



## The Call of Nature

According to ancient scriptures, human beings have five sheaths: the environment, the physical body, the mind or the mental sheath, the intuitive sheath and *purushartha*, or the blissful state. Thus, environment is our first body.



Environment consciousness is inbuilt in the human system. Historically, nature (or *prakriti*) has always been adored in India; mountains, rivers, the sun, the moon, the trees have always been honoured. It's only when we start moving away from nature that we start polluting nature. We need to revive the ancient practice of honouring and conserving nature.

The popular belief is that damage to ecology is an inevitable byproduct of technological progress. But it is not necessarily so; in fact, a sustainable growth is assured only if the ecology is protected. Science and technology should not be regarded as anti-environment; rather, we need to find ways of maintaining harmony in the environment while progressing in science and technology. This is the biggest challenge of this century.

Just observe nature; the five elements of nature are opposed to each other. Water destroys fire, fire destroys air... There are so many species in nature – birds, reptiles, mammals; all these different species are hostile towards each other and yet nature balances them out. Never in a forest does a specie of birds get wiped out. Neither will you find pollution in any forest despite so many animals living there together. We need to learn from nature; how

nature digests waste material and produces something more beautiful. Similarly, it is not technology and science that pose a hazard, but the waste material generated by technological and scientific processes. We need to find methods to consume the waste.

Separately, we also need to develop non-polluting processes, such as harnessing of solar energy. There are several other fields where there are no holes, it is the greed of some companies that don't share the environment friendly methods with everybody.

In reality, man's greed is the greatest pollutant. Greed stops man from sharing with others. Greed also obstructs preservation of ecology; man is so greedy, he wants to make quick profits and achieve quick results. Whilst being aware of methods to prevent pollution, he may not act upon them because they cost in some manner. This greed not only pollutes the gross, physical environment but also contaminates the subtle atmosphere; it stimulates negative emotions in the subtle mind.

These negative emotions impact the minds of all the people around; if one person is angry and agitated, the anger and agitation does not stay limited to that one person but rubs off onto all those whom he comes in contact with. These negative vibrations, once compounded, give rise to unrest in society. Negative feelings of hatred, anger, jealousy are the root causes of all disasters and misery in the world, whether they are economical, political or social in nature. Most of the wars are triggered off by such feelings and war is always accompanied by waste and natural disasters which take ages to balance out.

We need to attend to the human psyche which causes pollution, whether physical or emotional. If compassion and care are kindled within the self, they reflect in the environment; a sense of sacredness follows. People should be encouraged to treat the planet as sacred, to treat trees and rivers as sacred, to treat people as sacred, and to see God in nature and in people. This will foster sensitivity; and a sensitive person can't but care for nature. It is basically insensitivity that makes a person act callously towards environment. If a person is sensitive, he will nurture the environment, thereby eradicating pollution.

Spirituality elevates one's consciousness and checks that greed which leads to environmental degradation. It promotes a sense of caring and commitment for the whole planet. Spirituality is what cleanses greed, feverishness and small-mindedness in a person; it leads him to honour nature.

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