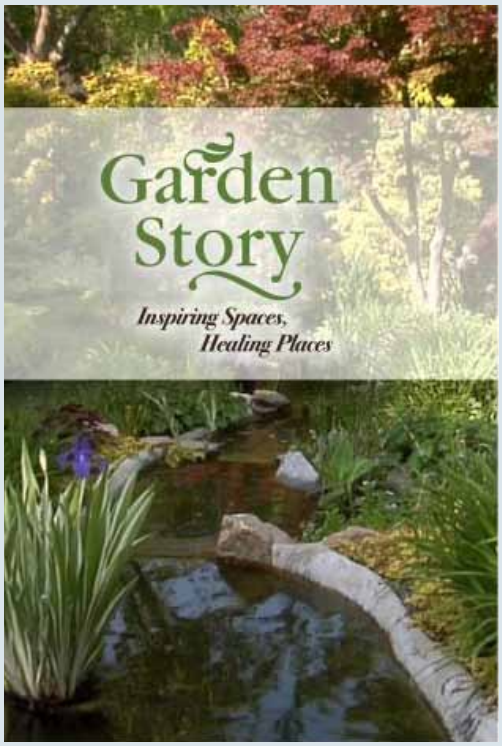
Starting an organic garden is a great thing to do for yourself, because of all the good endorphins that will flow in your body by engaging with children. And it will be great for the Earth – when children have an opportunity to be less alienated with the land and the food it provides us.

Corporate houses involved in industrial agriculture and governments in cahoots with them are not inclined to pay heed to the problems caused by chemical agriculture. But concerned groups around the world are passionately taking up organic farming and gardening, determined to bring bottom-up transformation rather than agonize over the lack of top-down change.

Garden Story

"Garden Story" is a documentary series depicting the extraordinary power of gardens to transform our lives and strengthen our communities. Ten engaging episodes filmed across America profile a wide variety of remarkable gardens. Some are creating positive social change in our cities, while others are protecting our natural environment. Among the exceptional gardens featured are therapeutic gardens providing healing and stress reduction in medical facilities, community gardens renewing urban neighborhoods, a teaching garden for inner-city children, a world-famous botanical garden supporting a global agenda of environmental stewardship, and a wet-lands habitat garden preserving endangered species in a rare mountain ecosystem. "Garden Story" challenges common perceptions of gardens and explores the many different roles that gardens play in today's world.

http://www.cultureunplugged.com/documentary/watch-online/play/6737/Garden-Story--Episode-1---The-Garden-as-Muse



Embracing a Simple Lifestyle...

William D. Holland talks of a minimalist lifestyle he adopted that gave him the freedom to watch the clouds floating by, write when he wanted to and visit dear ones more.

I had a friend ask me the other day what I had done that day, and my reply was that I had done next to nothing. An honest answer in that I hadn't done any of the things we associate with "doing things." I hadn't worked, nor had I run errands, gone shopping, done chores around the house…by the standards of today's modern world I had indeed done nothing.

But upon closer inspection I had done quite a bit. I visited with loved ones and friends. That took up quite a chunk of that particular day. I sat in the sun and listened to the birds and watched the clouds flow by. I stalked a deer and took a close-up picture for my memory box. I read for a while and even managed to find time to do some writing and take a nap. Food for body, mind and soul.

I have worked one job or another for nearly forty-five years, longer than most of you reading this have been alive. I have owned businesses, been married, been divorced, raised a son on my own, climbed mountains, fought the rat race, owned homes, done lawn work, played sports for decades….in other words, I have lived life at a reasonably fast and non-stop pace.

Now, at sixty-two, I have decided that it is time to step back, gear it down a bit, and appreciate those things that for decades were ignored. And I have never been happier. I absolutely love my life. First time ever I have been able to say that….i love my life. I do not feel the need to "do" anything. I help others when I can, make sure I take time for myself, and love those so important to me. It is an amazingly full and rewarding life I live today.

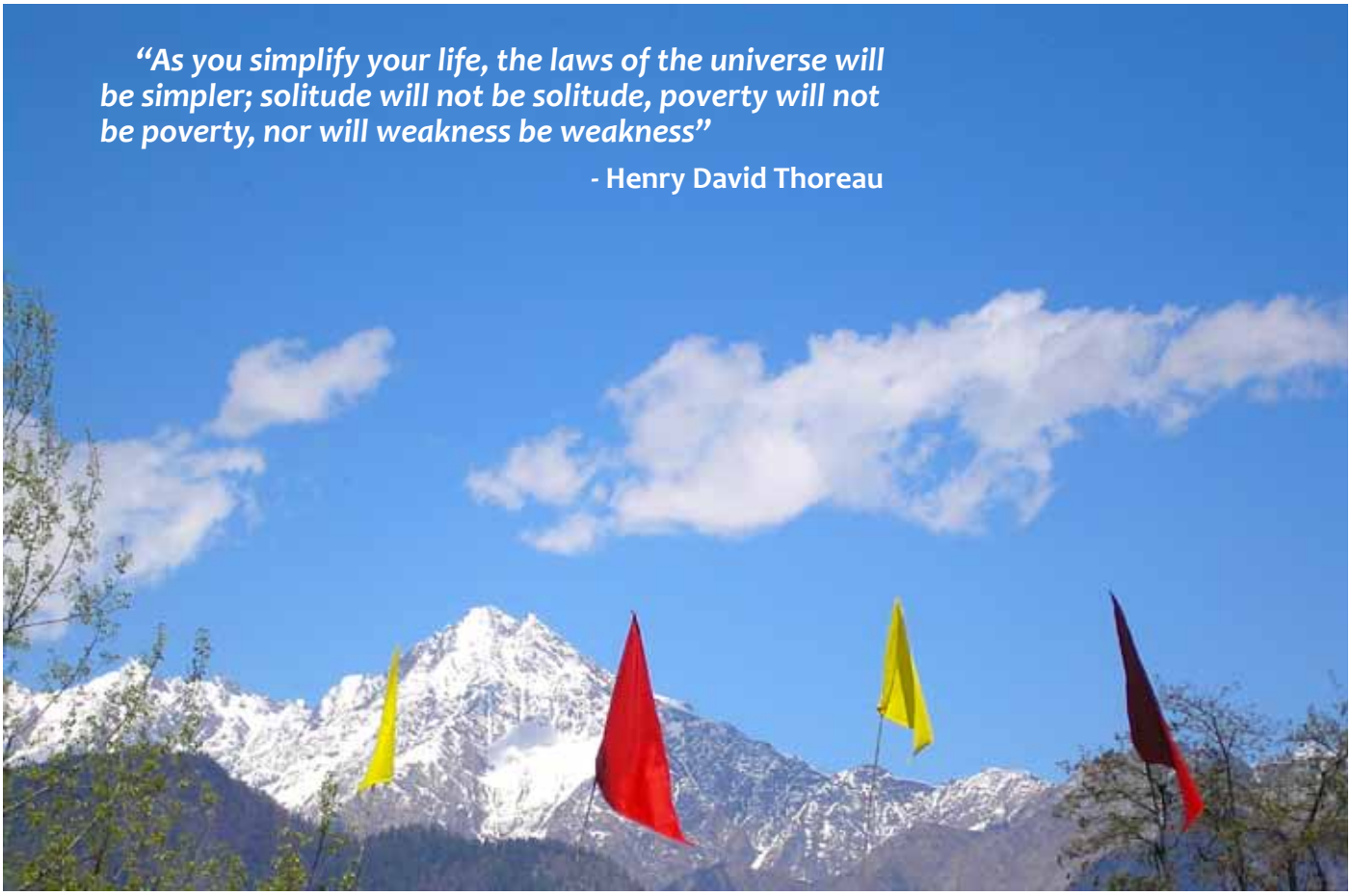
When I wrote that reflection I had just finished my second year of teaching at a private school in Beaverton, Oregon. I was about three weeks from starting a new teaching endeavor in Olympia and was seriously contemplating semi-retirement at the soonest possible date. Little did I know that I would leave that new job two months into the school year because of unacceptable working conditions. In other words, my peace of mind was more important to me than the paycheck that job offered.

> In the past 50 years humans have consumed more resources than in all previous history

Is it possible for those of you reading this to do the same thing? Of course, most of us have to work. We have responsibilities that have to be met; that is an absolute that can't be denied. There are jobs and debts and families and the list seems endless at times. Where is the time in that hectic day of yours to just be? Well, folks, you'll have to answer that question for yourself. I can tell you the steps I took to put myself in position to do what I did, and I can also tell you the decisions I made to make it all possible.

How it began

It began with a realization that I was not satisfied with my lifestyle, that it was not bringing me happiness. I had worked for over four decades, for the most part the typical nine-to-five scenario, five days a week, that leaves a person exhausted at the end of the week and wondering why the weekend is so short. Whoever came up with the forty hour work week was either a sadist by nature or had never worked under the conditions they envisioned. And since I was a fairly typical American, I managed to spend most if not all of my income each month. That left me with a vision of the future where work was necessary and just breaking even was the best I could hope for. In addition, I couldn't help but wonder how much longer I was able to handle the stress and the physical demands of working full-time? The typical adult works straight through their most productive years only to enter retirement too tired and beaten down to finally enjoy the golden years. Needless to say, after imagining a fairly realistic representation of my future, I was not overjoyed. So what could I do? What could I change? What facets of my life were set in stone and which could be altered or eliminated? Thus the quest for a better future began.



Photograph by Monal Shah

Change was necessary

My needs were few. I needed shelter, food, and a few creature comforts. I have never needed the newest toy, the flashiest car, the next high tech gadget. It's just not who I am. I was at that time renting a wonderful cottage on four wooded acres and I enjoyed the freedom that renting gave me….no lawn work, no repairs, no property taxes, etc. Since I live alone my grocery bills weekly amounted to less than $50, certainly not an extravagant drain of my income. I decided to monitor my spending for a month to see what I was spending my money on and by extension what I was wasting. Every penny was accounted for and at the end of the month I had a fairly good idea what I needed to do to shave expenses.

Once I had spending down to the lowest possible level I needed to look at my income. What if I quit my full-time job? Where would the money come from? I had just reached early retirement age, but my Social Security was not going to meet expenses, so that left the necessity of a part time job. Considering the fact that I had worked full-time for four decades, the thought of working part-time sounded damn good to me. Even in today's uncertain and unstable economy, a part time job is not that hard to obtain. I also liked the freedom that a part time job gave me, and I also had the realization that if something better came along I could always switch part time careers.

A happy ending

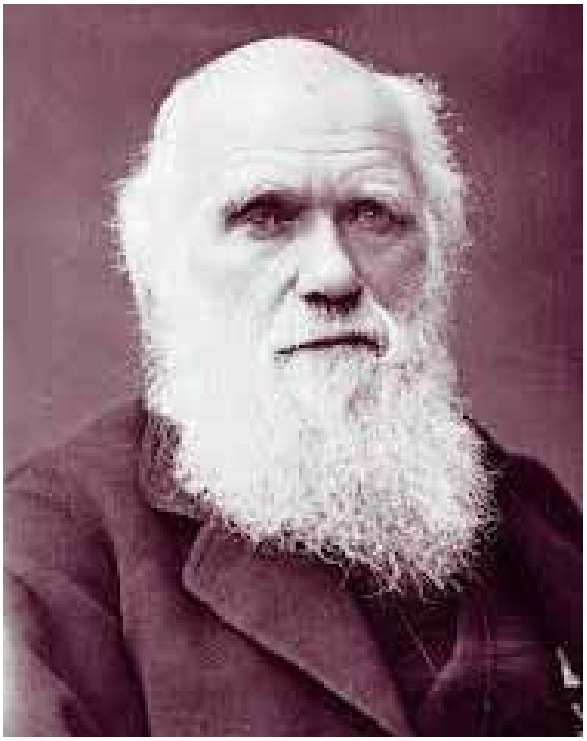
All of this took some time to formulate and make a reality, but today I write when I want to; I take on only the writing jobs that I want; I draw early retirement; and I lack for nothing. This minimalist lifestyle has become somewhat of a challenge to me. How can I further cut expenses? Where can I make a few extra dollars of income without infringing too much on the free time I have grown to love? As I write this it is eight a.m. on a Wednesday morning. I am having my cup of tea and watching the rain fall as I write my hub and organize for the rest of the day. Around noon I will go for a walk with my girlfriend/significant other/soulmate and we will talk about our future farm that we plan on buying and while we are walking we will watch the birds flying and the clouds drifting by and we will say hello to the neighbors. I am still young enough to enjoy life, my health is great, and I am stress free and in a very positive frame of mind. In other words, as I said earlier, I love my life.

I am not implying that most of you can just quit your job and live in a Utopian world of self-sufficiency. I am, however, suggesting that you can change your way of thinking about what is and is not important and make some decisions that will allow you more freedom to enjoy life and spend more time with loved ones. Is it more important that you buy an expensive gift for a loved one or that you spend more time with that loved one? Is it more important that you live in a bigger house and drive a newer car, buried in debt, or live more frugally debt-free? I know what I want; I took the steps necessary to achieve those things. Now it's your turn.

Mr. Holland has been a dedicated teacher for eighteen years; he has taught a variety of subjects over the years, including creative writing, history, geography and various business subjects. He is the author of a novel, 'The 12/59 Shuttle From Yesterday To Today' and he is currently working on several other interesting projects.

New Theory of Evolution

SURVIVAL OF THE NICEST



Darwin's 1871 book *The Descent of Man* argued that the human species had succeeded because of traits like sharing and compassion. However, industrialists like Andrew Carnegie interpreted Darwin's theories to justify an economy of vicious competition and inequality.

Eric Michael Johnson writes about how worker owned co-operatives rather than corporates are much more consistent with our evolutionary heritage.

A century ago, industrialists like Andrew Carnegie believed that Darwin's theories justified an economy of vicious competition and inequality. They left us with an ideological legacy that says the corporate economy, in which wealth concentrates in the hands of a few, produces the best for humanity. This was always a distortion of Darwin's ideas. His 1871 book *The Descent of Man* argued that the human species had succeeded because of traits like sharing and compassion. "Those communities", he wrote, "which included the greatest number of the most sympathetic members would flourish best, and rear the greatest number of offspring." Darwin was no economist, but wealth-sharing and cooperation have always looked more consistent with his observations about human survival than the elitism and hierarchy that dominates contemporary corporate life.

Nearly 150 years later, modern science has verified Darwin's early insights with direct implications for how we do business in our society. New peer-reviewed research by Michael Tomasello, an American psychologist and co-director of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany, has synthesized three decades of research to develop a comprehensive evolutionary theory of human cooperation. What can we learn about sharing as a result?

Tomasello holds that there were two key steps that led to humans' unique form of interdependence. The first was all about who was coming to dinner. Approximately two million years ago, a fledgling species known as *Homo habilis* emerged on the great plains of Africa. At the same time that these four-foot-tall, bipedal apes appeared, a period of global cooling produced vast, open environments. This climate change eventually forced our hominid ancestors to adapt to a new way of live or perish entirely. Since they lacked the ability to take down large game, like the ferocious carnivores of the early Pleistocene, the solution they hit upon was scavenging the carcasses of recently killed large mammals. The analysis of fossil bones from this period has revealed evidence of stone-tool cut marks overlaid on top of carnivore teeth marks. The precursors of modern humans had a habit of arriving late to the feast.

However, this survival strategy brought an entirely new set of challenges: Individuals now had to coordinate their behaviors, work together, and learn how to share. For apes living in the dense rainforest, the search for ripe fruit and nuts was largely an individual activity. But on the plains, our ancestors needed to travel in groups to survive, and the act of scavenging from a single animal carcass forced proto-humans to learn to tolerate each other and allow each other a fair share. This resulted in a form of social selection that favored cooperation: "Individuals who attempted to hog all of the food at a scavenged carcass would be actively repelled by other," writes Tomasello, "and perhaps shunned in other ways as well."

This evolutionary legacy can be seen in our behavior today, particularly among children who are too young to have been taught such notions of fairness. For example, in a 2011 study published in the journal Nature, anthropologist Katharina Hamann and her colleagues found that 3-year-old children share food more equitably if they gain it through cooperative effort rather than via individual labor or no work at all. In contrast, chimpanzees showed no difference in how they shared food under these different scenarios: they wouldn't necessarily hoard the food individually, but they placed no value on cooperative efforts either. The implication, according to Tomasello, is that human evolution has predisposed us to work collaboratively and given us an intuitive sense that cooperation deserves equal rewards.

The second step in Tomasello's theory leads directly into what kinds of businesses and economies are more in line with human evolution. Humans have, of course, uniquely large population sizes – much larger than those of other primates. It was the human penchant for cooperation that allowed groups to grow in number and eventually become tribal societies. Humans, more than any other primate, developed psychological adaptations that allowed them to quickly recognize members of their own group (through unique behaviors, traditions or forms of language) and develop a shared cultural identity in the pursuit of a common goal.

"The result," says Tomasello, "Was a new kind of interdependence and group-mindedness that went well beyond the joint intentionality of small scale production to a kind of collective intentionality at the level of the entire society."

What does this mean for the different forms of businesses today? Corporate workplaces probably aren't in sync with our evolutionary roots and may not be good for our long-term success as humans. Corporate culture imposes uniformity, mandated from the top down, throughout the organization. But the cooperative – the financial model in which a group of members owns a business and makes the rules about how to run it – is a modern institution that has much in common with the collective tribal heritage of our species. Worker-owned cooperatives are regionally distinct and organized around their constituent members. As a result, worker co-ops develop unique culture that, following Tomasello's theory, would be expected to better promote a shared identity among all members of the group. This shared identity would give rise to greater trust and collaboration without the need for centralized control.

...the structure of corporations is a recipe for worker alienation and dissatisfaction. Humans have evolved the ability to quickly form collective intentionality that motivates group members to pursue a shared goal... Corporations, by law, are required to maximize profits for their investors. The shared goal among corporate employees is not to benefit their own community but rather a distant population of financiers who have no personal connection to their lives or labor.

Photograph by Sarah A Knutie

Darwin's Finch: When Charles Darwin stepped ashore on the Galapagos Islands in 1835, he observed and collected a variety of small birds that inhabited the islands. Later in London, he realized that they were all different but closely related species of finch, which led him toward formulating the principle of natural selection.

Moreover, the structure of corporations is a recipe for worker alienation and dissatisfaction. Humans have evolved the ability to quickly form collective intentionality that motivates group members to pursue a shared goal. "Once they have formed a joint goal," Tomasello says, "humans are committed to it." Corporations, by law, are required to maximize profits for their investors. The shared goal among corporate employees is not to benefit their own community but rather a distant population of financiers who have no personal connection to their lives or labor.

However, because worker-owned cooperatives focus on maximizing value for their members, the cooperative is operated by and for the local community – a goal much more consistent with our evolutionary heritage. As Darwin concluded in *The Descent of Man*, "The more enduring social instincts conquer the less persistent instincts." As worker-owned cooperatives continue to gain prominence around the world, we may ultimately witness the downfall of Carnegie's "law of competition" and a return to the collaborative environments that the human species has long called home.

Eric Michael Johnson is a doctoral student in the history of science at University of British Columbia. His research examines the interplay between evolutionary biology and politics.

This article first appeared in the 'Yes' Magazine.

Back to traditional farming systems – a case of Monpa tribes

- Mihin Dolo

Monpa tribes, particularly belonging to Yewang, Namshu, Zimthung villages have gained awareness about the health risk of chemical agriculture, and are now going back to their traditional practices.

The Monpa tribes are an ethnic group of Tibetan descent, who live in the western districts of Tawang and West Kameng of Arunachal Pradesh. Nearly 80% of the 45,000 strong community depends on agriculture based on local resources with limited or no external inputs. However, policy planners and developmental agencies have been enforcing modern methods of crop production with high external inputs, without considering or incorporating the traditional ecological knowledge which has evolved through century old experimentations. For nearly three decades now, government agencies have consistently promoted the use of chemicals to supposedly improve yields and protect crops from pests and weeds.

Commercial cropping in the region led to a severe decline in crop diversity. Mono-cropping of cabbage, potato, garden pea, etc., in agricultural plots and fruits like kiwi, orange and apple in horticultural plots took over. The traditionally valued crops for rituals (e.g. buckwheat), soil health (soyabean, common beans) and human health (maize, millet) got replaced. The dietary patterns also shifted from maize as staple to rice. Consumption of soyabean-cooked or fermented (Churpi), millet, common beans etc., was also dislodged, which directly or indirectly affects the nutrient demand of human body.

Today, farmers realise that due to declining crop area under maize, millet and soyabean, nutrient rich traditional diet preparations and thereby the health of the younger generation has been affected.

Rejuvenating Traditional Practices

Monpa tribes, particularly belonging to Yewang, Namshu, Zimthung villages having understood the importance of oak forests and the health risk of chemicals, are now going back to and valuing their traditional practices. They have started to re-manage oak forests, which are an integral part of the agro-ecosystem for soil health management. Soil nutrient optimization is crucial for sustaining the agroecosystem in fragile Arunachal Himalaya. Interestingly, Monpa tribes are managing it through a type of agro-forestry by maintaining oak (Baisnang Sing; Baisnang mean oak, Sing mean tree) forests on the periphery of agricultural land. The oak (Quercus sp.) trees generally shed their leaves during January-February, which are collected and kept in a corner of the agricultural field. This collection and further mulching is largely done by women in groups called 'Mila'. The mulched leaves have both ecological and economic value. They protect soil erosion and runoff, maintaining soil moisture and soil health, which in turn enhances the economic yield.

Back to Biodiverse Farming

Monocropping system has been broken and several crops are now being cultivated on the farms. As many as 53 species of vegetables, grains and tuber crops and 7 species of fruit crops are now grown in different crop combinations in their traditional agro-ecosystem. It has taken nearly 3-4 years for the land to regain its status with traditional management practices. Besides ecological and economic benefits, the revival of the traditional system has helped to sustain an organic crop production system by limiting the use of chemicals, ultimately benefitting the health of the community. Community management of agro ecosystem, Traditional Village Institution (TVI) or 'Chhopa/Mangmajom', as it is locally called, has played a pivotal role in revitalizing traditional agriculture. The village institution is headed by a 'Tsorgen' (village chief) and assisted by 'Thumis' or 'Tsoblas' and village messenger (Gomin), as approved by a general assembly (Tso-Tsangzon). A village fund (Khrien) has been generated through household contributions. All the

households participate in every activity irrespective of their social and economic status. Villagers place their views in TVI, which are then extensively discussed and decided upon. Chopa have also developed local norms and rules to avoid conflict in accessing the forest resources. The private and community oak forest lands are demarcated separately using stones or other traditional symbols. A fine ranging from Rs 2,000 to 20,000 can be imposed by Chhopa headed by Gaon Burah (village head) if rules are violated. The Chhopa reserves the right to reduce the fine depending on the economic status of the person charged. The money collected from the imposed fine is used by the community for social welfare activities and managing natural resources like plantations on community lands.

Getting Back to Traditional Diets

With increasing crop diversity including grains, pulses, tuber crops and fruits, the Monpa tribes are getting back to their traditional diets. Besides giving food security during environmental stress periods, these crops are nutritious too. Maize, a protein rich grain and fermented soyabean (Churpi) are being extensively used by the community. It has been observed that traditional diets including a combination of different vegetables, grains, tubers and fruits produced without use of chemicals help farmers maintain their health.

Conclusion

Agriculture and health are intricately linked to each other. Policy intervention in agriculture and human health is often pursued with parallel and independent approaches. Coherent, joint action in agriculture and health can have large potential benefits and substantially reduce the health risk of traditional farming communities. There is a growing recognition that agriculture influences health, and health influences agriculture, and that both in turn have profound implications for poverty reduction.

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Ishita Khanna

Eco Tourism in the Himalayas

A TISS graduate (Tata Insititute of Social Sciences), Ishita Khanna gave up the life of a yuppie and decided to move to Spiti Valley in 2002. Hidden in the Trans-Himalayan belt of Himachal Pradesh, Spiti is a cold desert with average altitudes of above 13000 feet. Battling against odds like the harsh climatic conditions (in winters temperatures dip to -30 degrees) and inaccessibility, the now 35-year-old social entrepreneur has managed to revitalize a community of 11,000 people in just over a decade.

Ishita and her venture Spiti Ecosphere's mission has been to create a sensitized approach to development issues in the region.

Ishita grew up in Dehradun, which explains her love and fondness for the hills. She took it upon herself to work in the Himalayas, with help of locals from Lahaul and Spiti. To build a sustainable and green local economy, she got villagers to harvest a local berry, the Seabuckthorn, fruits from which are used to make juices and jams. For two weeks a year, when the berry is harvested, the women in 30 Spiti villages earn upto 800 rupees a day.

Ishita also encourages eco tourism of a completely unique nature in the area. Tours like 'Spiritual Soujourns', 'Rustic Revelations', 'Trans-Himalyan Trails' and 'Adrenalin Inc' are all carbon neutral. She also helps communities make their houses solar passive, (which help absorb the suns heat and retain it longer) reducing carbon emissions (by up to 2.5 tons / annum/ household) and fuelwood consumption by 60%. Ecosphere also works with communities to build greenhouses using local materials that allow green vegetables to grow throughout the year.

Some of the fantastic recognition has come from the prestigious Sierra Club Green Energy and Green Livelihoods Achievement Award in 2009. Interesting to know, Ishita received MTV India's Youth Icon of the Year Award in 2008 and was also nominated for the 2009 CNN-IBN Indian of the Year in the Category of Public Service.

http://www.spitiecosphere.com/

Linh Do

Social Change Advocate

22-year-old Linh Do is the founder of Change and Switch in Australia. She is a social change advocate focused primarily on environmental issues through community organising, altering paradigms through technology and political advocacy.

Seven years ago, Linh initiated the Change a Million Light Bulbs project in Melbourne to get people to switch from incandescent to LED or compact fluorescent light bulbs. Just five years ago, Linh was trained by Al Gore to be a Climate Project presenter and deliver the slideshow behind An Inconvenient Truth, and in 2010, Linh was one of 250 international passengers to spend two months on the Ship of World Youth, an initiative by the Government of Japan to facilitate intercultural exchange. Internationally, Linh has served as UNEP's youth advisor for better engagement within the Asia-Pacific region. The highlight of her career she proclaims has been helping to install clean water wells in a Kenyan slum.

She was selected to the Foundation for Young Australians program for her role in creating The Verb, a web-based media/ advocacy project that works with emerging young journalists. She realised that there was a real gap in reporting, where media persons didn't have the knowledge and the science behind these issues. It led to the creation of a website where young people have a say about the future of the planet. The Verb focuses on environmental issues that don't receive adequate coverage elsewhere. It has covered all the major climate change conferences since Copenhagen, producing daily policy updates and human interest stories on those affected by climate change.

She is a frequent public speaker in addition to being the occasional writer and photographer. She recently completed three months in Africa canvassing stories on the green economy for various publications. Her works have been published in the Drum, the Huffington Post, Next Web, the Herald Sun, the Age and the Guardian. And her photography credits have included the Atlantic, Fast Company, TreeHugger, Grist and traditional academic journals.

Currently she is working on a media organization that will train young people to better communicate about the issues that matter, such as climate change.

http://www.theverb.org/

Project Jatropha

In 2007, at the age of 14, Adarsha and his 12 year-old sister Apoorva decided they wanted to do something to combat climate change. So they started up the nonprofit Project Jatropha. Jatropha is a plant that grows in tropical climates. They discovered that, when dried and processed, oil could be extracted from the Jatropha fruit and used as an eco-friendly bio-fuel.

Since Jatropha plants could not be grown in their U.S. hometown, the two looked to India, a place where they already had family roots and had spent a great deal of time.

Their goal was to introduce Jatropha to the farmers of Mysore with hopes of energizing the local economy by promoting this sustainable source of biofuel. One of their most important crops, tobacco, required curing, something that's done with wood fires. This ultimately lead to an alarming amount of deforestation in the area.

Despite what seemed like a win-win proposition, the skepticism of local farmers remained and the siblings realized the job at hand would require extra effort to gain the villagers' trust, so they went and lived with them for several weeks.

"Youth everywhere need to know that, even if you're doing a small thing, you're still helping the planet by a long shot,"

- Apoorva Rangan

Adarsha Shivakumar & Apoorva Rangan

While bio-fuel cultivation on a very large scale has been shown to be unsustainable, small farm cultivations of Jatropha may benefit farmers.

The siblings travelled back to India twice a year to check on the progress of the Jatropha plants that had already been cultivated and to educate local school children about climate change and sustainable solutions.

In 2009, they won the prestigious President's Environmental Youth Award, honoring young people making a positive difference in their communities and their world.

http://projectjatropha.com/
Courtesy: myhero.com

Mayura Kadur and Kaavya Nag

Soaps can be Natural and Fun

Mayura and Kaavya – two friends who studied together right from the 1st Standard, decided to work on a simple philosophy to do their bit to bring in more naturalness to the way we live today.

To get away from chemicals everywhere, including in body-care products and at the same time to do something that has that element of fun and naughtiness in it, they started 'Do Bandar' which means 'two monkeys'.

They experimented to create soaps with only natural ingredients, pure certified essential oils and natural colours like turmeric, anatoe and the like. With some struggle they got the smell and all-natural, no-compromise products that have that essence of Indianness they wanted.

They also make lotion bars and body massage oils from food grade oils which are all chemical-free, and contain no parabens, sulphates, artificial colours or fragrances.

The Do Bandar make their 100% natural, handmade soaps on their farm on the outskirts of Bangalore. Why Do Bandar? "We take inspiration from monkeys - free-spirited children of nature who enjoy the fun things in life", they say.

Find the Do Bandar on: dobandar.com, and on facebook.

Biodiversity and Climate Change-

A Bio-centric Point of View

Climate change is challenging our very ability to survive as a species. **Jay Burney** writes of the need to go beyond the Energy Equation and include bio-diversity as a major focus of climate mitigation and adaptation efforts.

Climate change is rampaging our planet, our region, and our communities like an unstoppable freight train that has gone off the tracks. We are no longer looking at a "predicted" future of possible highly variable extreme weather conditions and catastrophic events. That future is here now. We are in an emergency situation.

The impacts do and will continue to affect each one of us. Our pocketbooks and our health will bear the scars.

Climate change is challenging our very ability to survive as a species. In early August, NASA released a study co-authored by Jim Hansen, the Director of the Goddard Institute for Space Studies. This study uses statistical analysis of recent heat and drought events, and extreme weather patterns and concludes that climate change has arrived, is here on a disastrous global scale, and is worse than we thought.

The science has been clear for a decade. The changes in atmospheric gasses now include nearly 400 ppm of CO2 and is increasing about 2ppm per year. These increasing emissions are due to human activity and this activity is causing the rapid escalation. Climate scientists estimate that a healthy and stable atmosphere needs to be reduced to 275 ppm. Currently we are not even slowing down global emissions although according to a new report issued by the US Energy Information Administration, in 2011 due to factors such as a poor economy and a glut of cheap natural gas US energy related carbon emissions declined by 2.4%.

The debate about what causes climate change is also over. The endless and obfuscating natural vs. humans activity debate must be put behind us. If you do not understand that, your head is buried somewhere other than deep in the sand.

We must solve the most serious issue that has faced our species. To do that we need to intelligently characterize and continue to identify how human activity has caused climate disaster. Most importantly we must find ways to change our ways.

The Role of Biodiversity

The evolution of life on earth coincides with the evolution of the atmosphere. Over the millennia, nature, biodiversity, and earth's ecosystems and atmosphere have undergone ongoing substantial adjustments. At every level vital exchanges between energy and life effect the atmosphere including how gasses are stored and released.

Biodiversity is fundamental to the way our atmosphere has evolved, -and to its stability. Life, collected in the oceans, forests, savannahs, wetlands and literally all of the bioregions of the planet interconnect, interact, and interdepend upon each other.

E.O Wilson, the famed Harvard biologist says that "nature achieves sustainability through complexity". A stable atmosphere champions life, including the relatively recent rise of the human species. Biodiversity makes us unique in the universe.

The downside is that as humans have risen to the top of the food chain, we have come to dominate and transform ecosystems at every level. One of the primary consequences is vanishing biodiversity. EO Wilson says, "each millimeter, each acre, each square mile of natures ecosystem that is destroyed is a nail the atmospheric coffin".

Human Dominion Over Nature

Human fecundity, and our alleged ability to reason have been the foundations of our belief in human primacy on the planet. That may be a temporary adjustment. Many scientists are now recognizing that we are experiencing an extinction event on this planet, The Holocene Extinction, that rivals any previous extinction episode.

Generally accepted practices of human culture tend to view the earth from an essentially anthropocentric point of view. This centers on the belief that

the earth is here to serve humans rather than humans are actually a part of a complex interdependent ecosystem. This intellectual achievement by humanity centers around a fundamentally political failure that pits things like mainstream monotheistic religious beliefs and economic hegemony, -and against science. The resulting conflicts have been consequential. It is a mismatch. Science wins. Humans and their paradoxical and often corrupting political philosophies are on the way out.

We cannot afford to think of the environment as something to be conquered but rather we must understand that our lives depend on our own healthy relationships with ecosystems. That means fundamentally, we must defend biodiversity.

The Kaya Identity

Decades ago, Japanese energy economist Yoichi Kaya explained that human caused CO2 emissions are explained by four factors: population, economic activity, how we obtain our energy, and how we use that energy. His resulting "Kaya Identity" (Emissions = GDP x Technology) is a formula that has been a way to both recognize and predict carbon emissions, and to find ways to reduce these emissions. Economic activity, translated in the formula as GDP, externalizes by tradition, fundamental environmental values. This egregious miscalculation has lead to a false hope that we can still work within the economic systems that have championed consumption and destruction of habitat.

This path has lead to climate disaster by forcing us to decide that we can only address the almost singular issue of "how we obtain our energy" while ignoring the results of expanding GDP on biodiversity and habitat loss. This strategy is not working.

It's the Economy, Stupid

Until now the discussions and arguments have been filled with political obtusities. Science almost always takes a back seat to economic growth.

We have been through decades of failed global summits and conventions including Kyoto, Rio, Johannesburg, Stockholm, Copenhagen and many others with the focus ostensibly on sustainable development and climate change. One of the problems is that the term sustainable development is clearly an oxymoron. Another problem is that the primary concern of virtually every world leader that has attended any of these events is not the environment, but instead the concern is economic growth and the GDP. According to our global leadership, sustainability is about the economy and not about the relationships between environment, society, and the economy, with the environment being the real bottom line. This is where the train has gone off the tracks.

Externalities v. Value

Our generally accepted economic system declares natural resources to be commodities. The costs and values of the ecological services that these systems provide such as atmospheric balancing and clean water are externalities. In other words a forest is measured by its value in board feet and its ecological services values are marginalized. The real costs and consequences of harvesting our ecosystems are "external" and are not the responsibility of the political entities that are profiting from exploitation. Instead the costs of water treatment facilities and health care associated with environmental degradation, are passed on to the public while the measured consumer economy grows without the bother of accounting for environmental loss.

The political economic systems that we have intentionally deployed are directly responsible for eviscerating earth's ecosystems. Beyond the equation of declaring the environment an externality is the uncodified by none the less systematic externality of social and cultural consequences in the economic meme. The real costs to society including war, human health consequences, food security, and disappearing fundamental human needs including clean air and water create social and cultural instability. These quantifiable social costs are borne not by the profit takers but are instead an external cost born by society.

Why the Energy Equation is Not Enough

How we obtain and use our energy is very important. The focus on renewable energy strategies is consequential, but identifying energy sources without taking into consideration consumerism, growth, and the externalities of the value of biodiversity and costs of habitat loss, and the social consequences of all of the above flies in the face of sustainable problem solving.

Certainly a focus on "greener" energy and a "green economy" has its merits, but can anything that promotes consumer growth and ignores the basic reality of the value of biodiversity succeed? Can we stop this careening train?

Jay Burney lives in Buffalo New York, on the Great Lakes and is the founder of the Learning Sustainability Campaign (2001), and GreenWatch (2010), a project which is designed to advocate "sustainability" literacy for media makers including journalists, artists, bloggers, and other individuals and groups that cover or talk about sustainability issues.

Photos: Monal Shah and Ahshil Shah

Ecological Intelligence

The Coming Age of Radical Transparency

- Yoginder Sikand

The more 'ecologically intelligent' individual consumers become, the more aware they are of the ecological consequences of their consumption choices, the more effectively will they be able to reign in most producers' fundamental lack of concern for ecological devastation, **Goleman** writes in his book, Ecological Intelligence.

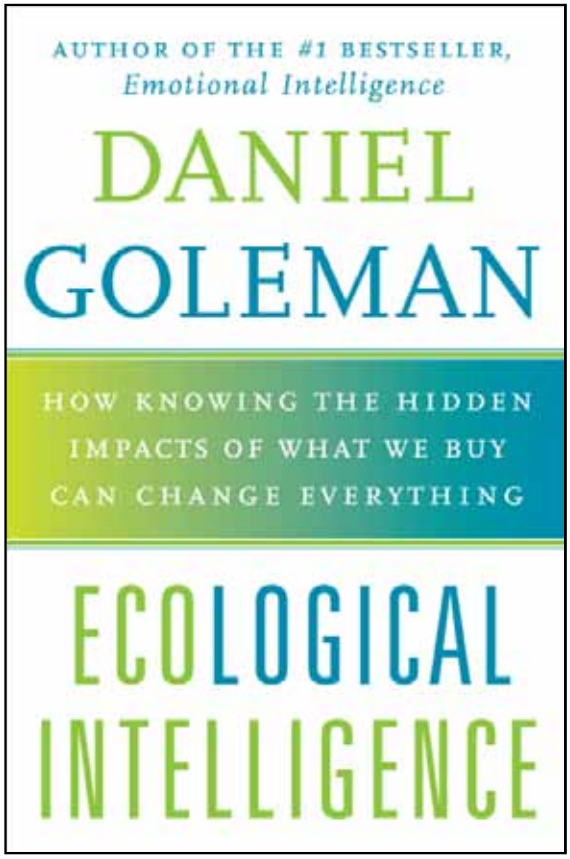
The ecological crisis that contemporary humanity collectively faces is truly of frightening proportions, as study after study testifies. Yet, it has not really sent the alarm bells ringing. With the exception perhaps of a relatively small circle of environmentally-conscious people, most of us still turn a deaf ear to warning signs of looming ecological disaster. Some of us might readily acknowledge the fact that the environments that we inhabit have definitely undergone a sharp degradation in just a few years. The streets are palpably more clogged with rubbish and vehicles, and the air is obviously thicker with dust and smoke. But, just as we find all of this deeply distressing, we feel there is absolutely nothing that we, as individuals, can do to change it. And so, we are led to a benumbing passivity, as if the unchecked destruction of the environment is something that we just have to put up with, and that there is no way out at all.

That attitude, as Daniel Goleman explains in this brilliantly-researched and timely work, may indeed be widespread but it needs to be challenged if we are at all serious about the possibility of a sustainable future for humanity and the planet we inhabit. We cannot, Goleman reprimands us, blame just irresponsible governments and greedy corporates for the rape of the environment. Nor can we expect to save the environment simply by reigning in governments and corporates. In fact, suggests Goleman, every individual across the world is actively involved in the destruction of Nature, particularly through the consumption choices he or she makes, although this is something that we are rarely aware of. And so, if these choices we make are altered, every individual can play a major role in saving Nature from further destruction. No longer can we, as individuals, continue to evade our own culpability in the degradation of the environment and, in addition, our responsibility to salvage it.

Goleman builds up an impressive case for individual producers and consumers to play their respective roles in saving their environment, or at least minimizing their destruction of it, based on an awareness of the environmental consequences of the production and consumption choices that they make. Every article produced contains a combination of elements extracted from Nature, and every act of production represents a depletion of natural resources. In addition, the production, packaging and delivery of consumer products and waste disposal all have crucial, though often not widely recognized, ecological impacts. Furthermore, many manufactured goods have frightening long-term consequences for consumers' physical and mental health. Scores of industries are based on heavily-exploited cheap labour, and some on pain inflicted on animals on a massive scale. All these must be factored in, Goleman argues, to arrive at a rough idea of the environmental cost of a particular product. Consumers must be encouraged to purchase and consume with more awareness—almost meditatively, if you like—basing their decisions not simply on product price and appearance but also on the ecological costs of the items they buy.

Presently, Goleman notes, most consumers have little or no idea of these hidden costs, which, obviously, most producers hate to admit exist. In other words, most of us are characterized by a woeful lack of 'ecological intelligence'. What concerns most consumers is simply the price that they have to pay for a product they want. Only a small minority of eco-conscious consumers seem passionately concerned about the ecological costs and consequences of the products they buy. And that is one reason why industries in many countries can continue to despoil the environment with impunity, driven solely by the desire for maximizing their profits and lacking concern for the impact of their production choices on the environment.

The more 'ecologically intelligent' individual consumers become, the more aware they are of the ecological consequences of their consumption choices, the more effectively will they be able to reign in most producers' fundamental lack of concern for ecological devastation, Goleman writes. Ideally, he says, producers must supply every prospective consumer with details of the ecological costs and consequences of their products—not just information about their chemical composition and, in the case of food products, their calorific value, but such facts as the amount of energy and other resources used in producing them, the wages and working conditions of employees at every stage of the production chain, the amount of waste produced, the method of waste disposal used by production units and the impact of this on the environment and so on. If consumers are provided with this



Given the ominous reality of the global environmental threat, Goleman's advocacy of universalising 'ecological intelligence' makes good sense, reminding us that although the problem is so huge that none of us can individually make much of a dent in it, every little effort, by every single individual, counts.

information for all available products, they can choose between competing brands of the same item not just on the basis of price and appearance but also on the basis of their ecological costs. As 'ecological intelligence' spreads across society, people will be motivated to make more ecologically sensible choices, preferring to buy those products that have lesser environmental costs than rival brands. In this way, Goleman contends, ecologically intelligent individuals' consumption patterns will have less devastating consequences for the environment than those of ecologically un-intelligent buyers.

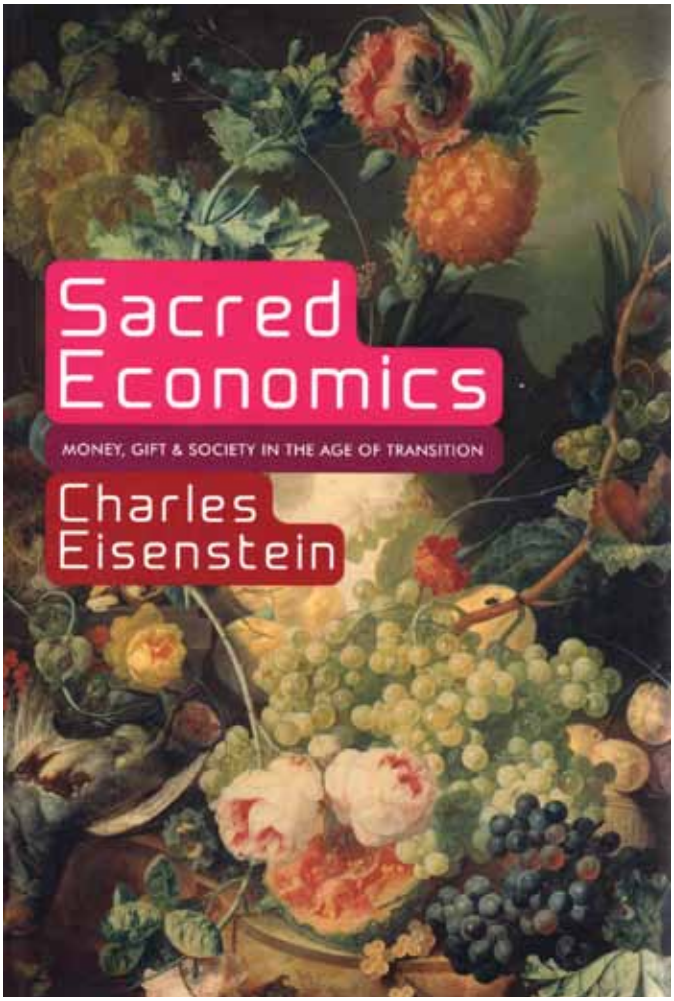
But what would make producers feel obliged to share embarrassing details of the ecological costs of their products with prospective consumers? The answer lies in the spread of ecological intelligence. As distress among people mounts over the increasingly intolerable destruction of the environment, they will, it is possible, begin to compel businesses to divulge this information to the general public. This information can, at least theoretically, be made universally accessible now through the Internet. Armed with this information, consumers will have a new form of power over producers, being able to choose from among rival companies on the basis of the ecological worthiness or otherwise of their products. This, so Goleman believes, will force companies to make efforts to minimize the ecological costs of their products.

It may even make good business sense to do so, Goleman says. If a company is seen by prospective consumers to be less ecologically costly than its rivals, it might attract a larger share of the market. This itself would drive some companies to observe stricter standards of ecological responsibility. In the long-run, this would have a multiplier effect, with other companies being forced to toe their line or else face plummeting sales and profits.

Given the ominous reality of the global environmental threat, Goleman's advocacy of universalising 'ecological intelligence' makes good sense, reminding us that although the problem is so huge that none of us can individually make much of a dent in it, every little effort, by every single individual, counts. This book makes out an impressive case for a global ecological activism that goes beyond simply targeting a few ecological offenders to working to bring every production unit to comply by strict ecological standards. Surely, this is a laudable task, and even though it may take decades, if not longer, for this to happen across the world, it is a goal worth striving for.

Only if the underlying premise of capitalism is itself challenged—which Goleman fails to do and even appears reluctant to dare even contemplate—can the reality of the global ecological challenge be effectively met. In other words, it isn't enough, as Goleman seems to argue, to produce and consume 'ecologically intelligently'. While we can no longer do without this, of course, the maximizing of production and consumption (even if in an 'ecologically intelligent way') must give way to a more ecologically sensible view of life, one based on a premise precisely the opposite of that which informs all forms of materialism—the reduction of our wants to our needs. For, as Gandhi famously remarked, 'The world has enough for everyone's need but not for everyone's greed.' That realization would seem to the culmination of 'ecological intelligence', but, sadly, this is something that Goleman fails to admit.

Yoginder Sikand is an Indian writer-academic with a background in economics, history and sociology. He works with the Centre for the Study of Social Exclusion at the National Law School, Bangalore. He is also the author of more than a dozen books, and freelances for several newspapers and magazines including Outlook and Countercurrents.org.



Sacred Economics

by Charles Eisenstein

Published by Evolver Editions

Rema Kumar writes about Charles Eisenstein's beautifully written book which she says is a must-read, for all those who believe that our economic system is terminally sick and in dire need of a re-haul. Eisenstein describes a vision of a money system and an economy that is sacred and embodies the inter-connectedness and uniqueness of all things.

The title of the book itself intrigued me, *economics* and *sacred*? The two seemed to be mutually exclusive to me. Living in an economics driven, money dominated, standardized world what one acutely experiences is the absence of the 'sacred'! Charles Eisenstein's beautifully written book is a must read, for all those who believe that our economic system is terminally sick and in dire need of a re-haul. He traces the history of money from ancient gift economies to modern capitalism and calls for a transition from profanity to sacredness in money. He describes a vision of a money system and an economy that is sacred and embodies the inter-connectedness and uniqueness of all things.

Sacred economics operates on four levels: it offers a fundamental analysis of what has gone wrong with money; it describes a more beautiful world based on a different kind of money and economy. It explains the collective action necessary to create such a world and the means by which these actions can come about; and it explores the personal dimension of the word 'transformation'. The personal dimension is the change in identity and being that the author refers to as 'living in the gift'.

Part I of the book illuminates the economic system that has arisen on the foundation of the story of separation. Separation is not an ultimate reality but a human projection, an ideology, a story. It is a story of separation of the human realm from the natural in which the natural world is ultimately reduced to resources, goods, prosperity and money. And built deeply into this economic system is anonymity, depersonalization, polarization of wealth, endless growth and ecological despoliation. The author raises some compelling questions, "If the true nature of the universe is abundance and gift, then how did money become a force of scarcity, greed and evil? If the purpose of money is to just connect human gifts with human needs, what power has turned it into an agent of scarcity?"

He further argues that the assumption of scarcity is one of the two central axioms of economics. The second is that people naturally seek to maximize self-interest. Part I also examines in depth the illusion of 'scarcity', the trouble with property, the corpse of the commons, the economics of usury and the crisis our civilization is facing. The author links all these to the stories we have been telling ourselves. The story of the separate self and the story of the world being there for our taking. And our ultimate destiny being of complete mastery or transcendence of nature. To revert the crisis our civilization is facing, nothing less than a transformation of the defining story is needed.

Part II, The Economics of Reunion explores this re-definition. The author calls the sojourn of separation from nature as the long infancy of the human species. For all this while we have treated Earth as the mother and taken from her, heedless of her sacrifice and pain. He calls for a shift in the relationship, so instead of Mother Earth we need to relate to Lover Earth. As he beautifully elucidates, "In a romantic

partnership, what you do to your partner bounces back to you; her pain is your pain."

The author calls the current crisis the coming-of-age ordeal and transition into adulthood for the human species. According to him, a new economic system is emerging that embodies the new human identity of the connected self living in co-creative partnership with earth. He then says that the economic system and money system will be agents of giving, of creation, of service, and of abundance. The chapters in Part II describe the elements of a sacred economy.

What then are the elements of a sacred economy?

A money and economic system that will obey rules of nature like the Law of Return; a money system that will be backed by commons, those things of which we are collective stewards; negative interest economies; local and complementary currencies, gift economies and social dividend. The author believes that the change is not a revolution but a metamorphosis. The Age of Reunion has long gestated within the institutions of separation.

The third part of the book, Living the New Economy is devoted to the shift of consciousness and practice. The author says that as we heal the spirit-matter rupture we discover that economics and spirituality are inseparable. At a personal level it is about how to give our gifts and meet our needs. The author states that by changing our everyday economic thinking and practices we not only prepare ourselves for great changes ahead; we also set the stage for their emergence.

This book is a great read for both idealists and skeptics. It combines philosophical and spiritual depth with practical insights and practices. A broadly integrated synthesis of theory, policy and practice, it can trigger serious worldwide conversations on how we can reinvent our attitude towards money.

It is for anyone who wants to find opportunities in the current crises and believes that possibilities exist.The author in fact dedicates all of his work "to the more beautiful world our hearts will tell us is possible", even though our minds may think otherwise.

Rema Kumar is the Director of Prakriya Green Wisdom School, Bangalore. She is a passionate teacher and conducts programmes focusing on self-exploration, eco-projects and creative teaching.

The Sacred Economy

will bear the following characteristics:

It will restore the mentality of the gift to our vocations and economic life.
It will reverse the money - induced homogenization and depersonalization of society.
It will be an extension of the ecosystem, not a violation of it.
It will promote local economies and revive community.
It will encourage initiative and reward entrepreneurship.
It will be consistent with zero growth, yet foster the continued development of our uniquely human gifts.
It will promote an equitable distribution of wealth.
It will promote a new materialism that treats the world as sacred.
It will be aligned with political egalitarianism and people power and will not induce more centralized control.
It will restore lost realms of natural, social, cultural and spiritual capital.
And, most importantly, it is something that we can start creating now!

Extract from Sacred Economics by Charles Eisenstein

Lessons from My Mother's Village Kitchen

Photo by Doug Pibel for YES! Magazine

The common peoples of the world, when left to live by the wisdom of their own traditions, culinary and other, do magnificently says **Madhu Suri Prakash**

I have been working on a book, collecting stories of a rapidly growing movement in the United States. Across the country, people are working to connect students with real food—grown themselves in school gardens or bought from local food producers. The aim is to break the chains of fast-food addiction and reawaken our connection to food as both physical and spiritual sustenance.

As I watch children, and the adults who teach them, relearn the joys of local food, I am reminded of my own experience growing up in India. Our home shifted every three years as my military father was shunted back and forth across the subcontinent. But in the face of that dislocation, my mother, Rajinder, stayed grounded in our indigenous food traditions. For a taste of her common sense, I invite you to enter our home, and explore with me its center—my mother's kitchen, her rasoi.

Rajinder's Remarkable Rasoi

Rasoi comes from the Hindi word "rasa," a word almost untranslatable, as are most of the core words referring to the sacred—the divine—that is the heart of Hindu culture and traditions. Yet, without rasa, it is impossible to say anything significant about the traditional Hindu arts and sciences, including the art of preparing and serving spicy, stunningly beautiful, aromatic foods that bring out the deepest pleasures of eating.

One of the many meanings of rasa is "juice"—the quintessential flow of flavors that comes only from slow, deliberate ripening that follows the organic rhythm of nature's cycles. Rasoi literally means that sacred place in the home where these juices flow naturally, and therefore produce profound pleasure—for the palate, the eyes, and the soul.

True artists in every field of creativity, including the art of living, bring forth diverse and unique kinds of rasa. Excellence of technique is necessary. But rasa only emerges when people combine the technical expertise that comes from the head, with habits of deepening the heart—connecting head and heart to the slow, deep workings of the soul. Only when we prepare food with love, reverence, and respect do we become adept in the art of bringing out the juices, the rasa, of all the vegetables, fruits, and other ingredients that go into the sublime and sacred preparation of food.

In the pre-dawn darkness, without electricity, Rajinder's unassuming little kitchen, with only two tiny earthen stoves designed centuries before the Dark Ages of Europe, slowly got going with fired charcoal; ready to receive the milk lovingly released only moments before by the hands of the gwala (milkman) from the udders of our neighborhood black buffalo herd. Frothing forth straight from the udder into the steel pot in which it would soon be boiled, its cream was quickly collected for the fresh, soft, and white butter I learned to churn by hand at age eleven.

This was Rajinder's remarkable rasoi, where for the first quarter century of my life, I saw one pot of milk, traveling no further than a block or two, yield generously to our yearning for buttered parathas, naan and super-hot chappatis—breads served so hot we had no recourse but to enjoy the pause as they cooled—long, soulful and necessary—awakening all the human senses without which the sacred and the sensuous cannot be headily and heartily enjoyed.

If all that came out of that pre-dawn pot of freshly drawn milk was butter, Rajinder's rasoi would be impressive, perhaps, yet not remarkable. In reality, Rajinder's deft fingers took that same pot of milk many miles beyond the wildest imaginations of "industrial eaters." She created creamy soft cottage cheese within minutes of squeezing the juice of limes harvested just then from our kitchen garden. She produced yoghurt raitas to accompany every lunch and dinner, to cool palates tickled by tamarind chutneys and gingery garlic cilantro curries bringing out all the flavors—whether of

In her heart, guts, and bones, and not in her head alone, she knew well all the reasons why out-of-season, long-distance-traveling refrigerated milk and other foods systematically destroy the delicate, intricate web of local relationships between tiny rasois and well-rooted, humble, small local businesses

No time-saving machines, no labor-saving gizmos, no measuring cups and spoons, no fancy ovens, no Cuisinarts, no blenders, and no recipe books—apart from her carefully handwritten slender, little notebook of recipes, oriental and occidental, appreciatively learned from visiting neighbors or friends.

Photograph by Monal Shah

potatoes or the roots of lotus flowers. She concocted soothing summer drinks—including lassis and chach flavored with black rock salt, mustard seeds and curry leaves—and kheer, phirni, rabri, gajar ka halwa, among others .

How can I do justice to the diverse dishes Rajinder created from the foods she bought in the local market? The twenty-five hues, textures, and tastes of lentils and beans, colorfully arraying her rasoi; constituting our subsistence, our staples. Or the 101 potato combinations concocted with coconuts, mints, fennel, spinach, tulsi, bitter gourd, brinjal, okra. Her thirty-four distinct ways of mixing a cup of basmati rice with whatever vegetables came out of the earth in abundance that particular morning—winter, spring, summer, or fall. During the thundering monsoons, the heady aromas of parched earth coming to life with long-awaited summer rain would mix and mingle with the aromas floating across the courtyard and wafting over the whole neighborhood from her earthen oven—the tandoor.

No time-saving machines, no labor-saving gizmos, no measuring cups and spoons, no fancy ovens, no Cuisinarts, no blenders, and no recipe books—apart from her carefully handwritten slender, little notebook of recipes, Oriental and Occidental, appreciatively learned from visiting neighbors or friends.

Rajinder's rasoi revealed the remarkable genius that was far from hers alone. She was but one lovely expression of her people's well-honed common sense, born of a commons of shared food and shared knowledge. This common sense demonstrates daily that most of the common peoples of the world, when left to live by the wisdom of their own traditions, culinary and other, do magnificently. They have hundreds of generations of elders to turn to for insights and guidance who have for centuries upon centuries accumulated knowledge of their place, through trial and error, creating forms of abundance and riches that respect the slow cycles of seasons from seed to plate, learning lessons taught in quiet conversations with Mother Nature.

With her indigenous Punjabi eyes kept wide open through habits of inventive frugality honed in slow time, she

could clearly see what her children and grandchildren with advanced university degrees in economics, business, and marketing remain blind to, even today. In her heart, guts, and bones, and not in her head alone, she knew well all the reasons why out-of-season, long-distance-traveling refrigerated milk and other foods systematically destroy the delicate, intricate web of local relationships between tiny rasois and well-rooted, humble, small local businesses—like those of the gwala and the sabzi-wala (vegetable man) peddling fruits and vegetables from a handdrawn cart, singing his song from home to home.

From Fast Food Nation to a New Rasoi

A few generations ago, Rajinder's rasoi would not have seemed so foreign to most Americans. A different set of spices, perhaps. But the American kitchen would have held food from vendors not so different from the walas Rajinder bought from. The advent of fast food quickly changed that picture. By 1970 Americans spent about $6 billion on fast food; in 2000 they spent more than $110 billion. According to Eric Schlosser, "Americans now spend more on fast food than on higher education, personal computers, computer software, or new cars; more than on movies, books, magazines, newspapers, videos, and recorded music combined."

Is there any hope for regenerating the affection, the care, and the other virtues sung about and savored in the age of slow food? In schools and campuses across the country, a new American Dream is bringing together school lunches, families, family farms, gourmet chefs, and community-supported farmers in fresh, new, radical (that is, rooted) ways. Revolutionaries are rising up to reclaim the rasa we have so easily surrendered. I cannot hope to honor them all in this little space. I can only give a taste of what is underway.

Alice Waters, of Berkeley's "Chez Panisse," is spearheading a "Delicious Revolution" in Berkeley. Her philosophy of Slow Food Education is based on the pleasure of food. Freshly picked produce is tastier than that which has lingered in cold storage, inspiring kids to choose an apple over a Snapple. The Edible Schoolyard project at Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School in Berkeley models Waters' vision of how we can return to producing much of our own food. Starting in 1995, students, teachers, and parents began the transformation of an acre of parking lot into what is now an organic garden supplying food for student lunches. Waters points out that about 20 percent of Americans are in school at any given time. "If all these students were eating lunch together, consuming local, organic food," she says, "agriculture would change overnight to meet the demand. Our domestic food culture would change as well, as people again grew up learning how to cook affordable, wholesome, and delicious food." There are now programs similar to the Edible Schoolyard in 400 school districts in 22 states.

With her own unique flair and genius, Judy Wicks of the White Dog Café in Philadelphia is making similar connections between the community-supported agriculture movement and her gorgeous restaurant. She is educating people from all walks of life about the pleasures of slow food, creating new links between communities, students and real food—grown organically and preferably locally on small family farms.

Catherine Sneed is demonstrating that "hardened criminals" who learn to grow Swiss chard and broccoli are less likely to grab old ladies' purses for a few bucks than men raised on drugs, speed, and fast food.

From the Common Roots program at the Barnet School in Vermont to students picking scallions and cilantro from their own garden at Evergreen Elementary School in West Sacramento, California, this grassroots movement across the United States and beyond now includes urban as well as rural schools. In California alone, some 3,000 schools have campus gardens.

In Happy Valley, Pennsylvania, where I live, Kimber Mitchell, Laura Silver, and other bioneers set up "Pizza Gardens" as well as perennial plots at Radio Park Elementary School—fostering connections between Penn State University's Center for Sustainability, local master gardeners Gene Bazan, Tania Slawecki, among others, and faculty drawn from different colleges, including engineering and education.

Will we rely on our common sense for regenerating the rasa of indigenous peoples, like Rajinder's? Danny Heitman says it well: "Not since the launch of Sputnik has U.S. education seemed so ripe for reform." Ripeness of reform for the rasa of teaching and learning, living and eating is here. The time has come to regenerate the classical concept of "school"—rooted in the Latin schole, or leisure. The tragedy of the loss of leisure from schooling because of industrial fast food (and more) can finally be put aside—the cruel, sickening, hard lessons of the twentieth century having been learned.

It is the most realizable dream of the twenty-first century: the dream of Slow Food education. Instead of McDonald's or Burger King announcing the nine-billionth burger sold, we are building a world where schools and colleges announce the 250 millionth American savoring the nourishing Slow Food grown by local CSA farmers.

Come, let us go forward towards schooling that savors and enjoys the good life lived through nourishing, slow food. Starting with our children, we can all learn how to reclaim the rasa I enjoyed in Rajinder's rasoi.

It is the most realizable dream of the twenty-first century: the dream of Slow Food education. Ripeness of reform for the rasa of teaching and learning, living and eating.

In schools and campuses across the country, a new American Dream is bringing together school lunches, families, family farms, gourmet chefs, and community-supported farmers in fresh, new, radical (that is, rooted) ways.

Madhu Suri Prakash wrote this article as part of Food for Everyone, the Spring 2009 issue of YES! Magazine. Madhu is a professor at Pennsylvania State University. Her books include Grassroots Postmodernism, Escaping Education, and the forthcoming No Chive Left Behind.

Vegan Recipes

Beetroot Salad

Serving Size: 1-2 persons

Ingredients:

- Beetroot: 100 gms
- Capsicum: 50 gms
- Few cherry tomatoes
- Carrot: 50 gms
- Lemons: 2
- Organic Jaggery Powder: 2 tea spoons
- Roasted Seasame or Groundnuts: 1 tea spoon
- Small amount: Salt and Pepper
- Cold pressed, unfiltered oil: 1 Soup spoon
- Coconut or Groundnut Chutney
- Mint or Coriander leaves for garnishing

Optional Ingredients:

- Roasted Moongdal: 1 tea spoon
- Sprouts: As you like

Making:

Shred beetroot and carrot, preferably long thin slices, slice capsicum also into long thin pieces, cut cherry tomatoes into half, transfer all to a big bowl. Make fresh lemon juice and add it - this gives you a simple dressing. Add a tea spoon of organic jaggery powder. Add a tea spoon of roasted seasame or groundnuts. Add a tea spoon of roasted moong dal if you like. Add sprouts if you readily have them. Add small amount of salt and pepper to add taste. Add a soup spoon of cold pressed groundnut oil - it really makes a difference! Mix all by lightly 'lifting' the salad inside the bowl. You can make some groundnut or coconut chutney and put it on the top. Finally garnish with fresh mint or coriander leaves.

Almond Milkshake

Serving Size: 2 persons

Ingredients:

- Almonds: 100 gms
- Date Syrup or Organic Jaggery Syrup: 3 tea spoons
- A touch of salt
- Fruits of your choice

Optional Ingredients:

- Cinnamon

Making:

Soak the almonds overnight. Grind the soaked almonds with 1 part almond and 3 part water, and just a little bit of salt. Strain using thin white cotton linen, and you have the almond milk (You don't have to throw away the remainings, it is still nutritious and you can use it in other dishes to add to taste). Add 3 tea spoons of sweetner - date syrup or organic jaggery syrup can be used. Add fruits of your choice - try Papaya-Pineapple combination, it comes out very tasty. Add cinnamon if required if you want additional flavours.

Basically almond milk itself is quite flavourful, and you can play around with rest of the ingredients as you like, and find out which one you like the best!

Carrots, The Healthy Kitchen & Store is the first 100% vegan restaurant and store in Bengaluru. "For Better Health, For Better Tomorrow" is their vision and guiding principle, and they strive for better tomorrow for all - environment, animals and us - human beings.

Being Creative-Conscious-Vegan is their mantra and they promote Fair Trade and Organic Farming.

Bhoomi College offers a Summer Programme:

Explorations in Inner and Outer Ecology

Dates: 20th May - 25th May, 2013
Venue: Bhoomi Campus, Bangalore

About this time and Space

This programme invites you to spend 6 days to reflect, share and connect with others to explore and understand our perceptions of our inner and outer ecology; we believe that learning from living and sharing in small groups can replenish us as well as transform the way we can build expanding communities that can live joyously and responsibly on 'Gaia', our living Earth.

The purpose of this programme:

This programme will be meaningful to anyone who wishes to explore deeper aspects of ecology and sustainability. It would provide the space and opportunities to explore oneself in a holistic way, including intellectual, physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of our relationships with ourselves, others, various human constructs and with our Planet Earth.

It is the first of a series of 5 different programmes to be conducted over 3 years - two of which will be held in the Sharavathi Rainforest, i n the Western Ghats. However it can be attended as a single programme too.

These programmes together are designed to help a person become a Facilitator in Eco-human processes.

It would be particularly useful to teachers / facilitators for learning about sustainable living in schools, colleges and NGOs.

What we will do:

With the help of highly experienced facilitators, for about 7 to 9 hours during each day, we will alternate between various kinds of sessions which would involve active participation by all the group members. These would include:

- *sharing of one's personal stories and related conversations*
- *conceptual understanding of inner and outer ecology, reviewing our lenses and filters and connecting with Nature*
- *hands-on activity in the garden, Nature walks, Nature meditation*

The Bhoomi College

40, Chikkanayakanahalli Road,
Off Doddakanahalli Sarjapur Road,
Carmelaram Post,
Bangalore - 560035

Registration:

For more information and a detailed brochure, contact bhoomi.college@gmail.com

Or call Santhi at 09449853834
or Preethi at 080 28441172 Extension 22

Please register on or before 10th May 2013.

NAVDANYA

Earth University / Bija Vidyapeeth Courses 2013

Grand Mothers University on Living Economies April 27-28th 2013

The dominant economic model shaped by capitalist patriarchy and corporate greed is in deep cricis. It is destroying the planet and people's lives.

The principles on which it is based are greed and competition. Its measure is 'economic growth'. Its currency is money.

We need to shift to principles of care and co-operations. We need to move beyond growth. We need to focus on the currency of life. For this transition the knowledge of one grandmothers can be our guide.

The course will focus on developing an understanding of globalization and corporate rule, and of nature centered, people centered alternatives for shaping living economies.

Mango Festival 6-7th July 2013

Join Navdanya to celebrate Aam Ki Bahar - A festival of 'King of the Fruits' this year at our Biodiversity Conservation Center and Organic Mango Orchard at village Ramgarh on Old Shimla Road in Dehradun on 6-7th July. Spend weekend in Dehradun with your family and cherish the mango delicacies prepared by our talented kitchen team.

Navdanya has about 20 acres of Certified Organic Mango orchard having about 650 trees of 9 varieties that includes Deshehari, Langra, Chausa, Safeda, Fazli, Gulab Jamun, Kalmi, Desi Achari etc.

To relish the mango recipes and to eat Garden fresh Organic Mango do not forget to visit us in between 15th June - 30th July.

A-Z of Organic Farming 1st -30th September 2013

With Dr.Vandana Shiva, Maya Goburdhun, Dr. Vinod Kumar Bhatt, Dr. J.C. Tarafdar, Dr. A.K. Panigrahi, Dr. V.P Uniyal, Dr. R.S. Rawat, Hari Raj Singh, Darwan Singh Negi, Dr. Mira Shiva, Reetha Balsavar, Lata Sharma, and others.

This 4 week course addresses the physical, intellectual, and holistic aspects of organic farming. Taught in English, for one month the international group will be guided by carefully planned and dedicated instructors who will teach the basics of Navdanya's organic farming methods. The course will be 80% hands on and 20% academic focusing on the practical, theoretical, and political aspects of Soil, Seed, and Food. From the Panchagavya and the harvest, to the politics and science of chemical-free farming, students will leave the course with a comprehensive understanding of the how to role model and create, through hands, head, and heart, organic farming methods around the world. Students will return home certified in the methods of Navdanya organic farming.

Gandhi, Globalization and Earth Democracy 21st Nov - 30th Nov, 2013

The economic paradigm based on limitless growth and corporate greed is collapsing across the world. In Europe, the "indignados" demand an alternative to the imposed austerity of the financial institutions. In the U.S., the Occupy movement has defamed the dominant economy as the economy of the 1 % excluding the 99%.

Everywhere, people are searching for an alternative to corporate rule. Gandhi's visions, practices and philosophy can give us new inspirations, new ideas, on how to create an Earth Democracy that ensures the well being and freedom of all life on Earth and all people.

This is what the course on Gandhi, Globalization and Earth Democracy will explore with visionary teachers like Satish Kumar, Samdhong Rinpoche and Vandana Shiva.

EternalBhoomi

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Looking back... My year at Bhoomi College
It was a great journey of sharing, exploring
and learning and meeting some
great teachers...

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Environmentalist, Author on
Bio diversity and Globalisation

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Writer and activist on food
and trade policy

Satish Kumar
Eco Philosopher and Co-Founder
Schumacher college, England

Madhu Suvi Prakash
Author and Professor of education
at Penn State University

Harish Hande
Founder Selco, Pioneer in
Renewable energy

Vandana Shiva
International Activist in
Seed Saving and organic farming

G Gautama
Director chennai centre
Krishnamurthy Foundation India

Anil Kapoor, Jeevan Kumar
Santosh Hegde, Sudha Premnath
Rahul Goswami, Pushpanath
Viva, Shubha Ramchandran
and many many more....

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The Bhoomi College offers a full time 1 year programme on:

Science and Management for Sustainable Living

(August 2013 to June2014)

- Are you keen to discover your path or your green career?
- Do you want to engage with communities and be a facilitator/catalyst for green activities?
- Would you like to understand science, humanities and management processes in ways which are integrative and holistic?

This course can make a difference to your journey...

About the Programme

This programme has been designed for those interested in Green Careers or Green Entrepreneurship, for students, researchers, mid-career professionals, teachers and others keen on sustainable living. In a world headed towards climate crisis and social and political conflicts we need to re-envision economics, technology and science which are aware of ecological realities. This programme aims at bringing to its participants the best work on these issues from around the world and use them meaningfully with committed facilitators and innovative and creative methods.

Unique Features of the programme:

- **Great Teachers and Facilitators:** The faculty includes scientists, activists, writers and others who have done path-breaking work in their fields. Satish Kumar (co-founder, Schumacher College, UK), Dr. Ashish Kothari (Kalpavriksh, Pune), G. Gautama, Shri Narayana Reddy and Shri Devinder Sharma are some of our teachers.
- **Cutting Edge Curriculum** involves intensive sessions on holistic science, food security, ecological economics and management for sustainability,
- **Gift Culture:** Students contribute what they wish to as tuition fees – at the end of the year – for a student in the next batch. Only a refundable deposit and basic boarding / lodging fees will be charged.
- **Learning Processes** at Bhoomi College includes real life projects of one's choice and internships with renowned NGOs and other organizations that Bhoomi collaborates with. Hands-on work, group participative enquiry sessions and co-designing learning activities are other features that make the course interesting.

About Bhoomi College

The Bhoomi College for Sustainability Studies is located on spacious campus off Sarjapura Road, Bangalore. It is a participative space for holistic learning with an organic garden and eco-friendly buildings.

The Bhoomi College believes in an integrated approach, combining the arts and sciences, theory and practice, eastern and western wisdom as well as intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual self-exploration.

Look up our websites:
www.bhoomicollege.org
www.bhoomimagazine.org

Admissions Information:

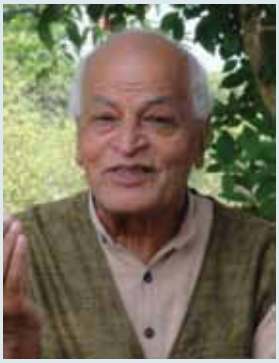
For a detailed free e-brochure and application form contact:
bhoomi.college@gmail.com or write to:
The administrator, The Bhoomi College, at the address given below:

The Bhoomi College

No. 40, Chikkanayakanahalli,
Off Doddakaneli, Sarjapura Road, Bangalore- 560 035
Phone: 080 28441173 / 094498 53834

Be the Change you wish to see in the World !

Teachers who visited us speak about Bhoomi College...



Satish Kumar co-founder, Schumacher College, UK
and Editor-in-Chief, Resurgence and Ecologist Magazine

"Bhoomi College is a wonderful place for people to get together, learn about Mother Earth, how to eat, work and live following Nature's laws and cycles - not for a few decades or centuries, but for ever. Schumacher College in the UK, Bhoomi College in Bangalore, Bija Vidyapeeth that was started by Vandana Shiva and other such places in the world are like life-boats - in a world which is like a sinking ship.

We need more such places to help more people learn to respect Earth and not exploit or be indifferent to her."

Devinder Sharma Journalist, Writer and Food Policy analyst,
chairman of Forum for Bio-technology and Food Security.

"Bhoomi College, Bangalore is a unique college for students - both fresh graduates and mid-career professionals who want to do some soul searching and learning about sustainable living and thinking. It was a pleasure speaking at the college yesterday, and later spending a very fruitful evening with them.

I feel proud to be a part of the advisory group of the college. If you are in Bangalore, do try to visit the college and see for yourself how a handful of people are trying to make a difference. It all begins with you."

Dr. Madhu Suri Prakash, Author and Professor of Education and
Philosphy, Pennsylvania State University, USA.

"Bhoomi is a place which provides space to a diversity of people to learn and form a community that shares and cares about Nature. I am truly impressed by the students, facilitators, the visiting faculty, the campus and even the food here. Informal yet serious about their work, living out the philosophy they believe in as well as enjoying themselves - here is a group that is keen on transformation, not just bookish knowledge.

I look forward to teaching and being here next year too, at the Bangalore Campus as well as at Bhoomi's Sharavathi Rainforest Centre."

The Bhoomi College

1 year programme : Science & Management for Sustainable Living
Weekend Programmes : Holistic Nutrition, Organic Gardening, Wilderness programmes
Transitions to Sustainability, Inner and Outer Ecology

Contact: **bhoomi.college@gmail.com**
or phone: **080 28441173 or 9449853834**