



Faiths and the Environment Digest

CIWEM's Faith and Environment Network: *"Putting belief systems at the heart of environmental policy and action"*



CIWEM recognises the important contribution that the faiths community can have on influencing behavioural change for the greater good and calls for the cooperation of faith leaders and groups to engage in collective action to protect our planet.

This digest provides a brief introduction to the views of faith groups on the environment and references some of their environmental teachings. It has been compiled with the help of the CIWEM Faith and Environment Network and is also based on the work of WWF and ARC (Alliance of Religions and Conservation) that asked the major faith groupsⁱ to provide a statement on their scriptures, teachings, and traditions on their views of nature.

Featured in the digest are the following faiths:

- Baha'i
- Buddhism
- Christianity
- Daoism
- Hinduism
- Islam
- Jainism
- Judaism
- Sikhism

Islam, Christianity and Judaism all share a belief in a single creator God; and humankind's appointment as stewards who rule with responsibility over the rest of creation. In contrast other religions originating on the Indian sub-continent such as Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism have a more flexible belief in the number of Gods (from none to many) but believe that all that living things - including plants and animals as well as humans - are potentially divine.

ⁱ The institutions that took part were the Muslim World League, the World Jewish Congress, the Franciscan Orders, World Council of Churches, Orthodox Churches and the Baha'i International Community. The Dalai Lama and Dr. Karan Singh represented Buddhism and Hinduism. Sikh scholars in the United Kingdom were consulted. The original statements can be found in Martin Palmer's Book Faith in Conservation.

Baha'iⁱ

The Baha'i faith promotes a worldview that is neither biocentricⁱⁱ or anthropocentricⁱⁱⁱ, but rather theocentric, with the Revelations of God at its centre. Humankind, as it strives to carry out the Divine Will in the physical realm, is thus the trustee or steward of nature.

While nature is greatly valued and respected, it is not to be worshipped or adopted. Scientific pursuits are highly praised when guided by spiritual principles, especially moderation and humility. Baha'is believe that only a spiritually based civilization in which science and religion work in harmony, will be able to "preserve the ecological balance of the earth, foster stability in the human population, and advance both the material and the spiritual wellbeing of all peoples and nations"².

Baha'i teachings on the environment

Baha'u'llah enjoins His followers to develop a sense of world citizenship and a commitment to stewardship of the earth. His writings are filled with a deep respect for the natural world and for the interconnectedness of all things. Baha'u'llah also teaches moderation, a commitment to justice, and detachment from the things of this world.

Baha'i principles guiding their approach to conservation include that:

- Nature reflects the qualities and attributes of God and should, therefore, be greatly respected and cherished.
- All things are interconnected and flourish according to the law of reciprocity.
- The oneness of humanity is the fundamental spiritual and social truth shaping our age.
- Nature reflects the qualities and attributes of God.

Baha'is have been promised by Baha'u'llah that civilization will exist on this planet for a minimum of 5,000 centuries and this makes it unconscionable for them to ignore the long-term impact of decisions made today. They aim to make use of the Earth's natural resources, both renewable and non-renewable, in a manner that ensures sustainability into the distant reaches of time.

Baha'i scriptures

Baha'i scriptures describe nature as an emanation of God's will:

"Nature in its essence is the embodiment of My Name, the Maker, the Creator. His manifestations are diversified by varying causes, and in this diversity there are signs for men of discernment. Nature is God's Will and is its expression in and through the contingent world."

"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 molds 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."

ⁱⁱ A political or ethical point of view which extends inherent value to non-human species, ecosystems, and processes in nature with human beings a part of that ecosystem and not superior to it.

ⁱⁱⁱ A political or ethical stance where human beings may regard themselves as the central and most significant entities in the universe.

Baha'i scriptures teach that, as trustees of the planet's vast resources and biological diversity, humanity must seek to protect the "heritage [of] future generations";

Buddhism

All Buddhist teachings and practice come under the heading of Dharma, which means Truth and the path to Truth. All outer and inner phenomena, the mind and its surrounding environment, are understood to be inseparable and interdependent.

In order to protect the environment Buddhists believe they must protect themselves. Protecting themselves is achieved by opposing selfishness with generosity, ignorance with wisdom, and hatred with loving kindness. Selflessness, mindfulness, compassion, and wisdom are the essence of Buddhism. Mindfulness and clear comprehension are at the heart of Buddhist meditation³.

Buddhist ideals⁴

The relationship between Buddhist ideals and the natural world can be explored within three contexts:

1. Nature as teacher

Buddha used examples from nature to teach. In his stories the plant and animal worlds are treated as part of Buddhist inheritance, even as part of themselves. Buddha taught that respect for life and the natural world is essential.

Buddhists are taught to appreciate the natural cycle of life. In this universe of energies, everything affects everything else. Nature is an ecosystem in which trees affect climate, the soil, and the animals, just as the climate affects the trees, the soil, the animals, and so on. The ocean, the sky, the air are all interrelated and interdependent- water is life and air is life.

2. Nature as a spiritual force

The Buddha taught that the balance of nature is achieved by the functions of the forest. Survival of the forest is vital to the survival of natural harmony, balance, morality, and environment. Buddhist teachers and masters have constantly reminded of the importance of living in tune with nature, to respect all life, to make time for meditation practice, to live simply and use nature as a spiritual force. Buddha stressed the four boundless qualities: loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy (delight in the well-being of others), and equanimity (impartiality).

3. Nature as a way of life.

The Buddha commended frugality as a virtue in its own right. Buddhism advocates a simple, gentle, nonaggressive attitude toward nature-reverence for all forms of nature must be cultivated. By living simply one can be in harmony with other creatures and learn to appreciate the interconnectedness of all that lives. Buddhists believe in the ability to enjoy without possessing, and mutually benefit each other without manipulation.

Buddhist teachings on the environment

Many Buddhist monks such as His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh, Venerable Kim Teng, and Venerable Phra Phrachak emphasise the natural relationship between deep ecology and Buddhism⁵.

In the words of Maha Ghosananda: "When we respect the environment, then nature will be good to us. When our hearts are good, then the sky will be good to us. The trees are like our mother and father, they feed us, nourish us, and provide us with everything; the fruit, leaves, the branches, the trunk. They give us food and satisfy many of our needs. So we spread the Dharma (truth) of protecting ourselves and protecting our environment, which is the Dharma of the Buddha."

Krishnamurti said: "'We are the world, the world is us.'" By starting to look at ourselves and the lives we are living we may come to appreciate that the real solution to the environmental crisis begins with us. Craving and greed only bring unhappiness-simplicity, moderation, and the middle way bring liberation and hence equanimity and happiness. Our demands for material possessions can never be satisfied-we will always need to acquire more, there is not enough in the universe to truly satisfy us and give us complete satisfaction and contentment, and no government can fulfil all our desires for security"⁶.



Christianity

The Christian faith recognises caring for God's earth and all of creation as a key responsibility. Christian teaching includes addressing the relationships within God's creation that have gone wrong such as environmental degradation, and working towards justice and good stewardship of the earth as envisaged in the Bible. There are many Christian organisations which promote environmental protection.

Biblical passages on the environment

The Bible gives a vision of hope in God's faithfulness to creation, a call to practise love and justice to our human and non-human neighbours, and a warning of God's judgement on those who fail to do so.

Psalms 24 begins: 'The earth is the Lord's and everything in it' and there are many other references to the overall rule of God on earth as it is in heaven. The first chapter of the Bible deals with God as the creator and that what God saw was very good, with the role of humans to care for it as stewards (Genesis 2 v15). Humans are to care for the earth because it belongs to God and he told us to care for it. But throughout time, humans have failed in this responsibility. Prophets, before the coming of Jesus, saw disobedience to God as a direct cause of the impoverishment of the land and its creatures. Jeremiah, for example, warned against oppression of the poor by the rich and prophesied judgement with ecological dimensions such as the fruitful land becoming a desert (Jeremiah 4 v 24-26). God spoke these warnings through the prophets to bring his people back to a loving relationship with himself and all creation. But when these failed, God sent his only son, Jesus, to restore his creation to the place it should be (harmony, peace and justice) (Colossians 1 v 20) and that whosoever believes in him should have life in its fullness (John 3 v16).

Jesus tells us to love God with all our hearts, souls and minds and to love our neighbours as ourselves (Mark 12 v 29-31). He reminds his disciples of God's concern for birds and the likes (Matthew 6) and that where humans have neglected their responsibilities; God's judgement will rest (Matthew 25 v 41-46). Jesus says that heaven is God's throne and earth is his footstool (Matthew 5 v 34-35); Christians must respect and cherish the earth because of this. St Paul says that we know that the whole of creation has been groaning, awaiting Christ's redemption and that this is the basis of Christian hope (Romans 8 v 22-25). Jesus calls his followers to show particular concern for the poor and to release captives – to free the earth from oppression of exploitation, ignorance and plunder (Luke 4 v18-19, Matthew 25 v 3 and 41).

The overall biblical narrative is of God creating the universe, God in Jesus Christ bringing reconciliation to a world gone astray (including environmental degradation) and God's promised redemption of all things in Christ and through his Spirit, leading to the remaking, reshaping and renewal of creation.

Christian environmental teachings and practice

Jesus gave Christians a clear injunction to be responsible and just stewards until his return. We have a responsibility first to God to look after creation, not as we please but as God requires, and secondly to the rest of creation as ones who stand here for God. The Church of England

has five marks of mission (action) for the church of which one is 'to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth', alongside other actions which include responding to human need and raising awareness of Jesus.

In 2009, Pope Benedict XVI linked care for the natural world to the social development of people, including teachings on matters such as globalization, environmental degradation and population growth. He stated: "The Church has a responsibility towards creation and she must defend not only the earth, water and air as gifts of creation that belong to everyone; she must above all protect mankind from self-destruction."

Some non-conformists (Baptists, Methodists and the United Reformed church) have called for Christians to live in ways consistent with sustainability, for repentance – acknowledging what we've done wrong environmentally - for churches to take urgent action and reduce their own environmental footprint, to encourage lifestyle changes of its congregations, and to campaign for policy changes at local and national level. Many climate change action groups are led by Christians including Operation Noah and supported by many Christian charities such as Tear Fund and Christian Aid.

Christians are taught to take wise actions (Romans 6, v 1-2). Their hope in God gives them a reason for bold action in the world, in accordance with God's will, and not an excuse for inaction. For centuries, they have led campaigns against injustice in the world e.g. slavery, apartheid. Environmental degradation and climate change is already affecting the poor and most vulnerable in the world, which gives an additional reason for Christians to act (as well as being just stewards). The World Council of Churches has an active environmental group seeking to influence at an international level. Charities have been set up by Christians with conservation aims internationally, such as A Rocha, and these have set-up schemes to encourage local churches to become 'Eco-congregations'. The Church of England has a programme to 'shrink its footprint' and has already made big reductions.

Christians recognise that a change of attitudes – hearts and minds, are needed to develop communities capable changing their lifestyles and behaviour. We need an economy which meets our needs and the needs of others, human and non-human, to be able to 'till the garden and to care for it'. The key to change is deep in the human spirit with individuals recognising the need to be accountable to God and his creation, out of a motivation of love. We are called to live simply, as Jesus did, and as Bishop James Jones said at a recent CIWEM dinner, we need spiritual revival now to make real differences environmentally.



Daoism⁷

Daoism looks upon humanity as the most intelligent and creative entity in the universe (which is seen as encompassing humanity, Heaven, and Earth within the Dao). Daoism has its own outlook on the universe, human life, ideals of virtue, and ultimate purpose. Due to its distinctive cultural and historical background, it has its own striking characteristics. It can be briefly summarized in the following two precepts:

1. Give respect to the Dao above everything else.

Dao simply means "the way." Daoism considers that Dao is the origin of everything, and Dao is the ultimate aim of all Daoists. Dao is the way of Heaven, Earth, and Humanity. Daoists are taught to be very plain and modest, and not to struggle with others for personal gain in their material life.

2. Give great value to life.

Daoism pursues immortality. It regards life as the most valuable thing. They believe that life is not controlled by Heaven, but by human beings themselves. People can prolong life through meditation and exercise but a peaceful and harmonious natural environment is an important external condition.

Daoist teachings on the environment

In Daoism, everything is composed of two opposite forces known as Yin and Yang. The two forces are in constant struggle within everything and this indicates the importance of harmony in nature.

In the Dao De Jing, the basic classic of Daoism, there is this verse: "Humanity follows the Earth, the Earth follows Heaven, Heaven follows the Dao, and the Dao follows what is natural." This teaches Daoists that the best course of action is taking no action in relation to nature and to let nature be itself.

There are generally two kinds of attitude toward the treatment of nature. One attitude (as is said in another classic of Daoism, Bao Pu Zi written in the fourth century A.D.) is to make full use of nature; the other is to observe and follow nature's way. Those who have only a superficial understanding of the relationship between humanity and nature will recklessly exploit it but those who have a deep understanding of the relationship will treat nature well and learn from it.

Daoists believe that people should take into full consideration the limits of nature's sustaining power, so that when they pursue their own development, they have a correct standard of success. Furthermore, insatiable human desire will lead to the overexploitation of natural resources, so Daoists believe that to be too successful is to be on the path to defeat.

Daoism has a unique sense of value in that it judges affluence by the number of different species. This view encourages both government and people to take good care of nature and biodiversity.

Hinduism⁸

According to Hindu philosophy, the goal of human life is the realisation of the state of peace. Dharma, loosely translated as religion, is the source by which peace can be fully realised.

Hindus believe that it is through ignorance that we destroy our relationships in the family and within the environment that ignorance is the cause of suffering. Traditional Hindu education covers the economic, political, cultural and religious aspects of life.

Hinduism is a religion that is very near to nature. It asks its followers to see God in every object in the Universe. Worship of God in air, water, fire, Sun, Moon, Stars, and Earth is specially recommended⁹.

Hindu principles on the environment

Earth as a Mother – Hindus revere the Earth as a mother and as she provides food and shelter, without her they cannot survive. As her children Hindus must take care of her in order for her to take care of them. Hindu's believe that by exploiting the Earth, nature has to defend herself and this is why we see events such as droughts, floods and hurricanes.

Non-violence – God's creation is sacred and therefore humanity does not have the right to destroy what it cannot create.

Kinship exists between all forms of life and reincarnation warns Hindus against treating lower forms of life with cruelty. The protection of cows symbolises the human responsibility to the sub-human world.

Sacrifice – “With sacrifice you will nourish the gods, and the gods will nourish you. Thus you will obtain the Highest Good” (Bhagavad Gita 3:10-11). Sacrifice does not just mean ritual worship, it means an act that protects life.

Hindu teachings

According to Hindu religion, "dharanath dharma ucyate" - that which sustains all species of life and helps to maintain harmonious relationship among them is dharma and that which disturbs such ecology is adharma.

“Everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord. One should therefore accept only those things necessary for himself, which are set aside as his quota, and one should not accept other things, knowing well to whom they belong” - *Sri Isopanshad*, Mantra 1.

"*Conserve ecology or perish*" is the message of the Bhagavad Gita, a dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna. The ecological cycle is explained in verses 3:14-16 where life is sustained by food which is brought about by rainfall, the timely movement of rains is helped by religious sacrifice, these rituals belong only to God; God is revealed by the Vedas; the Vedas are preserved by the human mind; and the human mind is nourished by food. This is the cycle that helps the existence of all forms of life on this globe.

Islam¹⁰

There are five major aims (*maqasid*) of the Shariah: protection of religion ('deen'), life ('nafs'), mind ('aql'), offspring ('nasl'), and property ('ma'al'). Ultimately, environmental degradation will end the opportunity to live, to own property, to get offspring, and to be religious. Environment protection thus encompasses the aims of the Shariah. This is illustrated by some 750 verses in the Qur'an that exhort believers to reflect on nature, to study the relationship between living organisms and their environment, to make the best use of reason and to maintain the balance and proportion God has built into the Creation.

Islamic teachings on the environment

Islam teaches that God created the Earth, and has given humans a certain amount of control over the environment, as well as custodianship of it. God has also given Muslims the intellectual capacity to harness the power of nature, and asserted the moral superiority of man over other creations.

The story in the Hadith of Muhammad and the River is a powerful story that Muslims use to teach about respect for the Environment. Muhammad washes in the river with a little bowl of water rather than using the whole river to wash saying that just because there is plenty we do not have the right to waste or take more than we really need¹¹.

The month-long fast of Ramadan has for centuries been a time when Muslims reflect on their relationship to God and their reliance on His bounty¹².

Islamic principles and scripture

The Islamic view on the environmental balance is explained by the following guiding principles. Taken separately there is not an obvious connection with the environment but together they proclaim the protection of creation.

- *Tawheed* - the fundamental confirmation of the oneness of the Creator and of the interdependence of the natural order of which humanity is an intrinsic part. Qur'an References: (Q 112:1-4) (Q 40:57).
- Man's relationship to God – A Muslim's relationship to Allah is total, to Him and Him only should humans refer for all their needs¹³ (Q 6:71-3).
- To Allah belongs the Earth and the Heavens (Q4:171).
- Man and *Khalifa* – Allah made humans as a *Khalifa* or guardian of the Earth. The planet was inherited by all humankind and all its posterity from generation to generation. No one generation has the right to pollute the planet or consume its natural resources in a manner that leaves for posterity a planet that is denuded of its resources or polluted. Obligation to practice *Khalifa* has led to *Himá* – areas set aside for the protection of natural capital.
- Mizaan – (Q55:001-013) There is order and purpose in the whole of creation. Creation follows a pre-ordained pattern and man must behave justly and not transgress this balance.
- Justice – Q 4:85 "Whoever recommends and helps a good cause becomes a partner therein: and whoever recommends and helps an evil cause shares in its burden: and Allah has power over all things". This concept of justice encompasses intergenerational justice implies that one shouldn't compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

- Use but do not abuse - Q 7:31 "...eat and drink: but waste not by excess for Allah loves not the wasters" Nature is provided for human nourishment but excess is strictly forbidden.
- *Fitra* – Q30:03 – teaches that humanity is an integral part of the environment and that no change should be wrought on the work of Allah.
- *Amanah* – Allah has given trust to mankind (Q 33:72) which must be used according to the wish of the creator of the trust. The consequence of violating the trust is attested in the Qur'an by the frequent recounting of the histories of the people of Ad and Thamud.

Jainism

The ultimate aim of life for a Jain is to emancipate the soul from the cycle of birth and death attaining Nirvana. Jains believe that to attain the higher stages of personal development, lay people must adhere to the three jewels (ratna-traya), namely, enlightened worldview, true knowledge, and conduct based on enlightened worldview and true knowledge. They must endeavour to fulfil the anuvratas (small vows)¹⁴. These include non-violence, truthfulness, not stealing, chastity and non-materialism.

Jain principles on the environment

Jainism is fundamentally a religion of ecology. All life (plants, animals, rivers and forests) is sacred and has intrinsic value. Jainism and Buddhism became champions of nonviolence not only to human beings but also to nature. Jains will not do any large scale farming using tractors, machinery or fertilisers. They are always vegetarian¹⁵.

Anekantavada (non-one-sidedness) – no one single perspective can contain the whole truth and Jains should take into account the viewpoints of other species, communities and nations.

Loka (the universe) – Jains believe that everything within the universe is eternal although their forms may be transient. Humans have a duty to promote universal well-being.

Judaism

At the heart of Jewish teaching is "God is One" – that there is a unity in the plurality of things, people and creatures. Life and consciousness are one¹⁶.

Jewish legal sources contain environmental issues such as the protection against odours, smoke, pollution of air and water, and damage to the natural landscape. These are based upon scripture and various commandments. The development of these principles continues in the post-biblical legal discourse of the Mishnah, Talmud, codes, and responses¹⁷.

In addition to various legal categories with implications for protection of the environment, both biblical law and subsequent legislation contain regulations aimed directly at environmental issues. Some of these restrict the rights of the individual in relation to his environment, while others, on the contrary, extend his rights by permitting use of the public

domain for personal needs. Special regulations were enacted for Jerusalem because of the city's unique status¹⁸. A person can be held responsible not only for causing direct damage to the environment, but also for creating circumstances that lead to damage¹⁹.

Jewish teachings on the environment

The Jewish attitude to nature is derived from a belief that the entire universe is the work of the Creator. Nature and all its beauty have been created for humanity and therefore it is wrong to degrade it. Jews must be mindful of not altering creation (Lev 19:19). There is a presumption to avoid the extinction of any animal as everything created was created for a purpose.

The story of the "one who threw stones into the public domain" teaches Jews that the "public" and "private" domain are not necessarily the same as "mine" and "not mine" and of the obligation to protect the public domain. Jews are commanded to not to spoil public areas but to improve and perfect them.

Protecting human health and the diversity of life is a value emphasised in Torah, Talmud, and rabbinic literature throughout the ages. Many mitzvot (commandments) found in the Bible and laws found in the Talmud instruct Jews to protect what the Jewish tradition views as "God's creation":

- *Bal tashchit* (do not waste) teaches Jews to conserve resources. The commandment prohibits Jews from the destruction of anything from which humans may benefit (Deut. 20:19).
- *Shiluach ha-keyn* (chasing away the mother bird) teaches Jews to safeguard all species.
- The idea of conservation may be found in the biblical institution of the sabbatical year *Shmita* (Lev. 25:1-5) as one of the goals of ceasing all agricultural activity is to improve and strengthen the land. It teaches that economic justice and ecological sustainability are intimately related.
- *Shabbat* reminds Jews that they are but one strand in the web of creation²⁰.

Jewish passages on the environment

The rationale for humanity's obligation to protect nature may be found in the biblical expression, "For the earth is Mine" (Lev. 25:23)²¹.

"Love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev. 19:18) not only relates between fellow men but also for man's treatment of plants, animals and inanimate elements of nature. When discussing the environment Jews must also remember that the environment includes the people living within in it – individuals and community. Jews must maintain the proper balance between protection of the environment and protection of humanity²².

Judaism's central statement of faith, the Shema, recited twice per day, includes a sentence (Deuteronomy 11:16-17), which says clearly: "Take care that your heart is not deceived and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, for if you do, God's anger will be turned against you and God will shut up the heavens and there will be no rain and the land will not produce her fruits and you will quickly perish from the good land which God has given to you".

Sikhism²³

Guru Nanak laid the foundation of Sikhism in the late fifteenth century. He and his successors during their lifetime worked toward creating an ideal society that has as its basis spiritual awareness and ethical integrity. The ideal for Sikhism is a society based upon mutual respect and cooperation which provides an optimal atmosphere for individuals to grow spiritually.

For a Sikh every decision in life has to be based on rationality and a personal code of ethics. Guru Nanak's philosophy of values inspires the individual to transcend his/her existence through this spiritual discipline. Sikhs following a highly disciplined life are capable of further spiritual transgression. In a higher spiritual state Sikhs are motivated by an intense desire to do good. A true Sikh works for individual human rights, the environment, and justice for all.

The Sikh view is that spirit and matter are not antagonistic. Guru Nanak declared that the spirit is the only reality and matter is only a form of spirit. The chasm between the material and the spiritual is in the minds of humans only.

It is difficult to translate certain Sikh concepts accurately. Hukam is one such concept. It may be best described as a combination of God's will, order, and system. The solution to problems manifest in our world lies in prayer and in accepting God's Hukam.

Sikh views on the environment

Life, for its very existence and nurturing, depends upon a bounteous nature. A human being needs to derive sustenance from the earth and not deplete, exhaust, pollute, burn, or destroy it. Sikhs believe that an awareness of that sacred relationship between humans and the environment is necessary for the health of our planet and for our survival.

Guru Nanak in his philosophy states that the reality that humans create around themselves is a reflection of their inner state. The current instability of the natural system of the earth is only a reflection of the instability and pain within humans. The increasing barrenness of the earth's terrain is a reflection of the emptiness within humans.

The material world is God's creation though God alone knows the reasons for, the extent of and the moment of Earth's creation. All parts of the Universe are holy and God is within each element of creation. Sikhs believe a concern for the environment is part of an integrated approach to life and nature. Becoming one and being in harmony with God implies that humans endeavour to live in harmony with all of God's creation.

Sikhs should be renouncers of plenty and maintain a simple life. Sikhism teaches against a life of wasteful consumption.

Sikhs believe that environmental concerns should be treated with an integrated approach that incorporates social justice. Sikhs believe in equality in society.

The Sikh scripture, Guru Granth Sahib, declares that the purpose of human beings is to achieve a blissful state and to be in harmony with the earth and all creation: "That which is inside a person, the same is outside; nothing else exists. By divine prompting look upon all existence as one and undifferentiated; the same light penetrates all existence. (599)"

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Chartered Institution of Water and
Environmental Management

15 John Street
London
WC1N 2EB
Telephone: 020 7831 3110
Web: <http://www.ciwem.org/>
Fax: 020 7405 4967

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CIWEM:

- Supports thousands of members worldwide
- Powerful evidence-based lobbying force within the UK and abroad
- Provides training and professional development opportunities
- Provides a forum for debate through conferences, events and publications
- Works with governments, international organisations, NGOs, creative organisations and faith groups for a holistic approach to environmental issues
- Develops partnerships with like minded organisations across the world
- Supplies independent advice to governments, academics, the media and the general public
- Brings members from all over the world together under common policy issues
- Directly inputs into European and UN policy developments
- Promotes excellence in environmental management through an awards portfolio
- The first chartered professional body to have its Environmental Management System (EMS) accredited to ISO14001 standard, demonstrating our commitment to continuous improvement