

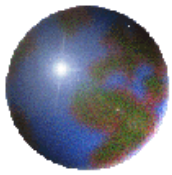
Educators' Society for Heritage of India ईशा

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Spiritual Aspect of Environment

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President - ESHA

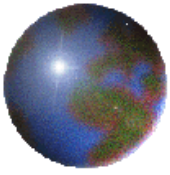




Outline

- ✚ Spiritual Understanding of the Environment is deeply rooted in the concept of the Creation
- ✚ Lets start at the source of it all
- ✚ Fundamental Concept:
 - ✚ The Creator and the Creation are not separate
 - ✚ Therefore, Creation is as Sacred as the Creator





Origin of the Universe

- ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमदच्यते
पूर्णं पश्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥ ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः

Source: Brihad-aranyaka Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda

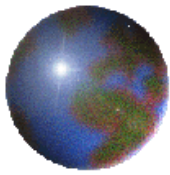
- Om Purnam-adah Purnam-idam Purnāt Purnam udachyaté
Pūrnasya Pūrnām-ādāya Pūrnām-éva avashisyaté. Om Shāntih Shāntih Shāntih

Om (the Primordial Sound of the origin of the universe (Big-bang))

- That (Brahman) is complete, or all-inclusive (Infinite)
This (created universe) also is complete (Infinite)
From That Infinite Brahman arose This Infinite universe
Yet, That Brahman remains complete (Infinite).

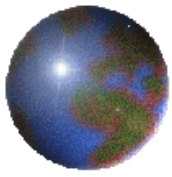
Om Peace, Peace, Peace.

- Mathematically, this is the definition of Infinity.



Origin of the Universe

- ✿ **Brahman is the Infinite Energy Source**
 - that existed before the Big Bang,
 - that exists now as the Universe,
 - and that will exist after the Pralay.
- ✿ **Origin of the Universe:**
Infinite Energy transformed into Matter and
 - **Physical Energy** = Heat, light, electricity, magnetism, gravity, electrons, protons, and
 - **Spiritual Energy** = love, devotion, compassion, intelligence and **cosmic consciousness** that pervades the universe



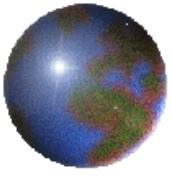
Creation of Panch Mahābhūta

(Five Macro-elements)

Fundamental Reality of Creation

Source: Tattvabodhah (Translated by Swami Dayananda Saraswati, Arsha Vidya Gurukulam)

- ⊗ Aspect of Brahman = Māyā or Prakriti (primordial energy)
- ⊗ Prakriti created **Space**
- ⊗ From Space — **Air** (Gaseous combustible cloud)
- ⊗ From Air — **Fire** (with heat and light)
- ⊗ From Fire — **Water** (liquids)
- ⊗ From Water — **Solid Earth**, oceans, and life
- ⊗ **Conclusion:**
Panch Mahābhūta are Divine manifestation of Brahman
- ⊗ At human level, **Prana = Life** & Prana is Air we breathe
- ⊗ By weight, the average human adult male is ~ **80%** water



Creation through Spiritual Cooperation

✿ Geeta karm Yoga Chapter 3 v 10

सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः ।
अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वमेष वोऽस्त्विष्टकामधुक् ॥ 10॥

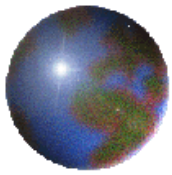
✿ **Sun shines ...Life wont exist without the Sun !**

✿ **Moon**

✿ **Earth**

✿ **Forests**



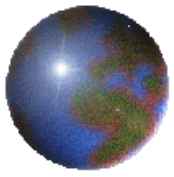


Creation and Cooperation

The entire cosmos is a cooperative

- ☉ The sun, the moon, and the stars function as a cooperative
- ☉ The same is true for humans, animals, trees on Earth.
- ☉ When we realize that the world is a mutually interdependent, cooperative enterprise — then we can build a noble environment.
- ☉ If our lives are not based on this truth, then we shall perish.” —**Buddha.dāsa Bhikkhu**

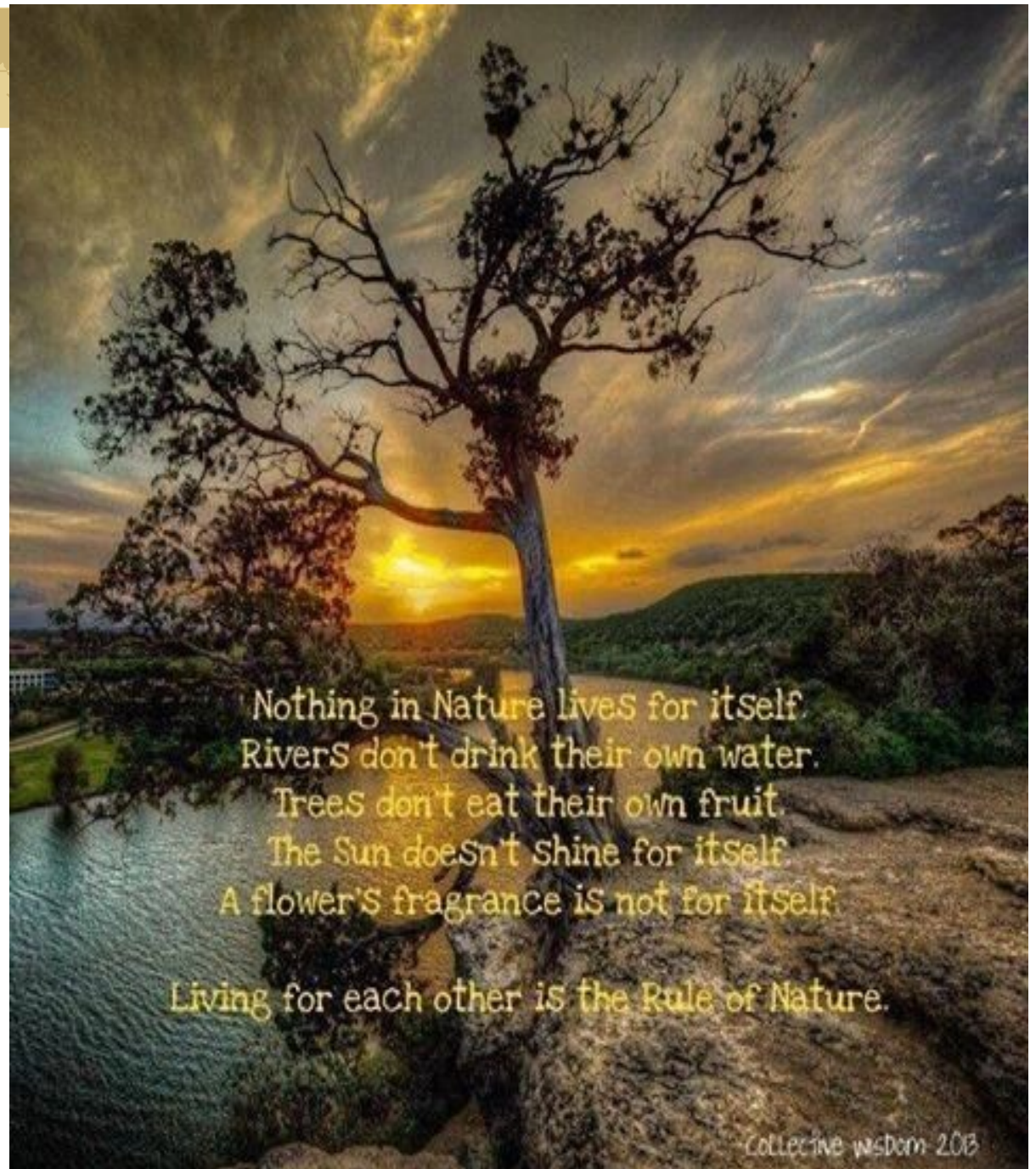




Vedic Ethic of Environment

**Nothing in Nature
Lives for itself**

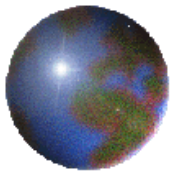
**Living for Each
Other is the
Ethic of Nature**



Nothing in Nature lives for itself.
Rivers don't drink their own water.
Trees don't eat their own fruit.
The Sun doesn't shine for itself.
A flower's fragrance is not for itself.

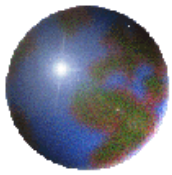
Living for each other is the Rule of Nature.

Collective wisdom 2013



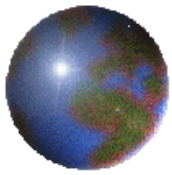
Vedic Environmental Ethic

- ❖ **Mother Earth is sacred** Goddess earth, Bhudevi
- ❖ **All rivers are sacred**: Yamunā, Gangā, Sarasvatī, Sindhu, Brahm-putra, and Narmadā, Krishnā, Kāverī rivers in South India
- ❖ **Mountains**: Kailāsh is abode of Lord Siva,
 - many places of pilgrimage (Tirtha),
 - abode of many saints, yogis, meditators
- ❖ **Forests**: Great significance of Forests in Vedic texts and traditions; abode of many saints, yogis, Gurus (teachers); Gurukula (schools); Vānprastha Ashram, ...
- ❖ **Every book is sacred**: an aspect of Saraswati



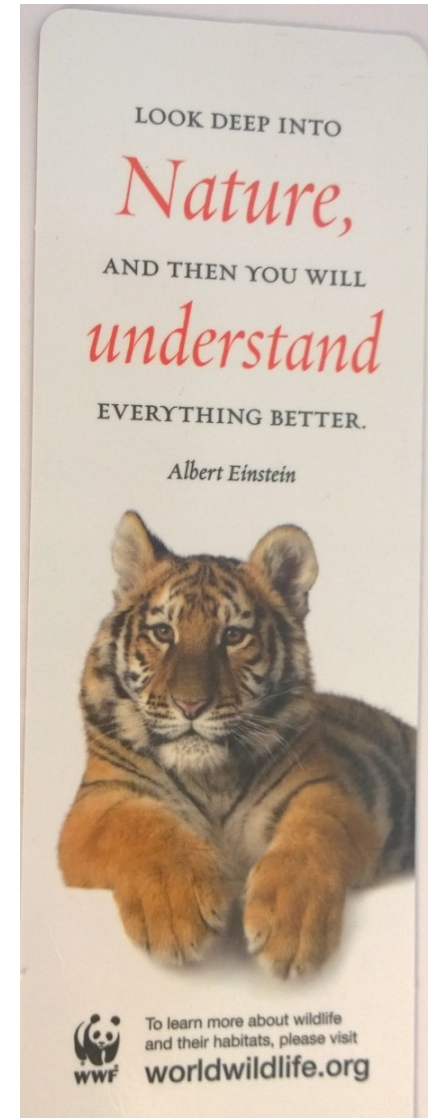
Universal Reciprocity

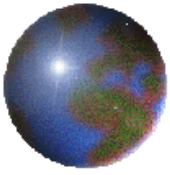
- ✿ We are a part of a highly organized **cosmic order called Ṛta**.
- ✿ There is a sense of obligation, a sense of reciprocity, that if you (humans) give back to Dévās (Sun, Moon, Earth, Rivers...) you will continue to get the blessings and bounties from Dévās.
- ✿ **Devās are the Divine Entities whose cooperation makes life possible on planet earth.**
- ✿ Examples: Grow a crop, make compost, put back in soil
- ✿ If you cut a tree, you plant a tree.
- ✿ If you clear a patch of forest to cultivate, you plant an equal size patch of land (that's not cultivable) with trees.
- ✿ **The Chipko movement** – made famous by Chipko women's commitment to “**hugging trees**” in their community to protect trees from clear-cutting the forests by greedy interests
- ✿ The tree hugging idea also spread to Northwest USA to halt clear cutting of forests by greedy corporations.



Study of Nature

- ❖ Many environmentalists, scientists and philosophers have been deeply influenced by the Vedic vision of Nature and Divinity.





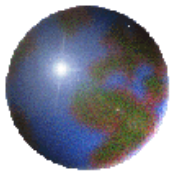
Eshāvāsyam

- ✦ ishāvāsyam idam sarvam yat kincha jagatyām jagat
tena tyaktena bhunjithā mā gridhah kasyasvid dhanam

Source: Isha Upanishad 1.1

Sacred Nature Conservancy

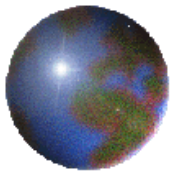
- ✦ The Almighty is Omnipresent, pervading every thing in the universe including planet earth (the oceans, rivers, forests, mountains, air, water, space, atmosphere) and all living beings
- ✦ Take only what you need from the planet earth
- ✦ sacrifice greed so every one's needs are also met
- ✦ Do not plunder, do not hoard
- ✦ Whose property is it after all? It all belongs to Brahman.
“Mother Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's needs,
but not every man's greed.” — Mahatma Gandhi



Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam

The whole world is One Family

- ⊕ Everything on Earth grew from mother Earth, air, water...
- ⊕ Thus, all living being belong to the Family of Mother Earth
- ⊕ the whole world is One Family includes not only humans, but all living creatures and the five elements of nature
- ⊕ There is an interconnected web of life on earth, including the earth, the cosmos, and all the living beings
- ⊕ "Our lives are inextricably interwoven with the natural world through every breath we take, the water we drink, and the food we eat. When the Earth becomes sick, we become sick, because we are part of her."

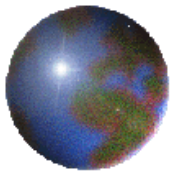


Planet Earth is Rapidly Changing

Forests are being cut. Glaciers and Icebergs are receding fast. Ocean levels are rising. Weather patterns are changing.

As the Arctic roasts, Alaska bakes in one of its warmest winters ever. Washington Post Feb 23.

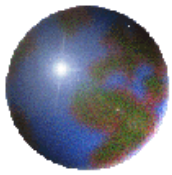




How to Live in Harmony with nature

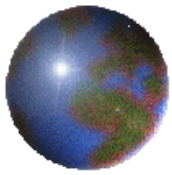
Americans make up only 5% of the global population but consume (use, abuse & waste) 25% of the earth's resources.

- ⊕ **Reduce consumption** of things injurious to air, water, land
Example: Use less power, water, paper, plastic, and harmful chemicals like fertilizers, pesticides, herbicide...
Reduce size of lawn to half; plant trees in other half.
Reduce playing golf; spend time in parks.
Reduce driving, car-pool; turndown thermostat 2 degrees
- Maximize Use of Natural sources: solar panels, rain water
- ⊕ **REUSE** – Don't throw away products after one use
Example: carry a reusable grocery bag.
- ⊕ **RECYCLE** – every thing that is recyclable.



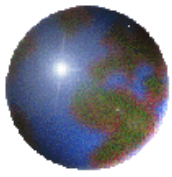
Ahimsa Paramo Dharma

- ✚ Non-violence is the greatest Dharma
- ✚ It includes non-violence to any living being and to mother Earth and to the elements of nature: air, water,...
- ✚ Reduce Fertilizer/Herbicide/Pesticide use:
Eat organic, locally grown, whole foods.
That's good for Environment & good for health.



Ahimsa > Vegetarianism

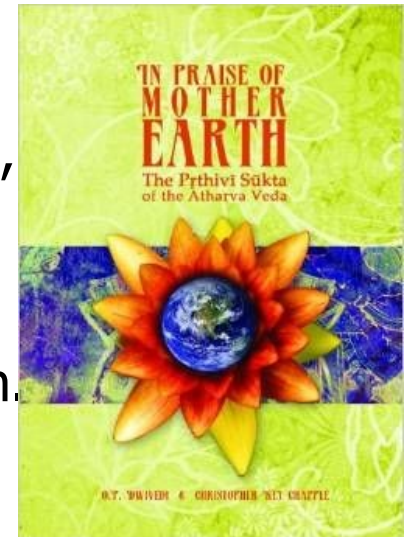
- ✚ **Reduce/eliminate Meat consumption**
- ✚ **Meat industry is the biggest polluter of environment**
- ✚ Livestock production accounts for 18 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, including 9 percent of carbon dioxide and 37 percent of methane gas emissions worldwide, according to the [Livestock, Environment and Development \(LEAD\) Initiative](#)
- ✚ Meat production is **projected to double by 2020** due to increased per capita global consumption of meat and population growth.
- ✚ These trends will have major consequences on the global environment. Vast transfers of "virtual" energy, water and nutrients will occur among nations that will have large impacts on local and distant environments.
- ✚ **Meat consumption leads to many diseases**
- ✚ **Plant food: good for environment & good for health.**

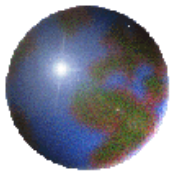


Prithvi Sukdam of Atharva Veda

(Prayers to Mother Earth)

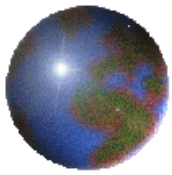
- ❁ Mother Earth is a Living Entity, a divine entity, a Goddess
- ❁ We touch the floor before getting out of bed every morning and ask BhuDevi to forgive for trampling on her body.
- ❁ Prithvi Sukdam has prayers to Bhudevi
 - ❑ We venerate Mother earth
the sustainer and preserver of forests, vegetation,
and all things that are held together firmly.
She is the source of a stable environment.
 - ❑ O Mother earth!
You are the world for us and we are your children.
Empower us to speak in one accord,
steer us to live in peace and harmony,
and guide us in our behavior so that
we have cordial and gracious relationships with all other people.





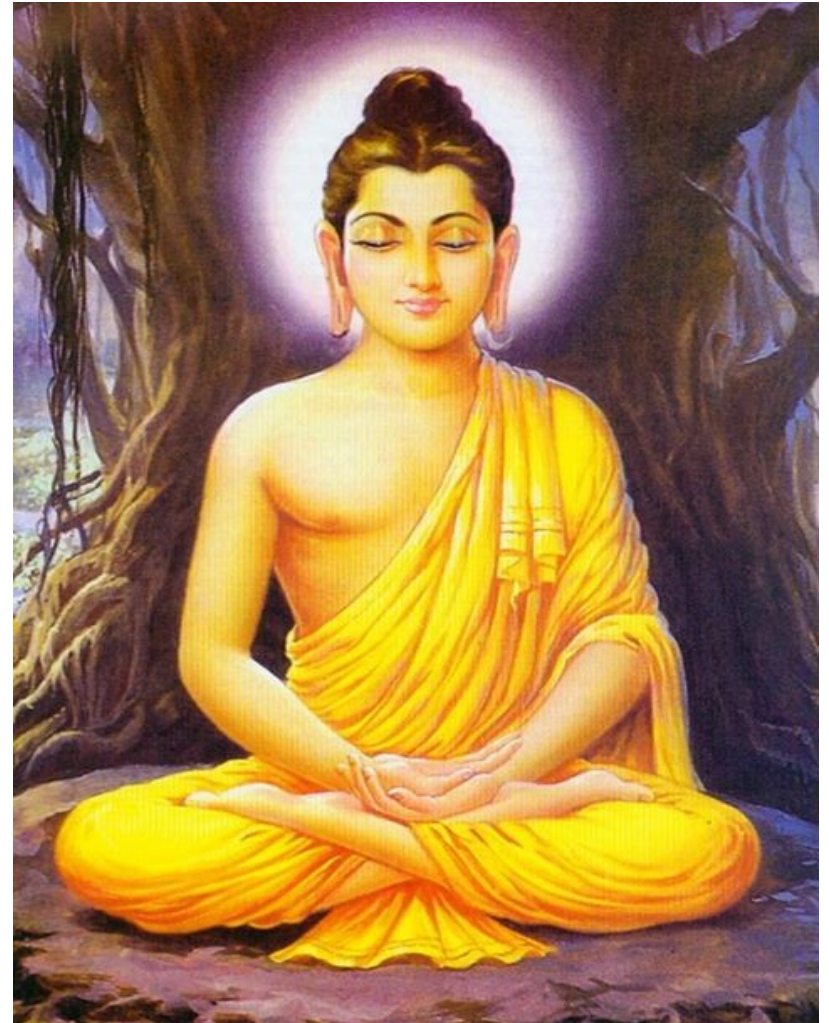
Gaia = Greek goddess Earth

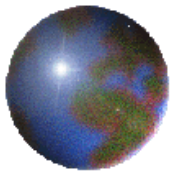
- ✚ Greek mythology: Gaia = Greek goddess Earth – a Divine, living entity
- ✚ *The Ages of Gaia – A Biography of our Living Earth* – James Lovelock, PhD, MD; Fellow of Royal Society of London, Prof. Yale, Harvard, Baylor University College of Medicine
- ✚ Earth is an immense living organism, self regulating body; it has maintained *temperature* and *oxygen levels* within the permissible range for sustenance of life on the planet for millions of years (on its own, without human intervention)



We are Surrounded by Nature

- ❖ **Buddha** seated under a tree in meditation in a forest





Shanti (Peace) Mantra

☉ We are All Children of Mother Earth

☐ The whole world is One Big Family

☉ Om, May Every One be Happy

☐ May Every one be Free from Illness

☐ May Every one See with kindness

☐ May no one Suffer from misfortune



☉ Om, Let there be peace in the heavens, on the Earth,
in the atmosphere, the waters, the herbs, the vegetation,
and among all Dévas. Om, may Peace prevail in our hearts !

Peace all around us !! Peace in the whole World !!! Namaste !