

Hindu Perspective on Climate Change and the Environment

Hindu presentation at RFF Multi-faith Walk 18.10.15

Welcome to the Mandir. We are pleased to see you. Hindus have a deep respect for the inter connection of all life. We are now going to talk about how being a Hindu helps us to care for the earth. We will also tell what the Mandir is doing already to reduce its carbon footprint.

Some of us from our Hindi classes had a workshop and talked about climate change. We first talked about what we love about the earth and how that might be destroyed. At our workshop we made some bunting. On one side we wrote what we love about the earth and on the back what will happen to what we love if we do nothing about Climate Change.

- One person loved the Coral Reef. If climate change continues then the coral reef will shrink as carbon dioxide will dissolve in the water, making it more acidic. Many animals that live in the coral will die because they will have no habitat
- One person loved the animal world. If climate change continues many species will become extinct as they will lose food and places to live
- One person loved the frozen places. As the air gets warmer the glaciers and ice cap will melt and the level of the sea will rise
- One person loved the sea. As sea temperatures rise some sea animals will no longer be able to get the food they need to live and will die out.

How Hindu teaching can inspire us to care for the earth

At our workshop we also talked about how Hindu teaching can inspire us to care for the earth.

Hindu teaching gives us inspiration to care for the environment in these ways:

- We practice Ahimsa (non violence)
- All souls are linked
- We believe in Shanti, that is, peace for the earth
- We respect the earth as it originally was made
- We follow the path of Dharma which has in it a duty to look after the earth

At this Mandir we are trying to do things to care for the earth, for example, we are making paneer from milk given for offerings, and using sensor taps to save water.

There are many levels for doing something to care for the earth.

We can do things ourselves, our schools and our community can do things, but also Governments need to take action. Like a puzzle needs all its pieces to be complete, we need to take action at all the levels. At our workshop we came up with ideas for actions at all four levels.

- At home we can recycle, buy fair-trade, use a compost bin and install solar panels at home
- At school we can conserve energy, switch off lights when we don't need them and use alternative energy like solar and wind
- We can plant flowers to attract bees
- We can raise awareness and fundraise for charity...This can aid many people and the environment
- At the Temple we can have a gardening and planting competition and encourage people to wear thick clothing in winter so that we don't use too much energy on heating
- Governments can make legislation to stop industry releasing greenhouse gases; they can stop deforestation and make all forests sustainable. They can research heavily in renewable energy, and subsidize renewable energy to increase its adoption

Prayer

We have a very ancient prayer which Hindus can say when they get up in the morning. It asks forgiveness of the earth that our feet will touch her, reminding us to tread gently on the earth.

Translated into English it reads,

O mother earth,

Who has the oceans as clothes and mountains and forests as her body,

Which is the wife of Lord Vishnu,

I bow to you.

Please forgive me for touching you with my feet

Thank you for coming to our Mandir. Take a look at the exhibition on loving food and hating waste as you leave

Hindusim and Climate Change youtube clips

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P7HsmcEpWEO>

Hinduism and environmental ethics

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qRH6gGSVq1Y>