

# Environmental and Inner Crisis: Two Sides of the Same Coin Reflections on Global Grace Day 2017

Sabine Lichtenfels, November 9 2017



**On her peace pilgrimage in 2005 to the Middle East, Sabine Lichtenfels, co-founder of the Peace Research and Education Center Tamera in Portugal and one of the “1000 Women for Peace,” initiated the annual Global Grace Day on November 9<sup>th</sup>. On this historic date marked by both pain and hope – in the “Crystal Night” of 1938 and the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 – she calls out to peaceworkers around the world to unify for global healing, reconciliation and the vision of a nonviolent world.**

Everywhere on Earth we witness the same catastrophes escalating – environmental disasters of unprecedented scale, wars, suicide attacks, increasing numbers of refugees and psychological crises. Here in Portugal we've been especially affected by the devastating fire catastrophes in which many people lost their lives, just as with recent events in California. The drought is becoming more and more extreme. The land is thirsty for water, springs dry up, lakes and rivers no longer carry any water. Despite this, eucalyptus and pine tree monocultures continue to be expanded and energy corporations keep pressing to drill for oil and gas on the land and off the coast.

It's time to realize that the environmental crisis and the inner crisis are two sides of the same coin. We, humanity, are a central cause of these disasters. In the same way, we could also be the source for their healing. It's time to awaken from the hypnosis of a large-scale globalized system that will clearly lead us toward collapse and extinction if we continue to comply with it. It's time to realize that there will be no solution for the ecological crises within the present societal order with its large-scale monocultures and

centralized energy systems. Without human interference, nature would automatically establish sustainable biotopes with a great biodiversity in which the natural powers could complement and balance one another. It's time for us to reintegrate ourselves into these powerful natural cycles and arrange our social and ecological systems in harmony with the powers of nature and the Earth. It's time for a fundamental system change – small corrections in a failing system will no longer be enough.

Early human cultures honored the Earth – including the balance of water and fire – as sacred. Humanity lived in permanent and direct cooperation with the powers of nature. Nowadays, we want to follow this calling again – without returning to prehistoric times. We're called to think both locally and globally at the same time. Only by consciously restoring the ecosystems that we've damaged can we prevent further devastation through fires, droughts and floods – and possibly roll back the global climate catastrophe.

Imagine village communities coming together in more and more places of Portugal to ecologically restore their regions and to make springs and creeks flow again. Imagine people establishing Water Retention Landscapes, accompanied by specialists and supported by the government, and so allowing the rainwater to filter into the ground locally. Imagine lush mixed forests replacing monocultures again, offering protection and food to a diversity of species. Imagine cooperatives becoming revitalized, people being trained in how to cooperate with each other and nature, so that social systems come into being in which solidarity, art and creative collaboration become natural. Imagine this lively culture prompting young people to return to the countryside, while similar decentralized communities arise in the cities. Through building transparent small-scale communities of trust, criminality and violence could cease to exist. Offer young people a sense of meaning and belief in the future! This is the birthright they should be able claim.

Let's collaborate so that model regions for a future worth living will come into being. Portugal will be a country of abundance when we learn to correctly manage the gifts of nature. A new future could commence in places where once catastrophes raged and exterminated life. May the nonviolent revolution of 1974 be followed by a second one – for a deeply humane and ecological socialism.

Ya azim.