

A Flourishing Earth



A worldview is a system of beliefs and assumptions about the nature of the world and reality. The dominant world-view in a society shapes what appears to be the self-evident reality that is unquestioned because it is the belief of almost all people, particularly the authoritative voices of society.

But there is a problem with the currently dominant worldview. Based on the assumptions that only material things and physical forces are real, and that humans are fundamentally separate individuals who should be allowed to follow personal interests without accounting for the effects on others, the dominant Modern worldview has encouraged the exploitation of nature and the disregard of values other than economic. Climate change and the devastation of the natural world are some of the results.

And there is another problem with the Modern scientific worldview: it has no place for values or for the meaning of existence. Such matters are unscientific and are left to personal choice. In practice, meaning and values are neglected – very little news or advertising space is given them in the media – and they are considered no more important than anything else that is not scientific and has no economic value. Thus modern society is predominantly nihilistic and basically unconcerned with community and relationships, despite lip service to the contrary.

In its assumption of basic separateness, and its disregard for meaning and values, the Modern worldview is incorrect and has led to destructive consequences. As long as the world-view is not changed, laws and regulations will not be effective in halting the march to destruction. Nor will there be a vision that will inspire people to create a flourishing Earth, in which all humans can attain full development: physically, cognitively, emotionally, socially, and spiritually, in a flourishing natural environment.

A new worldview that corresponds with the actual conditions of the contemporary world is necessary: one that is holistic, based on perceiving the interdependence of all things, and understanding that the

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whole person needs to be cultivated if she or he is to attain complete development. Much of the whole person is not accessible to the restricted materialistic Modern worldview. For example, it does not recognize the quality of relationships, the countless influences that affect who we are, determining our life chances and even whether we are aware of certain aspects of our being. Much of our human potential lies in areas neglected by the materialistic Modern world. Perhaps a person has spiritual potential, or potential in regard to deep relationships with the world around them, through empathy or even telepathy or e.s.p. The possibilities are enormous, but our world, for the most part, values only material and ego-centered aspects of reality. Most people never reach their full potential because they have no idea of what their particular potential is, and our society has little interest in helping them discover and cultivate it. Basically all that matters is to fit smoothly into the material culture.

A holistic worldview includes the realization that the world we live in is the result of our perception (rather than being a simple objective reality always the same for all). It includes perceiving the world beyond appearances, recognizing that all things that appear to be separate objects are actually inextricable from their context: their past and future, and all that has influenced them and that they influence. It includes understanding our motivations, and recognizing that these are not entirely a matter of personal choice but that healthy motivations are built into the fabric of the universe in which everything is affected by its total environment. We are not 'selfish genes' or 'rugged individuals'. The so-called individual is entirely dependent on its context. If the context is changed, or if the individual is removed from its context, it will be changed; perhaps it will not even be the same entity.

To perceive the larger menu of possibilities requires the attainment of direct, unmediated perception of the world. In this way we overcome the incorrect understanding that results from relying on misleading sensory data, and from perceiving some aspects of the environment and not others (known as inattentive blindness). Perceiving clearly, without the distortions of sensory appearances and the mental habits based on them, requires perceiving the world without the filter of thought. This is because our thoughts repeat over and over the understanding of the world we have learned, and which has come to appear self-evident. We create our world through our repeated thoughts.

Once we can prevent attention from being hijacked by uninvited thoughts, thought can be used for its proper purposes, such as planning and problem-solving. It will no longer be a running commentary we cannot turn off; and we will perceive the world without unconsciously turning it into concepts or interpretations of experience.

It takes time to learn this key developmental task of self-control of the mind. It is more difficult than learning to walk upright or use symbolic language. This is why it has not been achieved before now. And because long hours at the workplace make it almost impossible to have time or energy for such mental training, the technology invented over the past two centuries should be used for providing the basic needs of all humans: safety and security, food, housing, health care, education and recreation, so that every human has time and energy for attaining his or her potential. The basics should be guaranteed to every human, and there should be full support, at every level of society and its institutions, for all of us to reach our full potential. There should not be great insecurity regarding whether we will have the things necessary for survival and basic well-being. The technology exists to see that all humans are so provided.

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The industrial work model developed over the past two centuries does not have to be an unchanging iron jacket that stays the same forever.

The vision of the flourishing Earth is that no child *in the world* is left behind. All will be able to attain full physical, cognitive, emotional-social, and spiritual development in a flourishing natural environment. This vision of a flourishing Earth has not yet inspired enough people. But as more of us realize that this is not an unrealistic dream, but a reality that has been made possible by the technological and scientific advances of the past two centuries, more of us will *demand* that basic needs be met from the riches that have been created.

This is a vision of flourishing that is available to everyone. It requires time and effort to achieve

this developmental task, and that is why it is vital that our newly-found technological ability be used wisely – for the full human development of every human, in a flourishing natural environment.

While I have said very little about the nonhuman creatures with whom we share the Earth, this is their world too. Humans have a responsibility to be good stewards of the planet. If we are not, we will create a heavy debt of guilt that will not go away no matter how much we ignore it. There is a moral law in the universe that cannot be ignored into nonexistence. Actions have results. The question is whether humans are aware enough to recognize those results – and are human enough to care.

When a person realizes all the wonder, beauty, love, and opportunity that are available to us, she or he inevitably finds it hard to believe E could have wasted so much time in activities that provided none of these things. Many of the things most rewarding in life, such as relationships, awareness, creativity, spiritual beauty and love, have little to do with money. The time will come when a hundred million wise humans walk the flourishing Earth. The time to awaken them has arrived. The time for them to walk among us is now. With the aid of powers greater than human, humans will achieve their full potential. The task ahead is epochal, and will not be accomplished in a single lifetime. But the building of a flourishing Earth is the human destiny.

– RHT
12/16/2020

