



Sathya Sai International
Organisation

MOTHER EARTH

The Earth – A Gift of God

1. The major religions all propagate the glorious message that Creation proclaims the Will of the Lord and that the Earth is a gift of God.
2. The Vedas proclaim, *"I am One. I shall become many."* In *Psalm 148*, it is said: *"Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded and they were created ..."* The Quran says, 30:37, *"And it is He who begins creation ..."*
3. Creation is borne of God, is sustained by God, and eventually dissolves back into God. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Lord Krishna says, 7:6, *"So I am the source and dissolution of the whole universe."* In Islam, it is believed that Allah is the Creator, Sustainer and Owner of all creation – the central concept of Islam is *Tawheed*, the unity of God.
4. In Hinduism and Buddhism, Creation is made up of combinations of the five elements of space, air, fire, water and earth, which are in the outer world and in man himself. The five elements are embodiments of Truth, Auspiciousness and Beauty (*Sathyam, Shivam, Sundaram*), which are attributes of God.
5. The five elements reveal the interconnectedness of all creation. In St. Francis of Assisi's *The Canticle of Brother Sun*, he called all creatures his brothers and sisters, acknowledging they are part of one interdependent family of Creation. This has profound significance.

"Recognising the five elements as God's gifts, their sanctity must be preserved. They must be made use of in a proper and befitting manner."

Sathya Sai Baba



Mother Earth

6. The Prithvi Sukta in the Atharva Veda says, *"Earth is my mother. I am her son."* Echoing this, the Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh declared with beautiful simplicity that the Earth is our mother, nourishing and protecting.

Man's Duty to God's Creation

7. Man is at the apex of God's Creation. As body, mind and Spirit, only man can conceive of God and realise that Divinity permeates *all* beings and objects in the universe. In Hinduism, it is recognised that animals and plants, mountains and rivers all form part of the Earth, which is of divine creation.
8. Romans 1:20 declares that God's eternal power and divine nature can be understood and seen through the things He has made. Sathya Sai Baba says God is to be realised by man through Nature.
9. All the major religions speak of man's unique role as the custodian of the Earth's riches and his obligation to oversee the wellbeing of the earth.
10. In his message on the *World Day of Peace*, 1 January 1990, Pope John Paul II said, *"Christians, in particular, realise that their responsibility within creation, and their duty towards nature and the Creator, are an essential part of their faith."*
- Pope Francis said in his Encyclical Letter, *Laudato Si'*, *"This responsibility for God's earth means that human beings, endowed with intelligence, must respect the laws of nature and the delicate equilibria existing between the creatures of this world ..."*
11. In Islam, man's role on earth is that of a trustee, *khalifa*, of God, who must act justly in accordance with Allah's laws, Quran 6:165. Man is a steward of the Earth, not its master,

and man is responsible for maintaining the unity of God's creation and the integrity of the earth.

12. In Judaism, man is the leader and custodian of the earth, but he is commanded to behave with justice and compassion in his interactions, to manifest *Tzedek*, or justice / righteousness.
13. Conquest of Nature is contrary to the *Dharma* taught by the Buddha.

Upsetting Nature's Balance

14. For thousands of years, man's oldest cultures understood their oneness and interdependence with Nature, and so they maintained a reverence and compassion for Nature. These cultures recognised the relationship of God, Nature, and man.



"Humanity follows the Earth, the Earth follows Heaven, Heaven follows the Tao, and the Tao follows what is natural."

Tao Te Ching

In Shinto, Japan's indigenous religion, rituals nurture purification to rejuvenate balance between deities, nature, and humans.

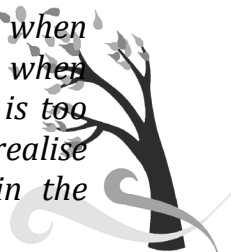
15. In the past century, uncontrolled desires and the reckless exploitation of natural resources have resulted in disturbances in the balance of Nature, leading to many natural calamities.
16. In his Encyclical Letter, Pope Francis lamented that man sees himself as the lord and master of the Earth, entitled to plunder her at will. *"The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of*

sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life."

17. The Islamic Foundation For Ecology And Environmental Sciences in 2015 added that man, though selected to be the steward, *khalifa*, on the Earth, has wreaked such corruption and devastation on it that life itself is endangered.

18. There is a piercing North American Osage saying:

"When you have polluted the last river, when you have caught the very last fish, and when you have cut down the very last tree, it is too bad that then, and only then, will you realise that you cannot eat all your money in the bank."



In Hinduism, it is recognised that Nature cannot be destroyed without humanity destroying itself.

19. Buddhists believe that the external environment is polluted because the internal environment in the mind is seriously damaged.

20. Man's understanding needs to be regained.

"In dealing with Nature, there are three requirements. The first is knowledge of the laws of Nature. The second is the skill to utilise the powers of Nature for human needs. The third is to maintain the balance among natural forces. It is the disturbance of this balance that has led to such consequences as soil erosion, pollution of the atmosphere, etc."

Sathya Sai Baba

21. The spiritual lapses of man account for the calamities that have resulted in upsetting of Nature's balance. *"Our present environmental crisis is in essence a spiritual crisis ..."*
Swami Tripurari

Understanding the Inter-dependence of all things

22. Hinduism teaches the interconnectedness of all things and the need for harmonious co-existence. The common good takes precedence over private gain, *Sarva Bhuta Hita*.

23. The Thai monk Buddhadasa Bikkhu explained that just as the sun, the moon and the stars live together as a cooperative, so do humans, animals, trees and the Earth. The Dalai Lama said: *"Because we all share this planet earth, we have to learn to live in harmony and peace with each other and with nature. This is not just a dream, but a necessity."*

24. In Judaism, *Tzedek* seeks to correct the imbalances that humans create in society and in Nature – this involves sustainable living and the equitable distribution of wealth and resources. *Halakhah* (Jewish law) prohibits wasteful consumption.

25. Islamic environmental ethics promote moderation, balance, and conservation – sustainable use – for future generations. Allah says:

"And We have willed you to be a community of the middle path (umatan wasatan)"
Qur'an 2:143

26. In the Yajur Veda, 5:43, it is commended, *"Do not disturb the sky and do not pollute the atmosphere."* Likewise, in the Rig Veda, 6:48:17, it is counselled, *"Do not cut trees, because they remove pollution."*

And in Charak Sanhita, it is declared that, *"Destruction of*

forests is taken as destruction of the state, and reforestation an act of rebuilding the state and advancing its welfare. Protection of animals is considered a sacred duty.” Divinity is present in all things.



“The rapid and excessive proliferation of industries, factories and automobiles with the attendant pollution of the atmosphere is responsible for the increasing incidence of diseases like eosinophilia, asthma, deafness, and pneumonia. ... science per se is not bad. What is necessary is for man to put it to proper and judicious use.”

Sathya Sai Baba

27. Collectively and individually, we all have a responsibility to care for Mother Earth. Sathya Sai Baba said, *“Love saves and serves ... Without love the universe is naught.”*

