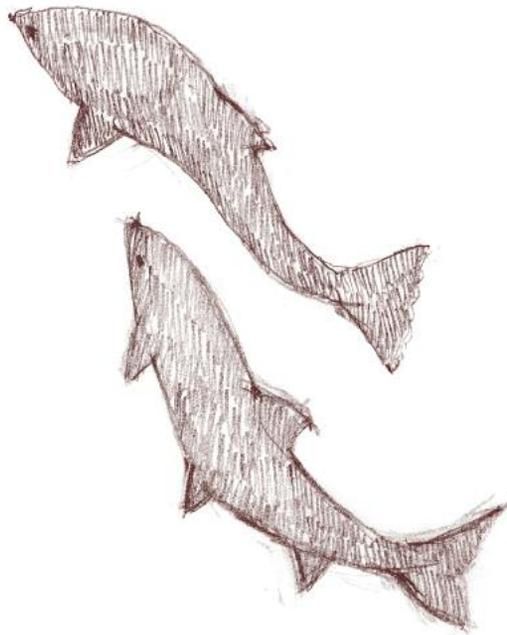


LESSON THREE



RESTORING THE BALANCE

HEARING THE VOICES OF CREATION TEACHER'S PACK
(BACKGROUND TEXTS TO LESSON 3 — SIKHISM AND ISLAM)

EVENING PRAYER (SIKHISM)

In the late 15th century, a visionary arose in India called Guru Nanak. From his search for the God who lies beyond our definitions of Him and our religious dogmas arose the teachings which came to form Sikhism. One day Guru Nanak was asked to offer incense and candles before a shrine. He refused to do so and to explain why, he asked why we, as mere human beings, should even try to make offerings to God with sandalwood and whisks and lamps, when nature itself makes such beautiful natural offerings. The trees are dancing, the flowers are offering incense and the lamps of the sun and moon and stars are celebrating God. This response is now the evening prayer of Sikhism, sung at nightfall in gurdwaras all around the world, and recognized as a Hymn Dedicated to the Environment. Once again, these words are there to remind us of our place within a greater grandeur and ask from us humility.

THE HEAVENS are Your offering tray
The sun and moon Your lamps;
The galaxy of stars are pearls strewn before You.
A mountain filled with sandalwood trees is Your incense stick
Breezes that blow are the cooling fan;
All the woods and plants
All flowers that bloom
Take their colours from Your light.

Thus we together with nature wave the offering tray of lights
How beautiful is this ritual.

HEARING THE VOICES OF CREATION TEACHER'S PACK
(BACKGROUND TEXTS TO LESSON 3 — SIKHISM AND ISLAM)

FINDING THE PATH (ISLAM)

The world's religions confront us with vast questions of meaning and purpose. They tell us that this world is a hard path to walk and that the journey will ask of us more than we expect or want.

They also tell us that they believe we do not make this journey alone.

Islam believes that Allah has provided humanity with the intellect and gifts to be maintainers of His Order upon earth. Returning to this order, this balance is, Islam teaches, the way forward, and this is revealed for Muslims through the Holy Qur'an.

WE CREATED HUMANITY and gave the faculty of speech.
The sun and the moon rotate in ordered orbits, the
plants and the trees, too, do obeisance. The firmament
– He raised it high, and set the balance of everything,
so that you humanity may not upset the balance. Keep
the balance with equity, and fall not short in it.

The Qur'an: Surah 55:3-9