



# Session IV

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**Deepa Bhaskaran  
Salem**

# Speaker Bio



**Deepa Bhaskaran Salem** is a published author of two books on Hindu dharma.

A sevika of Chinmaya Mission, she also speaks and writes on life lessons from dharma, Vedanta, and parenting targeting parents and youth.

She was a marketing executive based in Chicago and is also a mother of three.

# Presentation Abstract



## Cultivating a Sustainability Ethic in Hindu Children

As a way of life, Sanatana Dharma wove reverence for nature into daily life long before "sustainability" was a word. Pancha Maha Yajna calls to care for all beings and the Bhagawan as Vishwarupa indicates an interconnected universe.

Parents and educators can spark children's wonder about nature and build conscious daily practices at home through role modeling, scriptural study, and discussions.

Hindu-American children can become the torch bearers of dharmic sustainability across the world.

# Sustainability – A Dharmika View



Most children believe Sustainability is a western/modern concept.

## STEP 1 – Inculcate Dharmika origins of Sustainability

***Mātā bhūmiḥ putro'haṃ  
pṛthivyāḥ***

The Earth is my mother; I am her child.

— Atharva Veda 12.1.12

***Īśāvāsyam idaṃ sarvaṃ... mā  
grdhaḥ***

The Divine pervades all; use it with restraint, do not covet.

— Isha Upanishad, verse 1

***Samudra-vasane devi...  
pāda-sparśaṃ kṣamasva me***

Mother Earth, forgive me for touching you with my feet.

— Traditional morning prayer

***Puropavana-vanaspatīnām...  
prarohacchedane śatpaṇaḥ***

Cut a park tree's sprout: 6 panas. Fell it: a severe fine.

***Mṛga-pakṣi-matsyānām...  
uttamaṃ daṇḍam***

Harming wildlife in a protected forest: the highest fine.

— Arthashastra 2.26

***Manuṣyāṇām paśūnām ca  
duḥkhāya prahrte sati...***

Hurt a person or an animal, and the penalty must match the pain.

— Manusmriti 8.286

# Yagna Bhava - a life of sacrifice



*devān bhāvayatānena te devā bhāvayantu vaḥ  
parasparam bhāvayantaḥ śhreyaḥ param avāpsyatha BG 3.11*



What is Sacrifice today?

Giving up a little

1. Time
2. Comforts/Convenience
3. Money
4. Energy

for the larger good.

# Conscious Living and Restraint



Yagna life not only serves society, but also shapes the child in many ways

## **Discipline**

Daily seva and chores build routines that last

## **Financial moderation**

Giving up small wants teaches the value of money

## **Strength against peer pressure**

A clear sense of purpose makes it easier to say no

## **Restraint**

Pausing before acting on a want builds self-control

## **Gratitude**

Serving others shows how much they already have

## **Resilience**

Small, chosen sacrifices prepare them for setbacks

# Parents and Role Models



## 1. Our most important responsibility.

*Swakarmata tamabhyarcha siddhim vindhati manavaḥ — Bhagavad Gita, 18.46*

By performing one's own duty as an offering, a person attains perfection

## 2. Our greatest motivation to evolve.

*yad yad ācarati śreṣṭhas tat tad evetaro janāḥ  
sa yat pramāṇaṁ kurute lokas tad anuvartate - Bhagavad Gita 3.21*

Whatever action a great man performs, common men follow.  
And whatever standards he sets by exemplary acts, all the world pursues