**Second Place: Farewell Coral Reefs**

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Let us imagine one of these normal days when you are watching TV news, and you come across an oil tanker accident at the middle of the ocean where a special kind of coral reefs inhabits the seabed. You release a protesting sigh, and you shake your outraged head. What disaster are you beholding? What brutal tanker has just spilled its poison to the sea inhabitants, sentencing them to death?

I can tell how much you detest those oil tankers, but I just want to tell you, in case you have not been informed before, that YOU are not any better than a crashed oil tanker. Are you surprised enough? Then let me also add that YOU are even worse than an oil tanker. Poor oil tanker just moves around without even knowing that it contains oil inside! In fact, those fat neatly dressed people who are responsible for oil tankers' accidents belong to YOUR greedy species! YOU, smug hypocritical naïve one think that you do care about the environment and you are capable of saving Earth. Your concern will remain futile unless you stop thinking of protecting Earth as a public matter. Instead of blaming the world, Mahatma Gandhi suggested that you “be the change that you wish to see in the world.”

Let us be honest with ourselves, how on earth we can change the whole world? We never can. Nevertheless, we can contribute to the change. Start to think of your daily routine. How often do you use the elevator instead of the staircase? How often do you use plastic made forks, spoons, and bags? Have you tried in any way to get them recycled? Are you patient enough to walk for miles searching for the nearest recycle bin to throw your rubbish? Or you rather prefer to hide them behind a tree? Do you usually make sure that you leave no rubbish behind you when you leave your spot on the beach? You know, tides may drag them into the sea where your coral reefs live, and then you shouldn’t complain again about oil tankers. You may consider these habits trifles, but remember, a person is called a thief, whether they steal a penny, or 100000 dollars.

Let me ask you to pause for a minute, and look at the matter from a totally different perspective. Is Earth actually in need of your help? And do you work on saving the environment because you really care about it? In fact, earth doesn’t need our help because it is not going anywhere! We are the ones who are going to some future where there will be no place for us. Earth has the power to summon all of its glaciers to melt down covering up the dry lands, which is one of its smart ways to gain back its balance that we have played with. If we are lucky enough to escape that, then we are going to be burned by the increasing heat caused by global warming.

Plastic bags and carbon dioxide are not threating Earth! Let us put it in a clearer way. They are threatening our existence on Earth. Earth is not going to get sick and die because it has swallowed some plastic bags! Nor is it going to suffocate as a result of carbon dioxide! There are weaker creatures who are going to be victims of that. Yet, they think what matters to them is saving Earth. How about changing the universal slogan of “let’s save Earth!” to a more mature one “let’s save MANKIND!” This may evoke some serious changes before we get extinct. Unfortunately, this is the only language which the greedy, self-centered species seems to understand.

This brings us to the conclusion that we don’t really think about saving the environment because we care about it. We care more about ourselves! And to prove that, let me remind you that we have done whatever we have done of industrial activities for our sake from the beginning without thinking a bit about the environment. We started to care about the environment once we started to feel threatened. Nevertheless, some of our kind have reached a higher stage of selfishness in saying “why should I bother myself about the environment? I am going to live only one life!” What is there to be done to those for God's sake?

You know my friend; it seems there is no way you can enjoy your coral reefs for a much longer time. The best thing you can do for them is to leave them alone. Just forget about them, and let us pack up our stuff. We should be better leaving. We have done enough and we have failed too much to correct our mistakes.

So, it’s farewell coral reefs. Farewell MANKIND!