

## *Heaven on Earth - An Invitation from Darvesha*

Many young adults I talk to today have a passionate interest in sustainability....understandably. ....since they may be the first to reach the cliff for which we seem to be inevitably heading! But many of us, no matter what our age, look longingly toward ways of living naturally and sustainably, not out of fear, but out of love and gratitude for this magnificent, sacred nature that is the fabric of our lives, the display of God, our scripture, guide and teacher.

At the same time we are hopelessly entwined in world systems and find ourselves caught in incongruent actions like putting environmental stickers on the bumpers of our SUVs and recycling plastic bags instead of simply not using them. It is difficult for most of us to imagine a way to disengage from this modern entanglement.

Today the word 'sustainable' is so dishonestly used by corporations and governments that it has become a mockery: giving cosmetic lip service by using labels like 'green', while all the time encouraging us to worship the idols of consumption, shopping malls, cars, technology, "growthism", power and money. Actually *realizing* sustainability would require far more. John E. Carroll in his book Sustainability and Spirituality says it would require 'a conversion experience' in the depth of our being. That is to say, it requires a spiritual realization: a knowing that gives us faith in what is greater than ourselves - in mystery and nature, in the cosmos and the gods.

Today there are (and have been throughout modern history) living models of sustainability: residential, spiritual communities where the emphasis is on being, becoming, presence and awareness rather than 'having' and production, and where freedom is found "in" work (rather than "from" work) in the practice of "work as devotional prayer". Here we can see practitioners living the values promoted in the classical scripture of all spiritual traditions, exchanging modern 'needs' for pooled resources, joyful simplicity, companionship, rest, physical work, silence, and communal practice.

When we come together at Wilderness we ourselves get a taste of this kind of lifestyle: living simply in nature for a week and sharing spiritual practices. This year, as we take up temporary residence in spiritual community, let us look at the spiritual values common to all major traditions (what Hazart Inayat Khan calls the Unity of Spiritual Ideals) to see how they point us toward sustainability and simplicity, and how such values can help us to reshape attitudes that keep us from moving in this direction.

It seems like a ripe time for younger generations and those of us who were courageous innovators in the 60's and are part of a what Morris Berman calls the new monastic society (those of us who do not live in community but who do not 'buy into' mainstream values), to join hands and hearts in looking for ways to create a more reasonable world. Those who have the most to gain from moving in a sustainable direction, may also have the most to share...so we have invited 3 young dance leaders in their 20's and 30's to share the leading at Wilderness this year.

We hope you will also join us! And please enjoy this palindrome "Lost Generation". (A palindrome reads the same backwards as forward, but the meaning is the exact opposite when read backwards.)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch\\_popup?v=42E2fAWM6rA](http://www.youtube.com/watch_popup?v=42E2fAWM6rA)

And this video "Next Generation"

<http://www.commondreams.org/video/2010/09/29-2>

"The proving ground of spiritual practice is everyday life." - Pir Moineddin Jablonsky