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## pilgrims of the earth...

Satish Kumar, Editor of Resurgence and Director of Programme at Schumacher College believes the earth needs us to commit to life, in the here and now. In Satish's latest book *Earth Pilgrim*, he offers us the wisdom to make each step count.

### Is there a simple way to attain such consciousness?

Walking is a way. When I walk I touch the Earth, and Earth holds the mind of god. When I am walking I have time – I am going slowly. And when I am going slowly, then I am looking around. I can sense the sacred all around me. Life is sacred. Honey bees are sacred. Trees are sacred. Life is sacrificing life to maintain life. That is what makes life sacred. If I am on horseback, or worse in a car or a train, or worst of all in an aeroplane, I see little. I don't connect. But when I am walking I am connected with the Earth, with the air, with the trees, with the sunshine, with the flowers, with the fungi, with the birds, I am connected with the entire universe. There is no dualism, I am completely one with the universe, attuned. This is why pilgrims mostly go on foot.

I walk in nature, not as an escape from the strain and stress of urban life, not for entertainment or sightseeing, not even as a scientist looking at nature as an object of study. I go as a pilgrim for the renewal of my spirit. Walking in nature is my meditation and my prayer. The magnificent trees and majestic hills are my temples and cathedrals. I don't look above the sky

to seek heaven; my heaven is here on Earth. Being one with nature, I am enchanted and enlightened.

As a pilgrim on foot I can observe nature and connect with her on a deeply spiritual level. A tourist takes a picture with a camera; a pilgrim takes a picture with the heart.


### Why do we feel separated, fragmented, and disconnected?

The universe is made of a balance between yin-yang forces, the forces of negative and positive, masculine and feminine, dark and light. When there is a balance between these apparently opposite forces, human societies flourish in a harmonious way. That is what happened with indigenous cultures. There was a balance between yin and yang. For them yin and yang were not opposites, they were complementary.

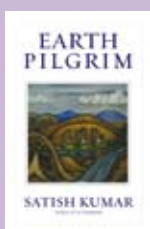
But at certain times in history the human mind saw yang as superior to yin, masculine as superior to feminine, positive as superior to negative, light as superior to darkness, Heaven as superior to Earth. That view is the cause of our crisis. When we pursue one aspect of existence at the expense of the other, we upset the balance

and harmony of our culture and of ourselves. When we pursue certain goals at the expense of balance, we end up dominating other people and nature. We also disturb our inner harmony. This is happening at this moment. We dedicate ourselves to certain goals such as attaining material wealth, financial prosperity and political influence, forgetting about mutual respect, mutual interest, and mutual harmony.



The cause of the crisis, which is manifesting in phenomena like global warming, global poverty, and global conflicts, is rooted in our mind itself. The solutions to global crisis are also rooted in our minds. When we are able to transform our mindset and cultivate a relational worldview, then we can return to a state of equilibrium. 

**Extracts from *Earth Pilgrim* - to be released in October 2009 by Green Books ([www.greenbooks.co.uk](http://www.greenbooks.co.uk))**



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Satish Kumar