



## Hindu Ecology

### Life is sacred

All living beings are sacred because they are parts of God, and should be treated with respect and compassion. This is because the soul can be reincarnated into any form of life. Hinduism is full of stories that treat animals as divine, such as how Krishna used to herd cows, or how the monkey Hanuman was a faithful servant of the Rama. Most Hindus are vegetarian because of this belief in the sanctity of life. Even trees, rivers and mountains are believed to have souls, and should be honoured and cared for.

### Simple living

The virtue of a simple life has always been prized in Hindu society. Teachers, or brahmanas, are advised to live on the charity of others and not accumulate too much wealth. The most highly respected person in Hindu society is the sadhu, or sage who lives outside normal society, in forests or caves, or travels on foot from one town to another. Sadhus take pride in living simply and consuming as little as possible.

### Inner peace

Hinduism stresses that true happiness comes from within not from outer possessions. This means that the search for material possessions, and the consumption of materials and energy it brings, should not be allowed to dominate life. Life's main purpose is to discover the spiritual nature and the peace and fulfilment it brings. The efforts to exploit the things of this world is considered by Hindu teachers to be a distraction from this central purpose of life.

The Sou

## How do Hindus care for the environment?

Hindus revere sacred rivers, mountains, forests and animals, and love to be close to nature. For example, many Hindu villages have a sacred lake, and around it a grove of trees to catch rainfall and protect the banks from erosion.

The lake and its grove store rainfall to irrigate surrounding fields and supply village wells with drinking water. These lakes and groves are places of tranquillity and sanctuaries for wildlife, but in recent times the neglect of these simple techniques for gathering and protecting clean water has led to serious water shortages and advancing desertification in many parts of India. This is a common story in India: traditional Hindu practices of caring for nature are being forgotten and as a result human survival is becoming more difficult.

### What do Hindus believe about genetic modification?

One of the world's best-known campaigners against genetic modification is Vandana Shiva, an Indian scientist motivated by her native Hindu beliefs to champion the rights of nature. She fought against the genetically modified 'terminator' seeds: seeds that produce only one crop and die each year from the suppliers. And she campaigns to stop the patenting of the sacred Neem tree, which is a drop of divine nectar carried to earth. Neem provides a natural and harmless alternative to pesticides that have tried to patent it for their own use. She has written many books, and her Research Foundation for the Ecology of Nature is a useful source of information.

The original and longer statement can be found [here](#)

For other faith's statements on the environment, please click [here](#)

Copied with permission from the [Alliance of Religions and Conservation](#) (ARC)



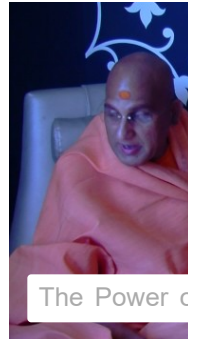
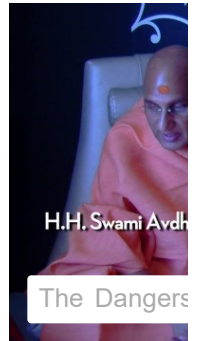
Krishna, who lived in the forest and herded cows, represents the highest expression of love in Hinduism.

The Interfaith C  
Sustainable Dev

**SUBSCRIBE to  
NEWS**

Name

Email



Load more

**ICSD works on a global basis, with current engagement in Africa, the Middle East, North Amer**

2020 © ICSD works on a global basis, currently in Africa, the Middle East, North America and Europe