

ENVIRONMENT AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF MAN

Hamid Farabi & Ruhiyyih Farabi

Earth



Venus



Mars



Mercury



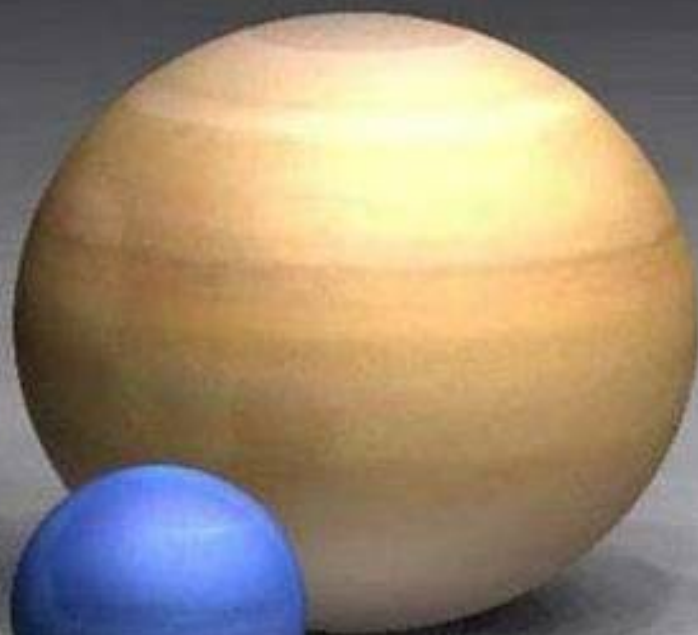
Pluto



Jupiter



Saturn



Uranus



Neptune



Earth



Pluto



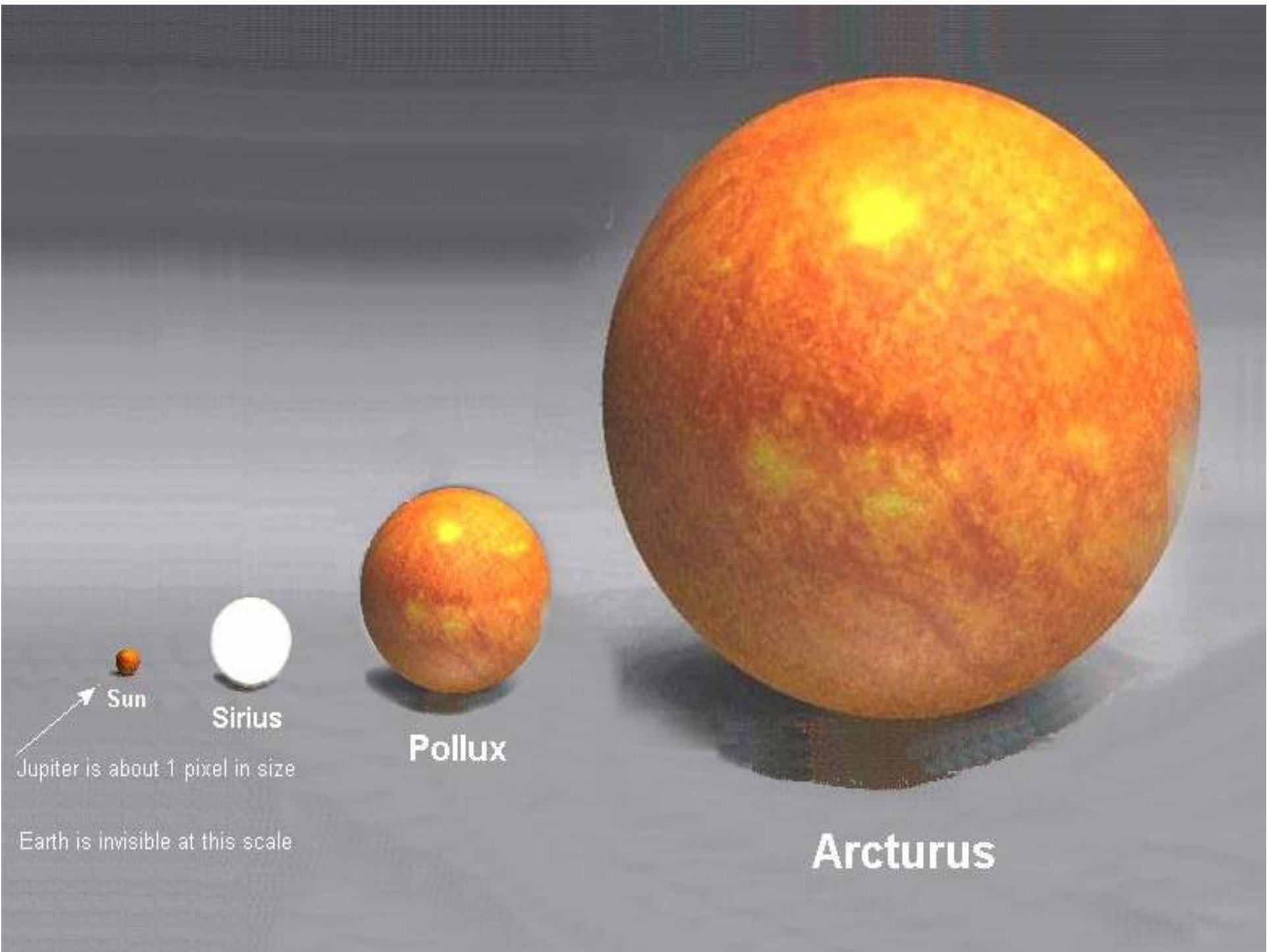
Sun

Jupiter

Earth

Pluto





Sun

Sirius

Pollux

Arcturus

Jupiter is about 1 pixel in size

Earth is invisible at this scale



Betelgeuse



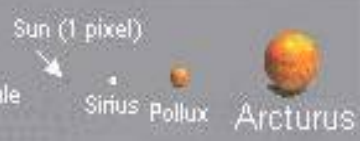
Antares



Rigel



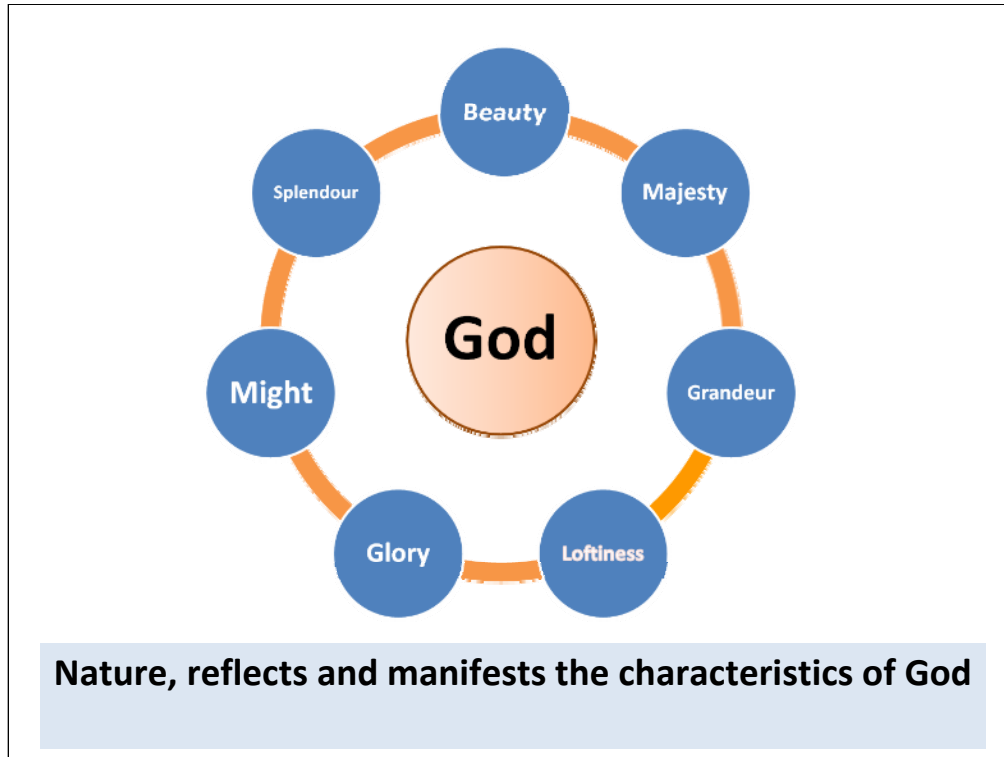
Aldebaran



Sun (1 pixel)

Sirius Pollux Arcturus

Jupiter is invisible at this scale



God the Almighty Creator of all things has given mankind a precious gift, that is the beautiful material environment which surrounds us. This environment, which we call nature, reflects and manifests the characteristics of God Himself, such as beauty, majesty and splendour. Nature, itself is a reminder to us of what God is like, just as we might recognise the style of a particular artist in a painting.

...whatever I behold I readily discover that it maketh Thee known unto me, and it remindeth me of Thy signs, and of Thy tokens, and of Thy testimonies.

Bahá'u'lláh

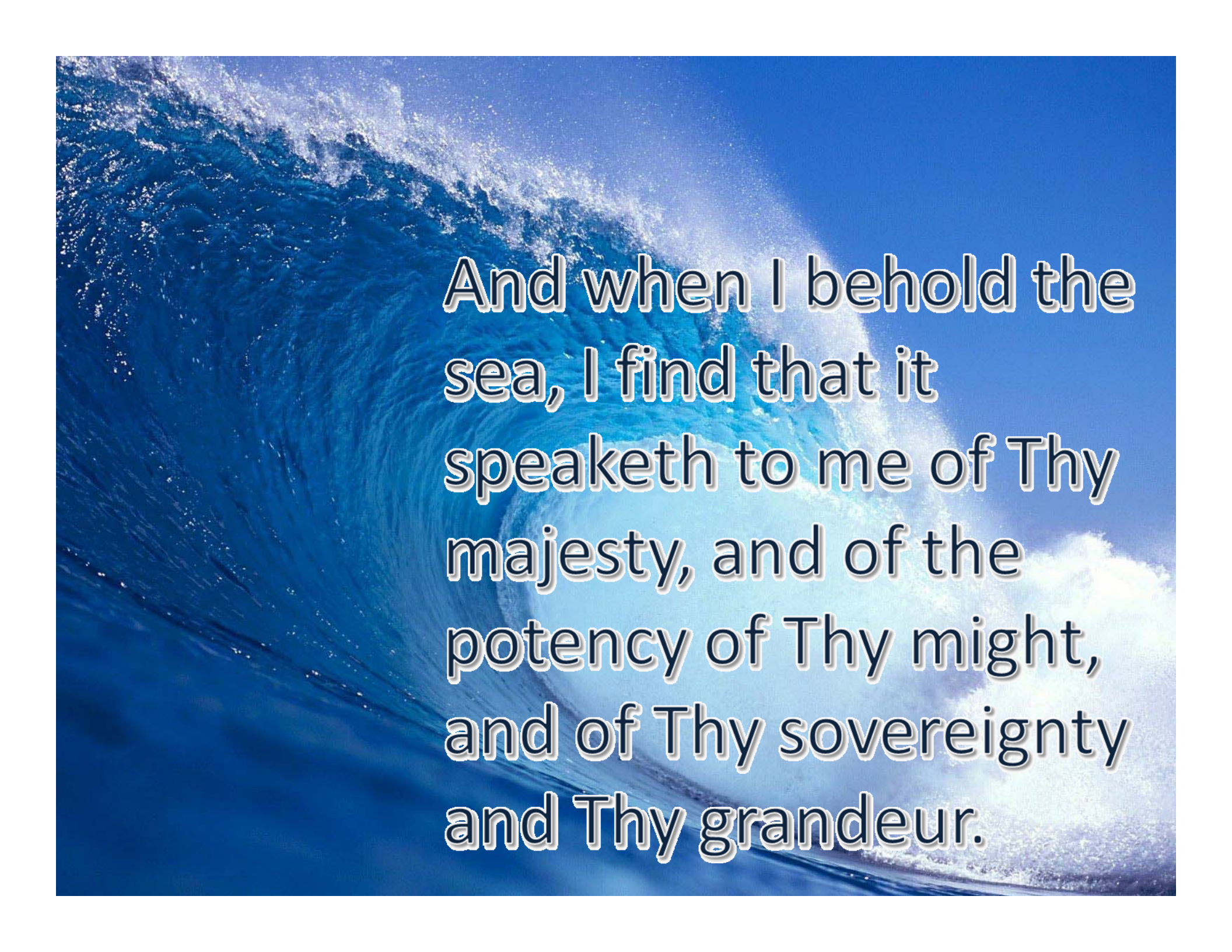


By Thy glory! Every time I lift up
mine eyes unto Thy heaven,

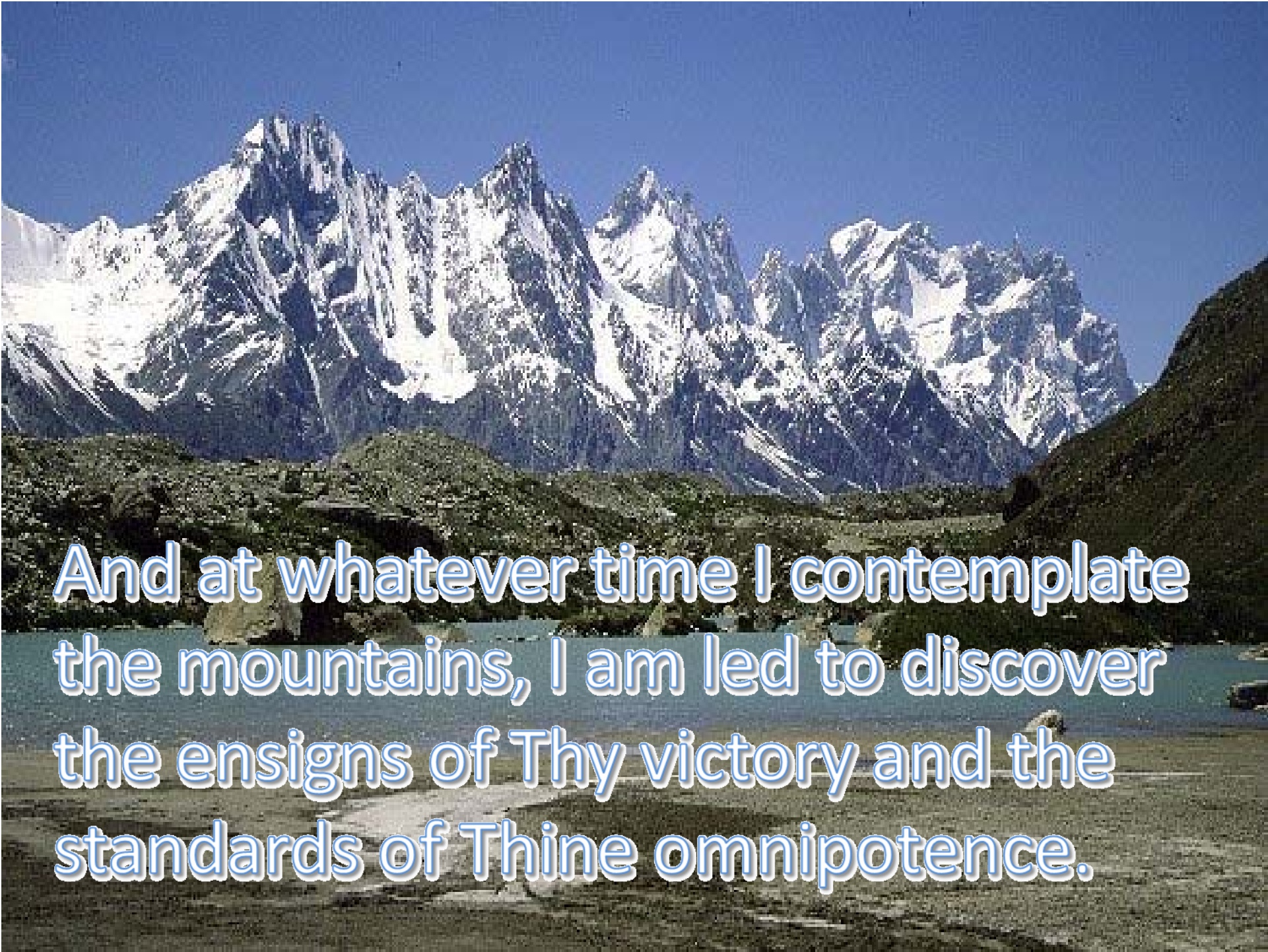
I call to mind Thy highness and
Thy loftiness, and Thine
incomparable glory and greatness

and every time
I turn my gaze
to Thine earth,
I am made to
recognize the
evidences of
Thy power and
the tokens of
Thy bounty.





And when I behold the
sea, I find that it
speaketh to me of Thy
majesty, and of the
potency of Thy might,
and of Thy sovereignty
and Thy grandeur.



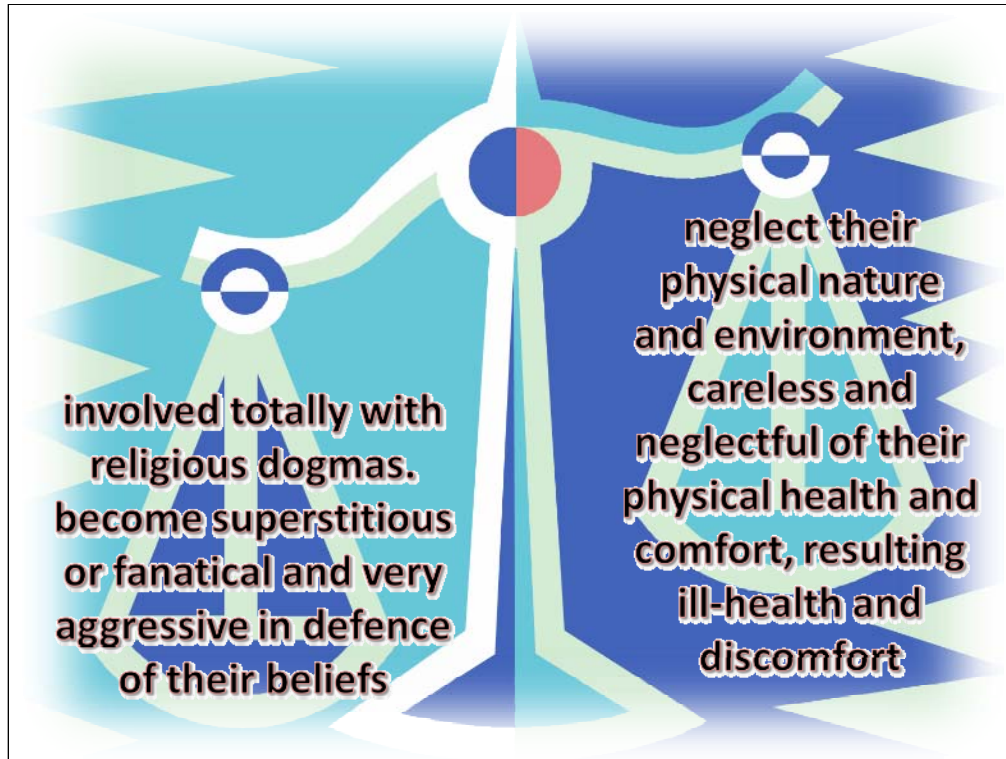
And at whatever time I contemplate the mountains, I am led to discover the ensigns of Thy victory and the standards of Thine omnipotence.



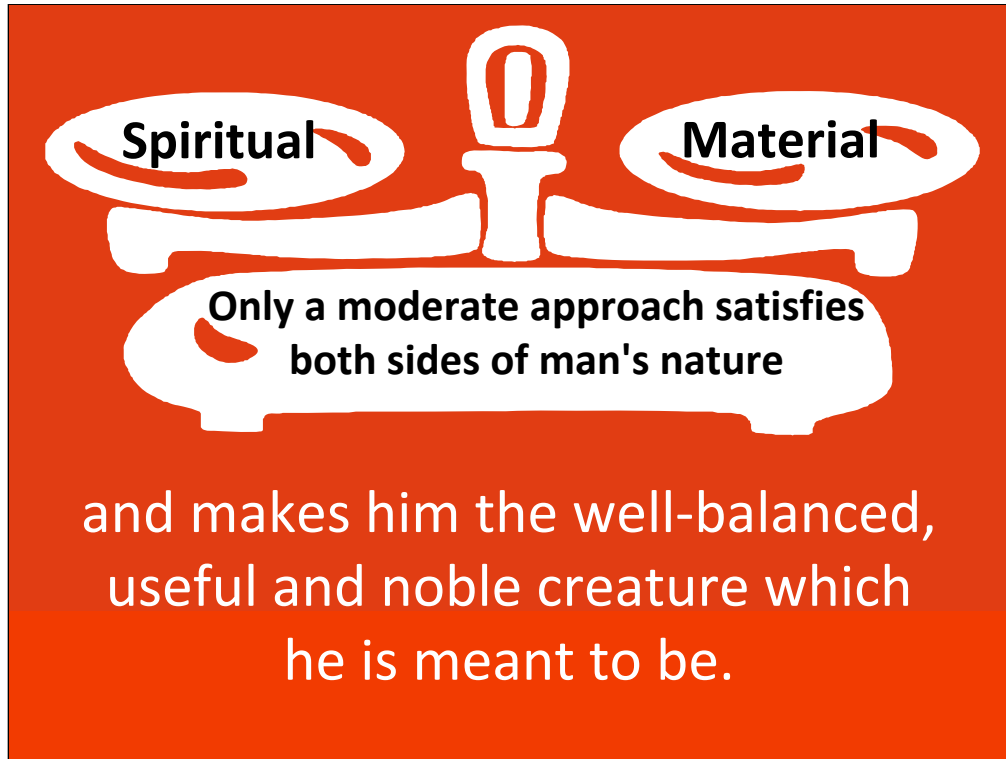
According to the Holy Books, man has been created in the "image of God". This means that he has a soul or a spiritual force within him that is higher and nobler than the physical nature which surrounds him. Man has been created as one entity which consists of two natures. He is both a spiritual and physical being; his spiritual nature consists of the capacity to behave in God-like ways and express love, generosity, compassion and other characteristics of God. Man's physical needs must also be met. These include the need for food, shelter, cleanliness, clothing, etc. If man lives in harmony with nature, both his spiritual and physical needs can be satisfied. But if man neglects one or other side of his reality he becomes unbalanced and incomplete.



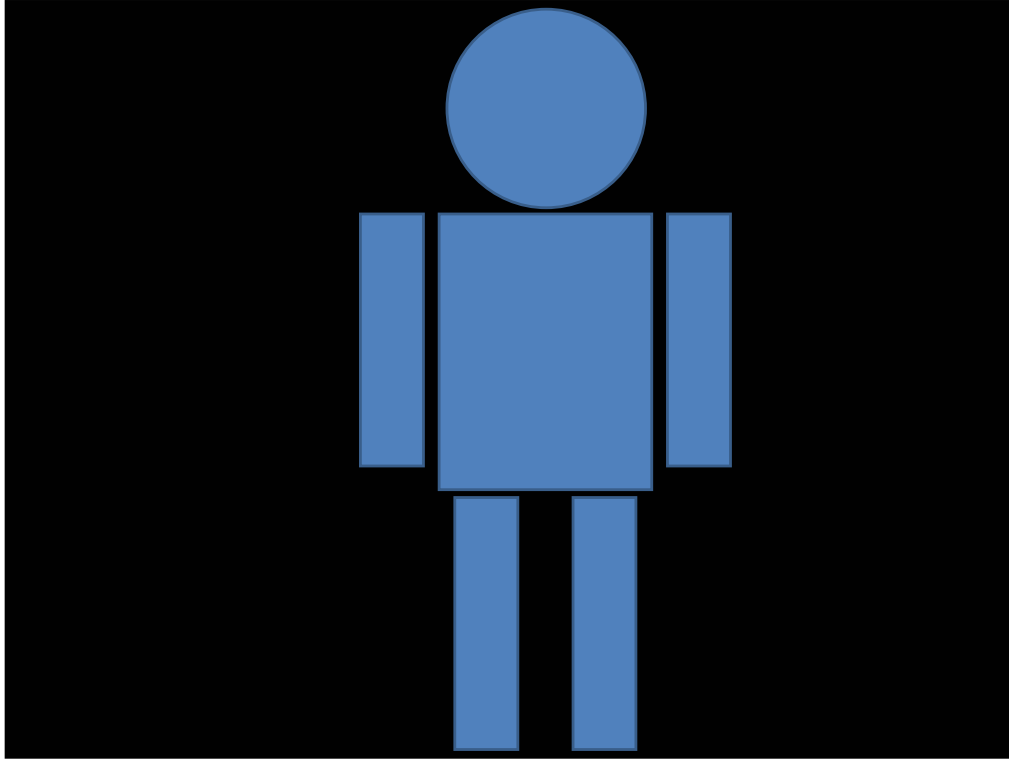
Unfortunately, people today place more emphasis on their physical being. The results are that their lives are ruled by materialism. They become aggressive in satisfying their own wants and needs and insensitive and apathetic towards the needs of others. They become obsessed with acquiring possessions, much more than they really need, and neglect the acquisition and practice of spiritual virtues which would develop their spiritual nature.



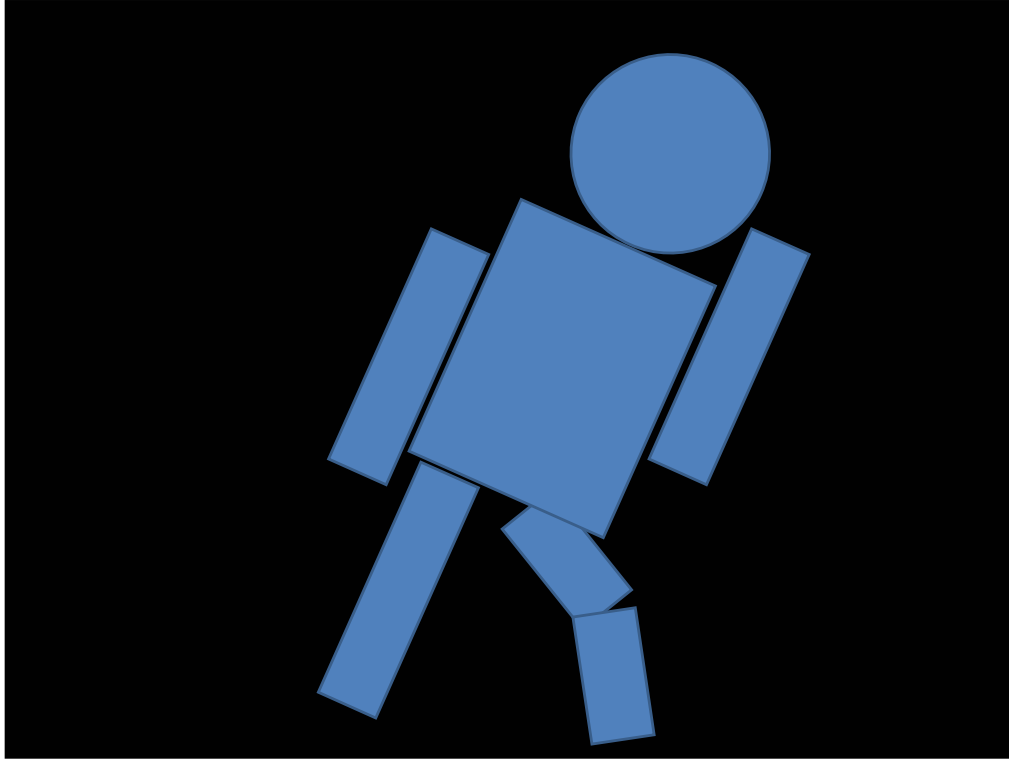
On the other hand, there are others who neglect their physical nature and environment and involve themselves totally with religious dogmas. These people may become superstitious or fanatical and very aggressive in defence of their beliefs and may be careless and neglectful of their physical health and comfort. The resulting ill-health and discomfort then becomes an obstacle in the way of their achieving their goals.



Only a moderate approach satisfies both sides of man's nature and makes him the well-balanced, useful and noble creature which he is meant to be.



In the whole of Creation we find that everything is somehow linked and related to everything else. It is like the human body which consists of different links and organs.



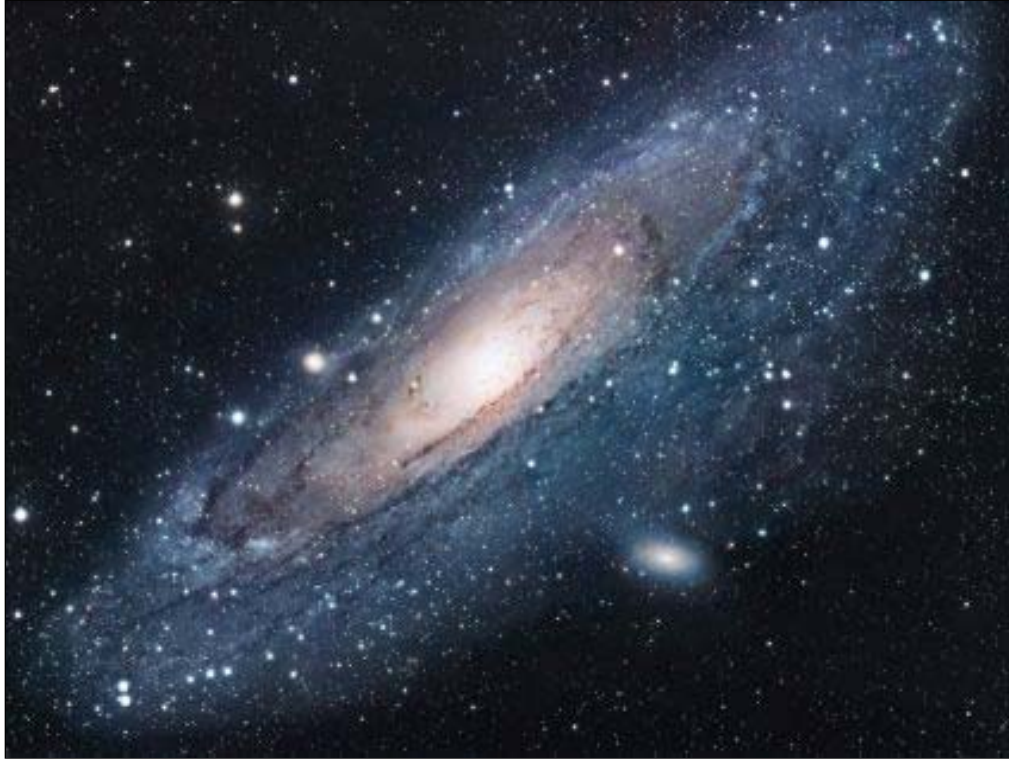
If one link or organ suffers the whole body suffers. If one unit or organ is missing, the body becomes incomplete. So the world of nature can also suffer or becomes incomplete when the various elements are abused or destroyed.



For example, flora and fauna. Each of these two groups use certain elements of nature to survive and each group also produces elements, which are essential for the life of the other.



In other words, the growth and development of the vegetable world are impossible without animals and the maintenance of animal life is inconceivable without the cooperation of the vegetable kingdom. The relationship is the same among all elements of nature.



Every part of the universe is interlinked with other parts by strong ties. There can be no imbalance or slackening whatsoever.



Nature is subject to an absolute organization, to determined laws, to a complete order and finished design, from which it will never depart. From the smallest invisible atom up to the large bodies of the sun or other great stars, their arrangement, composition, form and movement are all in the highest degree of organization and under one law. Similarly, mankind as a creation of God also fits into this interrelated cycle of nature and is intended to exist in harmony with his environment and everything else in the Universe.



For instance, few people can fail to be impressed and filled with awe when confronted with the many beautiful colours and perfumes of flowers in a garden



Or when viewing a vast natural landscape from a high vantage point. In these instances, people feel relaxed and are at one with nature and humbled by the power and majesty of creation spread out before them.



At these times, man's spirit can soar and it is easy to feel, practice and develop qualities such as peace, love, kindness, generosity, etc.

When man is in harmony with nature and without stress, these spiritual virtues can develop unhindered.



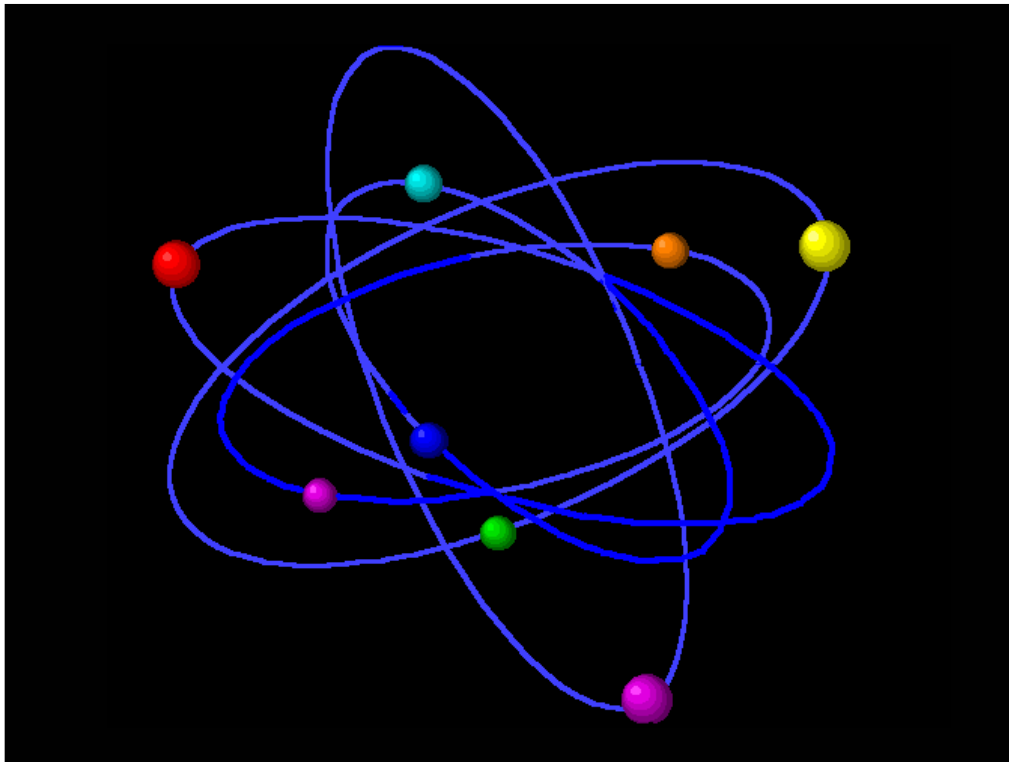
In such circumstances, man's spiritual nature comes to the fore and it is easy to reflect on the fact that the source of everything physical that mankind possesses is the very soil that he walks upon. In the great cycle of nature everything either comes out of the soil or is nourished by something else that does.



Nature itself, has no intelligence, no will. For instance, the nature of fire is to burn, water to flow, the sun to radiate, vapour to rise. They do these things without will or intelligence. They are compelled. There are no voluntary movements except those of animals and, above all, those of man.



Man has the power to control nature or his physical surroundings. Nature is inert, whereas man is progressive. Man is able to resist and oppose nature because he discovers the constitution of things, and through this he commands the forces of nature. All the inventions he has made are due to this discovery.



Everything in the contingent world is made of many varied atoms, and its existence is dependent on the composition of these. But when the order is deranged, decomposition and disintegration occurs. Then that thing ceases to exist. This estrangement and alienation lead to disturbance and annihilation



Although mankind is part of nature and reliant upon it for his physical survival, this free will and power to control it and change it gives him a tremendous responsibility towards maintaining the balance in the cycle of nature. Mankind should respect nature and according to his spiritual capacity concern himself with preserving it.



Yet mankind has become arrogant and neglectful and is wantonly destroying the very sources of his prosperity, wealth and advancement, power and even his very survival. That is he has rejected his responsibility towards his natural environment and is destroying his environment through greed. He is ultimately destroying his spiritual being and inner happiness.



How often have we observed that the more a person has, the more he craves for more, no matter what unscrupulous means it takes to get it. When he gets more, the less he wants to share and the more fearful he is of losing his possessions or power. Whereas the most generous, happy and spiritual people are often those who are materially poor.



Material wealth alone can only produce temporary happiness; while the real happiness of man is the result of good attitudes and virtues which are part of his spiritual being. These include love, wisdom, intellectual perceptions, scientific discoveries, justice, equity, truthfulness, benevolence, courage, respect for the rights of others, honouring agreements, wishing the good of all, the guidance and education of all nations and races.

Rank	Country	Military Expenditures (<u>USD</u>)	Date of information
—	World Total	1,470,000,000,000	2008
—	NATO Total	1,049,875,309,000	
1	United States	651,163,000,000	2009
—	European Union Total	312,259,000,000	2008-2009
2	People's Republic of China	70,411,404,000	2009
3	France	67,148,300,000	2008-2009
4	United Kingdom	61,472,400,000	2009-2010
5	Japan	48,860,000,000	2008
6	Germany	45,930,000,000	2008
7	Italy	40,050,000,000	2008
8	Russian Federation	39,600,000,000	2009
9	India	32,700,000,000	2009-2010
10	Saudi Arabia	31,050,000,000	2008

Source: Wikipedia

Let us consider what is presently happening. The situation has become so grave that the whole world is worried and concerned. Yet this same world has become so obsessed with obtaining maximum economic growth and wealth, instead of the optimum use of natural resources that it is seemingly too difficult to change these old habits in order to adopt new ones.

There are still some
26,000
nuclear warheads
in the world, enough to
destroy civilization many times over and
destroy most life on earth.



Nuclear weapons make humans
an endangered species.

Man's greed influences
him to regard any other
course as a sacrifice of his
needs. Individuals are not
concerned about their
fellow citizens of the world
or about the future.

More than 95% of all nuclear weapons are in the arsenals of the US and Russia.



They claim that today they have to survive and tomorrow is for the people of tomorrow to deal with.

The average nuclear weapon in the US arsenal is approximately eight times more powerful than the nuclear bomb that destroyed Hiroshima, immediately killing some 90,000 people.



Some have even convinced themselves that there is not going to be any tomorrow so they are at liberty to take whatever they can for today.

There are currently nine countries with nuclear weapons (US, Russia, UK, France, China, Israel, India, Pakistan and North Korea).



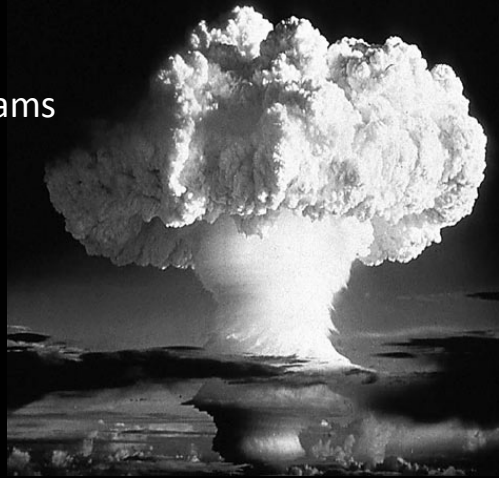
This pessimism and sense of futility and selfishness reflects man's wrong attitude towards nature, others, himself and towards life in general

The 1970 Non-Proliferation Treaty, ratified by nearly every country in the world, requires the nuclear weapons states to engage in good faith negotiations for nuclear disarmament.



so he enters into a vicious circle - an attitude which in turn is strongly influenced by the effect the world he has manipulated is having on his own spiritual development.

There are up to
2,000,000 kilograms
of Highly Enriched
Uranium (HEU) in global
stockpiles, and it takes
just 15-24 kilograms
for a nuclear weapon.



There are 28 countries with at least one bomb's worth of HEU and 12 countries with at least 20 bombs' worth.

As mankind neglects and destroys his environment so he destroys the conditions in which it is possible for his spiritual nature to thrive

The US has spent more than

5.5 trillion USD

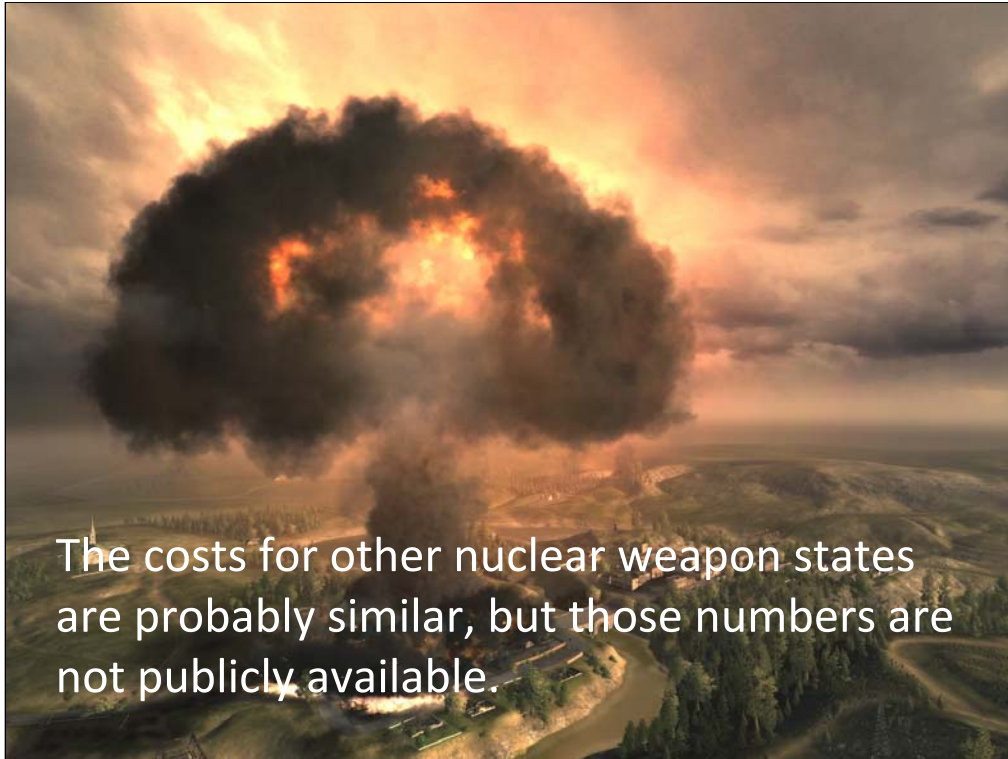
in developing their nuclear
arsenal and France has

spent about 1.5 trillion USD.

- And these numbers do not include the
costs of testing, fissile material
production, storage and disposal.



and he becomes alienated
and depressed and his
spiritual development is
retarded.



The costs for other nuclear weapon states are probably similar, but those numbers are not publicly available.

The situation has become so bad that mankind no longer has to look into the future and predict the results of his actions - the devastation is with us here and now.



The water, land and air which sustain life on this planet are contaminated by oil slicks, the continuous burning of fossil fuels, the poisoning of the atmosphere by various gases, the dumping of chemicals or nuclear wastes in the sea or on the land,



the increase of garbage and solid wastes, a problem which even recycling has failed to solve and the poisoning of our food by the indiscriminate use of chemicals in their production.



Global warming is only one major result that we can anticipate and try to understand. There are many other chronic consequences which we may not realise or we may fear so much and are ignorant of how to deal with them so we choose to ignore them.

Britain will take back toxic waste

July 19, 2009

More than 1,400 tonnes of toxic waste that was illegally shipped

by Miles Erwin

A south American country earlier this year, was destined for plastic recycling factories.

But port officials found up to 80 of the containers that came from Felixstowe were packed with trash – ranging from chemical toilet seats to rotting food and used syringes.

Plans are now being made to bring the rubbish back, although the process could take months, the Environment Agency said.

Those responsible could face prosecution, the Environment Agency warned.

'Where the Environment Agency detects or is made aware of the illegal export of waste, it works with all relevant partner authorities to ensure

the environmentally sound management of any illegal shipments – including the possible return of wastes to the UK,' a government spokesman said.

'If any company is found to have contravened the strict controls on the export of waste the Environment Agency will not hesitate to take enforcement action.'

Brazil made the request for Britain to be 'repatriated' with its rubbish on Thursday.

Brazil is not the rubbish dump of the world?

not a big rubbish dump of the world,' said Roberto Messias, president of the Brazilian

Environment Agency. He has fined the import companies involved in the shipments and said it was 'difficult to believe' they were innocent of any wrongdoing.



Some countries create rigid laws to deal with environmental wastes but only for their own benefit. Industrialists simply trade and export some of these wastes out of their own region and dump them into the sea or in the territories of weaker, poorer nations. These may accept the situation because they are either ignorant of the consequences or desperate for foreign exchange to buy food and the necessities for bare survival.

July 30, 2009

Long-buried poisons were unleashed

1934 - Corby Steel Works, Northamptonshire, opens. The 680-acre site is one of the largest such sites in western Europe.

1980 - The steelworks close with the loss of 10,000 jobs. A major clean-up operation of demolition, excavation and redevelopment begins.

1985 - Toxic material that had been buried underground when the works were in operation is moved with dangerous results. The 'wet waste' is transported in open-backed lorries to sealed containers. It is ingested by pregnant women. Some children conceived in the next 14 years are born with abnormalities.

1990 - Mothers of two of the victims meet by chance in a Leeds hospital while their sons have corrective surgery for similar deformities. A campaign to prove the abnormalities are not just a coincidence begins.

2000 - A study by Kettering Health Authority finds a statistically significant cluster of birth deformities in children born to others from Corby between 1989 and 1998. Birth-defect rates are more than three times those in surrounding area. The two families are soon joined by 16 others.

July 2009 - Families of the 16 children win their battle to hold the council liable for their abnormalities, after a court case lasting nearly six months. They could now receive up to £8million in compensation.

Young people die of cancer or heart disease or may be hospitalised as a result of dangerous chemicals which they have ingested, digested, inhaled or absorbed. Irresponsible and/or ignorant industrialists dump hazardous wastes into water, on land or into the air and for the sake of a few extra dollars hurt hundreds of people.

1 child dies every 5 seconds as a result of hunger & Malnutrition

- 700 every hour
- 16 000 each day
- 6 million each year - 60% of all child deaths (2002-2008 estimates).

A child in Sierra Leone, which has the world's highest child mortality rate (262 in 2007) is almost 100 times more likely to die than one born in Sweden (with a rate of 3).

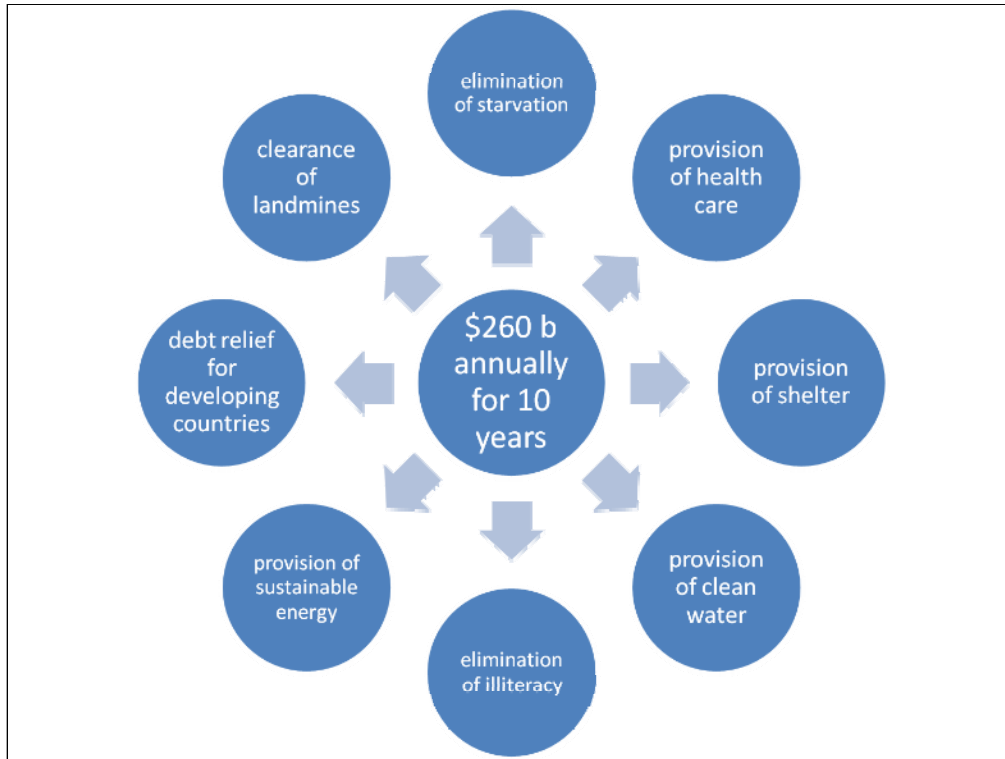
Every 3 seconds a child dies of hunger, disease or malnutrition

Source: UNICEF/FAO

Every 3 seconds a child dies of hunger, disease or malnutrition and yet every single day over 4 billion U.S dollars are spent on war and approximately 4 billion US dollars are spent on creating weapons which may be deterrents to war.

<u>World</u> Military Expenditures 2008	= USD 1,470,000,000,000
FAO annual budget \approx US\$382.85 million	\approx 0.0026% WME
WHO annual budget \approx US\$2,113.5 million	\approx 0.014% WME
UNEP annual budget \approx US\$119.5 million 2006-2007	\approx 0.0008% WME
FAO + WHO + UNEP budget \approx US\$2,616M	\approx 0.018% WME

This must surely be considered a misuse and mismanagement of the world's wealth and resources.



To put this into perspective the price of global elimination of starvation, provision of health care, provision of shelter and clean water, elimination of illiteracy, provision of sustainable energy, debt relief for developing countries, clearance of landmines and more has been estimated to be about 260 billion USD annually for 10 years.



We have the example of the vast oil slick and the burning of hundreds of oil wells in the Persian Gulf area. This could have a devastating effect on our weather pattern and the survival of vegetation, fish and other marine organisms.

It is true that this was the result of war and was unforeseen. But it did happen and may happen again and again and mankind together with all life-forms on earth must suffer the consequences.



Like many other activities in this world the victims are often the poorer peoples and nations; but the populations of developed countries are also becoming victims, with intangible effects.



The increase in disease and sickness, whether physical or psychological or spiritual are evidence of this.



The seemingly affluent, vast, sprawling cities of the industrial world, full of fear and hostility are just as squalid and deprived as the shanty towns and refugee camps of lesser developed nations.



The fact is that mankind is at war with his environment and is contributing to its destruction in every major industrial city in the world. Most of the people of the world are willingly taking part in this criminal venture, some because of greed and selfishness, others because of their dire need to survive. The cycle of nature has become unbalanced and has entered a dangerous downward spiral. Spiritual values of love and kindness have been perverted to imply sex and corruption.



The environment is no longer conducive to spiritual development as mankind's attitudes lean more and more towards materialistic and individualistic sentiments such as greed, which in turn compounds the situation and necessitates more destruction in order to satisfy the unquenchable desire.



Long ago mankind developed his consciousness of the family unit and the rules which govern the relationships between the family members. Whether these rules were good or bad they kept the family unit together. Then man, within his family associated with his neighbours and fellow country men who were dependent upon him as he was on them. So he developed a sense of national pride and brotherhood which would urge him to be concerned and to give and develop a close relationship with his fellow citizens, again maintaining harmony within his environment.



Today we can say that the world has shrunk due to the advancement of communications and transportation, so now members of families may be scattered in different places around the world. Neighbours may be divided by highways and busy roads and citizens find themselves seeking their own self interests and ignoring others.



People often work long hours during the day and are hypnotised by T.V. during the evening hours. They may feel, they have an inner peace as they remain isolated in the cubic concrete prisons which they call their secure homes, yet they seem unhappy, lonely, shy, insecure and suspicious of others.



Today, we refer to the world as a global village. Nations and peoples have become more dependent on each other than ever before and the survival of the planet may depend solely on cooperation between all nations.



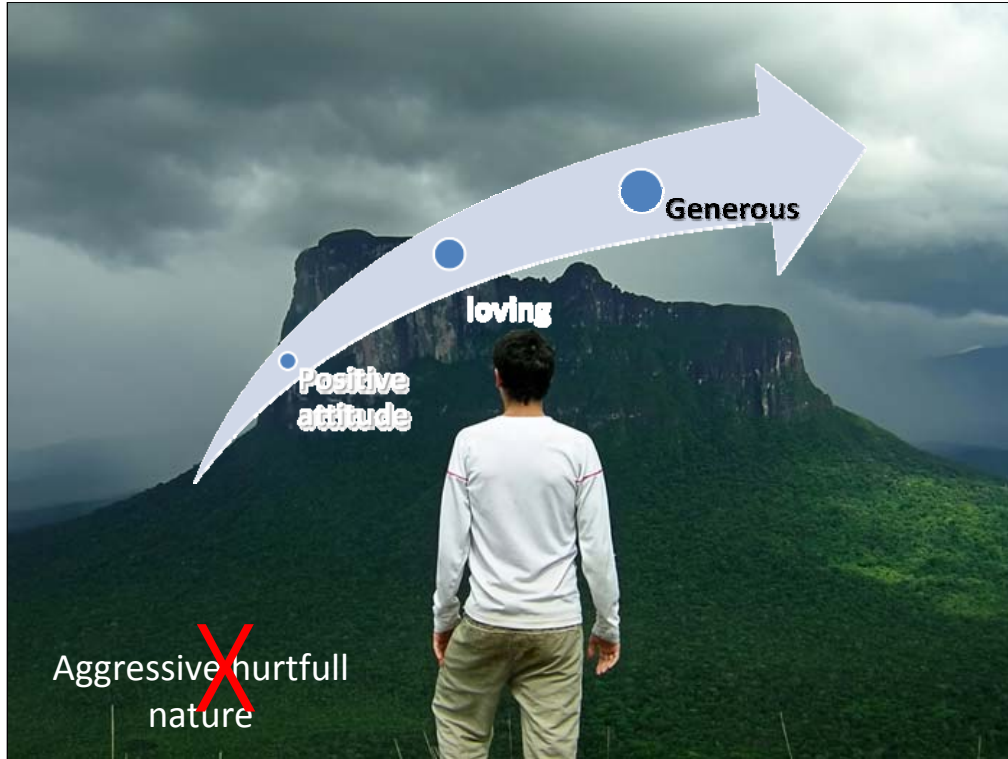
This co-operation will be difficult to establish so long as individuals within these nations seek only their own self interest and isolate themselves, losing trust in others and continuously violating the rights of other people.



Perhaps the solution to the problems lies within each individual. Any change in the situation for the better, has to begin with individuals who are educated to be more aware of their spiritual capacity and so change their attitude towards their environment and towards their fellow men.



There is a need to develop the spiritual side of man's nature for only then can the downward spiral of the imbalance of nature be halted and gradually reversed.



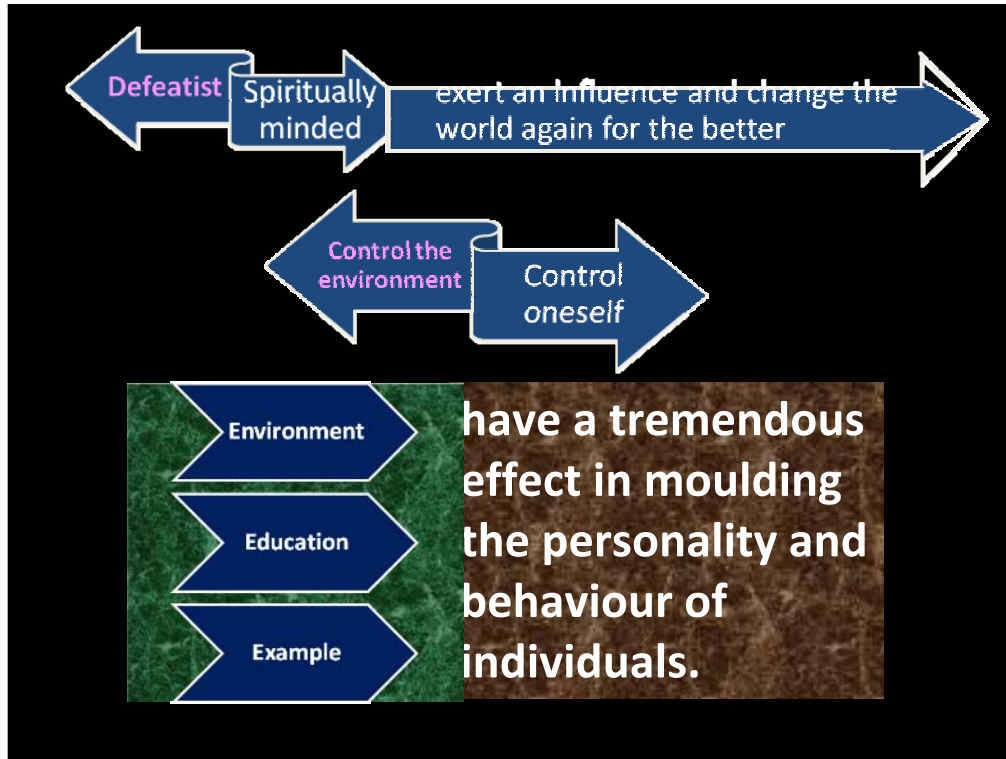
When a person changes his attitude towards himself and develops his loving, generous, gentle nature instead of his aggressive hurtful side, then his attitude towards his environment will change and also towards his fellow men.



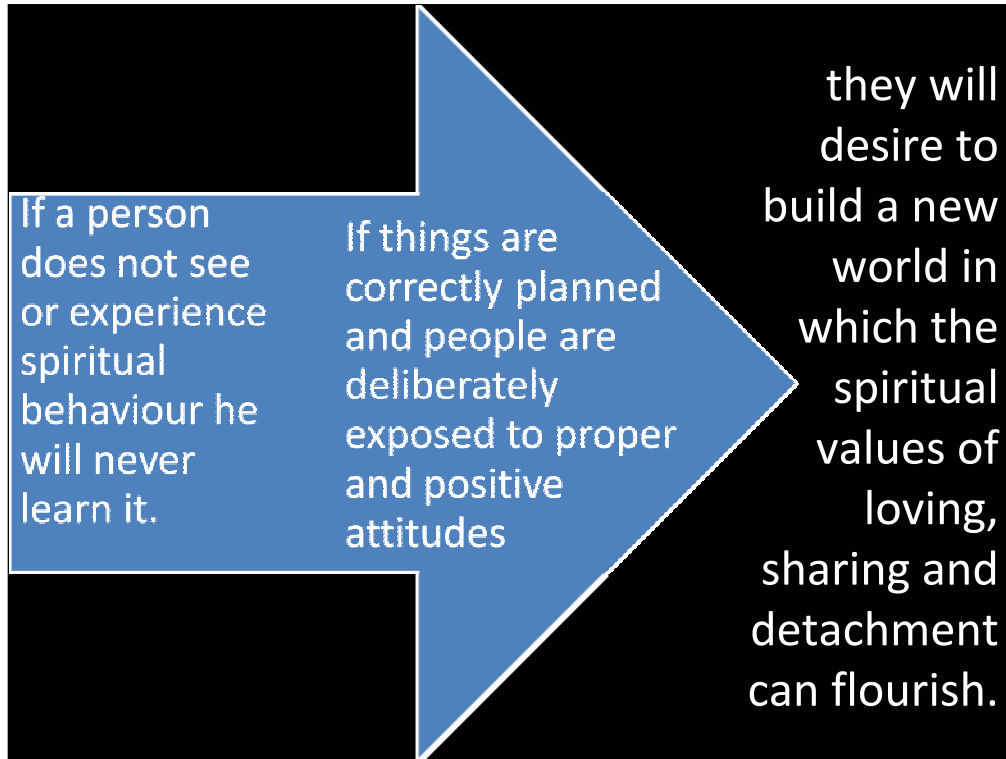
He will desire to give and to share and want all mankind to have enough to live and be content and he will be able to institute the systems and institutions, first within his own community and then on a worldwide basis, which are necessary for this to happen.



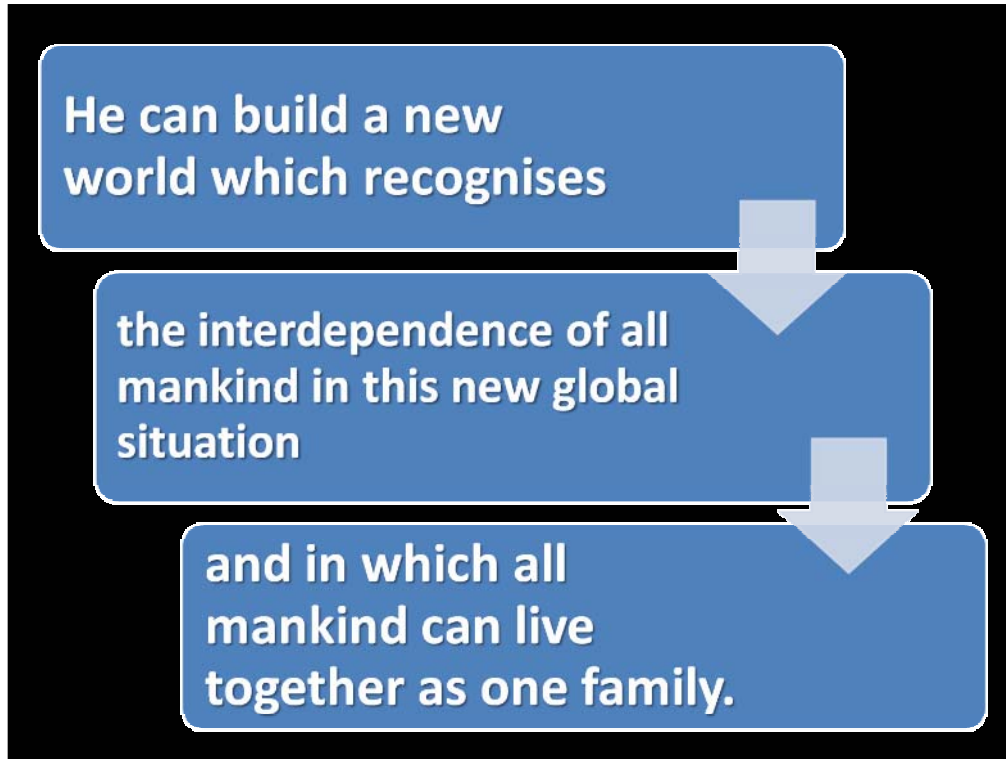
Thus, as we have seen, mankind has two natures, but he has neglected his spiritual nature and concentrated on his physical nature. In doing so he has caused his environment to be destroyed. This in turn has hindered the development of his spiritual nature still further, thus swamping him with unhappiness and despair.



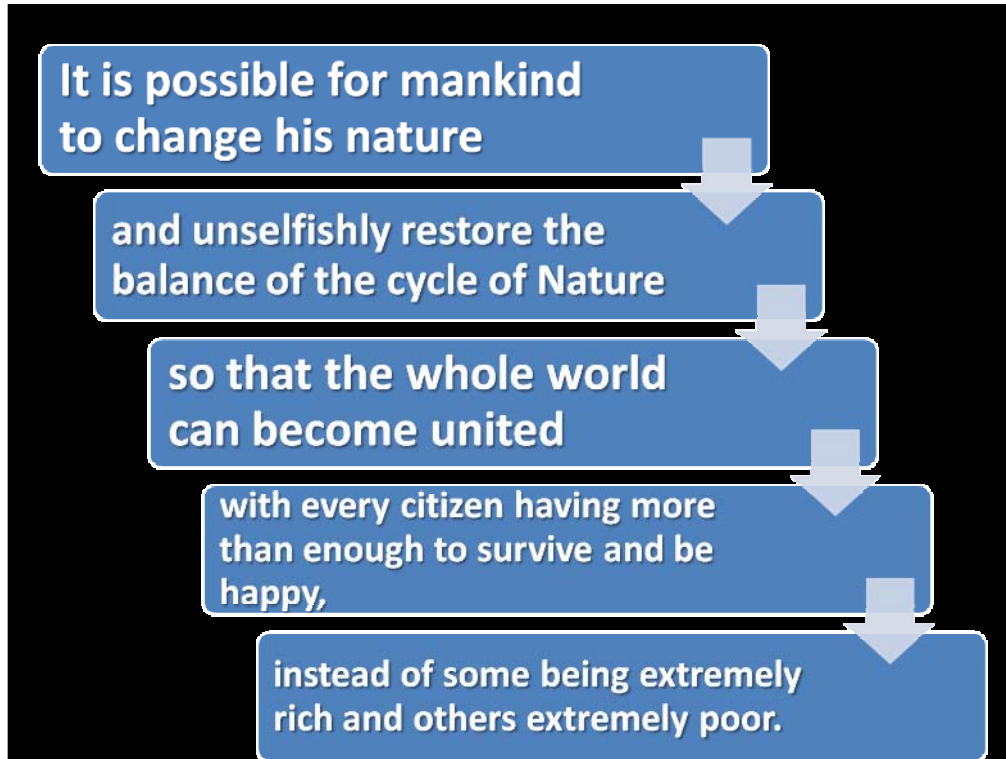
Yet it is still possible to reverse the process. It is still possible for spiritually-minded individuals to exert an influence and change the world again for the better. It serves no useful purpose to be defeatist and contend that human nature cannot change. Just as mankind can control his environment, so he can also control himself. Environment, education and example, have a tremendous effect in moulding the personality and behaviour of individuals.



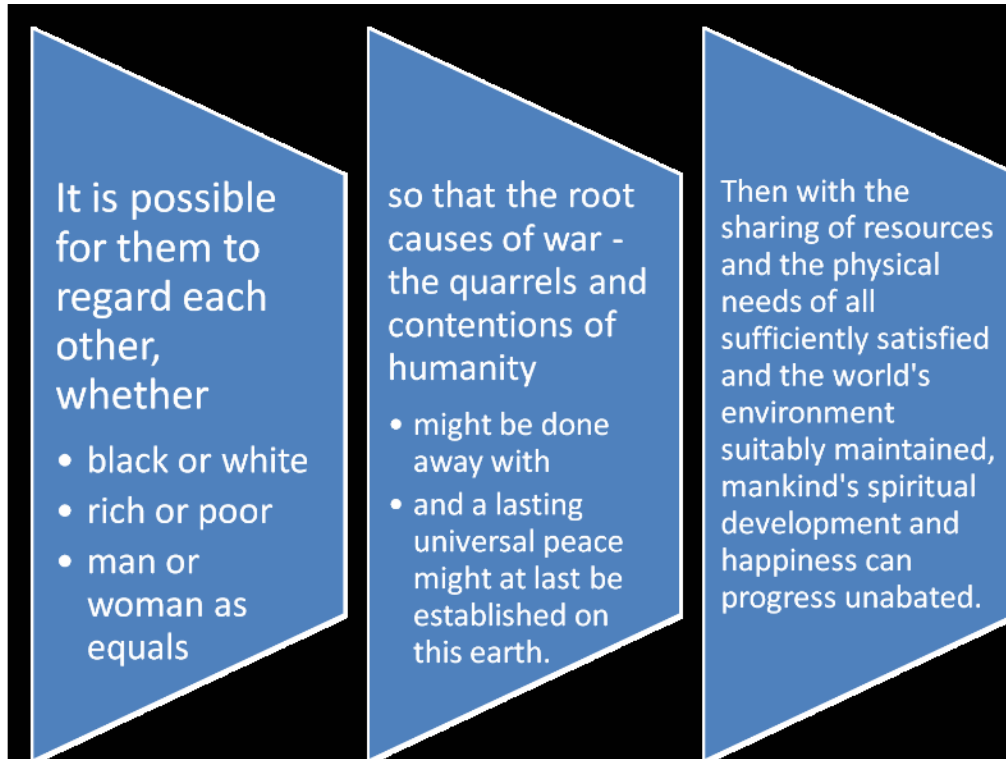
If a person does not see or experience spiritual behaviour he will never learn it. So if these things are correctly planned and people are deliberately exposed to these attitudes, they will desire to build a new world in which the spiritual values of loving, sharing and detachment can flourish.



He can build a new world which recognises the interdependence of all mankind in this new global situation and in which all mankind can live together as one family.



It is possible for mankind to change his nature and unselfishly restore the balance of the cycle of nature so that the whole world can become united, with every citizen having more than enough to survive and be happy, instead of some being extremely rich and others extremely poor.



It is possible for them to regard each other, whether black or white, rich or poor, man or woman as equals, so that the root causes of war - the quarrels and contentions of humanity might be done away with and a lasting universal peace might at last be established on this earth. Then with the sharing of resources and the physical needs of all sufficiently satisfied and the world's environment suitably maintained, mankind's spiritual development and happiness can progress unabated.