

Greenletter

June 2009 Issue 1
Service Wing

"Life is the best Teacher, Nature is the best Preacher" -Baba



When we heal the earth we heal ourselves.

Sustainable Living as Sai Devotees

The Sathya Sai Organization of Australia and PNG recently initiated a directive to enhance the global and national environmental awareness, and to encourage Sai devotees to care for and protecting the environment at individual level as well as at organisational level. To this end Green Officers have been appointed within the Service Wing to provide information and guidelines, with the goal of integrating spirituality and service to our planet under the heading of the Ceiling on Desires program. In this way we are all drawn along the road to the discovery of the inherent divinity within, using the teachings given by Sathya Sai Baba.

That we might be effective and influential in introducing these nation building programs into Australian society, we devotees must endeavour to exhibit exemplary behaviour and conduct. Personally living the five values and practice of the Ceiling on Desires program will draw others to the Sai message.

Why do we go green?

Saving and protecting Mother Earth is our responsibility and

duty as we are blessed to be in a spiritual organisation. We will prepare a better environment for the future generations. We want to provide all with the opportunity to live a healthy life.



"Nature is the best Preacher. Life is the best teacher. Fill yourselves with awe and reverence at the handiwork of God, the manifestation of His power and glory that is called the world. This is enough instruction and enough inspiration for you" (Divine Discourse, 14 Jan 1973)

How might we go about this?

We integrate our spirituality and our responsibility to this our Mother Earth; transforming society will come about when we begin with the individual in the personal practice of the Ceiling on Desires program and the **One in Three Challenge**, and with the group when we participate in periodical study circles. The One in Three Challenge offers us the opportunity to stop and think about how we are using the earth's resources to sustain and maintain our lifestyles. Every time we are about to purchase goods or services, we are asked to stop and spend a minute or

two to reflect on whether the purchase will meet a 'need' we have or whether, in fact, we are fulfilling a 'want'. On one in three occasions, we can choose NOT to purchase the goods or services and choose, instead, to make a commitment, within ourselves, to somehow translate that foregone purchase into helping to meet a need somewhere else. The **One in Three Challenge** is part of the Ceiling on Desires program and is thus part of the Nine Point Code of conduct and our individual spiritual practice. Download this from the Sai Australia Website.

<http://www.saiaustralia.org.au/s/eva/one-in-three.html>

The topics discussed at centres and at periodical study circles can include:



- Tips to save water.
- Food waste can be composted and reused around the gardens.
- Re-use shopping bags or even better, get long-life ones.
- Recycling batteries and ink cartridges.
- Turning computers or lights off when you leave the room/kitchen/bathroom to save

energy as well as to reduce the cost of accommodation.

- Boiling just enough water for the needs instead of filling the kettle.
- Depositing and recycling bottles, cans, paper etc.

We may also practice energy efficiency for everyday living by:

- Awareness of Carbon Intensity
- Cleaner environment
- Pooling cars for commuting
- Environmental Management awareness
- Green Power Use
- Packaging practices for gifts etc.
- Paper Use and Recycling
- Pesticide Use
- Toxic Emissions

All of the above topics can be discussed in a spiritual context.

Recycling Fabric Workshop (Qld)

Used fabrics are recycled into quilts and distributed in service activities in Queensland. Here are some screenshots of the ladies in the recycled fabrics workshop.

Matching up squares of quilted fabric



Sandra sews the separate sections together:



Bev and Kim sorting and colour coordinating fabrics



One half of a sewn quilt:



Esther and Kim hold up a finished blanket:



The final product, quilts made from recycled material are distributed as quilts to the Salvation Army Crisis Centres, to Rosies, a refuge service for needy youths on the streets, and to YHES House, the Youth Health and Education Services for inclusion in the youth survival kits.

REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE

All Sai Devotees are already being asked to treat WATER with utmost care. While attending a Water workshop here in Melbourne, I noticed that most of us are already practising water saving tips. (Holding a bucket near the Kitchen sink, collecting water from the shower for the toilet and using the last rinse from the Washing machine for the garden etc).

We can do the same with plastics too. Some of you may already have seen the shopping bag with the Sarva Dharma Logo. The Ladies carried them back from Parthi some time ago. Two more bales of these bags are awaiting delivery. We will make more orders as soon as we find a way to ship them at a low cost. (Latest offer is \$500 to ship a 1000 bags) The shopping bag material is slightly mixed with synthetic in order to keep it nice and stiff.

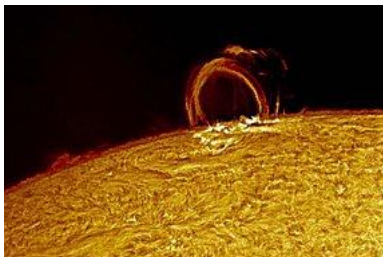
The code is **REDUCE, REUSE and RECYCLE**. This should be applied to all natural resources as nature is God. Sai Devotees can get children involved in sorting paper before putting into the recycling bin. It might be a useful integrated learning project for SSE children to start vegetable gardens as a part of their spiritual study on respecting the Earth as well as writing essays on this topic.

All Sai devotees and children can start carrying lunch in lunch boxes rather than using plastic bags and if plastic bags must be used remember to reuse them.

Another step is to get in touch with the local council to find out

about the latest earth saving measures. Using energy-efficient light bulbs and installing skylights are also easy and simple ways of saving energy. We are hoping to expand on these topics at a workshop, but you are all welcome to start now.

Love and Service to Mother Earth



Solar Flares affect our Earth

There is no doubt that our Mother Nature here on our home we call Earth is undergoing changes. All your service activities to aid the Environment are World Service, of the same calibre as the Great Yagnas performed by Swami in Prashanthi Nilayam. Your service to the Earth is love and sacrifice seeking unity in Diversity. May Swami's love be known in all that we do for our Environment.

Questions about our Future

With a current world population of 6.8 billion, projected to be 9 billion by 2050, what will our lives be like in another fifty years? Our consumption is causing scarcity of resources, food production is struggling to meet demand, almost everything we do destroys delicate ecosystems and our greenhouse gas emissions keep growing. We might take the time to consider how we might respond to these questions about the future in the light of the Nine Point Code of Conduct. Using the Nine Point Code of Conduct does not give us any "right" answers, only better ways forward to creating a sustainable future. Such reflections (and our actions based on those reflections) are

part and parcel of the mission of the Sai Avatar, for he says, "Your Life is My Message". That message is a message of restoring righteousness to the earth through our responses and our actions toward creating sustainable futures. That future is always created through our choices.

Food, Food, Food!

The Ladies Wing have recently produced a Cookbook compiled from recipes all around Australia, *Wonders of Vegetarianism, Food for the mind, body and soul*. This book centres on the importance of food for fostering spiritual growth. Our food choices are also part of creation of sustainable futures.



Plants grow making sugars, starches, oils, cellulose and other complex molecules from

simple raw materials, mostly water, carbon dioxide and sunshine. We harvest these plants for our foods, the manufacturers make foodstuffs measuring profitability in environmental and social terms as well as financial. The consumer uses, reuses and/or disposes of the refuse. At the end of its life, the residue and refuse decays, reducing large complex molecules to simple raw materials by the action of bacteria and fungi—composting.

Thus the cycle begins again. Plants grow making sugars, starches, oils, cellulose and other complex molecules from simple raw materials, mostly water, carbon dioxide and sunshine. Our food choices are critical, and education in food

choices is essential for creating a future which can sustain the billions who live on the earth at the present time, as well as for those who are born day after day. Here is a [link](#) to a new film about food just coming out, and a resource book for schools. It is essential that children understand what their food choices imply.



Activity

'The scriptures of old give the cycle of activity, rain, crops, food, and fecundity. It is activity which declares whether the individual or society is good or bad. The thermometer measures the temperature of the body and announces whether the body is well or ill. The karma or activity is the indicator of inner character.'



Observing actions, their motives, their consequences and the extent of one's involvement it is possible to declare that he or she is a beast, or verily Divine. All activity done for the welfare of others, without any aspiration for personal benefit is good action from which the whole world will benefit.' Voice of the Avatar, II, p 57

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