

The Ailing Environment



THE world we live in today is ailing. Many of us today especially in towns and cities are expected to accept the reality that filth and depreciating quality are becoming a norm. This is indeed depressing.

What had happened to the world today is our own doing. It is with our complacent and selfish self that we fail to understand the age old saying that 'We live today moulding the world in which the next generation would live next'.

We are actually here as caretakers, and we do not own any to do as we please to the detriment of the future. It is bad enough that the weather has changed and crops suffer.

We read with indifference of natural disasters created by the uncaring attitude of mankind. We read of soil erosions, collapsed roads, contaminated rivers, altered or lost fauna and flora due to the creation of dams and the pollution of air by toxins and particles. Many if not all, our rivers are in a brownish hue with no clarity due to excessive logging and abuse of the mangrove swamps and riverside.

All of these were caused by mankind in search of profit and development. The environment is in danger of accelerated damage. What use is it even in Malaysia when efforts to promote green tourism or

historical tourism when such efforts are not done in tandem with efforts for the environment?

In Kinabatangan recently, the rare pygmy elephants were found dead and presumed poisoned according to reports. This is something which the Sabah government should seriously look at. The Borneo Pygmy Elephants should be considered a natural treasure.

In Sarawak, the Piasau Camp which is Shell's housing quarters since the 1950s is home to many wild hornbills that come to nest. Efforts are currently ongoing to create and gazette the area as a Hornbill Park in its natural surroundings. Even the famed gula apong from the Nipah palm at coastal areas are becoming harder to find as such areas are cleared. These plants help nature with the protection of coastlines against sweeping waves and are home to crabs and snails.

In places in Malaysia, elephants are now rarely seen and wild boars have become rogues in search of food as their natural habitat had been altered with new forests like 'oil palm estates' which now cover a good size of our landscape.

Malaysia had gone from rubber plantation to paddy to pepper and for a few decades now, oil palm had taken prominence. This was supposedly the new driver of agriculture. My contention with this is on whose part? Is it not better for one to look at improving food produce? Oil palm plantations are presented as good economic yields due to the global demand for fats.

Today, many of us are look at improving our lifestyle and started cutting down on sugar, salt and fats. How can we still say that such crops are good for us when we still do not grow a majority of our produce?

How is it that when we need to eat to survive in this capitalistic world that we

need to have money to buy food? The focus on wealth and profits has evolved into narcissism. What is narcissism? It is defined as a description of a person who is characterized by egotism, vanity, pride and selfishness.

In the quest for profits and the ever famous bottom line, many are just followers of religion in their free time. How is it that one uses religion as an excuse for discriminatory actions, peer pressure and an excuse for doing harm to another fellow human being?

Since when is one better than the other when one professes a faith and believed to be the chosen one whilst others who do not practice the same are unworthy of heaven or better karma? We are all born humans in the miracle of birth.

Today, racism has reared its head. It gets worse when so called leaders take no notice of its divisive nature in view of selfish needs. Discrimination is another evil we have daily. Discrimination on how much you earn, what class you come from or what faith you follow all exist in today's context of what we call life.

The world is ailing as the environmental decay is created by mankind in the search for selfish needs. Whatever happened to the cooperation and collective agreement for sustainable environment? Has it become a buzz word that is trendy to use only?

Today, everyone talks about green buildings. What are green buildings? They claim it saves energy; it will create better profits whilst helping save the environment by not polluting it more with more burnt fossil fuel.

Just look around us, have the town planners actually looked at the improvement of the local environment? We still need to have a strong advocate for living landscaped public spaces. There is no need for artificial landscapes which has no life. Artificial plants, grass and flowers have now become a norm in some developments.

But these do nothing for the synthesis of

life and the creation of oxygen and the intake of carbon dioxide. Plants also help keep the ground fertile with its changing leaves and barks giving a chance for the creation of humus and feed the creatures beneath the earth.

The natural world is a circle of life. Every life-form has its role to play and is compensated by the chance at living form the other. But what has mankind done?

Has any other creature in this world shown traits of hoarding wealth and lived on more that it needs to survive? What more destruction of the environment?

If you had watched the Lord of The Rings, you would have surely remembered how greed breeds selfishness and the quest for power. You would see trees uprooted and chopped to clear for the creation of a factory of war and labour. What happened later was that the trees found out and used Mother Nature to destroy and cause the balance to return. This is eerie as the author of the book, J.J Tolkien wrote such a scene in the trilogy in the 1950s.

What will save our ailing world today is conviction. We must rise above the irresponsible quest for extreme wealth, the oppression of nature and people and the discriminatory and racist leaderships.

Mother Nature will strike when no one expects. Will it be a day as many believed in the good book of life that judgment will come to purge? We hope not. We hope to reflect on ourselves and start respecting the world and her life-forms before necessary evils take place for a better tomorrow.

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