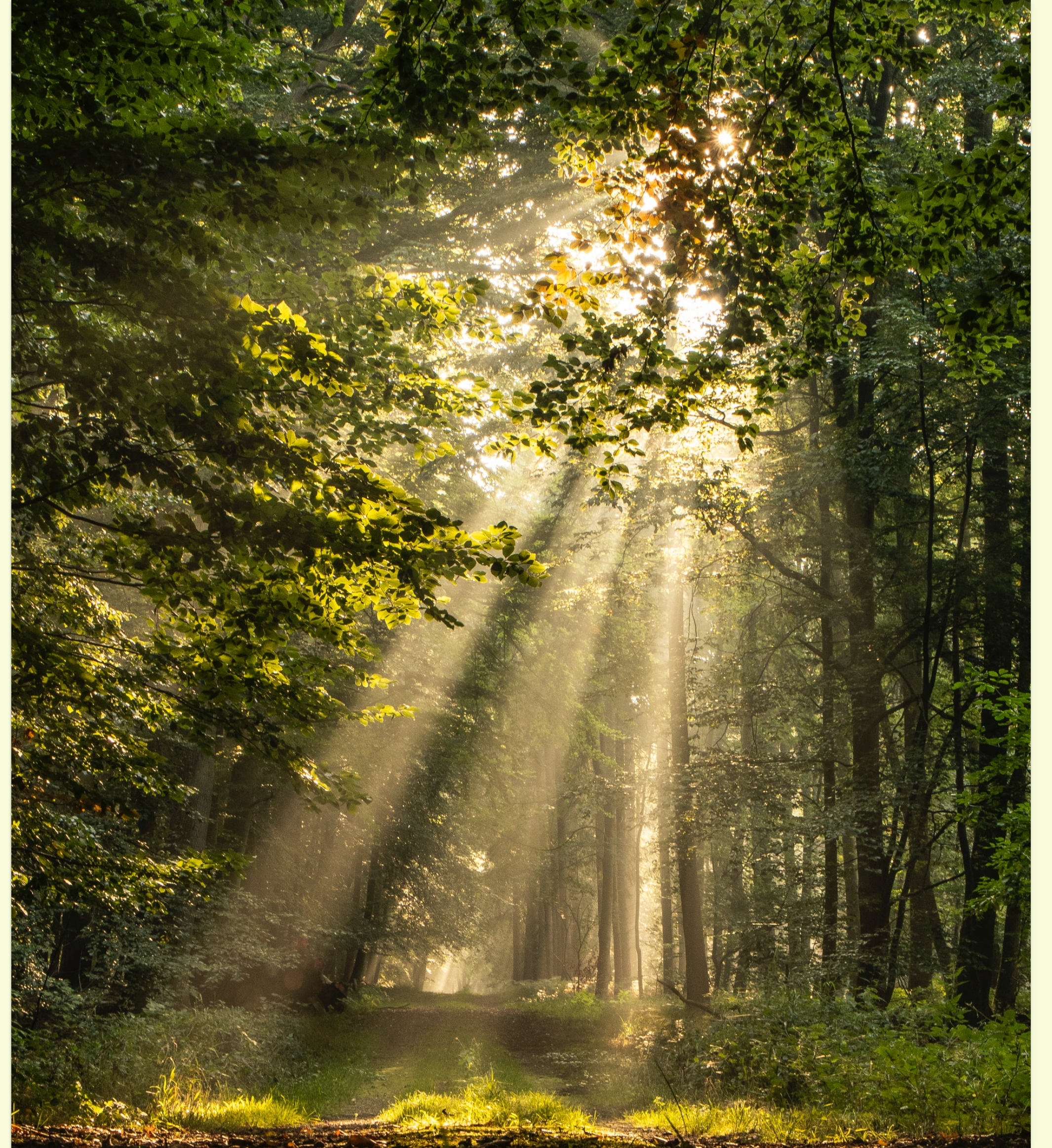




CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

A PRAYER TO BEGIN WITH

*Blessed is the spot, and the house,
and the place, and the city,
and the heart, and the mountain,
and the refuge, and the cave,
and the valley, and the land,
and the sea, and the island,
and the meadow where mention
of God hath been made,
and His praise glorified.*



—Bahá'u'lláh

But ask the beasts, and they will teach you; the birds of the heavens, and they will tell you; or the bushes of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind.—*Job 12:7-10*

Nature is God's Will and is its expression in and through the contingent world.—*Bahá'u'lláh*



We do not inherit the earth from our
ancestors; we borrow it from our children

—Native American Proverb



The earth does not belong to man, man
belongs to the earth. All things are connected
like the blood that unites us all. Man did not
weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it.

Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.

—Chief Seattle

Wilderness is a necessity... there must be
places for human beings to satisfy their souls

—John Muir

How wonderful it is that
nobody need wait a single
moment before starting to
improve the world.—*Unknown*

It has been widely acknowledged that economic prosperity has come at a tremendous cost to our natural environment. In fact, no country has emerged as a major industrial power without a legacy of significant environmental damage, affecting the security and well-being of its own populations and, equally significantly, those of developing nations. The growth-driven economic paradigm rooted in national interests at the expense of social and environmental variables and international well-being is under increasing scrutiny. —*Bahá'í International Community*

The future of life on earth depends on our ability to take action. Many individuals are doing what they can, but real success can only come if there's a change in our societies and our economics and in our politics. —*David Attenborough*

Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's needs, but not every man's greed. —*Mahatma Gandhi*

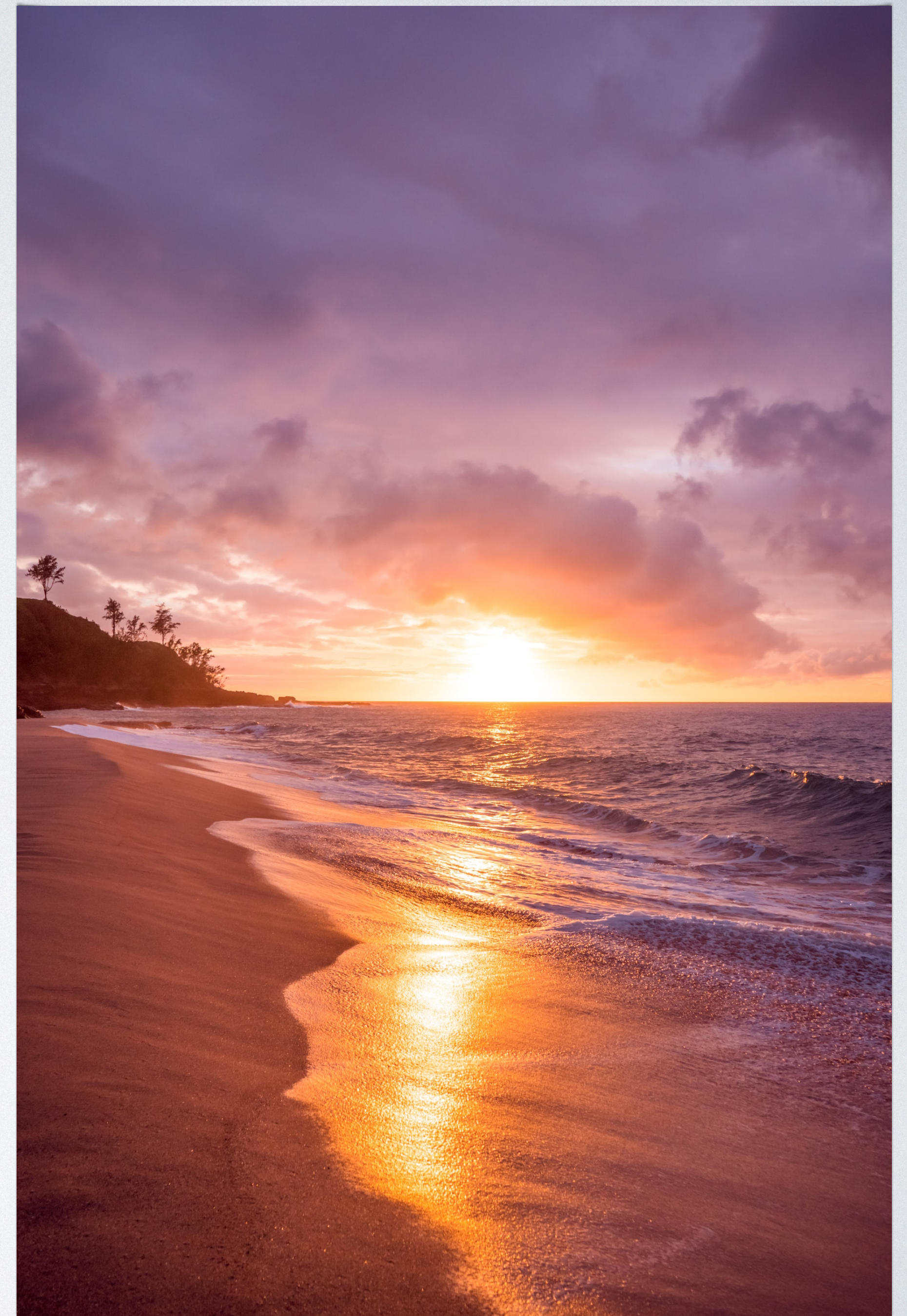
God has cared for these trees, saved them from drought, disease, avalanches, and a thousand tempests and floods. But he cannot save them from fools. —*John Muir*

As is well known, the dominant model of development depends on a society of vigorous consumers of material goods. In such a model, endlessly rising levels of consumption are cast as indicators of progress and prosperity. This preoccupation with the production and accumulation of material objects and comforts (as sources of meaning, happiness and social acceptance) has consolidated itself in the structures of power and information to the exclusion of competing voices and paradigms. The unfettered cultivation of needs and wants has led to a system fully dependent on excessive consumption for a privileged few, while reinforcing exclusion, poverty and inequality, for the majority. Each successive global crisis—be it climate, energy, food, water, disease, financial collapse—has revealed new dimensions of the exploitation and oppression inherent in the current patterns of consumption and production... the shift towards a more just, peaceful and sustainable society will require attention to a harmonious dynamic between the material and non-material (or moral) dimensions of consumption and production. The latter, in particular, will be essential for laying the foundation for just and peaceful human relations...—*Bahá'í International Community*

Anyone who believes in indefinite growth on a physically finite planet is either mad or an economist.—*David Attenborough*

The environmental crisis is a global problem, and only global action will resolve it.—*Barry Commoner*

When all the trees have been cut down, when all the animals have been hunted, when all the waters are polluted, when all the air is unsafe to breathe, only then will you discover you cannot eat money.—*Cree Prophecy*



It is now increasingly acknowledged that such conditions as the marginalization of girls and women, poor governance, ethnic and religious antipathy, environmental degradation, and unemployment constitute formidable obstacles to the progress and development of communities. These evidence a deeper crisis — one rooted in the values and attitudes that shape relationships at all levels of society.

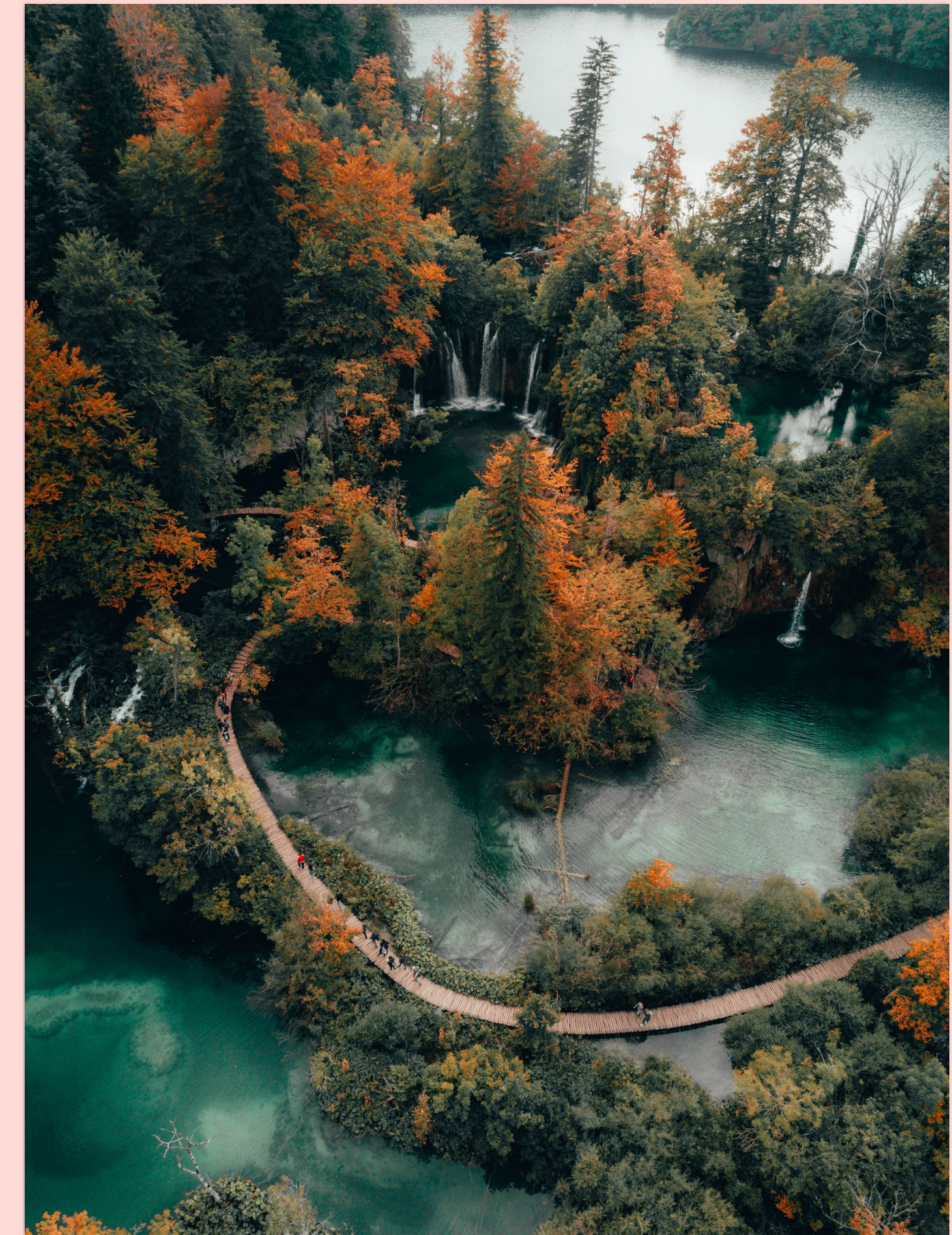
—*Bahá'í International Community*

What we are doing to the forests of the world is but a mirror reflection of what we are doing to ourselves and to one another.

—*Mahatma Gandhi*

The welfare of any segment of humanity is inextricably bound up with the welfare of the whole. Humanity's collective life suffers when any one group thinks of its own well-being in isolation from that of its neighbours' or pursues economic gain without regard for how the natural environment, which provides sustenance for all, is affected.

—*The Universal House of Justice*



Yet, in the face of the destructive impacts of climate change—exacerbated by the extremes of wealth and poverty—a need for new approaches centered on the principles of justice and equity is apparent... The fundamental questions it seeks to address include: Who is responsible for the consequences of climate change?; Who should pay for the damages?; How should target levels of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere be determined?; What procedures will ensure fair representation in decision-making?; and, if nations have a responsibility to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, how do those responsibilities devolve onto the various units of government, organizations, individuals and non-state actors? The challenge before the world community, then, is not only a technical one but a moral one, which calls for the transformation of thoughts and behaviors so as to allow our economic and social structures to extend the benefits of development to all people.

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To contribute to this important discourse, we assert that the principle of the oneness of humankind must become the ruling principle of international life. This principle does not seek to undermine national autonomy or suppress cultural or intellectual diversity. Rather, it makes it possible to view the climate change challenge through a new lens—one that perceives humanity as a unified whole, not unlike the cells of the human body, infinitely differentiated in form and function yet united in a common purpose which exceeds that of its component parts... In order to progress beyond a world community driven by a largely economic and utilitarian calculus, to one of shared responsibility for the prosperity of all nations, such a principle must take root in the conscience of the individual. In this way, we come to recognize the broader human agenda—which subsumes those of climate change, poverty eradication, gender equality, development, and the like—and seeks to use both human and natural resources in a way that facilitates the progress and well-being of all people. —*Bahá'í International Community*

Every choice... as employee or employer, producer or consumer, borrower or lender, benefactor or beneficiary—leaves a trace, and the moral duty to lead a coherent life demands that one's economic decisions be in accordance with lofty ideals, that the purity of one's aims be matched by the purity of one's actions to fulfil those aims.—*The Universal House of Justice*

You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference and you have to decide what kind of a difference you want to make.—*Jane Goodall*

Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without.— *Proverb*



By Thy glory! Every time I lift up mine eyes unto Thy heaven, I call to mind Thy highness and Thy loftiness, and Thine incomparable glory and greatness; and every time I turn my gaze to Thine earth, I am made to recognize the evidences of Thy power and the tokens of Thy bounty. And when I behold the sea, I find that it speaketh to me of Thy majesty, and of the potency of Thy might, and of Thy sovereignty and Thy grandeur. And at whatever time I contemplate the mountains, I am led to discover the ensigns of Thy victory and the standards of Thine omnipotence.

—*Bahá'u'lláh*

