

# SUSTAINABILITY IN HINDUISM



## ***Sustainable Traditions In*** **HISTORY**

- Atharva Veda 12.1.35 "O Mother Earth, when I dig and till the soil to sow the seed, let the seed grow soon and the ground fill up. O gracious, purifying and regenerative Mother, never would I hurt your vitality and fertility, never will I rip up your heart."
- Vedic Prayer "Do not harm the environment; do not harm the water and the flora; Earth is my mother, I am her son; may the waters remain fresh, do not harm the waters... Tranquility be to the atmosphere, to the Earth, to the waters, to the crops and vegetation."
- Mahabharata "Never displaying malice towards any living being through actions, thoughts or words, acts of kindness, and giving in charity; this is the Sanatana Dharma adhered to by righteous persons."
- The rivers Yamuna and Ganga have long been understood as the incarnations of the goddesses of the same names, the Himalayan mountains have been considered the dwelling place of the god Shiva, and temples have been essential in storing water for the good of many species during dry seasons.
- Amrita Devi, Mohandas Gandhi, and Rabindranath Tagore advocated for care of plants, animals, and natural resources.

- Keep your old phone and other electronics. Technology uses lots of mining-intensive minerals, so update your tech as rarely as possible.
- Use reusable versions of straws, water bottles, diapers, and napkins.
- Volunteer and donate.

## ***Sustainability*** **TODAY**

- Emphasis on *ahimsa* (nonviolence), ascetic simplicity, and protecting the divine in rivers and mountains
- Hindu organizations with environmental aims: Bhumi Project, Hindu Climate Action, Care For Air, and Nava Vajra Dhamma
- Environmental advocates: Dr. Vandana Shiva, Guru Das Agrawal, Dr. Amitav Ghosh, Naryan Subramanian, Sunita Narain, and Gopal D. Patel
- Books: *River Of Love In An Age Of Pollution: The Yamuna River Of Northern India*, *Earth Democracy: Justice, Sustainability, And Peace* and *Breathing Here Is Injurious To Your Health*
- Congregations are going solar with Interfaith Power & Light

## **DO YOUR PART!**

- Buy what you need and learn to repair what you have.
- Eat less meat. Try beans, peas, hummus, lentils, peanut butter, tofu, and meat alternatives instead!
- Lessen AI use.
- Sign petitions encouraging environmentally-friendly policies!
- Reduce backyard pesticide use.
- Encourage your workplace to implement resource-saving initiatives.
- When growing your family, consider adoption as an option.
- When appliances break, replace with energy-efficient versions.
- Reduce car use. Carpool, bicycle, or use public transportation!

This congregational resource was created as part of the Sustainability in Religion program by Conserve It Forward, a nonprofit organization focused on empowering everyday people through environmental education, and made by religious studies PhD student Avalon Jade Theisen in consultation with sociology of religion professor Dr. Pratap Kumar Penumala.

