



SPIRITUAL SOLUTIONS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Sathya Sai International Organisation's Executive Summary

The Sathya Sai International Organisation's (SSIO) vision is that we: 1) recognise our interconnectedness with Nature; 2) use Nature's resources sparingly and with gratitude; and 3) demonstrate compassion and minimise harm to Nature.

Traditional cultures and faiths around the world all propagate the message that Nature proclaims the Will of God and that humanity should live in harmony with Nature and care for Mother Earth. Increasingly, scientific and technological advances have distanced us from this close spiritual relationship. We have exploited the Earth's resources and degraded our land, rivers, oceans, and atmosphere, until it now affects us directly and significantly.

Sathya Sai Baba said the world is losing its balance because people, out of selfishness and excessive desires, are robbing the Earth of its resources and harming all life. The Earth is reacting with earthquakes, storms, etc., reaping destruction on whole communities of people around the world. It is said that the environmental crisis is a spiritual crisis, and the pollution we see outside is a reflection of the pollution inside which has infected our hearts and minds. We cannot continue to abuse God's creation and at the same time seek God's love, grace and protection. Change must begin from within each one of us.

Firstly, we will need to individually and collectively transform our relationship with Nature through the practice of the five universal human values

of Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love, and Non-violence. These values are common to all spiritual traditions and underpin the norms of morality in secular societies. They provide a comprehensive and practical framework to guide our behavior in all aspects of our interaction with the environment.

Truth leads us to want to know how our actions harm the environment and ourselves, and how to apply that knowledge. Right Conduct leads us to transform our bad habits and consume moderately and with wisdom. Non-violence teaches us not to pollute and promotes respect for animals and plants. Peace leads to self-discipline and humility. Finally, Love inspires caring and compassion for Nature.

Secondly, by placing a ceiling on our desires, we will consume less and live more simply, avoiding the over-utilisation of Earth's resources. We will use our savings of time, energy, money and food for the benefit of others. This self-sacrifice and service frees us from the pursuit of happiness through material pleasures, which can only be limited and temporary. With a ceiling on our desires, we tread more lightly on Earth, and reduce our carbon footprint.

The maxims "Love All, Serve All" and "Help Ever, Hurt Never" guide our treatment of one another and our relationship with Nature.

Change must begin with each of us. The impetus for change increases as we recognise the omnipresence of God in Nature.

"Cultivate the divine qualities of love, compassion, humility and reverence for all living beings, reverence towards the Earth and all the other elements. You can thus draw upon yourself the grace of God and render your life beneficial and fruitful."

- Sathya Sai Baba, 25 June 1989

