

Bhavan Australia

**ENVIRONMENT IS A GIFT TO US,
SAVE AND SECURE IT!**



**“EARTH PROVIDES ENOUGH TO SATISFY EVERY
MAN'S NEEDS, BUT NOT EVERY MAN'S GREED.”**

— Mahatma Gandhi

Words of Eternal Wisdom



*“You must be the change you wish to see in
the world.”*
— Mahatma Gandhi

*“What is the use of a house if you haven't
got a tolerable planet to put it on?”*
— Henry David Thoreau

*“A nation that destroys its soils destroys
itself. Forests are the lungs of our land,
purifying the air and giving fresh strength
to our people. ”*
— Franklin D. Roosevelt

*“To waste, to destroy our natural
resources, to skin and exhaust the land
instead of using it so as to increase its
usefulness, will result in undermining in
the days of our children the very prosperity
which we ought by right to hand down to
them amplified and developed.”*
— Theodore Roosevelt

*“...one cannot but wonder how an
environment can make people despair and
sit idle and then, by changing the
conditions, one can transform the same
people into matchless performers.”*
— Muhammad Yunus,

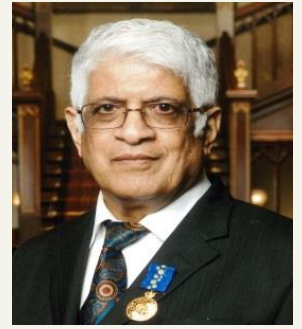
*“A conducive environment should be
known by these five characteristics:*
- providing easy access to food and
clothes
- being free of evil beings and
enemies
- being free from disease
- containing good friends who
maintain moral ethics and who
share similar views
- being visited by few people in the
daytime and with little noise at
night.”

— Dalai Lama XIV

President's Page

"Corruption is the biggest enemy of human rights".

Gambhir Watts OAM,
President, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia
Ambassador of Multicultural Relations



The environmental concern was minimal at the time of Gandhi, but his ideas on Village Swaraj, decentralization, Swadeshi, Sarvodya etc made him an advocate of environmentalism. He is often considered as a man with deep ecological view. The ideas of Gandhi have been widely used by different streams of environmental philosophy like green, deep ecology, etc and different environmental movements across the globe. An eminent environmental thinker Ramachandra Guha identified three distinct strands in Indian Environmentalism, the Crusading Gandhians, Appropriate Technologists and Ecological Marxists. He observed that, unlike the third one, the first two strands rely heavily on Gandhi. The purpose of this paper is to identify the Gandhian elements used by the Ecological Marxists in India. The Silent Valley Movement from Kerala is taken as a case study to analyze how ecological Marxists resort to Gandhian techniques to fight against environmental injustice. The role of Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP), a People's Science Movement (PSM) from Kerala with a Marxist background is studied to understand different strategies they used in the movement. It is observed that the methodologies adopted throughout the movement are inspired by Gandhian methods as previously used by other environmental movements like Chipko. The paper concludes that, like the Crusading Gandhians and Alternate Technologists, the Ecological Marxists also adopted the Gandhian strategies to work for ecological stability.

From the time of colonialism itself, India has witnessed different environmental calamities in the form of forest depletion, resource exploitation, high dam controversies etc. The emergence of environmental movements from different parts of the country paved way for a new paradigm in development which is called the sustainable development. The Fourth World which is the combination of Marxian, Gandhian, and Environmental ideas opens a new horizon for a sustainable economy and development.

Gandhi was not an environmentalist in the modern sense. Although he did not create a green philosophy or write nature poems, he is often described as an "apostle of applied human ecology." It is a fact that environmental concerns were minimal in Gandhi's time; but eminent environmental writers like Ramachandra Guha consider him an early Environmentalist. His views on nature are scattered throughout his writings. His ideas relating to Satyagraha based on truth and non-violence, simple life style, and development reveal how sustainable development is possible without doing any harm to nature and our fellow beings. His idea that "nature has enough to satisfy every one's needs, but not to satisfy anybody's greed" became one-line ethic to modern environmentalism.

Gandhi considered the earth a living organism. His ideas were expressed in terms of two fundamental laws: Cosmic law and the Law of Species. Cosmic Law views the entire universe as a single entity. Nothing could malfunction outside the threshold limits built into the grand system that includes both living and non-living phenomena. He believed that "the universe was structured and informed by the cosmic spirit, that all men, all life and indeed all creation were one."

Regarding the law of species Gandhi believed that without the cooperation and sacrifice of both human and non-human beings evolution is not possible. Being rational human beings, we are the custodians of the rest of creation and should respect their rights and cherish the diversity. It is for this reason that taking more than the required resources is seen as theft. Gandhi evolved these principles from his vast readings and understandings of religious traditions of Hinduism, Jainism, Christianity and Islam. His

social, economic and political ideas were framed on the understanding of interdependence of the whole universe.

Truth, Non-violence and Satyagraha

Truth and Non-violence are the fundamentals of Gandhian Philosophy. Nonviolence or Ahimsa means non-injury, but to Gandhi non-violence was much more than the absence of violence. He used it to mean non-injury in thought, word and deed. Ahimsa, Satyagraha and Tapasya were the basic principles that guided his life. Truth and Ahimsa are intertwined terms. To Gandhi truth is that "which determines the spirit in which one lives or the religious and ethical criteria which governs the way in which he thinks and acts." He believed that truth can be achieved only by means of non-violence. It affords the fullest protection to one's self-respect and sense of honour. If truth is the highest law, then non-violence is the highest duty. Gandhi claimed that truth was the most correct and fully significant term that could be used for God. To practice Ahimsa is to realize truth and to realize truth is to practice Ahimsa. The concept Satyagraha gave practical expression to the religious and ethical ideals of truth and nonviolence. Tapasya or self-sacrifice is necessary to achieve the highest truth. It involves freedom from fear and a willingness to die. Gandhi believed that Satyagraha is nothing, but tapasya for the truth. The suffering that has to be undergone in Satyagraha is tapasya in its fullest form.

Satyagraha is an active form of non-violence. Gandhi considered it as truth force or soul force. Satyagraha is based on the idea that the moral appeal to the heart or conscience is more effective than an appeal based on the threat or bodily pain or violence. Satyagraha itself originates from the belief that while violence to persons and property diverts the minds of the parties concerned from the real issues involved, non-violent action invites the parties to a dialogue about the issues themselves. The ecological scope of non-violence is unlimited. Gandhi's faith in non-violence and vegetarianism made him a votary of conservation of all diversity including all forms of life, societies, cultures, religions, and traditions.

Gandhi's Critique of Modern Civilization

Modern industrial civilization has had a huge impact on human kind as well as on the environment. It made a small part of the population wealthy at the cost of exploiting the world's natural resources. Gandhi believed that it propagates nothing other than the hunger for wealth and the greedy pursuit of worldly pleasures.¹⁶ Hind Swaraj, published in 1909, criticized the modern civilization as "satanic". He observed that 'machinery is the chief symbol of modern civilization; it represents a great sin. It is machinery that has impoverished India.'¹⁷ The distinguishing characteristic of modern civilization is an indefinite multiplicity of wants, whereas ancient civilizations were marked by an imperative restriction upon, and a strict regulating of these wants.¹⁸ Gandhi believed that the ancient civilizations were religious in nature which would surely limit worldly ambitions.

Gandhi believed that true civilizational values are not present in modern civilization. In Hind Swaraj Gandhi argued that what we think as 'civilization' today is an illusion, and that any civilization that ill-treated outsiders could hardly avoid ill-treating its own people. Gandhi's critique of western civilization and science emanates from his dissatisfaction with the divorce of science and progress from morality. He was not against the technology, but the technologism which creates a hierarchical relationship among men as well as between men and nature. Gandhi believed that the greatest achievements of modern civilization have been weapons of mass destruction, the awful growth of anarchism, the frightful disputes between capital and labour and cruelty inflicted on innocent, dumb, living animals in the name of science and technology. He believed a science to be science only if it afforded the fullest scope for satisfying the hunger of body, mind and soul.

Source: <https://www.mkgandhi.org/articles/environment1.htm>

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Cover picture credits:

Image taken from: <https://www.awarenessdays.com/>

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Bhavan Australia includes a number of articles from Bhavan's Journal.

Bhavan Australia: - ISSN 1449 – 3551

HISTORY OF WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY



The year 1972 marked a turning point in the development of international environmental politics: the first major conference on environmental issues, convened under the auspices of the United Nations, was held from June 5-16 in Stockholm (Sweden). Known as the Conference on the Human Environment, or the Stockholm Conference, its goal was to forge a basic common outlook on how to address the challenge of preserving and enhancing the human environment.

Later that year, on 15 December, the General Assembly adopted a resolution (A/RES/2994 (XXVII)) designating June 5 as World Environment Day and urging "Governments and the organizations in the United Nations system to undertake on that day every year world-wide activities reaffirming their concern for the preservation and enhancement of the environment, with a view to deepening environmental awareness and to pursuing the determination expressed at the Conference." The date coincides with the first day of the landmark Conference.

Also on 15 December, the General Assembly adopted another resolution (A/RES/3000 (XXVII)) that led to the creation of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the specialized agency on environmental issues. Since the first celebration in 1974, the World Environment Day has helped UNEP to raise

awareness and generate political momentum around growing concerns such as the depletion of the ozone layer, toxic chemicals, desertification and global warming. The Day has developed into a global platform for taking action on urgent environmental issues. Millions of people have taken part over the years, helping drive change in our consumption habits, as well as in national and international environmental policy.

***"On World Environment Day,
the message is simple:
reject single-use plastic.
Refuse what you can't re-use.
Together, we can chart a path to
a cleaner, greener world."***

— Secretary-General, António Guterres

Humans are both creatures and moulders of their environment, which gives them physical sustenance and affords them the opportunity for intellectual, moral, social and spiritual growth. In the long and tortuous evolution of the human race on this planet a stage has been reached when, through the rapid acceleration of science and technology, humans have acquired the power to transform their environment in countless ways and on an unprecedented scale.



The United Nations, aware that the protection and improvement of the human environment is a major issue, which affects the well-being of peoples and economic development throughout the world, designated 5 June as World Environment Day. The celebration of this day provides us with an opportunity to broaden the basis for an enlightened opinion and responsible conduct by individuals, enterprises and communities in preserving and enhancing the environment. Since it began in 1974, it has grown to become a global platform for public outreach that is widely celebrated in more than 100 countries.

“BEAT PLASTIC POLLUTION”

Each World Environment Day is organized around a theme that focuses attention on a particularly pressing environmental concern. The theme for 2018, “Beat Plastic Pollution,” is a call to action for all of us to come together to combat one of the great environmental challenges of our time. The theme invites us all to consider how we can make changes in our everyday lives to reduce the heavy burden of plastic pollution on our natural places, our wildlife – and our own health. While plastic has many valuable uses, we have become over-reliant on single-use or disposable plastic – with severe environmental consequences.

This World Environment Day UN Environment is asking you, companies and civil society groups, to take a concrete action to Beat Plastic Pollution. Let’s all help to clean up our environment. You can register your #BeatPlasticPollution activity.

THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development states our resolve “to ensure the lasting protection of the planet and its natural resources”. In particular, Goals 14 and 15 focus on protecting under water and on land ecosystems, as well as on sustainably using marine and terrestrial resources.

HISTORY OF THE PLASTIC SHOPPING BAG

A rare novelty in the 1970s, plastic shopping bags are now an omnipresent global product, produced at a rate of one trillion a year. They are showing up in the darkest depths of the oceans to the summit of Mount Everest to the polar ice caps – and creating some major environmental challenges.

HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?

1933 Polyethylene, the most commonly used plastic, is created by accident at a chemical plant in Northwich, England. While polyethylene had been created in small batches before, this was the first synthesis of the material that was industrially practical, and it was initially used in secret by the British military during World War II.

1965 The one-piece polyethylene shopping bag is patented by the Swedish company Celloplast. Designed by engineer Sten Gustaf Thulin, the plastic bag quickly begins to replace cloth and plastic in Europe.

1979 Already controlling 80% of the bag market in Europe, plastic bags go abroad and are widely introduced to the United States. Plastic

companies begin to aggressively market their product as superior to paper and reusable bags.

1982 Safeway and Kroger, two of the biggest supermarket chains in the United States, switch to plastic bags. More stores follow suit and by the end of the decade plastic bags will have almost replaced paper around the world.

1997 Sailor and researcher Charles Moore discovers the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, the largest of several gyres in the world's oceans where immense amounts of plastic waste have accumulated, threatening marine life. Plastic bags are notorious for killing sea turtles, which mistakenly think they are jellyfish and eat them.

2002 Bangladesh is the first country in the world to implement a ban on thin plastic bags, after it was found they played a key role in clogging drainage systems during disastrous flooding. Other countries begin to follow suit.

2011 Worldwide one million plastic bags are consumed every minute.

2017 Kenya bans plastic bags, making it one the most recent of the more than two dozen countries that have sought to reduce plastic bag use through fees or bans.

2018 #BeatPlasticPollution is chosen as the theme of World Environment Day, hosted this year by India. Companies and governments around the world continue to announce new pledges to tackle plastic waste.

TAKE ACTION NOW!



Take part in the global movement to #BeatPlasticPollution

All over the world, UN Environment is inviting everybody, from individuals to governments, small or big communities, schools, nonprofits, or businesses to plan events, to convert these events in a global movement, to take action and to share how you are participating to Beat Plastic Pollution. There are several ways governments, private sector and citizens can help to combat plastic pollution:

MAKE A PLAN TO BEAT THE PLASTIC POLLUTION.

Organize an event in your community and register your event.

Make your event fun, inspiring and interesting.

Take Action. Reduce, reuse and recycle.

Share! Get your friends, family, neighbors, colleagues involved. Bring together an inspiring change.

Be a part of a global movement to break up with plastic. Remember, if you can't use it, refuse it!

SPORTS ARE BEATING PLASTIC POLLUTION

From divers collecting waste from the seabed to joggers picking up rubbish as they run, athletes, sports enthusiasts and clubs are joining forces to tackle the tidal wave of plastic pollution that is poisoning the world's oceans.

Major sporting events can generate up to 750,000 plastic bottles a piece, so the pressure is on to clean up the industry and use sport's global reach to raise awareness among fans.

Here are some examples of sports and athletes that have risen to the challenge.

FOOTBALL: SPURRING OTHERS TO ACT

Tottenham Hotspur may not win the Premier League this year, but the English club is top of the table in tackling plastic waste. In April it said it would phase out single-use plastics in its new stadium, due to open next season. The aim is to eliminate plastic straws, stirrers, cutlery and all plastic disposable packaging for these items.

In the United States, Adidas and Major League Soccer released special kits, made out of Parley Ocean Plastic, for matches played during the weekend of Earth Day. All 23 clubs wore the Adidas Parley 2018 MLS shirts, which are made from technical yarns created from plastic waste found on beaches and in coastal communities.

SAILING: TURNING THE TIDE ON PLASTIC

It's the race of a lifetime and the cause of a generation. The Volvo Ocean Race sees seven teams race 45,000 nautical miles around the world over eight months in a gruelling competition that aims to raise awareness of sustainability issues, including the threat posed by marine plastic pollution. This year, the Turn the Tide on Plastic yacht is competing to

highlight UN Environment's Clean Seas campaign.

CRICKET: GOING GREEN IN INDIA AND STRIKING OUT STRAWS IN THE UK

In Bengaluru and Indore cities in India, a new "green protocol" is being put into play. In Bengaluru, Chinnaswamy stadium has adopted a zero-waste policy, using an army of green-clad volunteers to sort waste and educate spectators during Indian Premier League matches. Around 40,000 fans attend each match in the stadium, generating 3-4 tonnes of mixed waste each time. Because the waste is not separated, it has to be sent to the landfill.

In the UK last year, London's Kia Oval cricket grounds said it aimed to become completely plastic-free by 2020. The venue has banned the use of plastic straws this season, introduced compostable coffee cups, and is phasing out the use of plastic bags in the club shop. Last year, Kia Oval introduced eco-friendly cups to replace its plastic pint glasses. It also installed 20 free water fountains and taps and provided 20,000 limited edition refillable bottles.

Rugby: Twickenham converts disposable cups to souvenirs

Twickenham, the home of the English rugby team, has introduced a reusable Fan Cup to replace the flimsy, disposable cups that were previously used during games.

When customers buy their first drink, they are charged an additional £1 refundable deposit. When they return to the bar with the cup, the price reverts to the advertised cost. At the end of the day, fans can keep the cup as a souvenir or return it and get their deposit back.

Previously, around 140,000 pints of beer could be served during an international match meaning 140,000 cups were likely to be thrown away.

ATHLETICS: LONDON SEEKS ANSWERS TO MARATHON PLASTIC BOTTLE CONUNDRUM

This year's London marathon was the hottest on record but it was also unique because organizers trialed the use of compostable cups to reduce the number of plastic bottles that typically litter the streets after the event. Around 90,000 cups were placed at three drink stations along the route, as well as 760,000 plastic bottles for runners. The bottles were all to be recycled after the race, and the use of the cups will be reviewed.

COMMONWEALTH GAMES 2018: AUSTRALIA'S GOLD COAST BURSTS PLASTIC BALLOON

The Commonwealth Games were held on Australia's Gold Coast in April and organizers were determined to do everything they could to protect this beautiful region and the surrounding waterways and oceans. Helium balloons were banned from the event and spectators were encouraged to bring their own transparent bottle to refill at water points around the grounds.

BASEBALL: WHITE SOX STEP UP TO THE PLATE TO BAN STRAWS

In April, Chicago's White Sox became the first Major League Baseball team to serve drinks without single-use plastic straws as part of Shedd Aquarium's "Shedd the Straw" initiative.

The team said the move would take more than 215,000 straws out of play over the season.



SWIMMING: TAKING ON THE PACIFIC IN THE NAME OF SCIENCE

At 8,900 km, it's no wonder it's being called the Longest Swim. Adventurer and activist Ben Lecomte will set off in late May to swim from Tokyo to San Francisco and all in the name of science and sustainability. Lecomte's odyssey will take him through the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, a raft-like mass of waste three times the size of France.

Lecomte and his support crew will contribute to eight research programmes during the swim, covering everything from plastic pollution to currents and radiation. Using a neuston net and water samples, the crew will make daily collections of marine microplastics to help researchers learn more about these tiny pollutants that are finding their way into our food chain.

DIVING: UAE DIVING ENTHUSIASTS GO DEEP TO CLEAN SEA BED

In the United Arab Emirates, a group of deep-sea divers has been collecting tonnes of rubbish from the floor of the Arabian Sea to raise awareness of the damage caused by plastic waste while also documenting marine life in the area. Mohammad Falasi, a marine biologist, set up the team after he found the sea floor was covered with trash. Now he and his friends conduct clean-ups at the weekend, collecting plastic, metal, glass, ceramics, rubber, wood and charcoal.

PLOGGING: THE NEW PLASTIC-BATTLING FITNESS CRAZE

You don't have to be an elite athlete to join the battle against plastics. You could try "plogging". The Swedish trend, which involves picking up litter while you jog, is catching on and there will be plogging events across the globe on World Environment Day on June 5. The name comes from combining the Swedish word "plocka", to pick with "jogga", to jog.

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S MESSAGE

A healthy planet is essential for a prosperous and peaceful future. We all have a role to play in protecting our only home, but it can be difficult to know what to do or where to start. That's why this

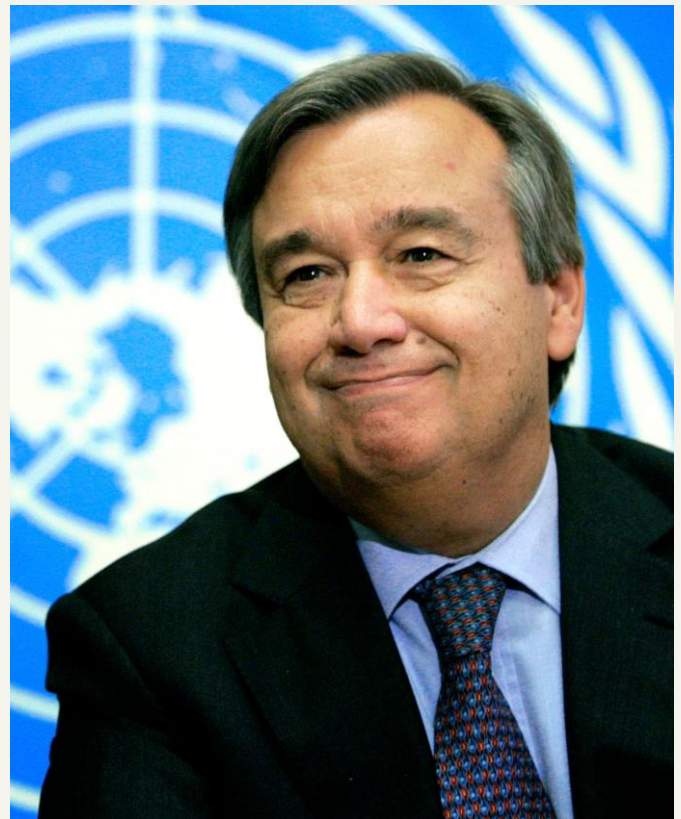
World Environment Day has just one request: beat plastic pollution.

Our world is swamped by harmful plastic waste. Every year, more than 8 million tonnes end up in the oceans. Microplastics in the seas now outnumber stars in our galaxy. From remote islands to the Arctic, nowhere is untouched. If present trends continue, by 2050 our oceans will have more plastic than fish.

On World Environment Day, the message is simple: reject single-use plastic. Refuse what you can't re-use.

Together, we can chart a path to a cleaner, greener world.

- António Guterres



Source:
<https://www.un.org/en/events/environmentday/index.shtml>

25 STEPS TO END MILLIONS OF DEATHS FROM “THE NEW TOBACCO”

Air pollution isn't a new problem. We've been worried about smog for centuries, from the infamous “pea souper” smogs of 19th century London to the hazes that regularly engulf cities from Beijing to Delhi in the present day. What is new, however, is the awareness of exactly how bad it is for our health.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), air pollution-related diseases claim seven million lives each year. But bad air doesn't just kill. In 2018, studies linked air pollution to everything from millions of cases of diabetes to lower intelligence levels. Little wonder that World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus calls air pollution “the new tobacco”.

But with this bad news comes a determination to act. 2018 saw the first-ever Global Conference on Air Pollution and Health, organized by the World Health Organization in collaboration with UN Environment and others, where participants pledged to reduce air pollution deaths by two thirds by 2030. At this meeting, UN Environment, the Asia Pacific Clean Air Partnership (APCAP) and the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) launched 25 solutions for Asia-Pacific to make this goal a reality.

Air Pollution in Asia and the Pacific: Science-based Solutions lays out 25 policy and technological measures, covering everything from industry to energy to agriculture. Together, these measures could save millions of lives and let one billion more people breathe clean air by 2030. And work is already under way in a region where four billion people—92 per cent of the population—are exposed to dangerous levels of air pollution.

Take electric mobility, one of the 25 measures. Philippines and Sri Lanka, supported by UN Environment, have begun to tax electric and hybrid vehicles lower than conventional vehicles. The impact has been clear. The number of electric and hybrid cars in Sri Lanka's active fleet grew 10 times between 2013 to mid-2018, with 150,000 such vehicles now on the streets. This growth saw the percentage of cleaner vehicles in the active fleet rise from 4 per cent in 2013 to 23 per cent by mid-2018. In the capital Colombo, where past research showed heavy traffic accounts for over 50 per cent of air pollution, this can make a real difference to human health.

“We acknowledge the importance of promoting cleaner and more efficient fuels and vehicles, and we welcome the support of UN Environment,”



said Sugath Yalagama, Director-General, Sustainable Development Council, Government of Sri Lanka. “Due to the more comprehensive vehicle excise tax, we now have more hybrid and electric vehicles on the road.”

This is just one example. Implementing all 25 measures fully would lead to a 56 per cent lower fine particulate matter exposure across Asia-Pacific in 2030 compared to 2015.

But air pollution is a global problem. For example, replacing the current fleet of buses and taxis in 22 Latin American cities could save 36,500 lives by 2030. This is why UN Environment, through its MOVE platform and with the support of Euroclima+, is assisting Argentina, Colombia and Panama with national electric mobility strategies, and is helping Chile and Costa Rica to expand the use of electric buses.

“Latin America has the greenest electricity matrix in the world, the fastest growing emissions of the transport sector and the highest use per capita of public transport globally,” says Gustavo Mañez, UN Environment Climate Change Coordinator in Latin America and the Caribbean. “The region is uniquely positioned to take advantage of electric mobility.”

Much more is happening across the globe. Breathe Life, a campaign by the Climate and Clean Air Coalition, the World Health

Organization and UN Environment, is running initiatives that cover 52 cities, regions and countries, and reach over 153 million citizens. For example, campaign partners energized the public through a sporting challenge that saw 55,000 people pledge to commute by bicycle or on foot. There are now more than a million electric cars in Europe. The rise of renewable energy will help, with investment in new renewable sources outstripping fossil fuel investments each year.

All of this work is having an impact. The World Health Organization in 2018 found that more than 57 per cent of cities in the Americas and more than 61 per cent of cities in Europe had seen a fall in particulate matter pollution between 2010 and 2016. We have a long way to go, but with all of the new science showing solutions, UN Environment and partners are pushing harder than ever to end the threat of this invisible killer. Learn more about our work on air pollution and on chemicals and waste.

This article is part of a series of stories highlighting UN Environment’s work and published in the 2018 Annual Report.

Source: <http://worldenvironmentday.global/>





ANIMAL RIGHTS: WE MUST DO BETTER TO PROTECT OUR ANIMAL FRIENDS

When animals are considered property under the law, there is no limit to the ways in which humans can exploit them. We need to change how we view animal rights and how those rights are handed over to our animal friends.

WHAT ARE ANIMAL RIGHTS

When animals are considered property under the law, there is no limit to the ways in which humans can exploit them. We need to change how we view animal rights and how those rights are handed over to our animal friends.

Animal rights have been the subject of much debate, especially among animal rights groups who fight for animal welfare. Unfortunately, animal cruelty still runs rampant throughout much of the world.

Some people simply don't believe in animal rights, and governments have failed to produce legislation that protects all animals from human predation.

Additionally, some industries have systematically commoditized animals for various purposes, treating them as things rather than as sentient beings. Even our beloved cats, dogs, and other pets are legally considered property.

It's true that some animal rights legislation has passed in the United States and elsewhere. For instance, law enforcement can bring charges

against a person for neglecting or abusing an animal. However, the animal his or herself doesn't have any legal rights.

An abused dog can't sue his tormenter for pain and suffering. A person can't do so on his behalf, either.

Furthermore, factory farming operations, animal testing facilities, and similar businesses continue to torture animals for the benefit of people.

Why does this continue? And what should animal rights look like on a global scale? Let's dig into some of the specifics.

WHAT ARE ANIMAL RIGHTS?



*Animal rights protest
Image via WeAnimals*

Animal rights is an idea and a movement that asserts that animals should be able to live free of

human interference and that they should never be exploited for human gain. Animals do have some rights, but not nearly enough.

Naysayers argue that nonhuman animals lack language and complex cognitive abilities, which somehow makes them lesser-than. However, animals have the ability to experience emotions like pain, fear, happiness, connection with others, and despair.

When a sentient being can suffer at the hands of humans, we have the obligation to protect them from our own brethren. Animals have value beyond what they're worth by the pound, and stripping them of that value creates a culture in which animals are viewed as food, fur, or servants.

The animal rights movement seeks to eliminate this view of animals and to give animals rights beyond what they currently enjoy. It's not about making nonhuman animals equal to humans, but about taking their inherent value into consideration when making decisions.

For instance, you could have a Big Mac for dinner. Alternatively, you could eat a garden salad full of flavourful fruits and vegetables. That's a choice.

So is starting a business that harvests animals like we would a field of corn. You could, alternatively, start a business that doesn't infringe on animal rights.

ANIMAL RIGHTS FACTS THAT MIGHT SHOCK YOU

Did you know that animals on factory farms live in such tight conditions that they typically can't even turn around? They're forced to live out their lives in tiny cages or crammed in amongst other animals of their kind with no room to move.

In hatcheries, which are designed to produce as many chicks as possible, male chicks are often ground up (technical term: macerated) alive because they have no value to the farmers. Others are scalded to death.

Dog fighting, a heinous blood sport, still exists today. In fact, the ASPCA estimates that tens of thousands of dogfights take place every year in the U.S. alone. Many of those fights are the professional variety, which means that hundreds of thousands of dollars could change hands for entrance fees and wagers.

You might also not know that animal testing has become unnecessary. We now have alternative

methods, such as in vitro cultures, that provide more accurate results than animal testing because the tests are carried out on human tissue. Yet thousands of animals suffer in laboratories around the world, suffering from human diseases, covered in dermatitis from product exposure, and other atrocities. These animals never receive names, receive affection, or experience their natural habitats.

DO ANIMALS HAVE LEGAL RIGHTS?

As mentioned above, animals do have some legal rights. However, don't confuse legal rights with animal rights because they're not the same thing. Animals are considered property. If you steal a dog from your neighbor, it's no different from stealing his television or car. If someone's dog attacks your dog, you can sue for the vet bills you incurred as a result of the injuries, but not for the pain and misery your poor pet experienced from the attack.

Most of the legal rights given to animals involve humans, such as in the case of the pet attacked by someone else's pet. Other laws prohibit abusing or neglecting animals, but even those are murky and uneven.

You can shoot a hog on your property, but you can't shoot your pet cat. You can shoot a whitetail deer during certain months of the year, but not during others.

Furthermore, the laws the USDA sets forth for treatment of animals at factory farming facilities are woefully inadequate and still leave thousands of animals living in abject misery for their entire — and often very short — lives.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN ANIMAL RIGHTS ACTIVIST?

An animal rights activist is someone who fights on behalf of animals to protect them from human predation in all its forms. These people give their time, money, and voices to a cause about which they're passionate, and their activities can range from protesting animal testing facilities and factory farming operations to lobbying legislators for better laws for animal rights.

If you want to be an animal rights activist, you don't need a license or certification. Start campaigning for animal rights in whatever way seems most appropriate for you. Join animal

rights groups, participate in tough conversations, and confront animal cruelty whenever you see it. Animal rights activists believe that animals deserve the same consideration as humans. In other words, their livelihood should be considered when we make decisions about the world and how we make our way in it.

If we're building a new housing development, for instance, how can we best avoid disrupting the natural wildlife there? When we're deciding what we eat, how can we make choices that don't cause animals to suffer?

We can wear synthetic fabrics instead of fur, eat whole fruits and vegetables instead of meat and eggs, buy products that have not been tested on animals, and educate the people in our lives about animals' plights.



WHAT ANIMAL RIGHTS ARE THE MOST ABUSED?

Certain animals experience more cruelty at the hands of humans than others.

Fish are the most "harvested" animal in the world, while chickens are the most harvested land

animal. The most abused animals tend to be dogs, cats, and horses, and livestock.

It's interesting that many animal rights cases of abuse go along with human abuses, as well. For instance, drug trafficking and manslaughter often go hand-in-hand with cock and dog fighting. Meanwhile, domestic violence is correlated heavily with animal abuse.

Someone who is willing to abuse an animal likely won't feel much compunction about abusing a fellow human. People who possess that innate level of cruelty can commit more than one type of crime.

Numerous investigations into factory farms have revealed abuses ranging from beating and kicking animals to using clubs and other weapons on them. These animals are often denied food and water as well as fresh air.



HOW DO ANIMAL RIGHTS DIFFER BETWEEN COUNTRIES?

The animal rights movement isn't much different from one country to the next. People who campaign for animal rights all want the same

thing: fair and humane treatment for animals all over the world.

However, animal welfare standards can vary significantly from one part of the world to another.

The United Kingdom, Austria, and New Zealand consistently rank highest on the World Animal Protection Index. Iran and Belarus rank the lowest. Brazil is the only Western country to rate a C, while the United States, Canada, and Mexico each rate Ds.

The indicators include factors like recognizing animal sentience, protecting farmed animals, protecting captive animals, and protecting companion animals. As a species, humanity isn't doing very well in our quest to support our nonhuman animal friends.

However, that could change. By campaigning for better legislation, raising awareness about animal rights, and doing our best to avoid consuming any animal by-product, we can make animals' lives better one creature at a time.

WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES OF THE ANIMAL RIGHTS MOVEMENT?

Now that we've covered some of the facts about animal rights and how we're trying to move the needle forward, let's look at some of the specific tenets of the animal rights movement and how they're implemented.

ANIMALS SHOULDN'T SUFFER FOR HUMAN BENEFIT

Perhaps the most important part of the animal rights movement is the push toward protecting animals from human predation. In other words, we want all animals to be free of suffering and death for human benefit, whether they're slaughtered for food or used as test animals in laboratories.

No animal should be caged, beaten, stripped of its dignity, or killed just so a human being can have what he or she wants for dinner. It's unconscionable, especially given how these animals are treated while they're still alive.

There's no reason for humans to consume meat. Vegans get more than enough plant-based protein, for instance, from other sources. Additionally, we have access to supplements if we need extra iron or B12 in our diets.

Veganism is a fast-spreading movement and lifestyle choice that eschews taking from animals. It's an offshoot of the vegetarian diet, but it spreads far beyond what we eat.

The animal rights movement asserts that animals shouldn't be abused or neglected. Companion animals are bred to live in harmony with their human counterparts, but they deserve to live unencumbered by human failures. When people have pets, they're morally obligated to provide what that animal can't obtain on its own, from food and water to veterinary care.

THERE'S NO NEED TO CONSUME MEAT OR ANIMAL BY-PRODUCTS

Vegans do not eat honey, eggs, or dairy. They don't wear leather or fur or wool, or use products tested on animals.

Some of these values might seem unnecessary. For instance, shearing a sheep doesn't kill the animal. However, it deprives that animal of its biologically defined protections against the environment. If sheep didn't need their wool, they wouldn't have it.

Vegans make sure that their lifestyles don't infringe on nonhuman animals.

ANIMALS NEED PROTECTION FROM HUMAN PREDATORS

The animal rights movement concerns itself with protecting wildlife. From hunting and poaching to disrupting natural habitats, humans have a lousy track record when it comes to putting our own needs and desires above animal welfare.

If you can see your beloved pet dog in the eyes of every animal on the planet, you'll better understand why animal rights are so important. Most animal species care for their young, form social relationships with one another, and provide environmental benefits in their natural habitats.

Many animals, for instance, eat insects. Without them, we would become overwhelmed by pests that put human lives in danger by carrying diseases and make existing outdoors almost unbearable.

Some might say that hunting helps control populations of certain animals. However, the animal kingdom does a good job of that on its own. Overpopulation occurs as a result of

reduced natural habitats — a human construction.

Furthermore, we've commercialized animal cruelty through factory farming and similar exploits. We're not just taking animals from their natural habitats, but breeding them en-masse for the sole purpose of slaughtering them later.

That's anathema to the animal rights movement.

ANIMAL ABUSE STATISTICS

If you think that animal abuse doesn't exist in your own neighbourhood, think again. As of March 2017, the RSPCA in the United Kingdom was investigating more than 150,000 cases of animal abuse. Calls to the hotline increased by 5 percent from the previous year.

According to the ASPCA, there are 65 million companion animals in shelters across the United States. Animals find themselves in shelters for myriad reasons, from surrender to confiscation. Many of these animals are physically and emotionally scarred by abuse — and won't find homes as a result.

HOW CAN I HELP ANIMAL RIGHTS?

If you're interested in helping the animal rights movement succeed, there are several things you can do to help further the cause. The more people who dedicate themselves to animal rights, the safer animals will become.

STOP EATING MEAT

One of the most important things you can do is to stop eating meat and animal by-products. Commit yourself to a vegan or vegetarian diet.

As of 2018, the average American will consume a staggering 222 pounds of poultry and red meat in one year alone. Simply by taking meat off the table, both literally and figuratively, can spare hundreds of animals throughout your lifetime.

Stop eating dairy and eggs, as well. Factory farmed animals endure longer lifespans when they're farmed for their by-products, which means even more suffering. Many of these animals die from exhaustion or are slaughtered because they're too weak to stand up after giving milk or eggs on continuous loops.

RESCUE ANIMALS FROM SHELTERS

There's nothing wrong with wanting a companion animal if you're able to care for it,

especially given the overpopulation of dogs and cats in animal shelters. But don't buy a companion animal from a store or breeder. Instead, rescue one from the aforementioned shelters.

These animals are just as lovable and kind as those bred for sale — and often more so because they know what it's like to live without a family. They need nurturing, love, companionship, play, and exercise.

Maybe your lifestyle isn't conducive to having a pet in your home. There's nothing wrong with that. Consider taking one Saturday a month to walk dogs at the local shelter. Giving these animals some fresh air and companionship, even if just for a few hours, will improve their quality of life immensely.

DON'T USE PRODUCTS THAT ARE TESTED ON ANIMALS

Animal testing is a heinous practice that leaves animals in pain and agony for much of their lives. Imagine enduring endless rounds of product applications on your bare skin, in your eyes, and elsewhere. It's a tremendously miserable way to live.

Fortunately, many companies have gone animal-friendly, which means that they no longer test their products on animals. You can seek out these products instead of your defaults to improve the lives of laboratory animals.

Many people underestimate the value of their contribution to this worthy cause. No, you won't single-handedly take down corporations that victimize animals, but you'll show these companies that they can't have your hard-earned dollars because you don't agree with their practices. When enough people take this approach, the companies won't be able to survive.

AVOID PARTICIPATING IN EVENTS WHERE ANIMALS ARE USED FOR ENTERTAINMENT

This is somewhat of a grey area. Some animal events, such as canine agility and equine dressage, result from mutually respectful relationships between human and nonhuman animal. The animals aren't forced to perform; they enjoy it as much as their humans do.

However, that isn't the case across the board. Horses, for instance, are subject to animal abuse and cruelty in many equestrian events. They are

beaten over fences, trained in chains to strengthen their muscles, or relieved of the bottoms of their hooves so their nerve endings are exposed.

Similarly, circuses and aquatic animal venues often beat their animals into submission and keep them in captivity where they're unable to thrive. Do your research. Before you attend an event in which animals are used for entertainment, find out how they are treated and whether the event is in the animal's best interest. Educate Others About Animal Rights

You can become a one-person bullhorn for animal rights. Protest animal cruelty whenever you get the opportunity. If a friend asks why you don't eat meat, explain. Share animal welfare stories on social media, write your legislators, and keep up with animal news.

The more you know about animal rights, the more you can amplify the stories of people who are fighting for animal welfare. These days, everyone has a platform waiting for them. Use it to further the animal rights movement in whatever way you can.

Don't become a nuisance to your family and friends. Preaching endlessly about animal rights will only cause people to ignore you. Instead, take the opportunities as they come. Let others let you know when they're ready to

hear your perspective on animal rights.

CONCLUSION

When animals are considered property under the law, there is no limit to the ways in which humans can exploit them. We need to change how we view animal rights and how those rights are handed over to our animal friends.

It starts with awareness and education. If you're willing to live your values, tell others about them, and spread others' stories about animal rights, you can make a real difference.

We have a systemic problem with animal cruelty across the world. Some countries get it better than others, but no population is truly devoid of cruelty toward animals.

What are you doing to help further animal rights in your corner of the world?

Source: <https://sentientmedia.org/>



OCEAN POLLUTION: THE DIRTY FACTS



WE'RE DROWNING MARINE ECOSYSTEMS IN TRASH, NOISE,
OIL, AND CARBON EMISSIONS

January 22, 2018

By Melissa Denchak

Covering more than 70 percent of our planet, oceans are among the earth's most valuable natural resources. They govern the weather, clean the air, help feed the world, and provide a living for millions. They also are home to most of the life on earth, from microscopic algae to the blue whale, the largest animal on the planet. Yet we're bombarding them with pollution. By their very nature—with all streams flowing to rivers, all rivers leading to the sea—the oceans are the end point for so much of the pollution we produce on land, however far from the coasts we may be. And from dangerous carbon emissions to choking plastic to leaking oil to constant noise, the types of ocean pollution humans generate are vast. As a result, collectively, our impact on the seas is degrading their health at an alarming rate. Here are some ocean pollution facts that everyone on our blue planet ought to know.

OCEAN ACIDIFICATION

When we burn fossil fuels, we don't pollute just the air but the oceans, too. Indeed, today's seas absorb as much as a quarter of all man-made carbon emissions, which changes the pH of

surface waters and leads to acidification. This problem is rapidly worsening—oceans are now acidifying faster than they have in some 300 million years. It's estimated that by the end of this century, if we keep pace with our current emissions practices, the surface waters of the ocean could be nearly 150 percent more acidic than they are now.

So what happens when the ocean's chemistry is knocked out of whack? Marine ecosystems—and the coastal economies that depend on them—go out of whack, too. Take reefs and shellfish, for starters. To build their shells and skeletons, creatures like mussels, clams, coral, and oysters require calcium carbonate (the same compound found in chalk and limestone). But the ocean's carbonate levels go down when acidity levels rise, threatening the survival of these animals. Bivalves are at the bottom of the food chain, so these effects ripple up to many fish, seabirds, and marine mammals. More-acidic waters also contribute to the bleaching of coral reefs and make it harder for some types of fish to sense predators and for others to hunt prey.

Meanwhile, ocean acidification threatens us land-dwellers, too. The billion-dollar American shellfish industry is the economic backbone of

myriad coastal communities, from Louisiana to Maine to Maryland. Already, declining harvests linked to more-acidic waters are estimated to have cost the Pacific Northwest's oyster industry nearly \$110 million and 3,200 jobs.

TRASH IN THE OCEAN

The majority of the garbage that enters the ocean each year is plastic—and here to stay. That's because unlike other trash, the single-use grocery bags, water bottles, drinking straws, and yogurt containers, among eight million metric tons of the plastic items we toss (instead of recycle), won't biodegrade. Instead, they can persist in the environment for a millennium, polluting our beaches, entangling marine life, and getting ingested by fish and seabirds.

Where does all this debris originate? While some is dumped directly into the seas, an estimated 80 percent of marine litter makes its way there gradually from land-based sources—including those far inland—via storm drains, sewers, and other routes. (An excellent reason why we should all reduce plastic pollution, no matter where we live.) Oil from boats, airplanes, cars, trucks, and even lawn mowers is also swimming in ocean waters. Chemical discharges from factories, raw sewage overflow from water treatment systems, and stormwater and agricultural runoff add other forms of marine-poisoning pollutants to the toxic brew.

OCEAN NOISE

The ocean is far from a "silent world." Sound waves travel farther and faster in the sea's dark depths than they do in the air, and many marine mammals like whales and dolphins, in addition to fish and other sea creatures, rely on communication by sound to find food, mate, and navigate. But an increasing barrage of human-generated ocean noise pollution is altering the underwater acoustic landscape, harming—and even killing—marine species worldwide.

Consider the incessant din of the roughly 60,000 commercial tanker and container ships that ply the seas at any given time. The underwater racket that results creates a kind of "smog" that reaches nearly every corner of the ocean and shrinks the sensory range of marine wildlife. High-intensity sonar used by the U.S. Navy for testing and

training causes some of the same effects—and has been linked to mass whale strandings, too.

Meanwhile, in the hunt for offshore oil and gas, ships equipped with high-powered air guns fire compressed air into the water every 10 to 12 seconds for weeks to months on end. Traveling as far as 2,500 miles, these deafening seismic blasts disrupt foraging, mating, and other vital behaviors of endangered whales (and may ultimately push some, such as the North Atlantic right whale, to extinction). The blasts lead some commercial fish species to abandon their habitat—a direct hit on coastal economies dependent on catch rates; they also injure and kill marine invertebrates, including scallops, crabs, and squid.

OFFSHORE DRILLING

In addition to noise pollution, the oil and gas industry's routine operations emit toxic by-products, release high levels of greenhouse gases, and lead to thousands of spills in U.S. waters annually. That oil can linger for decades and do irreversible damage to delicate marine ecosystems. Take the 1989 Exxon Valdez tanker spill in Alaska's Prince William Sound, from which oil still remains, or the BP Deepwater Horizon offshore drilling disaster in 2010, which spread millions of gallons of oil throughout the Gulf of Mexico. But even smaller spills pollute the ocean (and the air) with long-lasting impacts. Even the most advanced cleanup efforts remove only a fraction of the oil, and sometimes they use hazardous technologies. Chemical dispersants used in the largest spill response efforts—1.8 million gallons were released into the Gulf after the BP disaster—are dangerous pollutants themselves.

OCEAN POLLUTION AND YOU

The fate of our seas is not only up to the government or industry. Our individual, daily actions matter, too. You can start by reducing water pollution and runoff at home, being more mindful of your plastic consumption, or organizing a cleanup of your local waterway. You can also support the work of NRDC and other environmental advocacy groups as well as other businesses and organizations that work to preserve our coasts and waters.

Source: <https://www.nrdc.org/>

SOIL POLLUTION



Soil pollution occurs when the presence of toxic chemicals, pollutants or contaminants in the soil is in high enough concentrations to be of risk to plants, wildlife, humans and of course, the soil itself. Arable land is turning to desert and becoming non-arable at ever-increasing rates, due largely in part to global warming and agricultural fertilizers and pesticides, lessening the hope that we can feed our booming population. Within 40 years, there will be over 2 billion more people, which is the equivalent of adding another China and India. Food production will have to increase at least 40% and most of that will have to be grown on the fertile soils that cover just 11% of the global land surface. However, there is little new land that can be brought into production and existing land is being lost and degraded. The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization states that annually, 75 billion tons of soil, the equivalent of nearly 10 million hectares, which is about 25 million acres, of arable land is lost to erosion, water-logging and salination and another 20 million hectares is abandoned because its soil quality has been degraded. Contact with

contaminated soil may be direct, from using parks, schools etc., or indirect by inhaling soil contaminants which have vaporized or through the consumption of plants or animals that have accumulated large amounts of soil pollutants, and may also result from secondary contamination of water supplies and from deposition of air contaminants.

CAUSES OF SOIL POLLUTION

The redundant, ever-increasing use of chemicals such as pesticides, herbicides, insecticides and fertilizers is one of the main factors causing soil pollution by increasing its salinity making it imperfect for crop bearing and adversely affecting the microorganisms present in the soil, causing the soil to lose its fertility and resulting in the loss of minerals present in the soil, thus causing soil pollution and killing off more than just the intended pest. Other types of soil contamination typically arise from radioactive fallout, the rupture of underground storage tanks, percolation of contaminated surface water to subsurface strata, leaching of wastes from landfills or direct discharge of industrial wastes to

the soil, unfavorable and harmful irrigation practices, improper septic system and management and maintenance, leakages from sanitary sewage, acid rain falling onto the soil, fuel leakages from automobiles, that get washed



away due to rain and seep into the nearby soil and unhealthy waste management techniques, which are characterized by release of sewage into the large dumping grounds and nearby streams or rivers.

Soil Erosion Threatens To Leave Earth Hungry

"Arable land is turning to desert or to salt at an ever-faster rate, lessening the hope that we can feed our booming population"

The Guardian

EFFECTS OF SOIL POLLUTION

Soil pollution can have a number of harmful effects on ecosystems and human, plants and animal health. The harmful effects of soil pollution may come from direct contact with polluted soil or from contact with other resources, such as water or food which has been grown on or come in direct contact with the polluted soil.

Many common soil pollutants are carcinogenic causing humans who are exposed to these pollutants to be far more likely to develop cancer than those who are not. For example, regular exposure to benzene is known to cause leukemia in both children and adults and exposure to polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) is linked to liver cancer. Soil pollution can also cause neuromuscular blockage as well as depression of the central nervous system, headaches, nausea, fatigue, eye irritation and skin rash. Soil does not need to be highly contaminated to be harmful to humans. Soil that is not significantly polluted

may still harm humans directly though bioaccumulation, which according to Pollution Issues, occurs when plants are grown in lightly polluted soil, which continuously absorb molecules of the pollutants. Since the plants cannot get rid of these molecules, they accumulate in the plant, causing higher amounts of pollution to exist in the plant than in the soil. Animals who eat many of these polluted plants take on all the pollution those plants have accumulated. Larger animals who eat the plant-eating animals take on all the pollution from the animals they eat. Humans who eat plants or animals that have accumulated large amounts of soil pollutants may be poisoned, even if the soil itself does not contain enough pollution to harm human health. Furthermore, the presence of heavy metals in soil in toxic amounts can cause irreversible developmental damage in children. Lead and mercury in soil may also be harmful to human health. Although lead and mercury may be found naturally in soil, high concentrations of either metal may cause damage to the developing brains of young children, which in turn may lead to neurological problems. Humans of any age may also suffer kidney or liver damage from exposure to excessive mercury in soil. In addition to endangering human health, soil pollution can also cause economic damage. For example, in some parts of China, soil that is polluted with heavy metals is nevertheless used to grow grain. The grain grown in these soils is often polluted with heavy metals. According to China Dialogue, an estimated 12 million tons of polluted grain must be disposed of each year, costing Chinese farmers up to 20 billion yuan, or about \$2.57 billion U.S. Learn more.

Soil pollution can negatively affect the metabolism of microorganisms and arthropods, which can destroy some layers of the primary food chain and have a harmful effect on predator animal species. Also, small life forms may consume harmful chemicals in the soil which may then be passed up the food chain to larger animals, which may lead to increased mortality rates and even animal extinction.

ENVIRONMENT

According to Pollution Issues, soil pollution naturally contributes to air pollution by releasing volatile compounds into the atmosphere - so the more toxic compounds soil contains, the greater

the air pollution it creates - and can lead to water pollution if toxic chemicals leach into groundwater or if contaminated runoff or sewage, which can contain dangerous heavy metals, reaches streams, lakes, or oceans. When applied repeatedly or in large amounts, these heavy metals can accumulate in soils to the point that it is unable to support plant life. Moreover, soil pollution allows great quantities of nitrogen to escape through ammonia volatilization and denitrification and the decomposition of organic materials in soil can release sulfur dioxide and other sulfur compounds, causing acid rain. Furthermore, acidic soils created by the deposition of acidic compounds, such as sulfur dioxide brought about by the burning of fossil fuels, produce an acidic environment that harms micro-organisms, which improve the soil structure by breaking down organic material and aiding in water flow. Soil pollution may alter plant metabolism and reduce crop yields and cause trees and plants that may absorb soil contaminants to pass them up the food chain. Soils polluted by acid rain have an impact on plants by disrupting the soil chemistry and reducing the plant's ability to take up nutrients and undergo photosynthesis. Soil pollution also

causes the loss of soil and natural nutrients present in it, hindering plants ability to thrive in such soil, which would further result in soil erosion and disturbing the balance of flora and fauna residing in the soil. While aluminum occurs naturally in the environment, soil pollution can mobilize inorganic forms, which are highly toxic to plants and can potentially leach into ground water, compounding their effects. Soil pollution increase the salinity of the soil making it unfit for vegetation, thus making it useless and barren. If some crops manage to grow under these conditions, they would be poisonous enough to cause serious health problems in people consuming them. The creation of toxic dust is another potential effect of soil pollution. Furthermore, contaminated soils with high levels of nitrogen and phosphorus can leach into waterways, causing algal blooms, resulting in the death of aquatic plants due to depleted dissolved oxygen. Finally, acidic deposition into the soil can hamper its ability to buffer changes in the soil pH, causing plants to die off due to inhospitable conditions.

Source:

<http://www.everythingconnects.org/soil-pollution.htm>



TREATMENT OF ANIMALS IN HINDUISM



Do animals have souls? Yes, say the Hindu scriptures. Every living being, from the animals down to the insects and tiny organisms, possesses souls. Like humans, they are also beings (bhutas) subject to the laws of Nature and the cycle of births and deaths. We may consider them ignorant, but they have their own language and intelligence. They also perform an important duty in creation and occupy an important place in the manifestation and evolution of life. Their duty is to nourish the humans through milk and through self-sacrifice.

This article examines the importance of animals in Hinduism and how they are treated in general by various sections people. Animals occupy an important place in Hinduism. They are frequently mentioned in the Hindu myths and legends and enjoy a place of their own in Hindu pantheon as vehicles of many gods and goddesses, as divinities and also as incarnations or aspects of Vishnu or Siva. They embellish and beautify Hindu decorative art and temple architecture, adorning the outer walls and towers of temples as objects of beauty or being installed inside as objects of veneration. Animals appear in

Buddhism and Jainism both as divinities and as a part of their decorative art and architecture. Before Mahayana Buddhism became popular the Buddha was depicted symbolically as an elephant. Mahavira, the founder of Jainism, is often shown under the hood of a multi headed serpent, a practice, according to some, was later followed by Vaishnavism.

TREATMENT OF ANIMALS IN HINDUISM

Hinduism is a compassionate religion and treats all living beings from animals down to insects and tiny creatures with great respect as aspects of God, having souls of their own, going through the same process of births and deaths as human beings. Depending upon how they are born, they classify all living beings into three kinds: those who are born from seeds and sprouts, those who are born from eggs and those who are born from womb. The scriptures urge us to treat the animals fairly and, not harm them and not subject them to cruelty and pain. Non-violence towards all, including plants and animals is the highest virtue. Non-violence means not even having the intention to disturb others. Sacrificing animals to

appease the deities was a prehistoric tradition which continued in the tradition for long, but as time went by became increasingly uncomfortable with such practices to the extent that it is no more appreciated in Hinduism by all sections of people. The historical attitude of Hindus towards animals can be guessed from the fact that until the arrival of the British into India, the Indian forests were teeming with all kinds of wildlife. It was the British who made hunting a great sport and virtually wiped out the wildlife population from the country.

THE STATUS OF GODS, HUMANS, AND ANIMALS IN CREATION



According to various schools of Hinduism, spiritually there is no distinction between human beings and other life forms. All life forms, including plants and animals, are manifestations of God as limited beings (jivas) and possess souls. All beings are children of Prajapati only. There are no exceptions. God is the lord of the animals (pasupati). All humans are also animals until they learn to use their intelligence and overcome their ignorance and delusion. Like humans, animals are also subject to the cycle of births and deaths, karma, triple gunas, aspects of Nature, mortality and the possibility of salvation. All are subject to mortality and food for Death who rules the mortal world. Even microorganisms are jivas, having souls of their own.¹ The difference is in terms of their physical bodies and the number of tattvas (principles), gunas (qualities), elements (mahabhutas) and senses associated with them. The jivas are subject to the limitations of consciousness and capacity, induced by the activity of Prakriti or nature. When they overcome their limitations and regain their true consciousness, they become liberated. Saivism goes one step further and considers all living

beings as pasus (animals) in contrast to pati or Siva who is the lord of all (pasupathi). The pasus are Siva differentiated as individual beings subject to the bonds (pasas) of egoism, delusion and karma. When they overcome these bonds and realize their true consciousness they become liberated.



According to Hinduism, animals are not inferior creatures, but manifestations of God on the lower scale of evolution compared to man, each containing a spark of the divine, capable of becoming human and achieving salvation like the rest of us. Human life is precious because it comes after many lives of existence in the lower life forms. In the whole creation only human beings, not even devas (gods), have the opportunity to achieve salvation or ascend to the planes of divinity. Human life is therefore very valuable and unique. But if human beings choose to ignore the great opportunity earned by them through their previous karma and indulge in irresponsible actions, they may very likely regress into animal existence and have to start all over again. We have therefore a special responsibility to practice dharma and work for our liberation.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Hinduism upholds all acts of kindness. Since Hinduism recognizes all animals as beings with souls, it has been a tradition in Hinduism since the earliest times to protect them and nourish them. Nourishing the animals along with gods and ancestors has been a traditional practice and part of the five daily sacrifices of Hindu tradition. Just as humans depend upon gods for their protection, the animals depend upon humans for their welfare. Just as we nourish gods through sacrifices, animals nourish humans through milk and their flesh. Killing animals except for rituals or for food was a taboo. Even in case of the latter, the law books prescribed many restrictions. Hindus consider compassion for animals (bhuta daya) one of the highest virtues and mark of divine quality. It has been a tradition in Hinduism since long not to slaughter cattle that are past their prime. Even if they serve no purpose, they are allowed to die naturally. Hindus (who practice their religion, not the namesake Hindus) care for sick cattle and take care of their welfare. Intentionally they do not harm animals, because they know the consequences of such bad karma.

ANIMAL SCIENCE

In ancient India people used various types of animals for domestic, military, commercial, recreational or medicinal purposes. Hindu scriptures mention the use of cows, sheep, oxen, buffaloes, rhinoceros, camels, asses, elephants, birds, boars, pigs, dogs, snakes, fish, tigers, lions and many mythical creatures. Animals were used in trade and commerce, hunting, animal fights, gambling, defense, transportation, sacrificial ceremonies, medicines and as gifts and food. Snakes or snake poison were used to kill enemies or even kings. Animal science (pashu vidya) dealt with various aspects of animal life and how to tame them, train them and use them for domestic or military use. There were separate treatises on taming and training elephants. Animals were classified into groups based on their origin (oviparous or mammalian), anatomy, number of legs, number of sense organs, diet, behavior, dominant quality (guna), habitat and so on. People believed that animals had the ability to communicate in their cryptic languages and that gods had the natural ability to communicate with

them while human beings needed to develop psychic ability to do so. In the Hindu mythology we find animals trying to acquire spiritual knowledge from enlightened masters by loitering around them and listening to their discourses. Animals such as cows, lizards, crows, cats, vultures and owls were used to read signs and portend future or determine auspicious and inauspicious moments. There was a whole branch of science dealing with the medicinal value of certain animal parts and products.

THE ANIMAL WITHIN AND WITHOUT

In ancient India ascetics and religious teachers lived in forests surrounded by wild life, practicing tapas (austerities) or teaching students in the gurukulas (religious schools). The adverse and difficult conditions in the forests offered them an opportunity to practice the virtues of detachment, humility, equanimity and compassion. Living in harmony with nature, carrying no weapons and embracing the insecurity and fear they tried to tame and transcend their animal nature and achieve liberation.

ANIMALS IN HISTORY

Excavations at the Indus valley sites show that animals played an important role in the religious and economic lives of the Indus people. The Indus people domesticated cows, buffaloes, sheep and bulls and probably worshipped animals along with mother goddess and a prototype of Lord Siva who is depicted in the seals as a yogi seated in a meditative pose surrounded by animals. Unfortunately the Indus seals have not been deciphered so far. So we do not know much about what the Indus people did or how they lived.

Vedic people valued cattle as wealth and preferred to receive them as gifts. The scriptures repeatedly emphasize the virtue of donating cows to Brahmins on every opportunity. But they were not much into worshipping animal divinities. They used animals for milk, ghee (clarified butter), leather, medicine, barter, gifts, cooking and sacrifices. The early vedic people sacrificed cows, sheep, oxen, buffaloes and horses. They protected their farmlands from birds, pests and insects and hunted animals both for recreation and protection of their villages and cattle. They

tanned the hides of animals and used the leather to make bags, reigns, slings and bowstrings. Animals were also used for meat. Cooking was considered an art. Both Bhima and Nala excelled in the art of cooking. As time went by, sacrificial ceremonies became increasingly symbolic with the exception of horse sacrifice. Cows became sacred animals which cannot be killed both for religious and economic reasons. Killing cows became a social taboo and a capital offence.

HUNTING

Animal fights were a regular feature in the post vedic India. People participated in animal fights for betting and recreation. Hunting was a regular sport in which the kings and his family participated. Hunting provided them with a good opportunity to perfect their skills in archery, chariot racing and marital arts, get acquainted with the conditions of the region and clear the forests of wild animals which menaced the people living there. Accompanied by an entourage of soldiers, officials, ministers and entertainers, they went out on hunting expeditions either to kill or capture wild animals such as lions, tigers, bears, elephants, wild boar, deer and wild bulls. On occasions they visited the ascetics who lived near by and engaged them in spiritual conversation.

USE OF ANIMALS IN WARFARE'

Elephants and horses constituted a significant part of a king's military might, which were replenished regularly through hunting and conquests. The Greek historians accounted 4000

horses, 300 chariots and 200 elephants in the army of Porus who ruled a small principality in the Punjab region. The Nandas and Mauryans who ruled vast empires maintained huge armies consisting of hundreds of thousands of bulls, bullocks, horses and elephants. Chandragupta Maurya sent a gift of several hundred elephants to Selukas who was appointed by Alexander as the viceroy of the territories he conquered east of Hindukush. Animals were used in military either for warfare or in transportation.

Hindu law books declare that it was king's responsibility to protect his people from wild animals and pestilence. According to Kautilya's Arthashastra, a king should protect his territory from eight kinds of adversities namely, fire, flood, pestilence, famine, rats, snakes, tigers and demons. He should create separate departments to manage the forest and cattle wealth of his kingdom. Megasthenese, who was an ambassador in the court of Chandragupta Maurya, mentioned in his Indika that the Mauryan King went on hunting expeditions on the back of an elephant surrounded by women bodyguards. The king was fond of animals and enjoyed animal fights involving bulls, rams, elephants and other animals. Bullock carts were used in the transportation of food and other materials to the soldiers during war time. People used various types of animals for riding including horses, camels, asses, elephants and tigers. Shepherds and cowherds lived in open in tents. In post Mauryan period there were professional guilds of hunters, snake charmers, bird catchers and pig dealers. The growing popularity of Jainism,



Buddhism, Saivism and Vaishnavism created a new awareness among people about animals and the need for compassion towards them.

ANIMAL SACRIFICES

But their influence was not sufficient enough to stop animal sacrifices. Ancient Indians regularly indulged in animal sacrifices and rarely in human sacrifices. In some remote areas of India animal sacrifices continue even today. The rise of Tantricism in the post Mauryan period and the integration of folk religions into Hinduism contributed to the rise animal sacrifices. Kings sacrificed animals to appease divinities seeking their blessings and support. Inscriptions belonging to the Gupta period suggest that people had an obligation to supply sacrificial animals on demand to their king. Sometimes the kings exempted some villages from this obligation. Sri Adishanakaracharya disapproved extreme methods of tantric worship which included animal and human sacrifices. During his travels in the subcontinent, he encouraged the worship of shaktis through the traditional methods of rituals and puja rather than sacrifices and offerings of blood and flesh.

ANIMAL AS DIVINITIES

Hindus revere many divinities in animal form. Lord Vishnu incarnated upon earth first as a fish, then as a tortoise and next as a boar. In another incarnation he appeared as half lion and half man. He is worshipped in all these forms. Lord Siva appeared once in the form of a sharabha a mythical monster with multiple horns, legs and spikes instead of hair on the body. Hanuman is a monkey god who assisted Lord Rama ably in the battle of Ramayana. He is worshipped through out India and, though of a lesser god, ranks among the foremost in the Hindu pantheon. Ganesha the elephant headed god and son of Lord Siva and Parvathi is equally popular, if not more.

Adishesha is a thousand hooded primeval serpent associated with Lord Vishnu, who arises from the primeval waters (ksiramudra) in the beginning of creation resting on his endless coils, his thousand hoods providing him the canopy. The serpent symbolically represents the time and the thousand hoods divisions of time.

Besides Hanuman, animals played an important role in the epic battle of Ramayana. Jatayuvu, a mythical bird, loses his life fighting against Ravana when he is carrying away Sita after kidnapping her. During his wanderings in search of Sita, accompanied by his brother Lakshman, Rama comes across Sugriva, the monkey king of Kishkindha whom he helps against his brother Bali. Jatayuvu's brother provides a clue to the search party of monkeys headed by Hanuman that Sita was held in captive by the demon king Ravana. Then accompanied by an army of monkeys, bears and other animals Rama leaves for Lanka to rescue his wailing wife. The monkeys and other animals build an incredible bridge across the ocean to the island country of Ravana. They destroy the vast army of Ravana and help Rama in rescuing his wife. The story of Ramayana is a reminder of the Hindu belief that in the universal scheme of things God does not distinguish between humans and animals and that all living beings have an equal status but play different roles.

ANIMALS AS VEHICLES OF GODS

In the Hindu pantheon each god and goddess is associated with an animal as a vehicle. Symbolically the vehicles represent the animal energies or qualities or skills which need to be strengthened or sublimated in our lower nature with the help of the divinities who can transform them. The knowledge of vehicles is therefore very useful in knowing which divinity can help us in transforming our inner energies. The list of gods and goddesses and their vehicles are mentioned below:

Divinity - Vehicle
Ganesha - Mouse
Brahma - Swan
Vishnu - Garuda or eagle
Siva - Nandi or bull
Indra - Elephant Airavatha
Agni - Ram
Vayu - Thousands of horses, antelope, lion.
Varuna - Swans, crocodile or makara
The Sun - A chariot driven by seven horses
Skanda - Peacock
Saraswathi - Peacock or swan
Lakshmi - Owl
Parvathi/Durga /Chandi - Lion
Maheswari - Bull

Vaisnavi - Eagle
 Kaumari - Peacock
 Brahmi - Swan
 Aindri - Elephant
 Kama - Parrot, Cuckoo or Swan
 Soma - A two or three wheeled chariot drawn by ten horses
 Mangala - Ram
 Budha - A chariot drawn by four horses
 Brihaspathi - Golden chariot drawn by eight horses
 Sukra - Eight horses
 Sani - Vulture, crow, buffalo or an iron chariot drawn by eight horses,
 Rahu - Black lion
 Ketu - Vulture
 Kubera - Shoulders of a man or a carriage drawn by men or an elephant or ram,
 Yama - He buffalo
 Nritti - Donkey, lion, man
 Ishana - Bull
 Ganga - Crocodile

ANIMALS AS SYMBOLS

Animals serve as symbols in Hinduism. We have already discussed the symbolic significance of animals as vehicles of gods and goddesses. The elephant is used as a religious symbol by the Hindus, the Buddhists and the Jains. The symbol of ashta diggajas or eight elephants standing in eight different directions represent the ashtadikpalas or rulers of the eight directions of space. The elephants are also associated with goddess Lakshmi as symbols of abundance. The fish and conch shell are associated with Lord Vishnu. The conch is an attribute of Lord Vishnu while two fish juxtaposed to each other is considered as a symbol of fertility and good luck. Makara, a mythical figure, with the head of a crocodile, body of a reptile and tail of foliage, is a symbol of the zodiacal sign of Capricorn. It is also depicted as the vehicle of the river goddess Ganga. In northern India the lion, bull and elephant are included among the ashtamangalas or the eight auspicious objects.

ANIMALS AS SOURCE OF FOOD

Meat eating was not forbidden in ancient India. The Vedic people ate cooked meats of certain animals. Meat was also cooked and consumed at the end of certain sacrificial ceremonies such as

the horse sacrifice. Vedic people ate fish, buffaloes, oxen and various other animals. Cows were often sacrificed but they were subsequently banned from slaughter. Jainism exercised a great influence in changing the food habits of the people of the subcontinent. The Jain monks lived austere lives and encouraged people to avoid animal food. Many ancient rulers of India were Jains including Chandragupta Maurya which must have contributed greatly to the increasing preference among urban people for vegetarian food. Although Buddhism emphasized the virtues of compassion and non injury to animals, meat eating was not disallowed by Buddhism altogether. The monastic rules of Buddhism provided a code of conduct for the monks to follow in choosing vegetarian and non-vegetarian foods of various types without craving. Asoka introduced his law of piety (dhamma), which was a mixture of Vedism, Jainism and Buddhism, in which he emphasized the need for compassion and respect for animal life. He also banned animal fights and made provision for animal care. The post Mauryan period saw a revival of Hinduism. The Sungas, the Nagas, the Guptas and the Vakatakas, who ruled large parts of India patronized Hinduism and revived many ancient traditions. They participated in vedic sacrifices, worshipped Hindu gods and goddesses and built temples in their honor. The Dharmashastras prescribed elaborate rules regarding food and drinks. The Apastamba Sutras forbid meats of certain animals such as the one hoofed animals, camels, certain birds, fish, deer, village pigs and cattle, but allowed the meat of cows and oxen, tortoise, porcupine, hedgehog, the rhinoceros and the hare were allowed³. The Guatama sutras forbid meat of animals that had five toes, or double rows of teeth or excessive quantity of hair, but exempted the meat of hedgehog, hare, porcupine, the iguana, the rhinoceros and the tortoise. Certain animal parts such as the testicles of bulls and the meat of rhinoceros were used as aphrodisiacs.

SERPENT DEITIES

The worship of snakes has been a very ancient tradition in India. The vedic people did not worship snakes. But many native people across the length and breadth of the subcontinent worshipped them. Some of the tribes became popular as Nagas because of their association

with serpent deities. In the urban settlements snake worshippers worked as snake charmers and medicine men. They entertained people with magic and cured snake bites using a combination of prayers and medicine.



Between First century BC and second century AD, a group of Nagas claiming themselves to be Barasivas rose to prominence in central India. They established an empire that stretched from Jabalpur in the south to Mathura in the north. They contributed to the downfall of the Kushana empire and freed parts of northern India from foreign rule. They revived many vedic traditions including the horse sacrifice and played an important role in the reemergence of Saivism in the Gangetic valley and central India in the face of growing popularity of Buddhism. Their contribution to Hinduism is perhaps never fully appreciated as they left no monuments of their own. The Puranas mention names of several Naga rulers who ruled central and northern India. The Nagas initiated a process of revival of Hinduism that was later taken up by the Satavahanas in the south and the Gutpas and the Vakatakas in the north. As pointed out by Dr. Jaiswal 4, had there been no Nagas perhaps there would have been no Gutpas.

According to Hindu mythology, the serpent deities are semi-divine beings who descended from sage Kashyapa and Kadru. They live in the subterranean world of Nagaloka ruled by Ananta with Bhogavathi as its capital. They act as guardians of subterranean treasures such as gems, precious stones and minerals. Known for their quick temper, wisdom, skill and magical powers, they are depicted in Hindu iconography with a lower snake body covered by bejeweled garments and a human head adorned by three to seven cobra hoods. The snake deities are charming personalities, who can bewitch human

beings with their grace and beauty. Garuda, the celestial bird and vehicle of Vishnu, is their cousin with whom they have an eternal enmity.

In certain parts of southern India, the serpent deities are associated with fertility and tree worship. Women, desiring offspring, worship snake stones having the images of a snake goddess carrying two offspring in her arms. The stones are installed under either a pipal or a neem tree after keeping them submerged under water for six months and worshipped with flowers and vermilion.

Prominent serpent deities include Ananta, Kaliya and Vasuki. Ananta is the king of the serpent world. Kaliya was a five headed serpent who was subdued by Lord Krishna after a prolonged fight. Vasuki was a giant serpent who helped both gods and demons in the churning of the oceans for the nectar of immortality.

The serpent deities constitute an important aspect of Hinduism even today. Devout men and women in the rural areas of both northern and southern India worship them with milk, incense and flowers, seeking their help and grace. In some parts of the country killing a snake is a bad karma and a bad omen. People avoid killing cobras because of the belief that they can recognize their attackers and take revenge. If a snake, or a cobra, is killed by an accident, it is customary to perform certain rites before cremating or burying it to avoid retribution from the serpent deities.

HORSES



The horse was not indigenous to India. It was either imported from outside by the Indus valley people or came along with the Rigvedic people. In the early vedic period horses and chariots were used mainly for transportation but in the later vedic period they became an integral part of the army. Horses were also used in sacrificial ceremonies such as horse sacrifice.

According to the vedic mythology, horses originated from Uchhaishravas a mythical horse

that was white in color and had wings. It emerged out of waters during the churning of the oceans by gods and demon and was taken by Indra, the leader of the gods, who cut its wings in order to restrict its movements and donated it to the mankind for their welfare and convenience.

The horse played an important role in the formation of large empires by facilitating efficient and effective functioning of the administrative machinery in consolidating the monarchies and ensuring better control in collecting taxes, mobilizing large armies and maintaining hold over border areas that were often the centers of rebellion.

Ancient Indian rulers made adequate arrangements for the maintenance and procurement of horses. The Mauryan rulers had separate department for this purpose. Horses were used both for transportation and warfare but rarely in agriculture. They were drawn by reins as saddles were unknown in ancient India. During war time they were given fermented drinks before taking them to the battle field.

COWS



Cows occupy an important place in Hinduism. Hindus consider killing cows and eating their meat a serious taboo. Every part of a cow's body is said to be occupied by a divinity and everything it produces is considered sacred including the cow dung and urine which are used in certain rites and rituals. Cows are worshipped on certain occasions. Hindus do not appreciate the idea of sending old cows to slaughter house. Certain charitable Hindu trusts maintain cow pens to keep old cows and look after them till they die naturally. Though India is a secular country where the government does not interfere in the religious affairs of the people, no political party

would like to hurt the sentiments of Hindus by making any adverse statements on the cows or passing laws permitting their slaughter. It is no exaggeration to say that if cows have a mind of their own, perhaps they all would like to migrate to India and make it their permanent home!

The cows were considered sacred from the early Rigvedic period. The Vedas expressly prohibit the killing of cows either for religious or secular purposes. Vedic people regarded cows as wealth and demanded them as donation from the rulers and merchants in return for their priestly services. Cows were used in barter and as dowry. Cow products such as cow dung, cow milk and ghee were used in ceremonies and medicines. During the Gupta rule, cow slaughter became a capital offence and remained so for a long time under successive generations of Hindu rulers.

According to Hindu mythology, the cows were created along with Brahma, the creator. Kamadhenu and Surabhi were considered sacred cows that emerged from the churning of the oceans. They had the ability to grant any wish to their owners. Cows played an important role in the life of Lord Krishna who spent most of his childhood in the midst of cowherds tending the cows. His flute had a soothing effect on the cows causing them to produce more milk. Goloka or the land of cows is another name for Vaikuntha the world of Vishnu.

DOG

The dog is associated with Indra, Yama and Siva. Indra had a bitch by name Sarama whose progeny became the watchdogs of Yamaloka the nether world of Lord Yama. In the epic Mahabharata there is a story in which Lord Yama accompanies the Pandavas all the way to the paradise in the guise of a dog to test the wisdom of Dharmaraj, his god son and the eldest brother of the Pandavas. The dog is also associated with Lord Siva who is known as svapathi or the lord of the dogs. Bhairava a fierce form of Siva, has a dog as an attendant. Khanoba, an aspect of Siva, who is worshipped in Maharashtra, had a dog as his vehicle. Lord Dattatreya who is a personification of the Brahma, Vishnu and Siva is always accompanied by four dogs who symbolize the four Vedas.

Source:

<https://www.hinduwebsite.com/hinduism/essays/animals.as>

5 WAYS YOU CAN HELP ANIMALS WITHOUT DONATING MONEY



By shan gomes

Published on 10/06/2015

Donations are the most common way we contribute to a cause we believe in, and they do an unparalleled amount of good. In a world where time is our most precious commodity, donations are an easy and convenient way to help. The money goes where it's needed, and from start to finish the process may only take a few minutes.

But it can be easy to forget that donations aren't the only way you can help out. Not all of us are in a position to make a monetary donation (cough, cough ... college), and others prefer to take a more active approach to helping out.

Believe it or not, there are many different ways you can contribute. From reading to animals in the shelter (see also here), to dropping off the dish towels you got for Christmas last year, but never used at a local rescue, the possibilities are limitless.

Below you'll find five ideas to get you started!

1. MAKE TOYS, HOMES, OR BEDS FOR SHELTER/RESCUE ANIMALS.



I know homemade or craft-type items usually aren't something you'd donate, however, the stigma that goes along with donating homemade items in the "human" world has no place in the land of shelters and rescues! They are more than happy to accept these items, and often cherish them more than their store-bought counterparts.

What kind of things should you make, you ask? Well, the most common, and probably easiest, things to make are toys. Both cats and dogs love toys, and demolish them almost as fast as they get them. Which is why rescues and shelters can never get enough! And making dog or cat toys can actually be super simple and a lot of fun. Often times you already have the items you need at home.

Have any leftover plastic easter eggs from easter? Put a few beads inside, maybe hot glue on a feather for a tail, and voila: cat toy!

For dogs, all you need is an empty plastic water bottle and an old t-shirt. Wrap and tie the t-shirt around the water bottle, then let them at it! (Dachshunds especially love chomping on them.)

Dogs and cats aren't the only ones that can use your homemade items! There are many guinea pig, rabbit, and other small mammal rescues out there that could use some help. Many of these animals prefer sleeping in actual homes or hides. And while homes and hides can be expensive to buy at a store, making them at home is quite affordable.

Handy with a sewing machine? All you need is a little bit of fabric and a whole lotta love. Simple pillow cushions or beds are also always in demand. Small ones for guinea pigs, all the way up to big ones for dogs. A soft bed goes a long way to helping animals feel comfortable.

2. GO THROUGH YOUR PANTRY AND CABINETS FOR EXTRA ITEMS.



Sounds easy enough right? Well it is! And the list of supplies shelters and rescues desperately need will probably surprise you. It's a whole lot more than just pet food.

We all know it takes a lot to keep shelters and rescues running. But it's not just the animals that need items. The facilities and cages need upkeep as well. And that means cleaning supplies, which aren't always cheap.

Take a look through your pantry and cabinets, check under the sink, you'll be surprised at what you might find. A long forgotten bottle of dish soap that wasn't quite your scent? Yep, they need that. How about an old box of garbage bags that no longer fit your can? Yep, they need those too.

Take a look at some of the items shelters and rescues commonly need, and see if you might have a few lying about you wouldn't mind donating:

Distilled water

Towels and blankets

Bleach, laundry and dish soap

Housetraining pads

Paper towels

Trash bags: 45 gallon or larger

AA, AAA and D batteries

Cotton balls

Sandwich bags

Disinfecting wipes

Towels of all sizes

Lint rollers

Kleenex

3. CHANGE WHAT YOU BUY.



Changing what we buy is an essential part to the long term plan of actually saving our planet, our resources, and our animals. By purchasing certain products, we often inadvertently support behaviors and acts, that if we were aware they were going on, we would definitely not stand for.

These atrocities take on such forms as violently sheared sheep, whose wool makes the clothing we wear; to the deforestation of the rainforest for palm oil, destroying the ecosystems and habitats of countless species; to commercial long-lines and gill nets, which slowly and painfully kill, not only the fish they are meant to catch, but thousands of other marine animals.

These are a few of the many issues, and they only gets worse. The supply-chain/origination-points of the products we use and the food we consume can be near impossible to determine, as there is very little focus on transparency. But that has slowly started to change. Packaging and labels on many products now include tags or disclaimers letting you know that the items were responsibly sourced or humanely raised/harvested.

By changing our buying habits to only purchase products we know come from sustainable and humane sources we can slowly change the entire market. While this process will take years, if not generations, we must start now if we are to have any chance at all for a future.

4. GIVE YOUR TIME



As mentioned earlier, time is incredibly valuable, and we seem to have less and less of it nowadays. But spending time can make an incredible impact in the lives of animals.

Shelters. Rescues. These places only exist because people committed their time to make them a reality. They continue to flourish because of employees and volunteers who continue to give their time.

It doesn't have to be a lot of time. An hour a week, even an hour a month. Anything and everything helps. You could help with the adoption paperwork and interviews. You could help clean the facility, or mow the lawn. You could walk the dogs, or scratch the cats. You could help give them baths. You could read to them, or maybe even sing? (Bad singers beware, the dogs may decide to howl along with you).

But it's not just dog walking and litter box cleaning that they need you for (though both of those are equally as important). There are actually a variety of tasks you can help with.

Consider yourself a Handy Manny or Mandy? Many rescues and shelters need help with facilities or enclosure repairs.

Are you an accounting wiz who loves numbers almost as much as you love animals? Rescues and shelters both desperately need your skills. Get your furry-friend-fix while helping balance the books.

5. SIGN A PETITION.



Want to do something to help, but literally have like no time at all? Well, there's still something you can do! Sign a petition. Not even kidding. All it takes is your name, address, a few clicks of your mouse, and bam! You just helped.

And yes, your one signature really will make a difference. One voice can have a hard time getting those in office to listen, ten thousand, however, can easily grab and hold their attention.

You can find these petitions on a few fantastic sites that host them. There are dozens, if not hundreds, of petitions you can find, each supporting a different cause. The good news, you can sign all of them!

Animals, both wild and domestic, need our help. These five ways you can help animals are a good starting point, but far from all-inclusive. Do one, do all five, or make up your own way to help. There are literally countless things you can come up with. And every little bit helps!

Source: <https://www.thedodo.com/ways-to-help-animals-without-donating-money-1390977021.html>

VANDANA SHIVA: EVERYTHING I NEED TO KNOW I LEARNED IN THE FOREST

*We need to value nature's biodiversity, clean water, and seeds.
For this, nature herself is the best teacher.*



Vandana Shiva posted Dec 05, 2012

My ecological journey started in the forests of the Himalaya. My father was a forest conservator, and my mother became a farmer after fleeing the tragic partition of India and Pakistan. It is from the Himalayan forests and ecosystems that I learned most of what I know about ecology. The songs and poems our mother composed for us were about trees, forests, and India's forest civilizations.

My involvement in the contemporary ecology movement began with "Chipko," a nonviolent response to the large-scale deforestation that was taking place in the Himalayan region.

In the 1970s, peasant women from my region in the Garhwal Himalaya had come out in defence of the forests.

Logging had led to landslides and floods, and scarcity of water, fodder, and fuel. Since women provide these basic needs, the scarcity meant

longer walks for collecting water and firewood, and a heavier burden.

Women knew that the real value of forests was not the timber from a dead tree, but the springs and streams, food for their cattle, and fuel for their hearths. The women declared that they would hug the trees, and the loggers would have to kill them before killing the trees.

A folk song of that period said:

*These beautiful oaks and rhododendrons,
They give us cool water
Don't cut these trees
We have to keep them alive.*

In 1973, I had gone to visit my favourite forests and swim in my favourite stream before leaving for Canada to do my Ph.D. But the forests were gone, and the stream was reduced to a trickle. I decided to become a volunteer for the Chipko movement, and I spent every vacation doing

pad yatras (walking pilgrimages), documenting the deforestation and the work of the forest activists, and spreading the message of Chipko. One of the dramatic Chipko actions took place in the Himalayan village of Adwani in 1977, when a village woman named Bachni Devi led resistance against her own husband, who had obtained a contract to cut trees. When officials arrived at the forest, the women held up lighted lanterns although it was broad daylight. The forester asked them to explain. The women replied, “We have come to teach you forestry.” He retorted, “You foolish women, how can you prevent tree felling by those who know the value of the forest? Do you know what forests bear? They produce profit and resin and timber.” The women sang back in chorus:

*What do the forests bear?
Soil, water, and pure air.
Soil, water, and pure air
Sustain the Earth and all she bears.*



The Himalayan landscape. Photo from Shutterstock.

BEYOND MONOCULTURES

From Chipko, I learned about biodiversity and biodiversity-based living economies; the protection of both has become my life’s mission. As I described in my book *Monocultures of the Mind*, the failure to understand biodiversity and its many functions is at the root of the impoverishment of nature and culture.

The lessons I learned about diversity in the Himalayan forests I transferred to the protection of biodiversity on our farms. I started saving seeds from farmers’ fields and then realized we needed a farm for demonstration and training. Thus Navdanya Farm was started in 1994 in the Doon Valley, located in the lower elevation Himalayan region of Uttarakhand

Province. Today we conserve and grow 630 varieties of rice, 150 varieties of wheat, and hundreds of other species. We practice and promote a biodiversity-intensive form of farming that produces more food and nutrition per acre. The conservation of biodiversity is therefore also the answer to the food and nutrition crisis.

When nature is a teacher, we -co-create with her.

Navdanya, the movement for biodiversity conservation and organic farming that I started in 1987, is spreading. So far, we’ve worked with farmers to set up more than 100 community seed banks across India. We have saved more than 3,000 rice varieties. We also help farmers make a transition from fossil-fuel and chemical-based monocultures to biodiverse ecological systems nourished by the sun and the soil.

Biodiversity has been my teacher of abundance and freedom, of cooperation and mutual giving.

RIGHTS OF NATURE ON THE GLOBAL STAGE

When nature is a teacher, we -co-create with her—we recognize her agency and her rights. That is why it is significant that Ecuador has recognized the “rights of nature” in its constitution. In April 2011, the United Nations General Assembly—inspired by the constitution of Ecuador and the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth initiated by Bolivia—organized a conference on harmony with nature as part of Earth Day celebrations. Much of the discussion centered on ways to transform systems based on domination of people over nature, men over women, and rich over poor into new systems based on partnership.

The U.N. secretary general’s report, “Harmony with Nature,” issued in conjunction with the conference, elaborates on the importance of reconnecting with nature: “Ultimately, environmentally destructive behavior is the result of a failure to recognize that human beings are an inseparable part of nature and that we cannot damage it without severely damaging ourselves.”

Separatism is indeed at the root of disharmony with nature and violence against nature and people. As the prominent South African environmentalist Cormac Cullinan points out, apartheid means separateness. The world joined

the anti-apartheid movement to end the violent separation of people on the basis of color. Apartheid in South Africa was put behind us. Today, we need to overcome the wider and deeper apartheid—an eco-apartheid based on the illusion of separateness of humans from nature in our minds and lives.

THE DEAD-EARTH WORLDVIEW

The war against the Earth began with this idea of separateness. Its contemporary seeds were sown when the living Earth was transformed into dead matter to facilitate the industrial revolution. Monocultures replaced diversity. “Raw materials” and “dead matter” replaced a vibrant Earth. Terra Nullius (the empty land, ready for occupation regardless of the presence of indigenous peoples) replaced Terra Madre (Mother Earth).

This philosophy goes back to Francis Bacon, called the father of modern science, who said that science and the inventions that result do not “merely exert a gentle guidance over nature’s course; they have the power to conquer and subdue her, to shake her to her foundations.”

Robert Boyle, the famous 17th-century chemist and a governor of the Corporation for the Propagation of the Gospel Among the New England Indians, was clear that he wanted to rid native people of their ideas about nature. He attacked their perception of nature “as a kind of goddess” and argued that “the veneration, wherewith men are imbued for what they call nature, has been a discouraging impediment to the empire of man over the inferior creatures of God.”

The death-of-nature idea allows a war to be unleashed against the Earth. After all, if the Earth is merely dead matter, then nothing is being killed.

As philosopher and historian Carolyn Merchant points out, this shift of perspective—from nature as a living, nurturing mother to inert, dead, and manipulable matter—was well suited to the activities that would lead to capitalism. The domination images created by Bacon and other leaders of the scientific revolution replaced those of the nurturing Earth, removing a cultural constraint on the exploitation of nature. “One does not readily slay a mother, dig

into her entrails for gold, or mutilate her body,” Merchant wrote.

WHAT NATURE TEACHES

Today, at a time of multiple crises intensified by globalization, we need to move away from the paradigm of nature as dead matter. We need to move to an ecological paradigm, and for this, the best teacher is nature herself.

This is the reason I started the Earth University/Bija Vidyapeeth at Navdanya’s farm. The Earth University teaches Earth Democracy, which is the freedom for all species to evolve within the web of life, and the freedom and responsibility of humans, as members of the Earth family, to recognize, protect, and respect the rights of other species. Earth Democracy is a shift from anthropocentrism to ecocentrism. And since we all depend on the Earth, Earth Democracy translates into human rights to food and water, to freedom from hunger and thirst. Because the Earth University is located at Navdanya, a biodiversity farm, participants



learn to work with living seeds, living soil, and the web of life. Participants include farmers, school children, and people from across the world. Two of our most popular courses are “The A-Z of Organic Farming and Agroecology,” and “Gandhi and Globalization.”

THE POETRY OF THE FOREST

The Earth University is inspired by Rabindranath Tagore, India’s national poet and a Nobel Prize laureate.

Tagore started a learning center in Shantiniketan in West Bengal, India, as a forest school, both to take inspiration from nature and to create an Indian cultural renaissance. The school became a university in 1921, growing into one of India’s most famous centers of learning.

Today, just as in Tagore's time, we need to turn to nature and the forest for lessons in freedom.

The forest teaches us enoughness.

In "The Religion of the Forest," Tagore wrote about the influence that the forest dwellers of ancient India had on classical Indian literature. The forests are sources of water and the storehouses of a biodiversity that can teach us the lessons of democracy—of leaving space for others while drawing sustenance from the common web of life. Tagore saw unity with nature as the highest stage of human evolution. In his essay "Tapovan" (Forest of Purity), Tagore writes: "Indian civilization has been distinctive in locating its source of regeneration, material and intellectual, in the forest, not the city. India's best ideas have come where man was in communion with trees and rivers and lakes, away from the crowds. The peace of the forest has helped the intellectual evolution of man.

The culture of the forest has fueled the culture of Indian society. The culture that has arisen from the forest has been influenced by the diverse processes of renewal of life, which are always at play in the forest, varying from species to species, from season to season, in sight and sound and smell. The unifying principle of life in diversity, of democratic pluralism, thus became the principle of Indian civilization." It is this unity in diversity that is the basis of both ecological sustainability and democracy.

Diversity without unity becomes the source of conflict and contest. Unity without diversity becomes the ground for external control. This is true of both nature and culture. The forest is a unity in its diversity, and we are united with nature through our relationship with the forest. In Tagore's writings, the forest was not just the source of knowledge and freedom; it was the source of beauty and joy, of art and aesthetics, of harmony and perfection. It symbolized the universe.

In "The Religion of the Forest," the poet says that our frame of mind "guides our attempts to establish relations with the universe either by conquest or by union, either through the

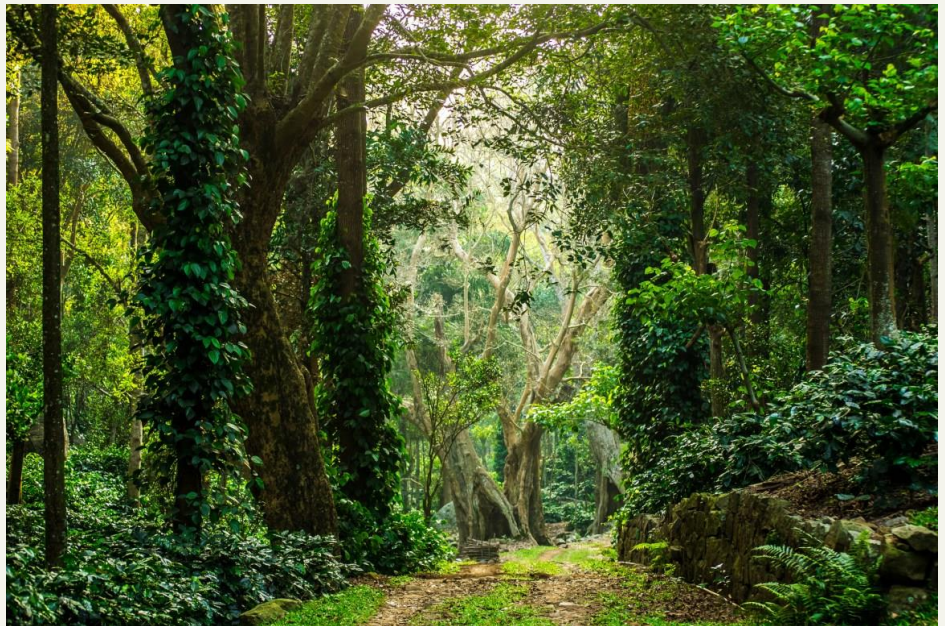
cultivation of power or through that of sympathy."

The forest teaches us union and compassion.

The forest also teaches us enoughness: as a principle of equity, how to enjoy the gifts of nature without exploitation and accumulation. Tagore quotes from the ancient texts written in the forest: "Know all that moves in this moving world as enveloped by God; and find enjoyment through renunciation, not through greed of possession." No species in a forest appropriates the share of another species. Every species sustains itself in cooperation with others.

The end of consumerism and accumulation is the beginning of the joy of living.

The conflict between greed and compassion, conquest and cooperation, violence and harmony that Tagore wrote about continues today. And it is the forest that can show us the way beyond this conflict.



Vandana Shiva wrote this article for What Would Nature Do?, the Winter 2012 issue of YES! Magazine. Shiva is an internationally renowned activist for biodiversity and against corporate globalization, and author of Stolen Harvest: The Hijacking of the Global Food Supply; Earth Democracy: Justice, Sustainability, and Peace; Soil Not Oil; and Staying Alive. The last section of this essay was adapted by the author from "Forest and Freedom," written by Shiva and published in the May/June 2011 edition of Resurgence magazine. Shiva is a YES! contributing editor.

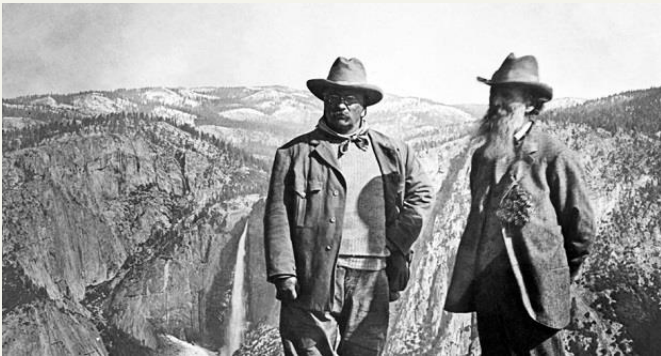
Source: <https://www.yesmagazine.org/>

12 ENVIRONMENTALISTS YOU SHOULD KNOW

By Marc Lallanilla

Environmentalists have had a big impact on our lives, but most people can't name one famous environmentalist. Here's a list of 12 influential scientists, conservationists, ecologists and other rabble-rousing leaders everyone should know who have helped contribute to the green movement.

JOHN MUIR, NATURALIST AND WRITER



Roosevelt And Muir

MPI/String/Archive Photos/Getty Images

John Muir (1838-1914) was born in Scotland and emigrated to Wisconsin as a young boy. His lifelong passion for hiking began as a young man when he hiked to the Gulf of Mexico. Muir spent much of his adult life wandering in -- and fighting to preserve -- the wilderness of the western United States, especially California. His tireless efforts led to the creation of Yosemite National Park, Sequoia National Park and millions of other conservation areas. Muir was a profound influence on many leaders of his day, including Theodore Roosevelt. In 1892, Muir and others founded the Sierra Club "to make the mountains glad."

RACHEL CARSON, SCIENTIST AND AUTHOR



Rachel Carson

Rachel Carson (1907-1964) is regarded by many as the founder of the modern environmental movement. Born in rural Pennsylvania, she went on to study biology at Johns Hopkins University and Woods Hole Marine Biological Laboratory. After working for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Carson published *The Sea Around Us* and other books. Her most famous work, however, was 1962's controversial *Silent Spring*, in which she described the devastating effect that pesticides were having on the environment. Though pilloried by chemical companies and others, Carson's observations were proven correct, and pesticides like DDT were eventually banned.

EDWARD ABBEY, AUTHOR AND MONKEY-WRENCHER



Edward Abbey. Wikimedia

Edward Abbey (1927-1989) was one of America's most dedicated -- and most outrageous -- environmentalists. Born in Pennsylvania, he is best known for his passionate defense of the deserts of America's Southwest. After working for the National Park Service in what is now Arches National Park in Utah, Abbey wrote *Desert Solitaire*, one of the seminal works of the environmental movement. His later book, *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, gained notoriety as an inspiration for the radical environmental group Earth First! which has been accused of eco-sabotage by some, including many mainstream environmentalists.

ALDO LEOPOLD, ECOLOGIST AND AUTHOR



Aldo Leopold. AldoLeopold.org

Aldo Leopold (1887-1948) is considered by some to be the godfather of wilderness conservation and of modern ecologists. After studying forestry at Yale University, he worked for the U.S. Forest Service. Though he was originally asked to kill bears, cougars and other predators on federal land because of protests from local ranchers, he later adopted a more holistic approach to wilderness management. His best-known book, *A Sand County Almanac*, remains one of the most eloquent pleas for the preservation of wilderness ever composed.

JULIA HILL, ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVIST

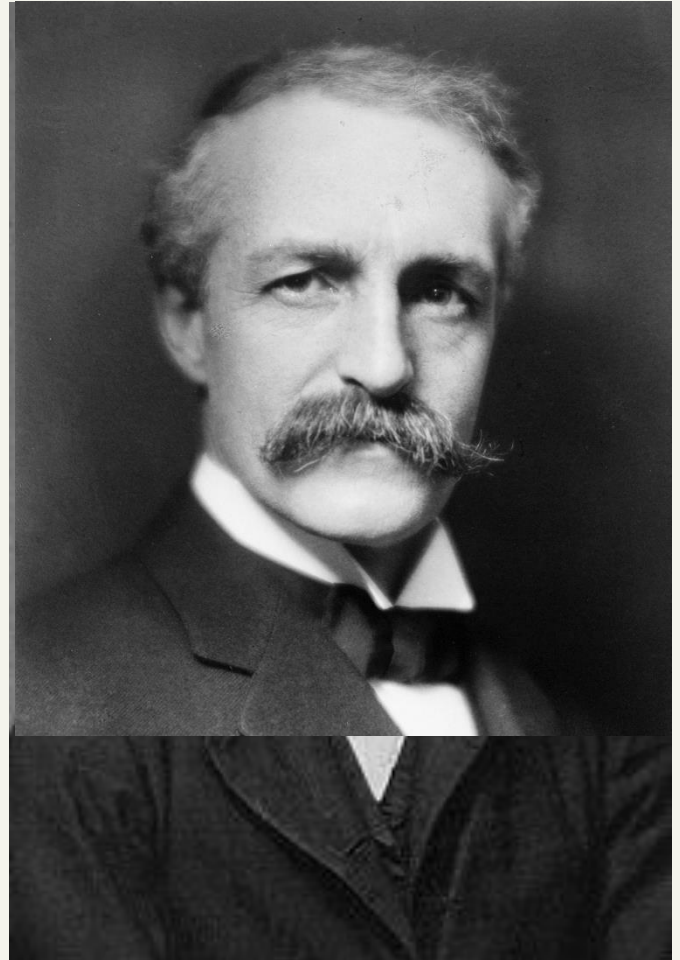


Andrew Lichtenstein/Getty Images

Julia "Butterfly" Hill (1974-) is one of the most committed environmentalists alive today. After

nearly dying in an auto accident in 1996, she dedicated her life to environmental causes. For almost two years, Hill lived in the branches of an ancient redwood tree (which she named Luna) in northern California to save it from being cut down. Her tree-sit became an international cause célèbre, and Hill remains involved in environmental and social causes.

HENRY DAVID THOREAU, AUTHOR AND ACTIVIST



Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) was one of America's first philosopher-writer-activists, and he is still one of the most influential. In 1845, Thoreau -- disillusioned with much of contemporary life -- set out to live alone in a small house he built near the shore of Walden Pond in Massachusetts. The two years he spent living a life of utter simplicity was the inspiration for *Walden, or A Life in the Woods*, a meditation on life and nature that is considered a must-read for all environmentalists. Thoreau also wrote an influential political piece called *Resistance to Civil Government* (Civil Disobedience) that outlined the moral bankruptcy of overbearing governments.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT, POLITICIAN AND CONSERVATIONIST



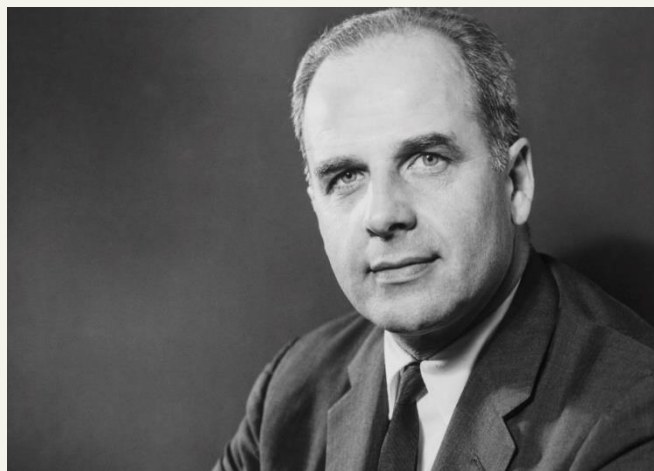
Theodore Roosevelt
NPS

It might surprise some that a famed big-game hunter would make it onto a list of environmentalists, but Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919) was one of the most active champions of wilderness preservation in history. As governor of New York, he outlawed the use of feathers as clothing adornment in order to prevent the slaughter of some birds. While president of the United States (1901-1909), Roosevelt set aside hundreds of millions of wilderness acres, actively pursued soil and water conservation, and created over 200 national forests, national monuments, national parks, and wildlife refuges.

GIFFORD PINCHOT, FORESTER AND CONSERVATIONIST

Gifford Pinchot (1865-1946) was the son of a timber baron who later regretted the damage he had done to America's forests. At his insistence, Pinchot studied forestry for many years and was appointed by President Grover Cleveland to develop a plan for managing America's western forests. That career continued when Theodore Roosevelt asked him to lead the U.S.

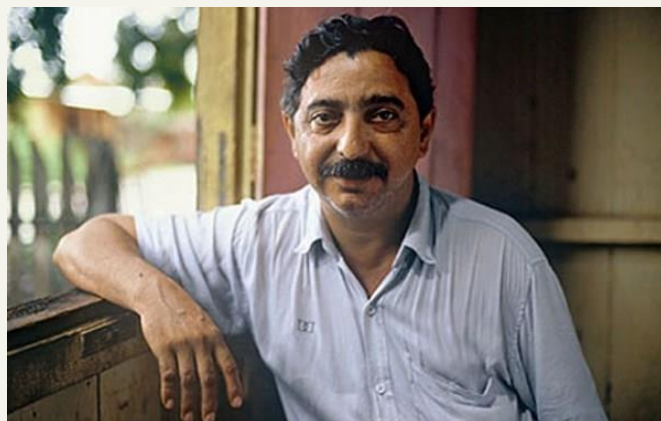
Forest Service. His time in office was not without opposition, however; he publicly battled John Muir over the destruction of wilderness tracts like Hetch Hetchy in



Gifford Pinchot
Historical/Getty Images

California, while also being condemned by timber companies for closing off land to their exploitation.

CHICO MENDES, CONSERVATIONIST AND ACTIVIST



Chico Mendes
Alex Robinson/Getty Images

Chico Mendes (1944-1988) is best known for his efforts at saving the rainforests of Brazil from logging and ranching activities. Mendes came from a family of rubber harvesters who supplemented their income by sustainably gathering nuts and other rainforest products. Alarmed at the devastation of the Amazon rainforest, he helped to ignite international support for its preservation. His activities, however, drew the ire of powerful ranching and timber interests -- Mendes was murdered by cattle ranchers at age 44.

WANGARI MAATHAI, POLITICAL ACTIVIST AND ENVIRONMENTALIST



Wangari Maathai
Wendy Stone / Getty Images

Wangari Maathai (1940-2011) was an environmental and political activist in Kenya. After studying biology in the United States, she returned to Kenya to begin a career that combined environmental and social concerns. Maathai founded the Green Belt Movement in Africa and helped to plant over 30 million trees, providing jobs to the unemployed while also preventing soil erosion and securing firewood. She was appointed Assistant Minister in the Ministry for Environment and Natural Resources, and in 2004 Maathai was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize while continuing to fight for the rights of women, the politically oppressed and the natural environment.

GAYLORD NELSON, POLITICIAN AND ENVIRONMENTALIST

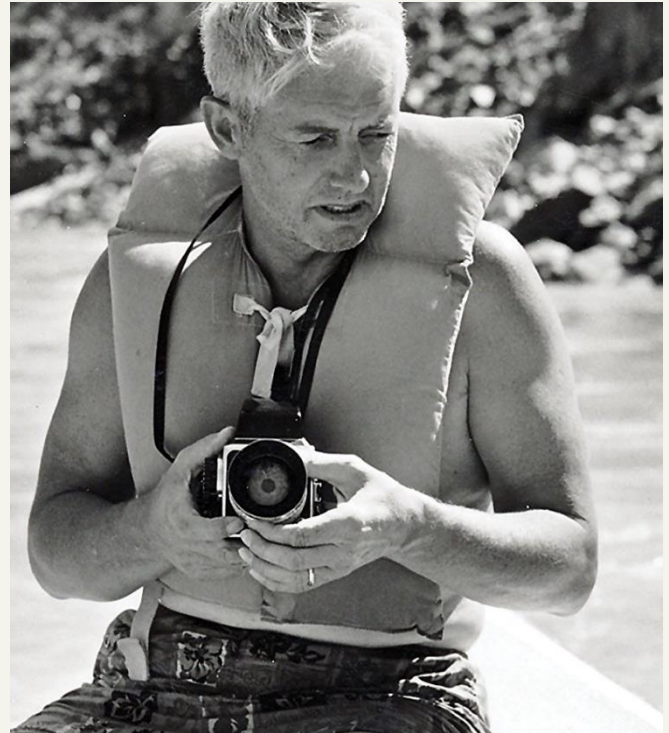
No other name is more associated with Earth Day than that of Gaylord Nelson (1916-2005). After returning from World War II, Nelson began a career as a politician and environmental activist that was to last the rest of his life.

Sen. Gaylord Nelson, University of Wisconsin

As governor of Wisconsin, he created an Outdoor Recreation Acquisition Program that saved about one million acres of parkland. He was instrumental in the development of a national trails system (including the Appalachian Trail) and help pass the

Wilderness Act, the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and other landmark environmental legislation. He is perhaps best known as the founder of Earth Day, which has become an international celebration of all things environmental.

DAVID BROWER, ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVIST



David Brower, Joe Munroe / Getty Images

David Brower (1912-2000) has been associated with wilderness preservation since he began mountain climbing as a young man. Brower was appointed the Sierra Club's first executive director in 1952; over the next 17 years, membership grew from 2,000 to 77,000, and they won many environmental victories. His confrontational style, however, got Brower fired from the Sierra Club -- he nonetheless went on to found the groups Friends of the Earth, the Earth Island Institute and the League of Conservation Voters.

Source: <https://www.thoughtco.com>

1 MILLION SPECIES UNDER THREAT OF EXTINCTION BECAUSE OF HUMANS, BIODIVERSITY REPORT FINDS



Keeper Zachariah Mutai attends to Fatu, one of only two female northern white rhinos left in the world, in the pen where she is kept for observation, in Kenya in 2018. Sunday Alamba / AP file

May 6, 2019, 9:00 PM AEST

By Denise Chow

A sweeping report assessing the state of the natural world found that humans are having an “unprecedented” and devastating effect on global biodiversity, with about 1 million animal and plant species now threatened with extinction.

A summary of the report’s findings was released Monday by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, which was established in 2012 by the United Nations Environment Programme and includes representatives from 132 countries.

Robert Watson, the panel’s chair and a professor of environmental sciences at the University of East Anglia in the U.K., said evidence collected over the past five decades from roughly 15,000 scientific and government studies paints “an ominous picture.”

“The health of ecosystems on which we and all other species depend is deteriorating more rapidly than ever,” he said in a statement. “We are eroding the very foundations of our economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of life worldwide.”

The report, which did not list individual species, found that 25 percent of mammals, more than 40 percent of amphibian species, nearly 33 percent of sharks and 25 percent of plant groups are threatened with extinction. Based on these proportions, the researchers estimated that approximately 1 million animal and plant species could die out, many “within decades.”

Since the 16th century, humans have driven at least 680 vertebrate species to extinction, including the Pinta Island tortoise. The last known animal of this subspecies, a giant tortoise nicknamed Lonesome George, died at the

Galapagos National Park in Ecuador in 2012. A subspecies of the Javan rhino went extinct in 2011, and the western black rhino and northern white rhino are extinct in the wild, according to the World Wildlife Fund.

“The essential, interconnected web of life on Earth is getting smaller and increasingly frayed,” Josef Settele, the report’s co-chair, said in a statement.

RAPID DETERIORATION

Extinctions have occurred throughout the planet’s history, but the report found that human actions threaten more species now than ever before, with the global rate of species extinction over the past 50 years already “at least tens to hundreds of times higher than it has averaged over the past 10 million years.”

This quickening pace should be cause for alarm, according to David Wagner, a professor of ecology and evolutionary biology at the University of Connecticut, who was not involved with the report.

“It’s happening faster than organisms can respond evolutionarily,” Wagner said. “That means new species generation won’t be able to keep pace with the loss of species.”

This could have serious consequences for the stability of ecosystems around the world, which in turn could directly affect human health, experts say. The interactions between animals, plants, humans and the environment make up a complex web. Disruptions to any part of this biological architecture can have significant, cascading effects.

For instance, humans need food to survive. More than three-quarters of the world’s food crops rely, at least in part, on the activities of bees, wasps, butterflies and other pollinators, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The new U.N. report found that 10 percent of insect species are under threat.

“When you lose a species, think of it like a fabric, and you’re taking and plucking one of the strings,” said Brett Scheffers, a conservation ecologist at the University of Florida in Gainesville, who was not involved with the report. “Over time, the fabric gets looser and less stable. These are the types of changes we’re observing where entire ecosystems collapse.”

Source: <https://www.nbcnews.com/>



INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY (IYD) 2019

International Yoga Day or World Yoga Day is celebrated every year on June 21. And also this Year the World Yoga Day 2019 will be celebrated on 21 June 2019 across the world. There is no public holiday on this day. It is a day for people to create awareness about Yoga throughout the world.

The main objective of International Yoga Day (Yoga Diwas) is to raise awareness about Yoga and to make people aware of the benefits achieved through yoga. International Yoga Day in India is celebrated by the Ministry of "AYUSH".

In IYD logo, a person is shown performing 'Namaskar' (Salutation) which shows the unity between the body, person and nature along with Yoga.

In the logo of World Yoga Day, the color of the person's body is shown in blue color. Which reflects the water element. Brown and green leaves have been shown next to the person. Green leaves symbolize nature and brown leaves symbolize earth elements. Yellow color symbolizes the eye element and solar energy is the source of inspiration.

Apart from this, 'Yoga for Harmony and Peace' is written on the bottom of this logo. Because with the help of Yoga, people also achieve Harmony and Peace.

FIFTH INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY 2019

The AYUSH Ministry has started preparations for Yoga Day from 50 days before the fifth International Yoga Day. In this order, the Ministry of Ayush has issued instructions to the Ministry of Human Development.

According to this directive, the Human Development Ministry has issued a letter to all the universities and CBSE council of the country.

It has been mentioned in this paper that the fifth Yoga Day will be celebrated among the students in a big way. The Yoga Day will be celebrated from 2 May to 21 June (for 50 days).

In these 50 days, yoga will be taught and practiced in every college and university of the country. The UGC has prepared a university monitoring portal to capture the yoga activities of universities and schools.

Aim Of International Yoga Day 2019: To promote Yoga among the youth and to invoke a sentiment of national pride, and spreading Yoga to the rest of the world.



IMPORTANCE OF INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY

We are living in a fast-growing world, where we do not have time to understand ourselves and that is why we face stress every day. Yoga helps us deal with the external environmental factors and it is possible with a peaceful mind.

The Importance for International Yoga Day is to highlight the benefits of yoga throughout the globe, which is helping people around the world to deal with various health

issues and establish a path to create peace and harmony in their lives.

PURPOSE OF WORLD YOGA DAY

Make people aware of the wonderful benefits of yoga:

By practicing yoga, connecting people with nature.

Reduction in the rate of challenging diseases worldwide.

Make people aware of the usefulness of yoga in a busy routine.

Spread the development and peace all over the world.

Relieve stress through yoga.

Source: <https://yogachapter.com>

TRUTH IS DEARER THAN LIFE

Our epic and puranic literature illustrates the importance of values—those principles which are valuable in themselves—through stories which cannot be classified as fiction. They are ethical nuggets part imaginary, part with a bearing on life as lived. Here is a story conveying profound truths through the mouth of a cow. The cow, Nandaa, while sticking to the plighted word, has a message to give on ahimsa, not adequately translated as non-violence in English. As we pay our homage to Gandhiji the Apostle of Ahimsa, in the 150th year of his birth, let us remind ourselves of the nobility of Nandaa.

There was a sacred river known as Nandaa-Saraswati. Once, Devavrata requested Paulastya to tell him how that river got its name. Paulastya narrated the following story:

There was a king called Prabhanjana, who was constant in the observance of his Kshatriya duties. As was his wont, he once went to the forest on a hunting expedition. Seeing a doe behind a thicket, he hit it with his arrow, wounding it mortally. At the point of death, the deer said to him, "What a heinous act you have committed! You hit me when, with head bent down, I was suckling my young one fearing no danger from any quarter. I have heard it said that it is unrighteous to kill an animal which is feeding its young one, which is drinking water, which is asleep or which is engaged in love-play. You sent your missile at me when I was feeding my fawn. You are guilty of an adharmic act. In consequence, you shall become a tiger roaming heartlessly in this jungle."

The King heard this curse which the deer pronounced on him. Trembling all over, and with folded hands, he said, "I was not aware that you were feeding your fawn. I hit you without

knowing it. So I beg you to look at me with a kindly eye and forgive me. At least tell me when I shall be released from this curse. When will I regain my human form?"

The deer replied, "A hundred years hence you will meet a cow known as Nandaa. When you



converse with her, this curse will end."

In terms of the curse, the King instantly became a ferocious tiger, bristling with sharp claws and deadly teeth, and was terrible to behold. The King-turned-tiger roamed in the forest killing and eating animals and men that came his way. Thus a hundred years passed. And then, there came to the part of the forest, studded with date trees, a mighty herd of cows tended by a number of cowherds. The forest echoed with the deep bellows of the cows and the noisy chatter of the cowherds. Among the cows was one named Nandaa. It was the best and most stately of them all. Of well-proportioned features and majestic mien, it proudly walked at the head of the herd as one born to lead.

Before long, however, enticed by the luxuriant growth of the green grass that grew far afield, it strayed far away from its fold. Losing its way, it reached a hill known as Rohita, by whose side there flowed a stream of cool water. All round the hill was a dense forest, infested with wild beasts, which had their lairs in the caves. Among the denizens of the forest was a tiger of enormous might and fearful appearance.

Seeing the unattended cow walking in front of it, the tiger sprang on it with intent to plunge its claws into its hide.

"How fortunate that you have chosen to come of your own accord as my food today!"

Nandaa heard these terrible words of the tiger and was rattled. Her thoughts flashed back to her young one, white like the very moon itself. Overpowered by her love and concern for her offspring, and despairing of ever seeing her child again, she began to moo and sob piteously. Seeing her weep, the tiger spoke to her harshly, "Why do you weep? Don't you see that the gods have sent you here today to be my food? Weeping or laughing, you cannot go back alive. So why weep at all? Tell me if you have anything to say. I am eager to hear."



Nandaa the cow replied, "My obeisance to you. I know that none who falls into your clutches can ever escape. I do not grieve over my death at your hands, for, whatever is born must die; and everything that dies must be born again. So, lord of beasts, I do not bemoan the inevitable. Even the gods are helpless in this and they too must meet their fate. Hence, I am not the only one who will die.

"And yet, my grief springs from my attachment. Listen to what afflicts my heart. I have a calf, the first to be born to me. He is still in his infancy and lives on my milk; he has not grown old enough to feed on grass. He lies helpless bound to the cowpen and will be looking for me to feed him when he becomes hungry. When I think of him, I am overcome by grief as to how he will live when I am dead. Just for once, I wish to suckle him. Having fed him with my milk, and after caressing him, I wish to entrust him to the

care of my friends and teach him about the good and the bad and how to get along in life. Then, I shall come back to you and you may make a meat of me."

The tiger replied, "Why do you care about your child? Know you not that you are about to die? Every creature is dreadfully afraid of me and none goes back from my jaws with his life. Out of the tenderness of your heart, you speak piteously of your child. Don't you know that no son or austerity, no gift, no mother or father, no friend can rescue one who is fated to die? I cannot believe that when once you get back to your fold, you will come again to this place.

Every part of me is itching to drink your blood."

Upon this, Nandaa the cow said, "O lord of the beasts, listen to my words! I have but recently given birth to my first child. Let me go. I shall have a last look at my mates, at my dear child, and at the cowherds. I shall bid farewell to them all and especially to my mother. I swear to you by everything that is sacred that I shall surely return. Pray, let me go just for a while. Listen! If I do not keep my promise, if I do not come back, let me be visited with the most heinous of sins. May the sin of killing a holy man, of killing

one's mother and father descend on me. Let me share in the sin of the avaricious, of the scum of society and of those who poison others. If I do not come back as promised, may I be guilty of violating the sanctity of a cowpen, of kicking one who is asleep. May I be guilty of marrying a girl who has been once wedded to a person. May the sin of a preferential treatment of one of two wedded wives light on me if I do not come back to you. May I be guilty of sending back a friend without fulfilling his wish."

Inclined to trust the cow, who swore in such terrible terms, the tiger said, "Though I would feign to believe that you would keep your promise, when you go back, you may perhaps say to yourself, 'I have deceived this fool of a tiger'. Others may dissuade you from going back. They may say there is no sin in violating a promise made on oath in specific circumstances; that a plighted word may be

broken to a lady in love, in the affairs of a marriage, in saving a cow and when one is in danger of losing one's life. Fools believing they are wise people may confuse your own mind with specious arguments. Like landscape painters who delude the onlooker, making level ground appear high and low, clever people may make the worse appear the better reason.

"This is an ungrateful world. Generally a benefactor is not remembered with gratitude. Even a calf gives up its mother if she runs dry. To achieve their objects, rishis, devas, asuras and men generally seal their compacts with an oath. Even when one makes a true oath in the presence of God, or of fire or of his guru, the god of death takes away half his merit. And so, do not break your promise in the belief that you have deceived me. You yourself have spoken the sacred law. Now, do as you please."

Nandaa replied, "Noble one! It is as you have said. But, who can deceive you? He is himself deceived who tries to deceive another."

The tiger said, "Gentle one! Go, see your dear child; pour your milk into its thirsty throat; lick him with all your maternal love. Take leave of your mother and your brother, of your friends and kindred. Be true to your promise and come back quickly."

Having thus made the promise to the tiger and swearing upon everything holy to abide by it and permitted to go back, the cow hastened to her fold, panting eagerly for her child. Tears streaming from her eyes, she was the picture of unspeakable agony. Hearing from a distance the bellow of her dear child, she dashed to his side and eagerly rubbed her face against her offspring from side to side.

The calf looked at its mother, and saw the tears flowing from her eyes. Much perturbed, the calf queried, "Mother, you are much agitated; your look is as of one afraid. You appear unhappy. What is the reason?"

Nandaa could not muster the courage to tell the truth, but asked her child to drink his fill from her udder and added, "Dear one! This will be the last time that you will drink of me. Alas! Having drunk of me now today, from whom will you drink on the morrow? I have come to you on a short reprieve having sworn to return to the tiger that is waiting to maul and make a meal of me."

Upon this, the calf replied, "I shall go with you where you go. Nothing will be more meritorious for me than to die with you. Even if I keep away from you now, I must die some day. If the tiger kills me along with you, I shall go to the celestial regions of those who are devoted to their mothers. And so, I must go with you to share your fate.

"Or, mother dear, you stay here. I shall go to the tiger keeping your promise. What avails me to live separated from my mother? Who will protect me rendered helpless when you are gone?"

"For infants like me still in the suckling stage, none can take the place of the mother. None can protect them as a mother does. The mother is their sole refuge, in times of distress. The mother is the only friend; she is the true source of joy. The mother is the very god, both here and hereafter. Those children who live by this supreme dharma prescribed by Brahma Himself, attain a glorious destiny."

Nandaa replied, "Dear child, do not think of going with me. It is to me that death has been ordained. None can take the place of one who is fated to die at a particular moment. This is my parting message to you, dear child. Listen carefully to what I say and act accordingly. Do not be neglectful of your safety while you wander in the forest and along river banks. Creatures come to grief by lack of care. Do not be greedy to graze in dangerous spots. Greed brings about the ruin of people in this world and elsewhere. Those deluded by greed wander forth along oceans, forests and caves. Even the learned do wrong things impelled by greed. The world comes to ruin by greed, neglect and want of care. Hence do not be avaricious, do not be neglectful or too trustful.

"One must take the utmost care to protect oneself. One must guard against evil creatures and evil men. The mind of those living by themselves is liable to delusion.

"Do not trust any creature which has claws; beware of deep rivers. Avoid horned creatures and those who carry weapons of attack. One should be careful in dealing with women of inconstant minds. Servants should not be relied upon overmuch.

"One should not trust those who must not be trusted and even those who are trustworthy should not be trusted beyond measure. For the

credulous have reason to fear danger and wholesale ruin to themselves.

"Do not rely even on your own body. Do not confide in anyone without due care and circumspection. Let your sense of smell ever guard you from danger. Cows see by their sense of smell as kings see through their spies.

"Do not remain alone in a forest. Be always intent on dharma and practise it scrupulously. Do not give way to grief that I am going back to die; for death is inevitable to every one.

"What is life? Just as a traveller seeks the shade of a tree from the scorching sun, rests there for a while and then passes on, the soul takes a body for a brief period and then, casts it in soil. Dear child! The whole world is impermanent. Why grieve for what will not last long? Hence abandoning all sorrow, abide by what I told you."

Then the cow sniffed at her calf and licked him on the head. Sighing heavily again and again at parting from her dear one, she felt as if everything about her was blank due to the impending separation from her child. In the midst of her tears, she spoke again and said, "Nothing can equal the love of a son; the home of a childless one is a terrible void. One who has not begotten a son lives to no purpose. It is by a son that one goes to celestial regions. A sonless person is consigned to hell. People say that the sandal-paste is very cool to the skin; but when one embraces one's son, one feels a cooling freshness far exceeding the sandal-paste."

Thus recounting the glory of having a son, casting a lingering look on her calf, the cow took leave of her mother, kindred and the cowherds. Nandaa said, "As I was wandering at the head of the herd, the lord of the forest pounced upon me. I was released from his hold on promising to return to him. I came to see my child, my mother, the gokula and my kindred. True to my promise, I am going back to the tiger."

Addressing her mother, Nandaa said: "Mother dear! Forgive me my transgressions. This is your daughter's son! What more need I tell you!"

Then turning to the other cows, Nandaa called them by their names and told them in plaintive tones: "Vipula, Champaka, Daama, Bhadraa, Surabhi, Maalini, Vasudhaara, Priyaa, Nandaa, Mahaa-nandaa, Ghatasrava, whatever wrong I may have done to you, knowingly or unknowingly, pray, forgive me. Good ones,

forgive all my faults. You are all of auspicious qualities; you are all mothers of all worlds; your bounties are without limit; bear with my little son. He is now helpless and unprotected; stand guard over him. Sisters all! Take special care of him lest he be consumed by the fire of separation from his mother. I leave him to your kind protection; look at him and nourish him as your own child when he is alone without me. Holy ones! Bear with me and I go back to keep my promise. Do not grieve over my fate; for death ever stands before one who is born."

Hearing these words of Nandaa, her mother and mates were overcome with grief. Surprised at her constancy to her promise, they said, "Nandaa! Self-protection should be the aim of every creation. If you go back to the tiger abandoning your child to his fate, you will be guilty of partiality to truth. Those who know the dharma have declared that in a crisis of danger to life, there is no sin in violating a promise. If a lie has to be uttered to save a life, the lie will become a truth. And, truth which endangers life will be a falsehood. In respect of the lovelorn, in marriages, to save a cow from danger and to rescue the holy ones, one need not stick to one's promise even though made under oath."

Nandaa said in reply, "I am prepared to utter a falsehood for saving the lives of others; but I shall not speak a lie for myself, even if it be to save my life.

"One gets into the womb alone; one is alone in death as in life. Joy and sorrow belong to one by oneself. No one can share another's fate.

"The universe is grounded on satya. Dharma too is founded on satya. The ocean keeps its bounds out of regard for satya.

"Making a gift of the whole Earth to Vishnu, Bali went down to the nether worlds. Though duped, yet he was steadfast to satya.

"When the Vindhya mountains were growing in size, Sage Agastya commanded it to cease growing. The mountain promised to stop and true to its promise, it has kept to its limit even now.

"Heaven, liberation, dharma, all these depend on the truth of the sacred word. He who subverts the word, is ultimately subverted by it.

"If a man understands the atman differently from the words of the sacred text, what heinous sin will he not commit? The truth of the sacred text is inviolable. He who seeks to violate it, is verily a thief who deceives himself. Of such a

one, the god of death annexes half his dharma. I shall not consign myself to deadly hell deceiving myself in this way.

"Satya is like a river. Its waters are deep and pure. Forbearance is a pool in that river. Bathing in that pool, released from all sins, I shall attain a superior state.

"When one weighs a thousand asvamedha sacrifices against satya, satya will always prove heavier.

"Satya is the best penance. It is also the easiest; one need not strain oneself to observe it. It is the treasure of the gentle folk. It is the inheritance of the good. It is superior to all ashramas. It is the most spontaneous virtue of men and it is their natural adornment. Observing it, even a fallen one goes to Heaven. How can I give it up?" Nandaa's mates observed, "o, Nandaa! You are worthy of receiving the obeisance of even the celestial beings. For, to keep our plighted word, you are determined to give up your life so dear to every one. Your constancy to satya brings everyone in the three worlds within your reach. No more do we grieve over your separation from us or from your dear child. For the women of auspicious mind, no harm can come from any quarter."

Casting a lingering look at her mates, and going round the entire herd preparing to go back, Nandaa addressed with devout humility the Earth, the Rain, the Fire, the Wind, the Moon, the lords of the ten directions, the Trees, the Stars and the Planets, and said,

"Ye, holy ones living here, and the divine guardians of the forest, pray protect my child.

"Listen ye, flowers of diverse hues and forms, and ye stately trees of the forest, listen to my prayer! When my child roams alone in these places, protect him as tenderly as you would your own child.

"Bereft of his sire and mother, alone and unprotected, afraid and afflicted by hunger and thirst, when my child cries piteously in these regions

seeing the whole world blank, I beg of ye take pity on him and guard him from all harm."

Appealing to the denizens of the forest in these terms, she was overcome by the prospect of separation from her offspring, despairing of ever seeing her child again. Nandaa felt acutely distressed like a chakravaka bird, bereft of its mate. She looked almost lifeless like a creeper fallen from the tree. She walked back with unsteady steps like a blind man who has lost his stick.

She came back to where the dreadful tiger was waiting for her. Just then, with uplifted tail the calf came galloping to her side and stood before the terrific beast.

Nandaa saw her child on one side, and on the other was the deadly tiger.

Addressing the tiger, Nandaa said, "Lord of the jungle! I have come back to you, true to my word. Eat your fill out of my flesh; feast on my body... drink my blood to your heart's content. And after I am dead, but not before, eat this calf, my dear child, if you will."

The tiger said, "Welcome, gentle creature, you have kept your promise. Nothing untoward will happen to those who are constant to Truth. I gave you leave to go back just to test your sense for Truth. Else, can any creature escape my jaws? By the very Truth to which you are constant, you have now been released from death.



"Hereafter, you are sister to me; and your calf is my sister's child. And, sinner that I am, you have taught me a holy lesson. I have learnt from you that the worlds are established in satya and that dharma is based on satya. By the power of satya do streams of milk flow from the cows to be used as sacrificial offerings.

"He who lives by your milk is indeed most fortunate. Fortunate are the meadows whereon grows the grass on which you feed.

"I am amazed at your fidelity to Truth. I do not wish to live henceforth pursuing my evil ways. I wish to be purified of my sins. Alas! How many thousands of helpless animals have I killed and eaten! What will be my fate hereafter? I have been a sinner, given to evil deeds; I have been heartless and cruel. I shudder to think of the hell to which I shall be consigned.

"So, I shall try to expiate my sins by visiting holy places. Or, I shall fall down from a mountain; I shall immolate myself in fire and put an end to my life.

"Gentle one, teach me how I may get rid of my sins and tell me quickly; for time is running out."

Nandaa said, "Tapas is extolled in Krita Yuga; in the Treta Yuga, Jnana and Karma are said to be efficacious; in sacrifices are the means to salvation in Dwapara Yugo. But in the Kali Age, daana is the only sure means. Of all the gifts, assurance of abhaya to all creatures is the greatest and the best. He who grants abhaya to everything moving and unmoving, is freed from every cause of fear and attains the Supreme.

"There is no gift equal to ahimsaa, no penance higher than ahimsaa. All virtues are inherent in ahimsaa even as every footmark is covered by the tread of an elephant.

"Therefore, all dharmas are covered by ahimsaa. Ahimsaa is the shade of the tree of Yoga; Heaven and Liberation are its fruits. Those who are victims of the three-fold afflictions seek its life-giving shade. They are no more subject to any grief; for, under it, they attain supreme peace.

"This, in brief, is the great teaching which I have conveyed to you. But, why do you seek it from me? You know it already."

The tiger said, "Cursed by a deer, I have now taken this form. Preying upon other creatures, I have forgotten everything. Your words have brought it back to my mind.

"There is no gift equal to ahimsaa, no penance higher than ahimsaa. All virtues are inherent in ahimsaa even as every footmark is covered by the tread of an elephant."

"By the power of Truth which you hold so dear, you will surely attain a noble destiny. But, one more question, dear one, by contact with you, I recall that a hundred years have passed since I was cursed to be a tiger. I have been instructed in the truth of dharma, which is the way of the good. Tell me, auspicious one, what is your name?"

Nandaa replied, "My master is called Nanda; he used to call me Nandaa. But why do you tarry? Make your meal of me."

The moment he heard the name Nandaa, the king regained his human form and was released from his curse. He stood there as a king with might and mien.

Meanwhile, the Lord of Dharma came to see Nandaa, the truthful and said: "I have come here drawn by your absolute devotion to truth. Ask for the best of boons that you can think of."

Nandaa replied, "Surely, by your grace, I shall attain a high destiny. May this river which flows here be hereafter known by my name as Nandaa-Saraswati, and may it do good to people who bathe in it with all that they may desire."

Then Nandaa went to the regions of those who ever abide in truth. Prabhanjana too went back to his kingdom.

This is the story, said Paulastya, of the origin of the name Nandaa-Saraswati to this holy river. And, since then it has been flowing southwards, purifying these regions.

—From the *Padma Parana* (Published by Bhavan's Book University)

Source: *Bhavan's Journal*, April 15, 2019

PERSONS OF THE MONTH: INDIA

<p>Rajendra Singh 6 August 1959 (age 59 years)</p>		<p>Rajendra Singh is a well-known water conservationist & environmentalist from Alwar district, Rajasthan in India. Also known as "waterman of India", he won the Magsaysay Award in 2001 and Stockholm Water Prize in 2015. He runs an NGO called 'Tarun Bharat Sangh', which was founded in 1975.</p>
<p>Bhagat Puran Singh (4 June 1904 - 5 August 1992)</p>		<p>Bhagat Puran Singh was born in Rajewal Ludhiana district, Punjab. Born into a Hindu family, he was given the name Ramji Das as a child. Later, while still a child, he chose to become a Sikh. Though he never finished his basic schooling, he became a writer, a publisher, an environmentalist, and a philanthropist.</p>
<p>Vava Suresh 1974 (age 45 years)</p>		<p>Suresh, popularly known as Vava Suresh, is an Indian wildlife conservationist and a snake expert. He is known for his missions for saving snakes straying into human inhabited areas in Kerala, India. He captured more than 162 king cobras, he is believed to have captured and rescued more than 50,000 straying snakes.</p>
<p>MEDHA PATKAR 1 December 1954 (age 64 years)</p>		<p>Medha Patkar – Born in Mumbai, Medha Patkar has been dynamic in bringing a change in the environmental process in India by starting 'Narmada Bachao Andolan' to fight for the justice of the dam project affected people. She has also been associated with a number of other movements. She mobilised massive marches and peaceful protests against the construction of India's Sardar Sarovar Dam, which displaced thousands of tribal peoples and submerged vast stretches of forests and farmland. She has won the Goldman Prize for Asia in 1992.</p>
<p>BANO HARALU</p>		<p>Bano Haralu – Known as the 'Falcon of the World', a journalist turned conservationist Bano along with her two colleagues unveiled the rapid decline of the Falcons, which were a vital factor for the agriculture as they preyed on the termites that would otherwise destroy the crops, by busting the Falcon scam of being hunted and sold in the local markets.</p>

Detailed profiles of these personalities are available in Bhavan's Journals.

PERSONS OF THE MONTH: WORLD

<p>Jane Goodall 3 April 1934 (age 85 years)</p>		<p>Jane Goodall is most well-known for her love of chimpanzees and her extensive years of field research on the species. In July 1960, she traveled from England to Tanzania and set out to discover the secrets of the chimpanzee species. Her unconventional approach to her research transformed relationships between humans and animals. In 1977, Jane founded the Jane Goodall Institute, which continues her research all over the world.</p>
<p>Rachel Carson (27 May 1907 - 14 April 1964)</p>		<p>Rachel Carson wrote the now-famous <i>Silent Spring</i>, an expose on the misinformation spread by the chemical industry and the use of synthetic pesticides, specifically DDT. This book spurred the environmental revolution. The overall theme of the book is the commanding- and overwhelmingly negative- effect that humans have on the natural world.</p>
<p>Isatou Ceesay 17 March 1955 (age 64 years)</p>		<p>Isatou Ceesay, dubbed “Queen of Recycling,” is a Gambian activist who started the recycling movement called One Plastic Bag in the Gambia. Ceesay works to educate citizens about recycling and reducing the amount of waste that is created. She founded a project that creates plastic yarn and forms bags out of the upcycled waste.</p>
<p>Marina Silva 8 February 1958 (age 61 years)</p>		<p>Marina Silva is a warrior for the Amazon Rainforest in Brazil. Silva was a colleague of Chico Mendes, who was assassinated for defending the rainforest in 1988. She and Mendes led demonstrations in the 1980s to protect the rainforest from government control. After Mendes’ assassination, Silva became a politician and fought for environmental protection, sustainable development, and social justice. Deforestation decreased by 59% from 2004 to 2007, during her political career.</p>
<p>Ken Saro-Wiwa (10 October 1941 - 10 November 1995)</p>		<p>Ken Saro-Wiwa (1941 –) Saro-Wiwa was a member of the Ogoni people, an ethnic minority in Nigeria. He campaigned against the environmental degradation of his local region, caused in part by the operations of Shell oil company and lax environmental standards of the government. He was executed after a special military tribunal.</p>

FESTIVALS OF THE MONTH: INDIA

<p>Ramadan May 6-June 5, 2019</p>		<p>The holy Muslim month of Ramadan is a fantastic opportunity to feast on fresh street food. During Ramadan, Muslims traditionally fast daily from sunrise until sunset. In the evenings, the streets in traditional Muslim areas are flooded with people and the tantalizing aroma of meat being freshly roasted to feed the famished. The revelry continues all night. Ramadan concludes with the festival of Eid-ul-Fitr, with more feasting and shopping.</p>
<p>The Yoga Shala Expo May 10-12, 2019</p>		<p>India's first international yoga, Ayurveda and wellness expo features a wide variety of practitioners and natural products such as organic food and clothing, and herbal cosmetics. There will be 150 exhibitors and speakers from 20 countries. Attractions include workshops, seminars, interactive activities, health consultations, and astrology consultations. The festival is back for the fourth year this year.</p>
<p>Buddha Purnima and Buddha Jayanti May 18, 2019</p>		<p>Buddha Jayanti, also known as Buddha Purnima, celebrates the birth, enlightenment and death of Lord Buddha. It's the most sacred Buddhist festival. Activities include prayer meets, sermons and religious discourses, recitation of Buddhist scriptures, group meditation, processions, and worship of the statue of Buddha. Indian Railways runs a special Mahaparinirvan Express Buddhist Tourist Train that visits all Buddhist pilgrimage places in India.</p>
<p>Sital Sasthi June 9, 2019</p>		<p>The occasion of Sital Sasthi, which celebrates the marriage of Goddess Parvati and Lord Shiva, provides a remarkable opportunity to see thousands of folk artists performing dying art forms in Odisha. The performances are part of a carnival-like marriage procession, which also features the deities. The festival was started about 400 years ago and is held to encourage an abundant monsoon (Shiva is believed to represent the scorching summer heat and Parvati the first rain).</p>
<p>Saga Dawa June 17, 2019</p>		<p>Saga Dawa is the fourth month of Tibetan lunar calendar and the holiest month for Tibetan Buddhists. The most important celebration falls on the full moon day of the month, when the birth, enlightenment and death of Lord Buddha is honored. In Gangtok, a procession of monks carries the holy book from Tsuklakhang Palace Monastery around town. It's accompanied by the blowing of horns, beating of drums, and burning of incense. Colorful masked dances also take place at Rumtek Monastery.</p>

FESTIVALS OF THE MONTH: AUSTRALIA

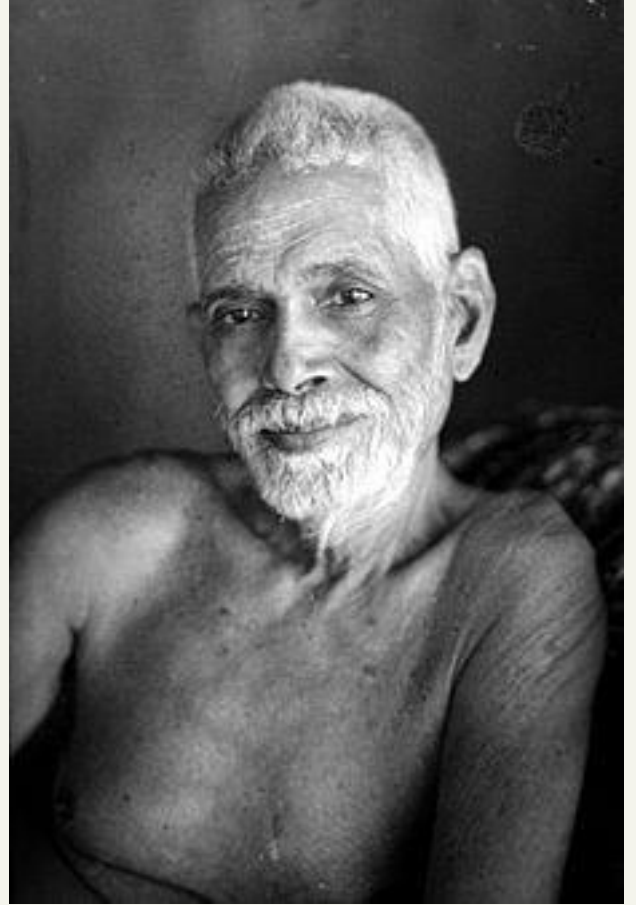
<p>Parks Week (9-17 May 2019)</p>		<p>The week saw councils and other organisations on both sides of the Tasman running engaging events to raise awareness on the value of parks and open spaces, and to get people out of their living rooms and enjoying the outdoors.</p>
<p>International Day for Biological Diversity (22 May 2019)</p>		<p>The United Nations has proclaimed May 22 The International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB) to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues. When first created by the Second Committee of the UN General Assembly in late 1993, 29 December (the date of entry into force of the Convention of Biological Diversity), was designated The International Day for Biological Diversity.</p>
<p>Volunteers Week (1-7 June 2019)</p>		<p>Volunteers Week is celebrated between 1st and 7th June every year. It is a week in which the UK celebrates volunteers and says thank you to them for the contribution that they make. The week also raises awareness about the benefits becoming a volunteer and the diverse volunteering roles that are available.</p>
<p>DreamBIG Children's Festival 22 May - 1 June 2019</p>		<p>This festival is all about children and families, and is divided into two categories: the public festival and a schools program that allows kids to participate in special events and performances organised through their school. It's a wonderful display of engaged young minds, energetic performances, inspiring educational programs and youthful entertainment.</p>
<p>Sydney Fair 30 May - 02 Jun 2019</p>		<p>If you think The Sydney Fair is only for lovers of 18th Century Antiques, think again, over 60 Australian and International best 20th Century, Art Deco, Vintage and Antique dealers will be at the Royal Hall of Industry Moore Park with thousands of pieces 17th to 20th May. Each piece is individually selected by an exhibitor with so many items absolutely unique. Buy an engagement ring, a dining suite, a fabulous necklace from a Hollywood Costume designer, a poster or print, everything from Furniture, Art, Lighting, Bronzes, Porcelain and glass.</p>
<p>Yoga Day Festival Brisbane 2019 29 June 2019</p>		<p>Join the world wide celebrations for the United Nations International Day of Yoga at YOGA DAY FESTIVAL BRISBANE, a community conscious event featuring fun and flowing yoga asana classes, deep relaxation, yoga breathing, exciting kid's games and activities, live music and kirtan (yoga chant), yoga wisdom talks and deep peace meditation.</p>

SAGE SPEAKS

SUPERNATURAL POWERS

Is there any connection between the attainment of Supernatural powers (siddhis) and Liberation (mukti)?

Only knowledge (jnana) obtained through enquiry can bestow Liberation. Supernatural powers are all illusory appearances created by the power of maya (mayashakti). Self-realisation, which is permanent, is the only true accomplishment (siddhi). Accomplishments which appear and disappear, being the effect of maya, cannot be real. They are accomplished with the object of enjoying fame, pleasures, etc. They come unsought to some persons through their karma. Know that union with Brahman is the attainment of the sum total of all the siddhis. This is also the state of Liberation (aikya mukti) known as union (sayujya).



— Sri Ramana Maharshi, Spiritual Instruction,
Chapter IV

SIX TYPES OF YOGA

Yoga is the path of reunion with the Divine through the conquest of circumstances and environments.

There are six kinds of yogas expounded in Shrimad Bhagavad Gita.

We have all descended from the Divine, but, influenced by the triple-quality Maya, we live in this world divided and separated.

Yoga is the path of union, re-union with the Divine—the origin—through the conquest of circumstances and environments. Man needs to control his five senses and mind to reach the stage of a true yogin.

The five senses lead man deeper into the clutches of Maya and illusion. Man must control them to lift himself up above this plane of Maya. Senses are to be controlled and subdued through living a life of balance and equilibrium. Control of desires and passions, simplicity of food and drink, dispassion and detachment to worldly affairs constitute the fundamentals of a balanced life.

Another thing to be controlled is the mind. The mind by nature is in constant agitation. It is endowed with a power of transformation which is boundless and is thus never at rest. Left to itself, as it usually is, the mind never settles down, nor stands unruffled. To control the mind, all sense-impressions coming from outside have to be stopped, including impulses from within—memories, emotional pressures and incitements of imagination. When mind is controlled, Buddhi wakes up. With the awakening of Buddhi—the inner consciousness, man stands on the threshold of realising the Divine.

There are a number of yogas because there are a number of different temperaments in man. Men are in different stages of evolution and there is yoga for each temperament.

In Shrimad Bhagavad Gita are expounded the six principal Yogas. They are:

Karma Yoga, which is the path of action. By actions wherein one remains unaffected with the fruits thereof and which have the sole aim of the good of others and humanity, man attains the Supreme.

Sanyasa Yoga, which is the path of renunciation. With the renunciation of worldly desires and possessions, the Sanyasa yogin goes about serving humanity and spreading the message of the Lord and ultimately merges into Him.

Dhyana Yoga, which is the path of attaining External Bliss through meditation and constant contemplation on the Lord.

Raja Yoga, which is the path of realisation of the Godhead through concentration and purification, which awakens the Kundalini Shakti at its basal Muladhara Chakra and raises it to the Sahasrara Chakra, into union with Lord Krishna at the crown of the head.

Jnana Yoga, which is the path of knowledge. Through accumulation and assimilation of the knowledge of God and Godhead, man also attains 'realisation'.

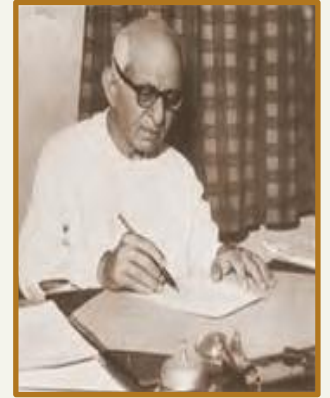
Bhakti Yoga, which is the path of devotion. Out of devotion comes surrender of self to the Lord and the Bhakta lives for the Lord alone, spreading the name of the Lord through the land. This God-consciousness takes a Bhakti yogin to the 'realisation' and into the Abode of Light. •

*From Bhavan's Journal, April 6, 1969
Reprinted in Bhavan's Journal, April 15, 2019*

Kulapativani

Students Bring Sunshine

True service, apart from great national crisis where the student must render every assistance, is to bring sunshine in whatever sphere he moves in. It is as great a service as any man can render. An ailing sister in the house; a lonely mother who needs company; an unfortunate neighbour who needs aid; a passer-by who is in distress; a victim of crime as you go along the street; some unfortunate who is being sacrificed at the altar of a social, economic or communal evil; a riot where the innocent requires protection even at the cost of life; a city without sweepers which wants volunteers for scavenging; a great occasion to be organised which needs service; a village needing education for social welfare; a night class where the poor have to be taught; — these are spheres of service in which every student can bring not only help but sunshine.



Dr K.M. Munshi
Founder, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan

The Test of Bhavan's Right to Exist

The test of Bhavan's right to exist is whether those who work for it in different spheres and in different places and those who study in its many institutions can develop a sense of mission as would enable them to translate the fundamental values, even in a small measure, into their individual life.

Creative vitality of a culture consists in this: whether the 'best' among those who belong to it, however small their number, find self-fulfilment by living up to the fundamental values of our ageless culture.

It must be realized that the history of the world is a story of men who had faith in themselves and in their mission. When an age does not produce men of such faith, its culture is on its way to extinction. The real strength of the Bhavan, therefore, would lie not so much in the number of its buildings or institutions it conducts, nor in the volume of its assets and budgets, nor even in its growing publication, culture and educational activities. It would lie in the character, humility, selflessness and dedicated work of its devoted workers, honorary and stipendiary. They alone can release the regenerative influences, bringing into play the invisible pressure which alone can transform human nature.





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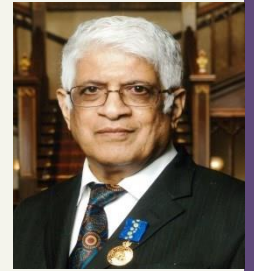
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