

Caring for the
environment is the
most important thing
a religious



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Caring for the environment is a very big dilemma in the modern world. It is easily anticipated that humans are to rule the world and it is theirs to own and use for their own benefits. However many believe that God has made us his stewards and we are to rule the world and 'look after it'. These may be the religious views but many atheists believe that harming the natural world will affect the eco-systems and eventually us. The two major religions Christianity and Hinduism have strict views on whether the world is something humans should care about.

Christianity holds a very significant view about this. They believe that because God gave them the 'responsibility to look after the world' they must treat it with care. This is backed up by good proof as seen here 'The environment should be treated with care and land should not be over-exploited'. (Exodus 23: 10-11). This not the only significant part of the Christian belief but also many important Christian figure-heads explain a similar concept. 'As children of God we have responsibility to take care of it.' Major Christine Parkin training and development officer. (Salvation Army).

The Christian religion introduces us as stewards of God, the meanings and examples of stewardship have been noticed in various parts of the scripture, for example Deuteronomy 20: 19 and 22: 6. This shows that the Christian belief to look after the world is validated to a large extent, however what about Hinduism. Realistically speaking Hinduism and Christianity hold very similar views. However first of all some differences are seen. Hindus believe that God powers all of the living things; evolving from the Hindu theory about reincarnation they believe that every living thing is equal.

It is the same soul that exists in humans also exists in other beings including plants. Therefore they believe that all is equal. The same soul but existing in different bodies. 'A householder should regard deer, camels, donkeys, mice, snakes, birds and bees as his sons...'. This is not all; another difference is that the Hindu belief about caring is stricter than that of Christianity. Although views change over time, Hindus are realistically meant to be vegetarians. They base this on ' Ahimsa' the Sanskrit word for non-violence. They are against the killing of animals. You can never get meat without violence to creatures with the breath of life..... '(The laws of Manu Chapter 5 verses 48 to 51).

There may be a lot of differences but both religions bear a similar trend as seen through this quote. ' The earth has enough for everyone's needs, but not for everyone's greed '. This is not all, both believe that they are working for God as stewards, not another set of rulers but caretakers. We are to make God's will happen. From this we can gather that on one side both Christians and Hindus have strong beliefs about caring about our planet, working as stewards and treating all animals and plant life with respect.

We should also take the atheist belief into account. A great number of atheists hold a view that relates very much to science, although conflicting the religious views of God creating humans in his own image and the absence of so called ' evolution', the atheists seem to believe a similar thing. They believe that because we have evolved from lesser creatures we should not harm them. We have no right to hurt them because we were once them and have evolved to a better species; this doesn't mean we are allowed to gain control.

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Hence we can see how all three sides meet a similar conclusion. However on the other hand the teachings are taken quite differently to what we see here. Some Christians and Hindus have another view about taking care of the earth, very similar to that of atheists. Although some Christians believe that it is our responsibility to look after this planet, others believe it is not. These are the Christians that believe that we are the Gods of the earth ourselves. After all they are made in the 'image of God' (Genesis).

This means that they are the supreme beings on earth, almost the apex predators. This means that they are at the 'top of the food chain' and or have full control of the earth. They believe they are to rule the earth, 'Rule over the fish of the sea, and birds of the air...' (Genesis 1: 1-31). They believe that because God has told them to be superior amongst the other creatures living on earth they shall do it. However a similar view is taken by Hindus too. In the creation story Hindus believe they were also made in the image of God, therefore it is again a similar sort of belief.

The religious views are not all, the atheist view depicts that we are a better species and we come to such a high status in the world, therefore we are to dominate the species. However some atheists or any religious person may believe that all other people are doing the harm and if they don't it will not make a difference. It is not their fault because the increase in the number of mega cities and population is leading everyone to use the resources carelessly. This is a major problem in our world; we are harming our own planet and destroying it. I believe that it is best to look after it.

I hold similar view to that of Christians, Hindus and Atheists. Those that believe we must care for the world. However I do understand why an Atheist that believes that it is impossible to not harm anyone and care for the world. The large population, increase in technology and demand for food leads to us to over-exploit the planet. It is not our fault but the circumstances we find ourselves in. However I do believe do believe simple actions such as recyclign and reusing can a make a big difference even if you are not able to control the other factors such a mass deforestation.