

Renewable energy, sustainability and peace building

By
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Where does human unrest come from? From a chaotic world, one may argue. But who makes the world chaotic but humans themselves? What is the main reason for this chaos? The response may be – the struggle to survive. From where does this struggle to survive emerge? If this is asked from someone languishing in some fuel queue in Sri Lanka it is likely the person making this query may end up with some serious injury.

However, it merits that we repeat that question for good measure because uncomfortable situations force us to ask uncomfortable questions. From where does this struggle to survive come from? Does it not come from a lack of basic wisdom and average common sense?

Speaking to many renewable energy innovators, especially solar and bio gas innovators in the past weeks, this writer ended up asking these same questions and trying to solve an unbelievably difficult puzzle. The puzzle of why Sri Lanka, a country which has been gifted with the generous bounty of the sun, has the ocean right round alongside rivers/ diverse water sources and the vast potential for bio gas options through its high skilled innovation/invention centred human resources is day in and day out becoming indebted to other countries for the purchase of fossil fuel at exorbitant prices. Alongside is the interlinked mystery why our renewable energy innovators are ridiculed, neglected and at times viewed akin to criminals.

Factors

Why had our economic and other experts both local and foreign not foreseen that this gross and irrational dependence would contribute one day to the shattering of our economy alongside many other factors culminating in the debilitating national scenario that we are experiencing now.

Fossil fuel exists beneath the surface of the earth; the extraction of which is greatly violent and harmful to the planet. Fossil fuel destroys the atmosphere when transformed to gas as it produces the poisonous carbon dioxide that destroys the health of both the environment and that of humans. This brings us to the question – while it could be argued as justified and rational for countries which are endowed with oil and petroleum to extract it through whatever means, why are far flung countries such as Sri Lanka which has an unlimited abundance of sunlight and other renewable energy options well in excess, not utilising it? Have we been in a coma for seventy



four years of so called independence?

There is no doubt that we have intelligent and innovative manpower. Why are we not building an education system catering to our national needs for innovation and job creation using primarily renewable energy which as pointed out in a separate article last week could lead to diverse industries connected to renewable energy industries. Why have we not carried out for all these decades research on quartz and silica which we possess for a national level transformation to solar energy production using locally available resources.

Is not our economic problems almost entirely man made? Why is our modern education system not creating professors and economic experts who will ask what a thinking nine-year-old with average intelligence would?

Peace, peacemaking or peace building; however we may coin these words refers primarily to a mental state. Peace begins first in our inner universe centered in the core of our awareness.

Ancient spiritual traditions ascertained this and had rituals and traditions that were designed to link the nurturing of inner peace of the human heart and mind with the larger pulse and veins of the earth. Ancient man and the pre-colonial education systems of diverse civilisations had utmost reverence for all of nature and would not have dreamt of using modern knowledge through science technology to harm it. The oceans were its bloodstream, the lakes its veins and the soil its robust body, providing life to all other beings.

Great mother

The earth was thus considered the great mother and revered. Disturbing its balance was not thought of. Even cutting of a tree was associated with permission seeking rituals practised in many cultural traditions. There was no forced grabbing of earth's resources and sharing of resources did not lead to an obsession with war, although of course the eternal reality of war and peace has existed throughout millennia.

What we have today, despite having institutions espousing peace and where making peace is a lucrative business, is insidious internal and external

warfare with both the planet and mankind. Yet in this exploitation centered reality we sleekly talk of sustainability, peacebuilding, human rights and preach economic equity.

To sustain is to last and the word able is to put to good use – sustainable. Peace building or human rights, natural resources and economic security has to last the test of a reasonable span of time and be sustainable. What we have today are not sustainable solutions but quick and surface based fixes.

We seem to be missing basic commonsense 'expertise' which is – use and innovate upon non violent, abundantly available resources for human survival – so that both man and planet will be able to cohabit in a tensionless existence and retain the earth's bounty for future generations.

Yet we are in a strange age where man and his modern technology treats the planet and all that lives in it as slaves – chained and fettered to profit and profit alone – an age where poison is created to make the earth 'produce' and where experts justify this even when that poison kills off both humans, soil, insects, birds and all that is alive in the realm of biodiversity.

Mini cemeteries

There is no peace in the way we do our modern farming. It is a violent process and our plates are mini cemeteries. And at times the same global systems that promoted such 'solutions' from the time of the green revolution to 'keep the world fed' does an instant U turn and proclaims that yes, it is a terrible thing that we have poisoned much of mankind through agriculture but blithely gets away with its earlier stance.

So while half of the population is being killed and becoming sick in the process of 'being fed' the other half gets killed by what we were forewarned some years ago by global business tycoons in the vaccine business as 'bio weapons' based illnesses.'

So we assume that viruses are made in labs, but we do not question much further because such questioning is not in our modern psyche, and as synthetic 'solutions' are found for profit, we continue ignoring the fact that all of nature holds for us a 'pharmacy of cures' for all our modern ills

whether it be natural energy, bio diversity focused food or nature boosted health; all of which are fragments that make up the bigger picture of economic expenditure/or earning of a nation.

Yet entities promoting human rights talk of 'sustainability,' 'environment protection,' 'equal rights,' and 'crimes against humanity' talk of these factors often without recognising that there is an urgent need to introspect upon the authenticity of these calls as opposed to what is occurring in practice.

None of the above humanistic ideals can be reached when the core of the consciousness which speaks of the above is distorted. The pragmatism of Buddhism holds that a distorted mind cannot come up with sensible solutions.

The world in which we are trying to find peace is distorted and its soul is a traumatised orphan. It is gasping for breath and the 'experts' who have walked far away from the goldmine of wisdom. Instead they use sterilise minds to come up with solutions which

are directed at keeping alive power status quos of diverse sorts and where the basic premise is hypocrisy, cunning, manipulation and control.

Yet, each human being, in whatever official position and living out life in whatever location in the world could be a reservoir of clarity upon which the yacht of inner peace could be set afloat. If authentic spirituality was linked with our modern diplomacy and philanthropy and governance, we would not have to wait to die to expect a heavenly experience.

Authentic inner peace and spirituality could lead to the creation of a fleet of honesty, goodwill, healthy profit making and economic integrity that does not manipulate either planet or human. If this is the case, words such as peace building, development and sustainability will no longer be useless phrases bandied about for diverse agendas but holistic words alive with practical meaning.

These words

would then be those that would rhyme in harmony with the heartbeat of the earth, resonating with the heartbeat of each human, wafting over the lands which ancient civilisations worshiped and protected as part of their gratitude to the planet that sustained them. Thus they would be words born out of honor, integrity and inner reflection aligned with the human conscience. In such a world all humans would gravitate to renewable energy which is nature's own 'do no harm model' handbook for modern human survival and the subsequent result would be an organically driven peace making among humans as resources are shared without destruction.

About the author; Frances Bulathsinghala promotes peace building and human wellbeing through spirituality, heritage, indigenous knowledge and earth protec-

tion. She is currently assisting a campaign to create national awareness on the islandwide renewable energy potential, especially bio gas and solar power.