



## WHY TREE PLANTING EXPRESSES OUR FAITH IN GOD

### THE EARTH

#### A Manifestation of God's Will

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All major religions affirm that creation proclaims the Will of the Lord and that the Earth is a gift of God.

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 ..."*

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

#### A Means to Know God

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On Earth, only humans can conceive of God and realize that Divinity permeates all beings and objects in the universe.

Lord Krishna told Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita, *"I am in the tree that you see. I am in the ocean. I am in the earth. See me in everything."*

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 realized by man through Nature.

### Understanding Nature's Balance

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For thousands of years, man's oldest indigenous civilizations understood their oneness and interdependence with Nature, and they maintained reverence and compassion for Nature. These cultures recognized the sacred 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

### Creating Imbalances in Nature

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Man, though the chosen steward, *khalifa*, on Earth, has, contrary to the Quran, wreaked corruption and devastation on it through waste, such that life itself is endangered.

Buddhists believe the external environment is polluted because the internal environment in the mind is damaged. In Judaism, *Tzedek* seeks to correct the imbalances that humans create in society and in Nature; *Halakhah* (Jewish law) prohibits wasteful consumption.

In Charak Sanhita, it is declared, *"Destruction of forests is taken as destruction of the state, and reforestation an act of*

*rebuilding the state and advancing its welfare.”* Sathya Sai Baba reminds man that the remedy for excessive carbon-dioxide in the atmosphere is intensive reforestation. It also requires protecting more trees.

## Trees Nurture Life

Trees are a protective cloak over the Earth. They allow the survival and nourishing of all life on Earth and they are home to many species. They produce pure atmospheric oxygen, moderate temperature, and give nuts and fruits, medicinal cures, wood for construction and heating, and much more.

Trees exist in their rich diversity as an interconnected, multi-specie family, actively communicating and caring for each other through a vast communication and nutrient exchange network beneath the ground. They model unity and harmony for us all.

The Buddha attained Enlightenment under the sacred Bodhi Tree. Africans believe the baobab tree represents the tree of life. The Shinto religion gives special reverence to pine trees into which it is said the souls of gods descend.

## Trees As Teachers

*“Trees teach the lesson of sacrifice in that they not only bear fruits while they are alive, but also give away their body to be used as firewood once the life goes out of them. Amongst teachers, a tree is the greatest.”* – Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Trees are the ultimate bearers of silence. They radiate silence while absorbing

sound. They stand resolute, poised, in a state of equanimity, ready for whatever comes their way. They are shining examples of what the highest state of our human lives can be.

The roots represent our foundation, which is strongest if connected to the Divine as the source of happiness. The trunk represents the physical/emotional body, which, resting on firm foundations, is not easily shaken by turmoil in the world. The crown represents our spirit of selfless giving, as trees provide shade and fruits to all.

