



THE HORIZONS

# A WORLD BECOMING

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APRIL 2025 EDITION

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# Editor's Note

Dear Readers,

Welcome to this month's edition of The Horizons, A World Becoming!

This time, we're diving into everything nature, sustainability, and the future of our planet. We're living in a time where the world is changing fast, sometimes in amazing ways, sometimes in ways that should make us stop and think. From tiny microplastics showing up in our bodies to the growing threat of global water shortages, it's clear that what we do today shapes the world we'll live in tomorrow.

In this edition, you'll find:

- An article (in collaboration with IDOS!) that breaks down why the rule of law matters more than ever, especially when it comes to protecting the environment.
- A deep dive into microplastics: how they're sneaking into places you'd never expect.
- A look at the future of water and why it's becoming one of the most urgent global issues.

And for those of you facing another kind of challenge, AP exams! Don't miss our special bonus article packed with survival tips, resources, and encouragement to get you through this season strong.

As you read, we invite you to reflect on the world you are helping to create. Every small action matters. Every voice counts. The world is becoming, and so are we.

UNTIL NEXT MONTH,

Editor-In-Chief, Saanjh Balpande  
Managing Editor, Fadumo Omar

**THE HORIZONS**





# The Dreaded. AP. Exams

If you're taking an AP exam this year, you're probably feeling the pressure already. The dreaded AP exams are here. The first ones are on May 5th, nearly a week away! Whether you're tackling just one AP or seven, right now it's all about survival. You've got about a week before AP exam season, so here are some tips that could save you some heart AND headache and earn you a 5 in whatever subject you're taking!

Instead of aiming for total mastery of every topic, focus on hitting the areas that carry the most weight and come up most often on past tests. Hyper-efficient review means covering the biggest scoring topics first, then filling in gaps when you have time.

A solid way to cover a ton of material fast is with targeted video reviews. Services like REA's Crash Course gear their lessons around exactly what's on the exam, cutting out fluff so you can power through units in half the usual time. If you prefer free options, you can hit up the official Crash Course channels on YouTube for quick, exam-focused playlists.



As you watch, keep mini notes to one page per unit. Write only key definitions, diagrams, and formulas. These “cheat sheets” become your go-to reference when you’re crunched for time. Once you’ve got your notes, drill yourself with a handful of multiple-choice questions, five to ten from each topic, and then complete one or two free-response questions to practice organizing answers under time pressure.

Here are a few study methods based on how you feel on the day:

- Confused?: Feynman technique
- Exhausted?: Pomodoro method
- Distracted?: Screen time block
- Unorganized?: Second brain system
- Forgetful?: Spaced repetition
- Unmotivated?: 3-2-1 method
- Procrastinating?: Pomodoro timer

Here are some resources and AI tools I adore!:

- Khan Academy
- Quizlet
- TurboLearn AI
- Knowt AI
- ZuAI (App)



As a fellow high school student, I know you probably feel an urge to pull an all-nighter, however sleep isn’t optional. Aim for at least six to seven hours a night so your brain can solidify memories and keep you sharp during exam days. At this point, it’s not about perfection but about covering the most ground, practicing smart and taking care of yourself. By combining crash-review videos, strategic note-taking, focused practice, proven study hacks, and solid rest, you’ll put yourself in the best position to score a 5. Good luck, you’ve got this!

Editor-In-Chief, Saanjh Balpande



# A Historical Overview of the Rule of Law

In collaboration with IDOS  
(International Diplomats and Orators Society)

By: Ruhaan Sardana, Secretary General of IDOS  
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## I Introduction: Beyond Dicey: Unearthing the Deep Roots of the Rule of Law

While the modern conception of the 'rule of law' is often associated with the influential writings of A.V. Dicey and others, its historical roots are considerably deeper. The fundamental principle that all individuals, including those in positions of authority, are subject to the law significantly predates milestones such as the Magna Carta Libertatum. This principle was not a sudden invention but rather the product of a gradual historical evolution over millennia, establishing that governance must operate within the framework of established laws binding both rulers and the ruled. Foundational contributions arose significantly from ancient civilizations such as the Indus Valley, with its rich Vedic legal traditions, the philosophical inquiries into governance in Ancient Greece, and the sophisticated jurisprudence developed by Ancient Rome, among others. These ancient efforts constructed the bedrock upon which later interpretations rest, such as A.V. Dicey's. The principle's enduring vitality is clear today, underpinning justice systems globally. International bodies consistently reaffirm their fundamental importance, notably highlighted by the United Nations' dedicated work on 'The rule of law at the national and international levels', recognizing it as an essential foundation for peaceful relations and a just world order. This is further demonstrated in the practice of international courts, such as the International Court of Justice, holding states accountable under international law, illustrated in cases such as the Corfu Channel case.

## II. Ancient India: Dharma and Vedic Justice: Dharma's Mandate: Ethical Governance and Early Legal Structures in Ancient India

The contributions of ancient Indian society, in the context of Dharma and Vedic justice, are very often neglected while we study the development of the rule of law. The word “Dharma” has a lot of different subjective meanings; it's about the order of how society works, what's right, and how to act. It was so fundamental that even the greatest of kings had to follow its strict rules. During the Mauryan Reign (321 to 185 BCE), Chanakya (also referred to as Kautilya or Vishnugupta) wrote a book called Arthashastra, which was a synopsis of royal obligations towards the public., This also included different war tactics and had a separate chapter for diplomacy. Kautilya said that dharma was a big part of a king's job. Kings had to protect their people and make sure things were fair. This was a key part of running society. The Arthashastra even has tough rules about contracts called Vyavahara, the government had to make sure business deals were fair and check that they were done right. It also lists different levels of punishments for crimes, which shows they had an early type of criminal justice system.



The Arthashastra laid down precise spheres of jurisdiction for different types of courts:

“Civil courts were termed as Dharmasthiyas and decided cases relating to agreements, marriages, gifts, sale, inheritance, succession, etc. Criminal courts were known as Kantakashodhanas and dealt with cases relating to rape, robbery, murder, theft etc. The Supreme Court was the main court, and it was presided over by the King. This type of division of courts is still prevalent in India, where there are different courts for civil and criminal cases. They have their jurisdictions regarding territory and subject matter.” 2.1

The Vedic period (1500 BCE to 500 BCE) started in the early Iron Age in India. At that time, the Indian subcontinent had a lot of prospering and booming villages and cities. With the advent of the Aryans, the Indus Valley Civilization started to die down. The Aryans, who are believed to be a tribe from the northwestern side of the subcontinent, settled down in northern India. These Aryans were the people who would write the Vedas. There are four Vedas (viz. Rig Veda, Yajur veda, Atharva Veda, and Sam Veda. (All the vedas go into detail in different topics, Rig Veda goes into detail in hymns or mantras, the Yajur Veda goes into detail in Rituals, the Atharva Veda goes into detail in charms and how to cure different diseases (The Ayur Veda is a subset of the Atharva Veda), the Sam Veda goes into detail in music and how to sing the hymns or mantras.

The Vedic period had a communal approach to justice, they had bodies called Sabhas (This assembly was a smaller group of wise elders who advised the king, assisting him in decision-making and judicial matters. Women were also known to participate in the Sabha.) and Samitis (The Samiti was a larger, more inclusive assembly where the entire community could gather to discuss and decide on important issues affecting the tribe. It also held the power to elect or depose the king.) These tribunals were the major source of justice in the Vedic age. The concern for Satya (Truth) in any court proceeding is unmatched and demonstrates devotion to truth, also asserted in the Manusmriti (Which can be called the main Hindu law book), one feature is that the king ought to be the guardian of the virtues of dharma and satya. We find mentions of to rule of law in the Manusmriti:



“Desha Dharma: The law of the land. All had to abide by this law” 2.2

The Manusmriti also speaks about the compassionate nature of judges,

“Chapter VIII, verse 304 of the Manusmriti says that punishments can be in the form of admonitions, fines, and lastly chastisement.” 2.3

“This concept of Manu can be seen in the present Indian scenario where the Evidence Act prescribes the procedures for the witnesses, their examinations, etc. There are also different punishments awarded for

### III. Ancient Greece: Natural Law and the Polis: Philosophical Pillars: Seeking Justice and Order in the Grecian Polis

Moving forward in this historical trajectory, Ancient Greece represents a pivotal period in the philosophical exploration of governance and law, laying crucial groundwork for the rule of law. Here, the pursuit of a universal order governing human affairs became a central theme, directly impacting the conception of legitimate authority. A key intellectual debate revolved around the interplay between *nomos* (law or custom) and *physis* (nature), questioning whether human laws were merely conventional constructs or reflected inherent natural principles. This inquiry was fundamental to the rule of law's development, suggesting that just laws might derive from a source beyond mere human will, thereby potentially binding rulers. This philosophical exploration significantly influenced the development of political structures, notably the direct democracy in Athens, where citizens actively participated in shaping the *nomos* of their polis (city-state). This participation underscored the principle that law was a community endeavor, not solely the decree of a single ruler, and had to be enforced equally as well as fairly. Philosophers like Aristotle further refined these ideas, emphasizing that the purpose of law within the polis was to promote the common good (*to koinon agathon*), arguing for laws grounded in reason and virtue. Aristotle's focus on law serving the public interest and being based on rational principles directly supports the rule of law's requirement for laws to be just, predictable, and applied equally. He

maintained that "laws are made after long consideration, whereas decisions in the courts are given at short notice, which makes it hard for those who try the case to satisfy the claims of justice" 3.1 (Rhetoric 1354b). These ancient Greek concepts of a higher, natural law influencing the rule of law as well as modern legal systems, resonate through history and are discernible in modern international legal instruments, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which posits inherent rights and freedoms applicable to all, reflecting an enduring legacy of the physis concept.

## IV. Roman Law: Architects of Legal Systems: Structuring Justice: Roman Jurisprudence and the Blueprint for Modern Law

The indestructible contribution of Roman civilization to the evolution of legal thought resides in its painstakingly precise, structured legal organization, which provided a foundation for subsequent legal systems worldwide. Roman jurisprudence exhibited a sophisticated understanding of legal categories, notably the difference between *ius civile*, the body of laws governing Roman citizens, and *ius gentium*, a set of principles developed to regulate interactions with non-Romans. The Romans also had a laid down system of procedure for judicial procedure:

Roman trials varied according to the type of crime committed. For instance, there were inheritance and property disputes heard in the Centumviral Court, and the *Quaestiones Perpetuae* was a permanent court set up for crimes such as bribery, poisoning, and violence. Criminal trials were usually heard by a jury of Roman citizens who deliberated on cases brought before them by prosecutors and defence advocates. Verdicts were usually decided by majority vote.” 4.1

Cicero's concept of natural law influenced *ius gentium*. This latter concept, grounded in natural reason (*naturalis ratio*) and universal justice, represents significant ancestry to modern law. The intellectual rigor of the Roman legal system is further sustained by the development of legal institutions, such as the praetorship with its capacity to issue formative orders, and the emergence of a learned class of *iuris prudentes* (literally “Wise in Law”), whose interpretations and responses shaped Roman law through analysis and the establishment of legal precedent.

Moreover, Roman legal thought articulated principles that foreshadowed contemporary currents of justice. While limited by the social hierarchies of the era, Roman law contained emergent concepts of legal equality (at least among citizens in certain spheres) and developed procedures that bear resemblance to modern due process. The emphasis on *audi alteram partem* (the principle of hearing the other side) and the right to legal representation emphasise their commitment to fair adjudication. This direct intellectual lineage is recognizable in the evolution of fundamental legal protections, such as the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution.

One of the most famous legal principles was 'Innocent until proven guilty,' which provided a procedural safeguard for the accused. However, trials were often swayed by public opinion and political rivalries, leading to instances of judicial corruption and manipulation.” 4.2

The Romans also laid down a profound system of judicial liability and accountability:

“In the Roman legal system, parties established liability based upon fault in a cause of action called the *delict*, which means 'wrong.' Generally, actions that arose *ex delicto* were civil as opposed to criminal wrongs and usually threatened the security of an individual's rights. Originally, a violent retribution required a *delictual* wrong; eventually, less violent means, such as monetary recompense, satisfied requital for such a wrong. Significantly, the *delict* encompassed injury to an individual's rights as well as harm to the state, and thereby served both a civil and criminal function in society. The ancient Romans also established tort-like judicial liability in actions that arose "as if from a *delict*" or *quasi ex delicto*. The *quasi-delicts* encompass liability for careless conduct, including liability for judicial dishonesty. In Roman law, judicial liability was created by a *quasi-delict* termed the *iudex qui litem suam facit*, which translates as a judge who "makes [s] a case his own." This legal action has garnered substantial scholarly recognition, but only in an attempt to reconcile it with the other three *quasi-delicts*." Scholars, however, have given less attention to a detailed study of the legal significance of the *iudex qui litem suam facit*, which merits a close examination. This Article analyzes this action as it developed from the Republican through the post-Classical Periods in Roman law. The scope of the *iudex qui litem suam facit* and its corresponding sanctions during each period will receive particular scrutiny.” 4.3

Later jurists like Gaius and Ulpian systematized Roman legal thought, impacting due process ideas. The Roman legal system states that individuals should not be deprived of life, liberty, or property without legitimate legal procedures (*nemo damnatur nisi per legale iudicium*), which directly influenced the inclusion of this crucial safeguard in American and other constitutional laws, illustrating the profound impact of Roman legal principles on contemporary legal frameworks.

## V. Conclusion: An Enduring Legacy: Ancient Wisdom and the Contemporary Imperative of the Rule of Law

In tracing the historical trajectory of the rule of law, the foundational contributions of ancient civilizations become undoubtedly clear. Ancient India, through its articulation of Dharma and Vedic legal principles, established early notions of ethical and legal supremacy, binding even rulers. Ancient Greece offered philosophical inquiries into just governance and the importance of law in a well-ordered society. Roman law, with its sophisticated legal organization, the development of *ius gentium*, and its emphasis on procedural fairness, provided a direct and precise blueprint for legal systems worldwide.

The enduring importance of the rule of law lies in its capacity to ensure accountability, protect fundamental rights, and foster stable and just, sustainable societies. Its contemporary relevance is starkly evident in the functioning of international institutions like the ICJ (International Court of Justice), which, in its pursuit of accountability for grave international crimes, exemplifies the rule of law in action on a global scale. The foundational contributions of these ancient societies laid the essential groundwork for our modern understanding and practice of the rule of law, underscoring the continuous need for its preservation and strengthening as a cornerstone of a just and equitable global order.

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# Plastic Crisis:

## Human-Caused Overproduction and Its Legacy of Devastation

By Abdulla Kharrrat

If excess and over-consumption are the contexts, then overproduction of plastic has acquired a status of the global crisis that seriously threatens the very ecosystems that underpin human existence. While uncontrolled plastic consumption is an environmental danger, it tends to become a strong attack against marine, terrestrial, and atmospheric ecosystems, alarming testimony to the fact that humans would always seek the easier way out, nonchalantly disregarding the processes of planetary degeneration.

Notwithstanding casual cries for sustainable alternatives, mankind seems stuck in this-destructive relationship with plastic manufacturing billions of tons every year, of which thousands of blocks the ecological life-supporting systems of our planet for centuries.

### **The Peril of Overproduction: An Unrecognized Crisis:**

The less-than-savory global production of plastic has reached an unprecedented, dystopian proportion and has surpassed 400 million metric tons annually. This has little to do with any real needs and more with fulfilling the voracious appetite of capitalism for profits.



Via consumerism and in cahoots with state governments, multinational companies flood the markets with cheap, disposable plastics that present momentary conveniences at the cost of long-term environmental damages. The over proliferation of those goods has turned into an ecological disaster, everything from the ocean filled with microplastic to the landfills with hazardous wasteland and smothering of communities under this synthetic scourge.

## Plastic in Nature: A Cycle of Destruction

The wanton production of plastic severely undermines ecosystems with gruesome perpetuity. And while producers are still basking in the throes of profit margins, the oceans harbor a number today estimated at over 5 trillion plastic items, infecting all strata of marine biodiversity. Sea turtles eat polyethylene bags, mistaking them for jellyfish; whales wash up dead, their guts full of trash; and corals-wildenstein pillars of biodiversity-are suffocated by chemical waste.

Besides visible refuse, microplastics small particles resulting from such excessive manufacturing-penetrate our atmospheric, aquatic, and dietary systems. In fact, humans can consume as much as 5 grams of microplastics a week, quite unbeknownst to them. Is this the grim end to our species-mankind being the promoters of our own destruction?



## Complicity of Capitalism: Profits over Planet:

Central to this is an economic platform that rewards mindless production and punishes good behavior. Plastic is cheap to produce, durable, and versatile-all qualities that corporations exploit to produce on a massive scale, shipping packaging and products to developing countries with often under-resourced waste management systems.

Instead of investing in a circular economy, companies continue to embrace wasteful linear ones: extraction, production, and disposal-an unsustainable cycle of environmental degradation.

This is best described as a Machiavellian ruse: corporate lobbying that shifts the blame onto the individual, dressing it up as "recycling." Less than 9% of worldwide plastic produced is adequately recycled by the current, glaringly insufficient recycling infrastructure. That shocking statistic really underlines failures of systemic measures toward solving overproduction, as industries just go on, unabated and unaccountable.

Health Implication: An Epidemic We Consume Plastic is everywhere, and it is present in the environment, polluting nature and human health. Toxins leaching from plastics include endocrine disruptors, carcinogens, and neurotoxins—substances implicated in a litany of chronic illnesses, reproductive issues, and cancers. This bioaccumulation of plastic's chemicals in the precarious balance of global health systems makes this an environmental and humanitarian crisis. The deafening silence of policy framers regarding the regulation of toxic material is like the industry's denial of responsibility, infuriating abdication of ethical leadership.

## The Way Forward: Terminate the Production Crisis

Plastic plague can be solved not by some half-hearted approach of recycling or incremental reductions but by an immediate aggressive turn around in production.



There needs to be government legislation that puts stringent curbs on single-use plastics, punishes manufacturers that flood markets with waste, and incentivizes innovations in biodegradable and reusable alternatives. At the same time, the narrative has to be shifted: consumers alone cannot be saddled with the burden of this enormous crisis. Instead, systemic change must focus on dismantling profit-driven plastic dependency, replacing it with a regenerating economic model that prioritizes long-term planetary health over profit.

## Conclusion

It is not a passive disaster; it is an outrageous act willfully kept alive by indifference, ignorance, and greed on the part of corporations. Each ton produced, discarded, and burned to ash delivers the next generation to a less livable world. We live in times when convenience is privileged at the cost of sustainability, profit is elevated above conservation, and solutions are available yet willfully put aside in favor of systems of destruction.

The war on plastic is a war on morality, an imperative. Humanity stands at that threshold where a choice has to be made between stewardship of our only home and blindly marching into its annihilation. Deliberation has had its day; it is high time there was a revolution against plastic and all machinery that perpetuates it. It is an inheritance of neglect and waste that we should not leave. It should reflect renewal, fairness, and long-term stewardship—a future defined by action, not one defined by neglect.

Cut plastic pandemic off right now.





# MICROPLASTICS IN OUR BODIES

By Ceana Marianu



## The Gum Connection: A Surprising Source of Plastic

A March 2025 study published by researchers from the Medical University of Vienna found that chewing gum, which was previously overlooked, is a contributor to microplastic ingestion.

Scientific discoveries made this year have recently shed light on a disturbing truth: microplastics – tiny fragments of plastic less than five millimeters in length – are not only polluting our environment and Earth but are also accumulating inside our bodies. Whilst concerns about plastic pollution in oceans and ecosystems are well documented and researched, new studies are now revealing how deeply embedded plastic has become in our daily lives; and our own biology. In 2025, two separate studies revealed shocking findings. One found that microplastics are released into our bodies through the simple act of chewing gum. The other discovered that these particles are inside the most protected organ in the human body: the brain.







The research showed that synthetic polymers, which are the base ingredients in many commercial chewing gums, can shed tiny plastic particles while being chewed. These microplastics then mix with saliva and are swallowed, thus entering the digestive system (Howard). “People may not realize it, but many popular chewing gums are essentially plastic-based,” the study’s lead author stated.

That means with every chew, microscopic bits of that plastic can be released into the mouth and swallowed” (Howard).

Although previous studies had focused on ingestion through bottled water or seafood, this research suggested that even habits like chewing gum could be contributing to the overall microplastic load in the human body.

### Microplastics in the Brain

Even more concerning were the findings of a February 2025 study that detected microplastics in human brain tissue for the first time. In an investigation led by researchers at the University of Amsterdam, brain samples from deceased donors were analyzed. In nearly every case, microplastics were present; sometimes in concentrations even higher than those found in other organs, such as the liver or kidneys (LaMotte).

Scientists were shocked to discover that microplastics had managed to cross the blood-brain barrier, seeing as it is a highly selective membrane that shields the brain from harmful substances in the bloodstream. This barrier is crucial for maintaining the brain’s protected environment, and very few materials are able to penetrate it. “The fact that microplastics can breach the blood-brain barrier raises serious questions about the safety of our daily exposure to plastics,” said one of the researchers. “We don’t yet fully understand the consequences, but the potential risks to mental and cognitive health are real” (LaMotte).

## A Growing Body of Evidence

These findings are part of a growing body of research pointing to the widespread presence of microplastics in human bodies. Previous studies have identified microplastics in human blood, lungs, feces, and placentas. Now, with the addition of gum-related ingestion and evidence of plastics in brain tissue, scientists are seeking immediate action and more rigorous studies on long-term health effects.

Although the health impacts are not yet fully known, the concern lies in how these particles may interact with the body's systems. Potential risks include chronic inflammation, hormonal disruption, and even the possibility of plastics acting as carriers for toxic chemicals.



## Reducing Our Exposure

While it may be difficult to completely eliminate exposure to microplastics in today's heavily plastic filled world, there are practical steps individuals can take to reduce their intake: Choose natural chewing gum made from tree resin or plant-based ingredients instead of synthetic brands.

Avoid single use plastics and instead opt for reusable containers made of glass, stainless steel, or bamboo.

Filter tap water using certified filtration systems that remove microplastics.

Reduce consumption of highly processed foods, which may have higher risks of contamination through packaging.

Be mindful of personal care products that contain microbeads or plastic-based ingredients.

## Going forward

The presence of microplastics in the human body is no longer just a theoretical concern, it's a reality supported by scientific evidence.

As researchers continue to uncover how these particles are entering our systems and what might be going on when they're in our bodies, public awareness and taking action are becoming increasingly important.

In the meantime whilst more research is being done to understand how severe microplastics in our bodies can be, individuals can take proactive steps to minimize their exposure. This could be by advocating for cleaner alternatives, supporting scientific efforts aimed at understanding, and addressing the long-term impact of plastic on human health.

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By Ceana Marianu



# ***Water Wars:***

## ***The Coming Crisis We Can't Ignore***

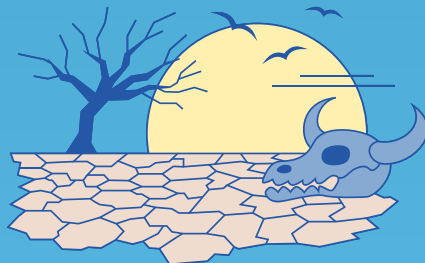
***By Amreen Kaur Maan***

If the 20th century was defined by oil, the 21st century may be shaped by water.

Across the globe, freshwater resources are quickly becoming scarcer. This isn't a phenomenon confined to desert regions—water scarcity is making its presence known in places once abundant with rivers, lakes, and rainfall. The consequences of this growing crisis are vast. In California, farmers are drilling deeper and deeper each year to access dwindling groundwater supplies. Cities like Cape Town and Chennai have come agonizingly close to “Day Zero,” the terrifying moment when the taps simply run dry. All signs point to the same inevitable conclusion: we are entering an era of water wars.

### **The Cause of Water Scarcity**

Despite covering 71% of Earth's surface, only 2.5% of the world's water is fresh, and less than 1% of it is accessible for human consumption. The balance is delicate, and the reality is that overpopulation, climate change, pollution, and inefficient water management are converging to make freshwater increasingly scarce. As glaciers melt and droughts become more frequent, rivers that once supplied cities and farms are dwindling, and groundwater is being extracted faster than it can replenish. This has created a significant imbalance, and the gap between supply and demand continues to grow wider.



### **Hotspots of Global Water Tension**

Water scarcity isn't just a localized issue; it's a global crisis with increasingly dire consequences. Nowhere is this more evident than in regions where international boundaries and water resources intersect.

In the American West, the Colorado River has long been a lifeline for over 40 million people. Yet, the river is running dry. States like Arizona, California, and Nevada are already facing extreme water rationing, and water rights disputes between cities and farmers are escalating. With climate change worsening drought conditions, the situation is becoming increasingly unsustainable.

## Water as a Weapon

Water-related conflict doesn't always look like military engagement. Often, it manifests as legal battles over water rights, clashes between rural farmers and urban corporations, and the political tension between upstream and downstream nations. Even within countries, water has become an issue that divides communities.

## Technological Solutions to the Crisis

The good news is that science and technology are advancing quickly, and there are a number of promising solutions to ease the crisis.

Desalination, which involves converting seawater into fresh water, is already in use in countries like Saudi Arabia. While the technology holds promise, it's energy-intensive and expensive, making it viable only for wealthier nations.



Atmospheric water generators (AWGs), which pull water out of the air by condensing moisture, are emerging as another viable option. These systems are already in use in some drought-stricken regions, although their scalability remains a challenge.

In agriculture, smart irrigation systems powered by AI and IoT (Internet of Things) are helping farmers use water more efficiently. By employing sensors to track soil moisture and weather patterns, these systems ensure that water is applied precisely where it's needed, minimizing waste and conserving precious resources.



Wastewater recycling is another technology being implemented to close the water loop. In places like Singapore and parts of California, wastewater is treated and reused, creating a sustainable cycle that significantly reduces the demand for fresh water. This technology is still seen as a last resort by some, but it's rapidly gaining acceptance as the reality of water scarcity becomes more apparent.

## **What's Being Done Globally**

Governments and international organizations are also stepping up their efforts to address the water crisis. The United Nations' Water Action Agenda, launched in 2023, includes over 700 projects aimed at improving water access and management worldwide.

In India, the Jal Jeevan Mission is working to provide piped water to every rural household by 2026. Meanwhile, the European Union has committed to improving water conservation across member states, focusing on stricter regulations for groundwater extraction and investing in nature-based solutions like wetland restoration.

The youth climate movement is also gaining momentum, with young activists in countries like South Africa, Peru, and the United States pushing for more action on water justice.

## **Conclusion: The Power of Awareness**

As Earth Day reminds us, awareness is the first step toward action. The water crisis is not an issue that can be solved overnight, but every small change adds up. Whether it's conserving water at home, advocating for better policies, or supporting technologies that promote water efficiency, every individual and every community can contribute to easing the strain on our planet's most precious resource. The world may not be ready for a "Water War," but with cooperation and innovation, we can turn the tide before it's too late.



# The World Without Us

By Azmah Alomari

Stillness. That's the first thing I noticed. No honking, no people shouting into their phones, no jackhammers, no engines sputtering. Just wind. Just birds. Just air. The hum of something bigger than the city and its chaos.

I was sitting alone in Central Park. Not even the "real" part of Central Park—just a random bench tucked somewhere behind the reservoir, the kind of place people only find when they're lost or looking for a moment to themselves. It was a Sunday, but it could've been any day, any year, any century. That's how timeless it felt. Like I had stumbled into a version of Earth that existed before people, or maybe after us. A single tree had caught my attention. Not because it was the biggest or the most beautiful—actually, it was kind of crooked and half-dead—but because it had managed to survive. Branches twisted like they'd been fighting something all their life. Bark peeling. But it stood tall, rooted. Quietly defiant.

It made me think: what would the Earth look like without us? We think we're at the center of everything, don't we? We build cities and highways and we light up the sky with our buildings and call it "progress." But that tree, and the moss growing on its base, and the bees hovering nearby—it all felt like a reminder that we are temporary here. This planet is ancient. Sacred. And we treat it like it's disposable.

I read recently that if humans disappeared tomorrow, most signs of us would be erased within a few thousand years. Skyscrapers would collapse. Roads would crack. Nature would swallow everything we've built. But if nature disappears—if trees stop breathing, if bees stop buzzing, if glaciers keep melting—we're the ones who disappear. We rely on Earth in ways that it will never rely on us.



And yet we act like we're invincible.

Plastic in the oceans. Microplastics in our blood. Forests cut down for hamburgers. Rivers poisoned. Air thick enough to taste. Every year, more animals vanish. Every year, the summers get hotter. But we continue like this is normal. It's not.

I feel helpless sometimes. Like I'm just one person using a metal straw in a world on fire. But maybe that's the wrong way to look at it. Maybe the goal isn't to save the entire planet by myself, but to live like it's worth saving. Maybe it's not about being perfect, but about being better.

I think about the children who'll come after us—those who'll inherit whatever's left of this place. I think about whether they'll ever sit on a bench in Central Park and feel the stillness that I felt today. Or if they'll only know a world that's constantly burning, flooding, choking. Will they see a crooked tree and wonder what trees used to look like? Will they think we failed them?

I don't want to be part of a generation that gave up. The Earth will survive with or without us. The question is: will we let it thrive with us? As I left the park, I looked back at that tree one last time.

Crooked.  
Resilient.  
Still standing.

Maybe we can be like that too.



By Azmah Alomari



# The Day Earth Got Fed Up

By Amreen Kaur Maan

It started on a Wednesday.

I woke up late—like always—and rolled out of bed to the usual chorus of birds outside my window. Only, today, the birds weren't singing. They were staring at me, like they knew something I didn't.

"Okay," I muttered, stretching. "No need to be creepy, guys." I looked out the window and... nothing. The sky was a dull grey, no clouds, no sunshine. Weird, but whatever. It wasn't until I stepped outside that I realized something was off. The grass wasn't green. It wasn't brown either—it was... sort of meh, a color that didn't quite exist. It was like the color palette of the world had been set to "mild disappointment."

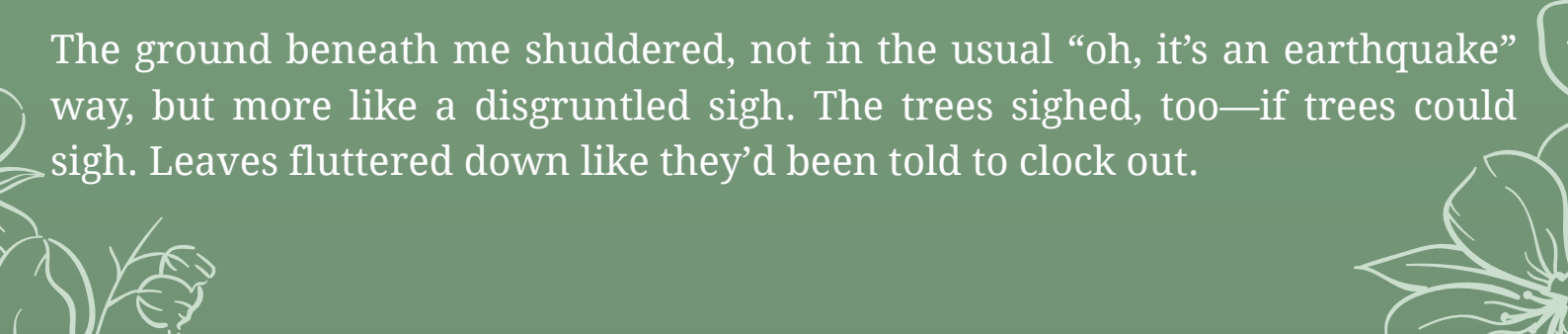
"Alright, Earth. What's going on?" I said to the ground beneath my feet, half-joking, half-curious. But instead of the usual hum of life around me, everything was eerily still. No buzzing bees, no chirping birds, no rustling leaves. Just silence.

As I started walking down the street to get to work, I couldn't shake the feeling that something was seriously wrong. My phone buzzed, but instead of a text or an alert, it was a notification that read: "Earth is on strike. Please do not disturb."

I stood there, blinking. "Excuse me?" I muttered to no one in particular, scanning the street for answers.

And then, it happened.

The ground beneath me shuddered, not in the usual "oh, it's an earthquake" way, but more like a disgruntled sigh. The trees sighed, too—if trees could sigh. Leaves fluttered down like they'd been told to clock out.



I stumbled backward. I couldn't hear it, but I felt it. A deep, rolling voice, thick with sarcasm, echoed through my bones

"Honestly, you people think you own me?" The voice was dry, almost like a parent scolding an unruly child. "You've been taking me for granted for centuries, and now I'm done. DONE." I froze, looking around. No one else seemed to notice. "Did anyone else just hear that?" I asked a woman walking her dog, but she just glanced at me like I'd lost it.

The voice continued, "No sunlight today. You're welcome. And gravity? Don't get me started. No guarantees on that one, either."

I looked up at the sky. Nothing. Not a single ray of light. No warmth. Just a massive grey void above me. And then... I felt it. My feet lifted off the ground, just a bit. My stomach flipped as if I were on a roller coaster, and I grabbed a nearby lamppost to stay grounded.

"Earth? Are you... are you messing with me?" I called out into the empty air, my voice shaking.

"Seriously?"

"Oh, I'm so messing with you," the voice replied, dripping with sass. "It's been years. You leave your trash everywhere, spill oil into my oceans, and pretend climate change isn't happening. Guess what? Today, I'm not having it."

I let go of the lamppost and tried to walk, but I was floating just enough that I couldn't really move. I looked down the street, but the cars weren't moving either—well, they were sort of... floating? No one could drive anywhere.

Suddenly, the ground beneath my feet solidified again, and the voice seemed to sigh, almost in exasperation.

"You know what? Fine," Earth grumbled. "I'll let you have your gravity back. But no more pretty sunsets. No fresh air today. Oh, and I've decided to cancel the rain. You're welcome."

The air felt... stale. Almost as if it had been trapped in a jar for centuries and was now leaking out in disappointment. I coughed, a dry rasp in my throat.

"Are you serious?" I asked, rubbing my eyes.



“Oh, I’m deadly serious,” Earth snapped back, and I could feel the snark all the way to my bones.

“Do you know how tired I am of you humans? No one listens when I beg for you to stop. ‘Reduce, reuse, recycle,’ you say. But you don’t! You’ve got your little plastic bottles, your carbon footprints, and your endless obsession with convenience. You think I’ll just keep letting you use me, take and take and take? Nope. I’m on strike now. And trust me, it’s the least I could do.”



I stood there, stunned. It wasn’t the first time I’d heard about the environmental crisis, but to hear it all laid out by the Earth itself? The one thing that had always been so constant and reliable? Well, that was something else.

“Okay, okay. I get it,” I said, looking around in a panic. “So... what do we do now?”

The voice paused, then responded with a surprising amount of sweetness, as if pretending to forgive me. “Well, you could start by listening. Clean up your act. Stop acting like I’m a free ride. If you want the sunsets back, the fresh air, the rain—start taking better care of me.”

“Right. Got it,” I said, now feeling completely absurd as I spoke out loud to the ground. “I’ll do better. I swear. Just... can we have the sunlight back? Please?”

A small chuckle rippled through the air. “Fine. You humans are so dramatic.”

As I trudged to work, I glanced up at the sky, wondering what would happen the next time we pushed our planet too far. And if, someday, Earth decides to hit snooze on us again.



# *Romanticize*

By Fatima Nihal

What is romanticizing life, a tender art, Where beauty blooms in every part?  
It's nothing fancy, just appreciation pure, For little moments that quietly endure.

Is it like waves that gently kiss the shore, Or rich aroma of coffee drifting through  
the door?

The smell of paper as a book unfolds, A whispered story the heart holds.  
A moment's grace, a second look.

Do grateful hearts in whispers sing, Finding joy in everything?

It's not a fashion, nor a play, But seeing life a softer way.

As years pass by, can we now see, That life's true magic lives in you and me?



# A Feather from The Mouth of the Wind



By Yasmen A.S Mhanna

I woke up beside her – the woman with the mole near her eye and the breath of coffee and soap, as if I had always woken beside her, the bedsheets were warm with sleep. Sunlight leaked through the curtains in a thin, golden blade. I said her name – I think it was Marianne – and she hummed like I'd said it a thousand times before. That was how I knew I'd lived here for years.

There were children. Two, no- three. I remember one falling off a bicycle. Another painted a tree with handprint leaves for Father's Day and cried when I didn't hang it on the fridge fast enough. The third has a crooked smile just like mine, like dandelions splitting concrete. They all looked at me like I belonged here.

At breakfast I talked about insurance. I kissed Marianne's shoulder; her skin there soft as rose petals. I laughed at a joke I think I'd heard before. I remembered birthdays. I remembered grief. I remembered mowing the lawn and crying, once, for no reason at all.

It was life. Not exactly beautiful, but real. Heavy, detailed, unrelenting.

And then –

Then I hear the ringing in my ears.

A bird outside the window sang the same four notes. Every thirteen seconds. Over and over. Not nature. Not randomness. A loop. I Timed it. I counted it. I couldn't unhear it. And suddenly, everything around me began to flicker.

I blinked.

I was at my job. The cubicle walls were too clean. Everyone said "good morning" in the same voice. I blinked again. I was home, Marianne asking me what I wanted for dinner. The birds were still singing. Thirteen seconds.

Then –

I woke in a field.

A field? No. not a field.

A mattress. A room with stained walls. A fan clinking overhead, ticking like a dying grasshopper. Something sticky on my tongue. My mouth was dry. My fingers twitched like they'd forgotten their names.

They said it was Datura – Angels Trumpet, some call it. A plant. A hallucinogen. Born in forgotten corners, blooming just like white flowers. It's not a party drug. Not something to try “just once”. Something ancient, pollinated by moths and myths, strange. A plant that doesn't just twist your thoughts- it plants them. Grows and lives inside you like roots through stone.

I asked them how long was I gone for. They said, twenty-two hours.

Twenty-two?

How could a flower bloom a decade inside your mind?

A wife?

Children?

Pain?

They told me I've been talking to people who weren't there. I had asked someone to pass the salt –

There was no one in the room. I kissed the doorknob and said “goodnight, love”

They laughed.

But the worst part isn't waking. The worst part is



What if this is the waking?

What if this – these stained walls, sticky tongue, this quiet shame –

What if this is the dream?

Because I still remember the scent of rain on Marianne's hair. I still remember the weight of a child sleeping on my chest. I remember forgetting how to be happy and live again.

Tell me –

What if I left the real blooms behind?

What if I blinked,

and it's still blinking back?



# Thank You For Reading



THE HORIZONS

## A WORLD BECOMING



Artwork By: Hnaya Bey

# See You In the Next Edition!