

DEATH OF A PLANET

**"Forest precede civilizations and
deserts succeed them."**

DEATH OF A PLANET

(A Collection of Articles on Environment)

Editor :
Kuljit Singh Khurana



All India Pingalwara Charitable Society (Regd.)
Amritsar.

Death of a Planet

Editor :

Kuljit Singh Khurana

Publisher :

Dr. Inderjit Kaur
President

All India Pingalwara Charitable Society (Regd.)

Amritsar. Ph : 0183-2584586,2584713

For Free Distribution only

Printer :

Printwell
146, Industrial Focal Point,
Amritsar.

DEDICATION

This Book is dedicated to the sacred
memory of Bhagat Puran Singh Ji
and all those individuals or
groups who are engaged
in preserving and maintaining
ecological balance
in the world

Contents

PREFACE	7
A DESERT ON THE MOVE	11
A FAMILY KILLS SIX TREES A YEAR	16
BURY THE DEAD, SAVE WOOD	19
SOIL EROSION...	21
"A GEOLOGICAL FORCE"	23
FOREST MEMORIALS	25
A SUB-SAHARAN DROUGHT IN INDIA?	27
KILLING TREES	29
CONTROLLING FLOODS	32
THE GLORY OF BUILDING	35
HUMAN PERSPECTIVES	36
CREEPING PERIL	38
DEATH OF A PLANET	43
DEFORESTATION MEANS DOOM	50
EARTH'S GREEN LUNGS	55
ENVIRONMENT: ASPECT OF INDIAN SECURITY	57
FOOD AND FORESTS	61
FORESTS: GULF BETWEEN IDEALS AND PRACTICE	63
IF ONLY TREES COULD VOTE	69
LET A HUNDRED TREES BLOSSOM	73
LET US GO DEEPER, BELOW THE DECORATIVE GREEN COVER	78
NATURAL DISASTER ON THE RISE	81
NATURE OF CONSERVATION	83
PLANS IN INDIA, PLANTS IN CHINA	89
RACE FOR DEATH	95
THE FORESTER'S ROLE IN PUBLICISING FORESTS	100
THE IMPORTANCE OF TREES	106
TREES FOR LIFE	112
ENVIRONMENTALISTS TAP VEDIC WISDOM	114
THE LIVING PAST TREES OF LIFE	123
DESERTIFICATION: THREAT IN HIMALAYAS REAL	126
THE LAST CALL OF THE WILD	128
HUMANITY POSES THREAT TO EARTH	131
ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION	133
CATASTROPHES: ROUTINE IN EARTH HISTORY	137
THE ECOLOGICAL IMPERATIVES	140
DO TREES CAUSE RAIN?	144
THE FROG'S REVENGE	148
MAKE YOUR LIFE BETTER	150
A WALK IN THE WOODS	152
WITHER GOOD EARTH?	159
OVER-EXPLOITATION OF GROUND WATER	162
NOT A CASE OF MISSING THE WOODS OR THE TREES	164
THE POLLUTED PLANET RUNNING INTO PROBLEMS	168
SPARE THOSE TREES IF YOU WANT TO SURVIVE	172
SYMBIOSIS BETWEEN THE EARTH AND HUMANKIND	177

PREFACE

Our mother is in peril! Our Mother earth is in peril
More than one-third of land area in the world is desert; and this area is increasing with each passing year. According to experts, the earth on an average is losing some 12 million hectares of rain forests every year. It means that 50 acres of rain forests are being cleared every minute somewhere in the world. How colossal! Our mother earth is being denuded of its cover at such a rapid pace. How criminal!

Nearer home, India is losing tree cover by over 1.3 million hectares every year. It is no strange then that the Rajputana desert is advancing into Haryana at the rate of about 10 sq. km. per year, though the State Government is trying to curb this trend by introducing lift irrigation schemes. Nonetheless, the desert area is increasing each year, chiming alarm bells.

Nature of course is so great and it works so comprehensively that it bestows unlimited benevolence on mankind and the animal kingdom alike. It has enough for everybody, every creature on land or in water. But we, humans, have over-exploited the natural resources for our ever-increasing greed. A U.S. environmental group in a study sometime back, had stated in very clear terms that the human activities are increasingly "sapping" the earth's resource. It is the law of nature that one species helps another species one way or the other, but we humans are killing them be it animals or vegetation.

The result is before us – the ecological imbalance. This has resulted in changes in earth crust, more earthquakes, shifting and fracturing of continental sheets,

widening of rift valleys, etc. and all this is seriously threatening the habitation potential of the planet.

As forests constitute the most important element of nature, one of the important factors in the creation of such an imbalance is the indiscriminate felling of trees. The biggest culprit in this respect seems to be Govt. itself, which, in the name of development and public welfare, is allowing cutting of trees rather generously. To meet with the growing demand for food for the rising population, more land is needed for agriculture and forests are the victims. For meeting demand for more power, dams are constructed for hydroelectric projects. Again victims are the forests. The changing consumption pattern of the people – particularly the middle class families – needing wood for houses and furniture takes a great toll of trees. Rapid industrialization is another major cause for elimination of forests and tree cover. All this has caused disharmony in the ecological system and has disturbed the equilibrium. The result is before every one of us to see – landslides, erosion of top soil, recurring floods, loss of biodiversity, water run-off, etc.

Himself a great lover of nature, Bhagat Puran Singh used to collect, from various newspapers and magazines, article dealing with environment and ecology by great environmentalists, ecologists and other eminent persons, get them printed in thousands in the shape of leaflets and pamphlets, and distribute them among general public to arouse their awareness and to evoke in them a desire for maintaining ecological balance. I have heard many persons speak to me that the pamphlets and leaflets of Bhagat ji had a great impact on them and their children. We have therefore, decided to reprint some of those articles in the form of a book, and present it to the public as a homage to this 'Yugapurush' on his 17th death anniversary, in the hope that public would feel conscious and see that our mother earth does not suffer any further deterioration.

The articles in this book include the one by Satyapal Anand – Death of a Planet – from which we have ventured

to borrow the title for this book itself. This article *inter alia* deals with the depleting non-renewable natural resources, such as ores, fossil fuels, etc. These resources are limited, very limited indeed. The article, "Forest Memorials" by Khushwant Singh is highly thought-provoking. He tells us how Israel, once a desert like its Arab neighbours, had turned itself green. We should draw inspiration from what he says and plant as many trees as we can.

The two articles by Sunderlal Bahuguna - '*Forests: Gulf between Ideals and Practice*' and '*A Walk in the Woods*' - present pen pictures of the state of forests obtaining in the Him alayan states of Jammu & Kashmir, Him achal Pradesh, Uttranchal and Uttar Pradesh. He gives useful suggestions for a forestation as enunciated by the World Forestry Congress, and as may form the basis of the National Forest Policy.

The article, "Controlling Floods" by Mira Behn, an associate of Gandhiji, also gives a vivid picture of how upper Him alayan regions, the catchment areas of the Ganga, were being denuded of the Him alayan Oak, leading to "ever worsening flood devastation with its enormous cost in money as well as human life and suffering."

The article by Shanta Chatterji, as also the one by Don Moraes (Nature of Conservations), draw immensely from the Védic literature and the epics, and tell us to fall back upon the "store house of myth and history, which we gathered in our childhood," and which have religious overtones, and refrain from felling trees and killing animals.

In fact, all the articles in this book touch one aspect or the other relating to environment. A couple of articles dealing with rightful human behaviour have also been included. Almost all these articles were published 15-20 years back, but these are as relevant today as, perhaps even more relevant today as they were two decades ago.

Our planet is on a life support system, God knows, when it may collapse. It is our duty, therefore, to restore

it to its “green lungs” and keep them in good condition for the future. As has rightly been said by John Ruskin (*The Glory of Building*), the earth “belongs as much to those who are to come after us, . . . and we have no right to . . . deprive them of benefit which was in our power to bequeath.” Let’s determine to plant at least one tree each year. If we all do so for the next seven years, we would be having several crores of them at the end of this period. Young men and women, as it is them that are likely to be most affected, should particularly take a lead in this campaign, and pledge to plant at least one tree in a year, on their own birthday or of a dear one. Young couples should plant trees on their wedding anniversaries. This way we can repay some of the huge debt we owe to our great mother earth that is in real peril.

- Kuljit Singh Khurana