



## Editorial



For many years scientists have been talking about climate change and the individual and societal changes needed to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees. All efforts so far, however, have not led to this fundamental turnaround. While we are still dealing with the Corona pandemic and its impact on our daily lives worldwide, we have had to experience new, challenging effects of the climate crisis in recent months. Torrential rainfall has caused floods in Europe and China that have stripped many people of all their belongings overnight. What is encouraging is the high level of compassion and cooperation that has been visible around the affected communities

and cities.

The [latest IPCC report from August 2021](#) gives a clear message : Unless we take immediate rapid decisions and actions to change ourselves and our societies towards becoming carbon neutral, life on earth becomes questionable. Despite these facts why do change still seem so difficult? We have enough scientific evidence that the man-made climate crisis evolves faster than predicted yet politicians, businesses and many civil society groups are still arguing and defending

the current ideology of economic growth which is a key factor for exploitation of the environment. Is it a lack of courage or fear of the unknown if we change?

In the face of these dynamics, it is appropriate and necessary to pause, broaden our view and ask what is fundamentally at stake now? Why do we avoid change and what has let us harm and destroy our earth in the first place? Mike George takes a deep look at the birth of humans' non-caring, violent behavior in our relationship towards ourselves, others and the eco system. He suggests we need to start first by healing our own inner wounds and damaging mindsets to return to an internal happiness that is not dependent on consumption and materialism.

Valeriane Bernhard, in her role as coordinator of the Liaison Interfaith Committee to the UN Climate Change Conference and UN representative of the Brahma Kumaris, talks on "Courage and ethics for climate action". She points out that quality in our thinking enables us to meet future danger and trouble without fear, which is important as fear influences the caliber of our decision making.

With this edition of the Eco Newsletter of the Brahma Kumaris Environment Initiative we would like to highlight the importance of courage in the face of the climate crisis. We would like to invite you to practice being courageous every day in little and bigger aspects of personal and collective change. Courage can be strengthened by reconnecting to our inner power and purpose. Each step of courage to change our thinking, behavior, and lifestyle towards one of non-violence, inner independence, true happiness, and unlimited cooperation will make us stronger inside and will enhance our decision-making power. By becoming authentic leaders for change we encourage each other.

**BK Carolin Fraude**

Coordination-Team of the BK Center, Berlin  
Representative of BK Delegation to the UNFCCC



## Retreat Centres in Australia Leading the Way



Image source: Blue Mountains meditation retreats

The Brahma Kumaris in Australia is fortunate to have four Retreat Centres; two just out of Sydney - 'Leura' in the Blue Mountains and 'Wilton' in the Southern Highlands, and two just out of Melbourne, 'Baxter' on the Mornington Peninsula and 'Yarra Valley' a recently 'acquired' beautiful boutique Retreat Centre in the Yarra Valley.

Retreat Centres are synonymous with nature and eco-care and there are many ways all of our Retreat Centres endeavour to take care of the land and its inhabitants. These include being members of Land for Wildlife - creating and sustaining habitats for wildlife, managing the land for healthy rivers and creeks, using eco-friendly cleaning products, composting and creating and maintaining veggie gardens, and teaching others about simple and economical living. We are always seeking ways to limit our footprint on the planet and one of our current projects is to secure a grant to install a solar system at our Retreat Centre in Leura. This will hopefully pave the way for similar projects at our other Retreat Centres. You can see more about all of our eco activities in the videos here.



## Nature vs Nurture

*Connection between environmental degradation and our consciousness*



Image source: veeterzy/unsplash

Mike George, in his recent talk on Nature vs nurture, begins by acknowledging the state of the environment today - ice is melting faster than ever before, we are losing tree cover the size of football fields every day and we are experiencing two or more climatic conditions in certain places on any given day. Such anomalies in the environment have become commonplace and the degradation of the environment is now accelerating at a dangerous pace. This is nothing new to us now as we have been witnessing huge corporations and organizations exploiting and polluting the environment. There has been a creeping absence of nurture in nature over the last hundreds of years. He attributes the underlying cause for such non-loving, non-caring and often violent behavior towards nature as early trauma!

“Violence emerges from trauma” - Mike George

This is not to be confused with the trauma that we experience in the body. It is rather about the trauma that our consciousness or psyche has experienced over many years. Trauma is buried very deep in the subconscious from birth, giving rise to unnatural energies of hate and anger possibly during childhood which continues to shape our belief systems and behavior as adults. The trauma experienced by consciousness causes us to violate our natural way of being and living. This in turn makes us non-caring and violent towards nature and other human beings. Any real change we want to bring to the environment has to begin with us healing ourselves from the inside.

To understand more about this interconnection between the inner and the outer world, please listen to this [talk](#) by Mike George.

### **The climate crisis requires a new culture and politics, not just new tech**

This moment calls for humility – we cannot innovate ourselves out of this mess.

Peter Sutoris, The Guardian



Image source: Roslan Rahman/AFP/Getty

We are living through what scientists call the Anthropocene, a new geological age during which humans have become the dominant force shaping the natural environment. Many scientists date this new period to the post-second world war economic boom, the “great acceleration”. This



rapid increase in our control over the Earth has brought us to the precipice of catastrophic climate change, triggered a mass extinction, disrupted our planet's nitrogen cycles and acidified its oceans, among other things.

Our society has come to believe that technology is the solution. Electricity from renewable sources, energy-efficient buildings, electric vehicles and hydrogen fuels are among the many innovations that we hope will play a decisive role in reducing emissions. Most of the mainstream climate-change models now assume some degree of “negative emissions” in the future, relying on large-scale carbon capture technology, despite the fact that it is far from ready to be implemented. And if all else fails, the story goes, we can geoengineer the Earth.

[Continue reading](#)

## Courage and Ethics for Climate Action



This is a video of a side event organised by different faith-based organisations at the Bonn climate Change conference in 2019. The three speakers emphasise from their own perspective, that both courage and ethics need to be at the heart of any climate action. Lindsey Fieldner Cook from the Quaker United Nations Office felt that faiths all over the world are offering a very positive and empowering voice of hope over fear and were urging fair action as a moral obligation. Lindsey encouraged us to ask ourselves: “what did we do when we knew?” and “to live so that others can live.” Valeriane Bernard from the Brahma Kumaris encouraged people to take

individual responsibility for the situation we are in as “we can’t change globally if we don’t change individually”. Listing different kinds of courage needed, Valeriane ends by saying that we need the courage to maintain hope and “to see and choose a beautiful future” and finally “to look into God’s eyes and take the inspiration to change ”. Arnold from Act Alliance, an umbrella of faith-based organisations in Nairobi, pointed out that as people of faith we need to take care of “God’s gift of creation” and become stewards of the Earth. We need to use our core values of love, care and humility and keep insisting on applying core principles such as equity and human rights for all.

Watch the video recording [here](#).

## Meditation



Image source: [yogisforfuture.org](http://yogisforfuture.org)

These meditations were recorded to send healing vibrations to nature to combat desertification and drought. [Click here](#) to listen.

For more of such meditation commentaries, please click [here](#)