



CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Bahai



Reflect upon the inner realities of the universe, the secret wisdom involved, the enigmas, the inter-relationships, the rules that govern all. For every part of the universe is connected with every other part by ties that are very powerful and admit of no imbalance, nor any slackening whatever.

Every man of discernment, while walking upon the earth, feeleth indeed abashed, inasmuch as he is fully aware that the thing which is the source of his prosperity, his wealth, his might, his exaltation, his advancement and power is, as ordained by God, the very earth which is trodden beneath the feet of all men. There can be no doubt that whoever is cognizant of this truth, is cleansed and sanctified from all pride, arrogance, and vainglory.

We cannot segregate the human heart from the environment outside us and say that once one of these is reformed everything will be improved. Man is organic with the world. His inner life moulds the environment and is itself also deeply affected by it. The one acts upon the other and every abiding change in the life of man is the result of these mutual reactions.



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Buddhism



There are core Buddhist teachings that would lead a person to have much less of an impact on the environment. For instance, 'Right Intention' teaches one to avoid acting on the intention of desire, ill-will or harmfulness, and instead to act upon their opposites, which are the intentions of renunciation, loving-kindness and harmlessness. Renunciation is an important intention as it implies living simply, being content with little and understanding that following greed and selfish desire only bring suffering. Buddhists take great care not to harm or hurt any living creature.

The Noble Eightfold Path of Buddhism teaches that wisdom and compassion are the ground for ethical action and speech.



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Christianity



St John wrote 'The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.' (John 1:14) Reflecting on this Douglas Moo and Jonathan Moo wrote in 2019, 'The most shocking claim of scripture is that it is this same Jesus, the creator and sustainer of all that exists, who takes on flesh, becoming part of his own creation.' If 'God so loved the world ...' (John 3:16), so should we, living according to our need, not our greed, living more simply that others can simply live and delighting in God's beautiful creation.

Father, Help us to tread your earth lightly, as people Reconciled by God with God, Reconciled by God with one another and Reconciled by God to his wounded planet, Living simply that all may simply live, to the glory of our risen saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ. AMEN (A Coventry themed prayer, 2018 by the Diocesan Environment Officer)



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Hinduism



Hinduism teaches the five great elements (space, air, fire, water and earth) that constitute the environment are derived from Prakriti, the primal energy, the creator. Hindus worship and accept the presence of God in nature.

The whole universe, living and non-living is created by the creator for a purpose. They are interdependent on each other for their care and they are in harmony. Human beings should respects and value nature. Hindus believe that harmony in nature brings peace to human beings.

Protecting and looking after the environment is part of Hindu Dharma, the eternal law of the universe. Hindus refer to the earth as 'Mother Earth' and respect the earth as our own biological mother.



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Humanist



As humanists, we rely on reason and science to make logical decisions and, as defined by our Golden Rule, we do not want to treat anyone in a way that we wouldn't like if done to us. Human happiness is very important for the one life we believe we have.

These humanist principles lead us to believe that climate change is real, that the western world has been the main contributor, and that we should act now to help millions of people around the world who are already being affected by droughts, flooding, storms, heatwaves, and fires which result in famine and loss of homes and livelihoods.



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Islam



One of the most important attributes conferred on human beings is the faculty of reasoning. This, above all, might well be the deciding factor in humanity's appointment by God as His representatives on earth. Here are the relevant verses from the Holy Quran.

In the name of Allah, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful.

**Allah Most Gracious! It is He Who has taught the Qur'an.
He created man. He taught him speech and Intelligence.
The sun and the moon follow courses by precise calculation.**

**And the stars and the trees prostrate in adoration.
And the heaven He raised high and He has set the balance
So establish weight with justice and fall not short in the balance.**

**It is He Who has spread out the earth for His creatures
Therein is fruit and palm trees producing sheathes of dates,
corn with its leaves and stalk for fodder and sweet-smelling plants.
Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny?
(Quran 055.001-013)**

Humans were not created to function exclusively on instinct. The "explanation" was taught to us because we had the capacity to reason and understand. There is order and purpose in the whole pattern of creation. The Sun and Moon following stable orbits make life possible. The stars that enable us to steer courses and the trees that give us sustenance, shelter and other beneficial uses.

The whole universe is in submission to the Creator.

The world will function smoothly so long as creation follows a pre-ordained pattern. Humans then have a responsibility by virtue of being able to reason, to behave justly, to not interfere with the environment unjustly and ensure "to transgress not in the balance."

We owe this to ourselves and our future generations as much as for sustaining the rest of creation.



CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Jainism



One who neglects or disregards the existence of earth, air, fire, water and vegetation, disregards his own existence which is entwined with them - Mahavir -

**All life is bound by mutual support and interdependence...
(If one does not care for nature, one does not care for oneself).
- Tatthvartha Sutra -**



CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Judaism



Bal Tashchit – You shall not destroy. The rabbis extended this principle of not destroying into peacetime too, also not wasting anything, not causing pain.

Tikkum Olam – repairing the world. Careful earth stewardship, taking responsibility for the earth: The responsibilities for both ‘caring and repairing’ the earth are very much expected of the individual as well as the community.

These principles are there in our age-old traditions, but applying them often needs a modern interpretation.



CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Pagans



Pagans believe that the Earth is our mother. Everything we are and everything we have comes from the Earth and we love and venerate her as a goddess whom we know by many names.

We also love and venerate the wider universe – the moon and stars. Pagans understand that we are part of nature and that everything in the universe is connected.

Consequently, our environment should be treated with love and respect. Our festivals are tied to the Wheel of the Year as we celebrate the longest day and the shortest day – and all the days in between that are landmarks in the natural world and our relationship with it (e.g. seedtimes and harvests!)



CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Quakers



Quakers have always had a love of the natural world and a sense of responsibility towards its care. Most early Quakers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries lived in farms or small settlements and knew at first hand their dependence on nature's resources in their own localities. The duty to take care of 'God's creation' and to live in harmony with it in their own contexts would have been very evident to them.

In 1772, John Woolman was already challenging Quakers to be mindful of the needs of future generations:

The produce of the earth is a gift from our gracious creator to the inhabitants, and to impoverish the earth now to support outward greatness appears to be an injury to the succeeding age.

During the 20th century, awareness of the finiteness of the earth's non-renewable resources grew rapidly, as did an understanding of the increasingly significant impact of humanity on the natural world with regard to pollution, depletion of resources, agricultural practices, global warming, and much else. 'Earthcare' became an important and ongoing focus for Quaker witness and continues to be so.

At the international level Quakers continue to pay particular attention to climate change, to sustainable food systems, and to the use of natural resources. Quakers have been active in modern nonviolent direct action campaigning in regard to caring for the environment for many years, locally, nationally and globally.

In Britain Friends have pledged themselves to become a low-carbon sustainable community, and Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) works to develop thinking about sustainability and climate justice, and what a sustainable economy could entail. EcoQuakers in Ireland works on similar issues. Australian and New Zealand Friends are also active on environmental matters. Many groups of Quakers in Africa work locally on sustainable agriculture, and on tree planting schemes to reduce erosion and to absorb carbon dioxide.



CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Sikhism



“Pavan guru, paanee pitha, maathaa dharth mahath” [Ang 8 SGG SJ]
“Air is Guru, Water is the Father and Earth is the Great Mother of all.”

Guru Nanak Dev Ji (the first Sikh Guru) in the above verse refers to the Earth as the Great Mother and also makes it clear in the below verse that the Creator (God) resides within the creation:

“Khaalik Khalak Khalak Mehi Khaalik Poor Rehiou Srab Thaanee” [Ang 1350 SGG SJ]

“The Creation is in the Creator, and the Creator is in the Creation, totally pervading and permeating all places.”

Therefore to realise God is to experience God through the creation and therefore extending love, care and compassion to the creation is a form of spiritual engagement.

The 7th Guru (Guru Har Rai Sahib Ji, pictured above) personified this message by setting up animal sanctuaries for sick animals and herbal gardens to provide free medicines. To celebrate this, Sikhs around the world commemorate Sikh Environment Day on the 14th of March every year by planting trees in our local communities, using organic and low carbon produce for the langar (free kitchen) or taking our children and communities into the countryside and educate others on how we can contribute to the environment.



CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Spiritualist

**“All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is and God the soul.”**

This reminds Spiritualists that God is in effect body and soul that envelops all humankind.

Thus, caring for the environment becomes a way of living meaningfully and respectfully within God’s presence, giving meaning to Spiritualism’s Fifth Principle of Personal Responsibility that inspires us to act in the best interests of the lives we now share with the earth and future lives to come. Resulting from our caring for the earth and all there is, we enable God’s vision of our connection with that one stupendous whole

**We Spiritualists sing,
God of the granite and the rose
Soul of the sparrow and the bee;
The mighty tide of being grows
Through all thy creatures back to Thee.**

**Thus round and round the circle runs
A mighty sea without a shore
While men and angels, stars and suns
unite to praise thee evermore.**



CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Zoroastrianism



Zoroastrians believe that everything God has created is pure and should be treated with love and respect. The role of human beings is to honour not just the Creator but also His Seven Bounteous Creations – the sky, water, earth, plants, animals, human beings and fire. Zoroastrians are expected to care for the environment by avoiding pollution and waste and restoring what has been damaged.