

LET'S GET FIRED UP ABOUT OUR ENVIRONMENT!



**WORLD 5 June
ENVIRONMENT
DAY**

Years ago, it was considered a symbol of success to be fully employed. This meant there was a steady salary that provided the resources with which to enhance our lifestyle - whether for taking a holiday or investing in our home. The word 'You are Fired' had an extremely negative connotation. Today it's a punchline - thanks in part to Alan Sugar. Being fired isn't a big deal today?

Why is that?

The reason is there is so much wealth today... such an abundance of resources of virtually every kind, such that being without work is just a minor inconvenience ... even if it lasts for months. We have so much abundance today that it's a challenge to really appreciate everything. Not too much work is not only not appreciated - it's described with a new word - stressful!

This brings me to our environment. In many cases we probably take it for granted too. Fresh air, the cool shade of a beautiful tree, the glorious colour of summer flowers - these are all things to celebrate. This appreciation and celebration redefine our environment. It makes it better because we are part of it. It comes alive! We really can change our environment by infusing it with our attention, energy, enthusiasm, and appreciation. Let us bring our attention to our environment and it will continue to reward us with countless benefits - like well...hmmm...like a steady salary.

BY KISHOR B SHAH





Our Earth

Our Environment

Our Responsibility



The environmental issues facing us are not just global responsibilities, but are also our responsibility as individuals. Considering the gravity and scale of environmental issues facing us, we may ask - **What Can I do?** Does what I think or do matter. Can I make a difference? The answer is of course, emphatically - Yes, we can all make a difference. The only place to start is with and within ourselves, instead of wondering what others are or should be doing. We can all be mindful of Earth's resources, appreciating the good things we have instead of taking them for granted.

Let us, as Jains, be true environmentalists by following the basic tenets of our faith - Ahimsa, Anekantavada and Aparigraha and living the Jain Way of Life and also be a source of inspiration to others





JAINENVIRONMENT

Jainism places great emphasis on the principle that one should refrain from avoidable acts that are harmful to oneself or others. Ahimsa (non-violence) is the fundamental tenet of Jain way of life, a term that is clearly allied with realism, common sense, personal worth and responsibility. For the Jains environmental harmony through spirituality should be pursued by all. This can be done by adhering to three precepts: the right belief, the right knowledge, and the right conduct. Everyone should be benevolent towards all living organisms, compassionate for the weak, tolerant of the insolent and joyful at the virtuous. This is the Jain way of bringing environmental harmony



OPENING TO GREATER LIFE

Tell the [future generations] that something new is happening, a new vision, a new energy, a new sacred story is coming into being in the transition from one era to another.

Tell them in the darkness of this time, a vast transformation is occurring in the depths of human consciousness, which is leading to the recovery of the soul, the earth, the universe and a sense of the sacred ...

Tell them that they must develop the inner vision that we need if we are to make the adjustments required for a viable future. Our existential questions must now be: How do we relate to the earth and to the universe? Our most basic issue is how we bond with the earth. And tell them they will meet great companions along the way, including those that burrow in the soil, fly in the air and swim in the sea...

Tell them to seek their own role in the larger evolutionary process: tell them that humans are always in the process of becoming, always “opening to greater life,” if they can learn to see it. Tell them the greatest need is to develop a sensitivity to recognize the inner promptings that emerge from the depths of one’s own being where the sacred reality resides...

Above all, tell them to practice an intimate presence to the beauty and wonder of the natural world through their intuitive awareness that recognizes the oneness of all life; tell them to stop and enlarge moments throughout their days to become aware of the mysteries and miracles of creation all around them – the movement of a squirrel, the sound of a bird, the pattern of a leaf, changing patterns of light, the sun, the rain, the stars, dawn and sunset. Tell them we are not ourselves without everything and everyone else.

Tell them to remember the great seasons and cycles of life. In moments of intimacy with the natural world they will recover the lost sense of the sacred in the human-earth relationship. And they will be participating in the evolution of a new consciousness on earth that can overcome the mental fixations of our times expressed in radical division between humans and the natural world. A mutually enhancing relationship will then become possible as the communion of all things is understood.

Thomas Berry, was one of the twentieth century’s most prescient and profound thinkers, who sought to provide a comprehensive understanding of humanity’s relationship with the earth to address contemporary ecological and social issues. Before his passing, when he was asked for words for future generations, this was his response.

As quoted in :
Recovering a Sense
of the Sacred by
Carolyn Toben