Most of us living in the west do not recognize the immanence of the Divine in Nature and maintain a very impersonal relationship with the natural world. We believe what we were taught from an early age - that Nature is composed of vast resources which are necessary to meet our basic human needs. In this context, Swami says, "Man has the rare good fortune of adoring Nature as the body of God and offering grateful worship to God. But is he conscious of God being the source and sustenance? Does he give God the first place in his thoughts which is His due? Or, is he engaged in the activities of life in total disregard of God? It is a pity that, instead of paying attention to God, Nature, and Man in that order, men today are concerned mostly with themselves, more with Nature and very much less with God. From birth to death, from dawn till night, man pursues fleeting pleasures by the exploitation, the despoiling, the desecration of Nature, ignoring the truth that it is the property of God the Creator, and any injury caused to it is a sacrilege, which merits dire punishment"[1].

STARTLING STATISTICS
The effects of man’s exploitation of Nature are devastating. Listed below are some of these shocking effects.

- **Global Warming**: Industrialization, deforestation, and pollution have greatly increased the concentration of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide resulting in global warming. The effects of global warming are
shattering. Average temperatures have shot up 1.4 degrees Fahrenheit around the world since 1880, with the last two decades being the hottest in 400 years. This is resulting in the extinction of many species [5].

- **Electronic Waste**: The unprecedented growth in consumer electronics has increased their inflow to the waste stream mainly because of the consumer’s insatiable hunger for newer products [9]. In 2008 the US generated 400 million units of electronic waste which contained about 42 million PCs and 130 million cellular phones. About 87% of this waste is incinerated or land filled which is releasing extremely hazardous material into the atmosphere [6].

- **Plastic and Styrofoam**: Plastic and Styrofoam products which are heavily used on a daily basis are major environmental offenders mainly because they are non-biodegradable [9]. In the U.S an estimated 30 billion plastic water bottles are consumed every year of which 99% are incinerated or land filled [7]. Every day, approximately 1369 tons of Styrofoam goes into U.S. landfills and burning of these landfills is releasing dangerous chemical byproducts into the atmosphere [8].

**IMPORTANCE OF GOING GREEN**

Swami tells us why going green is important: "The progress of modern technology, by polluting the atmosphere with Carbon dioxide smoke, is causing a threat to life on earth. This smoke has already created a hole in the ozone ring above the earth which has been serving as a protecting cover against harmful radiation from the sun. If the ozone layer is destroyed, the effect of the sun's rays may be disastrous. All nations are now worried about this threat. All that needs to be done to avert this danger is to reduce the pollution of the atmosphere caused by automobiles and industrial effluents. The uncontrolled development of industries has to be checked. Development should be in the common interest, to promote the welfare of all" [2].

Swami explains the interconnectedness in Nature and why man should strive to preserve it - "All men, all living beings, are cells in the body of God. Their origin, continued existence, and progress are all in God, by God, for God. The individual is a unit in this unity. When one is ill, all suffer. When one is happy, all are partners of that happiness"[3]. Swami emphatically admonishes man for disturbing Nature's balance and underscores the importance of protecting it - "the world is losing its ecological balance as man out of utter selfishness, is
robbing mother Earth of her resources like coal, petroleum, iron, etc. As a result, we are seeing natural calamities. Human life will find fulfillment only when ecological balance is maintained[3]. Hence to restore the balance we need to cut our consumption of natural resources and practice ceiling on desires. We also need to cultivate reverence towards Nature and be grateful to it for the resources it provides us. Swami says, "approach Nature in a humble, prayerful mood; then your future will be safe" [3].

Swami says that the root cause of pollution around us is the “internal pollution” in man. He says that immoral feelings, improper behavior, and sharp decline in values like love, compassion and forbearance are responsible for the widespread pollution outside [4]. Swami recommends the chanting of God's name to purify the polluted atmosphere. He says that the Divine vibrations originating from the chant of the Divine Name will cleanse the atmosphere [4].

**OBJECTIVES OF GO-GREEN HOUSE**
To implement the above mentioned teachings of Swami is the primary goal of the Sai Go-Green House. The main objectives of the house are to:

1. **Promote awareness and provide guidelines for the daily implementation of the 3R (reduce, reuse, and recycle) concept** - reduce the consumption of resources; reuse the products/material; recycle the material if it cannot be reused. As part of this initiative we have provided guidelines to recycle at an individual, center, and regional level. For example electronic waste recycling, composting of organic waste, and making Sai retreats environment friendly.

2. **Encourage participation in community level activities** such as neighborhood and beach cleanup and tree planting.

3. **Encourage participation in large scale projects** such as sustainable housing (e.g. solar powered homes) and sustainable transportation (e.g. electric cars).

4. **Initiate and/or participate in** individual and group level **chanting of the Divine Name**.

5. **Develop presentations and SSE lesson plans** on the importance of going green and how to practice it.

**REFERENCES**

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