

## 5. Planting Trees

*Because of the advance of technology, several factories have sprung up, causing emission of harmful gases in the atmosphere and resulting in the ozone layer becoming thinner. If this goes on unchecked, it may have disastrous consequences. Scientists are trying to stop the breakup of the ozone layer but are unable to find a remedy. The cause of this situation is that more carbon dioxide is being let into the atmosphere. Normally, plants and trees absorb and assimilate the carbon dioxide and supply oxygen by the natural process of photosynthesis. But because there is deforestation to an alarming extent, the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has considerably increased. The remedy for this situation is intensive afforestation, growing more trees everywhere and protecting the existing trees without destroying them for other purposes. The relationship of man, nature and God is very intimate, which scientists may not be able to realize. Sathya Sai Baba, Sanathana Sarathi 36, February 1993, p. 45.*

In 1993, Swami said that *man* is responsible for the decrease in the ozone layer and gave a remedy: protect trees and plant more trees. In this discourse, Swami talks more about man, nature and the balance between them that we must maintain; this discourse could be the focus of a good study circle.

Trees and plants use carbon dioxide to make oxygen; humans and animals use oxygen to make carbon dioxide; *we* are responsible for maintaining the balance. Trees have other uses. They prevent erosion. They provide shade and evaporative cooling. It has been said that in the summer, clusters of urban trees can cool air temperature by 10 degrees, reducing the need for air conditioning. Trees enhance neighbourhoods —have you noticed the difference between a new, treeless, suburb and a twenty-year-old suburb, with beautiful trees?

Here are some ways in which you and your Center could get involved in helping the earth and its atmosphere. Everything is voluntary, of course, but read again the above quote from Swami!

- Reduce your consumption of paper and paper products, thus saving existing trees.
- Plant some trees to spruce up your yard. If you don't know how to begin, your local nursery will be happy to help you. Or, contact a community organization or cooperative extension service of a local college or university.
- Help out on Arbour Day. Some schools use Arbour Day to teach children about the importance of forestry and trees. If your child's school does this, take part in planning and organizing it. Arbour day started in Nebraska on 10 April 1872.
- As a Center service project, plant trees. Start in devotees' yards. Then branch out and help a local organization that is involved in planting trees.

### Sai Quote

A tree when it is axed might yet put forth leaves, but a heart axed by a bitter word can never sprout again. *Sathya Sai Speaks XI*, Chapter 20, page 121.

### Facts

The average American uses the equivalent of 7 trees a year. That's more than 1.5 billion trees a year in the U.S.

From about 1950 to 1980, the world's forested surface was reduced by 25%. Every year, over 25 million acres of tropical forest are destroyed.

Rain forests are being torn down to make furniture from teak, mahogany, ebony and other tropical hardwoods. Help out by buying furniture made from hardwoods from forests in North America that are harvested, and replanted, just like other crops.

### Trees

by  
Alfred Joyce Kilmer, 1913

I think that I shall never see  
A poem as lovely as a tree.  
A tree whose hungry mouth is prest  
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast.  
A tree that looks at God all day  
And lifts her leafy arms to pray.  
A tree that may in Summer wear,  
A nest of robins in her hair.  
Upon whose bosom snow has lain,  
Who intimately lives with rain.  
Poems are made by fools like me,  
But only God can make a tree.