

this paper evolves, we may include also later teachings from the three Abrahamic traditions.

Preface: The Web of Life. We celebrate God's creation of a self-sustaining web of life in which plants, animals, land, water, air, and human beings are interwoven. There are many relationships in this web that can heal or damage the web itself. Among these, food production is one of the more significant forces. So we must choose ways of

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producing food that protect and heal the web of life.

Dimension 1. Growing Food in Ways that Protect and Heal the Web of Life. Food production, as one of the most significant forces in the natural world, affects the delicate balance of plants, animals, human beings, land, water and air—interdependent in seeking sustenance and survival. Farming and grazing together occupy one quarter of the world's lands and are the leading cause of deforestation and loss of natural lands. In order to maintain this balance for future generations, we human beings must choose to produce our food in ways that protect the web of life, preserve the living spaces that other life-forms need, and learn to use methods that return vibrant health to our soil and water.

Dimension 2. Humane Treatment of Animals. All our traditions agree that animals must be treated humanely and their suffering minimized.

Dimension 3. Protecting the Integrity and Diversity of Life. The ways in which we produce food must respect the integrity and diversity of the world's plants and animals, as well as taking active steps to prevent the extinction of animal species and plant varieties that produce seeds that can be saved.

Dimension 4. No One Should Go Hungry. All our traditions share a strong commitment that no one should go hungry at the end of the day. This applies especially to the poor and times of famine. Everyone should have access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally customary food. Each local community and the worldwide human community acting in concert share the responsibility for ending hunger and famine.

Dimension 5. Fairness Toward and Empowerment of Workers. All our traditions agree that workers must be treated fairly, justly and humanely. One out of every six people works to provide the food we eat—in the fields and in food transport, in restaurants and food preparation, and in food stores. We affirm their right to decent incomes, working conditions, and to organize themselves.

Dimension 6. Responsible and Ethical Forms of Business. All our traditions require that we act honestly, fairly, to the benefit of others, and in accordance with the ethical teachings of our faith traditions when dealing with customers, employees, partners, and the communities in which we conduct business. These relationships must be accessible to public scrutiny and accountability.

Dimension 7. Food as an Aspect of Spirituality. All our traditions affirm that food is an element in spiritual celebration and experience. Whenever we eat, we consciously affirm that eating is a sacred spiritual practice which celebrates the delicate interplay of plants, animals and people, land, air, and water that makes this possible and we commit ourselves again to maintaining this creation.

Dimension 8. Reflection on our Actions and Impact. The rhythm of Action and Reflection, renewed Action and renewed Reflection, is encouraged in our traditions in such forms as Sabbaths, Ramadan, and Lent, as well as other holidays when we refrain from our daily work and reflect on our roles in the web of life. Meaningful observance of these occasions can be expanded to include reflection on and assessment of the impact of human activity on the integrity of the web of life. It seems desirable to apply this

rhythm in making decisions about food. For example, there could be requirements that new departures in providing food be reviewed in the way 'environmental impact assessments' operate—with 'social impact assessments' also required. Some version of what is called the "Precautionary Principle" (analogous to the medical code, 'First do not harm') could be taken into account, so long as this does not prevent all development of new technology or new social arrangements.

Coda: A New Era of Religious Life? This Sacred Foods enterprise itself—because it is both interfaith, and inter-secular/faith—signals something of a new era in religious life. At that level and in many other arenas, Modernity is having a major impact on the self-understanding of the religious traditions. Indeed, Modernity is affecting both technology and social structures in ways that may require us to rethink some of the teachings of the past. Major changes in previous religious wisdoms have often accompanied major social and technological upheavals (as in the impact of Roman/Hellenistic civilization in opening hearts and minds to the new revelations of Rabbinic Judaism and Christianity about two thousand years ago, and the new revelations of Islam 1400 years ago). So we will need to keep that factor in mind as we draw on the religious and spiritual teachings of the past,

