



Life on Earth

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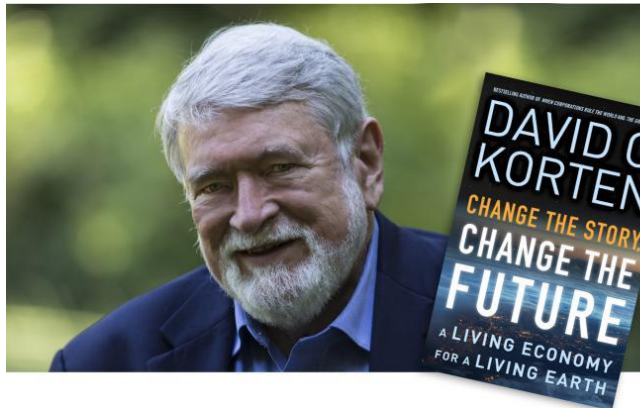


Dear Friends,

I am writing to you on this auspicious day of Pongal and Makar Sankranti with the prayers: “Lokah Samastah Sukhino Bhavantu”. May all beings everywhere be happy.

I plan to share with all of you, how science and spirituality is finding a common meeting ground, as we try to understand how life evolved on our planet Earth. We often hear the call ‘Save the Earth’ but the call must be reworded as ‘Save life on Earth’. Earth as a planet will continue for billions of years, but the question is, will life survive on Earth in the Anthropocene?

We human beings have been endowed with the ability to think, and we have always wondered, looking at the vast night sky littered with numerous glittering stars, ‘Who has created this Universe?’ We are very fortunate that we are living at a time when AMMA (Sri Mata Amritanandamayi Devi) is living on this Earth. She says very often, through Her songs and Satsang, “The Creator and the Creation are one and the same”. Today, I shall try to connect some scientific findings with this statement, and link science and spirituality with sustainability.



My sources are a book by David C Korten and the works of a renowned Botanist Elisabet Sahtouris. Life first appeared on Earth in the form of bacteria that we find every day in our common use: the *fermenters*. The basic form of energy that is required for all forms of life to survive is one chemical ATP (adenosine triphosphate). The first life form made ATP through the fermentation process.

They were the only forms of life on Earth initially for almost 2 billion years, and they covered all parts of the Earth from the atmosphere, land, water bodies and the sea beds. An existential crisis developed, as there was no food (natural forms of sugar and acids) left. Nature devised yet another life form that depended upon the process of *photosynthesis* to create ATP out of what was left: water, minerals and sunshine. The *fermenters* and the *photo synthesizers* ruled over the Earth for another billion years or so before a second crisis happened. Photo synthesizers were emitting oxygen that was deadly for the fermenters! They had to go under and hide, to save themselves.

This time Nature came up with yet another form of life, the *oxidizers*. They make ATP by burning food with oxygen. They are also called *breathers* because they breathe in air with oxygen for this purpose. They are the most efficient forms of producing ATP. The last phase of evolution resulted from a cooperation between all the three forms of bacteria, and as Sahtouris says, “They all start giving up some of their DNA into the central library of information we call the nucleus of the cell. And what they're forming is the kind of cells that you and I are made of; nucleated cells. And they're the only cells ever invented on the planet after bacterial cells.”



Fundamentally, all forms of life on Earth belong to any one of these three categories. Science also tells us a wonderful fact. The entire upper crust of our Earth is composed of matter that was part of a living organism, *at some time or other in the past*. We all know how coal or petroleum is formed out of dead trees, buried deep within the Earth. It is the same with everything else on the Earth's crust. According to Gaia theory, the entire Earth system is a living entity, of which we are an inextricable part.

Feeling our Earth as a living entity, of which we are an integral part, we stop exploiting Nature and start nurturing all forms of life on it. Spiritual masters have always taught us this principle of essentially being one with the entire Universe, and science is confirming this in its own way.

AMMA says “Science and spirituality are the two sides of the same coin”. The only way to achieve sustainable development is through imbibing spiritual and scientific principles in our day-to-day lives. Let us all join hands to ‘Save life on Earth’.

Source: Elisabet Sahtouris ~ The Miraculous Evolution of Gaia

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