

WORLD GOODWILL: AN INTERVIEW WITH SATISH KUMAR, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27TH, 2002.

WG: Satish Kumar is the editor of the highly respected magazine *Resurgence*, which is quite difficult to sum up briefly. For example, you could say it explores options for lifestyles which respects ecological limits and the appropriate scale for communities and technologies. But that doesn't really do justice to its unique combination of ingredients with poetry, beautiful illustrations and photography and profound thinking all skilfully blended together.

He is also the programme director of the internationally famous Schumacher College, which runs short courses on topics as diverse as *Spirit in Nature*, *Permaculture*, *Biomimicry and Sustainable Living*, and *Designing a Sustainable School Environment*, given by such well known thinkers and activists as Jane Goodall, Rupert Sheldrake and Jonathan Porritt, along with many other progressive thinkers.

He was also instrumental in setting up The Small School in Hartland, Devon. He was born in India and the extraordinary paths that has led him to his current home in Devon are recounted in his autobiography *No Destination*. He has recently brought out another book *You Are Therefore I Am, A Declaration of Dependence*, which sums up the influences that have led to his world view of reverential ecology. We are very grateful that he has been able to make time in his schedule to share his thoughts with World Goodwill on this and other topics. So welcome Satish Kumar.

SK: Pleasure.

WG: I'll just head straight into the questions for you. The world view of reverential ecology, which is expressed in your books is interesting in that, as far as I can see at least, it offers no detailed prescription of how to move from our current society to a more ideal one. Rather it is essentially a set of values which you are inviting people to take on board which will then permeate their practice. Why have you chosen this particular way of approaching the issue?

SK: Because, being prescriptive and telling people what to do, is not my way of working. People have to find their own path. What you can do is to help them, inspire them with some indicators, some ideas, some thoughts, but people need to be finding their own path. And, therefore, particularly in reverential ecology you have to have reverence and respect for individuals to find their own path and their own wisdom rather than thinking that they don't understand, they have no wisdom, I have to tell them what to do. So being prescriptive is not my way. I hope that people can find their own way. In reverential ecology, we need to move in that way because at the moment generally, governments and even environmental organisations tell people, do this, do that, don't do this, don't do that. Because they have a kind of utilitarian approach to nature, they have a utilitarian approach to people and I'm trying to move away from this utilitarian approach. Let us not look at nature as if it is useful and beneficial resource to human beings, therefore we must protect it. That's a kind of selfish ecology. In a reverential ecology you see nature as sacred, and in that sense you also see the sacredness in human beings. So it's very much in keeping with reverential ecology that you don't tell people do this, do that, don't this, don't do that.

WG: So what you are saying is the means and the ends have to be the same in effect? Your actual philosophy has to be imbued with the values you are trying to impress upon people or otherwise it won't work.

SK: Exactly. In fact in my view the means and ends are totally integrated. There is no distinction between means and ends because ends are already embodied in your means. While you are using your means to an end, those ends also become means to a further end. Because ends are never there as a final goal or final stage of arrival. Life is a journey and it's an endless journey. It's a quest, like T. S. Eliot said, that the only thing we can hope to attain is humility and humility is endless. In the same way, a spiritual journey is endless, and therefore means and ends are totally integrated in that endless journey. The meaning of this journey is to find a sense of belonging to the Earth, to nature, to people and to communities. That sense of belonging is not something you can say, "now I have a sense of belonging I have arrived there, and everything's finished." No. It is not like that. It is an ongoing discovery. It's a continuous journey.

WG: That, presumably, is why you called your autobiography *No Destination*.

SK: Absolutely.

WG: Some of the values that are central to reverential ecology, as I understand it, are gratitude and humility, and *intimacy*. Could you say something about how intimacy can be replenished or revived in our lives, given that nowadays, at least in Western society, people are almost terrified of intimacy both with other people and also with the Earth?

SK: Yes, intimacy is a very beautiful word and we need it. When we are looking at the world and we see it whole and find our place in it and develop a sense of belonging, then intimacy unfolds. You cannot develop a sense of belonging without intimacy. We are intimately connected with the place and with the natural world. For our intimacy we need to know where the food is coming from and where our air is coming from and the water is coming from. We need to experience intimacy in order to experience love which we have between people and between people and nature. Love is a very intimate thing. Fortunately this intimate connectivity with people and nature is also the ultimate connection. So intimate and ultimate are like means and ends. The ultimate is integrated with the intimate and the intimate is our ultimate; there is no distinction between intimacy and our ultimate vision of the whole Earth.

WG: That is like a little motto you've got there, "intimacy and ultimate". The other one that comes out that I've seen you use on a number of occasions is "soil, soul society". I'd say that could be a motto for reverential ecology. Could you say a little bit about how these need to be replenished?

SK: To start with, the reason I presented this new trinity of soil, soul, society was that quite often in our human psyche we tend to think in threes. So the Christian trinity is the classic and that's a trinity with a big T. And that has inspired many, many millions of people around the world. But I feel that for the age of ecology we need a trinity which embodies spiritual dimension, ecological dimension and social dimension. The Christian trinity was absolutely right and it has a very spiritual depth, but it does not include somehow, at least overtly, the social and the ecological dimension, although in spirituality everything is included. So in order to make it explicit, I thought that soil, soul, society will make it clear that our connection with nature, our connection with human beings and our connection with the cosmic forces - spirituality - are interconnected.

And then you can see the French trinity of *égalité*, *fraternité* and *liberté*: that trinity does not include the spiritual dimension and ecological dimension. The new age trinity of mind, body, spirit does not include the social dimension and the ecological dimension. So for our time, for our movement for ecology and spirituality and holistic thinking, we need a new trinity to give us a handle on what are we talking about. We are not talking about just take care of the earth, we are not talking just take care of the soul, we are not just thinking about go and meditate and do yoga and personal development and then everything will be alright. We are talking of a very holistic approach and that includes taking care of the soil, taking care of the soul, taking care of social justice and human communities, and they are all integrated.

We have to do all those three at the same time. You *have* to use the earth, because life nourishes life. So without taking something from the earth, like trees, we cannot build houses, without taking cotton, we cannot have our clothes, without food, we cannot survive and therefore we *need* to take something from the earth, but just taking is not enough. We have to return, we have to replenish what we have taken, so replenishing the earth, planting trees, making compost, cleaning the water, returning everything back to the earth. Replenishment of soil is the important thing.

In the same way, replenishment of the soul is also very important, because we use our selves, we act, we use our intellect, we use our emotions, we use our mind, we use our bodies, when we are talking we are using our self, when we are writing we are using our self. So we need to replenish ourselves and so we go for a retreat, we go for a walk, we have solitude, we have meditation, we have silence, we have fasting, we do many, many things to replenish ourselves. It's no good just trying to save the world and then you are burnt out, and you are frustrated, and you are unhappy and you are unfulfilled. So that's no good. So replenishment of the soul is as important as replenishment of the soil.

Then we are not only connected with the natural world and with our inner world. We are also members of our human community. We live in a community and we have to love our neighbour, we have to take care of our children, we have to take care of elderly people, we have to take care of the sick, the poor, and the deprived, we have to take care of the Third World, we have to make sure that there's no injustice, there's no unfair trade. In the name of globalisation there's too much unfairness. So bringing that fairness in a fragile world is also very important. So soil, soul, society you replenish all these three and do so every day, not one after another, but together. They are all inter-connected: when you are replenishing the soil, you are also replenishing the soul, because you are one with earth, it's a kind of meditation and when you are taking care of the soul and soil, you are also taking care of the people so it's all integrated but in order to make it a bit more explicit I use the words soil, soul, society.

WG: Education is an area that concerns you greatly, and education that takes place in the Small School and Schumacher college is clearly in a different spirit than in conventional institutions. Could you say briefly how they differ?

SK: The ideas of reverential ecology are at the centre of my vision for a holistic system of education, that we are a part of this integrated whole and not in charge of it, we humans are not a master race, nor a master species and the earth is not there for our benefit. How do you bring in this consciousness and the consciousness that we need to take care of the soil and soul and society in education. What do you do? No good just preaching about it from the pulpit. You have to practise it. You have to live it. Education is a way of imparting and communicating this vision without preaching. At the Small School for example, we have children aged 11 to 16 and the centre of the school is the kitchen. Every day children say, "We have to cook our meal, we have to prepare for each other, where does this food come from? Has it been imported from far, far away? Has it contributed to global warming? Is it genetically engineered? Have they used chemicals and fertilisers and other poisons to grow this food? Has land been taken care of properly? How were the animals treated?"

Sometimes farmers use land and animals as if we are at war with the animals and with the land. So when you are preparing food, food becomes an educational tool, to understand connectivity. Rather than standing in the pulpit and preaching to children that ecology is a good thing, you have to understand where our food is coming from which we are eating. And then you can add to it, as part of education, a garden. Why not grow some of our own vegetables so we can see the seed has gone into the soil and after a few days or a few weeks that seed comes out as a plant and that plant gives flowers and that flower turns into fruit and that fruit goes on our table and the kitchen waste goes back to the earth. So this cycle of life you can learn by experiencing and observing. So our education at the Small School is to practise some of the ideas about which we have been talking and try them out in your own life.

Education can only take place when there is a sense of community in the school. Parents, teachers, children belonging together to a learning community. If the schools are too big, they become institutions, so one of the principles for ecological and spiritual education is that they should be human scale. That's why we called our school the Small School, so that it is not too big it's not institutionalised, it's not bureaucratic, it is run on the principle of community.

So the same thing that we do with children, we do with adults at the Schumacher College.

WG: Do you find it's more difficult, because the adults are already almost conditioned, and less ready to shift their point of view?

SK: It *is* more difficult, but when adults come to Schumacher College they also do cooking, they make compost, they go for field trips, they go out in nature and they learn about spirituality, ecology, sustainability, Gaia and permaculture. New sciences as taught at the College have a very ecological dimension; complexity, chaos, quantum, all these things. So when the adults come in contact with these new paradigms of thinking, and a new world view, and practise it while they are at Schumacher College, then their hearts and minds are touched deeply. After that they can go back to their land, to their communities, to their organisations, schools, universities and businesses, and see if these principles of sustainability, ecology and holistic thinking are applicable to their situation so that some transformation can take place. Transformation is the purpose of

education.

WG: Going back a little bit to the idea of intimacy I noticed in *Resurgence* is the way in which you very often feature craft work. It seems like that's about the idea of becoming intimately involved with the material and crafting it into a work of art, but moreover that's not just a work of art. The crafted object is also useful in everyday life.

SK: The intimacy plays a very important role in everything that I'm talking about. The Small School should be small because then you can have intimacy. If the school is too big, there's no intimacy. In the same way at Schumacher College the maximum number of participants in any course would be no more than 25. This is to maintain that intimacy. So in the same way when you are working in the kitchen preparing food there is an intimate relationship with the food. If you are buying something from the supermarket, then there is a lack of intimacy there. When you are doing gardening, you have intimacy. Similarly craft is one of the best ways of experiencing intimacy. When you take a piece of wood and you turn it into a beautiful chair, you take a lump of clay and you turn it into a beautiful piece of pot, like Bernard Leach, or Hamada did.

WG: But not everybody can do that.

SK: Everybody can do something. As Sri Lankan art historian Coomaraswami said, "An artist is not a special kind of person, but every person is a special kind of artist". It is not that only a few gifted people like Henry Moore and Bernard Leach are artists. In every home we cook - does it matter if these famous chefs can cook wonderful meals. Every one of us can cook good meals, every potter in their intimacy can make a good pot if there's love, there's care in their pots. Every pot can be beautiful in its own way. You don't have to compare. You don't have to think in terms of commercial value. In my philosophy every person is a potential Buddha, they are called bodhisattva; we are all capable of liberation. Every person is a potential great artist. We all have that divine spark in us and therefore we cannot say that somebody else is the only good artist, I can't do it and therefore I give up. No. You go on your journey as Henry Moore and Bernard Leach and any other good artist. You are on your own journey and you make your journey and you are your own standard. You don't compare yourself with somebody else. And therefore every human being should be able to practise, experience that intimacy, that transformation: not only in their lives but also seeing transformation; seeing how a lump of clay is transformed into a beautiful piece of pottery and you see that transformation happening. If clay can be transformed in such a way, I too can be transformed.

WG: That's a wonderful symbol of transformation, self and world, which is all in keeping with the soul, soil, society trinity. I'd like to turn now to time, the way in which we approach time, particularly in the West. In your latest book you spoke of your mother's attitude to time. You said that she felt there was no shortage of it at all and that using a supposedly labour-saving device - the example was a sewing machine - to save time might actually be a mistake. How do you think that this idea can be applied to the ordinary person in the modern world. You know everyone's time is already curtailed by the busyness that pervades society. If I could just give a personal example: the idea of home-made bread strikes me as great, if you had a home-made loaf every week, but I never seem to get round to it. So I think, well maybe if I buy a bread machine, then I would do it. Am I making a mistake there?

SK: Yes, you are. By buying a bread-making machine, you are defeating the purpose because the idea behind making bread is not only to get bread to eat, it's also a spiritual activity. Baking bread is a spiritual activity in the same way as gardening is a spiritual activity or making pottery is a spiritual activity or making a sculpture is a spiritual activity or making a painting is a spiritual meditation. So baking bread is meditation, it is a practice. If you want to quickly bake bread in a machine and then get on with something else, then there's a clash of means and ends again. So the process is as important as the product. Product and process must be integrated. So process of weighing the flour, adding the yeast, adding the water, letting it rise, kneading it, putting it in the tin as the loaves, putting it in the oven, waiting for it, that's all part of meditation, the spiritual practise, and therefore if you have no time to bake bread and no time to live properly then you have no time to change the world. If you are trying to change the world so that people have more time for themselves but you have no time to bake bread, then it is a contradiction in terms. You are trying to be a spiritual person, you have no time to bake bread because you are busy meditating, you are busy doing yoga, you are busy going to spiritual lectures, you are busy reading Bhagavad Gita or the Bible, that's a waste of

time. I think when you are baking bread, that's the Bible in practice. It's better to bake bread than read the Bible. Jesus Christ said that "Here is the bread, this is me, this is my body, this is the real thing". He didn't say "take bible, and this is me", no, he didn't say the bible is my body. He said, bread is my body. So baking bread, doing the garden, having time is spiritual. Time is not linear, time does not start today and finish tomorrow, time is always coming, time is not running out. If you have this idea that I have no time, it's a mistaken notion. You have plenty of time, time is infinite, time is always coming, it's unfolding, it's ever present. Whatever you do time is always there for you. Time offers you more and more. There is an abundance of time. There's infinite time. No shortage of time.

WG: Well, that is almost precisely the opposite to the Western notion of everything has to be done quickly, and as quickly as possible and as efficiently as possible and it's also a very linear concept of time.

SK: The idea that everything has to be done quickly and efficiently is an utilitarian perspective, and a materialistic world view. Whereas what we are talking about is a holistic and spiritual world view, where speed and efficiency are not important; quantity is not so important, quality is important, quality of your being, quality of your work, quality of satisfaction. If after doing whatever work you have done, you have no fulfilment or satisfaction, that aah, what a wonderful pot has been made! If you rush, then it's bad pot with no fulfilment. So you have to give time. There's no more time needed. Everything takes its own time. You don't have to give to a pot or to bread more time than it requires. You don't have to sit there baking whole day bread. No. There is an appropriate time, essential time needed which you have to allow. You aren't thinking about time, you are thinking about bread, you are thinking about kneading. When it is in the oven, it only takes 25 minutes to bake, it doesn't take more than what it takes. So, we have to move from this materialistic perspective to a more holistic and more spiritual perspective where Life is to be lived fully not to be rushed.

WG: You said earlier that time comes in cycles. Do you think it's possible then to actually identify what kind of cycle we're in and where we might be at in a particular cycle, or does that make sense from your point of view?

SK: There are various ways to look at time cycles. You can look at it in a very pragmatic way, like cycle of seasons - so winter and then spring and then summer, then autumn, then winter again. In the same way you can see the cycle of weeks and you can say, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday again. So it's a cycle. Cycle of months, cycle of years, cycle of cycles. But that's a pragmatic way. The other way is in your consciousness, so that time returns, time is there, always coming back, like you put seed in the ground and when the plant grows, in the plant there's a fruit and the fruit has seed again. Where does it come from? Like magic, it's a cycle. So in that way, whatever you are doing, like baking bread, tomorrow or next week, it's the time to bake bread again. Where did time come from? It returns. Like a seed in the fruit, and fruit in the seed, seed can go back into the soil. In this cyclical way of looking at the world, everything is coming back, everything returns. This is the beauty, this is the magic miracle of time that we are experiencing. It's always there. It never ends, it never disappears. Time is always there and time is a divine presence.

WG: And there's always time, if you haven't achieved something at some point, there's always time to go back.

SK: Exactly. If you are writing, like I was writing my book, I wrote it and then I could go back to revise it, there was plenty of time to do it, and I could proof-read it, and then I can read some chapters to people. So there is no shortage of time. When the gods made time, they made plenty of it. So whatever you do, you need to put your attention in that action and not worry about time.

WG: Now, just shifting slightly to reflection on your own spirituality, the spirituality that you present in *You Are Therefore I Am* is one that you say embraces the great diversity of the religious and spiritual side of life. Now you've talked about the way in which gardening and baking bread and educating are all spiritual practices in a sense, they're all forms of meditation. Do you have any formal practises, formal religious practises perhaps from your Jain past, or perhaps from other traditions that you've encountered, that you engage in?

SK: Yes, I do practise meditation, and I do some yoga and I am vegetarian - that's a very important Jain practice, not to eat meat. What I try to do is to live my life with mindfulness, and attention. Paying attention is meditation. There is no distinction between meditation and action. Your whole day, every activity you are performing, should be mindful and you should pay attention and when you are mindful or attentive then you are in a state of meditation. So every activity can be transformed into meditation. Like there's no distinction between ends and means, there is no distinction between action and meditation. It is not just personal action, like baking bread and gardening which is spiritual; politics is also a spiritual practice. Mahatma Gandhi was a politician but his politics was not for any selfish gain. He was not in politics to gain power, personal glory, or a celebrity status or money - nothing. Politics was a service. It was a spiritual practice. Example of Martin Luther King is the same. His politics and campaigning for civil rights was a spiritual practice. So when I walked around the world for peace, or started the Small School, or work at Schumacher College, or edited *Resurgence* magazine, these social activities, and political activities are as much meditation and spiritual practice as baking bread and gardening and sitting cross-legged, closed eyes, meditating in a room or doing yoga. Because these things all have their time and you need to do everything, you can't just say this is spiritual and this is political.

WG: There's a strong emphasis in your spirituality on the natural physical world. Is there a place within it for recognising supernatural or non-physical dimensions of existence? For example, you mention in your book that you went to a Holy Mountain, Mount Kailash, in Tibet. Is there a sense for example that there might be a kind of guardian spirit or *genius loci* of the place that is somehow non-physical?

SK: It is, it is non-physical but I don't call it supernatural. I call it spiritual. There's a spirit of the mountain, and the sacred Mount Kailash where millions of pilgrims have been over centuries has a spirit. When you are meditating and chanting mantras and prayers you are attuning with the spirit and also you are calling for spirit, so spirituality to me is a holistic dimension. There's a meaning, there's a caring, there's a love, there's a spirituality. Ultimately there is no dualism of physical and non-physical; god and world.

WG: So for you, God is not a being or an entity.

SK: No, God is not a person. God is a kind of principle of truth and love. I don't have a personal God and I don't have personal non-physical beings who are hanging around. I don't have that experience myself, but what I have experienced is the presence of the spirit of the place, which is non-physical, there's something more there than just the rocks and the snow and the trees, there's a spirit there, there's a soul there, there's a kind of divine presence there. Now that presence I cannot explain in words, because words become inadequate, only I can experience and feel that spirit.

WG: One of the other things you mention in your book is the Jain tradition of the Tirthankaras, the great liberators. You have said somewhere that Gandhi seemed like a Tirthankara. Do you think that such great liberators appear cyclically, is that a cyclical process in order to give the evolutionary process a nudge perhaps, if it's stagnating? Is that something you see as true?

SK: You see there's an idea in Hindu tradition called Avatar, so in my view Tirthankara of Jain tradition is similar to Avatar. Now whenever there is need, whenever there is the presence of overwhelming dark forces and human minds are confused and bewildered, and the social, political, economic, ecological and spiritual conditions are ripe for a Tirthankara or an Avatar to appear, then that happens and I do believe in that. Therefore I said that the Buddha for me is a Tirthankara and Mahatma Gandhi is a Tirthankara. They come as a manifestation of great spirit and great force, a cosmic force, to give that nudge as you call it, give that encouragement and inspiration and a way out of that confusion, that bewilderment. And so Mahatma Gandhi in that situation in India, bringing non-violence, truth and love to the fore, became such a liberator that I have called him a Tirthankara; an Avatar.

WG: That's very clear. It's a little bit to me like the Buddhist notion, for example, some of them say that Jesus was a Bodhisattva. It's a similar kind of idea, isn't it?

SK: I would say Jesus too was an Avatar, a Tirthankara. It's the same idea. Because you can see in history from time to time, these spirits have really lifted the humanity to that kind of consciousness. They shake sleeping

humanity and wake us up.

WG: Shifting now to a slightly more practical dimension, in an earlier interview you emphasised the importance of small-scale projects like the Small School and Schumacher College. They are acting as examples for people to go out and do it themselves. What's your attitude then to larger scale campaigns like, for example, those to cancel national debt or to introduce a Tobin tax or to ensure that international trading rules are fair? How do you see those fitting in?

SK: There's no contradiction between large movements and the small activities. There is no contradiction between intimate and ultimate, between small and large - as long as large does not destroy the small. In smallness you can maintain the intimacy. In large intimacy is lost, but there something else is needed. When you want a transformation on a large scale, you need to bring large numbers of people together and you need to create large number of people being conscious of debt problems, ecological problems, social issues, trade issues, fairness issues. These are necessary for a global consciousness. So global and local are in the same category as intimate and the ultimate.

WG: It's not a case of either/or, but rather both/and?

SK: Yes, both/and. But you have to see when small is appropriate and when large is appropriate. There is no contradiction between dark and light. You need darkness in the night and you need light during the day. When you have dark you sleep, when you have light you work. So there's a complementarity there, between the opposites. In fact they are not opposites they are complementary, so global and local, small and large are complementary. The problem at the moment is that the idea of large and global has become too dominant. We need harmony and balance.

WG: That's very clear. Your father commented that although profit was a necessary aspect of business, it was not a main motivation for him. His main motivation was to make friends and serve the community. Now how do you think you can have this viewpoint spread within modern business because that's not really the way in which modern business is operating at the moment?

SK: I think our guiding paradigm and philosophy of economics needs to be transformed. What my father meant was that you need to make profit like when you are driving a car you need to put oil or petrol in your car in order to drive, but the purpose of your driving is not to fill the car with petrol. The purpose of driving is to go and visit a friend or go to a lecture or go to a conference or go to work. In the same way, profit is the oil to lubricate the wheels of business. Without the oil of profit your business will not move, your business will go bust and you will not be able to sustain it, but the purpose of business, is to serve the community, to make friends, to enhance the environment, to enhance the spirit, to bring the community together, develop a sense of service and belonging, and develop frugality. Don't sell things just to sell: "you buy this thing only if you need it but if you need it I am here at your service to provide it." So there's an activity going on there. Business is necessary, profit is necessary, but the motivation is not profit. Motivation is service, friendship, harmony, community, society, building all those values and qualities. Our business world needs to understand this, but at the moment our business world has become so profit-oriented that our environment is going to the dogs, our social values are going to the dogs, our personal development and personal satisfaction is going to the dogs, profit, profit, profit, and that has become so dominant that quality of life is diminishing. Therefore at Schumacher College we are running regular courses for business people to bring about this transformation in their consciousness, that profit is fine as long as your motivation is service, not profit.

WG: As long as it's not your God, basically?

SK: Profit is not God and profit is not your goal. Profit is a form to embody the spirit of serving the community, building personal relationships, building friendship, and then your profit also becomes a good thing. Because the means and ends are not in contradiction.

WG: Now the story of your life as given in your autobiography *No Destination*, which I read in preparation for this interview - I recommend it to all our listeners and readers - illustrates that you are someone who believes

very strongly in the value of action and practice and example, this is a theme that's come through in what you said. And you point out that for Jains, practice comes before theory. Now, I presume then that you think that the Western tendency which is to put theory before practice is to kind of put the cart before the horse. It's counter-productive in a way. So why do you think that we do that and how can we get rid of that kind of mind-set?

SK: Because it is easy to think theories and once you have thought of theories, you can say, I've done my job. Whereas in Jain tradition we say, your theory must emerge out of practice and lived experience. When you have your theory that you've already tried and tested with your own experience and practice then you can recommend that theory to somebody else. The Buddha said, "don't do it just because I have said it, go and practise it, try it out for yourself, if it works for you then do it, if it doesn't work for you then don't do it". When theory grows out of practice, then it's more real. At the moment we have too many theories, too many hypotheses, too many books and magazines. There is an explosion of ideas. So the Jain tradition is that the essence of knowledge is practice. Knowledge without practice is a burden. It is better to be ignorant than have knowledge without practice. But knowledge with practice is liberating.

WG: The two Earth Summits that we've had now. The Earth Summit at Rio and the Earth Summit at Johannesburg. Some people have said that the former was mainly about the theory of sustainable development, the latter was supposed to be about implementation or practice. What's your perspective on those?

SK: I was at Rio, but I didn't go to Johannesburg. I decided that it was too big a gathering for me. I thought that in Rio there was very good convergence of the visions of development and environment being two sides of the same coin. From Rio emerged the idea of Agenda 21 which was a plan, a charter of practice, so I was very encouraged by Agenda 21. Whereas in my view Johannesburg was hijacked by the business lobby who were interested in economic development at all cost whether it was environmentally sustainable or not. Therefore I was more disappointed from Johannesburg than from Rio. I feel that this distinction between environment and development is wrong. Development and environment are dependent on each other. We need to keep those two always together and not think that poverty can be alleviated by more industrialisation and more globalisation. I think the true source of development and economic well-being is in the protection and good care of environment. Because the environment and the natural world is like mother, it is the giver of food and the provider of well-being. Therefore a respectful and reverential attitude to environment is essential. Whereas Johannesburg became too much dominated by the development lobby, which was a great disappointment.

WG: Well, thank you very much Satish, it's been a wonderful exposition of your philosophy, and a very vigorous and lively presentation.

Satish Kumar's new book, *You Are, Therefore I Am: A Declaration of Dependence*,
is published by Green Books @ £9.95.

Further information about Resurgence can be obtained from Ford House, Hartland, Bideford, Devon, EX39 6EE U.K. or
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