

Religious teachings

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Baha'i

The Bahá'í Writings state: *"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."*¹

Buddhist Shanghai

We are living on a planet where the environment is deteriorating, and where many of the natural resources are increasingly being stretched. This is often seen as an external issue, but in the Buddhist teaching 境由心造 (translated as "our habitat is created by our hearts") it is taught that our environment is *caused* by the "shared action" or "karma" of humankind.

Following from this teaching, Buddhism believes that the only way to begin changing our existing environment, is to change our inner mind. But how can people's minds be open to change when they are already lost in the pursuit of high-consumption lifestyles? How can such people's spiritual realm and sense of social responsibility be enhanced? We believe that this is the shared responsibility of the world's Religions and that the Shanghai Buddhist community should also make our own commitment.

Some of the most important elements supporting the building of a more ecologically conscious and harmonious society are the moral and ethical norms of the community. Buddhism can play a very active role in providing this support. Buddhist teachings - covering among other things the ethical codes of service within the community, compassionate lifestyles, the principles of following Nature, advocating simplicity and restraining extravagance, the spiritual realm of peace and purity, and the ecological wisdom of harmony between man and nature - will provide favorable spiritual resources to deal with the current ecological crisis. If the monks, nuns and other staff within the monastery could understand these Buddhist teachings correctly, and bear them in mind, then activities of environment protection could be spiritually ensured.

¹ Shoghi Effendi, Compilations, The Compilation of Compilations vol. I, p. 84.

Christian

Alexandria and All Africa

a) The Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa shares in the sensitivity and concern of those that are anxious about the increase in pollution of the natural environment due to human factors. The Church considers this sin and calls all human beings to repent. There is a tendency to seek out a “new ethic”. For the Orthodox Church, however, the solution to the problem is to be found in the liturgical and Eucharistic life, as well as the ascetic ethos of the Orthodox Tradition.

- a) The Christian ascetic ideal is a radical response to today’s consumerism. This ideal, which is not the sole- privilege of the monks and hermits, but is a duty for all the faithful. Simplicity and frugality open the road for the restoration of the correct relation of man with the world.
- b) In this direction of true repentance of asceticism and frugality, though chiefly for the sanctification and ecclesial embrace of man and the world with the great Mystery of Holy Eucharist at its centre, all who have some kind of pastoral responsibility over the faithful can contribute: archbishops, clergy and lay- theologians, especially confessors, catechism teachers and preachers- with their word as well as with their example.
- c) Immediate priority has to be given to preaching and catechism at all its levels. The theology of Creation, the Orthodox teachings on the concerns of man and the world have to be given emphasis in the ecclesiastical education and teaching.

American Vineyard

Jesus of Nazareth announced the good news of the kingdom of God. He taught about this kingdom with the use of parables likening the kingdom to the created order over which God rules as King. The gospels depict him praying outdoors, with a preference for wild places. The prayer he gave his disciples urges them to pray that this kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.

Jesus and his followers spread a love for the Hebrew Scriptures to the nations. These Scriptures speak of the world as a good creation brought forth by a good God to be stewarded as a sacred treasure. This plan is rooted in the hope that Jesus of Nazareth is the same yesterday, today, and forever and able to influence all whose hearts are open to him.

Care for creation is firmly embedded in the nineteenth century American evangelical tradition; yet this mandate has been buried in the American evangelical landscape by layers of cultural conflict since the early 20th century. This is the nub of the challenge and the opportunity

presented by the emerging evangelical awakening to environmental concern: For the past thirty years the American evangelical community has been a locus of cultural resistance to stewarding the blessings of the creation responsibly. But it is in the very nature of the American evangelical religious experience to rediscover dormant biblical truths and give them practical expression within American society.

Armenian

1) Green Theology: The goal of the project is the introduction of new approaches in the educational processes of the Vaskenyan Theological Seminary. Brand new disciplines were introduced into the educational system of the young clergy of one of the oldest orthodox Churches: they received both theoretical and practical knowledge on ecology and the protection of nature. The objectives of the project are: to promote the education of Green Theology, to understand the importance of protecting the natural environment and to realise the significance of environmentally responsible management through studies and practical work within communities.

The activities of 2007 included three components: training in Green Theology, training of teachers and training in farming practices. The training in Green Theology was introduced in Vazkenyan Seminary. From October 15th until December a course on ecology and nature-protection (22 hours) was delivered to 33 students of Vazkenyan Seminary who were in their 3rd and 4th years of studies. The course was conducted by the professors of Yerevan State University, and was visited by Fr. Minas Martirosyan (Vice Dean of the Seminary), Dr. Dmitri Oikoumene from Oxford University, and two priests from the Russian Orthodox Church.

CBCEW

Wisdom and Guidance

- Re-discover and learn more about those prophets and saints who cared for creation.
- Use the Sacraments as a means to a deeper understanding of our relationship with God through the gifts of nature.
- Promote the theology of creation in all places of learning and formation.
- Promote environmentally sensitive pilgrimages and re-discover ancient routes that deepen our understanding of our past, present and future spiritual relationship with the natural world.

We are very keen to form long term associations with the world of science and conservation to inform our theology and teaching. Working with a scientific understanding of the problems is essential and quintessentially Catholic. We plan to actively engage in more fruitful partnerships.

Celebration in Liturgy

It is easy to forget that the Earth is not a problem but a source of wonder and joy. Surrounded by the despair and depression that accompanies any reporting on the environmental crisis, it is understandable that people feel a sense of foreboding about the future. But Catholicism brings a new voice that sings praises to God for the sheer wonder of the created world and our place in it. Catholicism celebrates our human existence on earth. It teaches that we are meant to be here; we are an integral part of God's plan; we are meant to enjoy creation in all its facets and that creation allows us to learn more about God. The profound hope embodied in Christianity gives us confidence to believe that we can work towards a more just and loving future.

Building more celebration of creation into liturgy and Parish life is a fundamental start to exploring a spiritual approach to nature. The new season of Creation Time (<http://www.ecen.org/cms/index.php?page=creationtime>) is a particularly good time to begin; it encompasses Harvest Festival and St Francis Day. Music, singing, prayer and joyful praise are at the heart of caring for the earth. We suggest that more opportunity is found throughout the year to celebrate the gift of creation and that it becomes an integral part of our liturgy.

Finding Joy in the Natural World

"I lift up my eyes to the mountains; where is my help to come from?

My help comes from God who made heaven and earth."

Psalm 121

Direct experience of the natural world is part of embodying celebration into our lives and we encourage parishes to experience their local environment as part of creating change. No church or community exists in isolation, it is embedded in the natural environment that surrounds it and nuanced by the history of an area.

As part of a long term plan we encourage all to celebrate local beauty, diversity, challenges and connections. This can be done throughout the year so that seasonal changes are celebrated. These experiences could take the form of a nature walk through a local beauty spot with a guide, experiencing the dawn or evening chorus, arranging a visit to see the spectacles of nature in the local area and many other ideas.

This is particularly important as we enter 2010, the UN International Year of Biodiversity. We can contribute to protecting other life on earth through celebrating and protecting our local places and by supporting organisations that are striving to protect them.

Many of our church grounds could be enhanced by planting wildlife friendly plants, shrubs and trees; each place of worship could become a haven for all of life and inspire the local community to follow our example.

CAFOD's liturgical and worship materials can be seen in the following link:

<http://www.cafod.org.uk/worship/environment>

“One could say that by being in contact with nature we absorb into our own human existence the very mystery of creation which reveals itself to us through untold wealth and variety of visible beings, and which at the same time is always beckoning us towards what is hidden and invisible.” Pope John Paul II Apostolic Letter 1985

Catholic Coalition on Climate Change

1. **Theology and Pastoral Plans and Programs:** to what degree have our seminaries and formation programs integrated care for Creation as a part of the training of religious men and women? How deeply rooted is the theology of stewardship and creation care in our tradition?
 - Seminaries: Working with NCEA’s Seminary division, the Coalition will begin discussions about seminary curricula and seek to include more explicit programming about care of creation and environmental justice.
 - Pastor Support: The Coalition will work closely with the National Federation of Priests Councils (an umbrella organization of clusters of parishes in the same geographical area) to encourage their support of the Covenant initiative, to share best practices among parishes, and provide resources for liturgy and parish programs.

The Coalition will begin discussions with national organizations that serve the continuing education needs of priests, deacons, and lay ministers.

- Scholars’ Conferences: The Coalition will sponsor two high-level scholars conferences within the next seven years to highlight and expand the evolving theology of stewardship and care for creation. Every effort will be made to have media coverage of these events to ensure that key themes and ideas are shared more broadly within the larger Catholic community in the U.S. and abroad.

2. **Celebration:** how well are we highlighting the themes of stewardship and care for creation in our liturgies and feast days and what new initiatives might we consider to help the Catholic community better understand a reverence for Creation and the Creator? How can we more effectively draw the link between care for creation and care for poor people in our liturgical life?

- Liturgical Commissions and Organizations: the Coalition will encourage national liturgical organizations to become key Coalition members and encourage their full participation in our activities, including the development of prayers, homily suggestions, and specific ways to integrate the themes of stewardship and creation into our liturgical life.

Church of Norway

The climate threat requires action. This item's documents demonstrate that within the church of Norway there is now increased support for environmental concern. But we have not come far enough. We are looking for new measures that can bring us forward. We seek a spiritual language that may offer renewal and give the church power to continue and expand its involvement for the environment. We rejoice in the multitude of important contributions from various theological and spiritual traditions. We remember the General Synod 1996 resolution - shaped as a liturgy, and the placard "The Cry from a Wounded Earth". This year's Youth Synod gave us important impulses under the topic "ecological faith" (UKM 04-2007). The Bishops have recently underlined the same in a brief and crisp document summarised in "It is urgent, it costs, it works" (BM-26/07).

The committee has concluded that there is need for a new and profound *reform* in our church, to clarify the church's task faced with these challenges. We need long-term thinking and action now. The committee sees that inspiration may be sought from two important on-going reform processes in the church, the reform of religious education and the liturgy reform. At the same time the contents of this sustainability reform must be reflected in the other reforms. In the liturgy we receive new strength to lift threatened life up to God; in religious education we must pass this on to children and young people. There is a similarity also in that these are central processes which over time will cause visible changes in the church as such.

The practical and economic sides of the matter have not been looked into properly yet, but as documented by the status report, there is already much knowledge, considerable experience and a clear involvement for this in the church. Many tools are in place and relations and networks have been established. Central processes and steering documents, as e.g. the liturgy reform, the reform of religious education, the communication platform and the Church of Norway strategy plan all mention the issue.

Church of England

The Christian scriptures and theological thought place repeated emphasis on the goodness of God's creation. Our vision of creation and humankind's role in it is a large one – at the same time requiring both recognition of our shared plight, and commitment to working for and with God in the process of „repairing“ that creation – knitting together and making whole what has been tragically sundered and marred, to be partakers of transformation and redemption.

The basis in our beliefs for action is plain. Christians are called to respect God's creation, and to model the life of Christ. The environmental challenges facing us are daunting, but a faithful Christian response recognises the hope there is in Christ and his work, and the joy inherent in a way of life that liberates us from the relentless pursuit of consumption for its own ends, and enables us to live lives of „shalom“, or full human flourishing.

We are to live in the hope and joy of what God, in Christ, has done for „all things . The lifestyle which Christian discipleship demands in these times is a radical one: of delight in frugality, „less is more , moving with the rhythms of the week and of the seasons. We must re-order our „aschaesis – the force of habit and daily use. We should be filled with the Spirit of God in worship and in the Eucharist, practising transforming prayer.

Moreover, the climate crisis is at heart a question of global justice. There can be no just and lasting solutions to the environmental challenges we all face that are not based on concern for the poor and vulnerable, and on recognition of the need for those of us blessed with wealth to live within our world 's ecological means, and to ensure that all can share in a decent life on God 's earth.

As disciples of Christ, we are to practise kindness and mercy, to love our neighbour as ourselves, to do justice and to walk humbly with our God. We are called also to discern what it means in our times to follow this path – loving God, caring for neighbours and strangers, and acting as shepherds and humble stewards of his creation.

The Gospel demands that we regard as our neighbours, in our own time, our fellow human beings all over the world; in generations to come, those whose environments and prospects are being shaped by our actions now, or have been already in the past – even though they remain strangers to us; and not just other human beings but all our fellow creatures, whose fates are linked to our own.

Yet, as set forth in this and following sections, the Church now has a substantial body of theological thinking and faithful action on which to draw in preparing plans for the next decade, a crucial one in the efforts to mitigate climate change and adjust economies, societies and technological development into sustainable patterns.

The Diocese 's Environmental Group promotes awareness, understanding and projects in the area and offers a forum in which theological study can take place alongside and through the development of projects in the community. The Group has produced a „*Praying for the Earth* book of prayers and publishes a newsletter for Christians in Newcastle and Northumberland, „*Renewing Creation* .

an essay by Bishop Tom Wright on the theology of the environment, contributed to the „*Green Bible* published by HarperCollins in 2008;

Wakefield

The diocesan website contains a theological statement on the reasons for concern about the environment and climate change, encouragement to parishes to take part in „Eco-congregation“, and a range of other practical help and resources.

Exeter

- Innovative work is also being pursued in relation to environmental theology – the theology of „transition“ to a more sustainable society and economy.

StF will seek to reflect Anglican thinking in church publications and the *Shrinking the Footprint* website, and to encourage study on „eco-theology“ at all levels of the Church.

Church of South India

1. EDUCATION

The Church of South India is the only Church in India with a special wing for environmental concerns. Hence we can use the official platform of the Church to educate the Clergy and laity on eco-theology

1. WISDOM AND PASTORAL CARE

The General Secretary, Rev. Mosses Jayakumar, in his inaugural address to the CSI Synod Ecological Concerns Committee in August 2008 reminded those gathered that creation is God's gift. Hence a human being has no authority to pollute this earth. Christians should have a concern for other life forms in this earth. Actions in this area include:

* **Seeing Climate Change as a Moral Issue:** The CSI Synod Ecological Concerns Committee has been alerting all the Dioceses to recognize climate change as a moral issue. It is important for us to encourage members of our congregations to take action to limit their contributions to climate change as an expression of their faith. We are called to encourage one another and build up each other. (1 Thessalonians).

* **Setting up Creation-awareness centres:** Each Green congregation should see itself as a centre for exploring the scriptural and theological foundations for caring for Creation. We also will learn from people suffering the severe impact of environmental degradation. Churches should seek to develop as creation-awareness centres in order to exemplify principles of stewardship for their members and communities, and to express both delight in and care for creation in their

worship and celebration. They should particularly aim to produce curricula and programs which encourage knowledge and care of creation. The Christian community must initiate and support the process of education (for all its members) on the Christian approach to environmental ethics. When all the congregations in a Diocese become Green Parishes it will become a Green Diocese, and when all the Dioceses become Green Dioceses it will become a Green Church. The CSI Synod Board of Ecological Concerns urges 21 Dioceses to become Green Dioceses.

*** Laying the Scriptural and theological basis for congregational actions.** This can provide an exciting study with the entire church and School, though the Eco-Management Committee may want to lead it.

*** Forming special study groups** or task forces around specific environmental issues, Bible study, or theological concerns

*** Reporting of Ecological Activities of the Diocese for self-reflection and improvement**

*** Encouraging prayers and liturgies which include God's Earth** and people working to protect biodiversity.

Diocesan Action on Theological Wisdom

Madras diocese Eco-Study circle in every first Tuesday of the month

Karimnagar Diocese Eco-awareness programmes for youth , clergy, and women.

Dornakkal Diocese Seminars at Diocesan and Congregational levels.

Medak Diocese conducting awareness programmes to pastors and heads of institutions, eco-clubs will be started in schools, support governments programmes, prepare charts, banners, slogans, street plays, etc.

Nandyal Strengthen eco-committees, Eco-awareness programs for pastors and clergy

Karnataka Northern Diocese Formation Ecological committee, creating awareness among the Church members and school students

Karnataka Southern Diocese Boosting awareness through literature, Ecological Sunday Seminars, special orders of Worship

Madhya Kerala Diocese has organised a deputation of environmentalists to all the parishes to deliver sermons on Ecological Sunday

Environmental problems are more spiritual than technological. God calls us to confess and repent of attitudes which devalue creation. Forgetting that "the earth is the Lord's," we have often simply used creation and forgotten our responsibility to care for it. Our actions and attitudes toward the earth need to proceed from the center of our faith, and be rooted in the fullness of God's revelation in Christ and the Scriptures. We seek carefully to learn all that the Bible tells us about the Creator, creation, and the human task. In our life and words we declare that full good news for all creation which is still waiting "with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God," (Rom.8:19)

The CSI Synod Ecological Concerns Committee has been focusing on Eco-theological education.. We call on all our members to affirm the biblical faith, and to seek ways of living out eco-principles in their personal lives, their churches, and society. Let the Ecological Resource persons training camp may be a turning point in the ministry of CSI.

Let us work together for a Green Church

Presbyterian Church of Ghana

The church is always ready to act beyond the pulpit and reach the congregations at the grassroots with the climate change message. The theme of climate change needs to be integrated into our worship, liturgy, preaching and also integrated into the curricula of our theological institutions.

Jesuits

The Lauriston Jesuit Centre in Edinburgh, United Kingdom, has been running a series of talks on the environment throughout 2009.¹⁵

At the Jesuit-run Gregorian University in Rome, two courses on ecology are being taught in the faculty of theology in 2009-2010: .“La crisi ecologica corrente: le dimensioni morali implicate.” (The Moral Dimensions of the Current Ecological Crisis).” (by Prem Xalxo SJ) and .“The Fields of Creation, Grace and Redemption.” (by Gerry Whelan SJ).

Al Fritsch SJ in the United States is running a website with daily reflections on the environment and simple living¹⁷ that has had 16 million visitors since it started in 2004. Also in the United States, Joseph Carver SJ (Berkeley) is currently developing a Licentiate of Sacred Theology (STL) course on .“Ignatian Spirituality and Ecology.”. Joseph Carver SJ and John Braverman SJ have written an .“Ecological Examen.”

Polish Orthodox

3. Series of presentations/several hours course on environmental protection, sustained development and possibilities of conservation run regularly for all students of Orthodox Theological Seminary in Warsaw may help to promote simpler lifestyle, deepen their knowledge on Orthodox *ecothology*.

3. More intense reflection on elements of *ecothology* in worship of the Orthodox Church may be supported by ceremonies of:

- traditional seasonal blessing of farmlands,
- blessing of water,
- blessing of bread, wine, rain of wheat and oil (gr. *artoklasia*) and
- Eucharist as liturgical manifestation of human care for natural environment entrusted to people by God.

We will attempt to cause revival of traditional spring/autumn farmlands blessing in all countryside parishes and more often blessing of water and *artoklasia* in all parishes.

ROAR

- November 7, 2007 Conference “Listening to Earth and Making Earth-friendly Decisions Regarding Land Use” facilitated by Sisters Margaret Galiardi, OP and Pat Siemen, OP. Invitations were sent to those in religious leadership, parish ministries, land stewardship and concerned about a sustainable future. Conference introduced Resource Book and offered theological reflections and practical applications around land use issues experienced by participants;

Lutheran Church of Tanzania

- To ensure a place for environment conservation education in the curricula in theological colleges, Church schools and colleges as well as in faith classes for children prior to confirmation.

Pastoral care	1. There is officially little or no space in the Pastors’ agenda regarding environmental conservation. Theology and Environment remain disjoint.	1. Introduce the lesson on environment in theological colleges 2. Conduct crash seminars for serving pastors on issues of environmental conservation 3. Pastors to constantly remind Christians and communities of their responsibility to protect God’s creation; More so on the event of thanks-giving following the harvest.
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Daoist

The great Daoist sage Laozi said: “I have Three Treasures, which I hold fast and watch over closely: the first is kindness, the second is simple living and the third is not to presume oneself to be the chief of the whole world” (chapter 67 of *Dao De Jing*).

In Daoist temples we will continue the tradition of simple and energy-saving lifestyles. We will also promote this kind of lifestyle to visitors and pilgrims, through Daoist concepts of simplicity and thrift.

Hindu

Scriptural research

As the Hindu community begins to engage in environmental action, the theological and philosophical basis for doing so needs to be outlined. Such a foundation will highlight the relationship between the Earth, the individual, and the Supreme from a Hindu perspective.

It will help provide guiding principles on how to care for the environment and fuel creativity in ecological projects. This research will be led by the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies, engaging eminent scholars and researchers.

This research will establish a bibliography of work already available and will also specifically research stories, passages and quotations from Indian scriptures and literature that discuss issues of environmental concern.

Over the course of the next year we will see the first findings of this research and will publish it on our website.

For the first year of the Temple Garden Scheme we will assess resources and current practice in temples. We will also develop, based on the Scriptural Research project, a Hindu perspective on gardening. The second year will see this work published in a handbook for temples and partnering with key organisations. By the third year we hope to create a network of temples that promote good practice and to hold a national Temple Garden Awareness Week. In years four–six, devotees will be encouraged to develop their gardens at home and grow their own produce. By year nine we wish to display a Temple Garden at garden shows, such as the Chelsea Flower Show.

Interfaith

Operation Noah

Operation Noah has produced a number of liturgical and theological resources for church leaders and communities, key among which are:

Between the Flood and the Rainbow - A Study Guide on Climate Change based upon key themes in Catholic Social Teaching. It is intended for study and reflection by adult groups. The guide contains agendas for six meetings with accompanying appendices, reflection and action sheets, reading sheets, plus a "prayers and liturgies" section.

Climate Change and Creation: An Operation Noah Briefing on the Theology of Climate Change – this paper by Operation Noah campaign strategist Mark Dowd looks at the Biblical narrative and the case it makes for taking care of God's creation - and by extension, taking action on climate change. It is intended for use by clergy, teachers, Bible study leaders and anyone else who will find such a resource useful.

Church Action Starter Pack – the pack contains the above resources along with recommendations for taking action, and resources for children.

1. We aim to steadily increase our theological and liturgical resources for church communities, broadening their content and take-up by congregations. Our intention is that Operation Noah supporters will introduce our theological and liturgical texts and resources to their church leaders, delivering the message that now is the time to consciously reconnect faith with the fundamentals of ecology, sustainability and care.

Interfaith Power and Light

The word "regeneration" has personal, biological and institutional significance. It is the process of spiritual, moral and ecological renewal. We seek to make a practical link between spiritual and ecological health. TRP envisions that people of faith will serve as the foundation for a national movement that addresses ecological issues from theological roots. Our purpose, therefore, is to expand and deepen this link between religious faith and action, particularly in regards to environmental protection.

Strengthen the message of why a religious response to global warming is important and broaden the understanding of the role that the IPL campaign plays

Commentary: IPL recognizes its potential to speak to a very broad constituency -

the 65% of the American public who are members of a religious congregation. 2 In order to build our name recognition and appeal to that diverse population we will strive to maintain a voice that is both theological in nature and interfaith in scope. We will tap our grassroots leadership to recruit spokespersons from a diverse cross section of the faith community, and to implement practical programs that embody our shared values.

GreenFaith US

Goal 1: Develop on-line or distance education capacity for ordained leaders

The vast majority of US clergy still graduate from seminary without any eco-theological education, which prevents them from providing leadership in ways that they are uniquely able to offer. Clergy who do not understand the basis for environmental care as presented in sacred and theological writings will not be able to serve as strong environmental leaders.

GreenFaith has developed experience conducting education for ordained leaders in the areas of Bible, theology, sermons, and religious education. During the coming three years, we will develop the capacity to conduct effective educational programming for lay and ordained leaders using electronic technology, and through writing and public speaking. These programs will educate and equip clergy to function as effective teachers and public speakers on the environment.

Jewish

The religious imperative for environmentalism should be rooted in central tenets of Jewish tradition.

The Jewish conversation on the environment should focus on the connection of central concepts of Judaism, like Halakha⁴ and Shabbat⁵, to the Earth and environmental sustainability in addition to some of the practices that were historically more marginal to Jewish life like bal tashchit⁶ and tu b'shvat⁷. This dual-strategy can broaden the popular appeal of the concepts and assure resonance across diverse people. We need to recover and restore the knowledge of how core Jewish beliefs and practices teach us to live in harmonious interconnectedness with the physical world. The tenets are discussed in detail in the Theology, Tradition and Wisdom section.

■ General Jewish Values that support Sustainability

● ***Pikuach Nefesh, Saving life:***

Climate change is a serious threat to human life. Already, climate change has contributed to increased fatalities through droughts and floods. Over the coming century it is projected to threaten the lives of tens of millions. Through the archetypal commandment to build a protective parapet around your house, the Torah commands us to take scrupulous precautions to protect and save human life. (Deuteronomy 22:8)

...The Torah commands us to take scrupulous precautions to protect and save human life.

● ***T'chum Shabbat and New Urbanism:***

Traditional Jewish communities have always been compactly organized. The prohibition against traveling and walking more than 2000 *amot* (about 1000 meters) beyond the city limits on Shabbat makes it essential for observant Jews to live within walking distance of key institutions: school, synagogue, *mikveh* (ritual bath) etc. This is a powerful model for the New Urbanism which seeks to build compact, green, walkable cities to reduce suburban sprawl and emissions from transport.

Theology, Tradition and Wisdom

What We Have: Jewish Theology, Tradition and Wisdom

In the multi-faceted Jewish world, there are diverse understandings of Jewish theology, law and practice. The task of articulating a Jewish environmental ethic that speaks across denominational differences is therefore challenging. It requires drawing upon commitments and vocabulary that are shared by as many contemporary Jews as possible.

We define four categories of environmental resources in the Jewish tradition.

- Theology
- Central practices – everyday practice that should either be seen in a new light or remembered in its original context
- Traditional Practices that directly address our relationship to the natural world
- General Jewish Values that support sustainability

Theology

The first two chapters of Genesis, arguably the most central and well-known of Jewish texts, teach a creation theology that provides a strong grounding for environmental responsibility. We learn there that, according to the Torah, Creation is good and reflects the plan of a Divine consciousness, diversity in creation is to be cherished, and human beings are charged with the responsibility of actively maintaining and conserving life on earth.

These chapters of Genesis have been frequently cited by writers on Jewish ecology to show that we are God's caretakers for the earth. Our job is to cultivate the natural world and enhance its capacity to support life. God created Adam and placed him in the Garden of Eden "to work it and conserve it." (Genesis 2:15.)

An often-quoted midrash says: When God created Adam, God led him around all of the trees in the Garden of Eden. God told him, "See how beautiful and praiseworthy are all of my works. Everything I have created has been created for your sake. Think of this and do not corrupt the world; for if you corrupt it, there will be no one to set it right after you." (Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:13.)

See how beautiful and praiseworthy are all of my works... Do not corrupt the world; for if you corrupt it, there will be no one to set it right after you.

Destroying the conditions on Earth for life as know it violates this duty of stewardship. It is from these beginnings that Judaism has evolved the notion of a religious responsibility for humans to care for creation.

Central practices

Some of the central practices of Jewish tradition relate to cherishing and protecting the natural environment. Often they are hidden in plain sight in the daily rituals that define Judaism.

Shabbat:

We need to recover the ecological value of Shabbat as a day to step back from the act of creation: manufacturing, shopping, flying, driving, and technological manipulation. The ability to set limits on human exploitation of the world is a crucial check on environmental destruction which Jewish tradition possesses, and which the global consumer culture generally lacks. For Jews who currently observe Shabbat, their observance can lead to a deeper sense of Shabbat's ecological significance. For Jews who do not currently keep Shabbat in a *halakhic* sense, there is an opportunity to explore aspects of Shabbat observance, as an ecological value.

For the broader global community, the model of Shabbat is useful in demonstrating how to live – if only for one day a week – without consuming. For example, if every resident in a major city chose one day of the week to refrain from driving, there would be immediate improvement to the city's congestion, local air quality, and carbon emissions.

● **Kashrut:**

We need to recover the ecological value of *kashrut*. Judaism has evolved a detailed system of laws governing what is fit for us to eat. While some of the original reasons for the *kashrut* laws are today opaque, it is clear that part of the motivation was to cause the animals that we eat the minimum of suffering, (see e.g. Maimonides Guide of the Perplexed, Book 3, Chapter 48) and to treat them with a dignity that recognized our interconnectedness with them.

Today, our understanding of *kashrut*—what is fit for Jews to eat—should be challenged to expand. The system of food production contributes between 25% and 37% of all United States greenhouse gas emissions. Eating is the one thing we all do that has the most far-reaching, negative ecological consequences.

Kashrut can consider whether produce that is grown at the cost of huge ecological damage, food that travels thousands of miles to reach us, factory farmed animals that are raised in great cruelty are fit to eat. We seek to build upon, paradoxically, also to move beyond the concept of eco-*kashrut* that was coined in the 1970s. "Eco-*kashrut*" suggests that the ecological destructiveness of our food choices is a fringe concern lying outside the purview of mainstream *kashrut* itself. Today we need to question this notion. The often destructive nature of industrial food production challenges both ordinary Jews and *halakhic* decision makers to consider whether and how *kashrut* should take account of these new realities.

● **Berakhot:**

Blessings are the tradition's way of enabling us to express gratitude. The blessings can be understood and practiced as a system of engendering mindfulness towards the gifts of Creation. When someone says a food blessing they pause to consider the origin of the food item to identify whether it grew on a tree, in the ground or in the sea. It is but a small step to extend that moment of awareness to reflecting on the circumstances under which the food was grown, whether in a way that nurtured the earth, or harmed it, whether in a manner that respected the creature that is about to be consumed. In that way, nurturing awareness can lead to change.

● **Shema:**

The *Shema* is the best known of Jewish prayers. It bears profound ecological meanings. The first line is an affirmation of the unity and interconnectedness of all things (Deuteronomy, 6:4). The second paragraph is a statement that if we live well in relation to our natural environment, our surroundings will treat us well and vice versa. (Deuteronomy 11:14-17). Although these passages have particularly Jewish significance, and in an era of global climate change, they clearly have universal ecological lessons to teach as well. These aspects need to be re-emphasized and taught.

■ Traditional Practices for the Natural World

● ***Shmita:***

Shmita (Sabbatical Year) is the practice of letting the land rest one year in every seven. During the *Shmita* Year, as described by the Bible, agricultural work in Israel stops. People eat whatever grows on its own in the fields, and everyone, rich and poor alike (and animals too) may come and take from its produce. *Shmita* acknowledges that the Earth is not raw material to be exploited for profit with maximum efficiency, but is a gift to be used for the common well-being.

In Israel, *Shmita* is practiced (though in an attenuated form) to this day. In the US, *Shmita* Project, a program of Hazon and Jewish Farm School, has begun the work of reapplying *Shmita* in a post-industrial world. The biblical practices of *Shmita* addressed both people's relationship to the land – through not planting – and to each other – through the forgiveness of loans. We should develop new means of honoring both.

● ***Bal Tashchit:***

Wasteful misuse of the world's resources. The prohibition is found in Deuteronomy (20:19-20), "When in your war against a city you have to besiege it for a long time in order to capture it, you must not destroy (*bal tashchit*) its fruit trees... You may eat of them but you must not destroy the fruit trees." Later Jewish thinkers explained that *bal tashchit* applies to any pointless destruction of resources. We need reconsider and reapply rabbinic sources which teach that consuming more resources than necessary to achieve a particular human purpose may be *bal tashchit*. (E.g. Talmud Shabbat 67a, 140a.)

● **Laws of Neighbors:**

A sophisticated detailed body of Jewish law, *Hilkhos Shekeinim*, laws of neighbors deals with our responsibility for pollution damage that we cause. For example, there is no presumptive right to cause pollution that damages another's health, however long we've been doing it. (Bava Batra 23a) This is relevant to carbon emissions, which the industrialized world has produced for two hundred years without understanding the damage they cause. Today these laws need to be extrapolated from their original local context, in order to provide guidance for our very different, global and interconnected world.

● ***Tza'ar Balei Hayim:***

The Torah prohibits inflicting emotional or physical pain on animals. For example, if on your way, you happen upon a bird's nest in a tree or on the ground, with baby birds or eggs in it, do not take the mother with her young. Drive away the mother and take only the young. "This way you will live a long life." (Deuteronomy 22, 6-7). Nachmanides explains that the crime here is that by catching the mother and young together one is taking a step towards the animal's extinction. This Mitzvah is a directive to preserve biodiversity and not to extinguish natural species. At the current rate, up to 30% of the world's species may be extinguished because of climate change.

■ General Jewish Values that support Sustainability

● **Mitzvah and Halakha:**

The notions of *mitzvah* and *halakha* as self maintained modes of best behavior are profoundly relevant to the environmental challenge of transforming societal behavioral norms. We have all seen the lists of "50 ways you can help save the planet" by changing personal and domestic behavior. Traditional Jews are intimately familiar with the practice of detailed self-discipline in everyday life. We need to bring this wisdom and discipline to the task of sustainable living.

● **Tzedek, Justice:**

The commandment of *tzedek, tzedek, tirdof*, (Deuteronomy 16:20) pursuing justice, pertains to the environment as well. The poor and vulnerable in the U.S.

Pursuing justice means advancing solutions to global sustainable development.

and the world over are disproportionately affected by all forms of environmental degradation. Pursuing justice means advancing solutions to global sustainable development.

● **Brit, Covenant and Our Children:**

The central Jewish concept of Brit, covenant, teaches that the ethical purpose of one's life stretches beyond one's limited existence, both in time and in space. Judaism is a multi-generational project. We lovingly invest in our children. The Talmud teaches, "Whoever teaches their children Torah, it is as if he had taught his children and children's children until the end of all the generations." (Kiddushin 30a) We are each a link in a chain that stretches from Sinai to the end of time. It is immoral for us to ruin the world that our children will inherit, for the sake of our current consumption. Furthermore Brit teaches that we are not just individuals. We are interdependent on all levels, and nowhere is that more manifest than in the environment. The notion of an individual prospering alone is distinctly un-Jewish. We need to reassert that our well being can only be secured collectively.

● **Tikkun Olam:**

Fixing the World, repairing what is broken, has been adopted as a cardinal modern Jewish value. The phrase itself is over 1500 years old, dating back to the "*aleinu*" prayer. Though *Tikkun Olam's* application to social justice and the environment is relatively recent, it has acquired profound resonance in the contemporary Jewish world.

● **Crisis, Adaptation and Hope:**

Judaism has more than once adapted itself to overcome crises that threatened its very continuation. We need to recognize what Jewish tradition can teach about adaptation in the face of impending ecological crisis. Many times, The Jewish People have stared down destruction and emerged with hope. Regardless of our current situation, hope that we can make the world a better place is a basic Jewish value.

Theology, Tradition and Wisdom

Vision for the Next Generation: Theology, Tradition and Wisdom

In the second half of the twentieth century, the tumultuous events of the Shoah (Holocaust) and the foundation of the State of Israel triggered an outpouring of Jewish philosophy and theology that aimed to interpret these unprecedented historical eruptions. Thinkers including Rabbis Joseph Soloveitchik, Abraham Joshua Heschel, Eliezer Berkovitz, Yitz Greenberg, David Hartman, Emil Fackenheim and Avivah Zornberg strove to find meaning in these new circumstances from within the matrix of traditional Jewish sources. In the process they helped engender far-reaching transformations in Jewish identity, affiliation and practice.

Today we argue that a similar investment of Jewish intellectual creativity is required to respond to the dramatic and unprecedented circumstances of the twenty first century ecological crisis. Just as late twentieth century Jewish thought helped Jews interpret and respond to the historical upheavals of the Shoah and the creation of Israel, so too, early twenty first century Jewish thought must do the same for our ecological upheavals. Beginning from the valuable resources identified above, the challenge is to evolve a theological and spiritual worldview which will engender a renewal of Jewish practice that responds to the crisis and orients Jews to the contemporary reality.

Our vision for the next generation is that the Jewish people's best thinkers and scholars will lead a large-scale and concerted effort that responds to the ecological crisis by renewing Jewish theology, spirituality and practice and begins to engender significant changes in consciousness and behavioral norms. By 2015, this effort will have helped place the Jewish People at the forefront of the global drive for sustainability.

Theology, Tradition and Wisdom

Theology, Tradition and Wisdom Goals for Generational Change: September 2015

Based on the vision, the goal for 2015 is to move ecological thought to the center of Jewish theology and practice. Specific goals include:

- Founding a Global Center for Jewish Ecological Thought in Jerusalem.
- Establishing several programs in Jewish Ecological Thought at leading rabbinical schools and University Jewish Studies Departments.
- Formulating a renewed theology and halakhic practice of Shmita.
- Formulating a Creation Theology rooted in an ecological perspective.
- Articulating a philosophy of sustainable consumption for Jewish communities that incorporates a vision of our interconnectedness with the world and all its inhabitants.
- Articulating a Jewish theology of climate change responding to the unprecedented circumstances in which human beings are a significant factor affecting the atmosphere.
- Formulating a theology and ethic of global responsibility that accounts for the fact that all of our actions affect everything in the world for better and worse.
- Renewing and recovering the ecological meaning in central Jewish practices. The task, in many cases, is to remember and revitalize the meaning of insights and teachings which have been forgotten or neglected.
- Stimulating scholars and halakhic decision makers to respond to issues of sustainable consumption and waste of natural resources by using and developing the tools of Jewish Law.

Rabbinic Training

The task of instilling the centrality of ecological concepts in Judaism begins with the rabbinate. We advocate incorporating an environmental leadership component into rabbinical training across the Jewish denominations, as has recently been pioneered by the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in Philadelphia.

This rabbinic training program component should equip rabbis to teach, lead and inspire their communities towards making sustainability central to their mission. It should include in depth study of classical Jewish source that bear on ecology, as well as basic environmental science and policy. Rabbis should be strongly encouraged to engage with and formulate theological and legal positions on environmental issues including environmental justice, e.g. by presenting them with halakhic and public policy questions on issues such as energy efficiency, switching to renewable energy sources and water consumption.

Muslim

Islamic View of Climate Change and how Muslims can help

The Islamic law code underpins the daily lives of Muslims, so the supporters of nature rely on it to prevent abuse of the environment. Despite the availability of texts and teachings and rules in the Islamic literature, the scholars of Islam have been slow to enact environmental laws that are derived from the Holy Qur'an. They are also slow in shaping Islamic environmental jurisprudence. Moreover, they do not include any mention of the environment and climate change in their sermons in mosques.

Qur'an calls for the preservation of nature, the enjoyment of its beauty and the prevention of distortion of the earth, God says in the Qur'an:

"...But do thou good, as Allah has been good to thee, and seek not (occasions for) mischief in the land: for Allah loves not those who do mischief."

It is forbidden to act in a way that corrupts or does any harm to the environment or any of its components such as air or water, whether living or non-living, either directly or indirectly. Islam is not only asks humanity to take responsibility to protect and conserve the environment, it also invites mankind to respect, cherish and enjoy nature. Prophet Mohamed (Peace be upon him) confirmed this sense of concern in the Hadith- Sharif (the Muslim should honor his palm tree as if it is his aunt). As well as in the Hadith-Sharif it says "Mount Uhod loves us and we (the Prophet) love it". More important is the Hadith in which the Prophet says "If anyone of you witnesses the day the world ends and in his hand is a seedling to plant then let him plant it".

There are many components of the environment - plants, animals, soil - which overlap and interact with each other in a complex web of mutual relationships, and any change or damage to any one of these elements leads to a change in the others. Thus, any kind of corruption, such as the destruction of forests by logging or destroying crops and poisoning water, which leads to the elimination of life forms, whether plant or animal, would affect that balance.

We believe that all the creatures in the universe were created in a balanced way and that this reflects the wisdom and creativity of the Creator. Air, water, gas, plants, birds and insects have all been created in proportion, as has the amount of solar radiation reaching the Earth, which controls the atmospheric temperature on the planet. Almighty Allah said: in AL Talaq chapter (divorce) in verse 3:

"...for all things has Allah appointed a due proportion" The entire universe is designed according to a carefully laid plan: the sun and planets, the moon and stars. He says: in the Ar-Rahman (The Merciful) chapter verse 5 "The sun and the moon follow courses (exactly) computed"

Throughout Islamic history, there are examples of care for the environment. Many Muslim scientists and scholars have explained that the issue of Taskhir (harnessing the earth for humankind) does not give humankind the rights or the power to exploit the universe and corrupt it. Taskhir, in fact, constitutes an invitation to discover and invest in the universe and enjoy it and feel its beauty.

Early Muslims understood these meanings, and we can find many models in Islamic civilization, which emphasize how Muslims dealt with the environment. They were the first to invent the idea of recycling and the reuse of material to reduce waste and thus the impact on the environment. The system of lighting and ventilation in the Sulaimaniye Mosque, which was designed by the architect Sinan, is one example of this great heritage.

Shinto

Shintos see themselves as protected by creation. It is the forests and not the buildings that mark the true shrines of Shintoism. The deities are invited to these forests, where they and their environment are protected by the local community, which in turn is protected by the deities. The Shinto plan reflects this theology.

EcoSikh

Each key area finds its roots in Sikh eco-theology and relies on this theology to enable its fruition. By retaining strong roots in our own theology we see the implementation of the EcoSikh Plan as a continuing expression of our faith.

Our rich history of eco-theology should serve as the backbone to the development of our educational curricula.

The EcoSikh website will be compiling theological reflections written by those who participate in EcoSikh in an eco-theology forum. This forum will provide an excellent resource for renewing and evaluating the success of our educational curricula.

Theological story: Guru Nanak and Malik Bhago (adapted from the version on [realsikhism.com](http://www.realsikhism.com/miracles/malik.html); <http://www.realsikhism.com/miracles/malik.html>)

Guru Nanak Dev ji traveled to many places, including Saidpur, now known as Eminabad in the province of Punjab, Pakistan. Even before Guru ji had arrived at Saidpur the word had spread throughout the city that a holy man was going to visit.

When Malik Bhago, the chief of the town, heard of the Guru's arrival he started preparing for the holy man to stay at his home. But Malik Bhago was a corrupt person who had amassed wealth through unfair means, charging extra tax to the poor farmers and taking most of their crop, leaving them hungry. And when Guru Nanak reached Saidpur, he did not go straight to the chief's house. Instead he knocked on the door of a poor carpenter named Lalo, asking him for hospitality. Lalo was joyful, and served Guru ji with the little food that he had and Guru ji would eat the simple offering with love.

News reached Malik Bhago that Guru ji was staying with a poor carpenter, so Malik held a big gathering and invited all the holy men. But Guru ji did not accept his invitation. Malik reacted angrily and ordered two guards to go to Lalo's home to force the Guru to accompany them, and the Guru went as asked.

When Guru ji arrived with the guards, Malik Bhago said to him: "O holy man, I have prepared so many delicious dishes for you, but you are staying with a poor carpenter and eating his dry bread. Why?" And the Guru replied: "I cannot eat your food because it has been made with money sucked unfairly from the poor, while Lalo's bread is bought with his own hard-earned efforts."

This made Malik Bhago furious and he asked the Guru to prove his point. Guru ji then sent for a loaf of bread from Lalo's house. In one hand the Guru held Lalo's bread and in the other that of Malik Bhago's, and he squeezed both. Milk dripped from Lalo's bread but from Malik Bhago's bread came blood. Malik Bhago was shaken by guilt and asked for forgiveness. The Guru asked him to distribute his ill-gotten wealth among the poor and live an honest life. Malik Bhago was re-born with the Guru's blessing.

The story of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the poor carpenter Lalo, and the corrupt chieftain Malik Bhago embodies the principles that may guide our use of assets. Although Malik Bhago is the ruler of Saidpur, Guru Nanak refuses to accept his hospitality because he has amassed his wealth through the exploitation of farmers and their crops. Lalo, on the other hand, is a humble man who earns his money as a carpenter -- a trade that works in harmony with the natural environment and uses its gifts in a sustainable way. Lalo uses his meager assets to provide for Guru Nanak, who is Sikhism's first ecoSikh, and for this he receives the Guru's blessings.

Theological story: Guru Nanak Dev Ji at Jagannath Puri in Orissa

The shabad composed by Guru Nanak Dev Ji at Jagannath Puri in Orissa embodies the principles that guide our education about the environment. Jagannath Puri is a Hindu temple located in

the coastal town of Puri in the state of Orissa. The area is known for its intense religious fervor and festivals even today. Guru Nanak traveled there with Mardana and upon his arrival met a number of worshippers who were using incense and plates and offering flowers as a form of worship. It is here where Guru Nanak composed this shabad that we recite in Sohila Sahib da paat:

raag dhhanaasaree mehalaa 1 ||

*gagan mai thhaal rav cha(n)dh dheepak banae thaarikaa ma(n)ddal janak mothee || dhhoop
malaaanalo pavan chavaro karae sagal banaraae foola(n)th jothee ||1|| kaisee aarathee hoe
|| bhav kha(n)ddanaa thaeree aarathee || aneathaa sabadh vaaja(n)th bhaeree ||1|| rehao
|| sehas thav nain nan nain hehi thohi ko sehas moorath nanaa eaek thuohee || sehas padh
bimal nan eaek padh ga(n)dhh bin sehas thav ga(n)dhh eiv chalath mohee ||2|| sabh mehi joth
joth hai soe || this dhai chaanan sabh mehi chaanan hoe || gur saakhee joth paragatt hoe || jo
this bhaavai s aarathee hoe ||3|| har charan kaval makara(n)dh lobhith mano anadhinuo mohi
aahee piaasaa || kirapaa jal dhaehi naanak saari(n)g ko hoe jaa thae thaerai nae vaasaa
||4||3||*

Raag Dhanaasaree, First Mehla:

*Upon that cosmic plate of the sky, the sun and the moon are the lamps. The stars and their orbs
are the studded pearls. The fragrance of sandalwood in the air is the temple incense, and the
wind is the fan. All the plants of the world are the altar flowers in offering to You, O Luminous
Lord. ||1|| What a beautiful Aartee, lamp-lit worship service this is! O Destroyer of Fear, this is
Your Ceremony of Light. The Unstruck Sound-current of the Shabad is the vibration of the temple
drums. ||1||Pause||You have thousands of eyes, and yet You have no eyes. You have thousands
of forms, and yet You do not have even one. You have thousands of Lotus Feet, and yet You do
not have even one foot. You have no nose, but you have thousands of noses. This Play of Yours
entrances me. ||2|| Amongst all is the Light-You are that Light. By this Illumination, that Light is
radiant within all. Through the Guru's Teachings, the Light shines forth. That which is pleasing to
Him is the lamp-lit worship service. ||3||My mind is enticed by the honey-sweet Lotus Feet of
the Lord. Day and night, I thirst for them. Bestow the Water of Your Mercy upon Nanak, the
thirsty song-bird, so that he may come to dwell in Your Name. ||4||3||*

Theological story: Guru Nanak and Wali Qandhari (adapted from the version on sikhiwiki.org;
http://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Guru_Nanak_and_Wali_Qandhari)

*After travelling through Arabia and many other countries in the summer of 1521, Guru Nanak
and a small party of followers reached a hilly place called Hasan Abdal - which today is in
Pakistan, some fifty kilometres from Rawalpindi. Under a shady tree, Guru Nanak and Bhai
Mardana started reciting Kirtan, as was their normal practice. Slowly, local devotees began to
gather around the Guru, and soon large crowds were gathering regularly. He talked to them
about God and the true path of the holy. He told them the greatness of God and His creations.
More and more people began to gather every day.*

*But on the top of a nearby hill, beside a natural spring, there lived a Muslim priest called Bawa
Wali Qandhari. Some time before he had established a dera, or holy place, at this hill, from which
came water that flowed down to the town, where the people used it for all their needs. There
was no other source of fresh water nearby. Wali Qandhari used this dera to assist people who
followed his faith; and also to punish those who did not.*

*When he saw people gathering around Guru Nanak instead of him, he became jealous, and he
diverted the spring water and stopped it from flowing down to the town. Down in the town the*

people became frustrated. How could they and their cattle live without water? A group of them went to Wali Qandhari and begged him to let the water flow down as before. But the priest replied: "Go to your Guru, the one you visit everyday now and ask him for water." So the people did, and the Guru reassured them: "Don't lose heart. Trust in God. He will not let you die of thirst".

The Guru then asked Bhai Mardana to appeal to Wali Qandhari to release the water, but as soon as Bhai Mardana reached the top of the hill, Wali Qandhari began shouting. "Go back to your Guru and ask him to give water to the people. I will not give you any water."

Guru ji asked Bhai Mardana to try again, but all he got was harsh words and angry comments. He tried a third time: the same story. The people became more worried, but the Guru said again: "Don't lose heart. God is great and merciful. He can make springs flow from wherever He likes. Let us all pray to Him." They all prayed. Then Guru Nanak Dev Ji lifted a stone. And at once, a stream of cool, clean water began to flow from that place.

At the same time, Bawa Wali Qandhari's spring dried up. He was so angry that he pushed a large rock towards the Guru from the top of his hill. For a moment it looked as if the rock would crush the Guru but then the Guru quietly raised his hand and the rock stopped. The Guru's hand was imprinted on the rock. And Bawa Wali Qandhari came down and fell at the Guru's feet. The Guru said to him, "Rise my friend. Live as lovers of God should live. Be kind to all."

The rock with the imprint of the Guru's palm still exists. There is a beautiful Gurdwara at that place called the Panja Sahib Panja means "hand print". Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa, after conquering the Sindh province during the Sikh rule, had the beautiful huge Gurdwara and Sarovar pool built at the site. Many people visit the site and during the hot summer many bathe in the cool waters that God revealed to the Guru and his followers on that day.

The story of Guru Nanak Dev Ji's encounter with Wali Qandhari at Hassan Abdal embodies the principles that may guide our media and advocacy work. As we seek to reach out to others and to form partnerships that will enable us to better our ecological practices we may occasionally be met by resistance, like that demonstrated by Wali Qandhari. However, if our work is true, humble, and in line with Sikh teachings, our message will prevail. Through persistence, patience and love, Guru Nanak was able to change the hearts of the incredulous. We must aspire to live up to this ethic with our outreach efforts.

Theological story: Guru Nanak Dev Ji and Bhai Mardana (adapted from the version on [sikhee.com](http://www.sikhee.com); <http://www.sikhee.com/Guru-Nanak-Dev-Ji-and-Mardana.htm>)

Guru ji and Mardana were very close to each other. Most of the time, he did kirtan with Mardana and his rabarb. There are two stories I would like to share with you:

I am sure everyone heard the story of when Guru Ji disappeared in a river, to meet God. Well, not many people heard about the conversation between Guru Nanak Dev Ji and Bhai Mardana the morning after he reappeared:

Bhai Mardana Ji: You don't love me! Guru Ji: Why, O loved one. I love you the most. Why do you think so?

Bhai Mardana Ji: Because you yourself went to meet God. If you had loved me, you would've

taken me WITH you!

Guru Ji: Well, i didn't take you on purpose. Basically, if I let you come with me to meet God, He would've told us to sing His praises. And after doing so, he would love ur music so much that he'll keep you, and leave me behind in the world. Tell me, how could I have lived longer without you? This is how much Guru Ji loved his rabarbi.

One day, Guru Ji was singing praises of the Almighty, while Mardana was playing his rabarb, as usual. But then, Bhai Mardana Ji played such a musical note in such a way, Guru Ji went into "smadhi" state. This lasted for 22 days with no food and no drink.

After the 22nd day, Bhai Mardana Ji grabbed Guru ji's feet and Guru Ji asked why did you stop playing the rabarb?? Bhai Mardana Ji replied: "Baba Ji, you were feeding on my music and keertan, but what about me? You left me hungry".

"You were reading Banni," Guru Ji said "How could you be hungry?"

"But Guru Ji, i remained hungry for your soft priceless bachans which touch my ears. Glve me a blessing so I can have darshan of your open eyes. Give me one of your pricelss bachans and then I will carry on with the kirtan as long as you like"

The relationship between Bhai Mardana Ji and Guru Nanak Dev Ji was immense! No other example in the world can equal to this.

The relationship between Guru Nanak Dev Ji and Bhai Mardana embodies the principles that guide our eco-twinning program. The sounds of Bhai Mardana's rabarb helped Guru Ji enter states of bliss with Waheguru just as Guru Ji's bachans nourished the soul of Bhai Mardana. They developed a long-lasting relationship of deep respect whose fruits helped share Sikhism with the world.

Theological story: Baba Har Rai Sahib Ji and the Trampled Rose (as told on sikhee.com; <http://www.sikhee.com/Baba-Har-Rai-Sahib-Ji-And-The-Trampled-Rose.htm>)

Satguru Sri Guru Har Gobind Sahib Ji Maharaj, maintained an excellent garden with rare medicinal herbs planted in it. He also had a rare passion for collecting birds and animals that could be tamed and trained. Baba Har Rai Sahib Ji was having his morning stroll in the garden one day, he was reciting Waheguru with each breath he took.

Guru Har Gobind Sahib Ji was also walking in the garden and was coming from the opposite direction to the one Baba Har Rai Sahib Ji was walking on. Seeing a beautiful flower on the ground, Guru Sahib, bent down and picked it up. He then asked, 'Who plucked this lovely rose and left it to be trampled on the ground?'

"It was my fault dear grandfather" said Baba Har Rai Sahib Ji. "My robes got entangled in the plant, and while loosening it, the flower fell on the ground. I should have picked up the flower, I am really sorry grandfather."

"Today", said Satguru Ji, "your robes have caused injury to this tender and beautiful plant out of carelessness, and left it to be trampled under people's feet; someday your paraphernalia, if not kept under restraint and control, may cause injury to innocent people, and in your heedlessness leave them to their fate. Yours Oh dear Grandson are not the robes of coercive authority which can afford to disregard the feelings of others, particularly those who suffer and live silently. Yours are the robes of a dervish, a holy saint, which must shed love, light, compassion, not only on human beings, but even on animals and plants. The more tender and weak a creature of Akaal Purakh, the more love, sympathy and compassion he deserves."

Baba Har Rai Sahib Ji fell at the feet of his beloved Guru and grandfather and sought his forgiveness.

Baba Har Rai Sahib Ji promised his grandfather, that he would in the future never show the slightest heedlessness in his responsibilities towards man, animals and plants. Restraint and self control boundless compassion and charity, were reflected in all his actions and dealings with others throughout Baba Har Rai Sahib Ji's life.

The story of Guru Har Rai Ji and the Trampled Rose expresses a profound call to ecological consciousness. When Guru Har Gobind Ji explains to Baba Har Rai Ji that the Sikhs must come to the defense of all that is vulnerable and protect the well being of plants and animals, he plants the seeds in Baba Har Rai Ji that would lead him to become an eternal defender and caretaker of our natural world. The beauty of this moment and the importance of these teachings may inspire us to celebrate our own relationship with the environment.

Shabad by Guru Nanak Dev Ji in Raag Maajh on Panna 147:

*salok ma 1 || naanak gur sa(n)thokh rukh dhharam ful fal giaan || ras rasiaa hariaa sadhaa
pakai karam dhhiaan || path kae saadh khaadhaa lehai dhaanaa kai sir dhaan ||1||*

Salok, First Mehla: O Nanak, the Guru is the tree of contentment, with flowers of faith, and fruits of spiritual wisdom. Watered with the Lord's Love, it remains forever green; through good deeds and meditation, it ripens. Honor is obtained by eating this tasty dish; of all gifts, this is the greatest gift. ||1||