



# Harmonizing Faith and Nature

An Ethical Exploration of Religious Perspective on Environmental Conservation

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## OUR ROADMAP

- The current environmental state
- Causes and Effect on Humans and non-humans and future generations
- Defining the problem
- Interplay of faith and Nature
- The case of 5 religious groups in Africa
- Common Ethical Values
- Different Ethical Values
- The need for an interreligious dialogue
- References



# Current Environmental Crisis in Africa

- coastal erosion and flooding,
- overexploitation of natural resources,
- marine and coastal pollution,
- illegal sand mining,
- loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services,
- severe weather,
- rapid urbanization, and overall poor environmental governance



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# The current state of the crisis

- illegal sand mining,
- loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services,
- severe weather,
- rapid urbanization, and overall poor environmental governance



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# Instances of Environmental Crisis in Africa

- loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services,
- severe weather,
- rapid urbanization and overall poor environmental governance



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# Instances of Eco-Injustice in Africa

- Oil Spill,
- illegal sand mining,
- loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services,



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# Causes:

- Humanity( Capitalism, Greed)
- Poverty
- Deforestation
- Ignorance (Ogungbemi, 1997)
- Mismanagement of the earth's resources
- Bad Governance
- Population growth
- Urbanisation
- Economic growth
- Intensification of agriculture
- Rising energy use and transportation.

# Effects

- Climate change
- Disasters: South Africa, Mozambique, Libya and Morocco
- Extinction of organisms and wildlife
- Depletion of resources such as quality of air, water, and soil
- The destruction of ecosystems
- Habitat destruction
- Pollution
- General vulnerability



# The Call: The Interplay Between Faith and Nature

- The urgency of these challenges cannot be underestimated; it calls for a multifaceted approach.
- In this presentation, I embark on a journey that explores an often-overlooked dimension of this discourse – ***the harmonious interplay between faith and nature.***
- It is a call to action, a reminder that our collective effort for the Earth is not just an environmental obligation but a moral imperative.
- By understanding and appreciating the rich diversity of religious perspectives on environmental preservation, we can forge stronger connections between faith communities and environmentalists, working hand in hand toward a more sustainable and harmonious future.

# Religion as a lens

- Religion serves as a lens through which individuals and communities perceive the world around them.
- It shapes their values, beliefs, and behaviors, including their attitudes toward nature.
- Each faith tradition provides a unique perspective on the natural world, often emphasizing its sacredness and the moral responsibility of humans to steward it.
- This interplay between faith and nature goes beyond mere observation; it leads to a deeper understanding of the environment as a spiritual entity

# REFLECTION



- **What are the teachings of the various religious traditions on the preservation of nature?**

# Exploring Beliefs and Teachings: Hinduism

- Belief in the interconnectedness of all life forms and the divinity of nature.
- The concept of "Dharma" includes the duty to protect and preserve the environment.
- The belief in karma, where one's actions in this life affect their future lives, encourages responsible stewardship of the Earth.
- The notion that the Earth is the mother (Bhumi Devi) and should be treated with reverence

# Exploring Beliefs and Teachings: Christianity

- Belief in God as the Earth's Creator and the Genesis declaration that humanity is given "dominion" over creation.
- The principle of stewardship, where humans are seen as caretakers of God's creation.
- The recognition that all creation is imbued with God's presence and should be respected.
- The belief that environmental degradation is a violation of Christian moral principles

# Exploring Beliefs and Teachings: Islam

- Belief in God as the ultimate Creator and sustainer of the universe.
- The concept of humans as "Khalifah" (stewards) of the Earth, responsible for its well-being.
- The Quranic teaching that nature is a sign of God and should be reflected upon.
- The emphasis on sustainability and responsible resource management.

# Exploring Beliefs and Teachings: African Religion

- Belief in the sacredness of the land, plants, and animals.
- The idea that humans are an integral part of the natural world, not separate from it.
- Rituals and ceremonies that celebrate and honor nature's cycles.
- A deep spiritual connection to specific natural landscapes and ecosystems.

# Exploring Beliefs and Teachings: African Religion

- Belief in the interconnectedness of all sentient beings and the environment.
- The teaching of "Ahimsa" (non-harming) emphasizes avoiding harm to all living creatures and the environment.
- The practice of mindfulness fosters a deep connection with the natural world.
- The idea that the Earth is a spiritual insight and enlightenment source.



# Common Ethical themes

- Stewardship
- Interconnectedness
- Reverence for Creation
- Responsibility
- Spiritual Connection

# Differences and Nuances

- Interpretation of Texts
- Economic consideration
- Technological Advancements:
- Changing Social values
- Cultural and Regional Variation
- Practices and Rituals
- Political Influences

# What ought to be done

- While there are common themes that bind various religious perspectives on environmental preservation, the differences reflect the rich diversity of beliefs and practices across faith traditions.
- Recognizing and respecting these differences while emphasizing shared values is essential for fostering collaboration and finding holistic solutions to the global environmental crisis.
- Ultimately, the interplay between faith and nature offers a tapestry of perspectives that can inform and inspire our collective efforts to protect the planet.

# Conclusion: Opportunity for collaboration

- The interplay provides opportunities for collaboration between faith communities and environmental organizations.
- The need for dialogue and cooperation in addressing environmental challenges.
- Thank you

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