

The Treatment of Animals in World Religions

Islam and animals



Camel train

There is not an animal on earth, nor a bird that flies on its wings, but they are communities like you...

Muslims believe that:

- all living creatures were made by Allah
- Allah loves all animals
- animals exist for the benefit of human beings
- animals must be treated with kindness and compassion

Muslims are instructed to avoid:

- treating animals cruelly
- over-working or over-loading animals
- neglecting animals
- hunting animals for sport
 - hunting for food is permitted if the animals are killed humanely
- cutting the mane or tail of a horse
- animal fighting as a sport
- factory farming

Using animals is permitted

The Qur'an explicitly states that animals can be used for human benefit.

It is God who provided for you all manner of livestock, that you may ride on some of them and from some you may derive your food. And other uses in them for you to satisfy your heart's desires. It is on them, as on ships, that you make your journeys.

Muhammad and animals

There are many stories and sayings of the Prophet (pbuh) that demonstrate his concern for the welfare of animals.

Once someone travelling with the Prophet took some eggs from a nest, causing the mother bird great grief. The Prophet saw this and told the man to return the eggs.

When the Prophet was asked if Allah rewarded acts of charity to animals, he replied: "Yes, there is a reward for acts of charity to every beast alive."

The Prophet said "Whoever kills a sparrow or anything bigger than that without a just cause, Allah will hold him accountable on the Day of Judgment." The Prophet explained that a killing would be for a just cause if it was for food.

Ritual slaughter

Muslim ritual slaughter

Muslims are only allowed to eat meat that has been killed according to Sharia law.

This method of killing is often attacked by animal rights activists as barbaric blood-thirsty ritual slaughter.

Muslims disagree. They say that Islamic law on killing animals is designed to reduce the pain and distress that the animal suffers.

Islamic slaughter rules

These are the rules for Islamic slaughter:

- the slaughterer must be a sane adult Muslim
- the slaughterer must say the name of God before making the cut
 - The name of God is said in order to emphasise the sanctity of life and that the animal is being killed for food with God's consent
- the animal must be killed by cutting the throat with the single continuous back and forth motion of a sharp knife
 - the cut must sever at least three of the trachea, oesophagus, and the two blood vessels on either side of the throat
 - the spinal cord must not be cut
- animals must be well treated before being killed

- animals must not see other animals being killed
- the knife must not be sharpened in the animal's presence
- the knife blade must be free of blemishes that might tear the wound
- the animal must not be in an uncomfortable position
- the animal must be allowed to bleed out

Is this a cruel way to kill an animal?

Some experts say that the animal killed in this way does not suffer if the cut is made quickly and cleanly enough, because it loses consciousness before the brain can perceive any pain.

Other experts disagree and say that the animal remains conscious long enough to feel severe pain.

Pre-stunning to prevent pain

Secular animal slaughter involves pre-stunning animals so that they are unconscious before they are killed. Until recently Muslim law has not permitted pre-stunning.

Muslims feared that pre-stunning might reduce the amount of blood that could drain from the carcass and also because they thought that the animal was sometimes killed by the stunning.

But recently (2004) Masood Khawaja, president of the Halal Food Authority, stated that it was not against halal practice to "immobilise" animals, provided they were not actually killed before their throats are cut.

Halal meat imported to the UK from New Zealand is stunned before slaughter. Masood Khawaja said that this was acceptable to Muslims, provided the religious rites were observed.

It is acceptable as long as the animal is not dead prior to slaughter, all flowing blood has been drained, and a Muslim has done the ritual slaughter.

Experiments on animals

According to Al Hafiz B A Masri, using animals for research may be permitted in Islam. The animals must not suffer pain or mutilation and there must be a good reason for the experiment:

Actions shall be judged according to intention. Any kind of medical treatment of animals and experiments on them becomes ethical and legal or unethical and illegal according to the intention of the person who does it.

Christianity and animals



Lamb

For most of history Christians largely ignored animal suffering.

Christian thinkers believed that human beings were greatly superior to animals. They taught that human beings could treat animals as badly as they wanted to because people had few (if any) moral obligations towards animals.

Modern Christians generally take a much more pro-animal line. They think that any unnecessary mistreatment of animals is both sinful and morally wrong.

The traditional Christian view

When early theologians looked at "nature red in tooth and claw" they concluded that it was a natural law of the universe that animals should be preyed on and eaten by others. This was reflected in their theology.

Christian thinking downgraded animals for three main reasons:

- God had created animals for the use of human beings and human beings were therefore entitled to use them in any way they want
- Animals were distinctively inferior to human beings and were worth little if any moral consideration, because:
 - humans have souls and animals don't
 - humans have reason and animals don't

- Christian thought was heavily human-centric and only considered animals in relation to human beings, and not on their own terms

Animals and saints

Not all leading Christians disparaged animals. Some of the saints demonstrated that virtuous Christians treated animals respectfully and kindly:

- St Antony of Padua preached to fishes
- St Francis of Assisi preached to the birds and became the most popular pro-animal Christian figure
- Cows are protected by St Brigit
- St Columba told his monks to care for a crane
- St Brendan was helped in his voyage by sea monsters

Modern and pro-animal thinking

Modern Christian thinking about animals



Modern Christians believe they are 'stewards'

Modern Christian thinking is largely sympathetic to animals and less willing to accept that there is an unbridgeable gap between animals and human beings.

Although most theologians don't accept that animals have rights, they do acknowledge that some animals display sufficient consciousness and self-awareness to deserve moral consideration.

The growth of the environmental movement has also radically changed Christian ideas about the role human beings play in relation to nature.

Few Christians nowadays think that nature exists to serve humanity, and there is a general acceptance that human dominion over nature should be seen as stewardship and partnership rather than domination and exploitation.

This has significantly softened Christian attitudes to animals.

Animal-friendly Christian thoughts

Here are some of the animal-friendly ideas that modern Christians use when thinking about animals:

- The Bible shows that God made his covenant with animals as well as human beings
- Human and non-human animals have the same origin in God
 - St. Francis of Assisi said that animals "had the same source as himself"
- In God's ideal world human beings live in harmony with animals
 - The Garden of Eden, in which human beings lived in peace and harmony with animals, demonstrates God's ideal world, and the state of affairs that human beings should work towards
 - The prophet Isaiah describes the Kingdom of Heaven as a place where animals and human beings live together in peace
- God has the right to have everything he created treated respectfully - wronging animals is wronging God
- God is not indifferent to anything in his creation
- The example of a loving creator God should lead human beings to act lovingly towards animals
 - Inflicting pain on any living creature is incompatible with living in a Christ-like way
- Animals are weak compared to us - Christ tells us to be kind to them
 - Jesus told human beings to be kind to the weak and helpless
 - In comparison to human beings, animals are often weak and helpless
 - Christians should therefore show compassion to animals
- To love those who cannot love you in the same way is a unique way of acting with generous love.
 - "If you love them that love you, what reward have you?"
- It is a great good to take responsibility for the welfare of others, including animals



Saint Francis

Andrew Linzey

Since an animal's natural life is a gift from God, it follows that God's right is violated when the natural life of his creatures is perverted.

The leading modern Christian writer on animal rights is Andrew Linzey.

Linzey believes God's love is intended "not just for human beings but for all creatures."

Linzey teaches that Christians should treat every sentient animal according to its intrinsic God-given worth, and not according to its usefulness to human beings.

Christians who do this will achieve a far greater spiritual appreciation of the worth of creation.

Andrew Linzey derives his theology of animal rights in several ways, but the one most often quoted involves looking at creation from God's point of view rather than humanity's:

- The universe was created for God, not for humanity
 - Creation exists for God, not for humanity
- God loves all creation
- God put himself into creation, and died for it on the Cross
- Since God cares for all creation so much, human beings should care for all creation too
- Human beings should care for animals, because they are part of God's creation
- Doing wrong to an animal is wronging God by violating his right to have the whole of his creation respected.

Churches' views

What the churches say about animals



Saint Francis

The Anglican view

This resolution from the 1998 Lambeth Conference of the Anglican Church is typical of contemporary Christian thinking about animals:

This conference:

(a) reaffirms the biblical vision of creation according to which: Creation is a web of inter-dependent relationships bound together in the covenant which God the Holy Trinity has established with the whole earth and every living being.

(i) the divine Spirit is sacramentally present in creation, which is therefore to be treated with reverence, respect and gratitude

(ii) human beings are both co-partners with the rest of creation and living bridges between heaven and earth, with responsibility to make personal and corporate sacrifices for the common good of all creation

(iii) the redemptive purpose of God in Jesus Christ extends to the whole of creation.

The Roman Catholic view

The Papal Encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* recognises that animals have both an intrinsic value and a place in God's kingdom.

The Roman Catholic Ethic of Life, if fully accepted, would lead Christians to avoid anything that brings unnecessary suffering or death to animals.

The official position of the Church is contained in a number of sections of the Church's official Catechism (the paragraphing within each section is ours).

373

In God's plan man and woman have the vocation of "subduing" the earth as stewards of God.

This sovereignty is not to be an arbitrary and destructive domination. God calls man and woman, made in the image of the Creator "who loves everything that exists", to share in his providence toward other creatures; hence their responsibility for the world God has entrusted to them.

2415

The seventh commandment enjoins respect for the integrity of creation.

Animals, like plants and inanimate beings, are by nature destined for the common good of past, present, and future humanity.

Use of the mineral, vegetable, and animal resources of the universe cannot be divorced from respect for moral imperatives.

Man's dominion over inanimate and other living beings granted by the Creator is not absolute; it is limited by concern for the quality of life of his neighbour, including generations to come; it requires a religious respect for the integrity of creation.

2416

Animals are God's creatures. He surrounds them with his providential care. By their mere existence they bless him and give him glory.

Thus men owe them kindness. We should recall the gentleness with which saints like St. Francis of Assisi or St. Philip Neri treated animals.

2417

God entrusted animals to the stewardship of those whom he created in his own image. Hence it is legitimate to use animals for food and clothing. They may be domesticated to help man in his work and leisure.

Medical and scientific experimentation on animals is a morally acceptable practice if it remains within reasonable limits and contributes to caring for or saving human lives.

2418

It is contrary to human dignity to cause animals to suffer or die needlessly.

It is likewise unworthy to spend money on them that should as a priority go to the relief of human misery.

One can love animals; one should not direct to them the affection due only to persons.

Some writers have criticised the statements above for being so firmly centred on human beings. Causing animals to suffer needlessly, for example, is described in 2418 as being contrary to human dignity, rather than as being a wrong towards animals.

Why do animals suffer?

Why does God let animals suffer?



Antony of Padua preached to fish

Animal suffering seems at odds with the Christian idea of a loving and powerful God.

After all, if God was all-powerful he could prevent suffering, and if God was perfectly good he would want to prevent suffering.

But animals do suffer on a colossal scale, and as there doesn't seem to be any logical necessity for them to do so Christians have some explaining to do.

This problem of animal suffering is part of the general problem that Christians face in explaining the existence of evil and suffering in God's world.

Theologians and philosophers have tried to deal with animal suffering - here are some of their attempts.

Animals don't feel pain

- Animals don't feel pain
 - Although animals behave as if they feel pain, this behaviour is not accompanied by unpleasant mental states
- Since animals don't feel pain, they don't suffer
- Therefore animal suffering is only apparent and does not conflict with the idea of a loving God.

This argument hasn't found much support, because of the cumulative effect of points like these:

- animals behave in similar ways to human beings when they are hurt
- higher animals have similar neurological structures to humans
- the same points could, with a little adaptation, be used to argue that human beings (other than ourselves) don't feel pain
 - telling others that we're in pain is just more behaviour - it doesn't prove anything

Animal pain isn't as bad as human pain

- Suffering and pain are not the same thing
- Suffering is completely bad
- Pain without suffering, although bad in itself, has good effects:
 - It informs animals of the need to take some action or other
 - It stimulates animals to move away from the source of the pain
- Animals and humans can both experience pain
- Suffering is a more complex phenomenon than pain
 - Pain only requires the ability to perceive physical sensations
 - Transforming pain into suffering requires the ability to think about oneself and one's experiences as well
- Only human beings possess the necessary mental capacity to transform pain into suffering
- Only human beings suffer because of pain
- Animals don't suffer, even though they feel pain
- Since animals don't suffer, the existence of animal pain does not conflict with the idea of a loving God

This argument has not found much support either, because:

- There's little scientific evidence that animals don't suffer
- The abilities deemed necessary for human beings to suffer also provide human beings with ways of dealing with pain. Animals lack these abilities, so their experience of pain may be worse than the human experience - for example:
 - Animals can't 'be comforted'
 - Animals can't understand their pain or set it in context (e.g. they can't see that the pain of having a tooth out is a small price to pay for getting rid of toothache)
 - Animals can't understand that a particular experience of pain is only temporary

- Animals can't think about something else
- Animals can't contemplate heaven as a reward for their present suffering

But the main objection to the argument is that it flies in the face of common-sense, as anyone who has seen the distress of an animal that has lost one of its young will tell you.

Animal pain is a necessary part of being an animal

Some Christians believe this is untrue:

Animal pain is a result of The Fall

- When God created the world, animals did not suffer pain, nor did animals attack or eat one another
- The fall of man corrupted nature and distorted the world
- Animal pain is the result of the corruption of nature

Some theologians have related animal pain to the fall of the angels before the fall of man.

Animals deserve their pain

One ancient theologian regarded animals as beings whose behaviour brought their suffering upon themselves.

Animal pain helps to educate human beings

Animal pain helps human beings understand the bad consequences of certain actions.

Animals will be compensated in the afterlife for pain suffered on earth

Christian theologians have traditionally taught that animals don't have an afterlife, and so will receive no compensation for suffering during their earthly lives.

But modern writers are more compassionate. Keith Ward has written:

If there is any sentient being which suffers pain, that being -- whatever it is and however it is manifested -- must find that pain transfigured by a greater joy

Some writers believe that the compensation of a glorious afterlife is the only thing that can reconcile animal (and human) suffering with the idea of a loving and omnipotent God.

This isn't entirely satisfactory, and it doesn't work for those animals that lack self-awareness and have no memory of what has happened in their lives.

John Hick put it like this:

It is extremely doubtful whether even a zoological paradise, filled with pleasure and devoid of pain, could have any compensatory value in relation to the momentary pangs of creatures who cannot carry their past experience with them in conscious memory

And C.S. Lewis like this:

If the life of a newt is merely a succession of sensations, what should we mean by saying that God may recall to life the newt that died to-day? It would not recognise itself as the same newt.

Historical attitudes

Historical attitudes



Lion

For most of its history Christianity regarded animals without much compassion.

Early Christians regarded human beings as greatly superior to all other animals. After all, human beings were made in the image of God, and God chose human form for his earthly life. Furthermore, God clearly decreed that human beings should have power over non-human animals.

Augustine

Leading thinkers such as Augustine reinforced ideas of animal inferiority, concluding that animals existed entirely for the benefit of humanity.

- Human beings are rational
- Rational beings are entitled to rule irrational beings
- Human beings can tame animals - animals can't tame human beings
- Animals are not rational
- Animals don't even know that they are alive

Aquinas

Thomas Aquinas was equally unconcerned with the welfare of animals.

Aquinas made the following points:

- Animals were created to be used by human beings
- Animals do not have the ability to reason, and are therefore inferior to human beings
- The status of animals is shown by the fact that the punishment for killing someone else's animal is a punishment for misusing that person's property, not for killing the animal

He taught that the universe was a hierarchy with God at the top. Each layer in the hierarchy existed to serve the layers above it. Humanity came above the animals, so animals existed to serve humankind.

Aquinas also reinforced the view that animals didn't have immortal souls.

Barth

In modern times, Karl Barth, the greatest theologian of the 20th century taught that God's choice of human form for his incarnation showed that human beings are more important than non-human animals.

Buddhism and animals

Although Buddhism is an animal-friendly religion, some aspects of the tradition are surprisingly negative about animals.



Buddhists believe souls are reborn as animals because of past misdeeds

The positive

- Buddhists try to do no harm (or as little harm as possible) to animals
- Buddhists try to show loving-kindness to all beings, including animals
- The doctrine of right livelihood teaches Buddhists to avoid any work connected with the killing of animals
- The doctrine of karma teaches that any wrong behaviour will have to be paid for in a future life - so cruel acts to animals should be avoided
- Buddhists treat the lives of human and non-human animals with equal respect

Buddhists see human and non-human animals as closely related:

- both have Buddha-nature
- both have the possibility of becoming perfectly enlightened
- a soul may be reborn either in a human body or in the body of a non-human animal

Buddhists believe that is wrong to hurt or kill animals, because all beings are afraid of injury and death:

All living things fear being beaten with clubs. All living things fear being put to death. Putting oneself in the place of the other, Let no one kill nor cause another to kill.

The negative

Buddhist behaviour towards and thinking about animals is not always positive.

The doctrine of karma implies that souls are reborn as animals because of past misdeeds. Being reborn as an animal is a serious spiritual setback.

Because non-human animals can't engage in conscious acts of self-improvement they can't improve their karmic status, and their souls must continue to be reborn as animals until their bad karma is exhausted. Only when they are reborn as human beings can they resume the quest for nirvana.

This bad karma, and the animal's inability to do much to improve it, led Buddhists in the past to think that non-human animals were inferior to human beings and so were entitled to fewer rights than human beings.

Early Buddhists (but not the Buddha himself) used the idea that animals were spiritually inferior as a justification for the exploitation and mistreatment of animals.

Experimenting on animals

Buddhists say that this is morally wrong if the animal concerned might come to any harm. However, Buddhists also acknowledge the value that animal experiments may have for human health.

So perhaps a Buddhist approach to experiments on animals might require the experimenter to:

- accept the karma of carrying out the experiment
 - the experimenter will acquire bad karma through experimenting on an animal
- experiment only for a good purpose
- experiment only on animals where there is no alternative
- design the experiment to do as little harm as possible
- avoid killing the animal unless it is absolutely necessary
- treat the animals concerned kindly and respectfully

The bad karmic consequences for the experimenter seem to demand a high level of altruistic behaviour in research laboratories.

Buddhism and vegetarianism

Not all Buddhists are vegetarian and the Buddha does not seem to have issued an overall prohibition on meat-eating. The Mahayana tradition was (and is) more strictly vegetarian than other Buddhist traditions.

The early Buddhist monastic code banned monks from eating meat if the animal had been killed specifically to feed them, but otherwise instructed them to eat anything they were given.

Judaism and animals

The way Jews should treat animals is encapsulated in Proverbs 12:10:

The righteous person regards the life of his beast.



Judaism accepts that animals have feelings and relationships

Judaism teaches that animals are part of *God's* creation and should be treated with compassion. Human beings must avoid *tzar baalei chayim* - causing pain to any living creature. *God* himself makes a covenant with the animals, just as he does with humanity.

The Talmud specifically instructs Jews not to cause pain to animals, and there are also several Bible stories which use kindness to animals as a demonstration of the virtues of leading Jewish figures.

Judaism also teaches that it is acceptable to harm or kill animals if that is the only way to fulfil an essential human need.

This is because people take priority over animals, something stated very early in the Bible, where *God* gives human beings the right to control all non-human animals.

Human beings are therefore allowed to use animals for food and clothing - and to provide parchment on which to write the Bible.

And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.

Genesis, the first book of the Bible, states that God has given human beings dominion over all living things. Dominion is interpreted as stewardship - living things are to serve humanity but human beings, as part of their dominion, are required to look after all living creatures.

His tender mercies are over all His creatures

The Bible gives several instructions on animal welfare:

- A person must feed his animals before himself (Deuteronomy 11:15)
- Animals must be allowed to rest on the Sabbath (Ex. 20:10, and Deut 5:14)
- An animal's suffering must be relieved (Deuteronomy 12:4)

Jews are instructed to avoid:

- Severing a limb from a live animal and eating it (Genesis 9:4)
- Killing a cow and her calf on the same day (Leviticus 22:28)
 - This demonstrates that Judaism accepts that animals have powerful family relationships
- Muzzling an animal threshing corn (Deuteronomy 25:4)
- Harnessing an ox and donkey together (Deuteronomy 22:10)

Hunting

Hunting for sport is forbidden, and has been strongly denounced by a number of important rabbis, as has staging animal fights for sport.

The Bible teaches that hunting animals is something shameful. Leviticus (17:13) instructs Jews to pour out the blood of hunted prey and cover it with earth. This teaches that hunters should be ashamed and should hide the evidence of their killing.

Experiments on animals

Jewish teaching allows animal experiments as long both of these conditions are satisfied:

- There is a real possibility of a benefit to human beings
- There is no unnecessary pain involved

Killing animals for food

Jewish slaughter rules

Observant Jews should only eat meat or poultry that has been killed in the approved way, called *shechita*.

This method of killing is often attacked by animal rights activists as barbaric blood-thirsty ritual slaughter.

Jews disagree. They say that Jewish law on killing animals is designed to reduce the pain and distress that the animal suffers.

Shechita is unequivocally humane and it cannot be compromised

These are the rules for Jewish slaughter:

- The slaughterer must be a specially trained Jew called a *shochet*
 - A shochet is trained in the laws of shechita, animal anatomy and pathology, and serves an apprenticeship with an experienced shochet
 - In the UK, a shochet has to have both a religious and a civil licence
- The animal must be killed by cutting the throat with a single stroke from a very sharp instrument called a *chalaf*
 - The cut must sever the trachea, oesophagus, carotid arteries and jugular veins
 - The chalaf must be perfectly sharp and smooth, with no notches or blemishes
- The neck structures must not be torn
- The animal must be allowed to bleed out
- The shochet must inspect the animal afterwards to confirm that the killing was correctly carried out and that the animal did not suffer from any abnormality that would render it unkosher

Is this a cruel way to kill an animal?

Some experts say that the animal killed in this way does not suffer if the cut is made quickly and cleanly enough, because it loses consciousness before the brain can perceive any pain.

Other experts disagree and say that the animal remains conscious long enough to feel severe pain.

Pre-stunning to prevent pain

Secular animal slaughter involves pre-stunning animals so that they are unconscious before they are killed.

Jewish law does not permit pre-stunning because it requires the animal to be uninjured at the time of shechita, and all pre-stunning methods involve an injury to the animal. There is also concern that the pre-stunning might kill the animal, and so render it unfit to eat.

However Jewish experts say that as shechita produces instant loss of consciousness, it incorporates pre-stunning.

Hinduism and animals

Because Hinduism is a term that includes many different although related religious ideas, there is no clear single Hindu view on the right way to treat animals, so what follows are generalisations to which there are exceptions.

The doctrine of ahimsa leads Hindus to treat animals well:



Sacred cows are allowed to wander wherever they like, even through busy traffic

- Most Hindus are vegetarian
 - No Hindu will eat beef
- Butchery and related jobs are restricted to people of low caste
- Most Hindus believe that non-human animals are inferior to human beings

- Cows are sacred to Hindus
- Some Hindu temples keep sacred animals
- Some Hindu gods have animal characteristics
 - Ganesh has the head of an elephant
 - Hanuman takes the form of a monkey

Animal sacrifice

Hinduism permits animal sacrifice.

Cows

The cow is greatly revered by Hindus and is regarded as sacred. Killing cows is banned in India and no Hindu would eat any beef product.

Sikh belief about the environment

Since animals are living beings just as we are, therefore they should be treated with same care as we treat ourselves. Ill treatments of any life form would be a wrong doing. In general there is nothing like special rights of animals in Sikhism, it's just that everybody should be treated without any harm. Although human beings are seen as the most intelligent life form on earth, they are responsible for almost all the **damage** done to the planet.

Sikhism is very concerned with the relationship between humanity and the environment. They believe that Waheguru (God) created the world as a place where every type of plant and animal could live so that all life could have the chance to prove that it was good enough to reach mukti (liberation from the cycle of birth and death, reincarnation).

Guru Nanak taught:

Nature we see
 Nature we hear
 Nature we observe with awe, wonder and joy
 Nature in the nether regions
 Nature in the skies
 Nature in the whole creation...
 Nature in species, kinds, colours
 Nature in life forms
 Nature in good deeds
 Nature in pride and in ego
 Nature in air, water and fire
 Nature in the soil of the earth
 All nature is yours, O powerful Creator
 You command it, observe it and pervade within it.
 (Guru Granth Sahib)

The lives of the Gurus are full of stories of their love for nature. Sikhs are forbidden to kill for the sake of killing or to eat to excess.

In Sikh hymns Waheguru is said to be the provider of all life. There is no difference between the world of humans and the world of nature. Both of these are equally important and must be treated with respect.

The Gurus have strongly made us aware of our responsibility towards this earth.

Guru Granth Sahib

Sikhs believe that the environment can only be preserved if the balance created by Waheguru is maintained.

- Since the beginning of the Sikh religion in the late fifteenth century, the faith has been built upon the message of the 'oneness of Creation'. Sikhism believes an almighty God created the universe. He himself is the creator and master of all forms of the universe, responsible for all modes of nature and all elements of the world. Sikhism firmly believes God to be the source of the birth, life and death of all things.
- Sikhism teaches that the natural environment and the survival of all life forms are closely linked in the rhythm of nature. The history of the Gurus is full of stories of their love and special relationship with the natural environment-, with animals, birds, vegetation, earth, rivers, mountains and the sky. There is also a very strong vegetation tradition.
- It is for this reason that in Sikhism those who kill for lust of hunting, eating or to make sacrifices are condemned. In Sikh hymns God is often referred to as the provider for all life which God loves and is loved by. God as both father and mother guarantees equality to man and woman in faith and compassion towards all beings and nature.