

Foundations of Earth Sharing Why It Matters:

By Lawrence Bosek

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Many notable people support sharing as part of the roots for peaceful sustainability.

Sharing is a virtuous fundamental principle taught among civilized cultures. Parents often teach their children to share among siblings and schools typically utilize shared resources. Sharing is inherent as well as learned and therefore is integrated into society at differing levels.

“We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools.”
—Martin Luther King, Jr.

While sharing is a widely respected value, little is heard about concepts of Earth sharing in the various classrooms we sat in growing up, which is unfortunate considering many of the leaders, shapers, and framers of our civilization we learned about also promoted the idea. From Moses to Jefferson to Lincoln to Gandhi, and many in between, Earth sharing has been praised and can be looked at as a foundational part of our evolving existence.

“Your land must not be sold on a permanent basis, because you do not own it; it belongs to the creator, and you are like foreigners who are allowed to make use of it. Thus for every piece of your property, you are to provide for the redemption of the land.”

—Moses

Like the shining sun and clean breathable air, we all have a birth right to the land and resources of the Earth. Nature is a gift for all. We all need land and natural resources to survive. The resources of nature, such as the sun, air, and water, are free for all to use. Even though we live in a vast expanse of nature, sharing resources is key to our sustainable survival. We all have the same basic needs.

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth.”
—Jesus

Resources are typically owned by powerful groups such as corporations and governments who continually hoard and profit at the expense of the people and other inhabitants of the Earth. In essence, *we are all forced to labor for the landowners to buy back what is already ours to begin with.*

“I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible.”

—Gandhi

The restricting of land and resources contributes to much of the suffering and poverty in society. Marginalized people are among those who Jesus was referring when he talked about inheriting the kingdom.

“The meek shall inherit the Earth.”

—Jesus

Perhaps these statements sound radical as they are likely in opposition to what many of us have been taught to believe in a system of capitalistic takers although they are sentiments shared even among revolutionaries such as the American Founding Fathers.

“Whenever there is in any country, uncultivated lands and unemployed poor, it is clear that the laws of property have been so far extended as to violate natural right. The earth is given as a common stock for man to labor and live on. If, for the encouragement of industry we allow it to be appropriated, we must take care that other employment be furnished to those excluded from the appropriation.”

—Thomas Jefferson

Properly maintaining and caring for our supply of basic resource needs is also crucial. Distinguishing between what we create and what is provided helps clarify methods of sharing in peaceful sustainability.

“There are two kinds of property. Firstly, natural property, or that which comes to us from the Creator of the universe—such as the earth, air, water. Secondly, artificial or acquired property—the invention of men. In the natural property all individuals have legitimate birthrights. Men did not make the earth. It is the value of the improvement only, and not the earth itself, that is individual property... Man did not make the earth, and, though he had a natural right to occupy it, he had no right to locate as his property in perpetuity any part of it; neither did the Creator of the earth open a land-office, from whence the first title-deeds should issue. Whence then, arose the idea of landed property? I answer as before, that when cultivation began the idea of landed property began with it, from the impossibility of separating the improvement made by cultivation from the earth itself, upon which that improvement was made.”

—Thomas Paine

In the original founding document, the Articles of Confederation, the framers implemented Earth sharing concepts as the law of the land. The first accepted tax was a land value tax based on Geoist Earth sharing principles.

“The whole problem is the structure of our economy which has been more oriented at increasing rents than increasing productivity and real economic growth...But a tax on land...rents would actually address some of the underlying problems. This is an idea that Henry George had more than 100 years ago but the analysis that I have done says it would actually go one step beyond Henry George. Henry George argued for a land tax because it was non-distortionary but this analysis says that a land tax actually improves the productivity of the economy because you encourage people to invest in productive capital rather than into rent generating wealth and the result of that shift in the composition of savings toward more productive investment leads to a more productive economy and leads to a more equal society.”

—Joseph Stiglitz

They understood, like many other influential people, that properly sharing the land and natural resources is essential for a prosperous and equitable society. This concept is often seen as taboo or not taken seriously in academic or political circles even though economists, sociologists, and policymakers understand the importance.

“Ground rents are a species of revenue which the owner, in many cases, enjoys without any care or attention of his own. Ground rents are, therefore, perhaps a species of revenue which can best bear to have a peculiar tax imposed upon them.”

—Adam Smith

Arguments abound about why these constructs changed when the secretly revised Constitution was written favoring the wealthy land owners and aristocracy, or the 1% of the time. Surely, greed and corruption were factors to contend with even back then.

“Our legislators are all landholders, and they are not yet persuaded that all taxes are finally paid by the land.”

—Benjamin Franklin

Greedy plutocratic influence reigns still today. Neo-feudalistic behavior threatens our resources, communities, and evolutionary human bonds. Thankfully, the Constitution is a living document and can be changed with the times. We must work together in unification to make the necessary changes.

“Earth provides enough to satisfy every man’s need, but not every man’s greed”

—Gandhi

Of course, Earth sharing is not favorable to greedy corporate profiteering and the propaganda is thick in its opposition. Furthermore, wars have become glorified business-as-usual and access to resources are among the root causes for the large scale violence across the globe.

“The equal right of all to the use of land is as clear as their equal right to breathe the air—it is a right proclaimed by the fact of their existence. For we cannot suppose that some have a right to be in this world, and others no right.”

—Henry George

Living in an unclean caged home environment is as unhealthy as it is unsustainable to continually release pollution into our land, water, and air. Quality of life also includes the quality of resources and access to them.

“The land, the earth God gave man for his home, sustenance, and support, should never be the possession of any man, corporation, society, or unfriendly government, any more than the air or water.”

—Abraham Lincoln

Polluting the Earth and hoarding resources are clearly not in the interest of sustainability within a community. Living peacefully with each other is the goal, which also includes the merging of science and spiritual concepts such as compassion and empathy along with sharing.

“The human failing I would most like to correct is aggression. It may have had survival advantage in caveman days, to get more food, territory or partner with whom to reproduce, but now it threatens to destroy us all. A major nuclear war would be the end of civilization, and maybe the end of the human race. The quality I would most like to magnify is empathy. It brings us together in a peaceful, loving state.”

—Stephen Hawking

A renewal of that which is sacred is happening. We must also remember that our actions affect others. Personal self-governance is also a foundational part of a sustainable society. Sharing works best when it is not forced, but as a learned understanding.

“Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every hillside, every valley, every clearing and wood, is holy in the memory and experience of my people.”

—Chief Seattle

Realizing further that we are all on the same team is one of humanity's awakening moments into a new paradigm of living on the planet together, compassionately, in shared peace and prosperity.

“We see ourselves as responsible members in our community and that includes the planet and that also includes the people.”

—Jill Stein

Sharing is also universally logical.

“The miracle is this: The more we share, the more we have.”

—Leonard Nimoy

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