



Environmental Ethics : An Ancient View

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Abstract:

The ethical relationship between humans and the natural world is the focus of environmental ethics. Environmental ethics did not become a distinct philosophical field until the 1970s, despite the fact that numerous philosophers have written about it throughout history. In the 1960s, people became more aware of the effects that population growth, technology, industry, and economic expansion were having on the environment. The publication of two significant books at this time helped foster this awareness. In her 1962 book *Silent Spring*, Rachel Carson made readers aware of how the widespread use of chemical pesticides was threatening public health and destroying wildlife. *The Population Bomb*, written by Paul Ehrlich in 1968, warned of the devastating effects that an expanding human population has on the planet's resources. Of course, environmental issues like pollution and resource depletion haven't been the only ones since then: Climate change, the loss of wilderness, the degradation of ecosystems, and decreasing plant and animal biodiversity are all part of a long list of "green" issues that have gained prominence in recent years in public policy as well as public consciousness. Our moral responsibilities in light of such concerns are the focus of environmental ethics. In a nutshell, environmental ethics must address the following two fundamental issues: What responsibilities do people have toward the environment, and why? Usually, the second question needs to be thought about first. It is typically considered necessary to first consider the reasons behind our obligations before addressing the specific obligations we have. For instance, do we have responsibilities toward the environment for the benefit of entities within the environment itself or for the benefit of humans as a whole, regardless of any benefits to humans? This fundamental question has received very different responses from various philosophers, which, as we shall see, has resulted in the development of very different environmental ethics. In this paper I shall try to explain the concept of environmental ethics in ancient india.

Keywords: Hinduism, Vedic, Rig Veda , Samhitas and Upanishads

Hinduism is one of the many religious traditions that originated in India, where people from all walks of life coexist harmoniously. In almost all Indian religions, reverence for nature and its creations is the guiding ethical principle. They've all prioritized nature over man. Our ancestors actually worshipped the five natural elements—the earth, water, air, light, and the cosmos—both literally and symbolically as they learned to live with them. The ancient Indian treaties and literature known as the Vedas and the Upanishads, which are all religions that are practiced in India, provide us with a wealth of information about the connections that exist between humans and nature, as well as human behavior and a sense of obligation to nature.

The Vedic and Puranic literatures, as well as the Upanishads, Arthashastra, Charak Samhita, Ramayana, and Mahabharata, all contain conservation messages that are based on Hindu religious philosophy. —Non-violence that is, non-injury to both the living also the non-living manifestations of nature like plants, creatures, air, water, land (earth), slope and timberland is the center of Hindu strict way of thinking which reached out up to Jainism and Buddhism. In Hinduism, every social and cultural activity has a connection to the environment. Hindus view rivers as their mother goddess, the forest as their god, totemic animals as brothers, and prey species as mortals in their relationship to social and natural environments. A traditional Hindu father is especially guided by the moral restrictions of destroying a green tree because it is believed that even the cutting of branches could make his son invalid. Traditional Hindus believe that trees can bring peace, prosperity, and consolation to mankind. They also believe that worshipping a green tree is a sin and a sacrilege that can spell disaster for the family and even the entire village community. Hindu households honor widowhood with the Ficus religious peepal tree; Hindu women who desire a son worship coconut trees and consume coconut fruits as a "divine gift" because the coconut tree (*Cocos nucifera*) is believed to be a symbol of fertility. 2 The tribal people, or aborigines, of India's primitive Hindu societies, who live in mountains and forests, have made a significant contribution to the protection and preservation of a number of virgin forest patches that are rich in biodiversity. These patches are referred to as "sacred groves" (Forest of God) and are untouched by the local population. It is usually dedicated to a deity or mother goddess who is supposed to guard it, rule over it, and punish those who break in. Interferences into it are forbidden. Such hallowed forests are tracked down all over India especially in the Western Ghats and north-eastern Himalayan districts and have become piece of the —Biosphere Reserves of India containing a portion of the uncommon and jeopardized types of plants and creatures. They are a repository for some valuable "germless" seeds that future farmers will need to keep farming. According to Hinduism, the environment's five great elements—space, air, fire, water, and earth—are all derived from prakriti, the primordial energy. Each of these things has a life and a shape of its own; The components are dependent and interdependent on one another.

The Vedas come from: It is difficult to determine when the Vedas' earliest parts were written, but it appears that they are among the earliest written works of human wisdom. As the antiquated Hindus only from time to time kept any authentic record of their strict, scholarly and political acknowledgment, deciding the time of the Vedas with precision is troublesome. We get a lot of guesses from historians, but none of them are guaranteed to be accurate. It is thought, however, that the earliest Vegas might trace all the way back to approximately 1700 BCE —

the late Bronze Age. 4: Who authored the Vedas? According to tradition, the revered compositions of the Vedas were not written by humans; rather, God taught the sages the Vedic hymns, who then passed them down through generations through word of mouth. One more custom proposes that the psalms were "uncovered," to the sages, who were known as the diviners or —mantradrasta of the songs. Around the time of Lord Krishna (around 1500 BC), Vyasa Krishna Dwaipayana was primarily responsible for the formal documentation of the Vedas. The Vedas are classified as follows: There are four volumes to the Vedas:

The Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda, and Atharva Veda, with the Rig Veda serving as the primary text. The four Vedas are referred to as the "Chaturveda," and the first three of them—the Rig Veda, the Sama Veda, and the Yajur Veda—are consistent in form, language, and content.

The Samhitas (hymns), the Brahmanas (rituals), the Aranyakas (theologies), and the Upanishads (philosophies) are the four parts that make up each Veda. The Samhita is a collection of mantras or hymns. Precepts and religious obligations are contained in the ritualistic texts known as the Brahmanas. There are a number of Brahmanas associated with each Veda. For ascetics who deal with mysticism and symbolism and live in forests, the forest texts known as the Aranyakas are intended to serve as meditation tools. The Upanishads are the Veda's concluding chapters, which is why they are referred to as the "Vedanta" or "end of the Veda." The essence of the Vedic teachings can be found in the Upanishads.

Even though devotees rarely read or comprehend the Vedas today, they are unquestionably the foundation of the universal religion known as "Sanatana Dharma" that all Hindus adhere to. The Upanishads, notwithstanding, are perused by serious understudies of strict custom and otherworldliness in all societies and are viewed as standard texts inside the body of humankind's insight customs. The Vedas have directed our strict heading for a very long time and will keep on doing as such for a long time into the future. And of all the ancient Hindu scriptures, they will always be the most extensive and universal.

The Rig Veda is the primary source of information on the Rig Vedic civilization. It is a collection of inspired songs or hymns. It is the oldest book written in any Indo-European language and contains the earliest form of all Sanskrit mantras, which date back to between 1000 and 1500 BCE. The Rig Veda was written between 4000 and 12000 BCE, according to some scholars. The Rig-Vedic samhita, or collection of mantras, is made up of 1,017 hymns or suktas, each with about 10,600 stanzas. These hymns are broken up into eight astakas, each with eight adhayayas, or chapters, that are broken down into different groups. Many authors, or seers, known as rishis, wrote the hymns. There are seven identified primary seers: Bharadwaja, Atri, Kanwa, Vashistha, Vishwamitra, Jamadagni, Gotama, and The social, religious, political, and economic background of the Rig-Vedic civilization is detailed in the rig Veda. Naturalistic polytheism and monism can be found in the religion of the Rig Veda's hymns, despite the fact that some of them are written in monotheism. Rig-Veda makes several specific mentions of the environment. According to a verse in the Rig-Veda, "the sky is like their father, the earth like their mother, and the space like their son." The universe made up of the three is like a family, and any harm done to any one of them

upsets the balance of the universe. These verses convey the message that humans must refrain from causing harm to the planet and engage in continuous forestation in order to survive, or else the ecological equilibrium of the planet would be disrupted. Rig-Veda has discussed the various ecosystem components and their significance. "Rivers occasion widespread destruction if their coasts are damaged or destroyed, so trees standing on the coasts should not be cut off or uprooted." Modern civilization is experiencing the wrath of floods as a result of the erosion of river embankments everywhere, and tree plantations along river banks cannot prevent erosion. The rishis had anticipated the natural corruption. They had even considered ways to control and clean the environment. They never permitted any environmental imbalance. In order to keep the environment clean and insect-free, the Vedas talk about self-realization through various "yajnas." By performing "yajnas," many pollutants and harmful substances could be eliminated. The Vedas forbid wasting water and other natural resources or polluting them. They recommend that towns and villages be surrounded by forests and trees. The Rig-Veda has a verse that says, "Thousands and hundreds of years if you want to enjoy the fruits and happiness of life, then take up systematic planting of trees." These verses convey the message that humans should refrain from causing harm to the earth.

In addition, the Rig Veda states: God's art creates the beauty of nature. Let us see the invisible hands of God at work in all that is beautiful. Rivers roar and flow as soon as His hand touches them. The moon sparkles, the stars twinkle, and flowers bloom when He smiles. The universe is shaken by the first rays of the rising sun; The gleaming rose buds are sprinkled with gold; The Rig-Veda encourages Hindus to form friendships with animals and even with inanimate objects.⁸ The Rgveda is considered the most ancient text in Indian context. The fragrant air is filled with sweet melodies of singing birds. It reads, "May the whole of humanity be of one mind, have a common goal, and the hearts be filled with love united, and the mind and soul be one and the same for all to live a happy life." The Vedas never made any distinction between their relationship to a specific geographical area or any particular biotic or abiotic entity on the planet.

The symbolic meaning of the Panchamahabhutas: 1. Shunya (Dreaming force): This doesn't produce any change in the real world. 2. Vayu (Illusory force): This force, like air, produces effects that most of the times has to be presumed. 3. Agni (Voluntary force): Like fire, this force is transient 4. Jala (Semi voluntary force): This force makes life water life i.e. flexible. 5. Earth (Involuntary force): This force makes life as rigid as earth 2.5 Agni Blesses with Wealth: Worthy is Agni to be praised by living as by ancient seers. He Shall bring hitherward the Gods (2). Through Agni man obtaineth wealth yea, plenty waxing day by day. Most rich in heroes, glorious (3). Agni, the perfect sacrifice which thou encompasses about verily goeth to the Gods (4). 10 2.6 Vayu (Air) : Beautiful Vayu, come, for thee these Soma drops have been prepared: Drink of them, hearken to our call (1). Knowing the days, with Soma juice poured forth, the singers glorify Thee, Vayu, with their hymns of praise (2). Vayu, thy penetrating stream goes forth unto the worshipper, Far-spreading for the Soma draught (3). These, Indra-Vayu, have been shed; come for our offered dainties' sake (4)

Keep Heaven and Earth safe from a terrifying threat. May we be close to the worlds that never experience pain, the godparents who support us with kindness, and the gods that alternate between day and night. Keep Heaven

and Earth safe from a terrifying threat (4). Twin sisters lying in their parents' arms, kissing the center of the world together, young and with limits. Keep Heaven and Earth safe from a terrifying threat. With God's protection, I appropriately call the two wide seats, the powerful, and the general parents. Who, stunning to observe, makes the nectar? Keep Heaven and Earth safe from a terrifying threat.

Gather heroes who will contribute to the preservation of the land. Twenty Vedas told the world that Earth (Prithvi) moves very quickly on its subtle axle, which doesn't rust and doesn't jerk either living or dead things. The idea of the earth's form in the Rig-veda is very fascinating. Earth produces medicinal herbs that prevent disease in animals and humans. In a dual conception, it is typically discussed alongside the heaven (Rodasi, Dyavaprihivi). Six hymns are penned specifically for Dyavaprihivi, while one brief hymn is penned specifically for Prithivi. In the Vedas, Prithivi is regarded as the mother and Dyau as the father, and they form a pair. "Heaven is my father, brother atmosphere is my navel, and the great earth is my mother" is a line from one of the Rig-veda's most beautiful verses.

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