

## Ecofriendly Policy Making Teachings from Ecocentric Vedic Literature

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Like all living creatures, a positive relationship with environment plays a key role in healthy living. We are all aware of the literal meaning of the word ecofriendly. The world has evolved in a global village where population, disasters, diseases etc. have spread to a maximum range. In this type of chaos, it is very necessary to preserve the earth and the living that exist on it. Here is the importance of ecofriendly policy making.

Literature deals with human life. So, all aspects of human life- social, political, economic, psychological, environmental are included in the vast domain of literature. Literature tries to analyze and evaluate the problems and through which solutions are aroused. Environmental issues are one of the most important problems our modern era faces. Profit oriented, anthropocentric attitude towards this nature is necessary and it is the need of this contemporary world.

Here, in this context, it is an enquiry on how Vedic literature approaches these issues, an enquiry about what kind of attitude is created by Vedas towards the nature and its resources. In that way, it will be also clear that how Vedic teachings can lead or guide to make ecocentric policies for the modern world.

These things are discussed under three subtitles.

### **1. Environmental Issues in the Modern Period**

Our environment is constantly changing. There is no denying that. Global warming, Climate change etc. stand in the top position of the issues. It is high time for human beings to take the right actions towards saving the earth from major environmental issues. If ignored today, effects are sure to curb human existence in the near future. Our planet earth has a natural environment known as Ecosystem which includes all humans and plant life.

Our planet is poised at the brink of a severe environmental crisis. Current environmental problems make us vulnerable to disasters and tragedies, now and in the future. We are in a state of planetary emergency, with environmental problems piling up high around us. Unless we address the various issues prudently and seriously we are surely doomed for disaster. Current environmental problems require urgent attention. Pollution of water, air and soil, global warming, Natural resource depletion, waste disposal, Climate change, loss of biodiversity, deforestation, ocean acidification, ozone layer depletion etc. are major problems in the modern era.

### **2. Ecocentric and Anthropocentric Attitudes towards Nature**

Ecocentrism is a term used in ecological political philosophy to denote a nature-centered, as opposed to human centered, as opposed to human centered system of values. The justification for ecocentrism

usually consists in an Ontological belief and subsequent ethical claim. The ontological belief denies that there are any existential divisions between human and non-human nature sufficient to claim that humans are either (a) the sole bearers of intrinsic value or (b) posies greater intrinsic value than non-human nature. Thus the subsequent ethical claim is for an equality of intrinsic value across human and non-human nature, or “bio spherical egalitarianism”

Environmental thought and the various branches of the environmental movement are often classified into two intellectual camps: those that are considered anthropocentric, or “human-centred”, in orientation and those considered bio centric, or “life-centred”. Ecocentrism can be seen as one stream of thought within environmentalism, the political and ethical movement that seeks to protect and improve the quality of the natural environment through changes to environmentally harmful human activities by adopting environmentally benign forms of political, economic and social organization and through a reassessment of humanity’s relationship with nature. In various ways environmentalism claims that non human organisms and natural environment as a whole deserve consideration when appraising the morality of political, economic, and social policies.

Anthropocentrism is the belief that considers human being to be the most significant entity of the universe and interprets or regards the world in terms human values and experiences. The term can be interchangeably with human centrism, and some refer to the concept as human supremacy or human exceptionalism. It is a

major concept in the field of environmental ethics and environmental philosophy, where it is often created by human action within the ecosphere.

### 3. Vedic View towards Nature

The most authentic and supreme texts in Indian philosophy are the Vedas. Vedic philosophy is highly ecocentric. According to Vedic thought there is no separation between the Divine and the nature. There are the two aspects of same reality. The cosmic reality is one like ocean. Nature is the manifest of the world like the waves on the surface of the sea.

The sacred presence of Brahman or the supreme Divine reality is there in god, What is called Ishwara or the Cosmic lord in Hindu thought. Yet it is also present in soul or reincarnating entity. What is called jiva as our higher self. And it is present in the world of nature, jagat, god, soul and the world aspects of one reality, but not in limited way each shares the entirety of the underlying reality Each is sacred and holds the same deeper nature of the being, consciousness and bliss (sat-chit-andanda)

The vedic vision unity is the basis for an ecological approach in which we can honor the entire universe as part our own higher self. It takes us beyond the duality god and creation. God does not create world out of nothing, The world, God and the soul are inherent aspects of the same external being.

It is interesting to know that ancient Vedas have several references in them on environmental protection, ecological balance, Weather cycles, rainfall. phenomena hydrologic cycle, and related subjects that directly indicate the high level

of awareness of the seers and people of that time.

Ancient treasures of vast knowledge reveal a full cognizance of undesirable effects of the degradation, whether caused by natural factors or human activities. The protection of the environment was understood to be closely related to the protection of the dyaus or heavens and prithvi or earth. Between these two lines the atmosphere and the environment that we refer to as the pyaravaran. Many of the Rig-vedic hymns therefore vividly describe the DyavaPrithvi that is they describe Heaven and earth together.

The Rig Veda venerates deities like mitra, veruna, indra, maruts and aditya that are responsible for maintaining the requisite balance in the functioning of all entities of nature weather the mountains , lake, heaven and earth the forests of the waters, seers recognized that changes caused due to indiscreet human activities could result in imbalance in seasons rainfall patterns crops and atmosphere and degrade the quality of water, air and earth resources

There are many hymns seeking the blessings of the five basic gross elements or the panchamahaboota of nature akash or firmament vayu and air, agni or fire ,apah or water and prthivi or earth. People were careful to refrain from activities that could cause harm to nature's boundaries it was understood that the well being of mother earth depended on the preservation and sustenance of the environment.

For any inadvertent action leading to earth's excessive exploitation the seers prayed for forgiveness ."whatever I dig from thee O earth may that have quick recovery again. O

purifier may we not injure the rituals or the heart "The seers of rigveda speak on behalf of earth for its principles of replenishment "you give me and I give you. "They look at every entity of nature with the eyes of a friend and sympathizer: "mitrasyaahamchakshashansarvanibhootanis ameekshe".

All four major Vedas - the Rig, Sama, Yajur and Athurva Vedas recognize the importance of maintenance of the season's cycles that are likely to get altered due to the climate change owing to inappropriate human actions. It is remarkable that the people in vedic times regarded nature and environment in a holistic manner reversed each of it's constituent and entities by carefully preserving them Do not harm the environment :Do not harm the environment do not harm the water and the flora: earth is a mother, I am her son may the waters remain fresh do not harm waters..... Tranquility be the atmosphere, to the earth to the waters, to the crops and vegetarian the vedic prayer invokes divine intervention to bless and protect the environment

It is often supposed that humans can get what they want from this world provided they are prepared to work hard enough for it that with our superior intelligence we can win wealth by exploiting the earth's resources while animals can only follow their instincts in the struggle for survival. The ability of humans to exploit their environment is presumed somehow to give us rights over animals and nature. This misconception lies at the root of the expansion of human domination of the planet over the past 500 years.

A different concept is taught is taught by the vedas. The planet and all she produces does not belong to humanity any more than she belongs to humanity, any more than she belongs to the other species living here. The earth is satisfied when she sees her produces symbolically returned to God, it's original Source. This principle is taught in the classic vedic text Isha Upanishad.

In the Vedic vision of the world consciousness pervades the universe and all within it. A human being an elephant a cow, birds, ants, trees, mountains, rivers, and the planet itself –all are conscious. The sun, moon, and stars shine their conscious beings fill the space between us with their invisible presence.

The splendor of the moon, the stars, the rising sun, the winds, the sky, the

vegetation, the animals, birds, rivers, trees, oceans, the mountains together form the beauty of the natural creation. Part of that beauty is called vana vaibhava of that in Sanskrit. It can be translated to English as forest splendor. Human beings are part of this forest splendor and should therefore love and respect it. We are part of it; it gives us our identity and without it we are lost

In short vedas created an attitude in Indian minds is based on ecocentric. This attitude is necessary to cure the modern ecological problems. We should understand the laws of nature and obey them. Vedic texts give us an ecocentric attitude. It should be preserved. It is the need of new era. So, if we try to accept the Vedic attitude towards nature and making of policies, it will be a blessing to the whole world.

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