

PLEDGE TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

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“We pledge that we shall, at all times, protect and preserve our planet and will not, in thought, word or action, endanger or destroy the environment. Let us together cherish an earth on which we can live long, healthy lives and enjoy fully her boundless beauty and abundant wealth.”

This pledge is not an oath taken by the forest officials. This pledge is not an oath taken by the members of a non-government organization like Taru-Mitra (friends of trees). This pledge is not an oath taken by the members of some international organization engaged in forestry and forestation. Certainly all these people could take this pledge.

This pledge is actually taken by the students of Mount Carmel School at Ahmedabad. I was happy to see this pledge printed in the invitation card of the annual function 2006 of the school with the chief guest Smt. Mrinalini Sarabhai who is a great lover and protector of trees and the environment.

I believe that in the school annual day function the students and their guardians must have seen cultural programmes and have heard speeches about the importance of protecting and keeping our environment clean. They must have been inspired to protect and preserve the environment of our planet to the best of their abilities.

Today we live in a “do or die situation”. It is a challenging situation of protect the environment or perish. Not only our external environment but also the human life and the life of all living beings are at stake. The newspapers and other media call our attention time to time to the ill effects exploiting the nature without any concern for our environment. This mindless exploitation of the nature is the proof that we are not yet fully aware of dangerous situation of our environment. We are not even aware of the possibilities of our own contribution to protect and preserve our own neighbourhood environment!

We call our planet with respect ‘mother earth’. What relation a person keeps with his/her mother, what love a person shows with his/her mother, what attitude a person shows to his/her mother, such a relation of love, respect and kindness we should keep with our mother earth. The elephants have different tooth to show and to eat. We cannot afford to have two different type of relationship with our life-giving mother and life-nourishing mother earth. Different types of attitude or relationship do not do any credit to us.

The earth is really our mother. We are all the children of mother earth. The effects of what the mother earth experiences will certainly affect her children. If we destroy the earth directly or indirectly, we will feel its effects sooner or later. We are not the owners of the earth. We are living beings on earth like other organic or inorganic beings. We don't possess the earth; but the earth possesses us. Someone has said that we have not inherited the earth from our ancestors. But we have loaned the earth from our children. So we are bound to return the earth with interest; that is to say, we should give the earth in a better situation than we got it.

In other words we should pass the earth and its environment to the new generation in a better condition to live than the present situation. But instead of making our environment better, we are destroying it!

The destruction of environment has become a big problem for humanity. We pollute our rivers, lakes and seas by sending to them chemicals and other poisonous substances which pollute the waters. Consequently the water is not potable and we also destroy the wealth of fish and other creatures living in the water!

The poisonous gas let out in the air by lakhs of vehicles and our factories contribute enormously to destroy the environment. Through the uncontrolled use of plastics, insecticides, artificial manure we destroy the natural fertility of the earth. If we have to pay for the oxygen in the air, we have to spend crores of rupees for the oxygen which is produced by the trees and yet we cut the trees!

These are a few of many and varied ways through which we are destroying our water, the earth and the atmosphere. The environmental experts tell us that till now our life-span has steadily increased in the past. But now pollution of our environment ever on the increase. If we do not reverse the trend, then, first time in human history, the life-span will decrease with the next generation!

The environmental pollution has reached in life-threatening situation around the world. There are many programmes and projects at national and international level to control environmental pollution and reduce it. For instance, public prohibitions against spitting, smoking, throwing waste and defecating in public places or in the open are meant to control the environmental pollution.

Every citizen can contribute his/her share to clean environment by taking care of these things. Today's young generation with its own examples can take leadership in these things. About 60 to 65 percent of India population is young. If these youth take the leadership, then there is no doubt that the cleanliness of the environment will increase and pollution will decrease.

I would like to recall here an environmental poem "I Listen" by Dr. Charles Roper written in 1992.

I Listen to the trees, and the say:

 "Stand tall and yield.
 Be tolerant and flexible.
 Be true to yourself.
Stand alone, and stand together.
 Be brave.
 Be patient.
 With time, you will grow."

I Listen to the wind, and it says:

“Breathe.
Take care of yourself –
Body, mind and spirit.
Take time.
Be quiet.
Listen from your heart.
Forgive.”

I Listen to the sun, and it says:

“Nurture others,
Let your warmth radiate for other to feel.
Give yourself without expectations.”

I Listen to the creek, and it says:

“Relax; go with the flow.
Tend to what’s really important,
And let the rest go by.
Keep moving – don’t be hesitant or afraid.
Lighten up – laugh, giggle.”

I Listen to the mountains, and they say:

“Be there.
Be honest.
Be trustworthy.
Do what you say you’re going to do.
Be true, genuine, and real.
Speak from the heart.
Don’t cheat.”

I Listen to the birds, and they says:

“Set yourself free
Sing.”

I Listen to the clouds, and they say:

“Be creative.
Be expressive.
Let you spirit run free.
Let yourself be light and gay,
but let yourself be heavy and sad.
Cry when you feel like it.”

I Listen to the sky, and it says:

“Open up.
Let go of the boundaries and barriers
which you have created to protect yourself.
Experience change.
Fly.”

I Listen to the flowers and small plants, and they say:

“Be humble
Be simple
Respect the beauty of small things.
Respect the beauty of humility and truth.
Let go of perfectionism
Love yourself as you are; it opens the door to change.
Practice acceptance.”

I Listen to the bugs and flying insects, and then say:

“Work.
Be productive.
Use your hands.
Focus on what’s in front of you.
Ignore the past; there is only the present.”

I Listen to the moon, and it says:

“Love.
Share love.
Make love.
Be romantic – touch and caress.
Allow yourself to be loved.
Be gentle, kind, and understanding.
Use candles.”

I Listen to the stars, and they wink and say:

“Play.
Dance, be silly, have fun.”

I Listen to the earth, and it says:

“I am your mother.
I give you life.
Respect all that is around you.

Find beauty in all things – living and not – including
yourself; for we are all one – not separate.
Be especially respectful to the very young and the very old,
for they are both very near God.
Give up the belief that you are a higher form of life;
there is no higher form of life.
We are equal because we are the same.
When you return to me, I will welcome you,
and I will set your spirit free.
Love and nurture your children; cook good food for them,
and hold them very close to you often.
Hold me close to you often as well,
and I will hold you in return; I will support you.
Have faith.

Let us become consciously aware of our environment like Dr. Charles Roper. Let us listen to all the organic and inorganic beings. Then, we will understand many things of our environment. We will be able to appreciate and enjoy the beauty of creation. We will enjoy the healthy environment. If we become conscious of our environment, then we will be aware of the polluting factors and we will be able to protect and preserve better the environment. Let us decide firmly to protect and preserve our environment. Our pledge to preserve the environment will help us in this task. (Contact: ciss@satyam.net.in)