



From Ego to Eco

Journey to Oneness through Nature

Summer Conference 2019



What is the ideal relationship between mother and child?

What is the mother's duty?

What is the child's duty?

Discuss and share back





Sathya Sai Baba speaks of five mothers:

1. Deha-mata (physical mother)
2. **Go-mata (cow that gives sustaining milk)**
3. **Bhoo-mata (the land which grows the crops which feed the body)**
4. Dhesa-mata (one's native country)
5. Veda-mata (spiritual knowledge and wisdom)

Two of these mothers directly pertain to Nature, Earth



Like a physical mother, Nature gives many gifts that allow us to live and thrive



Sathya Sai Baba's teachings

Nature is the manifestation of God – Nature is the effect and God is the cause. *(SSS, 1996)*

Recognise the immanence of the Divine in the entire cosmos. *(SSS, 1996)*

Nature is the panorama of God's manifold majesty – it is the gateway to liberation. *(SSS, 1970)*



Sathya Sai Baba's teachings

God is to be worshipped by man, to be realised by man through Nature. *(SSS, 1967)*

From birth to death, man pursues fleeting pleasures by exploiting, despoiling, desecrating Nature, forgetting that it is the property of God. *(SSS, 1985)*

Natural calamities like earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, droughts and floods result from disturbances in the balance of Nature caused by reckless exploitation of natural resources. *(SSS, 1997)*





Nature, all of creation, is our family

Play Video: The Land Owns Us

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w0sWIVR1hXw>

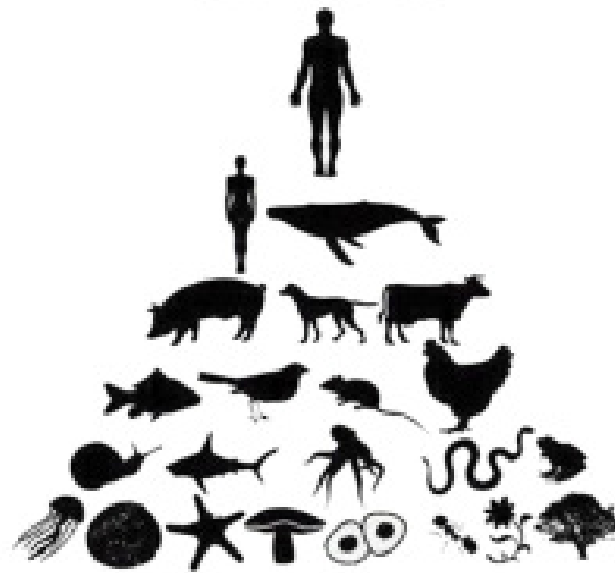
Discussion:

How do you relate to and treat Nature?

How is your relationship with Mother Earth similar / different from how you relate to and treat your physical mother?



As a society we view man as superior to Nature



Man thinks he has dominion over Nature, that he can exploit the Earth's resources.





Our ego-centric relationship with Nature is destroying ourselves and the planet

12.6 million deaths globally to environment related reasons

Global temperatures set to increase by 4 degrees by 2100

1 million poisoned yearly from pesticides used to grow food

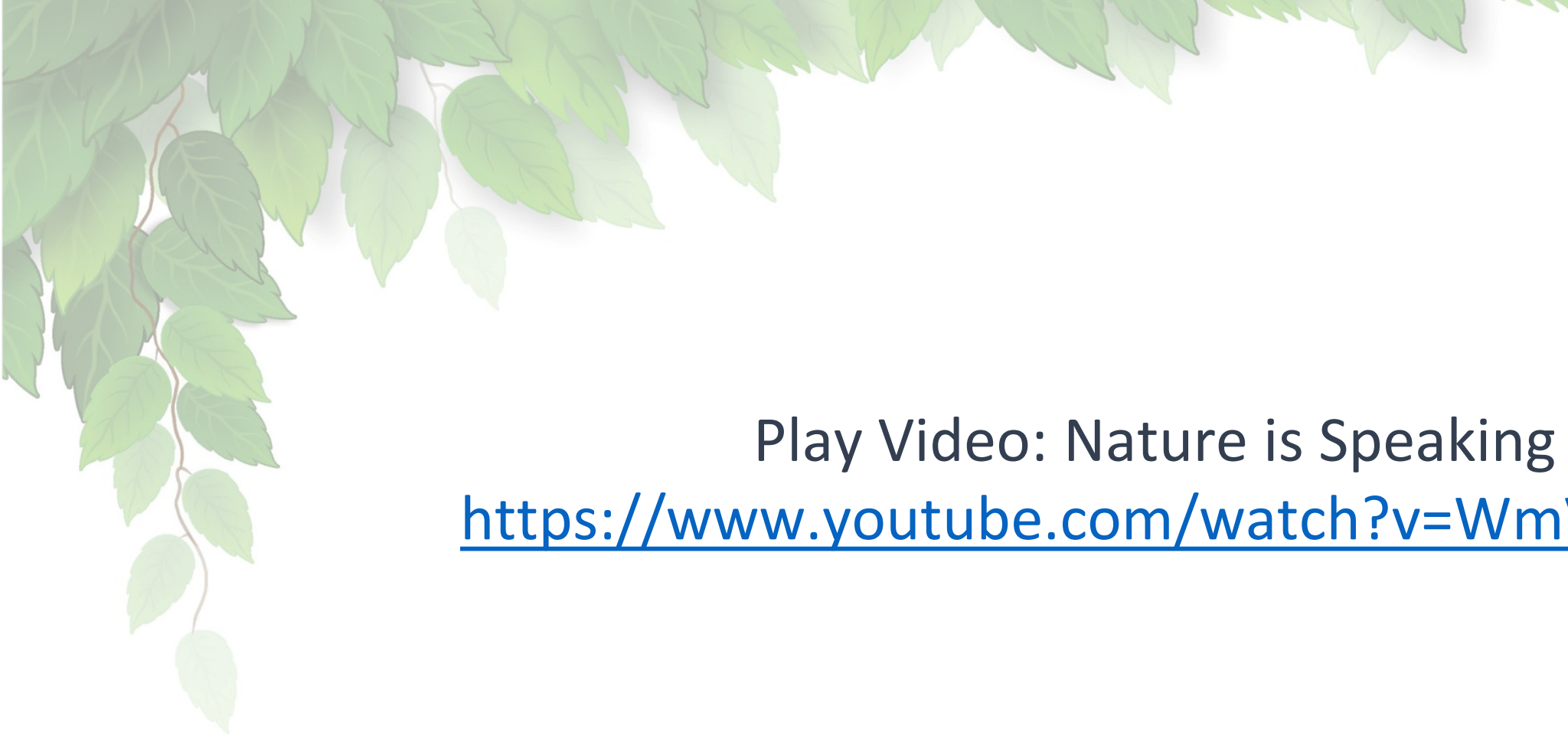
Up to 13 million tonnes of plastic waste enter ocean every year

1 in 9 deaths caused by air pollution

2 billion people drink water contaminated by faeces

Humans have wiped out 60% of animals since 1970, says WWF





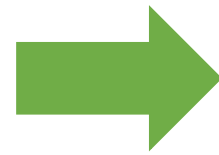
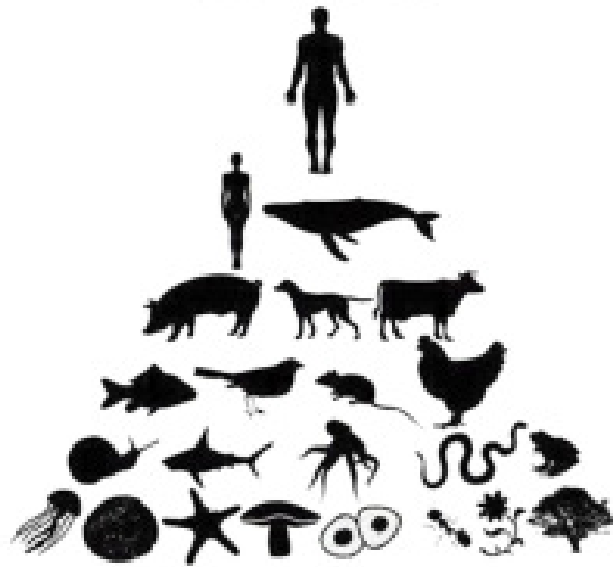
Play Video: Nature is Speaking

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WmVLcj-XKnM>

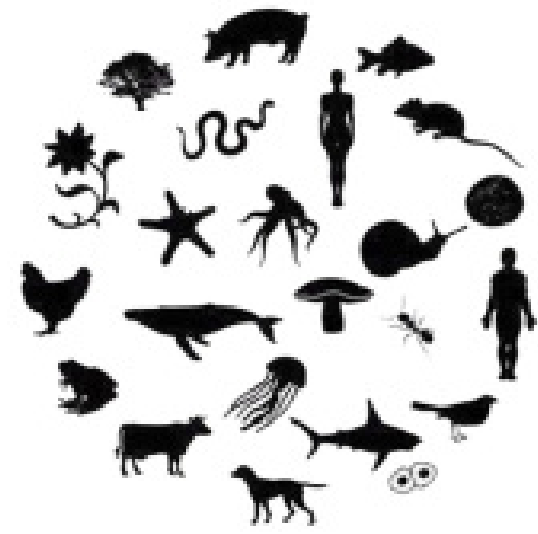


We need a collective shift from Ego to Eco – where man realises he is interconnected and interdependent on Nature

EGO



ECO



The motivation in our actions have to shift from Ego to Eco

EGO



ECO

Current Behaviour

Human Centric Reason for Change

Non-Human Centric Reason for Change

Eat meat for its taste

Eat less meat because it is fatty

Eat no meat because animals are inherently divine like us

Use plastic for its convenience

Reduce plastic usage because it is expensive / we have problems disposing it

Reduce plastic usage because It is polluting our land, water, and suffocating our fellow living creatures.

Consume high energy to satisfy all perceived needs

'Dirty energy' production causes climate change and pollution, which in turn causes diseases which harm me, therefore save energy

We are a part of Mother Earth, which is inhabited by many interconnected beings. We should consume less energy to save all fellow beings that inhabit our shared home





Discussion

Where in your life do you notice ego-centric behaviour?

How do we bring about our eco-friendly behaviour?



Divine guidance from Sathya Sai Baba

Since the five elements are saturated with divinity, use them reverentially and with humility and gratefulness. *(SSS, 1996)*

Do not pollute God's creation. *(SSS, 1996)* Man's health and man's mind is being affected by the pollution. *(SSS, 1994)*

The world is not created for mere enjoyment. Abusing Nature and forgetting his basic nature, man is going against the purpose of creation. Man has not recognised the integral relationship between humanity and Nature. *(SSS, 1992)*



Divine guidance from Sathya Sai Baba

There should be no excessive indulgence in any desire, whether it be food or other necessities. (SSS, 1997) Man should put a ceiling on his desires. (SSS, 2001)

Purify the environment, which is affected by pollution of air, water and food. Reduce the use of automobiles and control the emission of harmful industrial effluents. (SSS, 1993) Grow trees to control atmospheric pollution. (SSS, 1993)

Avoidance of pollution of the atmosphere or natural resources like rivers is one way an enterprise practices non-violence (SSS, 1990)



The Human Values Tree

Sathya (truth) is the seed, this world of matter and energy results from the germination of the seed. The fostering of *Sathya* by *Prema* results in this creation.



As the seed becomes a tree, it follows a set of laws and principles, which is *Dharma*. Practical non-violence (*Ahimsa*) is the non-violation of natural laws.



Shānti or Peace is the fruit of the Human Value Tree.



Envirocare *Sadhanas* & Practices

Reconnect & Review

- Reconnect with Nature by spending time in Nature; acknowledge the interdependence and inter-connectedness of everything.
- Reflect God's love in your life by including love for Nature.
- Cleanse the atmosphere with good thoughts, prayer, devotional singing, *mantras* and meditation; achieve inner balance and balance with Nature.
- Create inner peace and outer cleanliness by practising the five universal human values, unity in thought, word and deed, and selfless service.
- Live a simple, eco-friendly life as a spiritual practice.
- Evaluate the environmental impact of your habits and desires.
- Seek happiness that does not come from material wealth, comfort and excessive consumption.
- Avoid animal products that involve killing or inhumane treatment.
- Respect the Divine spark in everything and practice compassion towards Nature and all beings.

Reduce & Refuse

- Everything you need is a gift from God; consume responsibly and in moderation.
- Do not waste natural resources - place a Ceiling on Desires and be content.
- Refuse gratefully when you are offered less environmentally friendly choices.
- Do not waste energy. To reduce your carbon footprint –
 - switch off lights and devices when not in use,
 - reduce your use of cars and flights;
 - use renewable energy sources;
 - minimise your use of fossil fuels;
 - plant more trees;
 - be vegetarian, and consume locally grown, organic food or grow your own.
- Do not waste food: reduce your consumption and share any extras with others.
- Do not waste your money: purchase only what you 'need' and not what you 'want'.
- Do not waste your time: undertake green service projects, attend eco-friendly events and outreach projects, and do things that help environmental sustainability.
- Do not waste water: use the minimum you require every time and reuse where possible.
- Reduce or eliminate your use of plastic items; discover alternatives and use them.
- Use whatever you save to serve others and Mother Earth.

Reuse & Recycle

- Accept recycled items and purchase second hand items; share what you do not need.
- Donate your used quality clothes and household items to charity or opportunity shops or give them to friends.
- Compost your waste food and yard clippings.
- Recycle packaging, such as cans, glass bottles, plastic containers, paper, etc.
- Sort and reuse/recycle your other suitable waste.
- Recycle useful items such as your mobile phones, reading glasses and printer cartridges.
- Responsibly dispose of your hazardous waste, such as automotive liquids, paint products, batteries, light bulbs, household/garden chemicals, etc.
- Repair items you use instead of replacing them, whenever possible.
- Learn from Nature, where nothing is wasted.

Refer to SSIO –

<http://www.sathyasai.org/ya/serve-the-planet>

Environmental Sustainability – Practical Tips for Daily Use:

<http://sathyasai.org/environmental-sustainability>



How can each of us cultivate the feeling of oneness with Nature and transform this relationship?

Discussion:

Which of your daily *sadhanas* (spiritual practices) relate to the care for the environment?

What impact have they had on you? What transformation have you experienced?



How environmentally conscious are you?

- How often do you use public transport vs. a private car?
- How often do you take a plane (a huge carbon footprint)?
- How much do you buy because you are self-conscious about your appearance / to please others – luxuries, clothes, bags, accessories?
- How often do you upgrade your phone / car / computer? The batteries are a real problem.
- Do you refuse, reuse, recycle?
- Do you consume animal products, especially from animals that have been ill-treated?
- How much waste do you produce? Do you compost?
- Which of the Earth's resources can you consume less of each day?



A few facts...

- A four hour round plane trip produces 2 to 3 tonnes of Carbon Dioxide, the average individual carbon budget is 1.2 tonnes
- 1 kg of cheese produces 13.5kg of Carbon Dioxide, one kilogram of lentils produces 0.9 kg of Carbon Dioxide
- 2,000 to 3,000 cocoons are required to make a pound of silk, billions of cocoons are destroyed each year. Most materials contain some petroleum based synthetic material. Cotton is best!
- Our use of diesel vehicles and energy from non renewable sources is driving temperature increases. Cities including Dhaka, Jakarta, Mumbai, New York, Rio will be among the first to drown



A few more facts ...

- Globally, we use 1 million new plastic bags per minute, which uses 2.2 billion gallons of oil each year. Plastic debris an estimated 100,000 marine mammals annually, as well as millions of birds and fishes.
- Cows are artificially inseminated to produce calves and aggressively milked as soon as their calves are born, to meet the demand for milk and dairy products.





An interconnected world: How each of us can change the world around us.

Play video: How Wolves Change Rivers:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ysa5OBhXz-Q>



Moving forward

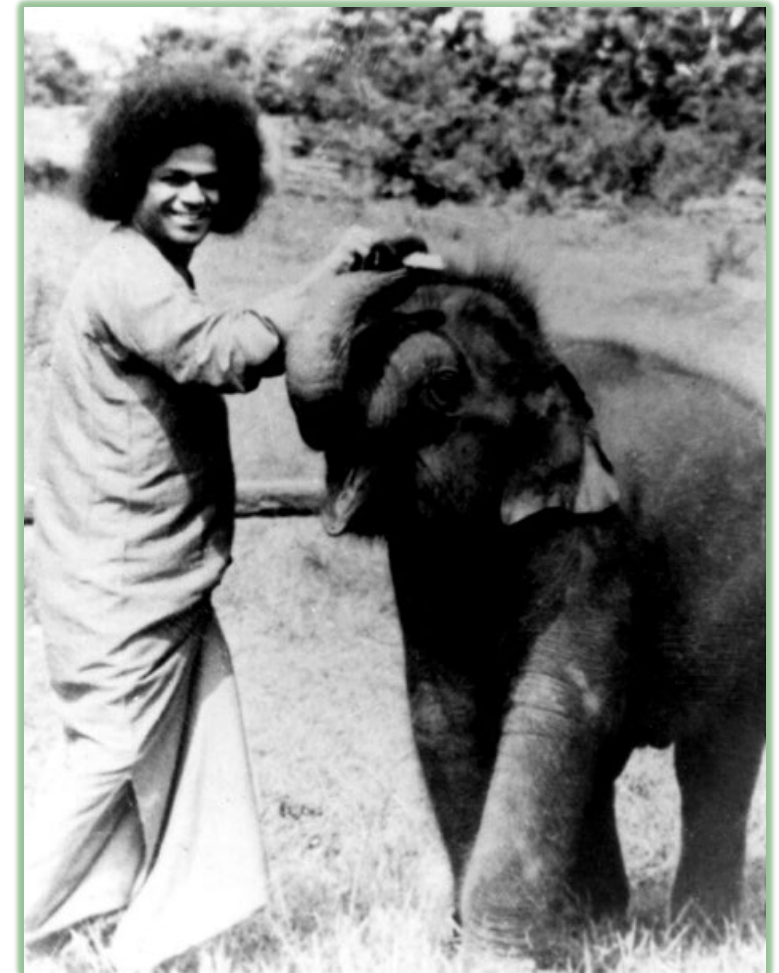
1. Communication of the environmental visions at grass roots level.
2. Study Circles – the foundations of change in every Sathya Sai Centre/Group must come from source. The Study Circle can be a spiritual self-audit.
3. Go Green activities in Sathya Sai Centres – reassessing practices and activities in every Sathya Sai Centre/Group. Incorporate 'green' practices into SSIO activities.
4. Education and Human Values – SSE and Young Adults programme take up the study and participate in 'green' practices at home and in the Sathya Sai Centre/Group.
5. Public Outreach – emphasising the practical application of EnviroCare.



Closing reflections

Sharing of insights,
learnings

Expression of gratitude
to Mother Earth





Appendix

Greed is destroying Nature's balance and Man himself – some facts

1. WHO report in 2016: 12.6 million deaths globally, or 23%, due to the environment.
2. 2018 report of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services: Degradation of land due to human activities negatively impacts well-being of at least 3.2 billion people. Including loss of forest cover.
3. UN Environment Programme 2017 report: About 19 million premature deaths occur annually because of the way we extract natural resources and harm the environment to support production and consumption.
4. The WHO's 2016 report: Air pollution – ambient and indoor – responsible for 1 in every 9 deaths annually. 2017 UNEP report: main sources of outdoor pollution are fossil fuel emissions from burning coal, oil and natural gas. Heavy metals pollution impairs neurological development and harms the nervous, digestive and immune systems, lungs and kidneys.
5. UNEP 2013 report: 1 million people globally poisoned yearly by pesticides used to grow foods. Land pollution also has profound impact on wildlife due to loss of natural habitats and food supplies. Pharmaceutical pollution gives rise to antimicrobial resistance in humans.
6. Water pollution: Between 4.8 million tonnes and 12.7 million tonnes of plastic waste enter the ocean very year. Globally, at least 2 billion people due drinking water contaminated with faeces.
7. Climate change: If greenhouse gas emissions continue, by 2100 the global average air temperature will warm 4C, impacting human health, food production, low lying communities, cause loss of many species, and increase extreme weather events, including heat waves.
8. Melting ice sheets and glaciers, and thermal expansion of seawater as oceans warm, will cause sea levels to rise, risk submerging coastal communities. Will contaminate coastal fresh water sources. Over 275 million people will be affected.
9. Economic costs from impact on human health, productivity losses, health-care costs and ecosystem damage will be in the hundreds of billions in US\$.

Role of Human Values to Protect the Planet

Human Values inspired Individual Transformation

1. The fundamentals of creation are the five elements (*pancha mahābhūta*) and three attributes (*trigunas*). These from Consciousness. Mankind is intricately connected with the entire creation.

THE HUMAN VALUE TREE

2. *Sathya* (truth) is the seed, this experiential world of matter and energy is the germination of the seed. The fostering of *Sathya* by *Prema* results in this creation. As the seed becomes a tree, it follows a set of laws and principles, which is *Dharma*. *Dharma* is how this materialisation is arranged.
3. Practical non-violence (*Ahimsa*) is the non-violation of natural laws – non-violation of *Dharma*. *Shānti* or Peace is the fruit of the Human Value Tree.

Sathya Sai Education in Human Values

4. The first layer of *Educare* is creation as a manifestation of divinity. Creation commences with the sound “Om” and divinity manifests as the five elements of Space, Fire, Air, Water and Earth. Strong attachments to the material distort thinking and so humans engage in activities that pollute the elements and creation.
5. The second layer of *Educare* is to bring out the latent divinity in man through appropriate enquiry and practice. Management of the senses and the mind to discern the sacred basis of creation. *Educare* supports the development of *buddhi* (intellect, discriminative faculty) and the drawing out of human values from within.
6. Conscious living and commitment to living mindfully and consuming the Earth’s natural resources moderately reduces pollution and waste and protects the planet as a spiritual practice. Sathya Sai Baba called this Ceiling on Desires.
7. The third layer of *Educare* is a pedagogic tool which utilises the above two concepts to underpin the approach in Sathya Sai Education.

Teachings of the Saints and Sages – some illustrations

“The Earth is our mother, nourishing and protecting us in every moment – giving us air to breathe, fresh water to drink, food to eat and healing herbs to cure us when we are sick. When we breathe with mindfulness ... With every breath we can experience communion.” – Thich Nhat Hanh

“As stewards of God’s creation, we are called to make the Earth a beautiful garden for the human family. When we destroy our forests, ravage our soil and pollute our seas, we betray that noble calling.” – Pope Francis

“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. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she ‘groans in travail’.” – Rom 8:22

We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. Gen 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.”

“The purpose of life is to be part of all that there is. ... we are connected to everything else, and the proof is being alive. You’re one with everything there is.” - Bob Randall, Yankunytjatjara Aboriginal Elder, Australia

“Our species, though selected to be a caretaker or steward (khalīfah) on the earth, has been the cause of such corruption and devastation on it that we are in danger [of] ending life as we know it on our planet. How will we face our Lord and Creator?” – The Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences, 2015.

“Only through love and compassion is the protection and preservation of Nature possible. But both these qualities are fast diminishing in human beings. In order to feel real love and compassion, one must realise the oneness of the life force that sustains and is the substratum of the entire universe.” – Sri Mata Amritanandamayi Devi