

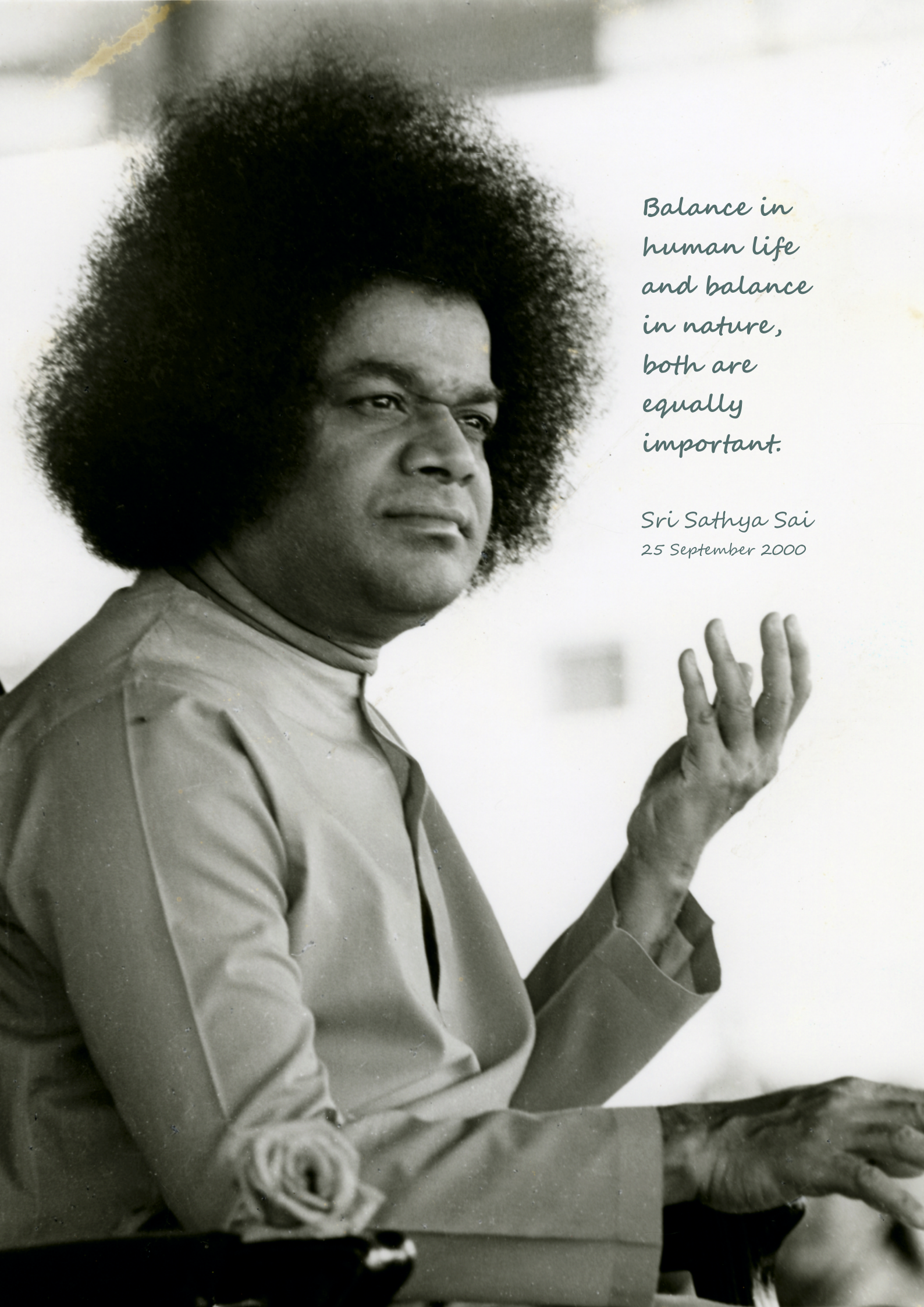


Sri Sathya Sai Prema Tharu

*An initiative to adorn Mother Earth with
10 Million Trees*

by Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Birth Centenary in 2025





*Balance in
human life
and balance
in nature,
both are
equally
important.*

*Sri Sathya Sai
25 September 2000*

INTRODUCTION

It goes without saying that whatever we are doing to nature is but a mirror reflection of what we are doing to ourselves and to one another. Today, we find innumerable instances of degradation of our environment which is resulting in marked changes in our climate patterns and is posing unprecedented risks to survival of humanity and all other forms of life.. Although much of it seems to be irreversible, there can still be hope, if we endeavour to awaken our spiritual element with heartfelt knowledge that we are the caretakers of this planet.

WE MAKE THE WORLD WE LIVE IN

We make the world we live in, we shape our environment. It is high time we take the lead now and strive towards leaving to our future generations, a world better off than the one that we have inherited from our forefathers. We have to be the change that we wish to see in the world and save the planet Earth because it is the only one we have . Each one of us can make a difference provided we make a choice to do so. The greatest threat to our planet is the contention that someone else will save it. It is our collective as well as individual responsibility to preserve and tend to the world in which we all live.

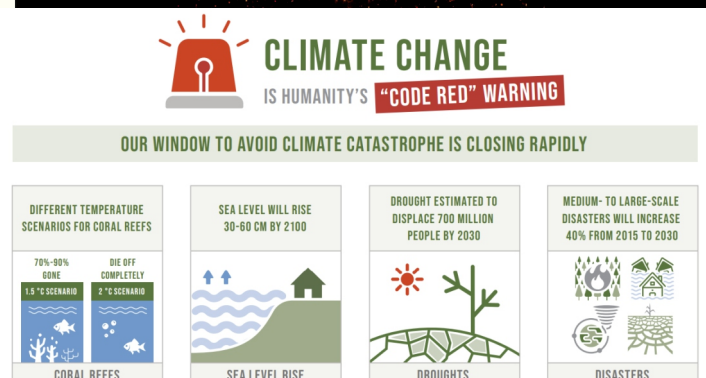
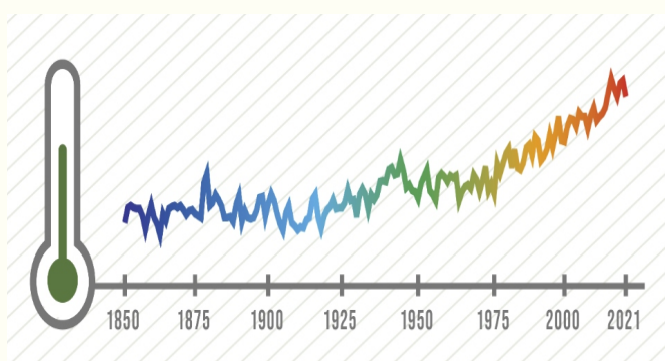
For most of history, man has had to fight nature to survive. In this century, he has to realise that in order to survive, he must protect it. Conservation is a state of harmony between man and nature. What we save, saves us. The major problems in the world are the result of the difference between how nature works and the way people think. **The environment and the economy are really both two sides of the same coin. If we cannot sustain the environment, we cannot sustain ourselves.**



Unfortunately today, as a consequence of scientific and technological progress, humanness has declined and man considers the world as only intended for his enjoyment. As a result, the powers of Nature are being used in a manner which poses a great threat to the world. The world has not been created for mere enjoyment. Abusing the resources of Nature and forgetting his own basic human nature, man is going against the purpose of Creation. Many natural catastrophes are entirely due to man's behavior.

– Sri Sathya Sai

Divine Discourse, 22 November 1998



Source: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal15>

ENVIRONMENT – The Essential Element of Human Progress

We have to pledge sincerely to nurture nature in order to ensure a better future. ***Nature does not need people, people need nature.*** In the words of the Mahatma, "The earth provides enough to meet every man's needs but not every man's greed". The conservation of nature, the proper care for the human environment and greater concern for the long-term future of the whole planet are absolutely vital if the future generations are to have a chance to enjoy their existence on this earth. Self-preservation is the first law of nature and conservation is an essential element of human progress.

If we protect nature, nature will protect us. The conservation of natural resources is the fundamental problem. Unless we solve that problem, it will avail us little to solve all other problems. Progress is impossible without change and those who cannot change their mindset cannot change anything.

CONSERVATION OF NATURE – The Required Shift In Understanding

We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors. Instead, we borrow it from our children. Conservation means development as much as it does protection. We need to recognise the rights and duties of this generation to develop and use the natural resources of our land but we cannot recognise the right to waste them or to rob, by wasteful use, the generations that come after us. We need to protect nature not for nature's sake but for our own sake because it serves as the infrastructure of all communities.

We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we start seeing land as a community to which we all belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect. We are facing a tripping point of environmental crisis, unprecedented in human history and our very survival is dependent on protecting nature. We are part of nature and as we destroy nature, we destroy ourselves. The further we distance ourselves from the speed of the present, explored by our senses, the harder it will be to



"Essentially, there is no conflict between man and creation, just as a child is entitled to enjoy the milk from its mother and the bee is entitled to enjoy the honey from flowers, there can be no objection to man enjoying the resources of nature. But as a result of uncontrolled desires and reckless exploitation of natural resources, Nature is exhibiting frightening disorders. Natural calamities like earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, droughts and floods are the result of disturbances in the balance of Nature caused by reckless exploitation of natural resources. Mankind today appears like a foolish man who is wielding the axe at the branch of a tree on which he is sitting."

– Sri Sathya Sai
Divine Discourse, 13 February 1997

understand and protect nature's precarious balance, let alone the balance of our own nature. ***How is it possible that the most intellectual creature to ever walk the planet earth is destroying its only home?*** To reconnect with nature, is the only solution to save the planet.

We cannot protect the environment unless we empower people, inform them and help them understand that the resources of the earth are their own and that it is their responsibility to protect them. Our challenge is not so much to teach children about the natural world but to find ways to sustain the instinctive connections, they already carry.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – The Need for Balance

Mother nature has created a perfect world. Let us not drive it towards imperfection. We have to see nature not with our eyes but with our understanding and our hearts. Plans to sustain the earth are in fact plans to sustain humanity. Sustainable development requires human ingenuity because people are the most important resource. The first rule of sustainability is to align with the natural forces or at least try not to defy them. It is the masterful balance of meeting our own needs without jeopardising the ability of our future generations to do the same.

We should strive towards sustainable development however we cannot afford to do things sequentially but parallelly. Preservation of the environment, promotion of sustainable development and particular attention to climate change are matters of grave concern for the entire human family. **Sustainable development is a process which enables all people to realise their potential and to improve their quality of life in ways which protect and enhance the Earth's life support systems.**

Sri Sathya Sai Baba emphasises on achieving a balance between both our inner and outer selves. Our bodies being constituted of the pancha bhootas, thrive to its fullest when a fine balance is struck with the all encompassing prapancha or the divine creation around us. By restricting our consumption to suit our bare needs, we shall be using the natural resources only to the extent of our requirement and in the process leave the rest to be distributed to the others.



Man is entitled to enjoy the fruits of Nature even as a child is entitled to the mother's milk or a bee to suck the honey in a flower. The creation is greater than mankind. It is humanity's privilege to understand the secrets of creation. Man should also seek to know the relationship between creation and the Creator. The human body consists of different organs like eyes, nose, hands, legs, etc. Human beings are limbs of society human societies are limbs of humanity. Humanity is a limb of Prakrithi. (Nature). Prakrithi is a limb of Paramatma (Cosmic Self). If you consider this chain of relationship, you can see that man is related to the Supreme embodiments of Bliss. But, why is this Bliss eluding man? Because he has not recognised the Divinity within him. Man is considering nature as entirely a creation of Providence for his enjoyment. This is a mistake. Nature exists for enjoyment by man according to certain limits. Scientists today are exploring the powers of nature with a view to enjoying them without limit. They want to bring all those powers under human control for their unrestricted enjoyment. This is responsible for so many of the natural disasters that we witness today. What is the cause of droughts and floods which occur in the world? Man seeks to enjoy the benefits of Nature which has grave consequences. Here you have a globe. If you hit it one way, its balance is disturbed. We should always see to it that in the utilisation of natural resources a proper balance is kept. Excessive use in any one direction will result in harm in another direction. In the exploitation of natural resources, people are observing no limits in the name of their hakku (right) to act as they please. I do not understand wherefrom this "right" is derived. In reality, there is no such thing as a "right." In fact, what they have is responsibility. If one's responsibilities are properly discharged, some rights may emerge from them. If responsibilities are ignored, what can be the outcome? Only disorder and lack of peace.

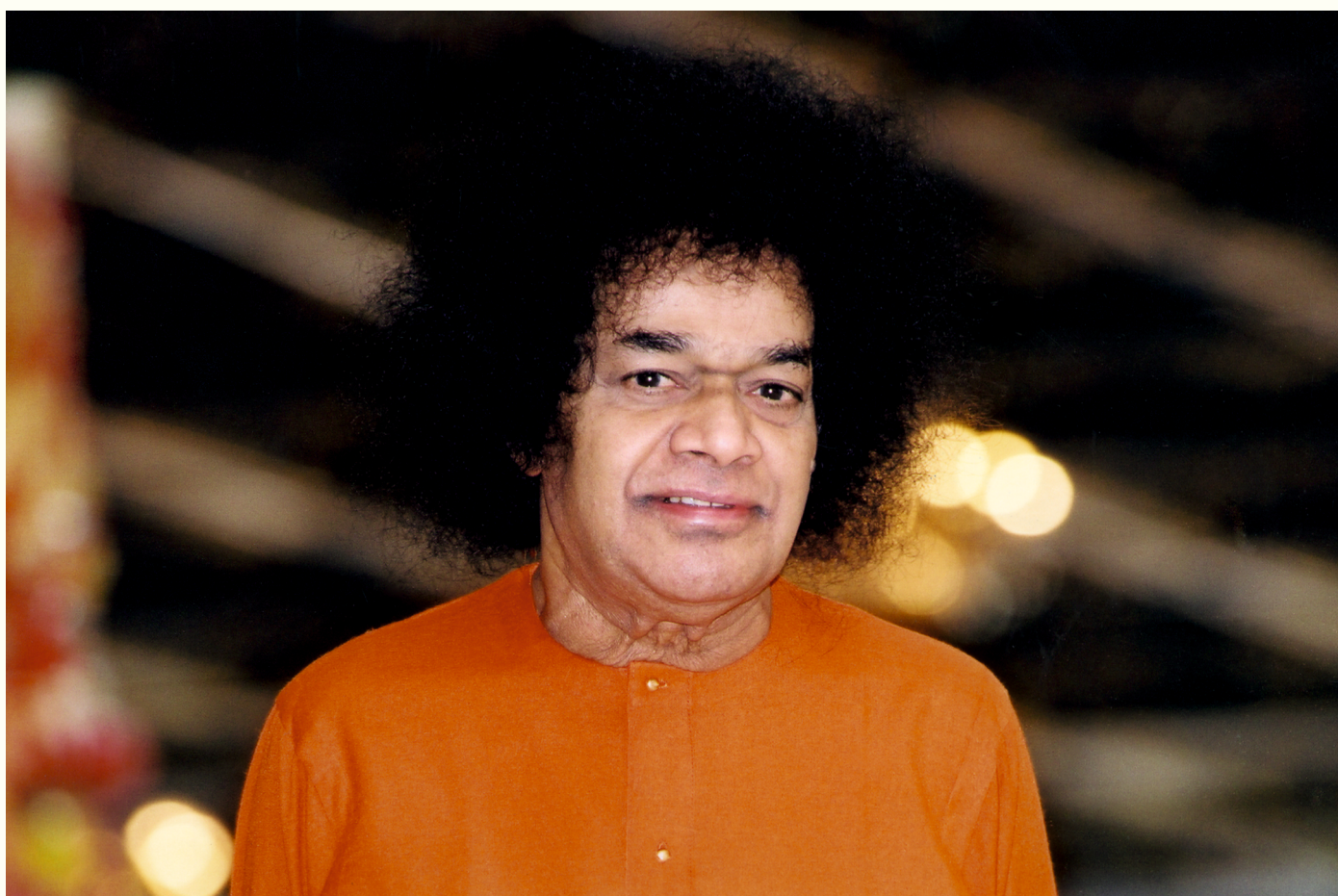
– Sri Sathya Sai
Divine Discourse, 22 November 2002

TREES – The Most Vital Ingredient for Human Survival

Trees are a poem that the earth writes across the skies. Humanity cuts them down for paper to record its emptiness. The one that plants trees loves others besides himself.

According to the progress report on 'The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022' published by the United Nations, nearly 10 million hectares of forests are destroyed every year. Every tree that is cut down, affects our sustenance and every tree that we plant ensures sustenance for the future generations to come.

On this hallowed occasion of Bhagawan's 97th birthday celebrations, and as we move yet another year closer towards HIS birth centenary, let us pledge to plant 10 million (one crore) saplings throughout this blessed country of ours as a loving gift to the Nature, being HIS own vesture, when we celebrate HIS birth centenary in 2025. Let this initiative be suffused with our love and gratitude for mother earth as we pledge to restore a tiny bit of whatever we have taken away from her. Let this new beginning be an opportunity for all of us to be change that we wish to see in the world.



"During a marriage function, our ancients used to erect a Pandal with green leaves. What was the reason? During marriages and other functions, a large number of people gather at one place. In those days, even the illiterate villagers knew the scientific principle that the green leaves take carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, absorb carbon and release life-giving oxygen for us. In those days, villages were located in the center of a vast forest, where ample supply of oxygen was available to the people. That is why they were free from diseases. Heart diseases were not even heard of. Asthma had no existence at all; so was eosinophilia. Trees do so much good to man by giving life sustaining oxygen. People are not able to realize this truth. They are cutting down trees with increase in population with the result that today there is deficient supply of oxygen. In this way, we are ourselves inviting dangers for us."

– Sri Sathya Sai
Divine Discourse, 16 June 1996

"Trees teach the lesson of sacrifice in that they not only bear fruits while they are alive, but also give away their body to be used as firewood once the life goes out of them. Amongst teachers, a tree is the greatest."

*Sri Sathya Sai
Divine Discourse, 29 September 2000*



Trees play a vital role in helping mankind to receive oxygen from the atmosphere while they absorb the carbon dioxide exhaled by human beings. Hence, the ancients favoured the growing of trees to control atmospheric pollution. But nowadays trees are cut down indiscriminately and pollution is on the increase. The relationship between man and trees is indicated by the term "Vanaspathi " (herbs) employed in Ayurveda. Man is leading an artificial life today. One should understand that he is not merely the body but a combination of body, mind and Spirit.

Sri Sathya Sai

Divine Discourse, 6 February 1993



Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust

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23 November 2022