

PRE Curriculum (Year 7, Term 3): Exercise Sheet 7.3.6b

Cards on KEY Concepts and Values (as linked to Environmental Issues)

These to be printed out and cut; and preferably stuck on cards that can be laminated. Illustrations may be added. Each group is to be given one or more cards and asked how this concept or value might inform Hindu responses to environmental issues. Do refer to pages 4-5, the Student Text or other literature for possible answers to help steer student groups.

The Triguna	The Triguna	The Triguna
The presence of the divine in Nature	The presence of the divine in Nature	The presence of the divine in Nature
God's Role in Creation (and its purpose)	God's Role in Creation (and its purpose)	God's Role in Creation (and its purpose)
The many deities linked to nature and creation	The many deities linked to nature and creation	The many deities linked to nature and creation

Ahimsa and cow-protection	Ahimsa and cow-protection	Ahimsa and cow-protection
Sankhya philosophy and the eight elements	Sankhya philosophy and the eight elements	Sankhya philosophy and the eight elements
The atman (in all forms of life)	The law of Karma	Purity
Dharma	Intentionally left blank (well nearly)	Intentionally left blank (well nearly)

Possible Answers

These answers are guidelines only and can be further developed. During the group work, the teacher - at his/her discretion - can circulate to teach in each group, rather than simply assist.

1. The Triguna: link the notion of 'sustainability' to *sattva guna*; also the consequences for the environment of insatiable greed (*rajo-guna*) and 'ignoring consequences' (*tamo-guna*). The desirability of living in a place influenced by *sattva* (in order to develop wisdom and contentment)
2. The presence of the divine in Nature: Nature is sacred and should be treated as such. Religious and moral practices such, as scripture that forbids the cutting of trees. Understanding the ideas of primary ownership (God) and secondary ownership, or 'stewardship' (human beings). The worship within Hinduism of sacred hills, rivers and plants.
3. God's role in creation: one purpose is that humans can be happy through the gifts of nature, and developing *sattva*. Also, the idea of cyclical time is important, as so closely linked to nature, the seasons, and so on.
4. The many deities linked to creation: the many deities, such as Indra (god of rain), Agni (god of fire), Vayu (god of wind) and Varuna (god of the waters); if these gods or demigods are pleased (e.g. through sacrifice), then there will be ample natural resources. Some of the Dashavatara stories embed environmental themes, as when the earth falls from her orbit after the wicked Hiranyaksha mines the planet of all its gold.
5. *Ahimsa* and cow-protection: *ahimsa* (nonviolence) is a key Hindu value, and is applicable to all life forms (not just humans); therefore all humankind should be nonviolent towards nature and wildlife. Cow-protection is particularly important. Eating meat is extremely wasteful in terms of natural resources, including grains and water.

6. Sankya philosophy: the gross elements develop from the finer elements. Hence, pollution of the air will result in pollution of fire, water and earth. Also, contamination of the ether (as by engaging in gossip or in telling lies) pollutes everything in turn. Similarly, the mind and intelligence should be pure, as also the sense of identity which should be linked to the divine.
7. The *atman* in all forms of life: such an understanding will lead to empathy for all life forms, and hence a careful and conscientious approach to the environment
8. The law of karma: the recent notion of 'global karma'; especially as indicating how humans are now reaping the karmic results of exploitation, in terms of pollution, global warming, and so on.
9. Purity is a key Hindu-Vaishnava concept linked to external cleanliness and represented by the lotus flower. Purity is antithetical to pollution.
10. Dharma raises the question of our duties and responsibilities towards the environment. Dharma also means "That which sustains us.", and hence indicates 'sustainability' (in many ways).