

Facts

- Internationally 3-4 million children under the age of 5 die every year from dehydration as a result of waterborne diseases caused by polluted water.
- Only 3.6 percent of the rural population of India has water sanitation.
- In some villages women are walking over 4km each day in over 40 degree heat just to bring the families water supply.
- A reliable water supply underpins the success of industry, health and environment and therefore is one of the crucial factors in the alleviation of poverty.
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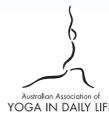
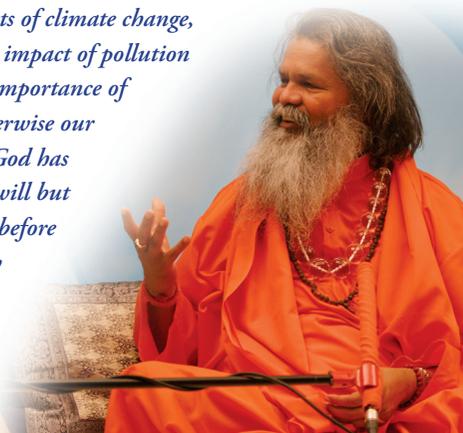
His Holiness, Paramhans Swami Maheshwarananda - on Water & the Environment

In the last 50 years our planet Earth has faced many great challenges from its own child, namely the Human. Humans are rapidly destroying the planet's natural environment due to pollution and over-development. What to say? We live in a 'throw-away' society, but throw away where? The result of pollution and over-development is standing clearly before of us...more floods, droughts, bushfires, hurricanes, earthquakes.

All the indications are here. In the name of development more \$ have been gained but in the process many lives destroyed and our planet has been degraded. One great American Indian once said, "When the last tree will be chopped down and the last fish will die, oh human then you will realize you cannot eat your money". In the history of our planet there have been cultural, religious, economic and political wars, but the time is swiftly coming where there may be war over water. Therefore it is humanity's prime duty to respect and save water. Water is 'white gold'. Water is life itself. Water should not be used indiscriminately. Never waste water.

Swamiji is a leader of World Peace, a tireless advocate of environmental protection, humanitarian aid, protection of all creatures and human rights. He is the Author of the Internationally Acclaimed system "Yoga in Daily Life". Deeply revered and recognized globally by many thousands, he spreads the light of knowledge wherever he goes.

"Contemplate the effects of climate change, think deeply about the impact of pollution and consider well the importance of conserving water. Otherwise our future is in darkness. God has not only given us free-will but also a fine intellect, so before doing any action know its consequence, know the outcome and act wisely".



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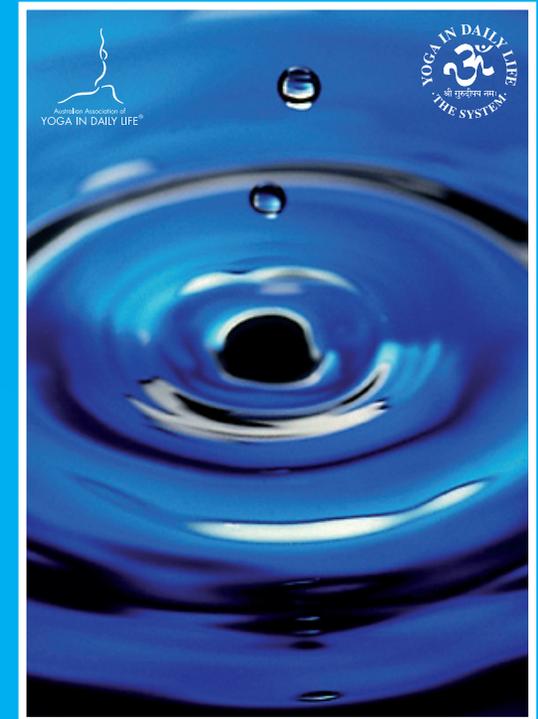
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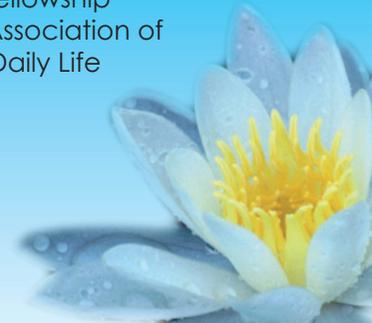
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D E S E R T R A I N W A T E R H A R V E S T I N G I N I T I A T I V E R A J A S T H A N , I N D I A

Partnership led by
International Sri Deep Madhavananda
Ashram Fellowship
& Australian Association of
Yoga in Daily Life



Overview

To address the major water crisis in the desert state of Rajasthan India, the International Sri Deep Madhavananda Ashram Fellowship, has launched a Desert Rainwater Harvesting initiative.

This Rajasthan initiative will utilise traditional Rainwater Harvesting techniques in conjunction with community based watershed management plans to provide a sustainable model to be used in drought affected areas throughout the world.

The Desert Rainwater Harvesting Initiative is a grass roots project aimed at alleviating poverty and providing a reliable water supply to some of the most remote populations in rural Rajasthan, who have been in the grip of severe drought for the last four years.

A key outcome of the Initiative will be the formation of global partnerships and the establishment of an international centre to promote Rainwater Harvesting for desert and semi-arid regions of the world.

The Rajasthan Water Crisis

Rajasthan is a desert state in India with a geographical area equal to 10 percent of the country, but with only one percent of the country's water resources. The scarce and fragile water resources in this semi-arid environment are under threat from frequent droughts, increasing groundwater salinity and falling water tables.

The region's recent drought has lasted over 4 years, today almost all bore wells are dried up or providing water that is so salty that it is not fit even for irrigating plants and crops, let alone for drinking.

The bulk of Rajasthan's annual rainfall, (54 to 82cm) falls during the monsoon season followed by months of dry hot days that typically yield only several centimeters of additional rain.

These rural areas are also faced with increasing desertification as a result of over grazing and wide spread tree cutting by local people. A combination of both wind and monsoon rains create severe erosion of up to 3000 tonnes per hectare.

The state's poor rural communities, which account for 77 percent of the population, need access to fresh water for drinking and agriculture.

The Desert Rainwater harvesting initiative will provide a wholistic approach that addresses the freshwater needs of local communities, as well as promoting sustainable agriculture, reforestation and increased biodiversity.



If only 1% or 2% of the rain that falls on India was captured, it would be sufficient to meet the drinking requirement of a billion people at a liberal 15 litres per person per day.



The Rainwater Harvesting Solution

The Desert Rainwater Harvesting Initiative (DRHI) was created in response to the ever increasing water crisis facing India's remote rural communities in Rajasthan and from direct requests from villages affected by a recent 4 year drought.

The Initiative aims to provide a year round supply of fresh water for rural communities in drought affected areas of Rajasthan where the Lead Partner has had a long standing presence and ongoing working relationship with the local villages. By using a combination of traditional water harvesting technologies together with modern watershed management tools the DRHI will provide long-term solutions at a local village level by actively involving the local communities in all aspects of the Initiative. The local villagers will be empowered to create their own Village Water Action Plans and will be responsible for designing, planning, implementing, assessing and maintaining their own projects and programs.

The success we are achieving with the Desert Rainwater Harvesting Initiative in rural Rajasthan is the result of over a decade of work, where in this small corner of the world we have respected the ecosystem and natural environment. Much of the water that is being harvested in this project, filters back through the earth to replenish the underground water table. The result is that the surrounding plants and vegetation are benefiting and the impact of the ongoing drought is lessened.

Our aim is to leave the world as pure and peaceful as we received it...

Hari Om!

It is nice to hear of your interest in our place and projects. What follows is just a little information about our centre.

We are an Ashram in rural Rajasthan, situated on 250 acres. There are approximately 35 permanent residents here from all over the world and India. In addition, a large number of local workers come here on a daily basis. We practice Yoga and Meditation daily and have a purely vegetarian kitchen providing nutritious meals for all.

The Ashram and its various projects have been established for approximately 12 years and it is progressing well in this arid region of India. Our main focus in recent years has been to improve the water supply, both within the Ashram and in the surrounding local villages. You may know that Rajasthan has suffered a severe drought lasting several years.

Everyone living here is involved in various aspects of the Ashram... some work on the Construction projects, others on the Reforestation initiative, the Rainwater Harvesting projects, or provide Tuition for the students at our school, which offers education from 1st Grade to 10th Grade for over 250 primary school children. Others spend time tending the vegetable gardens and crops such as wheat. The yield from these crops provides fodder for the Ashram's Animal Refuge that is home for more than 150 abandoned Brahman cows.

Visitors are welcome at any time to. Accommodation is very nice with attached bathrooms. There is also a small shop where personal items can always be found.

The founder of the Ashram, His Holiness Paramhans Swami Maheshwaranandji Maharaj comes intermittently throughout the year and during his stay a lot of people visit from all parts of the world. You are also most welcome to visit whilst His Holiness Swamiji is here and you are also equally welcome to come after He has gone.

We look forward to receiving you as our guest and welcome your support. If you have any other questions feel free to ask.

Yours, Swami Jasraj Puri
Shree Vishwa Deep Gurukul Maheshwaranand Ashram
Village Jadan, District Pali
Rajasthan, India

*You Too Can
Help Save Lives*

