

## Book Reviews: "[Carbon Dharma](#)" and "[Carbon Yoga](#)" by Sailesh Rao PhD

Reviewed by: Christine McClarnon MADL MScF

"**Carbon Dharma**" and its complementary companion, "**Carbon Yoga**" by Dr. Sailesh Rao PhD, are two of the most solemnly invigorating, yet simultaneously uplifting, motivational books on climate change solutions that I have read recently. These deeply inspiring, compassionately written books belong in the homes of every family or individual who cares about the near future of their offspring, and also the near future of all life forms. The books don't just describe the world's climate and ecological problems and then half-heartedly leave it at that, as many other books on climate change do with their typical concluding lament that "our governments need to do *Something*" without clearly describing exactly what that *Something* is.

Dr. Rao's powerful books offer practical lifestyle solutions, within the capability of every person to undertake in his or her own home and community. No one need wait for politicians or governments to impose changes, we can bring them about ourselves. In this, these two books are extraordinary. Given that each of us can easily bring about personal changes that will, cumulatively, heal our world, these books empower us to, ourselves, bestow the possibility of ongoing life to the future of humanity that no political leaders anywhere have yet been able to, or can, offer or guarantee.

Not only do these two books clearly expose how our daily consumption choices are cumulatively affecting our global environment with the accompanying dire ecological and social catastrophes (including increasing social unrest, large-scale species extinctions, widespread forest fires, and climate refugees who are being displaced worldwide as the polar ice caps melt), they go far beyond that to envision how changes in our consumption habits will help us to pull together and effect a reversal on climate change in this, the last decade where some reversal may still be possible (after which the earth's atmosphere is expected to reach a temperature that will render our climate to become inhospitable to many life forms). These same lifestyle changes can also increase social harmony and personal happiness, and secure a future for our offspring and living systems worldwide. I also appreciate Dr. Rao's spiritual insights, as he shares some ancient yogic and Hindu perspectives that have helped guide his own transition to a lifestyle that strives to markedly reduce harm to others.

While our politicians futilely throw up their hands to what humanity is collectively causing to happen in our atmosphere and the massive species extinctions of non-cultivated wild life forms, thereby dooming us all to the possibility of collective suicide within the lifetime of the next generation, Dr. Rao addresses these issues head on, not by suggesting how to convince our politicians to make policy changes, but rather, in showing us what changes we can make ourselves in our own lives, and thereby, collectively restore hope and a kinder world to the future of our offspring and other living beings. This places us all in co-drivers' seats, and is a practical and achievable solution to the mess that our thoughtless adherence to consumer culture has created.

**"Carbon Dharma: The Occupation of Butterflies"**, the first book, is a metaphor for humanity, describing a state of existence whereby the commercial consumer culture has spread ravenously throughout our shared world, creating systems that powerfully indoctrinate people everywhere to adopt consumer habits that render a systematic pathological obliteration of our world's delicately interconnected ecosystems, wreaking havoc on our oceans and atmosphere. Dr. Rao describes this as a "caterpillar" phase that devours everything in sight, until the hosts (in our case, the earth's natural living systems) eventually die. However, he credits humanity with an ability to learn and overcome this destructive stage, through a metamorphosis into a "butterfly" stage, which will move humanity to forge a co-operative existence, such that our impacts to the earth become minimal and positive, and thus allow our earth's biological systems to heal. The butterfly stage is a necessary transformation to ensure a secure future for younger generations. Without feeling any kind of deprivations, just a different way of living that is less self-interested and more conscious of how we affect others with our daily choices, the lifestyle choices outlined for transformations into butterflies, lead to increased happiness and well-being for humanity throughout the world, and visibly demonstrate to others in our lives that we truly care for their well-being. It is not possible to speak of "love" if our daily choices are harming the future of everyone around us.

**"Carbon Yoga: The Vegan Metamorphosis"**, the second book, complements "Carbon Dharma", and describes a metamorphosis already partly underway in our world; particularly the global movement towards adopting vegan lifestyles, which by definition are structured by each individual person and their communities to cause the least harm to other living beings through compassionate lifestyle choices. Dr. Sailesh Rao very clearly shows how this transformation is inevitable in order to heal the earth and organize an equitable global human society, where all life is valued and sacred, and where all humans tread lightly on each other and all life systems. The current consumerist culture belongs to a ravenous caterpillar stage, whereas the metamorphosis currently underway towards a compassionate vegan paradigm, is part of the healing stage that is necessary to restore degraded ecosystems that we depend on for sustained life. As this metamorphosis progresses, he describes a state of increased and enlightened joy worldwide, as our world heals.

While I recommend purchasing these inexpensive books to support Dr. Rao's beautiful work, he has generously placed them online for free, so that they can be available to everyone. They can be accessed for purchase or download at the "Books" tab at: <http://www.climatehealers.org/>