

Global Forum
on Environment and Development
for Survival

Moscow, USSR

Meditation given by
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Let us first remember in silence all the victims of catastrophes - of the Armenian Earthquake and other earthquakes all over the world - victims of Chernobyl and of Three Mile Island

of train and plane disasters
of oil spills and nuclear radiation
of Hiroshima and Nagasaki
of cyclones and tornados
of tidal waves and floods
of poisons and drugs
of AIDS and other contagious diseases
of wars and armed conflicts
of revolutions and popular uprisings
of all forms of ecological catastrophe
of poverty and want
of ignorance, ill-health and illiteracy
of racism and sexism
of greed and violence
of torture and terrorism
of pollution and toxic waste
of genocide and concentration camps
of police and military brutality.

Let all the earth keep silence before him ...

For it is now the turn of the earth to speak ...

Hark, the earth speaks ...

Nay, she is groaning ... she asks us to give utterance to her groans and prayers.

Listen to her complaint before the Lord about us, her children.

My children, she says, something has gone wrong with them. They act as if they want to kill themselves, along with me their mother, and all life I have born and brought up through the millennia.

They are full of insatiable greed, she complains: their cupidity knows no limits. They are so aggressive that they would like to blow each other up with nuclear weapons. Their greed is such that they would exploit their own brothers and sisters. Their cupidity is so limitless that they would rape and torture, kill and trample on their fellow-creatures'

dignity, just to satisfy their perverse lusts and mad desires for gratification.

Listen, she stops, and she moans again, weeping for her mindless children - in pain and agony ...

Ah, now she takes up her complaints again ...

They are my precious children - these human beings to whom I have given birth. And yet, they now have power to destroy me and all my children, all living beings, including themselves. Have mercy on them and on me, Lord ...

They would upset the balanced habitat in which I seek to nurture them.

They burn up all the oil and gas and coal that it has taken me thousands of years to develop in my womb. They do not think of future generations. They release carbon dioxide, methane and nitrogen monoxide, and other gases which heat up the atmosphere which it has taken me millions of years to develop for their sake, and for the sake of all life. They disrupt the soil microbial communities, and release more of these greenhouse gases. The polar ice is melting. The ocean level has risen. The ozone which guards them from the harmful rays of the sun is already depleted. Their rain is acid: so is their snow and fog even.

So many life forms, my children, are becoming extinct every year; the desert spreads, but they keep on mindlessly felling trees. They empty billions of tons of toxic waste into the oceans and rivers and kill off tens of thousands of seals and millions of fish and other marine life.

I am tired of complaining, says the earth and weeps again; now she speaks, in a different tone. Have mercy upon them, she says. They are my children. I love them, even when they care not for me. They need help, Lord, she now says. Not for my sake, but for their own sake.

Teach them compassion, Lord, she now prays, compassion for themselves, for their fellow-humans, for future generations yet to be born, for trees and plants, for birds and fish, for all life in earth and air and sea. Teach them to respect life, to practice justice, to desist from oppression and exploitation, to learn war no more, to pursue the paths of peace, to care, to restrain their greed and lust, to grow in love, to seek fulfillment in inner discipline, compassion and prayers, rather than in gratification of lust and greed or in violence and oppression, in drugs and consumerism.

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Finally the Lord answers: I groan with you, O Earth, and with all your children. Their pain is my pain. Their suffering is my suffering. When they fail to love, they fail me, and fail themselves. They are made for love, for rightness, for truth, for peace. But they are free. When they turn to me, I shall

respond. I shall then turn your pain into the birth pangs of the new. The new is love and compassion, self-mastery and creative freedom, disciplined communities which live in joy and peace, truth and justice. I wait in pain, for them to turn to me, that I may heal and make them whole.

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Come Lord, come as the fire, to burn our trash
Come Lord, come as the wind, to cleanse
Come Lord, come as the light, to show us the way
Come Lord, come as the healer, and make us whole
Come Lord, come as love, that we too may learn to love
Come Lord, come as the Saviour, to save us from ourselves
Come, come to comfort, to convert, to convict, to
consecrate, to create the new.