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Change the Climate

The mankind is passing through difficult times. The rising stress levels, terror attacks, environmental pollution..., there are dangers lurking in every corner. As the concerns about global climate change gets alarming, there is an urgent need to find holistic means of ensuring environmental sustainability.

The starting point of this search is in creating awareness about pollution. Many people in the world live without the knowledge of climate and their surrounding environs. They are oblivious to changes in the cycle of seasons and its variations. Unless these people are educated about the ecosystem and the way it is changing, no remedial measure can save it.

Many people are of the view that damage to the ecosystem is an inevitable by-product of technological progress. But that is not necessarily so. Actually, sustainable development is assured only if the ecosystem is protected. What we develop today should not become a noose around our neck tomorrow. Sustainable development is that which keeps in mind the long-term effects and benefits to humanity.

Science and technology are not anti-environment. There are several areas where there are no contradictions between Nature and progress. The latest technology needn't always be the best way of addressing developmental needs. We need to look into the merits. Just because something is new, it is not necessarily good or just because something is old, it need not be discarded. For instance, a return to traditional methods such as organic and chemical-free farming will go a long way in preparing the ground for healthy development.

Tradition, technology and truth need to be revived from time to time. Unless they are revived, the whole meaning for which they were initiated will be lost; ancient and modern methods have to be synergised. Despite advances in the field of chemicals and fertilisers, the ancient Vedic method of using cow urine and cow dung continues to be one of the best ways of cultivating crops.

Several studies have shown that natural farming (without fertilisers and pesticides) not only leads to enhanced yield, but also supports healthy lifestyles. We need to find ways of maintaining harmony in environment while advancing in science and technology by harnessing non-polluting processes such as solar energy and chemical-free farming.

Environment consciousness is inbuilt in the human system. Throughout history, Nature (or prakriti) has always been adored in India; mountains, rivers, the sun, the moon, the trees have been revered. In fact, ancient cultures all over the world have exhibited a deep reverence for Nature.

Just observe Nature; the five elements of Nature are opposed to each other. Water destroys fire, fire destroys air... Then there are birds, mammals; all these different species are hostile towards each other and yet Nature balances them out. Never in a forest does one species of birds get wiped out. Neither will you find pollution in any forest despite so many animals living there together. We need to learn from Nature for it's only when we start moving away from Nature that we start polluting



HIS HOLINESS SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR

Creating a Stress-Free Mind and a Violence-Free World



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it. Today there is a pressing need to revive the ancient practice of honouring and conserving Nature.

In reality, man’s greed is the greatest pollutant. Greed stops man from sharing with others. Greed also obstructs the preservation of the ecosystem as man is so greedy that he wants to make quick profits and achieve quick results disregarding all long-term pitfalls. This greed not only pollutes the gross, physical environment but also contaminates the subtle atmosphere. It stimulates negative emotions in the subtle mind and creates emotional pollution. If one person is angry and agitated, the anger and agitation rub off onto all those who he comes in contact with.

One of the best ways to prevent polluting oneself and the surrounding environment is to remain joyful and stress free. It brings less greed, less conflicts and ensures harmonious existence between people and environment.

The goal of sustainable development is to build a healthy and happy society. There can be no sustainable development in a society which is full of stress and violence. A disease-free body, a stress-free mind, a violence-free society and a toxin-free environment are vital elements of sustainable development. The purpose of development should be to support and sustain life. We need to explore means to evolve and sustain healthy lifestyles. Ravaging natural resources without a long-term vision will destroy the ecosystem which is the very source of life.

We need to attend to the human psyche which causes pollution, whether physical or emotional. If compassion and care are kindled within, they reflect in the environment; a sense of sacredness follows. For this, we need a convergence between modern life and spirituality. Modern society puts a lot of demand on our time and resources while spirituality brings enthusiasm and a sense of confidence to face the pressures modern society poses. Together, the two make life pleasant, better and comfortable.

Spirituality elevates one’s consciousness and checks that greed which leads to environmental degradation. It promotes a sense of caring and commitment for the whole planet. People should be encouraged to treat the planet as sacred, to treat trees and rivers as sacred, to treat people as sacred and to see God in nature and in people. This will foster sensitivity; and a sensitive person can’t but care for Nature. It is basically insensitivity that makes a person act callously towards environment. If a person is sensitive, he will nurture environment, thereby eradicating pollution.

When development plans are aligned with the basic purpose of bringing happiness to people and preventing the planet earth from depletion, what comes out will be sustainable development. It has to be noted that the ultimate aim of development is to preserve the planet Earth, replenish, not deplete, its resources. The health of our planet is of utmost importance.