

## **A Non-anthropocentrism Approach to Environmental Ethics: A Theological Worldview**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The discussion regarding non-anthropocentrism as the most amicable solution to the current environmental crisis will be incomplete if scholars fail to include the issue of restoring man's lost spirituality. Due to the dominance of the concept of man's conquest of nature (anthropocentrism), which has led to an unprecedented rate of scientific and technological development in an attempt to artificialize the natural environment, the spiritual connection between man and nature has been severed. Modern quantitative science's lack of a metaphysical foundation is said to destroy the spiritual connection between man and nature. This paradoxical situation necessitates the revival of eco-spirituality, which echoes ancient religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and others. The goal of this paper is to investigate a second-order method of combating environmental degradation. This "second order" within the preview of eco-spirituality and non-anthropocentrism includes ancient religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity, and Islam. Further, the "second order," under the label of "anthropocentrism," is opposed to scientism, materialism, individualism, and extinctionism. This work submits that the universal acceptance of the holistic worldview reflected in the ancient religions listed above will aid in the creation of a society free from man's dominance and exploitation, allowing him to live in peace and harmony with nature. Individuals' inner minds must be developed in order to effect a change in their attitude toward nature. This requires the cultivation of the ideas inherent in religions. This research is carried out with the philosophical methods of critical and context analysis.

**Keywords:** Non-anthropocentrism; Religious Perspective, Christianity, Islam.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The environmental crisis brought about by the application of modern science is acute, but few have sought the intellectual and historical causes leading to this state of affairs. People are conscious and alert about the present problem of overpopulation, war, and pollution of air and water, but at the same time they speak about modern development, which in the true sense is mal-development or the destruction of nature. Human society will never be at peace as long as man's attitude toward nature is based on aggression and war. Bahnson & Wirzba (2012) says, to be at peace with the earth, one must be at peace with heaven. The role, application, and function of modern science and technology have become dangerous as they lead to the destruction of the sacred and spiritual values of nature. People living in urbanised areas of the world feel the lack of something natural due to the creation of an artificial environment by themselves (Udoka 1984; Udoka 2006). Even religious people who live in such an environment have lost sight of nature's spiritual significance. The creation of an artificial environment in urbanised areas resulting

from the domination of nature by modern man has in fact threatened his very existence (Ekuri et al, 2014; Ekuri & Saba, 2016). Modern man has come to realise that the castles they are building are on sand, and there is disequilibrium between man and nature that threatens all of man's apparent victory over nature (Rusliana et al., 2018).

The domination of nature by modern man resulting in the present environmental crisis can be exemplified in the following manner: According to Clark (1916) for modern man, nature has been like a prostitute to be benefited from without any sense of obligation or responsibility towards her. The difficulty is that the condition of prostituted nature is becoming such as to make any further enjoyment of it impossible, and in fact, that is why many have begun to worry about its condition. Grahman's comments reflect the same point of view. Saniotis (2012) says, the sense of domination over nature and a materialistic conception of nature on the part of modern man are combined, moreover, with the lust and a sense of greed that make an ever greater demand upon the environment. Such a grave situation was expressed by Mahatma Gandhi by saying that there is enough in the world to meet everyone's needs but not everyone's greed. It may be said that scientific development is the root cause of the environmental crisis or the crisis between man and nature. "This is due to the fact," Perry (2009) says, that scientific knowledge of nature is secularized." This secularised knowledge of nature divorced from the vision of God in nature has become accepted as the sole legitimate form of science. Discord between man and nature is caused by the breakdown of harmony between man and God. For a non-modern man, the universe has some sacred aspects.

The very structure of the cosmos contains a spiritual message for man and is thereby a revelation coming from the same source as religion itself. The cosmos is a divine creation, coming from the hands of God, where we find the world impregnated with sacredness. Modern science that fails to accept the divine character of the world can come into existence only when the cosmos is emptied of its sacred character. Modern science, propagated through its vulgarization, has led to the secularisation of nature. Due to the vulgarisation of modern science, the cosmos, which was once pure and transparent, has become opaque, i.e., it has lost its spiritual meaning. In the process of vulgarising science, nature has lost its sacredness and divinity and has therefore become secular. Industrialization and modernization, the outcomes of the quantitative nature of modern science, have created a choking material environment in most of the urban centres today. The quantitative sciences of nature are accepted by modern man as legitimate sciences, and all other knowledge of natural and cosmic order is deprived of the status of legitimate science and accepted as something sentimental or superstitious. As a result, modern quantitative, secularised science rejects knowledge about the source of existence itself.

Modern science, although in itself natural, has injected the knowledge of facts into modern man's mentality, but it has failed to inculcate enough knowledge of the underlying nature of existence, and this limitation of modern science threatens the very existence of man with all other animate and inanimate species of the natural world (Grof, 2019). In its actual sense, cosmology is a sacred science of

the world connected to revelation and metaphysical doctrine, which has disappeared, especially in the west, due to the general neglect of metaphysics. The negligence of metaphysics is the outcome of modern science, which is based on the principle of reducing multiple levels of reality to a single psychological domain. Since cosmology encompasses both physics and metaphysics, and modern science ignores metaphysics and is directed towards instrumental values, it therefore neglects cosmology in part. Because modern science is based on reductionist principles, it ignores or disregards degrees of knowledge, resulting in the emergence of metaphysics and the destruction of bondage or harmony between man and nature. Simplicity is the outcome of modern science, where there is no place for metaphysics taken as superstition. Many of the scientists, particularly the physicists, have realised that the quantitative character of modern science has its limitations; it cannot discover the ultimate nature and roots of things.

Many agree that science deals with only one aspect of reality and not its whole (Ogabor & Ekuri, 2016; Ekuri & Sanusi, 2016). Many of the physicists are now seriously thinking about philosophical and religious problems and are inclined towards oriental doctrines. They admit either the existence of a real world or that all things and all consciousness are aspects of a single reality, the One. There are scientists who are unconcerned about the relationship between science and reality. But many are now concerned about the limitations of science and the problem of the encounter between science, philosophy, and religion. They are conscious of the fact that such problems and complications arise due to the total lack of metaphysical knowledge. They now realise that only this knowledge can reveal the true significance, whether symbolic or spiritual, of the complex scientific discoveries and theories, and that in the absence of this metaphysical knowledge, the scientific theories and discoveries appear as mere facts, opaque and disconnected from truths of a higher order. The secularised world view of modern science, devoid of reality or nature, when presented before the public after being taken out of the hands of professional scientists, places obstacles in the way of the religious understanding of things (Cobern, 2000). The scientific theories, laws, and technologies of today have taken man far away from nature and the religious and metaphysical conception of the world.

## **RELIGION AND ENVIRONMENT**

It has already been mentioned in the earlier paragraphs about the major causes leading to today's acute environmental crisis. The factors leading to environmental degradation may be summed up under the following four headings: (a) Humans' desire to dominate and control nature; (b) the materialistic approach of human society. (c) Blind faith in science and technology lacking a metaphysical basis (d) An unconstrained growth ethic in a limited world Humans have become conscious of their misdeeds and feel that it is indeed difficult to survive in a diseased environment. In this situation, the question that arises is: how can we work together to protect, preserve, and sustain our environment and create a cordial relationship with nature while at the same time enjoying the benefits of science and technology? To cultivate a harmonious relationship with nature, one should investigate religious and cultural imperatives. In this respect, Rapoport (2011) remarks, "World religions

can provide a framework for changing our attitudes.” Our religion teaches us that the land, rivers, mountains, minerals, oceans, and other species should be held in trust for God but can be used for the general welfare of humanity. According to Dwivedi (1997), human’s religions tell us that we should only consider ourselves as trustees of the universe. Of course, as trustees, we are authorised by God to use natural resources, but we have no divine power of control over nature and the elements. Moreover, from the perspective of many religions, the abuse and exploitation of nature for immediate gain is unjust, immoral, and unethical. In the following paragraphs, we shall try to analyse the contribution of some dominant religions in the world towards environmental protection and sustainable development.

### **HINDUISM**

Hinduism is in fact the most traditional religion in the world, where we find the sanctity of all forms, animate as well as inanimate, being maintained. This religion holds that God, the creator of this world, is all-powerful and has supreme authority over all his creations, including man (Jonas, 1987). It therefore follows that man, the possessor of supreme intelligence, has no right to confer degrees of relative worth on the different species created by God. This further implies that no human being can cause harm or damage to God’s creations, leading us to the conclusion that all living species, animate and inanimate, humans and non-humans, have an equal right to exist in the world. We may thus say that Hindu religion is centred around the ethics of biocentrism. Moreover, domination over non-human species and all other forms of exploitation of nature were totally forbidden in Hinduism, and people were expected to co-exist in peace and harmony with nature. In various Hindu scriptures, it is found that everything relating to the cosmos, everything relating to nature, i.e., its creation, maintenance, and destruction, is up to the will of God (Singh, 1992). Hence, one may say that Hindus equate nature (Prakrtz) with God. By no means can humans subjugate nature. On the contrary, they have more obligations and duties toward nature. The manifestation of God in the form of various animals, trees, and plants made people show their respect towards the natural world, which ultimately led to the preservation and conservation of nature. The basis of Hindu culture and religion is Ahimsa, or non-violence, and it gives rise to a system of guidelines for the maintenance and conservation of nature. The land ethic of Leopold, which pleads for the preservation of natural species, is found in the ecological insights of Hinduism.

### **THE VEDIC PERIOD’S MAN-NATURE RELATIONSHIP**

The first indications of appreciation for nature or the environment may be found in the excavations and finds of the Hindu-dominated Indus Valley civilization. During the Vedic era, the zoomorphic aspect of Hindu deities demonstrated compassion for animal life (Lopez Jr., 1995). According to Verma (2011), the natural world was not seen as something apart from man but rather as a mirror of his emotions and desires. The Vedic man used nature to his advantage, and his existence was wholly reliant on nature. His experiences with nature, though,

demonstrated his appreciation for it. The Vedic man believed he was a part of nature. According to Vedic literature, *Yajniya-purusa*, a person born from a sacrifice, is the origin of creation. Humans were formed alongside all other natural phenomena; hence, it may be deduced that they are a part of nature and do not have a superior position to other members or species of the universe or cosmos.

Nature provided for the fulfilment of the Vedic man's basic needs but not for his avarice. He owed nature for providing for his basic needs, and his debt to nature can be seen in a variety of ways. The deification of all natural components and environmental aspects, such as *Prthivr* (mother earth), *Agni* (fire), *Usa* (dawn), and *Surya* (sun), demonstrates his reverence for nature. The sun was cherished and worshipped because it was seen as the spirit of the cosmos. All of these natural components were venerated because of their supernatural properties and role in preserving the universe. In Vedic religion, the concept of cosmic rule or cosmic order is of the highest importance. People thought that the cosmos was an orderly, God-run whole and that nature had its own system of manifestation. The idea of *RTA* incorporates both the concept of physical order and the belief in ethical order. There is a clear order to the occurrence of natural occurrences, and all components of nature move within a well-defined perimeter. Despite the fact that natural events and occurrences are subject to change, there is something unalterable at their core. *Ta* is the constant that keeps the changing events together (Kalupahana, 1995).

In the Upanishads, the greatest ideal of Hinduism, where a harmony between Brahman and Atman may be achieved, the origins of Hindu environmental ethics can also be seen. According to the Upanishads, the ultimate truth is immutable, although the external world is continuously changing. Brahman and Atman may manifest the ultimate reality, which is similar to the essence of man. According to the Upanishads, Brahman, the ultimate source of the exterior universe, and Atman, the individual's inner self, are distinct. Self-realization reveals that the atman, or "I," is in fact Brahman. As Brahman is equivalent to Atman, Brahman's macrocosm is Atman's macrocosm (Lipner, 1984). The notion of karma has a prominent position throughout the Upanishads. The philosophy, which is akin to cause-and-effect theory, asserts that all human actions, whether good or bad, have repercussions. The notion of karma and the philosophy of reincarnation are inextricably linked. This simply implies that an individual's good or bad acts are mirrored in his rebirth. A person must endure the negative effects of his acts in the future. He has the ability to reincarnate as any disabled living creature. He is able to reincarnate as any disabled living creature. On the contrary, an individual's good acts may be rewarded.

The Vedic people had a strong belief in karma and reincarnation. Due to their dread of retribution, they venerated nature, therefore preserving ecological equilibrium. Regarding the non-anthropocentric approach to ethics, it may be defended from an Indian perspective. In Advaita Vedanta, the body is seen as the substratum of pleasure (*bhoga-ayatanam*), the outcome of Karma. The body is divided into four categories: those that emerge from the womb (*jarayuja-ianra*), those that emerge from eggs (*andaja-iarira*), those that emerge from wetness (*sredaja-ianra*), and those that arise from penetrating the ground (*sredaja-ianra*)

(udbhija-sarira) (Ottuh, 2020). The first group consists of humans, the second of birds, etc., the third of insects, etc., and the fourth of trees, plants, etc.

This implies that all types of bodies serve as the foundation for activity enjoyment. Animals, birds, reptiles, trees, plants, and all other forms of life have bodies because they must experience the consequences of their actions in this or a prior incarnation. They have a feeling of both freedom and delight. They have acquired bodies and achieved life on this planet for the purpose of their own freedom, not for the sake of humans. Hinduism is based on the sanctity of all forms of life. God, the universe's single creator, has total dominion over all living creatures, including humans and non-humans. God's creation is perfect and divine; consequently, no creature, not even humans, has the right to hurt other species without justification. Therefore, all species are equal and have an equal right to exist. This concept of ecological harmony is mentioned in the Jsavasya Upanishad: "The universe is a creation of supreme power intended for the benefit of all; individual species must therefore learn to enjoy its benefits by becoming a part of the system in close relationship with other species; let no species infringe upon the rights of another" (Ottuh, 2020).

The Upanishads are based on the fundamental notion of oneness. The Supreme Being is the creator of all things, and it is the soul that holds everything together. All gods, all worlds, all living things, and all of ourselves are kept together by this soul of all things, much as the hub and flange of a wheel hold all spokes together. The whole universe is considered a stage on which each living species arrives, does its job, and then exits. One spirit serves several roles. There is a single spirit, a single deity, and a single creature with many forms. The living things have their entrances and exits, i.e., as long as the soul or spirit is inside them, they perform their function in the world, and their death signifies that the soul has left their body, i.e., matter. Thus, we might conclude that "matter is in tension with the soul, yet the spirit is gradually evolving into its own." In Hinduism, all people are seen as an integral part of nature. Humans are equal to all other creatures of the Supreme and do not possess a particular status due to their unique features. Hinduism's notion of unity is strongly related to deep ecology, in which humans are seen as part of nature. This viewpoint is in stark contrast to shallow ecology, which is anthropocentric and attributes supremacy over nature to homo sapiens due to their superiority. Hinduism's unitive thought is fundamentally holistic, emphasising the whole above the parts. "The dynamics of may only be comprehended by examining the qualities of its constituents," wrote Mistry (2011, p. 82).

In the end, there are no components. "What we refer to as a portion is really a pattern inside an interdependent network of connections." One might thus assert that the microuniverse and the macrouniverse are interconnected. In reality, every living creature on Earth is a component of the faraway stars. This holistic perspective of Hinduism develops regard and respect for all living things in the cosmos. Each species contributes to the total, and they are all equal. This notion of the oneness of life prevents inflicting pain or injury on another, which in turn promotes ahimsa, or nonviolence, which is essential for the maintenance and preservation of the biotic community. The Vedantic philosophy precludes the

destruction and exploitation of nature by humans because it precludes the notion that man is the exclusive proprietor of nature. The notion of interconnection described in the Upanishads is inextricably related to the concept of life's oneness. *RTA*, or "immanence dynamic order," impacts all species and causes the cosmos to work in a predetermined manner, thereby establishing a connection between cause and effect. From *Rta* derives Dharma, which signifies the binding power, and from Dharma emerge the rules of Karma, which indicate that one becomes what he does and conducts himself to be.

As previously discussed, the philosophy of Karma plainly asserts that every action or deed a person commits has either immediate or long-term consequences in the world. This philosophy produces within people a predisposition, or *vasana*, to behave properly with regard to nature and all living beings. In other words, the idea of karma, which is an integral component of the Upanishads, regulates the activities of people, which contribute to the preservation of ecological equilibrium. In actuality, an environmental catastrophe is caused by two primary factors: (a) the human instinct to consider themselves superior to non-humans and distinct from nature, and (b) the human propensity to disregard the consequences of their activities. Lord Brahma, the all-powerful creator, created water with his unsurpassed ability to create. He flung the spirit into the water, which took the form of a testicle when illuminated by the sun (Pandit, 2005). He was born from the testicle of Brahman, the father of all creation. He stayed in the testicle for a year, until the womb matured and split into two pieces (Pandit, 2005).

Brahman created heaven in the higher testicular part and the universe in the lower testicular region. As recounted by Manu, this is the actual account of creation. Due to their intimate interaction and interdependence, the environment comprised of both living and nonliving substances stayed in perfect equilibrium. Manu asserts that all living and nonliving things contribute to environmental protection. In previous chapters, it has been argued that humans, particularly modern men, saw nature as a "warehouse of resources" to be exploited to satisfy their avarice. Destruction of forests on a massive scale has led to a reduction in precipitation, which in turn has caused a water crisis, soil erosion, a lack of soil fertility, a rise in carbon dioxide, global warming, and several other terrible environmental effects. Even in the earliest years, Manu and other dharma-sastrakaras recognised the significance of trees and specified laws for forest maintenance and tree planting.

In Manu Samhita, there is also an awareness of the contamination of water sources. Manu prohibited bathing in water that was also used for drinking and other purposes (Padhy, 2006). The sacred texts of Manu ban the discharge of faeces, urine, blood, mucus, etc., as well as the washing of soiled clothing in bodies of water, thereby preventing water contamination. The Manu Samhita contains prohibitions against the cruel murder of animals and the eating of the flesh of birds and animals, indicating the cultivation of an attitude of love, respect, and care among people as early as the first century BCE. Manu grasped the actual importance of nature during the ancient era, and in order to protect the environment from calamity, he established a stringent code of behaviour for the people, some of which were addressed in the preceding paragraphs (Padhy, 2006). By adhering to Manu's rules, a man becomes completely pure, which fosters in him an attitude of love,

compassion, and respect for the whole environment. Thus, a rebirth of Manu's code of behaviour and its implementation by humans in contemporary civilization may prevent additional environmental calamities (Narayanan, 2001). Manu believed that there should be no distinction between man and nature, or between living and nonliving things. The concept of *Rta*, which represents the vision of unity in the midst of diversity, has given the Samhitas contemporary relevance. The rebirth of Upanishadic ideas, particularly the interconnectivity concept, is crucial to overcoming the environmental problems of the twenty-first century.

To avert environmental disasters, individuals must see the world as a whole, without compartmentalising it by civilization. The interdependence principle is strongly linked to the interconnectivity principle-based holistic worldview. Historically, Hinduism emphasised the interconnectedness of man and nature in the form of a sacrifice, or *yajna*. By favouring this sacrifice rite, people hoped to gain the favour of God, who maintained the regenerative characteristics of nature and who, in turn, relied on the duty of humans for sustenance. 184 In later times, the interconnectedness of biotic species, including man, was conveyed via the concept of *rina*, or debt. The concept of "rinal," or debt, suggests that one should repay what has been granted. This concept of reciprocity was critical to maintaining nature's equilibrium. In fact, the word "ecosystem" itself implies the connection between the habitat or physical environment and the biotic or living species of the planet. Through the food web, energy flow, and biogeochemical cycles, which maintain the system's equilibrium, all components of the ecosystem are directly or indirectly reliant on one another. All of this is natural, and all components of the ecosystem live in a delicate equilibrium of interdependence. Inconsiderate human involvement in the natural system upsets the whole equilibrium.

Hinduism encourages the union of the individual *atman* with the universal *Brahma*, as shown by the preceding discussion. All beings are expressions of *Brahma*, and they exist both independently and interdependently. They originate from *Brahma* and are eventually reabsorbed by him. To prevent environmental devastation and catastrophe, it is necessary to instil in the minds and hearts of contemporary, technologically oriented brains the Hindu philosophy that everything is one and nature cannot be conquered. Thus, Hindu environmental ethics encourage human and natural equilibrium. Harmony already exists; one must just find it to realise it. Subbarao states that, because *Brahman* and nature are one, we must see the Supreme Being in all of creation and all of creation in Him.

## **THE POSITION OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE EYES OF DHARMA**

The mere name *Dharma* refers to "something which binds the many elements and characteristics of a person or object into a totality." In reality, *Dharma* is a system of morality and obligation that compels one to pursue the road of goodness (Simmel, 1955). *Dharma* is closely tied to the Vedic concept of *Rta*, which refers to the impersonal cosmic ordinance or rule of the cosmos. *Dhanna* comprises all the deeds of human righteousness that contribute to the maintenance of cosmic order (Dilawari, 1996). It prohibits violations of the *RTA* and the cosmic order. There must be a short explanation of the various varieties of *Dharma*, including *Sanatana Dharma*, *Sadharana Vamasfame Dharma* (or *Svadharm*a), and



*Manava Dhanna*. *Sanatana dharma* is the everlasting dharma established for Hindus in the Vedas and Upanishads, which guides individuals to preserve a proper cosmic order by following the correct path.

*Samanya or Stidhiirana dhanna* represents the duty of all individuals, regardless of caste, race, or gender. These responsibilities must be founded on the four noble qualities of truth, nonviolence, self-control, and holiness (Hiltebeitel, 2010). The dharma of Svadhanna or Vanasrama is intricately related to an individual's karma, or action(s). Manu, the Hindu lawgiver, believed that those who followed the holy dhanna, or road of justice, attained glory in this life as well as unrivalled bliss and serenity beyond death. One's dhanna is also connected to the Hindu notion of reincarnation. It is stated that one who leads a dhannic life will be rewarded and take a suitable reincarnation in the next life; i.e., the form of rebirth depends on a person's karma from the previous life. "Mcinava Dharma" or "global Dharma" refers to moral responsibilities owed to the whole of God's creation. Manava dharma is strongly related to the Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam philosophy, which asserts that all living creatures in the cosmos are members of a vast extended family. Respect for all living, animate, and inanimate species can be demonstrated by viewing them as extended family members.

As a result, our *dharma* to all living things on the planet is *manava dharma*. The notion of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam encourages the well-being of everyone, or sarvodaya, which is realised through spiritual comprehension. According to Gztii, nonviolence, friendliness, compassion, a loving attitude, respect for everyone, open-mindedness, and devotion to the Brahman comprise the essence of Dharma (Das, 2010). *Dharma* refers to the whole of an individual's obligations toward all forms of God's creation, which link them to the natural social world. As we have explored, *Dharma* promotes the wellbeing of everyone, but adharmas, or the poor fulfilment of one's obligations, harms society and, by extension, the whole universe. According to Wolfe (2019), "dharma is anchored on a basic view of a structured existence in a structured universe." "Society is dharmic due to the cohesion of its ideals and its fundamental morality." In addition, he believes that the Dharma's tenet that rewards can be obtained through worldly activities may motivate mankind to seek harmony with nature.

The value of Dharma in resolving environmental issues cannot be overstated. This may be described using the Hindu notion of Karma-phala, or one's acts' repercussions. According to the rule of karma, every action generates its own series of repercussions or responses. As a result, those who dominate nature through destructive activities are vulnerable to environmental degradation and other forms of ecological disaster (Reichenbach, 1988). This catastrophe impacts not just the person who caused it, or their "karma," but also future generations. Individuals must realise that the devastation and destruction they cause to the natural environment via their karma will affect not only their children and future generations but also them if they believe they will return to earth in a future life. If this notion is deeply ingrained in a person's head, he will repair his acts and refrain from destroying the environment. In today's world, when environmental and social issues are prevalent, the term "*dharma*" may be used in a number of circumstances. The human race must adopt a dharmic way of life. *Dharma* may refer to rituals, the unique

characteristics of anything, or simply the religion of man, as articulated by Rabindranath in Manusher Dharma. Specifically, dharma refers to moral principles (Dasthakur, 2020).

Nonviolence, or *ahimsa*, is dharma when seen as a moral virtue (*ahimsa paramo dharma*). In the Mahabharata, Dharma is described as promoting the wellbeing of the whole world, including both humans and non-humans. This notion of dharma, as represented in the Mahabharata, is of utmost significance in light of the current environmental catastrophe. If “welfare for all” becomes the guiding principle of dharma for every person, the environment will gradually heal and become the peaceful home of all species, human and nonhuman alike. A dharmic man, or a man governed by dharma, lives a disciplined and moral existence that fosters coexistence with all creatures in the environment (Rankin, 2019). However, according to ancient Indian philosophers, dharma is neither fixed nor unchanging. It is dynamic and adaptable, adapting to the demands, temperaments, and social changes of people.

As stated in the preceding paragraph, dharma is associated with values. A man’s life and actions are determined by his values. Among the three life goals of dharma, *artha*, and *kama*, dharma is the most important. In reality, all three components of the *trivarga* should be in harmony. According to Sharma & Talwar (2005), the *dharma* must endeavour to promote social welfare. If anything is connected to societal welfare, it is referred to as “dharma.” It implies that everything associated with an individual’s well-being is dharma. If dharma is interpreted in this manner, it will safeguard the environment, which is vital to human wellbeing. Regarding our dharma to the environment, Dwivedi (1997) asserts, our dharma to the environment may give a fresh perspective on reality and validate concepts of what is true for an ecologically conscientious society. In addition, Dharma’s underlying concepts, such as truth, moral obligation, and duty, may be used to mobilise individuals to assume responsibility for societal change, therefore ensuring the preservation of nature and sustainable development.

By following a *dharmic* lifestyle, one may overcome greed, abuse, mistreatment, exploitation, and environmentally damaging impulses. Only by first regulating our own ideas can we influence a shift in societal attitudes. Here, Dharma plays a significant role. Dharma, which is free of institutional structures, rituals, and other religious activities, directs individuals to embrace the correct ideals and the proper way of life in order to cultivate reverence and respect for nature. This will definitely permit the preservation of cosmic order and natural or divine law, thereby preventing an ecological disaster on Earth. Dharma instils awe and respect for nature in the populace and promotes environmental protection decision-making.

## **CHRISTIANITY**

Both the Old Testament and the New Testament include ideas about our responsibilities and duties toward nature. Although, as stated before, Christianity preaches ultimate human control over nature, the religion also advocates human responsibility toward nature in some contexts (Kay, 1989). Further, the teachings of the Old and New Testaments affirm that God is the unique creator of nature and that he has entrusted humans with its care (Vos, 2003). These teachings instil in

humans a feeling of duty toward non-human nature, which in turn fosters fidelity to God and a respectful, honourable, loving, and compassionate attitude toward non-human nature. Such lessons support the development of harmonious human-environment relationships, which are helpful to the preservation of ecological equilibrium. The biblical teachings also support the concept that God is the supreme Creator of the universe and that humans are the stewards responsible for caring for nature; yet, the continuation and preservation of nature are at God's will. God created nature and imbued it with life in the form of plants, animals, people, and all other kinds of life. In this regard, there is no distinction between humans and the rest of God's creation (Dudley et al., 2009). Further, according to Levinson (1994), the Bible declares that God's divine hand is in every part of creation, so no human has the ultimate authority to harm it. Thus, the environmental catastrophe of the twenty-first century may be alleviated to a considerable extent if people adhere to the teachings of Christianity.

## **ISLAM**

The Islamic holy book, the Quran, has passages on the preservation of nature. The Quran acknowledges that all natural phenomena are the result of natural law or natural order and that human interference in nature for the sake of artificializing it should not exceed its limits. Humans are God's or Allah's creation; they should serve the divine by caring for God's creation, i.e., nature, and "act as a mirror to reflect the lovely image of God" (Ali, 1996). The texts of the Quran affirm that nature maintains a delicate equilibrium and that all natural events occur in line with the rules of nature. Allah, or the All-Mighty, is the Creator of the Universe, and humans are nothing but his creation, created to serve him. They are not granted entire control of the natural world, nor are they permitted to alter God's divine creation to suit their egotistical demands, which upset the delicate equilibrium of the natural world. The Quran requires responsibility before God after death for such actions on the part of humanity. God has filled the world with all of His creatures for right and prudent use, according to the Holy Quran (Haq, 2001).

In Islam, *fasad* refers to the illegal and criminal overexploitation of nature's beautiful resources in the name of growth and progress, which upsets the natural balance and degrades environmental quality, particularly on the part of man. In Islam, *tawheed* signifies that the oneness of God promotes conservation and the preservation of natural equilibrium. In this context, unity refers to the harmony between humans and nature, including flora, wildlife, and the physical environment (Tariq, 2019). As previously stated, the establishment of harmonious interactions among all natural creatures, including humans, aids in the preservation of nature and ecological balance.

Furthermore, the Quran teaches that all natural phenomena are the result of God's *sunnah*, or natural law, and that humans must accept this rule as the Creator's will.

Any effort by *Homo sapiens* to amend or transform this rule will result in an ecological imbalance, or *FASD*, which is criminal, as stated above. Respect and regard for all natural beings are clearly emphasised in the Holy Quran's verses. God enables the prudent use of nature without waste, damage, misuse, or change, as

stated in the Quran (Hampson & Reppy, 1996). God has authorised humans to occupy the land as tenants, not proprietors, and has given them the task of preserving the natural balance through harmonious living and respect for all natural forces. All people are required to respect the God-given environment.

### **JAINISM**

This religion is more profoundly anchored in benevolence, love, Ahimsa, or nonviolence, and regard for living things (Gentry, 2016). According to Ottuh (2020), this religion conforms to the global rule, which holds that life generates life, order produces order, and peace may be attained through peace. According to Jainism, passion is the single cause of self-injury and harm to others. This must be managed by controlling one's voice, thoughts, and movements. To live peacefully and in harmony with the natural world, all persons must cultivate the virtues of integrity, honesty, chastity, charity, love, respect for everyone, and compassion. Himsa or violence in war, injury, hunting, adultery, and stealing should all be prohibited. Thus, the fundamental principle of Jainism is nonviolence, or Ahimsa, which is closely tied to the three precepts of right belief, right knowledge, and right behaviour (Tobias, 1991). Environmental harmony may be produced and maintained, according to the Jain, via kindness and affection for all animals, respect, compassion, and tolerance for the weak.

### **CONCLUSION**

From the above debate, we may conclude that the current ecological catastrophe necessitates the development of eco-spirituality, a spirituality that prioritises a creation-centered lifestyle over an ego-centered one. By following the path of Ahimsa and adopting a "reverent receptive" attitude towards the natural world rather than a consumerist and exploitative one, the current ecological catastrophe may be progressively resolved. Spiritual answers, according to Guha (2006), may restore balance and completeness between humans, between humans and the environment, and between humans and God; this is the emancipation and redemption of the whole universe.

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