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HELP PROTECT THE OZONE LAYER: USE OZONE FRIENDLY PRODUCTS

If you take a frog from its pond and put it in a pan of hot water, it will jump out. If you put it in a pan of cold water and heat it gradually on a stove, the frog will sit there until it boils to death. This may sound humorous at first but on comparing the frog's response with that of man to the destruction of the ozone layer, one stops smiling.

What exactly is the ozone layer? This is a layer of ozone (an unstable allotrope of oxygen) found in the upper parts of the atmosphere. Its vital purpose is to protect us from the harmful ultraviolet radiations emitted by the sun. These radiations cause skin cancer, eye cataracts amongst other disorders.

Within the past century, the ozone layer has diminished rapidly due to the unchecked use of some household products containing chlorofluorocarbons or CFCs. These CFCs, on reaching the upper layers of the atmosphere, react with ultraviolet rays to form chlorine monoxide which causes the ozone molecules to break down. Similar effects are caused by bromine halocarbons and nitrous oxides from fertilizers. Surprisingly tiny quantities of these compounds can cause extensive damage to the ozone layer.

Other related effects are caused by most automobile exhaust fumes and the burning of petroleum fuels. These lead to the accumulation of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, which tends to prevent the heat from the sun from being reflected back into space, hence leading to the Greenhouse Effect otherwise known as global warming. The results of this may be catastrophic. For instance, the heat which has accumulated has caused a rise in the sea level. This is due to the melting of the ice caps in the polar regions. The consequence of this rise shall be widespread flooding, especially around the coastal regions of the world.

Several steps have been taken in an effort to curb the worldwide use of CFCs. In 1985, countries met for a United Nations Convention on protecting the ozone layer. Many developed countries have now banned products containing CFCs and many companies have begun manufacturing CFC free products.

However, despite these efforts, the question still boils down to us as individuals, What are we doing to protect our ozone layer? Few people realize what is happening and even many of those who do still do not think they can play an appreciable role. It is our duty to take care of the world God gave us. If we don't do it, then who will?

It is about time you and I stopped behaving like frogs and realized that the water in which we are sitting is almost boiling us to death. If everyone gets keen on checking that the products they buy are ozone friendly, then we can talk of protecting the ozone layer for us and generations to come.
