



Environmental Ethics Hindu Perspective

Vijai Singhal

Director

Hindu Council of Australia

www.hinducouncil.com.au





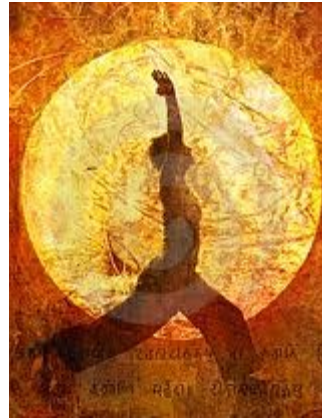
HINDUISM

- **Hinduism is one of the oldest living religions in the world, and its 3rd largest. It predates recorded history**
- **Hindus call it "*Sanātana Dharma*" – the E ternal Religion**
- **It is based on the revelations of basic truths to the ancient *Rishis* (seers) and not on any single prophet**
- **Hindus believe in the unity of all existence**
- **Majority of Hindus are *vegetarians* due to their belief in *Ahimsa* – (non-injury) and sanctity of all life**
- **Hindus worship the earth, the sun, the rivers, the trees and the animals –nature in all its manifestations and glories**

Nature Worship



Mother Earth



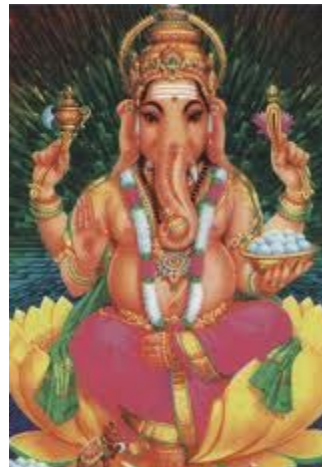
Salutations to Sun



Mother Ganges



Tree Worship



Lord Ganesha



Holy Cow



HINDU SCRIPTURES

“E arth in which the seas, the rivers and many waters lie, from which arise foods and fields of grain, abode to all that breathes and moves, may She confer on us Her finest yield.”

(Bhumi Sukta, Atharva Veda xii.1.3)

“E verything within this world is possessed by God. God pervades both the animate and inanimate. Therefore **one should only take one’s fair share, and leave the rest to the Supreme.”**

(Isa Upanishad, Verse 1)



ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS - 1

Sustainable use of natural resources:

1. Take only what you need and no more

- **Consumerism - the root cause of climate change**
- **Demand-based economic model**
- **Emphasis not on reducing consumption but finding alternate energy sources – not enough.**
- **Proposed solutions not green – e.g. use of Biofuels**



ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS - 2

2. **Minimise wastage**

Rapid technological changes, planned obsolescence and wasteful living results in huge domestic and industrial wastage

Food wastage – 4.45 MT worth \$7.8 billion annually.

It wastes water, energy, natural resources and generates methane

e-Waste – UN estimates 50 MT is created globally.

It is toxic containing lead, cadmium and mercury

“National Waste policy (2009) – Less waste, more resources” was developed by Australian Government to tackle this problem



ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS - 3

3. **Ahimsa – Non-violence or non-killing**

- **Unity of all existence** – “*Sarvam Khalu Idam Brahma*”

- **Vegetarianism** – avoids cruelty to animals.

It is good for the planet, good for the poor and good for our health

- Launch of **Meat-Free Day** campaign by Hindu Council on 2 Oct 2008. Now celebrating the **10th Anniversary**

- Have been working with ARRCC to promote **Eat Less Meat** campaign

“Eat food, not too much, mostly plant”

– Michael Pollan

Simple living – the heart of sustainability



4. **Simple living**

- **Hinduism teaches virtues of simple living as pathway to *Moksha* (liberation)**
- **Mahatma Gandhi, a living example of Simple living**

5. **Socially responsible economic growth**

GDP vs Index of General Well-being

- **Prosperity without Growth** by Tim Jackson
- **Addicted to Growth? A vision for a Steady State Economy** by Haydn Washington
- **What is economic growth got to do with expanding waistline?** by Garry Egger



Inner Peace and Tranquility

Inner peace and tranquility

- **Our hearts are filled with violence, fear, hatred, mistrust, jealousy and greed**
- **Need to renounce all violence and oppose ever-increasing expenditure on warheads**
- ***Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* – the whole world is a family**
- **L earn to cultivate mutual trust to live in peace and harmony**
- **L earn to be happy and enjoy living**



Final Message

***Reduce consumption, reduce wastage, reduce greed,
live simply, foster mutual love and be happy***

***"The rich must live more simply so the
poor may simply live"***

- Mahatma Gandhi