

# Ancient thoughts of Ethics on Environment

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This Universe, our Planet as well as our Human body is made up of five basic elements – Pancha Boothas - Earth, Water, Fire, Air & Ether (Aakasha) and it is our prime duty to protect the same.

Everybody is now talking about Environment Protection, ISO-14000 and many other things to protect the environment after having allowed it to be spoiled. Modern age does not seem to believe in “prevention is better than cure”. For eg. why allow mosquitoes to come inside the house and then burn a mosquito coil or apply mosquito repellent cream that have a high impact not only on environment but also on Health? Instead one can prevent the mosquitoes from coming in by using a proper net at a physical level. Alternately, one can also find solution at a root level by protecting the environment.

Our ancients were highly conscious of what they were doing and they always followed a proactive approach. Ancient scriptures have spoken about this at length.

Here are a few ancient Sanskrit shlokas (Verses) from different ancient literature that speak volumes about how our ancient people were respecting and protecting the environment.

First the morning prayer of an ancient Indian from Vamanapurana:

*“Pruthvi Sugandha Sarasasthathaapah  
Sparshascha Vayuah Jwalanah Sathejah  
Nabhah Sashabdham Mahatha Saheva  
Yachanthu survey mama suprabhatam”.*

(May this day begin with the fragrance of the earth, the coolness of water, the delicate touch of the air, brilliant flames of the fire, and the pleasant sounds over the sky. May all these make my day happy.)

He further prayed to the Mother earth on which he has to move about:

*“Samudravasane Devi Parvathasthanamandithe  
Vishnupathni Namasthubyam Padasparsham  
Kshamasva Me  
Vishtamuthrakaapotsargamaaparadham  
shamasva Me”.*

(He begs pardon of the earth for bringing his foot into contact with it, and for making it dirty in a number of ways.) This shows that he was aware of his responsibility of keeping the mother earth and the surrounding environments clean and unpolluted.

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People were extremely conscious of environment protection. Ramayana quotes the statement of king Bharata, who asks his army while entering Rishi Bharadwaja's ashram, to keep a league away from the ashram and take rest. He enters the ashram alone and when Bharadwaja asks him why he has left his army behind, Bharata replies: "I did not bring them because they may pollute the water, disturb the trees, spoil the ground and damage the cottage."

This shows the amount of respect our ancients had for the environment and the care they took to protect it.

From Kowtilya on Penalty: - Penalty was levied for cutting tender leaves and tender branches, for cutting developed branches & trunks, and for total uprooting. A provision of double penalty was levied for similar offences in respect of trees on the borders of villages and the "Janapada" areas, in temples and other protected areas.

These provisions clearly show that whatever care and protection was bestowed on human beings by the State, was also bestowed on trees and plants. If man has to live, thrive, and prosper, he has to let the environment around him also to thrive and prosper.

### **From Vishnu Smruthi:**

Vishnu Smruthi elaborates the penalty for cruelty to animals. Thus apart from Earth, Water, Air and Fire, Plants and Animals also constituted man's environment. It is the moral duty of man to take care of them. A moral duty can be discharged only when it is also realized as a human value.

Love of one's environment gives a profound joy to oneself. Just as loving his kith and kins

delights man, loving his environment should also delight him.

God has given us good environment and has blessed us to be born in such a good condition with good health & wealth. We have been placed so well compared to others who are suffering due to bad health. We the blessed ones have to think as to how we can give back to "God" who is with us in the form of "Nature" and to the society we are living, by protecting and maintaining the environment that has been given to us thus proving wrong the old saying, "God Gives and Forgives, Man Gets and Forgets".

Lastly, environment protection is not just confined to this alone. We need to address pollution due to sound, noise emission etc. and above all the environment that we create by Jealousy, Anger, Hurting, Hating others and so on, there by accruing negative energy within us and spreading negative environment around us.

I am sure that enlightened people can consciously create a positive energy within themselves and a positive environment around them by spreading love and affection and by creating abundance of joy, and help the mankind in protecting the environment.

Let us pray God to give us the necessary:

"*Jnanashakthi*" - Knowledge,

"*Ichaashakthi*" - The Desire and

"*Kriyashakthi*" - The Ability to achieve this.

"*Sarve Jana Sukhino Bhavanthu*" - Let all people be Happy & Blessed.

(Reference: Book in Kannada by  
Prof KT.Pandurangi)

