

DEVOTEES OF KRISHNA TO PROTECT MOTHER EARTH



ECOLOGY BASICS

Recommendations by ISKCON Hungary on Ecological Issues

*„Everything animate or inanimate
that is within the universe is controlled
and owned by the Lord. One should
therefore accept only those things
necessary for himself, which are set
aside as his quota, and one should
not accept other things, knowing well
to whom they belong..“*

(Shri Ishopanishad, Mantra 1)



DEAR READER,

You are holding treasures in your hand: wood, water, energy, air, fire. The world is running toward an ecological catastrophe and these basic elements are becoming increasingly precious. It is not enough to manage the crisis by material means; the causes must be eliminated. This however needs honest introspection and doing the needful by all of us—even if it seems like a tiny step. This leaflet is trying to give practical help.

*Gandharvika
prema dāri*

Gandharvika Prema Devi Dasi
Editor



HOW BIG IS YOUR FOOTPRINT?

How can we measure with one figure whether our lifestyle is sustainable? Such a measure is the 'ecological footprint'. It indicates the size of a productive area of land necessary for supplying our consumption according to our habits as well as the area needed to process the waste we produce. When scientists first calculated this measure for the countries of the world they were shocked by how high the number was.

These days the average ecological footprint of mankind is 2.7 hectares, which is over 2.5 times the amount in 1961. The planet Earth presently has 11.2 billion hectares of biologically active land and ocean surface and 7.3 billion human inhabitants. If everyone was to live at the (relatively modest) Hungarian living standard, we would need three Earth planets.

Calculate your ecological footprint on-line and find out if you need take up some of the ecological recommendations on the following pages. www.krisna.hu/okolabnyom

DID YOU KNOW?

**The ecological footprint of the
inhabitants of Krishna Valley is
40% less than the national average.**



ENDLESS DEAD END

Although the ability of Nature to renew itself is admirable, human destruction has become so enormous that it is jeopardising the sheer survival of humanity itself. There is garbage everywhere: in the oceans, on land, even in space and on the slopes of the Himalayas. The air and the waters are contaminated; there is more poison than vitamin in food; the changes in climate result in desertification and erosion of soil; new diseases decimate the population. These all indicate that the so-called economic progress of society is unsustainable. The pursuit of constant economic growth and insatiable consumption spells havoc for humanity which pretends to be a neutral observer.



AS WE SEE IT

According to the understanding of the devotees of Krishna, Nature, with all her treasures, is the manifestation of the Lord's energy, and thus belongs to Him. It is our conviction that protecting the environment starts with restoring respect to God and His creation. According to the Vedas, planet Earth also has a personality: she is Bhumi Devi, Mother Earth, who patiently carries and cares for us, even though we are continuously damaging her body.

Although we, human beings, are but one of the many species created by God, a tiny part of the order of His creation; we are still the most influential in a sense because by making responsible decisions, we can support the Good and avoid catastrophe. But, despite being influential, we have no right to destroy or damage this Creation which is ours to experience for a limited time only and which was given to us to use responsibly. As members of the most intelligent species, our conscience warns us to be careful, respectful and merciful towards the Earth.



THE ROAD TO SOLUTIONS

Most difficulties can be mitigated by avoiding products detrimental to the environment. According to experts, reviewing how animals are kept and radically reducing meat consumption are more influential in minimizing climate change than, for instance, the replacement of fossil fuels by renewables. Compared to a meat-eater's diet, vegetarianism requires one third of land and represents one tenth of the burden on the environment. The grains fed to the animals kept for their meat or the crops grown on the land producing such fodder would, combined with proper distribution, feed the 7 billion people on

planet Earth. This consideration does not even touch on the ethical aspects of cruel rearing and mass killing of animals.

In the long run, setting up and maintaining small self-sustaining communities, like Krishna Valley, can provide a solution. Such eco-villages are simultaneously economic and social communities where we can observe that if Nature's gifts are used according to the Lord's intentions she reciprocates with abundant crops. With this ecological model the Valley can share its practical experience and knowledge on sustainability with thousands of people every year. The simple and peaceful quality of life offers a positive alternative to the stressful and obsessive urban lifestyle which is based on financial gains but turns out to be unsustainable in the long run.



ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION STARTS IN OUR HEARTS

The solution can be found by finding the cause of the unfortunate situation: the human quality of greed. As long as we don't manage to gain control over our greed we are rushing to our inevitable doom. We need to stop and consider: what are our real needs, and what are our exaggerated, excessive desires.

Such desires bind us. Let us change our habits; let us become conscious and moderate producers and shoppers; let us put an end to our never-ending desires that compell our actions. It is up to us to take responsibility for the change as it is us who will have to enjoy or suffer the results of our actions. The culture of wasteful consumption can be overcome by developing a spiritual vision and experiencing satisfaction that does not come from material sources. In this way, we will start valuing people instead of objects and our values will become spiritual, thus regaining our lost life.

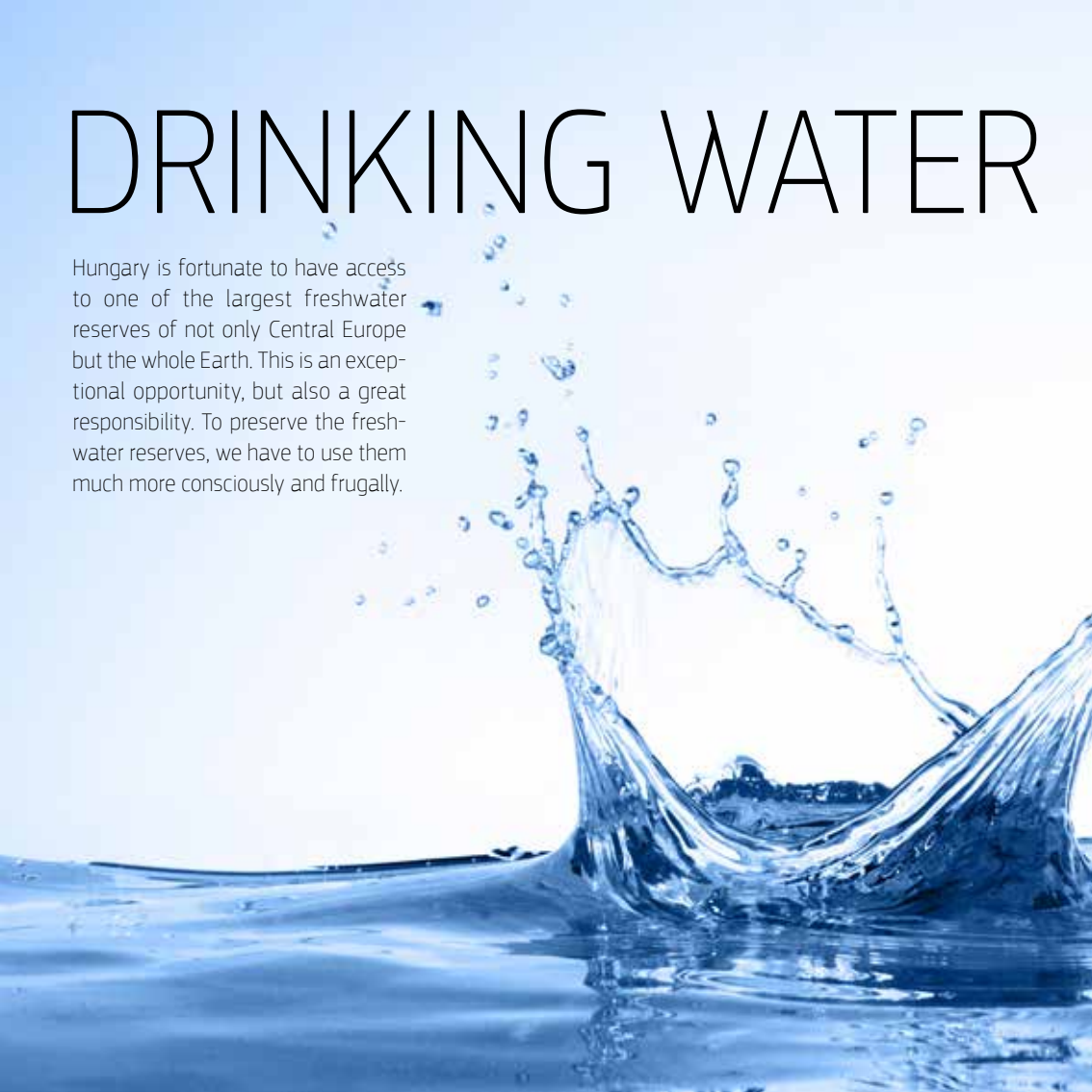


OUR MAIN PRINCIPLES RELATED TO A SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLE:

- ▶ Vegetarianism, non-violent lifestyle
- ▶ Simplicity, harmony with nature
- ▶ Less objects, more spiritual experiences; less technology, more human relationships
- ▶ Green households, protection of ecosystems, the soil and the waters
- ▶ Moral and ethical behaviour towards other living beings and nature, awareness of the law of karma
- ▶ Developing the virtue of satisfaction

DRINKING WATER

Hungary is fortunate to have access to one of the largest freshwater reserves of not only Central Europe but the whole Earth. This is an exceptional opportunity, but also a great responsibility. To preserve the freshwater reserves, we have to use them much more consciously and frugally.



SAVE THE DROPS

- › Vegetarians avoid the activity that is wasting the greatest amount of fresh water on Earth. Producing 1 kilo of meat requires about 10 thousand litres of freshwater—from growing fodder, to processing meat. Treating slaughterhouse sewage also requires lots of sterilising chemicals and energy. Reduce your meat consumption or join the 'Meatless Monday' movement. You will see, it is easier than you think!
- › Water usage of all kinds should be monitored at businesses and homes: we can use perlators to waste less water when washing hands or taking a shower.
- › When choosing to buy a washing machine, we should consider the water usage of the various models.
- › Collect rainwater outside. It can be used to water the garden and even pumped into the house to flush the toilet. Using drinking water to flush the toilet is a ludicrous waste! Think about how you can collect rainwater in your garden or balcony.
- › Choosing to take a shower rather than a bath uses a lot less water to wash away the fatigue after a long day.

DID YOU KNOW?

**The community
in Krishna Valley treats
sewage by a reed root
zone plant.**



WASTE MANAGEMENT

The best method of waste management is to prevent the production of waste. This is not simple however because we are often left without a choice. For instance, if the widely used packaging materials are allowed to get into the soil and water, they will re-enter the food cycle in a few decades and exert their detrimental effect on our bodies.



HOPELESS STRUGGLE? START ON A SMALL SCALE!

- › The first step: recyclable waste (paper, plastic bottles, glass, tins, etc.) should be deposited at increasingly available recycling points.
- › The most dangerous waste (batteries, fluorescent tubes, electronic waste, medicines, paint, used oil, etc.), should be deposited at specialised centres! If they get into the landfill, they cause great damage.
- › Never burn plastic waste! It directly damages our health and that of our neighbours.
- › Single use containers should be compressed before putting them into the proper container.
- › Rather than buying foodstuffs in punnets, packets or bags, choose the bulk stuff or the refill package.
- › Whenever possible, use recycled or recyclable materials. Such materials fulfil their role if they get recycled.
- › Kitchen waste can be composted to produce our own garden fertiliser.
- › Unnecessary clothes and household items should be given away or exchanged; use the flea market. A little investment, nice profit.
- › Join the annual 'Let's Clean Up Europe' events organised to clean up the waste from neighbourhood communal areas.

DID YOU KNOW?

Your excess crops, used clothes, toys and other useful donations can be forwarded to the needy through our Food For Life Programme



ENERGY

We use natural resources in all walks of life. These days we all know that it does matter how and from what source the energy is produced to maintain our lifestyle.



WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU DO NOT LIVE ON AN ORGANIC FARM?

- › We can watch energy usage in a city apartment. A good idea is to use energy efficient lightbulbs and to install individually adjustable radiators.
- › Our apartment can be refitted with insulation which pays for itself quickly.
- › Avoid gadgets operated with batteries. Even the battery driven toys continually produce hazardous waste. Children are happy to play outdoors with simple toys made of natural materials or self-made toys.
- › Be mindful of the energy efficiency of white goods like a refrigerator. Even small things like unplugging chargers after use can make a difference. When we leave the house for a longer period, we should unplug appliances if possible.
- › Rather than buying, we should consider borrowing appliances and tools that we don't use all the time.
- › Instead of having freezers, it is better to make preserves of summer produce like

fruits and vegetables and store them in reusable bottles and jars. Home-made jams and pickles are tasty, healthy and can often be prepared without preservatives.

- › Join the 'Earth's Hour' movement and turn off the lights for one hour a year. A huge amount of the Earth's energy can be saved in this way.
- › Heating with firewood is an environmentally friendly technology as the amount of carbon dioxide released by burning is exactly the same as the carbon dioxide absorbed by the tree during its life.
- › If it is within our means, we may switch to renewable energy (sun-collector, solar panels, windpower, etc.) even if it seems to be expensive.

DID YOU KNOW?

- **At our organic farm, firewood is obtained from our own energy forest planted for this very purpose.**
- **For storing produce and preserves at Krishna Valley we use traditional cellars and stacks.**



FUEL

Our lifestyle often means that we have to travel or transport goods long distances. Producing and using fuels, however, also produces a lot of hazardous waste and toxins. Because of the growing fuel prices there is an increase in food prices; which results in increasing starvation. Do we really always need to use petrol, everywhere?



IF YOU HAVE TO TRAVEL, DO IT RIGHT

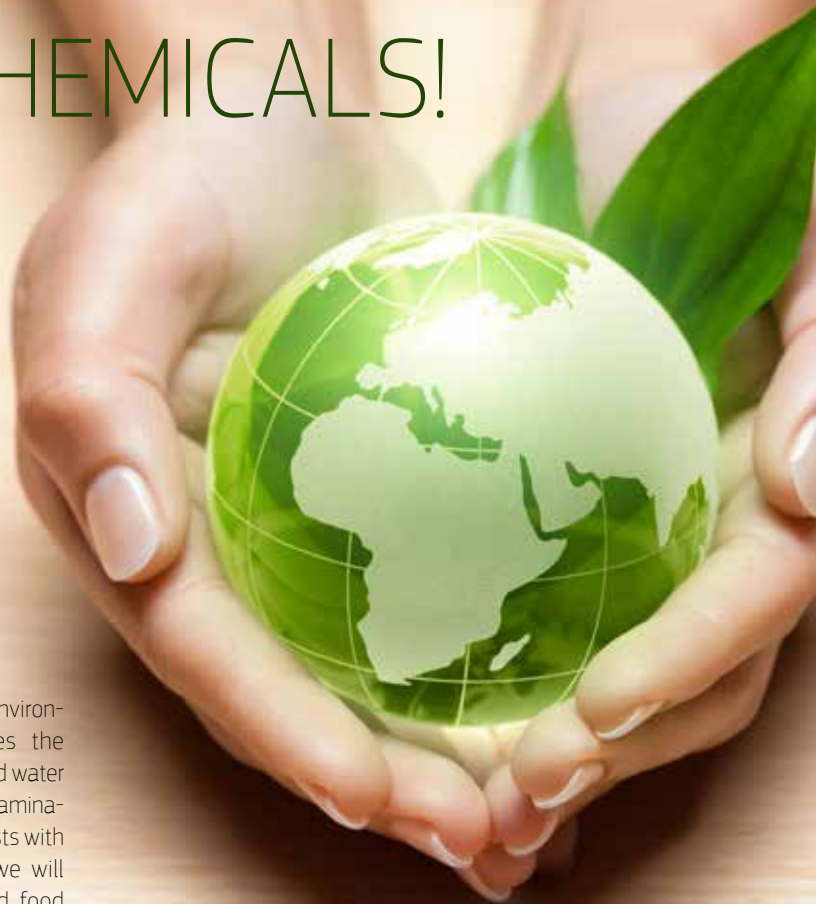
- › When we have to travel, move home or go shopping, it is good to organise it with the environmental aspects taken into account. Team up with friends, use the car sharing pages!
- › Local produce has the most nutrients and vitamins whereas those which ripen on their long journey coming from another continent have much less in the way of valuable nutrients. Instead of exotic products, take the locally produced, cheaper and more tasty food-stuffs. By investing some work and time we can get by even through the winter months just by eating the home-made preserves of local produce.
- › If you can, grow your own vegetables! There are more and more allotments even in cities. We can share our gardening tips with you.
- › When shopping, support local producers rather than the big supermarket chains that are based on the exploitation of workers in faraway countries.
- › Cut down on nonessential travel. Live close to your workplace.
- › For small distances, walk or cycle; it is better for your health as well.

DID YOU KNOW?

At Krishna Valley, we mainly use ox power in the fields.



NO CHEMICALS!



The destruction of the environment not only involves the exploitation of the soil and water habitats but also the contamination of water, air and forests with chemicals. Eventually, we will only have contaminated food and water produced from poisoned Nature. Is it worth it?



IS IT POSSIBLE WITHOUT CHEMICALS? YES!

- › Perfect cleanliness can be achieved in the home by using organic cleaning agents like vinegar, ash lye, soda, citric acid and natural essential oils, horse chestnut or soap nut. The recipes for organic home-made preparations are widely available. These naturally sourced preparations can also be used in community buildings to provide hygiene—it is well worth in the long run!
- › Cosmetics without synthetic ingredients are increasingly available and if you are feeling adventurous, with a little investment of time and using a few reliable ingredients, you can prepare your aluminium-free deodorant and lipstick without animal fat or other cosmetic ingredients.
- › Choose natural remedies. For example, you could try India's ancient life science, the Ayurveda. Left-over medicines and additives represent a significant burden on the environment as well as on our own bodies. This burden can be avoided by using medicinal herbs and disease prevention methods by natural preparations. However, if necessary, you must also take the medicine prescribed by your doctor!
- › If you have a garden, plant organic seeds. This means you will need to select seed-producing (non-hybrid) varieties which are resistant to disease.

DID YOU KNOW?

- **In Krishna Valley we avoid having to spray with chemicals by using crop rotation, plant association and green manure.**
- **On our organic farm, we do not use artificial fertilizers. The power of the soil is enhanced by use of bovine manure and plant compost.**



THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO CONSIDER HOW YOU CAN MAKE
OUR ENVIRONMENT CLEANER AND MORE HEALTHY!



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