

MAKE POLLUTERS PAY ACTION DAY

SATURDAY 23 SEPTEMBER

How does faith shape our understanding of climate justice?

'The whole world is one family'

Avnish Thakrar, Hindu Climate Action

In the Hindu tradition, we revere nature with Gods and Goddesses associated with natural forces. Earth provides us with everything that we need to flourish and this is nothing short of a miracle! So, I've always felt a deep gratitude towards nature for everything that She has given us.

The destruction of the natural world and the devastating consequences our actions are having on the Global South deeply pains me. We must immerse ourselves in the practice of *ahimsa*: trying to cause the least harm to all living things.

In the Upanishads there is a verse: 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' – 'the whole world is one family'. This mantra is needed now more than ever to ensure that current and future generations can flourish on our beautiful home, Earth.



Recompense and reconciliation

Bob Kikuyu and Frances Clemson, Christian Aid

The loss and damage caused by the climate crisis requires recompense. Recompense is needed not just for its own sake but as a step towards reconciliation. How can we be reconciled to each other if we refuse to address the past and present wrongs that have caused harm to others? When we seek reconciliation, we can repair and renew our relationships with our fellow humans and with the whole of creation. Taking a step towards reconciliation means listening and responding to the groaning of creation and to voices raised in righteous anger and lament.

In the Christian scriptures, we are told that 'all things were created' through Christ who is 'the firstborn of all creation'. It is Christ in whom 'all things hold together'. It is Christ who reconciles the whole of creation to Godself. For Christians it is Christ who calls us to healing and reconciliation not only with Godself but also with one another. Our faith tells us that God will make this possible - holding us together through acts of love, justice, repentance and truth-telling.

In what ways does your faith motivate you to seek climate justice?

Interconnection

Olivia Fuchs, Eco Dharma Network

From a Buddhist perspective, we understand all life as being interconnected, which includes self and environment, self and society, self and nature, and society and nature. Due to this interconnection, also expressed as 'dependent origination' or interbeing, when we change something in ourselves, in our inner ecology, it will have an impact on the outer ecology. We need to transform our inherent greed, anger and delusion into the Buddha's virtues of compassion, courage and wisdom. This individual and collective process will lead to systemic change and transformation.

Many people have heard of the Buddhist idea of 'karma' (a Sanskrit word meaning 'action'). In the Global North we have had a destructive effect on the Global South and we must take responsibility for the karma that follows and thereby transform it. We must support people, especially those living in the Global South, who have done least to cause our climate and ecological crisis, and yet who are the ones that are having to suffer the effects of these crises most.

The next generation

Charlie Meiklejohn, Christian Aid Scotland

I will open my mouth with a parable;
I will utter hidden things, things from of old— things we have heard and known, things our ancestors have told us.

We will not hide them from their descendants;

we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done. (Psalm 78.2-4)

As I reflect on this psalm, I visualise the young people who have been at the forefront of the climate justice movement, calling for change, action, and accountability. For many, it is their future wellbeing that they see hanging in the balance, fearing the loss and damage of their homes and livelihoods. For young people in the Global South this isn't a future worry, but a very present one, as drinkable water, arable land, and breathable air all come under threat from pollution and climate chaos.

For older climate activists, a common refrain is that they want to leave a better planet for their children and grandchildren. The psalmist speaks of this same desire to pass something down - learning spiritual wisdom from ancestors and sharing the good deeds of God with the next generation. In our care for creation (or lack thereof) what things have we forgotten 'from of old' that those who will come after us would urge us to remember? Surely we can count caring for God's creation as wisdom worth passing down. At Christian Aid we believe that all people are made in God's image, and have a right to a full and dignified life. This dignity is threatened by the climate emergency and we must all raise our voices to challenge this injustice

