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As we prepare to celebrate the festival of lights, we embark on a process of planning for the year to come and attempt to rid ourselves of what does not serve us. It is also a time for generosity, compassion, and benevolence.

We invite you to participate in *Deep Daan* and rekindle the inner light of the soul (*Atma Jyoti*). Your contributions serve to fulfill the conscientious duty of reading, learning, and teaching the Vedas. *Deep Daan* contributions assist to produce publications and examinations of Veda Niketan.

In this issue the President of Arya Samaj South Africa shares a message for Diwali.

We publish the lecture delivered by Nirode Bramdaw on 17 August 2022 at the Back to the Vedas lecture series entitled “**How the Arya Samaj Values Shaped my Life.**” This is followed by “**My experience in the Arya Samaj Prepared me to Act for Change**” by Karuna Mohan. With these contributions we commence a new series of articles focusing on “**What does it mean to be part of the Arya Samaj**”. We invite all to send in their contributions on this theme for future issues.

We thank Rasigan Maharajh and Suvarna Parbhoo Mohan for the articles on “**Intergenerational Climate Crimes and a Just Transition**” and “**Citizens contributing to Science through the Great Southern Bioblitz.**” Their contributions continue to brief us on environmental justice, the just transition and social action. We invite all to get involved in the Great Southern Bioblitz 28 to 31 October.

The Editorial Committee of Veda Jyoti wishes all readers a safe, happy, and prosperous Diwali.

Veda Jyoti Editorial Committee:

Arthi Shanand, Karuna Mohan, Kirun Satgoor, Ressma Rambaros, Shoba Singh, Sudhira Sham, Usha Debipersad.



यत्र सोमः सदमित् तत्र भद्रम्।

Yatr somah sadamit tatr bhadram. Atharva Veda 7.18.2

Where God is, charity and benevolence also are.

This mantra explains that in the role as the Ordainer Lord, God assigns to all an ever-flourishing and never-exhausting life. May we receive the friendly grace of the Lord, who has all the riches.

Just as God provides for humans, animals, and plants humans have a duty to share our talents, wealth, and knowledge. We practice benevolence – compassion, kindness, generosity, and magnanimity to animals, plants, and our fellow humans.

Through our actions and relationships, we weave threads of continuity to the tapestry that God created. We light up our lives and the lives of others with acts of benevolence. We support good causes through charity. Our willingness to share uplifts the downtrodden.

Deepavali, is indeed a time of renewal and reflection. Let us take steps to protect the environment, support good causes and to renew our commitment to reach out and serve our purpose of protecting all living beings (animate and inanimate) on Earth and in the universe.

Author: Karuna Mohan

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Message from the President

Dear Readers

NAMASTE and greetings during this very auspicious month of October – a month of prayer, worship, and devotion amongst Hindus throughout the world with variations depending on language and regions based in India.

Hindus began their month-long observation of Purnima which began on 18 September culminating on the 18 October. This is carried by strict abstinence from non-vegetarian meals, alcohol, and other negative habits encouraging discipline in thought, word, and deed.

The nine-day observation of Navaratri from the 26 September to 5 October is celebrated over nine nights in praise, prayer and worship of the God as Mother Lakshmi, Mother Saraswati, and Mother Durga or Shakti.

On 24 October, Hindus throughout the world celebrate the most important festival, Diwali or Deepavali – meaning a row of lights. Diwali is celebrated with pomp and ceremony as the underlying message is bringing Light into the world, getting rid of darkness.

As the story goes, it is a celebration of the return of Lord Rama to Ayodhya with his wife Sita and brother Lakshmana, after having killed the Demon King, Ravana.

The triumph of good over evil!

Diwali is also celebrated because at that time too, Lord Krishna killed the demon, Narakasura. Another display of the triumph of good over evil.

So, what are the observation of all these periods of worship and celebration of festivals telling us?

Lamps are lit to remove darkness. It literally means the removal of the darkness of ignorance by acquiring knowledge, getting rid of negative qualities from within.

Before Diwali we clean our homes and workplaces so that we can welcome positive thoughts and God. We need to also cleanse our minds, thoughts, feelings, actions, and words of negativity so that we can be positive in our interactions with other beings.

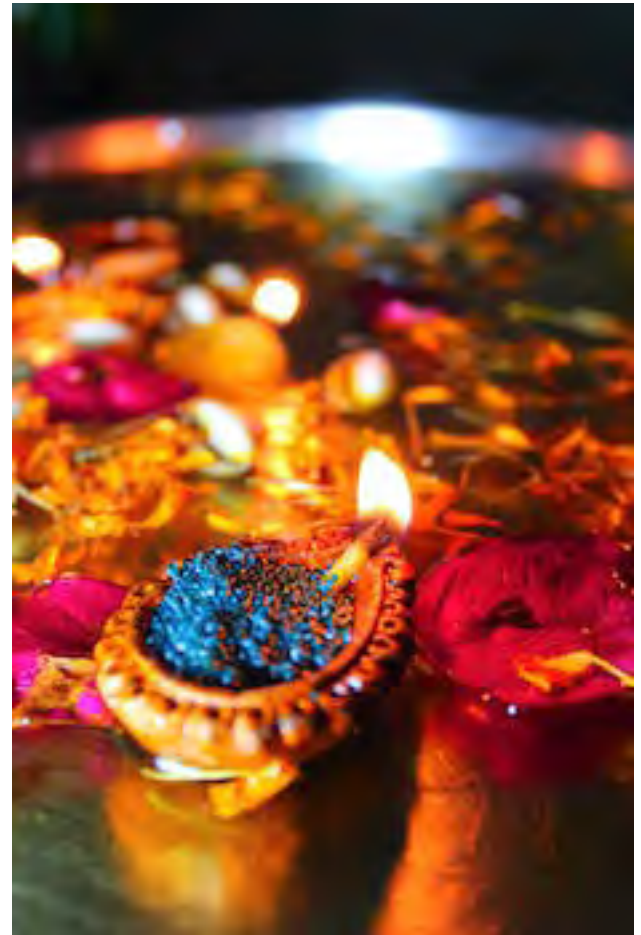
We need to practise patience as we go about our lives every day. Whatever is carried out with effort and dedication will be rewarded with success. One needs to cultivate patience to enjoy the benefits of one's good actions.

Diwali is also a time of sharing and caring. Just as we share gifts and sweets with family, relatives, and friends, we must also share goodwill and happiness with every sentient being without being judgmental.

Diwali brings with it a time to reflect on oneself and to put aside disappointments and shortfalls, it's a time to embrace the light of a new day which brings with it hope and new beginnings.

On behalf of all the officials and members of Arya Samaj South Africa, I wish you all a happy and bright Diwali.

Pt Arthi Shanand



How the Arya Samaj Shaped my Life

I AM deeply indebted to my forebears for affording me the freedom of thought and the freedom to choose whichever philosophy rang true for me.

I consciously, out of my own volition entirely, laid claim to that heritage, its literature, its geography, and civilisation which stretches back to the world's oldest religious treatise, the Vedas.

I also found within the thinking of the Arya Samaj an intellectual 'fit'. I was raised during the struggle for democracy. It became an attitude to life. I eschewed rigidity and rules as oppressive to the intellect, which we constantly pray to hone.

The Arya Samaj afforded me the liberty to think independently and not to bridle my mind with the yoke of orthodoxy. I am free to reject any notion of Hinduism I feel uncomfortable with and embrace those that resonate with me.

As an Aryan, I am free of restrictive dogmas, and I am not shackled by one prescribed set of thinking.

What made a particular impact on me as a young seeker was the Nasadiya Sukta, also known as the *Hymn of Creation*, as contained in the Rig Veda. It resonated with me as it concerned cosmology and the origins of the universe:

But, after all, who knows, and who can say
Whence it all came, and how creation happened?
the gods themselves are later than creation,
So who knows truly whence it has arisen?
Whence all creation had its origin,
the creator, whether he fashioned it or whether he did
not,
the creator, who surveys it all from highest heaven,
he knows — or maybe even he does not know.
Rig Veda, 10. 129.6&7

I found it particularly poignant that this religion made bold to simultaneously marvel at the wonder of creation, yet express scepticism of the omniscience of the Creator. One of my favourites in high school was the astronomer Carl Sagan, who hosted the popular television series, *Cosmos*. He said of this hymn, that it was the first that

discussed "the tradition of sceptical questioning and unselfconscious humility before the great cosmic mysteries".

Being born into an unjust society in South Africa, where racial discrimination was legislated, compelled one to invoke some of the 10 principles of the Arya Samaj. It no doubt guided those leaders of yesteryear that aligned the Arya Samaj with the forces of democracy. Allow me to quote those that resonate around racial liberation:

4. We should be ever ready to imbibe truth and forsake untruth.
6. The prime object of Arya Samaj is to do good to the whole world, i.e. to achieve physical, spiritual, and social prosperity for all.
8. One should dispel ignorance and promote knowledge.
10. All human beings should subject themselves to abiding by the rules of social interest and should be free to follow every rule which is beneficial for all.

The indelible role played by various Samajists throughout its history in South Africa bear testament to these injunctions.



Dhane Bramdaw

The glorious role played by Swami Bhawani Dayal, not only in fighting for justice locally but also in Guyana, Fiji and India is trailblazing. His leadership no doubt inspired

the movement to unreservedly pin its colours to the mast of racial liberation. This inspired other Samajists, notably Pandit Sewpersad Dookran and Dasarath Bundoo in Pietermaritzburg, while contemporaneously my grandfather Dhane Bramdaw used his newspaper *The Leader* as a voice for the oppressed people in South Africa.

However, indulge me as I change lanes from the given topic and focus on gender parity. I make this point of departure because August is observed nationally as Women's Month. So, excuse my preoccupation with what Swami Dayanand did to ameliorate the plight of women in India in the late 19th Century. The work that he started, almost 200 years ago, leaves much more for us to do in our lifetime.

Swami Dayanand was born into a form of Hinduism that was replete with contradictions.

He was confronted with a faith filled with empty ritualism, casteism, dowry, sati, animal sacrifice, idol worship, polytheism, pantheism, untouchability, child marriages, forced widowhood, superstitions, and illogical dogma; much of which was devised by the Brahmin caste to subjugate society.

His idea of denouncing the caste system, inherited in lieu of one's birth, was nothing short of radical at the time.

Swami Dayanand not only sought spiritual reorganisation of the Indian psyche he also worked towards abolishing various social ills. Primary among these were widow remarriage and women education. He launched programmes to support widow remarriage in the 1880s.

Swami Dayanand also underlined the importance of educating the girl child and opposed child marriage. He proclaimed that an educated man needs an educated wife for the overall benefit of society.

My grandmother Saraswati Bramdaw, as secretary of the Arya Stree Samaj in Pietermaritzburg, worked on a door-to-door campaign to compel Indians to educate their girl children. Indeed, we were the first to ordain female priests as well, the vision and foresight which we must always articulate.



Saraswati Bramdaw

In yesteryear India, and abiding by Manu's Law, a woman had little to no freedom.

"A virtuous wife should serve her husband like a god, even if he behaves badly, freely indulges his lust, and is devoid of any good qualities. A woman who abandons her own inferior husband is reborn into the womb of a jackal and is tormented by the diseases born of her evil..." Chapter 9 Manusmriti.

Now that we appreciate the context of our 200-year legacy, what about contemporary society?

Moreover, being Aryan, we ask tough questions.

So, in 1995, on his first visit to South Africa, Swami Agnivesh, Arya Sabha founder and leader, was hosted at a discussion at the Vedic Temple in the Durban CBD.



The Arya Samaj Complex in the Durban CBD

I was fortunate to have chaired that session with the late Swami Agnivesh and he asked the audience, why is it that in India they preserve nine nights to worship the Mother

Goddess yet have the highest rate of female infanticide in the world? Why is it that the gambling dens are busiest on Luxmi Day? Why is it that schools and universities are closed on Saraswati Day?

I looked up statistics and there are about 300 acid attacks on women in India per annum. Add to this hundreds of rape cases per day across the country.

So here we see, if we care to look, that Swami Dayanand's work, and vision for a just and equitable society, especially regarding the rights of women, is becoming unstuck at an increasingly alarming rate.

I won't delve into the rape and gender-based violence (GBV) statistics in South Africa in too much detail, save to say that a quarter of women in the country have experienced some form of GBV, while there are about 150 reported rape cases in SA daily. Mind you, these are reported cases. The picture is far worse when one compounds the unreported rapes.

According to the report by the United Nations Office on Crimes and Drugs for the period 1998 to 2000, South Africa was ranked highest globally for rapes per capita. In 1998, one in three of the 4 000 women surveyed in Johannesburg had been raped. Women's groups estimate that a woman is raped every 26 seconds in South Africa, while the police contend it is one every 36 seconds. Either way, this is a worrying trend.

From my own research, in the Chatsworth Magistrate's Court, more than 1 000 protection applications are made by fearful women every month.

My work at shelters for abused in Chatsworth was guided by the 9th principle of the Arya Samaj: "None should remain satisfied with one's own elevation only but should incessantly strive for the social upliftment of all and realise one's own elevation in the elevation of others."

Let me quote from the Atharva Veda, which aside from echoing Swami Dayanand's call for awareness, implores us all to search for answers and propose solutions. The clarion call of the Arya Samaj, as I see it, is to be aware:

How does the wind not cease to blow?
How does the mind take no repose?
Why do the waters, seeking to reach the truth,
Never at any time, cease to flow?

Atharva Veda, 10. 7.37



Author: Nirode Bramdaw

Nirode Bramdaw delivered this speech at the Back to the Vedas lecture on 17 August 2022, organised by Veda Niketan. He is a Director of the 1860 Heritage Centre and the Bat Centre.

This speech was published in the Post Newspaper on 31 August 2022



My experience in the Arya Samaj Prepared me to Act for Change

The genealogy of my family tree in shaping the Arya Samaj in South Africa include: my parents Mr & Mrs P Mohan; my mother's brother Mr Gangadaya (Jt Treasurer of the APS); my father's sister Pt Sham; my father's brother Pt Bookhan and his childhood friend Pt R M Singh. Other very treasured memories are of Mr S Chotai, Pt Jugmohan Singh, Mr S Rambharos, Mr S Satyadeva and Pt Nardev Vedalankar.

In 1975 I attended the 100th Anniversary Conference of the Arya Samaj held in New Delhi. This experience revealed a new facet of the Arya Samaj. Several Arya Samaj leaders were detained during the State of Emergency in India and were released a day before the international conference. At that time I was a member of the Aryan Youth League.

In 1978, when Swami Deekshanad visited South Africa, I spent some time with him during his stay in Pietermaritzburg. Having been excluded from the then University of Durban Westville, I had the opportunity to support him and learn about Sanskrit, the Vedas, mantra recitation, the sanskaars, organising maha yajnas and sangeet sammelans, the Arya Samaj principles and practices and, also how the Arya Samaj in India supported the liberation struggle.

I began to question what the Arya Samaj had to offer as guidance to correct action in South Africa. I debated with Pt Nardevji about the immorality of apartheid and what I understood to be the practice of the Arya Samaj contributions in the struggle for liberation from colonial rule.

I asked questions relating to the silence of Hindu bodies on the detention of leaders such as Pravin Gordhan and Yunus Mohammed in 1981, the school boycotts of 1980, the rent struggles in working class communities and the disenfranchisement of the African majority. This resulted in the Veda Niketan booklet "Hindu Polity and Administration".

At that time I was actively engaged in organising communities as an activist of the Natal Indian Congress (NIC). The NIC did not focus on religion and struggle.

From 1984 to 1986 I worked for the Pietermaritzburg Council of Churches on evaluating community development projects and supporting families of detainees and political prisoners. I fed back debates of religion being a site of struggle to the family and friends, the NIC and leadership of the Arya Samaj.

I also learnt that religion and politics were linked. I also got to understand the slogan "unity in diversity" and the need for inter faith co-operation and collaboration. I got to understand the Kairos Document developed by liberation theologians. I joined them in setting up a chapter of the World Conference on Religion and Peace in South Africa. I learnt about the common threads that unite all religions.

It was my family background and consistency in the Arya Samaj that gave me an edge later-on, when I attempted to shift conservative Hindu organisations into taking a political stand to side with the majority, to support the campaign to unban the ANC and SACP, to call for the release of detainees, and to participate in bringing an end to apartheid. Together with friends: Ujala Satgoor, Kirun and Kirthi Satgoor, Anithra Jadoo, Vishwas Satgar, Yuvi Basanth, Ved Dookran, Abeen Badul and others we brought critical thinking, democratic practices, and our interpretations of correct and just action into the Arya Samaj.

The Arya Samaj in South Africa was still locked into an Indian ethnic minority enclave. The need to side with the African majority was paramount in some of our minds. We debated, organised workshops and the articles we wrote were published in the Veda Jyoti and in newspapers.

I learnt from the Hindu Scriptures, that opposition to tyrannical rule was just and moral action. The Ramayan and Gita indicated that it was correct action to take up arms to rid society of evil. I also gleaned from my readings of the Vedas that a redistribution of wealth and balanced wealth was an ideal to strive for. From the Upanishads I learnt that use of natural resources should be in a manner that does not deplete the resource or exploit people and the environment. From the debates in the Upanishads I got to understand that monotheism, polytheism, and atheism are means to understand work, creation and existence and we have a choice.

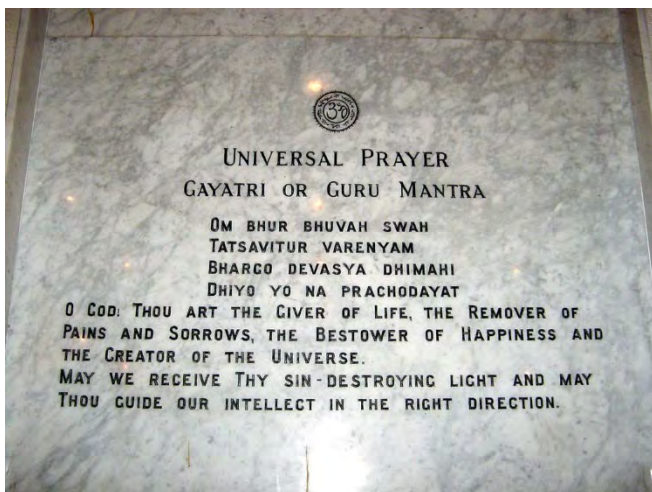
I wondered why the apartheid system of migrant labour and the exploitation of workers and gold was being upheld as it was in direct contradiction to the teaching of

Hindu scriptures. I also got to know the Sangatan, Purusha and Nasdiya Suktas of the Rig Veda.

I learnt that the organisation of citizens in a manner where all lived in harmony and concord and democracy was a goal to reach.

These snippets were revolutionary thoughts. In hindsight I think that a large portion of my drive and zest to participate as an activist in the liberation movement came from the belief that I was working on issues and aspects that would lead to a better life for all, that it was my human duty, my *swadharma* to oppose apartheid and exploitation, that it was noble action to see all humans as equal, and that the building of a non-racial, non-sexist society was correct action. The Arya Samaj experience taught me to uphold the truth and to be selfless.

I believe that space accorded to me was because Mr Rambharos, Pt Nardev and my parents accepted that women are equal and should be actively involved in social and just actions.



In 1984 the Veda Dharma Sabha of Pietermaritzburg openly opposed the House of Delegates and joined the UDF in Pietermaritzburg. I was sent as their representative to the UDF council. The Arya Samaj made their venues accessible to the liberation movement for meetings, but its members did not actively engage in the struggle for liberation. Many Arya Samaj leaders protected me from the security police harassment by not revealing who was organising the venues.

The fear of repression in the Hindu community and low political consciousness led to my assumption of leadership positions in the Arya Samaj. I was often seen as a politician in the Arya Samaj. My position as a political leader only unfolded when the ANC was unbanned, and I was elected to the position of regional treasurer in the

ANC Women's League in the Midlands region by a majority African women.

I worked in the ANC Women's League alongside Ela Gandhi, who was the only other Indian woman leadership figure in the ANC Women's League.

When the Arya Samaj finally accepted the practice of non-racialism and had Archie Gumede (the UDF President) and Ismail Meer (NIC leader) to participate in a hawan at the Ved Mandir in Durban I was elated - the years of work in the Arya Samaj had led to a new beginning.

We can only grow on this path and share with South Africa, Africa, and the world our understanding of the Vedic adage "may we look at all with an equal and friendly eye" and add value and content to our nation that still needs to be transformed and healed and has a dire need for just and ethical leadership.



Author: Karuna Mohan

This article was first published in an APS Anniversary Brochure post 1994.

Intergenerational Climate Crimes and a Just Transition

Introduction

It is currently estimated that approximately 7.9 billion people inhabit a terrestrial planet (Earth) which circumnavigates a barycentre between a 'yellow dwarf' G-type main-sequence star (Sun) and a giant gas planet (Jupiter) on an annual cycle which humankind uses to determine their passage of time (years) and its calendar (365.2425 days). Earth is estimated to be 4.54 billion years old and is part of a solar system that is just 460 million years older (4.6 billion years).



Human-beings (*Homo sapiens*) are not the only or even the most populous life-form on the planet and they are neither omnipresent, nor omniscient. Rather, humanity represents the last extant incarnation of their species of hominids who split from other great apes and monkeys approximately 13-11 million years ago and who underwent significant evolutionary changes ever since then (Engels, 1876 and Childe, 1936).

Human beings are a sub-group of Animals and share living on Earth with at least five other Linnean kingdoms (Bacteria, Chromista, Fungi, Plantae, and Protozoa). According to Mora et al, we share the planet with at least "... ~8.7 million¹ eukaryotic² species globally" measured as an extension of statistical estimations rather than through a thoroughly inclusive and complete census (2011). According to the United Nations, the world population is projected to reach eight billion people on the 15th of November 2022.

Anatomically modern human beings are believed to have emerged in Africa just ~150,000 years ago and dispersed

¹ Standard Error of 1.3 million.

across the planet about ~60,000 years ago. Assuming a global genetic isopoint, we can calculate that more than 108 billion members of our species have been born since our assumption of our current species-being form.

Fixing a generation to 20 years, we can further estimate that our current population is the offspring of at least 2,000 previous generations. All these approximations are however merely the product of our improving scientific and technological capacities, capabilities, and competences as we lack authentic demographic data for at least 99% of the period since our species-being emergence.

The empirical vantage point, albeit imagined and supplemented by qualified estimations, nevertheless provides us with an important reminder about our very brief existence on the timeline of the planet and our precarity relative to the wider cosmos.



This brief essay covers three main questions. After this introduction, we turn to defining intergenerational climate crimes. Building on our understanding of the term, we turn to exploring the relationship between the apex political governance institution: states and the primary enterprise for entrepreneurship: corporations. We will specifically focus on how their relationships play out in the persecution and prosecution of climate crimes. In the final and concluding section, we will unpack climate justice and its implications for our contemporary conjuncture within our combined, uneven, and yet common world systems.

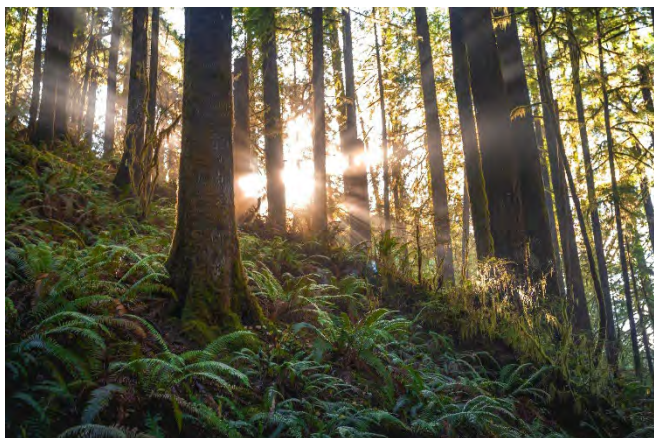
Intergenerational Climate Crimes

In our brief existence (~2,000 generations), humanity has massively expanded in size, scale, complexity, and

² Organisms, with complex cells, or a single cell with a complex structure, whose organelles are membrane-bound.

material impacts on biophysical planetary processes through individual development within socially determined world systems that frame our contemporary conjuncture (Stephan et al, 2015 and Wallerstein, 2011).

Since separating from other great apes several million years ago (according to the fossil record), it is estimated that the human species has co-evolved through genetic adaptations, intra-species cooperation, inter-species competition, and revolutionary social transitions over a span of the last two-hundred millennia.



Our home planet: Earth can be understood as comprising eight main biogeographic realms within which are located at least fourteen major biomes and 867 ecoregions (Olson et al: 2001: 934). Living together in geological spaces has enabled the categorisation of ecoregions as “relatively large units of land containing a distinct assemblage of natural communities and species, with boundaries that approximate the original extent of natural communities prior to major land-use change” (Ibid: 933).

In addition to this disaggregation of the planet, a new category has been added called anthropogenic biomes. These are also known as ‘anthromes’ or ‘human biomes’ and serve to describe the terrestrial biosphere in its contemporary, human-altered form using global ecosystem units defined by global patterns of sustained direct human interaction with ecosystems (Ellis and Ramankutty: 2008).

Whilst the emergence of the human species was intrinsically correlated with the biogeographic realms, our subsequent evolution is the collective results of transiting variously through Palaeolithic, Neolithic, Urban and

Industrial Epochs of human, cultural and historical development (Childe, 1936; amongst others).

The Neolithic Revolution transformed hunter-gatherer cultures into settled agriculture. All these social, economic, and political transitions emerge from the accumulation of information and its reproduction across generations as knowledge.

New regimes or modes of organising have arisen from these developments as productive forces engagement with physical environments and the utilisation of improved technologies. During the preceding three millennia, and most concentrated in the last five decades of the 20th Century, environmental degradation, atmospheric emissions, and water pollution has accumulated, and the planet is now witness to mass extinction of biodiversity, global warming, and climate change³.

In the 2,022nd year of our Common Era⁴, humanity now recognises that nearly 97% of the land on Earth no longer qualifies as ecologically intact and shows evidence of human interference. According to Plumptre et al, “... only 2.8% of the terrestrial surface of the planet is represented in areas of 10,000 km² or larger with low human footprint, no known species loss and no species known to be reduced below functional densities” (2021).

Whilst the complex interaction within biomes has over the long-term generated immense systemic variations amongst us, and helped configure socio-cultural distinctions, our current developmental trajectory and its resource-intensity is proving to be self-endangering and hastening existential precarity.

Exacerbating uncertainty is the recognition that the world’s weather patterns have been radically altered making abrupt climate change inevitable albeit yet unpredictable as to when it will strike.

This situation is compounded by the continued extraction of non-renewable resources and the dominance of unsustainable production, distribution, and consumption patterns.

The mineral endowments of the planet developed over billions of years, yet its rate of extraction has accelerated

³ “Climate change” means a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods. (Article 1(2) UN Framework Convention on Climate Change).

⁴ The chronological category of the Common Era originated in the mid-17th Century but assumed more popular usage since the advent of the 21st Century. It ostensibly represents a more 'neutral' categorisation of time that eschews the particular religious hegemony of Christianity, amongst the huge variety of human belief systems.

with advances in science and technology seeking to maintain and extend 'comparative advantages.'

The net effect is that the stocks of planetary resources are being depleted faster than nature can replenish them and without intergenerational concern.

As recognised by the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change: "there is a more than 90% percent probability that human activities over the past 250 years have warmed our planet. The industrial activities that our modern civilisation depends upon have raised atmospheric carbon dioxide levels from 280 parts per million to 379 parts per million in the last 150 years" (IPCC: 2007). The panel also concluded that human-produced greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide have caused much of the observed increase in Earth's temperatures over the past 50 years.



Current changes to the climate and potentially irreversible climate change imply the loss of productive land, extreme weather conditions, rising sea waters, massive dislocation of people, desertification, and serious economic and social upheaval.

Other resource shortages like fresh water, forests, agricultural land, and biodiversity are being severely impacted. Depletion of oil and gas reserves impacts directly on the lives of the billions of people of the world and the fragile biosphere.

The current production paradigm remains locked into fossil fuel dependencies that include long distance transportation; factory production systems; as well as many other systems and commodities.

This system will become increasingly difficult and constitute an important site of conflict in the face of recognising the planet as a finite life-supporting system.

The mineral endowments of the planet are being extracted at an accelerated rate of extraction.

The net effect is that the stocks of planetary resources are being depleted faster than natural processes can replenish them, and this decline is being undertaken with little apparent concern for inter-generational transfers.

Intergenerational climate crimes can only be appreciated within the long-run evolutionary history of our species-being and the human society we have co-created.

Humanity is only just beginning to appreciate the limits of the Earth's carrying capacity. Our species continues to expand both in terms of population as well as with respect to developmental needs.

The system of global capitalism has enveloped the planet and is marked by a distinct pattern of combined and uneven development whilst further enclosing and appropriating the commons.

The resulting inequalities, marginalisation and exclusion requires a fundamental reassessment of some of life defining aspects characterising our social, economic, and political paradigms as the edge of the ecological catastrophe we have generated.

Converging global living standards between the more developed with the rapidly developing parts of the world further strain the planetary thresholds whilst most countries remain outside the realm of benefits.

Epochal changes are required, though such agitation may still be ascribed as demanding the impossible.

Recognising intergenerational climate crimes, prosecuting those perpetrating such acts, and ensuring the convergence of living standards that affords a better life for all within planetary boundaries will demand redistribution and reparations commensurate with our common but differentiated responsibilities in world systems.

States and Corporations

Human society is currently segregated into 195 political units called nation-states. These are inter-nationally recognised by other political units as sovereign countries as they possess a permanent population, a defined territory, a government, and the capacity to enter diplomatic relations with the other countries.



According to Engels however, “(t)he state, ..., has not existed from all eternity. There have been societies that did without it, that had no idea of the state and state power. At a certain stage of economic development, which was necessarily bound up with the split of society into classes, the state became a necessity owing to this split.

We are now rapidly approaching a stage in the development of production at which the existence of these classes not only will have ceased to be a necessity but will become a positive hindrance to production. They will fall as inevitably as they arose at an earlier stage. Along with them the state will inevitably fall” (Engels: 1884).

The doctrine of sovereign states has served to further embed a particular relationship between people and the planet into our ways of living and engaging. The 1648 Treaty of Westphalia installed a system of political order premised on the recognition of territorial integrity within continental Europe.

This regime would be transposed across the world through subsequent eras of imperialism and colonialism. The country borders thereby determined, would form the basis of struggles for national self-determination in the late 20th and early 21st Centuries and rendered the perpetuation of contemporary conditions of coloniality that are reproduced even in the current era of neoliberalism through the agency of corporations.

According to Berle and Means, Corporations are “... both a method of property tenure and a means of organizing economic life” (1933). Marx had quipped that corporation “... means in the Yankee dialect joint stock company” (1881).

Notwithstanding a variety of subsequent definitions with increasing depth and detail, corporations remain the main contemporary institution of contemporary capitalism for the pursuit of private wealth and accumulation although ownership and management have been separated.

According to the Transnational Institute, “(t)he corporation is a legal construct, indeed a legal fiction. It is not something created by God or by Nature, but a legally created and enforced set of relations designed to raise capital for industrialism’s large projects. Its main function is to separate the owners of an enterprise from the enterprise itself” (TNI, 2020).

Lawrence and Zeilig provide a much more contemporary definition of the relationship between the state and corporations in our current era. According to them, “(t)he state under neoliberal capitalism has been undergoing a process of what can best be called colonisation by capital such that the interests of the dominant global capital, both financial and industrial, were effectively aligned with those of the state.

Now commonly known as ‘state capture’, this alignment has been enabled by the ‘revolving door’ through which political figures move into business and back into politics and vice versa, by business lobbying, by business funding of political parties at election time, and, as a consequence of privatisations and subcontracting of public services, by an increasingly systemic relationship between capital and the state” (Lawrence and Zeilig, 2018).

As we trespass further into the 21st Century, the contradictions of capitalism are entwined with corporate state capture and further an increasing complicity with the ecological catastrophe confronting all living organisms on Earth and thereby also, culpability for climate crimes.

Conclusions: Climate Justice and the Possibilities of a Better Life for All

Redressing the combined, uneven yet common world of global inequalities, corruption, and ecological crimes demands Climate Justice.

As a species being, humanity must ascend beyond the national consciousness deemed appropriate by Capital but counterfactual to the realisation of a better life for all within planetary boundaries.

This requires renewed intergenerational engagements and a commitment to the pursuit of a just transition beyond Capitalism itself. Critical towards such progressive advances will be the reconciliation of common but differentiated responsibilities, global citizenship, and a major dose of humility.

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Citizens contributing to Science through the Great Southern Bioblitz

Human dependence on the environment is evident throughout the archaeological periods, from hunter and gatherer activities to food production and agriculture (Lesley Kennedy, 2019). The interdependent relationship between biological diversity (biodiversity) and cultural diversity is influential in sustainable development.

For most cultures, religion provides ethical and social models for living reverently with nature while religious beliefs and rituals influence our behaviour towards each other, including our relationship with nature (Negi, 2005).

According to Dasgupta, in Faith and Biodiversity Hindu literature emphasizes the importance, conservation, and sustainable use of biodiversity in several different ways. Animals are considered divine beings, with some deities taking the form of animals or are pictured with animals ie Lord Ganesha, Lord Shiva, Mother Durga, Lord Hanuman. Trees and forests are described as sites for recreation and shelter.

There are several references to plants in daily prayer, nuptial ceremonies. One such prayer is for peace

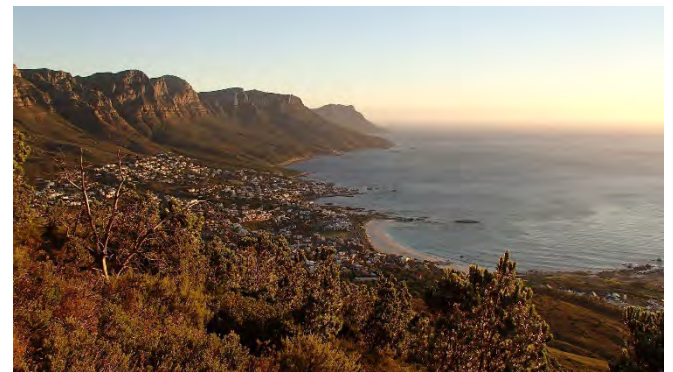
Om Dyauh Shaantir-Antariksham Shaantih
Prithivii Shaantir-Aapah Shaantir-Oshadhayah Shaantih
|
Vanaspatayah Shaantir-Vishvedevaah Shaantir-Brahma Shaantih
Sarvam Shaantih Shaantir-Eva Shaantih Saa Maa Shaantir-Edhi |
Om Shaantih Shaantih Shaantih ||

Peace is in the sky; peace is in space (between earth and sky). Peace is in the earth; peace is in water; peace is in plants. Peace is in trees; peace is in God's creation (presiding over the various elements of Nature); peace is in Brahman (Absolute Consciousness). Peace is pervading everywhere; peace alone (which is outside) is in peace (which is inside). May you be (established in) that peace (and make your life fulfilled). Peace, Peace, Peace.

These religious values and customs, that have prohibited the destruction of natural surroundings, are being

scorned upon in the modern world. Progressively, religion needs to be deconstructed to fit in with modern, urbanised society, with a renewed respect to biodiversity conservation and the value of a simple life (Negi, 2005). The ecological relationship between society and their developed environment is interdependent, yet not thought highly of.

As the global population increases, so too has the urban sprawl. Although we appreciate nature when at the countryside, mountains or near the ocean, we forget the urban biodiversity surrounding us. As cities evolved, the wildlife that occurred was lost to urbanisation with little connectivity of natural habitat.



We can improve our quality of living by increasing and conserving biodiversity in our cities. Our moral obligation should be to talk to our neighbourhoods and take community environmental action to increase (Jolma Architects, 2021), beautify and admire the green spaces outside our homes as we welcome birds, butterflies and other organisms into our surroundings, including our soil.

What an amazing part of the world we are blessed to live in... The diversity and uniqueness of South Africa's plants and animals makes us 1 of the world's 17 mega diverse countries.

These are countries that together contain more than $\frac{2}{3}$ ^{rds} of the worlds biodiversity. Whilst South Africa's territory covers 1% of the earth, we have over 20 400 plant species of which $\frac{2}{3}$ is endemic, in other words found nowhere else in the world. Our animal species include 5% of the world's mammal species, 7% of bird, 4% of reptile, 24% of octopus and squid and 5 % of butterfly species.

South Africa has an exceptionally wide range of ecosystem types classified and mapped across its landscape and seascapes ranging from true desserts to forests, from coral reefs and deep ocean allices.

Our biodiversity gives our people tangible benefits like food, clean water, medicine and materials. It supports

agricultural and fisheries production and helps protect us from natural hazards like flood and drought and the basis of our vibrant tourist history while offering natural spaces for recreation and cultural activities (SANBI, 2018).

The significant features of South Africa's rich biological heritage and the pressures on its biodiversity has inspired South Africans to become citizen scientists and get involved in conservation projects. Citizen science is strengthened by key non-government organisations that support the work of government to ensure the conservation of biodiversity thus transcending geographic, taxonomic and ecosystem boundaries.

Citizen scientists across the world have volunteered to record and safeguard their city's amazing biodiversity by participating in 2 international events – the City Nature Challenge (CNC) and the Great Southern Bioblitz (GSB). City Nature Challenge is in celebration of Spring in the northern hemisphere. Started in 2016, the CNC is an annual 4-day global bioblitz at the end of April, where cities are in a collaboration-meets-friendly-competition to see not only what can be accomplished when we all work toward a common goal, but also which city can gather the most observations of nature, find the most species, and engage the most people in the event (City Nature Challenge, 2022). The City of Cape Town has been participating since 2019 and has topped the leader board for most observations and most species every year, except this year whereby La Paz in Mexico took the top position. The southern African CNC participation is increasing each year. In 2022, 13 cities/regions from South Africa, 5 from Botswana and 2 from Zimbabwe participated. The City Nature Challenge yielded 137,987 observations of 8,564 species in southern Africa.

Equally, the Great Southern Bioblitz highlights the biodiversity in the southern hemisphere during spring while engaging with the public in science and nature learning (Great Southern Bioblitz, 2022). Both events use the citizen science platform, iNaturalist as the data collection tool. GSB2022 is happening on 28-31 October; with an increase in the number of participants since the CNC 2022. At the time of writing this article, 28 African cities/ regions have registered – covering Botswana, eSwatini, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe with a few more pending confirmation.

We encourage you to join the biodiversity frenzy by engaging with the environment surrounding you.

Download the iNaturalist application on your smartphone,
Find wildlife,
Take a picture and share your observation on the app.

- Photographs of any plant, insect, animal or fungi you observe in and around your home, garden, neighbourhood or natural space can be uploaded.
- Observations of living or dead organisms (like shells, tracks, scat, feathers) or evidence of those organisms are counted.
- You do not need to know the name of the species - you just need to take a good enough photo (or photos) so that it can be identified.

Tutorials are available on the iNaturalist App and YouTube, though the coordinators will be hosting free, online iNaturalist training while limited in-person sessions can be arranged.

It's as simple as 1,2,3!



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Sanskrit words explained

शान्ति

Shānti

From the verb root sham (to be at peace). Shānti means peace, contentment, and stillness.

Shānti is about the eternal principle of calm and repose. While everything is known in the all-powerful silence, at the same time it is manifest in the universe.

The Shānti Paat is in the Purusha Suktham of the Rig Veda 10.90. The recitation of this manta calls for peace for all beings on earth. It's a prayer for all of creation. It encompasses all living things – animals, plants – the entire chain of beings.

This Diwali, we invite you to participate in Deep Daan towards rekindling the inner light of the Soul (Atma Jyoti)

Your contributions serve to fulfill religious duty of reading, learning and teaching the Vedas.

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You are invited to send articles to the editorial committee for publication. Please email your submissions to admin@aryasamajsa.org

Acceptance conditions:

1. All submissions must be in word for the attention of the editorial committee.
2. All Sanskrit words must be in Italics.
3. Photographs submitted must be in high resolution.
4. All references must be cited.
5. The limits for articles will be as follows:
 - 5.1. Short articles & messages three hundred words,
 - 5.2. Current issues and social justice up to nine hundred words
 - 5.3. Feature articles 1500 to 3000 words,
 - 5.4. Secondary articles up to 1500 words.
6. The acceptance of articles will be considered based on the following criteria:
 - 6.1. Vedic teachings,
 - 6.2. Principles of the Arya Samaj,
 - 6.3. Social justice and social action,
 - 6.4. Relevance to current issues.

To contribute to projects of the Arya Samaj contact admin@aryasamajsa.org
Please send your comments and suggestions to admin@aryasamajsa.org

Rig Veda 9.63.5

कृण्वन्तो विश्वामार्यम् "Krinvanto Vishwam Aryam" Make the World Noble

Yajur Veda 36.18

मित्रस्याहम् चक्षुषा सर्वाणि भूताननि समीक्षे mitrasyāham chakṣuṣā sarvāṇi bhūtānani samīkṣe May we all live in friendly cooperation and mutual trust

मित्रस्याहम् चक्षुषा समीक्षामहे "mitrasyaaham chakshushaa sameekshaamahe" May we look at all with an Equal and Friendly Eye

Veda Jyoti Founding Editors were Pt Nardev Vedalankar (1913-1994) and the late Manohar Somera



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