Publisher's Desk
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Subramuniyaswami, Sivaya H.H. Things are often not what they seem. For instance, recently a Mauritius youth visiting California saw a "hot dog" sign and worried that Americans were eating their canine friends. We had to explain that hot dogs are not dog meat at all, but a kind of sausage made of pork and beef. Last week in California a fine lady from India who is raising her children as best she can told a priest, "They never eat beef, though maybe a little chicken or Big Mac now and then." She was genuinely shocked to hear that a Big Mac hamburger is not made from ham, but beef. Things are not what they seem.

When we want to eat vegetarian, we often buy a pizza. No one tells us that the cheese is made of a beef rennet. The mother cow is everywhere. Hindus run into her on every table. Even meat today is not what it used to be. It has a too generous supply of chemicals in it for preservation mixed with the chemicals fed to fatten cattle quickly. Doctors who once said meat was essential in the human diet are now cautioning patients to not eat it, that it is unhealthy. Yes, things are often not what they seem. To live in today's world one must be alert, careful and well informed. For instance, by eating "junk foods" children forfeit some of their brain development. Adults who partake in today's meats may shorten their life span some ten years, we are told.

Of course, the animals themselves are most unhappy. They know that rain forests are being destroyed so they can graze and thus feed the peoples of the planet. They must instinctively know that without those rain forests the earth's temperature will increase and some of the lands will turn to deserts.

Well, is there anything happening on earth that is good? Yes, there is! It's another

example of things are not what they seem. The world does seem in pretty bad shape sometimes, dark and scary. But actually it is not all that bad a place. Our Hindu masters assure us that the world is God's perfect creation and evolution is going on just as it should, even though it may not always be obvious to us. There is a lot of good that is happening. Much of the earth's population is turning to the great truths of the Sanatana Dharma for answers to their plight. They feel the rishis of the past have some of the answers needed today. Westerners are intrigued with the Eastern idea that we humans are also a part of the ecology that we study and alter. This perception erases the old idea that man is dominant over the fishes of the sea, the birds of the air, the animals and all else in the natural world.

Yes, we are a part of this planet, our physical body is, our emotions are and so are our minds. Being dominant gives us privileges; being an integral part of all things gives us responsibilities. To be well informed is the key that will bring us era we are hearing so much about. The Brahma Kumaris have a good program to create a better world. They teach everyone to perform tasks that are in their immediate vicinity, such as cleaning the sidewalk in front of the house, picking up papers in public places, buying biodegradable items and a host of other practical things to do. Yes, we all can do our pan and it is not too different than thousands of years ago when we had to acknowledge that nature and its laws never conflict with man, nor should man with nature. Out of this belief came ayurveda, which Mahesh Maharishi is doing such a yoeman's job in promoting worldwide.

Here's one last thing that is not what it seems. People often think that because they don't personally kill the animals they eat or chop down the trees to make pastures they avoid the karma. In truth, it is our desire for meat that causes another man to take such actions. We share in the karma. This was known 2,000 years ago when a South Indian weaver. Saint Tiruvalluvar, wrote: "If the world did not purchase and consume meat, there would be none to slaughter and offer meat for sale."

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