



News Item

How all religious faiths advocate for environmental protection | UN Environment Programme

By United Nations Environment Programme

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According to the United Nations Environment Programme, “from Buddhism to Christianity to Hinduism to Islam, various faiths acknowledge the need for environmental stewardship and their holy texts urge adherents to be caretakers of the Earth and its biodiversity.” Those passages include the following:

Baha’i: “Nature is God’s Will and is its expression in and through the contingent world.” (Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh, p. 142)

Buddhism: “Our ancestors viewed the earth as rich and bountiful, which it is. Many people in the past also saw nature as inexhaustibly sustainable, which we now know is the case only if we care for it.” (Dalai Lama, 1990a)

Christianity: “We must treat nature with the same awe

and wonder that we reserve for human beings. And we do not need this insight in order to believe in God or to prove his existence. We need it to breathe; we need it for us simply to be.” (Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, 2010)

Confucianism: “... sustainable harmonious relationship between the human species and nature is not merely an abstract ideal, but a concrete guide for practical living.” (International Confucian Ecological Alliance, 2015)

Hinduism: “There is an inseparable bond between man and nature. For man, there cannot be an existence removed from nature.” (Amma, 2011)

Islam: “Devote thyself single-mindedly to the Faith, and thus follow the nature designed by Allah, the nature according to which He has fashioned mankind. There is no altering the creation of Allah.” (Qur’an 30:30)

Jainism: “Do not injure, abuse, oppress, enslave, insult, torment, torture, or kill any creature or living being.” (Mahavira)

Judaism: “And God said: ‘Behold, I have given you every herb yielding seed, which is upon the face of all the

earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed—to you it shall be for food.” (Gen 1:29)

Shintoism: “I will give over to my child the rice-ears of the sacred garden, of which I partake in the Plain of High Heaven.” (Nihongi II.23)

Sikhism: “You, yourself created the Universe, and You are pleased... You, Yourself the bumblebee, flower, fruit and the tree.” (Guru Granth Sahib, Maru Sohele, page 1020)

Taoism: “This original nature is the eternal law. To know the nature’s law is to be enlightened. He who is ignorant of the nature’s law shall act recklessly, and thus will invite misfortune. To know the constant law of nature is to be generous. Being generous, one is impartial. Being impartial, one is the sovereign. Sovereign is the nature itself.” (Lao-Tzu, Tao Te Ching, Chapter 16)

Gary Lewis, Director of Policy and Programme Division at UN Environment, who was interviewed for this UNEP analysis, pointed out the role of faith-based education in spreading awareness about the importance of environmental protection. He states, “About half of the schools on our planet are owned by faith-based institutions, therefore they play a crucial role in arming the society with knowledge about the damage we are doing to our

environment and how we can turn things around,”

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