

Key words!

Stewardship - The idea that believers have a duty to look after the environment on behalf of God.

Extinction - When all members of a species have died out and that species will never exist on Earth again.

Vivisection - The cutting up of animals for scientific experiments.

Vegan - A person who will not use any animal product.

Vegetarianism - Someone who doesn't eat meat.

Ahimsa - The principle of non-violence towards all living beings.

Animal rights - The belief that animals have a dignity just as humans do and should be given care and protection.

Animal welfare - Animal welfare standards regulate the treatment of animals, in order to reduce suffering and improve health.

Animal rights!

Many people believe that all living things should be treated with respect. They believe animals have the same right to be protected from ill-treatment and exploitation as humans.

Most people believe humans are capable of more than other animals, e.g.; they can make decisions about what is right and wrong and they may have religious beliefs. This may mean that animals are not equal to humans, but also that they should be looked after carefully and protected as part of the natural world.

Christian views!

God has created a world in which humans have a special role as stewards of creation. This means they should look after the interests of the planet and all life on it. They may use animals for their survival and to help them in their work, but animals should never be neglected or made to suffer unnecessarily.

Stewardship means that in general they are against:

- neglect or ill-treatment of animals
- keeping animals caged or chained for human entertainment
- trading in certain animal products such as fur or ivory
- hunting for sport where animals may be injured or killed
- factory farming where conditions are poor and animals are severely restricted in space.

Buddhist views!

Buddhism requires us to treat animals kindly:

- Buddhists try to do no harm (or as little harm as possible) to animals
- Buddhists try to show loving-kindness to all beings, including animals
- The doctrine of right livelihood teaches Buddhists to avoid any work connected with the killing of animals
- The doctrine of karma teaches that any wrong behaviour will have to be paid for in a future life - so cruel acts to animals should be avoided
- Buddhists treat the lives of human and non-human animals with equal respect

Muslim views!

Muslims believe Allah created the world and everything in it, therefore all of creation is precious. Allah has given humans dominion over other creatures. He has made them 'vicegerents on earth' (Qur'an 35:39). This is a duty and a responsibility. Muslims should not abuse their privilege or exploit animals, because God will punish them if they abuse this power. Animals have been given to people by Allah and should be used wisely:

It is God who provided for you all manner of livestock, that you may ride on some of them and from some you may derive your food. And there are other uses in them for you to satisfy your heart's desires. It is on them, as on ships, that you make your journeys.

Qur'an 40:79-80