Voices of Sisters
Environment
EarthBeat



Guwahati, Assam, India (Unsplash/Bhargav Keot)



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While working in a jungle with an Indigenous girls' empowerment program, I came to realize that if I obey the indispensable rulings and conscience of nature, I will be gifted with liveliness and loveliness. I understand this to mean that nature shows us how to eat in harmony with the environment, which in turn gives us rejuvenating health and radiance.

When I read that this year's Earth Day theme is "Our Power, Our Planet," I spontaneously said to myself, "Wow! Our power." It is my power to celebrate Earth Day as *my* day.

The philosophy of Indian Ayurveda and yoga teaches that the human body is composed of five essential elements: air, earth, ether (space), fire and water. Practically speaking, my body itself is "Earth." With this thought, I felt connected to all planetary beings. Every individual is part of a larger ecosystem, and we coexist as a cosmic community. This connection expanded as I reflected on environmental issues, linking my health to the health of every being.

Celebrating Earth Day as my birthday helps me acknowledge that my personal health crisis mirrors the climate health crisis. Every action I take can influence public health and economic resilience.

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I recalled the "hundredth monkey phenomenon." In the 1950s, scientists observed macaque monkeys on Japan's Koshima Island. A young female monkey began washing her sweet potatoes before eating them. Gradually, her family and playmates adopted the behavior, and over several years, it spread across the island. This story illustrates how one individual's mindful action can become a tipping point for collective change.

Thousands of years ago, our sages taught that we are more than our physical bodies — that our thoughts, intentions and actions carry energy that extends beyond ourselves. Reflecting on this while celebrating Earth Day as my birthday, I realized that every personal action, no matter how small, can ripple outward and contribute to meaningful collective change.

By celebrating Earth Day this way, I realized that nourishment extends beyond physical food. Spiritual nourishment comes from gratitude, forgiveness and loving thoughts. Spending time in nature, or in service to others, feeds the spirit, helping us foster peace and unity. Every mindful action strengthens my consciousness, creating a sense of ease and interconnectedness with the environment.

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Mindfulness is not achieved overnight. It takes practice to know oneself deeply. Observing Earth Day helps me align my living self with the greater interconnected world. This awareness shapes how I eat, think and act, integrating body, mind and spirit. As with the hundredth monkey, small, intentional actions can spark major change. Environmental well-being and human well-being are inseparable.

Ayurveda reminds us, "When diet is wrong, medicine is of no use. When diet is correct, medicine is of no need." The truth is that we can't just change ourselves without changing our diet. If we eat nutrient-poor, unbalanced, processed food, our energy will be drastically reduced to lethargy and dullness. With organic food, our life expectancy will grow leaps and bounds.

Mother Earth is creative, and just as she evolves, every human body and spirit also requires growth — this is part of the very nature of nature. For me, this means my hope and effort must focus on the inner dynamics of my own being. Each day, nature calls me to remain flexible, open to new ideas, and attentive to the subtle promptings of my soul.

By embracing the spiritual dimension of Mother Earth, I am also called to honor the sacredness of every being. Every moment spent in nature expands my mind and soul, reminding me to "enlarge the place of my tent" (Isaiah 54:2).