

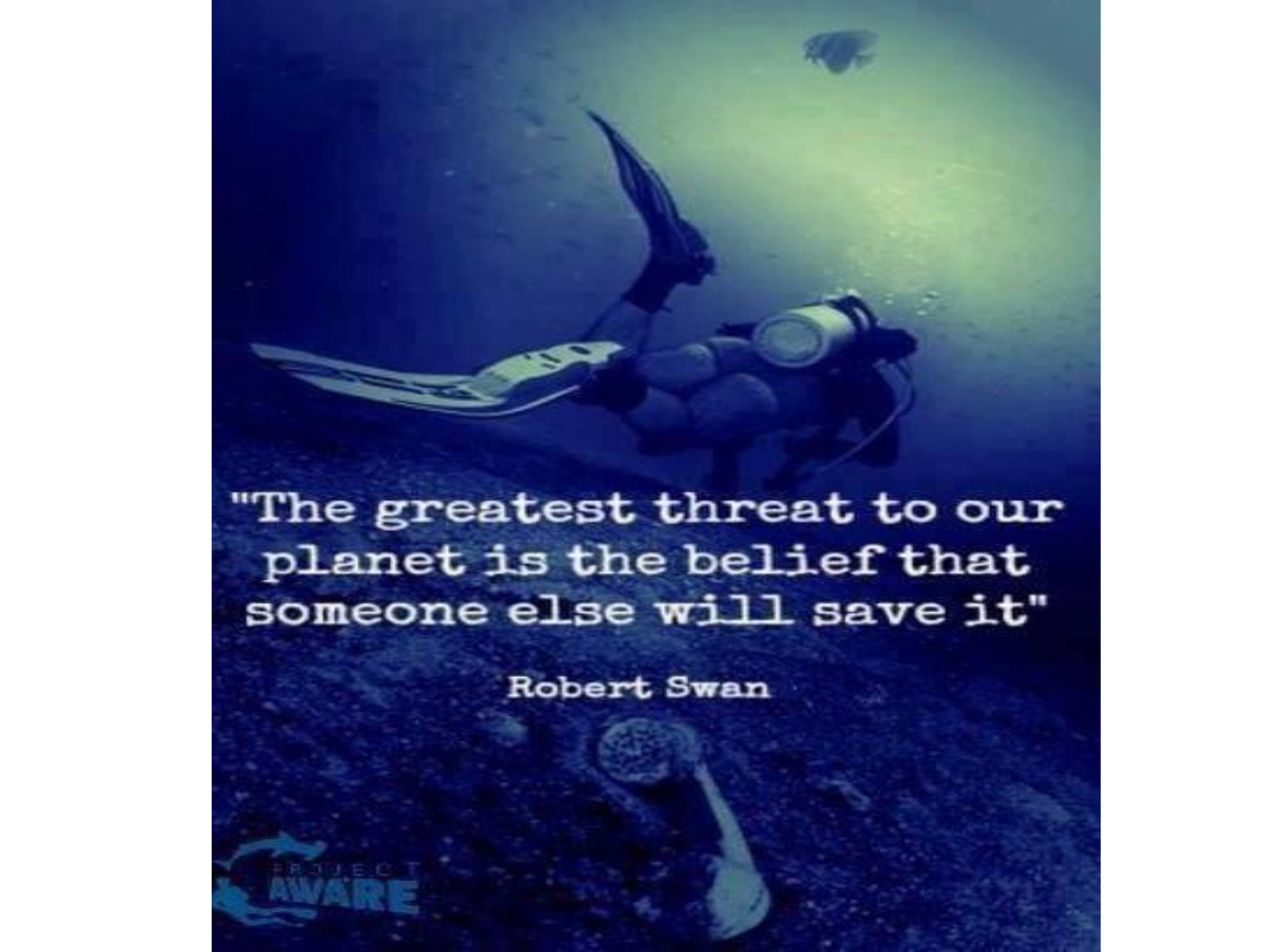
# Hinduism and environment

- Presented by:

- **Jag Aggarwal**

We are in danger of destroying ourselves by our greed and stupidity. We cannot remain looking inwards at ourselves on a small and increasingly polluted and overcrowded planet.

*Stephen Hawking*

A diver is shown underwater, illuminated by a bright light source, possibly a flashlight or a light from above. The diver is wearing a scuba tank and fins. The background is dark blue, suggesting deep water. The overall mood is somber and contemplative.

"The greatest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it"

Robert Swan





The greatest  
danger to our  
future is **apathy.**

*~Jane Goodall*

# Hymn to the Earth

- Earth, in which lie the sea, the river and other waters,
- in which food and cornfields have come to be,
- in which lives all that breathes and that moves,
- may she confer on us the finest of her yield.
- Earth, in which the waters, common to all,
- moving on all sides, flow unflinching, day and night,
- may she pour on us milk in many streams,
- and endow us with luster,
- May those born of thee, O Earth,
- be of our welfare, free from sickness and waste,
- wakeful through a long life, we shall become bearers of tribute to
- thee.
- Earth, my mother, set me securely with bliss in full accord with
- heaven,
- O wise one, uphold me in grace and splendor."
- 
- Artha-Veda

# Hindu Ecology

- *samudravasane devi  
parvatasthana mandale  
vishnupatni namastubhym  
padasparsam kshamasva me*
- **Meaning:**  
It says, mother earth, you are with the oceans and mountains on you. Salutations to the wife of Vishnu deva. Forgive me for placing my feet on you.

# Hinduism and Environment

- Mahatma Gandhi has said: “The country’s development has to be in harmony with nature.”
- “The earth has resources to meet everybody’s needs, but not anybody’s greed.”
- “Man must voluntarily limit his wants.”
- “We must learn to live lives of simplicity and austerity.”

# HINDUISM:

## *Term Hinduism is a misnomer*

Derives from “**Sindhu**” Those who lived in that region of Sindhu river were called **Hindus** ( Persians, Arabs did not have “S” sound ---”H” sound

*Real names and definitions:*

## Sanatan Dharma

**Sanatan** means Eternal

**Dharma** means individual’s duty fulfilled by observance of custom or law

## Vedic religion

Principles and practices based on Vedas



# Hinduism

- **No one founder**
- **No one holy book**
- **No fixed starting time**
- **Tolerance for other faiths**
- **Non violence**

# Hinduism

- *Ekam Sat viprah bahudha vadanti*
- **Truth is One, sages, learned describe variously**

# Hindu concept of God

- **Brahman Centric**

- **“That supreme reality which is the source and ultimate refuge of everything material, immaterial, visible, invisible, manifest and unmanifest”**

# Hindu concept of God

- **Brahman Centric**
- “That supreme reality which is the source and ultimate refuge of everything material, immaterial, visible, invisible, manifest and unmanifest”
- **Isha Upanishad says:**
- That supreme *Brahman* is infinite, and this conditioned *Brahman* is infinite. The infinite proceeds from infinite. If you subtract the infinite from the infinite, the infinite remains alone

# Reincarnation, Rebirth



- Hindus believe that after we die, we are reborn. We continue to be reborn until we find God. The only thing that we carry to the next life is the fruits and effects of our actions i.e. *KARMA*
- Other religions that originated in Indian subcontinent such as Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism also believe in rebirth

# Reincarnation



- *Just as the body discards worn out clothes and acquires new clothes, soul discards worn out bodies and acquires new ones. Gita ch2.v 22*



# KARMA



- ***Webster definition***
- The force generated by a person's actions held in Hinduism and Buddhism to perpetuate transmigration and in its ethical consequences to determine the nature of the person's next existence.
- ***In Hinduism:***
- Describes cause and effect system that applies to good as well as bad deeds. Not only to physical but also to speech, mind and thought as well. The effect may be experienced now, in the future in this life or in one of the future lives. Unless all karma, good and bad has been exhausted, there is no salvation.

# Hinduism and environment

- Sanskrit term for environment is:
  - Paryavarana
- Sanskrit term for pollution is:
  - Pradushana



# Hinduism and Environment

## **Guiding principles:**

- Karma ( Inevitability of consequences of actions)
- Reincarnation
- Interconnectedness of all things
- Need for Harmony between humans and nature
- Ahimsa – Non Violence
- Everything comes out of nature and goes back to nature
- Divinity is the basis of everything ( Brahman )
- Vegetarianism

# Hinduism and Environment

## Sources of these principles:

### Hindu scriptures

**Sruti:** Vedas ( Four )  
Upanishads ( 108 )

**Smriti:** Puranas ( Several hundred )  
Ramayana, Mahabharata

**Bhagwadgita:** Dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna on the battlefield.

# Divine Revelations or Shruti

Vedas Total 100,000 verses

Rigveda

Yajurveda

Atharva Veda

Sama Veda

Upanishads

Comentaries and elaboration on Vedas

108 Upanishds

# Gita, Bhagwadgita



- Dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna the warrior prince



# GITA, BHAGWADGITA



- Called the “Bible” of Hindus
- You can read all the 108 upanishads or you can read The Gita
- You can read all 100,000 verses in vedas or you can read The Gita
- 700 verses,
- 18 Chapters
- Part of Mahabharata

# GITA



- Explains what is :
- Soul
- God
- Karma
- Nature
- Means of attaining salvation
- Individual's duties
- Creation
- Immanence of God

# GITA



सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज ।  
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥

यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः ।  
तत्र श्रीर्विजयो भूतिर्धुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम ॥

# Four stages of Human life cycle

- Brahmacharya
  - Grihasth
  - **Vanprastha ( Live in a forest )**
  - Sanyasa
- 
- Forest living was essential for spiritual growth



# Five Elements

- Elements of nature are the same:(5 elements)
- Earth,
- Water
- Air
- Fire
- Space
- Same 5 elements are in me and the outside
- I am made up of all these. So polluting these elements will lead to polluted “me”

# Hindu Ecology

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# Ecology- Divine basis

- Divine is Omnipresent:

ishavasyam idam sarvam  
yat kincha jagatyam jagat  
tena tyaktena bhunjitha  
ma gridhah kasya svid dhanam

Ishopnishad, Sh Yajurveda

- Everything is pervaded by the Divine. Enjoy everything with an attitude of renunciation, do not covet. ( after all ) who really owns anything ?

# Ecology Divine basis

- *Tain tyakten bhunjitha* -- has been translated, "Take what you need for your sustenance without a sense of entitlement or ownership."

# Divine basis of ecology

- **Everything is Divine:**

Rivers ( Don't pollute rivers )

Mountains

Trees ( Don't cut more then what is needed )

Air ( Don't pollute the air )

# Scriptural Basis

- Sarvam Khalvidam Brahman:

*Chandogya Upanishad of Shukla Yajur veda*

All this is Brahman ( The Supreme reality )

Everything is Brahman

Seeing common underlying thread

Not mindless worshipping of objects

# Scriptural Basis

- **Four Mahavakyas** ( Supreme statements )

1. 'Prajnanam Brahma.' ( Rig Veda )

2. 'Aham Brahma Asmi.' ( Yajur Veda )

3. 'Tat Tvam Asi.' ( Sama Veda )

4. 'Ayam Atma Brahma.' ( Atharva Veda )

Brahman is the basis of everything

# Hindu Ecology

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# Hinduism and Ecology

- **Law of Karma**

- *As you sow, so you reap*
- Bad Karma will lead to bad future life or lives
- We are accountable for all our actions. This includes actions towards all things ( Nature ) and all living beings ( non violence )

# Hindu Ecology

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# Reincarnation

Ties into Karma

We can not escape the consequences

If we abuse, pollute the environment, law of Karma and Reincarnation will ensure we face the consequences. If not in this life but certainly in a future life.

# Hindu Ecology

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# Harmony and interconnectedness

## **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam:**

*Maha Upanishad*

*Vasudha means whole earth*

*Kutumbakam means family*

Whole earth is one global family

Includes animate and inanimate

# Harmony and interconnectedness

Bhagwadgita ch 12, v 4

Sarva Bhuta Hitay rata:

Engage in the welfare of all. ( Animate and inanimate )

# Peace Chant

- ॐ द्यौः शान्ति रन्तरिक्षं शान्तिः
- पृथिवी शान्ति रापः शान्तिरोषधयः शान्तिः।
- वनस्पतयः शान्ति विश्वे देवाः शान्ति ब्रह्म शान्तिः
- सर्वं शान्तिः शान्तिरेव शान्तिः सा मा शान्तिरेधि ॥
- ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥
- =यजुर्वेद ३६:१७

# Harmony and interconnectedness

- **Peace Chant:**
- May peace radiate there in the whole sky as well as in the vast ethereal space everywhere. May peace reign all over this earth, in water and in all herbs, trees and creepers. May peace flow over the whole universe. May peace be in the Supreme Being Brahman. And may there always exist in all peace and peace alone. Aum peace, peace and peace to us and all beings!



# Hindu Ecology

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# Vegetarianism

## **Vegetarianism:**

A central tenet of Hinduism

Less taxing on the environment

One pound of beef= 2464 gallons of water

One pound of wheat= 25 gallons of water

one beef calorie requires 40 calories

One tofu calorie requires 2 calories

*( These estimates vary )*

Animal waste is a major pollutant

# Scriptural basis

## Yoga Sutras

### **Eight fold path to salvation**

Yama

Niyama

Asana

Pranayam

Pratyahar

Dharna

Dhyan

Samadhi

# Yoga Sutras

- Yama: First step in the eightfold path
- Includes: **Ahimsa ( Non violence )**
- Satya ( Truthfulness )
- Asteya ( Non stealing )
- Brahmacharya ( Sense Control )
- Aparigraha ( Non Hoarding/greed )
-

# Yoga Sutras

- Niyama:
- Includes:
  - **Sauca ( Cleanliness )**
  - Santosha ( Contentment )
  - Tapas ( Discipline )
  - Swadhyaya ( Self Study )
  - Ishwar Pranidhan ( Belief in the Divine )

# Scriptural sayings Environment

- **“A person, who is engaged in killing creatures, polluting wells, and ponds and tanks, and destroying gardens, certainly goes to hell”**
- *Padmapurana Bhumikhanda 96: 7-8*

# Scriptural sayings Environment

**The Earth is Mother, I am a child of Earth**

*Atharva Veda, 12.1.12b*

*Hymn 1 of book 12 of Atharva Veda is all about  
importance of Earth ( Mother Earth )*

# Scriptural sayings

## Environment

- “Do not cut trees, because they remove pollution.” (*Rig Veda*, 6:48:17)



# Scriptural sayings

- “Do not disturb the sky and do not pollute the atmosphere.” (*Yajur Veda*,5:43)
- Ozone layer

# What is being done

- Clean Ganga project ( Ganga Action Plan, GAP ): River Ganges
- Chipko movement: Trees
- Art of living programs: Multiple items

# GAP- Founder Swami Chidananda



# Art of Living founder

