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Congratulations on a job well done! It is hoped this eco-guide will create a readership that is fired up and inspired to act on being more aware and conscious of our environment. Our lives and all of creation are intrinsically interwoven and interconnected. Therefore, we have a responsibility to breathe as 'ONE.' Each time we fail in sharing this breath of life, we bring about our own death and the death of all creation! This 'ruach' or breath is that which gives life and sustains all of creation! Besides the reader-friendly layout and presentation, the checklist provides the dedicated opportunity for all faith based organisations to keep track of their ecological footprint. Thank you for coordinating the first Faith & Nature Conference in Singapore at the turn of the 21st century! Your efforts have blossomed into an ecological and environmental guide that will go a long way for Faith and Nature initiatives in Singapore. I recommend this book to peoples of all ages, cultures and creed who desire to re-discover new energies in reaching out, lifting up and renewing the whole of creation.

**Sister Mary Elizabeth Lim**

*Religious of the Good Shepherd, Spiritual Director  
Vice Chair, Singapore Archdiocesan Catholic Council for Ecumenical Dialogue  
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World Council of Churches; & Faith and Order Commission*

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# FAITH AND NATURE

An Eco-Guide to Greening Faith Communities

*Compiled by*  
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This manual was first compiled in February 2001 with the help of the Faith & Nature Committee that was formed for the Faith & Nature Conference held in Singapore.

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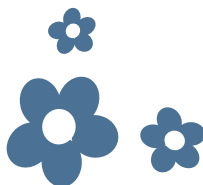
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We are hopeful that this effort will open up more avenues for environmental work across faiths and act as a unifying force amongst peoples of different faiths.



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## 1

## Introduction

The universe is a living entity and all life is interconnected and interdependent. While the call to protect our environment is inherent in all faiths, it may be challenging for faith communities to carry out these environmental principles. Notwithstanding this, people from all walks of life and of varying beliefs and spiritual backgrounds have a compelling desire to know and put into practice some amount of environmental care out of their love and respect for this planet we inhabit.

This was the premise that set us in motion to publish this eco-guide as an attempt to do our part for communities, from a cross-faith perspective. A Faith & Nature Workshop, held in Singapore in March 2001 showed that inter-faith collaboration promoting environmental care was doable. The workshop was the first ever held in Singapore, attempting to bring the environmental and religious communities together.

The workshop was a joint collaboration between the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) and several environmental groups in Singapore. The ARC assists faiths to become more involved in conservation through education and practical projects.

## Such support helps faith communities to create, protect and enhance the earth's rich natural and human heritage.

ARC also assists environmental organisations to develop co-operative links with various religious communities and organisations in order to increase the effectiveness of conservation efforts at local, national and international levels.

Sustaining such efforts is important. It is with this in mind that the Project ME: Muslims and Environment Initiative is seeing through the production of this manual with the support of the Young Association of Muslim Professionals of Singapore. Project ME, which is an initiative to bolster environmental awareness and action amongst Muslims, sees this manual as an important step in providing the necessary tools to individuals and organisations to implement change progressively.

– Farheen Mukri and Sofiah Jamil



## 2

# WHY FAITH AND NATURE?



## The Global Context

The official fusion between faiths and conservation began at a time when the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) was collaborating with various religious representatives on conservation projects. In 1986, at WWF's 25th Anniversary in Assisi (Italy) representatives from five of the world's major faiths were brought together by WWF to meet key environmental conservationists.

Together they explored how best to utilise the faiths' unique position in society to cultivate environmental sustainability. At the end of this meeting, the WWF Network on Conservation and Religion was formed.

In 1995, the network grew and involved nine faiths: the Baha'i Faith, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Sikhism and Taoism. This led to the forming of the Alliance of Religions & Conservation (ARC) in Windsor, UK, where HRH Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh officially launched ARC to support their ongoing conservation work. ARC took over the work of the WWF Network, extending the emphasis from networking to supporting and developing practical projects.

The Alliance presently coordinates 11 faiths with the addition of Shintoism, and Zoroastrianism. All faiths have their own distinctive beliefs about the role of nature and humanity that shapes their lives as faith communities and their relationship to the environment. The workshop in 2001 saw representations from the following faiths: Baha'i, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism and Taoism.



**Discussions showed that members of faith communities were generally interested in having guidelines that would pave the way towards environmental advocacy and care.**

The feedback was positive and supportive of such initiatives. Participants also felt that governments should back such efforts even though the workshop was initiated via non-government channels. They felt that support at the government level would increase awareness of and attention towards environmental issues.

Since then, efforts in highlighting the links between faith and nature have grown around the world, and further catalysed with the power of the internet and social media. Non-religious organisations, including government bodies and environmental organisations, have also increasingly acknowledged the importance of faith communities in complementing national environmental agendas as well as effectively implementing environmental activities at the local level.

The following sections are brief and only partially representative of the environmental viewpoint of each religion. Attempts have been made to retain the essence of religious teachings specifically in relation to environmental care and preservation, and how our lifestyles and these teachings are closely interrelated.



*Message by Ameer Ali Abdeali,  
5 Feb 2002  
Inter-Religious Organisation (IRO)  
Singapore*

allure of seashores and the artistry of rainfall gladdens our hearts and elevates our spirits.

I would like to extend my congratulations to the organisers of the Faith & Nature Workshop, held in March 2001. The workshop brought into focus the inextricable link between faith and nature. It highlighted the need for people of the various faith communities to work together for the caring and preservation of our natural environment. This comes with the understanding that the world doesn't belong to humans alone. We share this planet with millions of species. And we have a responsibility to care for the welfare of other life, as well as our own.

A profound relationship with nature simultaneously takes us deeper into ourselves and further outside ourselves. Inwardly, we gain a sense of personal identity and self-understanding by viewing ourselves as a part of nature. Outwardly, we gain a sense of responsibility and selflessness by caring for creation.

Religion creates a quintessential religious bond between nature and humanity. With God immanent in nature, the Earth is sacred and the universe divine. This sacredness evokes a reverence for creation. We have a kinship with all living things. We marvel at fellow creatures and admire how they adapt to their environments. With plants and animals all around us, we find the world full of fascinating companionship.

Nature's creative force, embodied in evolutionary processes, affirms our oneness with everything in existence. The word 'religion' comes from the Latin 'religare' which means, "to bind together." This binding together or communion with nature brings us in touch with divinity. Union with the divine links us to the source of our being and brings serenity to our lives. The loveliness of flowers, the majesty of trees, the delicacy of butterflies, the

Faith is a creative force. It puts our ultimate trust, not in human intelligence, but in the higher power that gifted us this intelligence. By aligning ourselves with nature and by having faith and trust in its creative forces, we join hands with the infinite power and find our greatest peace.



## The Singapore Context

This manual addresses the more prominent environmental issues in Singapore and how faith communities can be mindful of these issues. These include among other things, resource usage of paper, water, waste; buying policies; transport practices; energy efficiency; and surroundings management.

It is hoped that civil society organisations and religious communities will be able to use this manual to enhance their everyday operations in a conscious manner and be heedful of their environmental impact. It is also hoped that tips from this manual be conveyed to followers of the faith so that they can reflect on their own lifestyles, and make a concerted effort to emulate the lines of recommended action.

Youth groups and activity-based groups within faith communities can further organize events that explore ideas of resource conservation so that environmental care becomes part and parcel of faith.

Faith communities are welcome to make copies of this guide for further dissemination with due acknowledgement to the parties mentioned in the Copyright page.

A soft copy is also available to be linked from: <http://thegreenbush.wordpress.com/faith-nature-guide/>



# 3

## FAITHS ON NATURE



## Baha'i Faith

Growing trends of consumerism and greed has led to the weakening of moral standards and spiritual values. Baha'is believe that only a unifying vision of a global society, supported by universal values can inspire individuals to take responsibility for the long term care and responsibility of the environment. They find this system of values in the teaching of Baha'ullah - teachings that they believe can bring about an era of justice, prosperity and unity.

**“The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens.”**

– Baha'ullah, from *Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'ullah*

Baha'i Scriptures teach that humanity must protect the “heritage of future generations”. Baha'ullah's writings are imbued with a deep respect for the natural world and for the interconnectedness of all things. Baha'ullah also teaches moderation, a commitment to justice and a detachment from the things of this world – spiritual teachings enabling individuals to contribute to establishing a united world civilization.

**“Nature is God's Will and is its expression in and through the contingent world. It is a dispensation of Providence ordained by the Ordainer, the All-Wise.”**

– Baha'i writings

However, while nature is greatly valued and respected, it is not to be worshipped or adored. Rather it is to serve the purpose given by God to the human race, which is to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization. The principles of interconnectedness underlie the Baha'i

understanding of both the operations of the universe and the responsibilities of humankind.

**“For every part of the universe is connected with every other part by ties that are very powerful and admit of no imbalance, not any slackening whatever...”**

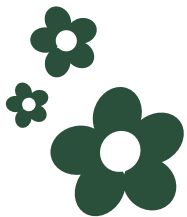
– Baha'ullah, *Selections from the Writings of Abdul Baha*

Protecting biodiversity is evident in Bahaism. Biodiversity is highlighted in Baha'i scriptures as:

**“Diversity is the essence of perfection and the cause of appearance of the bestowals of the Most Glorious Lord... How unpleasing to the eye if all the flowers and plants, the leaves and blossoms, the fruits, the branches and the trees of that garden were all of the same shape and colour!”**

– From *Selections from the Writings of Abdul Baha*

The spiritual and material domain are interconnected as Baha'i scriptures point out that segregation of ‘the human heart from the environment outside us’ is not possible as it is not possible to 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.”**

– *Secretary of Shoghi Effendi, from a letter dated 1933*

Another important principle and perceived as a ultimate goal of humankind’s collective life on the planet, for Baha’is, is the oneness of humanity. This is applicable not only to the individual, but also to the relationships that bind all states and nations as members of one human family.

Believing in being the most recent of God’s revelations, Baha’is feel their teachings point to the relevance in present day circumstances when the whole of nature is threatened by man-made perils ranging from the wholesale destruction of the world’s rain forests to the final nightmare of nuclear annihilation.

A century ago, Baha’ullah proclaimed how humanity has entered a new age. As promised by all religious Messengers of the past, his teachings adhere that humankind must recognize its fundamental unity, as well as the unity of God and of religion. Baha’is believe that until there is a general recognition of this wholeness and interdependence, humanity’s problems will only worsen.



## Buddhism

Buddhism is a religion of love, understanding and compassion, and is committed to the ideal of non-violence. As such, it also attaches great importance to wildlife and the protection of the environment on which every being in this world depends for survival.



All Buddhist teachings pave the path to Truth, or Dharma. Dharma also means phenomenon, hence embracing everything within the sphere of the teachings. All outer and inner phenomena, the mind and its surrounding environment are understood to be inseparable and interdependent.

**“Among the three - human beings, society and nature - it is us who begin to effect change. But in order to effect change, we must recover ourselves, one must be whole. Since this requires the kind of environment favourable to ones’ healing, one must seek the kind of lifestyle that is free from the destruction of one’s humaneness. Efforts to change the environment and to change oneself are both necessary.”**

– *Vietnamese monk, Thich Nhat Hanh*

Selflessness, mindfulness, compassion and wisdom are the essence of Buddhism. Buddhist meditation sharpens the senses to be aware of the effects of our actions, including those destructive to the environment. A sense of focus and mindfulness are at the heart of Buddhist meditation.

**“When we respect the environment, then nature will be good to us. When our hearts are good, then the sky will be good to us. The trees are like our mothers and fathers, they feed us, nourish us and provide us with everything; the fruit, leaves, the branches, the trunk.”**

– *Maha Ghosananda*

Three contexts broadly determine the relationship between Buddhist teachings and the natural world. These three contexts are Nature as Teacher, Nature as Spiritual Force and Nature as Way of Life.

### **Nature as Teacher**

Buddhists are taught that respect for life and the natural world is essential. By adopting a simple lifestyle, one can be in harmony with other creatures and learn to appreciate the interconnectedness of all that lives. Such simplicity of life involves:

1. Developing an openness to our environment
2. Relating to the world with awareness and responsive perception

Buddha has taught us to live simply, to cherish tranquility and to appreciate the natural cycle of life. Life in this universe of energies allows everything to affect everything else. An example is Nature being an eco-system where the climate affects the trees, the soils, the animals and so on. The ocean, the sky, the air are all inter-related and interdependent - water is life just as air is life.

The Buddhist concept expressed by the term Treasure Land relates directly to harmony between human beings and the earth's ecological system, which is the basic premise of a healthy environment.

### **Nature as a Spiritual Force**

Buddha stressed the four boundless qualities:

1. loving-kindness
2. compassion
3. sympathetic joy (delight in the well-being of others) and,
4. equanimity (impartiality)

These reinforce the Buddhist teachings of being conscious of one's environment and how one impacts upon it.



### **Nature as a Way of Life**

Skilful living avoids waste and we should try to recycle as much as we can. Buddhism advocates a simple, gentle non-aggressive attitude towards nature (and the environment). By examining ourselves, and the lives we are living, we may come to appreciate that the real solution to the environmental crisis begins with us. If we are conscious of our greed and instead focus on simplicity, moderation and the middle way, we are capable of enhancing equanimity and happiness.

**“Without life, there is no environment; and life is created and supported by its environment”**

– *Buddhist scriptures*

The reflections on Dharma spotlight life as it actually is. Here, the teachings of the Buddha relate to us being mindful, receptive and sensitive and not fixed on any one thing but able to adapt according to what is needed in that time and at that place.

In our livelihoods by seeking work that does not harm other beings, refraining from trading in weapons, meat, alcohol and poisons, we can feel more at one with nature. The Buddha taught to live in peace and harmony with nature and Buddhists believe this must start with us.



## Christianity

**Christianity teaches that the whole of creation** is the result of the loving action of God who not only willed creation but also continues to care for all aspects and dimensions of its existence.

Christian scripture affirms that the world, as God's handiwork, has its own inherent integrity; that land, waters, air, forests, mountain and all creatures, with humanity at the top of creation's realm, are 'good' in God's sight<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, Nature, as creation of God, has value in itself independently of the value that human beings give to her.

**“Humanity is in communion with nature in life as well as in death.”**

– *Bible, Genesis 1–3*

Nature reveals God and traces of her Creator can be discerned in creation. Thus, Nature is not simply something for human beings to use and dispose of. She transmits a divine message that can be listened to and recognised, but it can also be neglected<sup>2</sup>.

In this respect, the role of human beings is not simply to be nature's stewards or keepers. Through their activities, they fulfil a decisive role: they are called to be nature's companion along the journey towards the fulfilment of God's plan on creation. When we begin to see nature as a work of God, we begin to see our own place as human beings within nature. The true appreciation of any object is to discover the extraordinary within the ordinary.

<sup>1</sup> *The Jerusalem Bible, Genesis 1* “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth ... God saw all he had made, and indeed it was very good.”

<sup>2</sup> *Doni, from the Spiritual Thoughts of Chiara Lubich on nature*, “The harmony and unity that can be discovered in nature is a sign of God. The love of God gives life, governs and supports every element of creation. Therefore nothing is immobile or static in nature. All moves and flows according to a law of unity and distinction, of life and death. Life is death because it is the giving of self; death, hence, is life.”

Christian faith teaches that there is a relationship of love among the elements of nature, as reflection of the relationship of love among the three persons of the Trinity. However, this relationship has been blurred by the human being's behaviour, by the sin of humanity that has marred this imprint on creation<sup>3</sup>.

Hence, as human beings, we are called to help nature develop, setting her on a path towards eternal life where creation will be transfigured into “new heavens and new earth”<sup>4</sup>.

In his message for the World Day of Peace 1990, His Holiness, Pope John Paul II stated: “Christians, in particular, realise that their responsibility within creation and their duty towards nature and the Creator are an essential part of their faith.”



<sup>3</sup> *Sergio Rondinara, from the Spiritual Thoughts of Chiara Lubich on Nature*

<sup>4</sup> *The Jerusalem Bible, Book of Revelation 21, 1* “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth” – *Isaiah 66, 22* “For as the new heavens and the new earth I shall make.”

As a consequence, we must act as a third part in the relationship between God and the rest of His creation. In this sense human beings can be regarded as 'priests of creation'. They can give rise to events of communion between nature and themselves that are aimed at attaining the fulfilment of God's plan of salvation that concerns not only humanity but also the entire creation.

Christian ideas that the natural order are signs and sacrament of God reflect that humanity must recognize that all creatures and objects have a unique place in God's creation. When humanity is sensitive to God's world around, there is also a heightened sense of consciousness to God's world within.

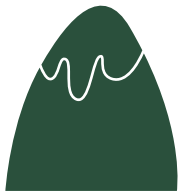
**“Yahweh, what variety you have created,  
arranging everything so wisely!  
Earth is completely full of things you have made....”**

– *Bible, Psalm 104:24*

For all Christians, the challenge is to rediscover that God's love and liberation is for all creation, not just for humanity and to be stewards; and to seek new ways of living and being Christians which will restore that balance and give the hope to so much of the endangered planet.

**“And you, mountains and hills, O bless the Lord  
And you, all plants of the earth, O bless the Lord  
And you, fountains and springs, O bless the Lord  
To him be highest glory and praise for ever.  
And you, rivers and seas, O bless the Lord  
And you, creatures of the sea, O bless the Lord  
And you, every bird in the sky, O bless the Lord  
And you, wild beasts and tame, O bless the Lord  
To him be highest glory and praise for ever.”**

– *Bible, Daniel 3:75-81*



## Hinduism

**The Hindu viewpoint on nature is permeated** by a reverence for life, and an awareness of the great forces of nature - the earth, the sky, the air, water and fire - as well as various orders of life including plants, trees, forests and animals, are all bound to each other within the great rhythms of nature.

Early Hinduism was characterized by a long phase, which was dominated by respect for Nature and a desire to live in harmony with it. Hindus revered Nature as a gift of God for the benefit of the soul. Thus temples were set up among trees and rocks, while flowers, fruits and even leaves are offered in prayers.

Yagna, which is sacrifice in relation to the 'modification of actions in consonance with the cosmic order (Rita)', formed the basis of living in harmony with nature. This basic and fundamental concept of sacrifice is at the root of the Hindu contribution to the conservation of nature and the preservation and enrichment of biodiversity.

**“From food the beginnings arise, Rain produces food,  
Skillful practices (sacrifices) produce rain  
The extent of our skill is the result of our Nature.”**

– *Bhagavad Gita*

An example of this would be leaving a plot of forested land aside, which may have been used for agriculture. Instead of clearing it, it is preserved, leaving it in its natural state. This 'sacrifice' will benefit the environment, as the preserved forest becomes a catchment area where vegetation flourishes.

Many aspects of Hinduism speak of harmony with nature and all of creation. There are moral and spiritual laws of life forming the basis of the very structure of the universe. Often places of worships are on tops of mountains, or the banks of rivers, wherever there is some natural beauty or grandeur.

Hindus regard the earth as mother, Bhoodevi (or Goddess Earth), deserving our reverence. Like a mother, the earth is a source of unconditional giving and nurturing. The earth feeds us, provides shelter and material for clothes; without these 'gifts', even survival is impossible. If, as children, we do not take care of her, we reduce our own chances of being taken care of. Unfortunately, our scientific and industrial achievements are undermining the natural environment.

The concept of a trinity and its relation to the Goddess Earth has Brahma as the Creator, Vishnu as the Protector and Siva as the Destroyer. While easy to understand the positive roles of Brahma and Vishnu, it is on hindsight that one realizes the 'Destroyer' to be positive for example how a natural disaster like a flood can have positive results. When a river breaches its bank in a flood it can cause destruction of life and property if we are caught unprepared. But the flood also enriches the area because when the waters recede, it leaves behind rich silt, which will eventually benefit humankind. The balance and harmony in nature begin to take root. That said however, global environmental problems make our continued existence on the planet questionable.

A main pillar of Hindu belief is that there is soul in all plants and animals. One has to do penance even for killing plants and animals for food. This daily penance is called *visva deva*. All kinds of life contribute towards the maintenance of the ecological balance.



Sri Krishna, the eighth incarnation of God, concern with the preservation of the life sustaining nature, is very inspiring. The Supreme Divinity plays with common, simple and pure cowherds. Krishna endears himself not only to his contemporaries and humanity at large, but also to all creatures and the natural environment.

Hindu beliefs purport that all forms of life are an integral part of nature. In herbs and plants, we can find remedies to known and unknown diseases. The Ayurvedic system of preventive and inexpensive health-care system encourages the value in botanical research and conservation awareness.

God is revealed by the Vedas, which are preserved by the human mind; and the Hindu belief is that the human mind is nourished by food. The cycle is made clear when life is sustained by the different kinds of food on this planet where food is supported by rainfall and where rainfall itself is a biological process brought about by the timely movement of clouds. This cycle helps the existence of all forms of life.

## Islam

**For the Muslim, humanity's role on earth is that** of a *khalifa*, a vicegerent of God. We are God's stewards and trustees on Earth. Human beings are not masters of this earth nor does it belong to us. It belongs to God and He has entrusted us with its safekeeping.

Islamic bearing on conservation revolves around the concept of Tawheed - which relates to the Oneness of Allah. This principle is fundamental to Islam and Muslims believe there is no separate deity for the many attributes they ascribe to the One Universal God, the God of the Universe.

It is ascertained by Islamic leaders (*ulemma*) that two-thirds of Prophet Muhammad's (s.a.w)<sup>5</sup> early preaching and the Qur'an itself were and are dedicated purely to endorsing this Oneness of Allah. The importance of this understanding within Islam will elucidate the relevance of the vital role played towards the rest of Allah's creation.

Islam teaches that humanity is an integral part of the environment. It is part of God's creation that humans are inter-dependent with nature not independent of it. The power given to man by God is seen in Islam to be limited by the responsibility he bears, to all of creation.

In Islam, *amanah* or a sense of trust is responsible for linking the human condition and the environment. According to Islam, humankind lives on this earth as a trustee. Humankind is therefore entrusted to ensure that the rights we enjoy to the resources of the earth are not abused. For example, we cannot pollute drinking water sources nor slaughter animals except for food or to prevent the spread of disease.

The current global situation of depletion of the earth's natural resources and the continual production of waste and pollution on an escalating scale, has thrust humankind into a detrimental state.

While Islamic morality and law should never allow such crises to unfold, unfortunately, with the influence of globalisation, Islamic values in their environmental aspects are no longer seen even in Muslim societies.

**"No Creature is there crawling on the earth, no bird flying with wings, but they are nations like yourselves."**

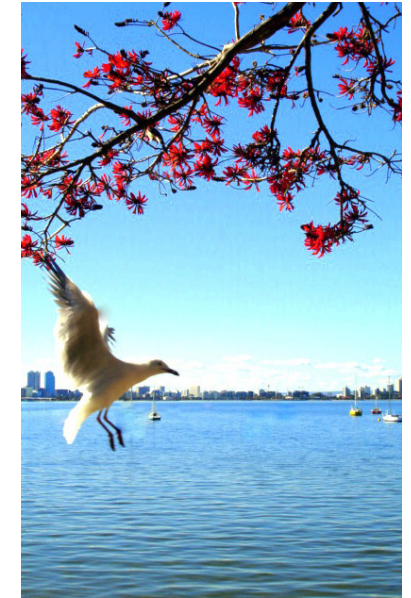
– Surah Al-An'um, Qur'an 6:38

Each organism has a role to play in the intricate and interdependent network of ecosystems. As "nations" like us, each species that make up creation enjoys certain rights. For man, this creation, or what is often called nature, are signs of God's power and wisdom. To gain knowledge of this creation is to increase the faith in God and acquire a love and respect for nature.

These rights have always been there but many have become critical in recent times. Our basic needs of food, clothing, shelter and security have extended to include education and intellectual development, spiritual purification and growth.

### **The Balance – Mizaan**

Importantly, the main attribute conferred on humans is the faculty of reasoning. Possibly the deciding factor on humans' appointment as God's vicegerent on earth. The following verse reminds us of this faculty:



<sup>5</sup> The Arabic salutation said after the Prophet's name which means 'peace be upon him'.

## Judaism

**“The sun and the moon follow courses (exactly computed);  
And the herbs and the trees – both (alike) bow in adoration.  
And the firmament has He raised high and He has set up the  
balance (of Justice)  
In order that you may not transgress (due) balance  
So establish weight with justice and fall not short in the balance.  
It is He who has spread out the earth for (His) creatures:  
Therein are fruits & date palms producing spathes (enclosing dates):  
Also corn in its leaves and stalk for fodder and sweet smelling plants.  
Then which of the favours of your Lord will ye deny?”**

~ Surah Ar-Rahman, Qur'an 55:5 – 13

The Islamic faith in God as the Creator and Sustainer of everything generates and sustains the kind of reverence and respect for everything created. Islam purports that all creations are serving Allah's will. So the law of nature that every plant, every rock, every fish and every molecule of soil has its journey through life, is put into perspective with the responsibility placed on humans to play their role in sharing the planet with other creations.

Muslims are taught that their relationship with the environment is not based on immediate want and needs but is shaped by one's consciousness of the needs of future generations. Prophet Muhammad's saying illustrates:

**“If the Hour is imminent and anyone of you has a palm shoot in your hand and is able to plant it before the Hour strikes, then he should do so and he will be rewarded for that action.”**

This hadith shows that in Islam improving the quality of this life for others brings several rewards both to the doer of good and those who benefit from his action. It also expounds that it is

**never too late in life to do good**, and that there is a close connection between this world and the Hereafter.

The Hebrew Bible and Rabbinic literature are replete with references to the natural world and our responsibilities to it and in it. Jews believe that environmental protection is a command from God and when there is a death even of a single species, or a loss of a habitat, it is like a loss of an entire world and by it, we, as human beings and the quality of our life on earth, is diminished.

**“All I have created, I created for you. Take care not to corrupt and destroy my universe, for if you destroy it, no one will come after you to put it right.”**

~ Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7

On over-exploitation of the earth's resources, Jews are instructed to be mindful of preserving the natural balance of creation. Jewish scriptures speak directly against the mixing of species.

**“You shall keep my statutes. You shall not let your cattle gender with a diverse kind; you shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed; neither shall there come upon you a garment of two kinds of stuff mingled together.”**

~ Leviticus 19:19



### Prohibiting wasteful destruction

The commandment to preserve the natural environment also prohibits the wasteful destruction of anything from which humans may benefit. For example the prohibition against cutting down fruit bearing trees and as described in Sefer haHinnukh's comments state:

**“... as is said, ‘you shall not destroy the trees thereof... and you shall not cut them down.’ (Deuteronomy 20:19) Included in this prohibition is destruction of every type, such as burning of tearing a garment, or breaking a vessel for no reason.”**

– *Sefer haHinnukh, Commandment 529, (ed. Chavel, Commandment 530)*

The *Sefer haHinnukh* further exemplifies the prohibition that this is the way of the pious. The pious encourage one to not waste even a mustard seed, and they are pained by all the destruction and waste they see.

Another analogy on the importance of preserving trees is explained in *haKeta vahaKabbalah* as:

“The altar was created to prolong the life of man and iron was created to shorten the life of man; thus it is not fitting that something which shortens man’s life can be used upon that which lengthens it. So too a tree, which was created to make fruit to nourish men and animals, should have nothing done to it to that destroys man.”

Jewish scriptures hold serious views on the subject on smoking. Some sects prohibit smoking in public



places where it might bother others, considering even if smoking was irritating only to those who are hypersensitive, it also constitutes an environmental pollutant to the air around us.

Designation of open spaces requires space that is free of all obstruction. In Pentateuch (Num. 35:2-5), there are ample instructions on city planning. Sotha Rashi, a commentator describes the purpose of the open strip as being ‘for the beautification of the city, that it has air.’

### **Love for nature**

Jewish belief, similar to the Christian and Islamic beliefs, holds that the entire universe is the work of the Creator. Love of God is taken in the broadest sense to include all His Creations: the inanimate, plants, animals and humans. Instead Judaism commands humans to improve and perfect it.

**Nature is understood by Jews to have been created for humans, and it is therefore wrong for humans to spoil it.**

There are important aspects concerning welfare of the individual and community on one hand and environmental values on the other.

Currently, the world is facing increased environmental threats, and such disasters pose a real danger not just to the environment and our quality of living, but to life itself. Thus it is an even more opportune time for the emphasis on Jewish values and the approaches explained in Jewish legal sources. If rightful action is implemented, humans stand to enjoy a life of comfort, as the environment will prove to be comfortable for our sustenance.

## Sikhism

The word 'Sikh' means disciple or learner of the Truth.

To Guru Nanak, the Sikh spiritual leader, the earth and the universe are sacred. His teachings advocate that all life is unity and its mission is spiritualisation of all. Guru Nanak laid the foundation of Sikhism in the late 15th century. His writings are compiled in the scripture, Guru Granth Sahib. Guru Nanak and his successors worked towards creating an ideal society that values spiritual awareness and ethical integrity.

Guru Nanak's teachings exemplify that human beings have around them a reflection of their inner states. His analogy corresponds to the current instability of the natural system of the earth, where the external environment of human beings impacting on it, is a reflection of the instability and pain within them.

The increasing barrenness of the earth's terrain is a reflection of the emptiness within humans. He advocates that solutions to the world's problems lie in prayer and God's hukam. Sikhism urges its followers to seek to redress the current environmental crisis, through the guidance of the Guru, who is believed by Sikhs to be a Divine Master and messenger of God.

**"Creating a world, God has made it a place to practice spirituality."**

~ Guru Granth Sahib



Sikhism calls for a sense of social and environmental justice between the demands of economic growth and individual wants. Widespread pollution is linked hugely to waste from modern technology.

Sikhism has three suppositions in its teachings:

1. That there is no essential duality between spirit and matter.
2. That humans have the capacity to consciously participate in the process of spiritual progression.
3. The highest goal of spiritual progression is harmony with God, while remaining earth-conscious, so that the world itself may be transformed to a spiritual plane of existence.

### **Interconnectedness of all Creations**

In Sikh doctrine, the spirit is the only reality and matter is only a form of spirit.

**"By divine prompting, look upon all existence as one and undifferentiated; the same light penetrates all existence."**

~ Guru Granth Sahib

Guru Nanak speaks of innumerable galaxies, of a limitless universe, the boundaries of which are beyond human ability to comprehend. All actions take place within God's *hukam*<sup>6</sup>. The Sikh belief surrounds the notion that only God knows how and why.

**"Men, trees, pilgrimage places, banks of sacred streams, clouds, fields. Islands, spheres, universes, continents, solar systems. The sources of creation, egg-born, womb-born, earth-born. Sweat-born, oceans, mountains and sentient beings. He, the Lord knows their condition, O Nanak."**

~ Guru Granth Sahib

<sup>6</sup> *Hukam* refers to God's will, order or system.

The teachings that all creation is a manifestation of God imply that every creature in this world, every plant, every form is a manifestation of the Creator.

In Sikh belief, environmental concern is part of an integrated approach to life and nature. All creations have the same origins and end. Human beings then must have consciousness of their place in creation and their relationship with the rest of creation.

Sikhism warns against a life of conspicuous and wasteful consumption. The Gurus teach humans to be aware of and to respect the dignity of all life. It is believed that such respect can only be manifested when one recognises the divine spark within oneself, sees it in others, cherishes it, nurtures it and fulfills it.

**“The air is deemed to be Guru, Water the father  
and the Earth, the mother,  
Whose belly gives us all the things.  
Night and day are the two female and male nurses.  
Made to play thus, the world plays in their lap.  
You Yourself are the fish and yourself the net.  
You Yourself are the cow and gazer  
Your light pervades in all beings of the world just as  
Lord has willed.”**

*~ Guru Granth Sahib*

A Sikh life is a life of harmony with other individuals, other beings and other forms. Sikhs believe that the ultimate objective of all humans is to practice spirituality and that the world serves this purpose. A true Sikh is described as one with a mission and involved in human and societal problems working for emancipation of all.

Sikhism opposes the idea that humanity is in a struggle with nature and is against the notion of harnessing nature. The main objective of Sikh belief implies a life



of harmony with all existence, with the focus of that lifestyle being on sharing. If such attitudes are adopted, there will be optimum utilisation of resources.

Even today, most gurdwaras in India (where Sikhism originates from) are designed to have a water tank or are situated near running water – which is always considered a community resource. The cities or towns that grew around gurdwaras show that they are centered on a spiritual lifestyle of sharing.

As human beings we need to derive sustenance from the earth, not to deplete, exhaust, pollute, burn or destroy it. Vital to Sikh belief is that awareness of the sacred relationship between humans and the environment is necessary for the health of our planet and for our survival.



## Taoism

### Tao simply means ‘the way’.

Taoism, originating from China, first evolved between the years 770 – 221 BC and exerted a great influence on Chinese way of thinking. Known then as the One Hundred Schools of Thought, it focused on a person’s consciousness and sub-consciousness.

Taoism has its own outlook on the universe, human life, ideals of virtues and ultimate purpose. Taoists believe that Tao is the origin of everything and achieving the Tao (or the Way) is the ultimate objective of Taoists. This is the most fundamental tenet of Taoism.

**The Tao in Nature  
Reduces the excessive  
And supplements the insufficient,  
The Tao in Man is not so;  
He reduces the insufficient,  
Because he serves the excessive**

~ Lao Tzu from ‘Directing the Power’

Tao is the way of Heaven, Earth & Humanity. Early legend has it that Tao came in the form of the Grandmother Goddess, who came to Earth to enlighten humanity. Her teachings were to let things grow according to their own course and not to interfere. This principle integral to Taoist faith, is known as no-action, no-selfishness (wu-wei). It implies a life of modesty and simple living promoting a notion of not competing with others for personal gain in their material life.



The Tao gives great value to life encouraging its followers to practice ways that prolong life through meditation and exercise (moral and physical). This can keep people younger and in good health. The cyclical effect on good health depends on a peaceful and harmonious natural environment, as an external condition.

Taoist teachings can be used to counteract the shortcomings of current values confronting the destruction of the Earth. They view humanity as the most intelligent and creative entity in the universe.

**“If we destroy our environment, we destroy eventually ourselves - this is biological law. If we protect and nurture our environment, it will nurture and provide for us.”**

~ Writer and Taoist teacher, Ron Teeguarden

There are four main principles, which guide the relationship between humanity and nature.

1. The Tao te Ching which is the teachings of the Tao in a compiled volume, indicate that humanity should attach importance to the Earth and follow its rule of movement. The Tao follows the natural course of development, of everything. Human beings can help by allowing things to grow in their own way, and thereby cultivate the way of no-action in relation to nature.
2. Yin and yang are the two opposite forces, which Taoism believes everything is composed of. Yin represents the female, the cold, the soft and so forth. Yang represents the male, the hot, the hard and so on. Taoist belief is that the two forces are in constant struggle with everything.

When they reach harmony, the energy of life is created.

**“For all creatures there is a time of advancing,  
A time for withdrawal,  
A time for inhaling, a time for exhaling,  
A time for growing strong, a time for decay,  
A time for creation, a time for destruction  
Therefore the wise avoid extremes and will not be lost,  
Those who follow Tao avoid extremes,  
Because they avoid extremes they do not expire.  
They are like seeds and are constantly renewed.”**

*~ Ron Teeguarden, Author & Taoist teacher in ‘Chinese Tonic Herbs’*

3. It is important that the limits of nature’s sustaining power are understood so that actions are suitable to achieve a certain level of accomplishment. If anything is counter to the balance of nature, people should refrain from doing it. In any case this stops over exploitation of natural resources.

**“People should take into full consideration the limits of nature’s sustaining power, so that when they pursue their own development, they have a correct standard of success... Insatiable human desire will lead to the over-exploitation of natural resources. “**

*~ Lao Tzu*

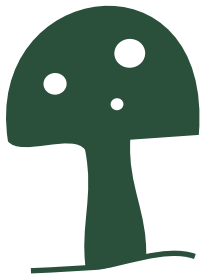
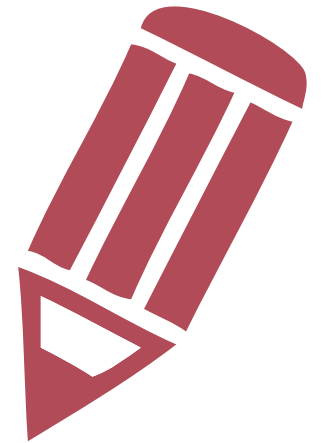
4. An important understanding in Taoism is the unique sense of value attributed to the number of different species. If all things in the universe grow well, then that society is a community of well being. If not, then it’s on its decline. Through this doctrine, Taoism encourages people to take good care of nature.

**“The closer one lives to Nature, the closer one comes to fulfilling the purpose of life”.**

*– Writer & Taoist teacher Ron Teeguarden*

# 4

## ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST



## How to Use this Environmental Guide

This environmental guide outlines 10 main areas of environmental consideration in Singapore, which are generally faced by faith communities. These areas are energy, paper, water, catering, domestic/household purchases, transport, engaging your community, promoting social responsibility, surrounding premises, animals. It should not be underestimated that environmental concerns are far more encompassing and cover wider ground than is attempted in this guide.



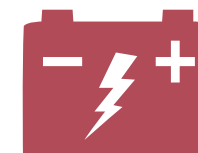
### Suggestions

In addition to the checklist, the following points are suggested as a means of maximising the potential of this environmental guide so that it is not seen merely in terms of being a ritual but rather a practice with deep understanding of the issues at hand.

1. Present this environmental guide to your respective faith committee or council.
2. Appoint an individual to oversee the checklist process.
3. The appointee should work through the questions, ticking the boxes that most reflect the community's practice. Discussions may need to be held with those responsible for specific areas before some parts of the checklist can be completed.
4. The appointee should report back to the Council/board members when the checklist has been completed with recommendations for enhancing the faith centre's environmental profile. (Following this, a timetable can be set up for the implementation of these decisions.)
5. Additional people can be appointed to work with the appointee ensuring the changes have been put into place and an evaluation can be conducted by respective faith communities to assess the feasibility of a more conscious environment.

## Energy

A bustling city like Singapore requires a tremendous amount of electricity to keep it going. The use of conventional energy sources (such as natural gas and oil) for electricity means increasing carbon emissions into the atmosphere, as well as higher financial costs since these fossil fuels are imported and are prone to market shocks. While there are moves to diversify our energy sources by introducing renewable forms of energy (eg. solar), the bulk of electrification is still from conventional energy sources. Singaporeans can help to reduce carbon emissions (as well as their electricity bills) by being more mindful of their energy usage.



	YES DOING	JUST STARTED	NO BUT INTERESTED	NOT DOING
Does your organisation/centre use low-energy light bulbs? <sup>1</sup>				
Do you switch off unnecessary lights and use stand-by functions, e.g. on photocopiers and computer monitors?				
Do you have your windows cleaned regularly to increase the level of natural light in your rooms?				
Do you maintain your air-conditioning temperatures within the recommended range of 23 to 25 degrees Celsius (Singapore Code of Practice for Airconditioning and mechanical ventilation in buildings)?				
Do you encourage members of your faith community to adopt these measures in their own homes?				

<sup>1</sup> They cost more initially but last much longer and use 1/5th of the energy.

## Paper

We produce 684,400 (Ref: 2008) tonnes of paper/ cardboard waste every year with only 42% of it being recycled. Saving paper saves trees. The processes used in its production use non-renewable resources and add to pollution.



	YES DOING	JUST STARTED	NO BUT INTERESTED	NOT DOING
Do you use recycled paper or paper made from 75% post-consumer waste? <sup>2</sup>				
Do you use brown manila envelopes? <sup>3</sup>				
Do you re-use envelopes whenever it is practical to do so?				
Do you re-use paper that has been used on one side for internal notes, notice boards or faith related classes?				
Do you have a designated box or bin where recycled paper may be placed?				
Do you place all waste paper in a bin or a sack and arrange for it to be picked up and taken to the recycling plant?				
Do you avoid purchasing goods with excess packaging, if possible?				
Do you encourage members of your faith community to adopt these measures in their own homes?				

<sup>2</sup> The price may be a little higher but if more people use it, the price may come down  
<sup>3</sup> They are cheaper and without bleaching process, cause less pollution

## Water

Despite clean drinking water readily available at the turn of a tap, we should not forget that achieving water self-sufficiency in Singapore is still a work in progress. While ongoing governmental efforts and technological advances are geared at sustaining water supply, society's water demands may either facilitate or obstruct these efforts. Individuals can therefore do their part by making a conscious effort to avoid wasting our precious water resources.

	YES DOING	JUST STARTED	NO BUT INTERESTED	NOT DOING
Does your faith organisation make sure that its members are aware of the importance of saving water?				
Do you regularly inspect your pipes and taps and ensure that any leaks or drips are attended to promptly?				
Do you avoid over-filling kettles or buckets so as not to waste water?				
Do you ensure that taps outside your premises are not left running and do not drip?				
Have you placed informational notices above taps to remind users not to waste water?				
Have you installed water-efficient toilet flushes? <sup>4</sup>				
Have you considered other ways to promote water conservation? <sup>5</sup>				
Do you encourage members of your faith community to adopt water saving measures in their homes via special sermons, workshops, and talks?				

<sup>4</sup> Placing a brick or a water bottle filled with water in the cistern is a useful temporary measure as well. In the long run, water – efficient toilet flushes are also cost efficient as they serve a large number of people over a period of time.  
<sup>5</sup> Eg. rainwater collection for garden use or watering plants, washing the floors, etc.

## Catering

Food is a significant part of many faith-based organisations' activities. Whether it be refreshments after a lecture/seminar, or meals during a youth camp, the choices we make in catering food must be given more consideration so as to ensure that our habits and practices are ethical and environmentally sustainable.



	YES DOING	JUST STARTED	NO BUT INTERESTED	NOT DOING
Do you use biodegradable cutlery and crockery instead of those made out of plastic or polystyrene?				
Do you use reusable cups, plates, cutlery for your regular weekly/monthly functions/meetings, rather than disposable plastic or paper ones?				
Do you engage caterers who provide non-disposable cutlery and crockery?				
Do you make a conscious effort to opt for healthier and/or vegetarian food options?				
Do you have separate bins for waste packaging, cans and bottles and arrange for them to be collected by or taken to a recycling centre?				
Do you encourage your members to adopt these measures at home?				
Do you enquire if your caterers use food that has been genetically modified?				
When purchasing for functions for your organisation, do you examine food labels to find out what additives have been used?				

## Domestic/Household Purchases

With greater awareness on health issues (eg. GM food and pesticide residues, the use of bleach and phosphate based detergents), it becomes important to know alternatives and to encourage our faith members to be mindful of our consumption patterns that directly affect the planet's resources. **How can our faith centres encourage a more conscious lifestyle through their purchasing practices?**



	YES DOING	JUST STARTED	NO BUT INTERESTED	NOT DOING
Whenever possible, does your organisation buy environment-friendly cleaning materials?				
Do you look for eco-friendly labels when buying products for your organisation?				
Do you ensure that your organisation uses cleaners/detergents that are environmentally friendly?				
Do you encourage your members to adopt these measures at home?				
Do you encourage members of your faith community to buy local produce as much as possible? <sup>6</sup>				
Do you buy organically grown vegetables and ensure any animal-based products are free-range?				

<sup>6</sup> There is an environmental and energy cost in transporting foodstuffs over long distances. In Singapore, mostly all is imported.

# Transport

Travel is a necessary part of our busy lifestyles in Singapore. Singaporeans depend heavily on public transport as their mode of transport. Yet, even this huge percentage of people have access to cars and do choose to drive or be driven from point A to point B. Careful consideration needs to be given on how we travel, taking into account the environmental impacts of transport vehicles, costs, convenience and reliability.



## Does your faith organisation encourage:

	YES DOING	JUST STARTED	NO BUT INTERESTED	NOT DOING
Walking or cycling rather than using the car?				
Using public transport as often as possible and explaining why?				
Walking the children to places of worship, their school, libraries or leisure activities?				
Sharing cars whenever possible? <sup>7</sup>				
Use of venues for external meetings/events/social activities that are accessible by public transport?				
Do you have cycle racks at your faith organisation? <sup>8</sup>				

	YES DOING	JUST STARTED	NO BUT INTERESTED	NOT DOING
When planning annual holidays/ events, do you consider its environmental/ecological impact (eg. carbon footprint and resource use)?				
Where possible, do you educate members of your faith community on the effectiveness of low-carbon emission vehicles (eg. CNG, hybrid)?				



<sup>7</sup> Eg.: youth activities, trips for elderly/physically challenged members, regular organisational functions etc.  
<sup>8</sup> Similar to the practice at some MRT stations, where there are bicycle racks, your faith organisation can encourage the same for your members to instill a consciousness of light transport.

## Engaging Your Community

Does your faith organisation engage positively with the local community? Buildings and common open areas can be shared for local events; this will encourage social participation and also ensure an effective use of community resources. Creating a communal identity also helps us to become more sensitive to the effects of our actions upon other people and the environment.



	YES DOING	JUST STARTED	NO BUT INTERESTED	NOT DOING
Does your faith organisation cater to a recycling service in your premises, for the surrounding community to use?				
Do you encourage and publicise conservation issues in your faith lectures/ workshops/ newsletter and on your notice boards?				
Do you regularly (eg. quarterly) encourage your youth wing (or related sub groups) to get involved in environmental projects at the community level?				
Do you regularly encourage schools and other organisations/ bodies in your community with whom you have contact, to be more aware of environmental issues?				
Do you bring environmental concerns into regular faith-related services throughout the year?				

	YES DOING	JUST STARTED	NO BUT INTERESTED	NOT DOING
Do you highlight the importance of environmental issues on special faith days?				
Do you organise nature walks or other outdoor activities to enhance consciousness of Nature's creation?				
Do you conduct services/ sermons/ prayer sessions out in natural settings?				
Have you or any members of your faith community read any up to date books/ articles on environmental issues from a faith perspective?				
If you have responded "yes" to the above question, is this shared through any forums/discussions?				
Have you invited anyone to talk about environmental issues in your faith centre?				
Do any of your religious classes highlight environmental concerns and specific faith teachings on them?				
Does your faith centre have its own social action project/programme, which addresses an environmental issue?				

## Animals

All creatures share this earth with us, and are part of creation. In the same breath, all faiths encourage the care and principles concerned with their welfare and human responsibility towards them.

Often, in faith organisations, one sees cats or dogs/puppies or pigeons abundantly. Strays or resident strays are cared for by strangers out of compassion. Besides just a compassion card alerting us, how else can we be more aware of animal issues in our societies and do something positive for them? Urban societies sometimes use culling of a species to stop a 'menacing problem'. Cruel methods of culling are not aligned with compassionate educative angles adopted by faiths.



From consumption to care of animals, there are many stages of involving your faith communities. **How actively involved is your faith organisation with animal issues?**

	YES DOING	JUST STARTED	NO BUT INTERESTED	NOT DOING
Does your faith organisation encourage purchasing meat, dairy and other animal produce from organic sources?				
In the context of animal welfare, human health and the current practices of animal husbandry (eg. hormone-injections), do you encourage members to seek alternative free-range produce and or encourage vegetarian options in your catering policy?				

	YES DOING	JUST STARTED	NO BUT INTERESTED	NOT DOING
Have you had discussions about the relationship between humans and animals in the light of your religious scriptures/teachings on the subject?				
Has your organisation considered collaborating with an animal welfare organisation (eg. SPCA, Cat Welfare Society, ACRES)?				
Have you generated discussions on the ethics of the use of antibiotics and other additives in animal feedstuffs to promote growth and inhibit disease, as is common in intensive/factory farming?				
Have you generated discussions on the ethics of genetic modification of farm animals for increased productivity or the production of pharmaceuticals in their milk, blood or urine?				
Are you conducting discussions on animal testing in toiletries and drugs, and the use of animal organs for human transplant?				



## Surrounding Premises

Every faith centre and its surroundings, besides being a place for prayer, meditation assembly or study, also embodies its commitment to the earth, and the other non-human creations we share our planet with. While different faith communities will have differing approaches for action, a concerted effort is possible by every member of the respective faith communities.

Some of these can include cultivating butterfly parks, nature corners that stimulate the growth of local flora and attract local fauna – while also doubling up as ideal spots for quiet focus and meditation – and ponds/lakes etc if space permits, to encourage a biodiversity of all kinds.



### Have you considered nature conservation in the management of your faith centre's surroundings?

	YES DOING	JUST STARTED	NO BUT INTERESTED	NOT DOING
Have you made a survey of the flora and fauna in your surrounding premises?				
Do you avoid using chemical pesticides, herbicides and chemical fertilizers?				
How safe are your surrounding premises? Do you attend to them promptly where regards overgrown trees, weeds, broken stonework, glass or other debris that may cause a safety hazard?				

	YES DOING	JUST STARTED	NO BUT INTERESTED	NOT DOING
Have you made a management plan that is sensitive to the wildlife around your premises?				
Do you put up nesting boxes, fruit bat feedings, etc in your grounds?				
Do you grow specific flowers and plants to attract and provide food for local varieties of butterflies, birds and insects to your grounds?				
Do you encourage your members to adopt any of these measures in their own homes?				



## Promoting Social Responsibility

As well as taking action ourselves, we must make our concerns known to those who shape our community decisions. Such decisions should promote consciousness towards environmental sustainability. As active citizens, we should cultivate an environment that encourages positive action nationally and internationally. What can your faith centre do to support campaigns about world poverty, environmental issues and human rights?



	YES DOING	JUST STARTED	NO BUT INTERESTED	NOT DOING
Do you engage your local MPs and Grassroots Leaders of Community Development Councils (CDCs) on environmental issues?				
Have you used your faith centre bulletin/ newsletter to highlight any environmental issue that is purported by your faith teachings?				
Does your faith centre support voluntary environmental organisations? <sup>9</sup>				
Has your faith centre ever considered organising an event jointly with an environmental organisation to highlight certain environmental issues?				
Have you ever conducted a joint environmental project with another faith community in your neighbourhood?				

<sup>9</sup> Eg.: Singapore Environment Council, Nature Society (Singapore), ACRES, SPCA, Asian Conservation Awareness Programme, WWF Marine Conservation groups etc.

## Evaluation And Scoring

The above-mentioned categories are a starting point for your faith organisation to be conscious and think about implementing environmental practices in everyday decisions. The audit especially targets the running of activities and maintaining the environment in and around the faith/community centre.

At the end of the year, it is crucial to present to the board or management committee whether the audit has helped your faith organisation in the following:

- Being more conscious in the use of resources that we sometimes take for granted
- Understanding environmental issues by changing or modifying our lifestyles and sharing the knowledge with family, friends and colleagues
- Realising the benefits that environmental consciousness inevitably brings to the faith centre
- Improving the quality of practice at the faith centre and advocating likewise practices to friends and people we meet outside the faith circles.

## 5

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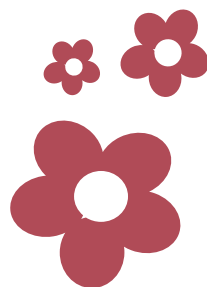
There are a total of 75 questions. Award yourself the following points per box in each category of the checklist.

YES DOING	JUST STARTED	NO BUT INTERESTED	NOT DOING
3	2	1	0

Then total up your score and find where you are on our green grade:

<b>176 – 228</b>	Excellent! Be a leader for other groups (within your faith and outside)
<b>126 – 175</b>	Good Job!
<b>76 – 125</b>	Satisfactory; need to grow your green paw.
<b>0 – 75</b>	Get to work!

We hope this manual is useful to your faith organisation and that you will share the good practices with your faith's sub-branches. We encourage you to share your successful run of activities incorporating environmental decisions on Project ME's Faith & Nature page <http://thegreenbush.wordpress.com/faith-nature-guide/>. Do contact us at [faithandnature@gmail.com](mailto:faithandnature@gmail.com).



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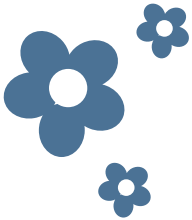
# NOTES



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