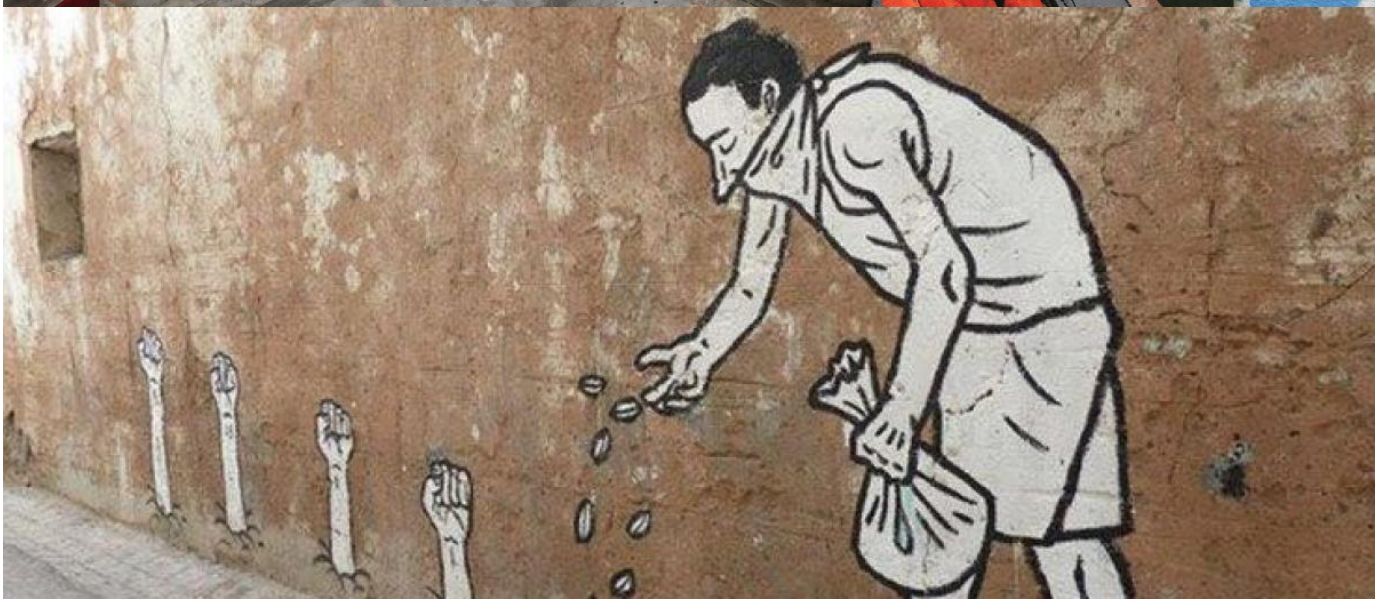




Seeding the Future, Seeding Freedom... One Seed at a Time

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Humanity stands at an evolutionary crossroads.

We will either make peace with the Earth by realizing we are part of her, not her master, owner, conqueror—or the Earth will no longer allow us to exist. We will face extinction as humans even while we push millions of other species to extinction. We will either make peace with our diversity, or destroy the social fabric which diversity weaves, and with it, destroy the social conditions of our continued existence. But we can consciously choose the path of Oneness—of being part of one planet, one humanity, living and celebrating our many diversities, interconnected through bonds of compassion, interdependence, and solidarity. This is the path of the Earth Democracy movement.

We need a new public imagination to address the deep and multiple crises of our times—a public imagination that helps us reclaim our humanity, our freedoms, and our earth citizenship. When we think of the planet and all of humanity in abstractions, taking the path of Oneness seems impossible. But when we think through the real relationships we have with the Earth and each other in the real world, our consciousness expands, and simultaneously the task of making a radical shift becomes simple and possible. The “resurgence of the real” has become a precondition for the continued survival and evolution of our species. Living through illusion is no longer a luxury we can afford. Illusions of separation, atomization, fragmentation make us feel powerless and isolated, while seeing interconnectedness makes silos collapse and turn into bridges. Living in and through non-separability expands our sense of self. Becoming aware of our relationships enlarges our being, and our potential and power. We become aware that rejuvenating the planet and reclaiming humanity are not two different ends, reached through different paths, because the Earth and society are interwoven in one vibrant, indivisible fabric of life in autopoetic freedom.

Both the planet and humanity face the same threat from the same source: the 1%

with *one mechanical mind*, which is destroying the intelligence of nature and humanity, running *one money machine* based on violence and war. By appropriating and enclosing the commons, it is promoting poverty, dispossession and disposability. I see the privatization and appropriation of our common wealth as piracy, whether it be the privatization of public lands for drilling and mining, or the privatization of water to sell as a commodity (bottled by Coca Cola, Pepsi, and Nestle, or as urban water supplied through Suez and Bechtel), or the privatization of seeds, of public health, of education systems. Piracy is the violent appropriation of what is not yours.



The 1% are trying to create *one history* based on hiding their roots in the piracy and colonialism of earlier times and the continued piracy in our times, constructing false identities, false claims to innovation, and false superiority. The illusion of "innovation" has reached its extreme with the claim of patenting life, which is in fact a claim to creation. In every patent on a seed or on a living organism is a loud announcement: "God Move Over."

This illusion has real effects in the real world. The will to own and conquer the common wealth of nature and society translates into the will to exterminate. Patents on seeds are pushing species to extinction, pushing farmers to suicide, transforming

our daily bread into our daily poison. For people across diverse cultures and diverse beings on the planet, it is truly an end of history.

An unfair, unjust economic system controlled by billionaires creates an undemocratic "democracy." Through the construction of a *delusion of democracy*, representative democracy has become an instrument of corporate power and rule of the 1%, using cultural technologies of divide and rule to create a politics of fear and hate. These structural relations between economies that kill, democracies that are dying, and cultures of fear and hate, demand that we think and act collectively to seed our future and seed our freedoms through Earth Democracy.

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In 1999, after we the people stopped the WTO Ministerial Meeting in Seattle, movements got together and launched the World Social Forum in Porto Allegre in Brazil with the vision 'Another World is Possible.' That is when I first spoke of Earth Democracy as the necessary alternative to destructive corporate globalization. It is an ecological necessity because the worldview of separation combined with an illusion of limitless extraction and exploitation of nature is pushing us to an ecological precipice. It is an economic necessity because a 1% world must render 99% of the population disposable, extinguishing our diverse creativities, potentials and possibilities. It is a democratic necessity because the rule of the 1% is violent dictatorship, destroying our fundamental freedoms and the freedoms of all beings to evolve freely in an interrelated world. It is a social necessity because the world of the 1% must destroy our social being—our communities—through privatization and enclosures of the commons, reducing us to consumers, dividing us on the basis of gender, race, religion. It is a human necessity because participating in a world of limitless greed, profit, violence, and abuse of power robs us of our humanity.



Image source: FIAN International

The powerful have divided us, and continue to divide us. Our strength is our Oneness—not a construct, but our very being. We need only to wake up to it. This is where the resurgence of the real begins. The real is the Earth and our oneness with the Earth. The real is our families and friends and communities. The real is the seed that gives rise to seed—not the GMO, patented, toxic non-renewable seed. The real is the food grown with loving, caring hands and mindfulness of the beings in the soil, the sun that blesses the plant, the plant that feeds us—not the fake food that industry manufactures, the toxic chemicals and fossil fuels reaping limitless profits for a few while our health is destroyed. The real is the intelligence pervading life, because life is intelligent. The real is our creativity, the creativity of our bodies and minds, the creativity of our hands—not the “innovation” of tools based on thievery, tools made to control nature and society for extraction and exploitation.

During my 45 years of service to the Earth and my engagement in fostering living economies based on non-violence and real creativity, I have always turned for inspiration to Gandhi’s teachings: to act in times of hopelessness, to open spaces

when all spaces are shrinking, to cultivate compassion and solidarity in times of greed, fear and hate, to reclaim our power when we are told that power is the monopoly of the few.

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The times have changed but the patterns of colonization stay the same. They are based on the violent destruction of people's freedoms and economies, creating supremacy through a strategy of divide and rule. But popular longings for liberation and freedom are perennial, and these desires for freedom shape the path for the resurgence of the real. Three central concepts light this path.

Satyagraha is the deepest practice of democracy: the moral duty to not cooperate with unjust, exploitative and undemocratic processes. This is the first step in breaking free of an enslaving, colonizing system. "Satyagraha"—the force of truth—is Gandhi's word for non-cooperation with systems, structures, laws, paradigms, policies that destroy the Earth and rob us of our humanity and our freedoms, that crush our potential for compassion and sharing. Similarly, Henry David Thoreau coined the term 'civil disobedience' in an essay on his refusal to pay taxes to a political system that supported slavery. He argued that higher moral laws compel citizens to disobey lower laws that institutionalize injustice and violence.

Swaraj is self-organization, self-rule, self-governance, autopoesis—it is the basis of real freedom in nature and society, beginning at the smallest scale and emerging over time at higher levels. Resistance by itself does not create freedom from oppression. We also need to sow the seeds of real freedom in our imagination, in our daily lives, and through our diverse and multiple relationships.

Swadeshi is self-making, based on local resources, indigenous knowledge, and community. It allows the expression of our fullest creativity as human beings and as Earth citizens. In Swadeshi we are co-creative with nature's intelligence, creativity, and regenerative potential, as well as the creativity and intelligence of our fellow human beings. Co-creativity with nature combines production with conservation. It is not extractive, polluting, and degrading to the planet and to human communities. It is the foundation of sustainability. It is the core of economic democracy. It is the source of *real wealth*, of well-being and happiness for all.

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Real freedom and real wealth creation call for the practice of integrating Satyagraha, Swaraj, and Swadeshi. Resistance alone will not create another world. We must combine it with another imagination, one rooted in the real and combined with constructive action. Sowing the seeds of freedom is not “imaginary.” It is a real act, an act in which we become one community with the Earth, one with our hands, hearts, and heads. Oneness is our being, our source of power: our power to resist, nonviolently. It is our power to co-create, nonviolently. This kind of creative public imagination can enable us to live as one humanity on one shared planet, our common home.

Editor's note: Vandana Shiva adapted this essay from her forthcoming book, Resurgence of the Real.



Tags

imagination

creativity

agriculture



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