THE WAY

BY

EDWARD GOLDSMITH

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Dr. INDERJIT KAUR
Successor to
BHAGAT PURAN SINGH JI
FOUNDER PINGALWARA, AMRITSAR.
Bhagat Puran Singh

Bhagat Puran Singh Born at Rajewal, Distt. Ludhiana in 1904, set out in life for the service of the suffering humanity—The greatest religion. He founded PINGALWARA in August, 1947 with a few discarded patients. Now Pingalwara is a very big home of human service.

Bhagatji’s contribution in spreading awareness about the global dangers of environmental pollution, increasing soil erosion etc. are commendable.

His dedication was awarded with heaps of honours by many quarters. Prestigious among these was the Padamshri Award in 1979, which he surrendered in the wake of the army attack on the Golden Temple in 1984.

He left for his heavenly abode on August 5, 1992.
FOREWORD

Edward Goldsmith ranks among those pioneer pragmatic thinkers of the world who had anticipated mankind's physical and spiritual devastation, with the start of the wild cyclone of development, in the mid of the 20th century. Although he had begun expressing his views in the periodical, 'Ecologist' in 1969, yet he was accorded general recognition through his book, "Blueprints for survival," in 1972. This valuable document was translated into seventeen languages, and it caused the formation of the first Green party in England. On the persuasion of the veteran leader, Jayaprakash Narayan, Edward Goldsmith stayed in India during 1974-75 and studied Gandhian philosophy which set him on the path of revolution for the new system. He wrote the famous treatise, 'The SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF LARGE DAMS' with the Co-operation of his colleagues working in the publication 'Ecologist'. As a result, mighty movements have been launched in several parts of the world in protest against constructing giant dams which are aimed at destroying the calling of tilling and livestock keeping—the very basis of the poor dwellers of the hilly region. These people staged a demonstration before the U.N.O. against the destruction of tropical forests and presented a memorandum to the Secy. General, signed by three million affected people, for taking stern measures to stop further felling of trees. They urged the Security Council to treat he deforestation as serious a matter as war.

The booklet in hand is the gist of Edward Goldsmith's book, 'The WAY'. It inspires us to set out on a path that leads to the resuscitation of
our languishing planet, by which human being can achieve the goal of enjoying the fruit of real development—perennial bliss, peace and contentment, for whose attainment, man has been striving for ages. The only way to survival is the one, set forth in our ancient culture which, today, has been obturated callously by Today's luxuriant living. The horror of this monstrous civilization has become obvious as its protagonists are themselves frightened by its hideous gifts to the world—puncturing the canopy of ozone, catastrophic spread of carbon dioxide leading to rise in atmospheric temperature, dearth of potable water, rising level of oceans, mounting pollution and rapid accretion of deserts. Today, they are seeking solution for these syndromes in technology, which itself is sick and helpless.

'THE WAY' lies in listenning to the clarion call of the indigenous civilization.

SUNDER LAL BAHUGUNA.
THE WAY

By Edward Goldsmith

Modern humanity is rapidly destroying the natural world on which it depends for its survival. Everywhere on our planet, the picture is the same. Forests are being cut down, wetlands drained, coral reefs grubbed up, agricultural lands eroded, salinized, desertified, or simply paved over. Pollution is now generalized our groundwater, streams, rivers, estuaries, seas and oceans, the air we breathe, the food we eat, are all affected. Just about every living creature on earth now contains in its body traces of agricultural and industrial chemicals—many of which are known or suspected carcinogens or mutagens.

As a result of our activities, it is probable that hundreds of species are being made extinct every day. Only a fraction of these are known to science. The earth’s magnetic field is being changed, with no one knows what possible consequences. The ozone layer that protects humans and other living things from ultraviolet radiation is being rapidly depleted; and our very climate is being so transformed and destabilized that within the next forty years, at current trends, we will experience climatic conditions in which no human has ever lived before.

By destroying the natural world in this way, we are making our planet progressively less habitable. If current trends persist, in no more than a few decades it will cease to be capable of supporting complex forms of life. This may sound far-fetched; unfortunately, it is only too realistic. My colleagues and I have documented this whole process, its causes and implications ad nauseam, in The Ecologist, over the last 21 years.

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Why, we might ask, are we doing this? The answer is that our society is committed to economic development—a process which by its very nature must systematically increase the impact of our economic activities on an environment ever less capable of sustaining them, and even more deeply degraded by them. An idea of the gross mismatch between the impact of human activities and the environment’s capacity to sustain them is provided by the fact that we now co-opt, for our own use and for our various economic activities, fully 40 per cent of the biosphere’s terrestrial net primary production (NPP). What is more, if economic activities continue to expand at the present rate, within no more than a few decades we will co-opt 100 per cent of NPP—which of course, is not remotely conceivable.

All this is of little, if any, concern to our political leaders. They continue to go about their normal business as if the problem did not exist. Thus, though 170 scientists sitting on the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), set up by the United nations, have warned them that carbon dioxide emissions must be reduced by 60-80 per cent immediately, if we wish to avert a climatic catastrophe, the British government has just undertaken the largest road-building in the country’s history and talks happily of doubling the number of cars on the roads by the end of the century. The last American administration openly admitted that, whatever the climatic consequences, it planned to go on increasing carbon dioxide emissions into the foreseeable future. Industrialists are, if anything, even less concerned. The oil industry has been very active in lobbying governments to prevent them from taking any measures that, in the interests of reducing CO₂
emissions, might lead to a reduction in oil consumption and a consequent dip in sales. In general, a major constraint on government action to tackle the serious environmental problems that face us, is imposed by the lobbying efforts of powerful industrial groups intent of defending their petty short-term interests, come what may.

More surprising, however, has been the almost total indifference with which the academic world has viewed this critical problem. Its acknowledged role is to provide governments and society at large with knowledge that serves the public interest and maximizes the general welfare. But how can it achieve this task if it systematically ignores the fatal process that is rendering our planet ever less habitable and, unchecked, must inevitably lead to the extinction of our species along with countless others? Our academics bring to mind those Australian Aborigines, who, when they first sighted Captain Cook’s impressive ship sailing up the Australian coast north of Botany Bay, just went about their normal activities as if this strange monster was simply not there. Parhaps they hoped-consciously or unconsciously—that by ignoring it to the point of not recognizing its very existence, they might induce this aberration to go away and leave them alone.

The parallel is more than superficial. In both cases a life-threatening challenge is systematically ignored because a prevailing world-view declares it to be inconceivable—indeed, as proved wrong if the challenge is shown to exist. The American anthropologist A.F.C. Wallace (1) shows convincingly that tribal peoples will go to any lengths to preserve their ‘cognitive structure’ or ‘mazeway’ as he refers to it.
A scientist will go to equal lengths to do so—as Thomas Kuhn, Michael Polanyi, Gunther Stent and other enlightened philosophers of science have shown.

The world-view which today's academics share with everybody else in our society. I refer to as the world-view of modernism. It is faithfully reflected in the paradigms underlying the specialized disciplines, in terms of which modern knowledge has been divided—the paradigm of economics and that of science, for example. One of the two most fundamental tenets of this world-view is that all benefits, and therefore our welfare and our real wealth, are derived from the man-made world; this means, in effect, that they are the products of science, technology and industry and of the economic development that these make possible. Thus health is seen as something that is dispensed in hospitals, or at least by the medical profession, with the aid of the latest technological devices and pharmaceutical preparations. Education is seen as a commodity that can only be acquired from schools and universities. Law and order, rather than being natural features of human society, are seen instead as provided by our police force in conjunction with the law courts and the prison system. Even society is seen as man-made, having been brought into being by the 'social contract'. Not surprisingly, a country's wealth is measured by its per capita Gross National Product (GNP), which provides a rough measure of its ability to provide its citizens with all such man-made commodities, a principle faithfully reflected in modern economics.

For economists trained in these ideas, natural benefits—those provided by the normal workings of biospheric processes, and that assure the stability of
our climate, the fertility of our soil, the replenishment of our water supplies, and the integrity and cohesion of our families and communities—are not regarded as benefits at all; indeed, our economists attribute to them no value of any kind. It follows that to be deprived of these non-benefits cannot constitute a 'cost' and the natural systems that provide them can therefore be destroyed with economic impunity.

Even economists who can see through this preposterous accounting system still deny that environmental destruction is a problem because they have been taught that the market system, in conjunction with science, technology and industry, can deal with any 'resource shortage'. For instance, the farmers of the San Joaquin valley, in Southern California are faced with a serious water shortage which may put many of them out of business, but they do not seem unduly concerned and are making no effort to adapt highly wasteful-water intensive practices to the new conditions. It is taken for granted that, sooner or later, some massive water diversion scheme will, as in the past, bring them the water they require from some other part of America, or even Canada.

The same argument is used to persuade us that the degradation of our agricultural land is not a problem. For our economists, agricultural and is just another 'resource'. Gale Johnston, a university professor and well-known agricultural economist, insists that natural resources play a relatively minor role in determining the wealth of nations. Emery Castle (2) of Resources for the Future, one of the USA's most influential research organizations, told a meeting on the availability of agricultural land in 1980, that the loss of farmland is not a pressing national concern. The agricultural economist Philip Raup
tells us that there can be no permanent shortage of agricultural land. To suppose the opposite is an error that stems from wrongly considering the availability of resources in physical, rather than economic, terms. Indeed, if some land is unsuitable for agriculture, this is only a reflection of current market conditions. If the land were really needed, then the necessary science, technology and capital, would make it productive.

This aberrant attitude is further rationalized by mainstream scientists, who set out systematically to denigrate natural processes. Sir Peter Medawar (3), the brilliant British biologist and Nobel Laureate, talks about nature’s ‘own artless improvisations’. The American Sociologist Lester Ward (4) attacks nature’s inefficiency:

“rivers, instead of flowing straight, and so delivering their water to the sea’ with minimum expenditure of energy, lazily meander through plains and valleys.”

He complains of “the redundant fertility” of the organic world: the herring lays 10,000 eggs, of which only two will reach maturity, and a large chestnut tree produces up to a ton of pollen. Nature’s shortcomings are an invitation to man to become nature’s engineer and create a paradise on earth, of his own design, whose functioning he can plan and direct in all its detail.

The truth is very different. If the constituents of the living world appear clumsy to us it is that they are not designed simply to provide us humans with short-term natural benefits but rather to contribute in all sort of sophisticated ways to maintaining the critical order and stability of the biosphere.

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In reality, there is no way in which they can be adequately replaced by human artifacts however elaborate they might appear to us. For instance, nothing that man has invented can conceivably replace the natural forests that once covered significant proportions of our planet’s land area, in particular the tropical rainforests. One can draw up an almost endless catalogue of the irreplacable services that rainforests provide us. Thus, by means of their elaborate root systems, they literally hold the soil together, preventing erosion from even the steepest slopes. Even in rainforests that are subjected to three hundred inches of rain a year, the water that runs off into the rivers is crystal clear. Their elaborate root system also ensures that the earth beneath it is sponge-like and maximizes its capacity to retain the rains; by the same token, they control run-off to the rivers, releasing only a fraction of what they retain. Once the forests have been cut down, and the roots have rotted the earth hardens and ceases to be capable of retaining water. Most of the water runs off immediately into the rivers, whose beds have been raised by erosion from the deforested slopes, giving rise to ever-worsening floods below. In the meantime, beneath the deforested slopes, the water table sinks; rivers become torrents that only flow during the rainy season; streams and springs dry up. Forests also provide the perfect habitat for living things—it is said that between 50 and 80 per cent of the tens, if not hundreds, of millions of different species of living things inhabit the tropical rain-forests. Vernacular man, even after he has become a sedentary cultivator, still derives much of his food from neighbouring forests. He also finds there the materials required for his houses or

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huts, his artefacts and tools, his medicinal herbs and his vegetable dyes—indeed, they provide the very material basis of his cultural pattern, which necessarily disintegrates once the forests go.

Forests generate the oxygen required for animals to breathe and also provide an important sink for carbon dioxide. The wholesale burning of forests that is occurring today is responsible for a significant proportion of the carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere to cause global warming. Forests, via the transpiration from their leaves, give rise to much of the atmospheric moisture that will form into clouds and help reduce the sun's heat and give rise to precipitation. In addition, between 50 and 70 per cent of the rain that falls on the three thousand square kilometres of Amazonian rainforest is generated in this way. Thus over this vast area, huge amounts of water are constantly falling and rising, yet another way in which the forests act as a cooling system for our planet.

James Lovelock (5) has sought to calculate the annual energy cost of achieving the same degree of cooling by mechanical means.

"If the clouds made by the forests are taken to reduce the heat flux of sunlight received within their canopies by only 1 per cent, then their cooling effect would require a refrigerator with a cooling power of 6 kilowatts per hectare. The energy needed, assuming complete efficiency and no capital outlay, would cast annually £1,300 per hectare."

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On the basis of this calculation, he regards "the refrigeration system that is the whole of Amazonia" as being worth about one hundred and fifty trillion dollars. This is probably a conservative estimate, and values only one of the large number of different services that the forest provide. Cattle ranching on the same low-grade land would yield a total income of less than one thirteenth of this sum, and even then only for a few years, for by then, this highly vulnerable land would have been largely transformed into dust.

Needless to say, we could not afford to install all the technological devices required to perform the free services which the forests once provided for us, even assuming that it was technically possible to do so. Not surprisingly, even after one hundred and fifty years of economic development, the vast bulk of the services required to keep our planet functioning are still provided by the self-regulating processes of the Biosphere. This was stated quite explicitly by Carroll Wilson (6) in his seminal 1967 MIT report "Man's Impact on the Global Environment."

"Almost all potential plant pests are controlled naturally. Insects pollinate most vegetables, fruits, berries and flowers. Vegetation reduces floods, prevents soil erosion, air-conditions and beautifies the landscape. Fungi and minute organisms work jointly on plant debris and weathered rock to produce soil. Commercial fish are produced almost entirely in natural ecosystems. Natural ecosystems cycle matter through green plants, animals and decomposers to eliminate wastes. Organisms regulate nitrates, ammonia
and methane in the environment. On a geological time scale, life regulates the amount of carbon dioxide, oxygen and nitrogen in the atmosphere."

No more than a minute fraction of these essential self-regulating biospheric functions can be taken over—very inadequately, at that—by the externally regulated, technospheric institutions and corporations of our modern world.

Why this must be so, is clear if we compare the lot of the Indians of the north-west coast of America, before the arrival of the white man, with that of an astronaut. That region was once covered with luxuriant temperate rainforests teeming with game and plentifully supplied with all sorts of wild fruits, berries, herbs and roots. At low tide, so abundant were the shellfish on the beaches that the Tlingit, a local Indian tribe, used to say that "when the tide goes out, the table is laid"; nor, it would seem, was there any need to build bridges across the rivers, for it was said that you could cross them on the backs of the salmon. All this ecological wealth was made available to the Indians, free, by the self-regulating processes of the Biosphere, in what—barring totally unforeseen catastrophes, such as the arrival of the white man—was a totally sustainable manner.

The lot of the astronaut circling our planet in a small metal box, could not be more different. He is deprived of even the most rudimentary ecological wealth. No edible plants grow in his space capsule; there is no game to hunt, no fish to catch, no shellfish to gather from the shores. There are no rivers, no streams, no springs from which he can obtain water to drink. Even the oxygen he breathes has to be
brought from afar. Indeed, the very conditions required for sustaining life in his capsule can only be maintained by the most sophisticated technological devices. The cost of sustaining him in such degraded and highly artificial conditions is beyond calculation. The richest man in the world could not afford to enjoy his degraded lifestyle for more than a few days, while only the wealthiest nations, at the height of their economic fortunes, could afford to provide it to a handful of their subjects for a few days, weeks or at the most, months.

If the US government takes seriously the National Academy of Science’s (7) recent publication, “Policy Implications of Greenhouse Warming,” then we may all be condemned to become astronauts on our own planet. Indeed, if we refuse to cut down global emissions of greenhouse gases, by 60-80 per cent as recommended by the United Nations’ Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change (IPCC), the only method available to us for preventing a global climatic disaster may well be to install the appropriate technological devices for doing so. Among the ‘geo-engineering’ strategies suggested by the National Academy of Sciences, is the placing of “fifty thousand, one hundred square kilometre mirrors in the earth’s orbit, to reflect incoming sunlight.” Another is to “use guns or balloons to maintain a dust cloud in the stratosphere, to increase the sunlight reflection”. Other strategies involve using aircraft “to maintain a cloud of dust in the low stratosphere to reflect sunlight” or decreasing the “efficiency of burning in engines of aircraft, flying in the low stratosphere, to maintain a thin cloud of soot to intercept sunlight.”

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But how do we know that these ludicrously crude geo-engineering strategies would work? Also what happens if there is a general strike in the country that is responsible for producing them? Or civil war? Or a Chernobyl-type accident to a nuclear installation, leading to the compulsory evacuation of large numbers of people? Or simply an economic collapse of the sort that occurred in 1929 and which is more than likely to recur in the next decade? In any case, how do we know that the world economy would continue to be capable of sustaining the cost of applying these geo-engineering strategies? How do we know that the resources would always be available, or that our planet could sustain the social and ecological costs? Or even that the climatic degradation caused by the carbon dioxide emissions from the burning of the fossil fuels required to power so gigantic a geo-engineering enterprise might not neutralize what beneficial climatic effects there were?

That our scientists should even suggest the remote possibility that these absurd technological strategies could provide a substitute for the homeostatic mechanisms of the Biosphere that have so far regulated world climate, indicates to what extent they live in a world of their own—one that seems to be increasingly insulated against social, ecological and even economic realities.

The second fundamental tenet of the world-view of modernism follows quite logically from the first: it is that to maximize all benefits and hence our welfare and our wealth, we must maximize economic development—a process we identify with progress. To question its efficacy or to suggest that it might not be entirely beneficial, is to blaspheme against the
holy writ of the modernistic creed. Thus, Sir Peter Medawar (8) admits that our hopes have not worked out: "every folly, every enormity we look back on with repugnance can find its equivalent in contemporary life." But still, for him, this does not invalidate the principle of progress.

"There is no need," he writes, "to be dismayed by the fact that we cannot yet envisage a definitive solution of our problems, we can obviously do better than this."

In any case "It is a bit too early to expect our grander ambitions to be fulfilled." We must remember that "human history is only just beginning." We have known that "there has always been room for improvement; now we know that there is time for improvement too."

But is there really time? Is history only just beginning, or is it in reality coming to an end? Is there really any reason to suppose that "we can do better" if we continue to move in this anti-evolutionary direction? This is a pure act of faith—one that is irreconcilable with all our relevant knowledge.

It is even more blasphemous to suggest that economic development, rather than solve our problems, is, in effect, the main cause of these problems, as it clearly is. Scientists will lift up their hands in horror if it is suggested that the modernization of agriculture in the Third World is the main cause of malnutrition and famine, or that modern medicine has failed to prevent an increase in the global incidence of just about every disease with the exception of smallpox. Nor will any believer accept that the terrible social and environmental destruction we are witnessing today is a result of this sacred process.
Instead, it will be imputed to deficiencies or difficulties in its implementation—government interference, corruption among local officials, or freak economic or climatic conditions that are unlikely to recur.

More precisely, modern scientific man interprets problems, such as an epidemic, in terms of a cause and effect relationship on the basis of which it is attributed to a discreet event such as the action of a bacterium, virus or other pathogen—which must then be eliminated, usually by waging chemical warfare against it. To do this, we build factories for manufacturing the chemicals, shops in which to sell them, hospitals in which to administer them and universities in which we train the requisite chemical engineers, pharmacists, doctors and other specialists. Thus we interpret our problems in such a way as to make them appear amenable to solutions that are dependent on scientific, technological and industrial development, or progress—precisely what our society is organized to provide. This may occasionally serve to cure individual sufferers: it will always serve the interest of industrialists and their political allies; but it will do nothing to reduce the incidence of the disease. Not surprisingly, the incidence of just about every infectious disease with the exception of smallpox, and possibly poliomyelitis is increasing throughout the world today and will probably continue to increase, so long as current economic trends persist.

All the other ever more daunting problems which confront our society today are interpreted in much the same way. Thus poverty is seen to be primarily a shortage of material goods and technological
devices and of the money required to purchase them. Economic development can solve this problem, since it will enable us to build factories which can manufacture these commodities, and provide jobs to enable people to earn the money required to pay for them.

The rapid degradation of the world's remaining agricultural lands is attributed by governments and international agencies to traditional agricultural techniques. Thus US aid attributes the rapid deterioration of "the soil resource base" in arid lands to mismanagement, based on the use of "traditional technology and agricultural practices"—though these techniques have been used sustainably for thousands of years.

Malnutrition and famine are also attributed to archaic agricultural practices and, in particular, to low inputs of fertilizer. A report based on a 20-year study, jointly undertaken by the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) (9) and other organizations insists that the amount of food produced in the world is a direct function of fertilizer use, without mentioning the diminishing returns on successive applications of fertilizer experienced wherever farmers have adopted modern agriculture methods. According to the FAO, malnutrition and famine are also due to poverty. People starve because they do not have the money required to buy food; it follows that:

"the income of the poor must be increased so that their basic food requirements can be translated into effective demand."

Hence, more economic development—even though, in spite of the unprecedented economic development of the post-war years, more people than ever before now lack the money to buy food.

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The population explosion is also primarily attributed to poverty. Poor people are insecure, which leads them to produce more children, who can be put to work to earn money for their parents. This means that to bring population growth under control requires rapid economic development which will provide them with the money they require to assure their security, assuring in this way "a demographic transition" as has already occurred in the industrial world. No mention is made of the fact that this transition only occurred in the industrial world once per-capita income had reached a much higher level than Third World people can hope to achieve. Nor is it noted that economic development, by destroying families and communities, annihilating their natural environments and forcing them off the land and into the slums, is the greatest source of their present insecurity.

The population explosion is seen above all to be the result of a shortage of family planning devices—so much so, that the World Bank (10) estimates that to achieve "a rapid fertility decline goal" in sub-Saharan Africa would mean increasing the amount of money spent on "family planning" twenty times by the end of the century—an extremely convenient approach to the problem from the point of view of manufacturers of birth-control pills, condoms and IUDs.

So it is, with all the other problems that confront us, whether it be unemployment, crime delinquency, drug-addiction, alcoholism, pollution and resource depletion, global deforestation and global warming. Each of these problems is interpreted in a way that rationalizes policies we have already
decided to adopt: those that make the greatest contribution to economic development and hence best satisfy the requirements of the corporations and institutions that dominate our society. In other words, instead of interpreting our problems as the inevitable consequence of economic development or progress we interpret them instead as providing evidence that economic development has not proceeded far or fast enough.

This is the essence of the Great Misinterpretation—the ultimate manifestation of modern man's cognitive maladjustment to the industrial world that he has created. It has drawn us into a veritable chain reaction which leads to ever greater social and environmental destruction, from which we must waste no time in extracting ourselves if we are to have any future on this planet.

To extract ourselves, we must learn to interpret our problems in the light of a very different world-view—one that I refer to as the world-view of ecology—and which I identify with the world-view of those vernacular peoples who practised a Chthonic or Gaian religion—a religion of the earth. It seems certain that all vernacular societies at one time practised such a religion and hence were imbued with the world-view of ecology. It is only in this way that we can explain their great stability—the fact that such societies could thrive for as long as they did without destroying the natural world on which they depended for their welfare and indeed for their survival.

The main tenet of the world-view of ecology is that our true wealth and hence real benefits, are derived from the normal functioning of the world
of living things. Those imbued with this world-view fully realise that our greatest wealth must be our favourable and stable climate, our forests, rivers, and fertile soil. If this is so, then their principle preoccupation must be to preserve the critical order and stability of the natural world rather than systematically destroy it as modern man is committed to do. It is easy to show that this was in fact the overriding goal of such vernacular societies. To achieve this goal meant following what many of these societies referred to explicitly as The Way. This meant behaving in accordance with their society's traditional law which the Greeks referred to as the Nomos. The Way was also referred to by them as Dike, which meant justice, righteousness or morality. Jane Harrison (11) tells us the Dike was also "the Way of the world, the way things happen."

The Way was also referred to as Themis, which Jane Harrison regards as "that specialized way for human beings which is sanctioned by the collective conscience." Themis was also taken to be the way of the earth, and sometimes the Way of the cosmos itself, that which governed the behaviour of the gods. Later, when these concepts were personalized, Themis became the goddess of law and of justice, and hence of morality.

The Way to be followed by all human beings was the same as that which must be followed by society as a whole, by the natural world, by the cosmos and therefore by the gods themselves. There is thus a single law which governs the behaviour of the whole cosmic hierarchy. "Themis in the world of Zeus," as Pythagoras (12) writes (see Iamblichus).
“and Dike in the world below, hold the same place and rank as Nomos in the cities of men; so that he who does not justly perform his appointed duty may appear as a violator of the whole order of the universe.”

The Chinese concept of Tao refers at once to the order and to the Way of the cosmos. The term is applied to the daily and yearly “revolution of the heavens” and of the two powers of light and darkness, day and night, summer and winter, heat and cold. E. de Groot (13) tells us that;

“It represents all that is correct, normal or right (ching or twan) in the universe; it does, indeed, never deviate from its course. It consequently includes all correct and righteous dealings of men and spirits, which alone promote universal happiness and life.”

Tao represent the natural course of things. It was considered Joseph Needham (14) writes,

“not only as vaguely informing of all things, but as being the naturalness, the very structure of particular and individual things.”

Feng Yu-Lan (15) sees the Tao as “the all-embracing first principle of things.” All living things, including humans, are enfolded in this natural order, subject to the Tao which is its governing principle. “Tao, as the order of nature…governs their very action,” Feng Yu-Lan writes. Humans follow the Tao or Way, by behaving naturally. In Taoist terms, this means abiding by Lao-Tzu’s principle of Wu Wei, for “when all things obey the laws of the Tao,” as

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Wing-Tsit Chan writes, (16) "they will form a harmonious whole, and the universe will become an integrated organism."

A similar concept existed in Vedic India. "The processes whose perpetual sameness or regular recurrence give rise to the representation of order," writes Maurice Bloomfield (17) "obey R’ta or their occurrence is R’ta." We read in the Vadas that:

"the rivers flow R’ta. According to the R’ta the light of the heavenborn morning has come...the year is the path of R’ta. The Gods themselves are born of the R’ta or in the R’ta; they show by the acts that they know, observe and love the R’ta. In man’s activity, the R’ta manifests itself as the moral law."

R’ta also stands for truth, though in a philosophical context truth is usually Satya. Untruth, though it is sometimes Asatya, is usually expressed as An-R’ta, hence as a divergence from the Way.

The Vedic poet, as Krishna Chaitanya (18) notes, fully realises that to attain nature’s bounty, man must obey R’ta:

"for one who lives according to Eternal law, the winds are full of sweetness, the rivers pour sweets. So may the plants be full of sweetness for us."

The great Vedic "Hymn to the Earth" clearly expresses the belief in human dependence on the order of the cosmos and the human role in maintaining it by observing the ancient law. The poet expresses his faith in the eternal order and in the human duty to preserve it. It is this order which has bound
“rock, soil, stone and dust” in such a way that “trees, Lords of the Forest, stand very firm.” It is this order that maintains in “unfailing flow, day and night, the waters that are common to all” and nurtures “cornfields that nourish quadrupeds and bipeds.” In all this, the poet displays a respect that unites the spiritual and the practical:

“Whatsoever I dig from thee, Earth, may it have quick growth again. O purifier, may we not injure thy vitals or thy heart.”

In the Persian Avestar, The Way is also referred to as Asha, the celestial representative of justice on earth. According to Chantepie de la Saussaye: (19)

“Justice is the rule of the world’s life, as Asha is the principle of all well-ordered existence, and the establishment or accomplishment of justice is the end of the evolution of the universe.”

Latter, the concept of Dharma was also used by the Hindus in the same way:

“That regularity, that normality of the universe, which produces good crops, fat cattle, peace and contentment,” A. M. Hocart (20) writes, “is expressed by the word Dharma which means etymologically ‘support’, ‘upholding’.”

It describes the way in which animals, men or things are expected to behave: it is natural law. The sun is sometimes identified with Dharma because it regulates the seasons: sometimes it is considered to be regulated by it. Among the gods, Varuna is the “Lord of Right” who lays down the ordinances for the universe. At the same time, the king on his
accession is seen to have become to his people what Varuna is to the gods. For that reason, he too, is known as the “Lord of Right” and hence the living representative of Dharma. In Balinese Hinduism, Fred Eiseman (21) writes, Dharma is seen as

“the organizing force that maintains order, the organization that governs the universe as a whole, the relationships between various parts of universe and actions within the various parts of the univers.”

The concept of Dharma was also taken up by the Buddhists, who brought it to China where the Dharma of Mahayana Buddhism was identified with the Tao. De Groot (22) describes the Buddhist Dharma as the universal law which embraces the world in its entirety.

“It exists for the benefit of all beings, for does not its chief manifestation, the light of the world, shine its blessing on all men and all things?”

When a Buddhist Lama sets his prayer wheel turning he is performing a ritual that has deep meaning both in terms of the Dharma and the R’ta. Not only are the prayers printed on it repeated by his audience, but, as Jane Harrison (23) notes

“He finds himself in sympathetic touch with the wheel of the Universe; he performs the act Dharma-Chakra-Pravartana, ‘Justice-Wheel-Setting in motion.’ He dares not turn the wheel contrariwise; lest that were to upset the whole order of nature.”

If there is a notion of the right way to follow in order to maintain the order of the cosmos, there
is, in all traditional societies, a notion of the wrong way, or anti-way, which threatens the order of the cosmos and must thereby give rise to the worst possible discontinuities. In the Vedas, as Chaitanya (24) notes, we read that R’ta, though benign, can also be “stern and fierce” when it comes to transgressions. “Brihaspati rides a fearsome chariot of R’ta for destroying the wicked” meaning those who violate the eternal laws and so threaten the critical order of the cosmos.

Among the Greeks, the wrong way was referred to as “ou Themis”, the opposite of Themis (which occasionally was used to mean ‘social order’ and occasionally ‘the order of the pantheon, as well as the path to be followed to achieve such order). Among the Indians of Vedic period, the anti-Way was referred to as An-R’ta, the opposite of R’ta, and among the Buddhists as Adharma, the opposite of Dharma.

To follow the ou Themis could not be done with impunity. Among the Greeks, Themis (or Dike) would on such occasions take on a very different form, that of Nemesis, which is seen by Cornford (25) as related to Nomos—in turn related to Nemos, the sacred grove which was almost certainly the original place or worship of the ancient Greeks, as it was of the Celts. Nemos, or Nemesis, inhabited such a grove. She may originally have been the woodland goddess, identified with Artemis, or Diana of the woods. She was also a goddess of fertility, closely allied with Fortuna, “the Lady who brings forth the fruits of the earth”. However, as Cornford (26) notes,
“She who dispenses good things can withhold them or dispense blights instead of blessings, the awful power which haunts the Nemos may blast the profane invader of her sanctuary.”

Vernacular man in the classical world understood, as Donald Hughes notes that “hunger, ill-health, erosion, poverty and general ruin” were only different forms “that the earth’s revenge could take for the terrible mistreatment meted out to her by man”—punishment for having diverted from The Way in pursuit of the anti-Way or the ou-Themis. The only way to combat these ills, therefore, was to treat the earth with greater care, which meant to return to the Way of the ancestors who lived in the Golden Age when such ills were unknown.

Vernacular people invariable interpreted disease in particular in this way. Thus among the Tukanos of Colombia, as Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff (27) notes

“illness is taken to be the consequence of a person’s upsetting a certain aspect of the ecological balance. Overhunting is a common cause and so are harvesting activities in which some relatively scarce natural resource has been wasted. The delicate balance existing within the natural environment between nature and society, and within society itself, is bound to affect the whole.”

In other words,

“The shaman as healer of illness does not so much interfere on the individual level, but operates on the level of those supra-individual structures that have been disturbed by the person. To be effective, he has to apply his treatment
to the disturbed part of the ecosystem. It might be said then that a Tukano shaman does not have individual patients: his task is to cure a social malfunction.”

He does this by re-establishing the rules that “will avoid overhunting, the depletion of certain plant resources and unchecked population increase”. Quite clearly then, the shaman is more than a medical practitioner. He is a “truly powerful source in the control and management of resources” for he can really affect the incidence and severity of diseases over which the modern medical practitioner has no control whatsoever.

Victor Turner (28) shows that among the Ndembu of East Africa the doctor “sees his task in very much the same way”. It is:

“less as curing an individual patient than as remedying the ills of a corporate group The sickness of a patient is mainly a sign that ‘something is rotten’ in the corporate body. The patient will not get better until all the tensions and aggressions in the group’s interrelations have been brought to light and exposed to ritual treatment. The doctor’s task is to tap the various streams of affect associated with these conflicts and with the social and interpersonal disputes in which they are manifested—and to channel them in a socially positive direction. The raw energies of conflict are thus domesticated in the service of the traditional social order.”

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In this manner, vernacular man diagnoses diseases as the symptoms of social and ecological maladjustments brought about by diverging from The Way, thereby violating the laws of the cosmos and disrupting its critical order; maladjustments that can only be eliminated by correcting the divergence and returning to The Way.

This interpretation is correct—the scientific one is not. Epidemics are generally caused by large-scale environmental changes, such as deforestation, the building of cities and huge water development schemes, that by their very nature must disrupt the basic structure of the natural world. These bring us into contact with living things, and with the parasites and pathogens of which they are the vectors, with which we have often had little previous sustained contact and to which we are highly vulnerable. Thus malaria was originally a disease of monkeys living on the canopy of tropical forests. By cutting down the trees we entered into contact with them and inherited one of their parasites, the Anopheles mosquito that transmits malaria.

By building large and ecologically disruptive water development schemes we created niches for the vectors of water-borne diseases, such as malaria and schistosomiasis, whose incidence is now spreading throughout the world.

The solution is correct to—technological solutions to specific diseases only deal with the symptoms
not the causes. In spite of the trillions of dollars spent on modern medicine, the incidence of just about every infectious disease, with the exception of smallpox and perhaps poliomyelitis, is everywhere on the increase.

It is only by repairing the damage we have done to the natural world that we can recreate conditions in which the incidence of these diseases can be reduced to a minimum.

And so it is with all the problems that confront us today, whether it be poverty, malnutrition, unemployment or armed conflict. Their increasing incidence can only be regarded as symptoms of social and ecological disruption. Science and technology can only mask such symptoms, rendering the problems correspondingly more tolerable, which can only serve to perpetuate them. The solution can only reside in restoring the functioning of the natural systems that have been disrupted—which means returning to The Way:—that cultural behaviour pattern that assures the maintenance of the critical order of the living world.
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20. Elseman, Fred, 1989, Bali; Sekala and Niskala,


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Strength of Patients

Insane ladies 170
Insane men 97
Insane girls 77
Insane boys 75
Infants on milk 23
Girls with serious diseases 22
Seriously injured and infected patients 25
Paralytic patients 12
Dump-deaf-blind 4
Aged 41
School going children 14

Total Patients 560
They are taken care of by 120 men and 62 women.

Expenditure for 1996-97
Per Month

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General kitchen and food expenses</td>
<td>Rs. 1,65,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>Rs. 1,40,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clothes, sheets, etc.</td>
<td>Rs. 1,00,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salaries of those directly involve</td>
<td>Rs. 3,60,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>in patients’ care</td>
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<tr>
<td>Milk and yoghurt</td>
<td>Rs. 70,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hygiene and laundry</td>
<td>Rs. 65,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building repair and maintenance &amp; Assets.</td>
<td>Rs. 4,00,000</td>
</tr>
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APPEAL

PINGALWARA Ashram was established with a humble beginning in the holy city of Amritsar—barely 30 km. away from Indo-Pak border—on August 18, 1947. It was initiated by the Samaritan saint Bhagat Puran Singh Ji, in a refugee camp meant for Hindus and Sikhs expatriating from Pakistan in the wake of the partition of the sub-continent. Today, the name of Pingalwara Ashram is known all over the globe for its dedicated services unto the suffering mankind which are carried out with the same zeal with which it was started by Bhagat Puran Singh Ji. Pingalwara is engaged in the service of humanity irrespective of distinctions of religion, caste or creed. It has practically no source of funds but the kind donations sent by kind-hearted patrons dwelling far and near. Today, the strength of the inmates amounts to about 560, comprising of the orphans and patients of mental retardation and other ailments of serious and incurable nature. The daily expenditure incurred on the care and maintenance of these patients, the education of young boys and girls, and the remunerations of the 'sewadars' of the Ashram is to the tune of Rs. 65,000. Naturally, this great task, initiated by Bhagat Puran Singh Ji, can’t be carried out with the succour and cooperation of the compassionate hearts.

All the patrons and well-wishers of this institution are humbly requested to extend their monetary help as much as they can in order to contribute to the elevated and noble cause of redressal of pain and agony on earth.

The donations from our benefactors shall be thankfully received through the authorised fund collectors, by M. O.’s, Bank Drafts, Cheques etc.

Inderjit Singh ‘Baghi’ Dr. Inderjit Kaur
Hon’y. Chief Administrator President
All India Pingalwara Society (Regd.) Amritsar.