CHAPTER II

RELIGIOUS FOUNDATIONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

INTRODUCTION

The classical adage 'religion is the foundation of ethics, and ethics is an expression of religion' seems to find expression in discourse on environmental ethics. Such expressions may be explicit or implicit, depending upon the nature of philosophizing. The tradition-based philosophies would be more pregnant with such expressions as against contemporary 'secularized' articulations. In the present chapter an attempt would be made to understand the extent of influence of religion and its ethical discourse on environment and how religion mediates between the extremes of environmental debates.

Religious precepts are embedded in the respective scriptures of religions. They also seem to find their expression in the structured legal systems of various traditions and communities. The praxis centered concepts influenced wide range of ethical thoughts in such a way that environmentalists

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1 Religion and ethics are two autonomous systems of thought to uphold human behaviour in a greatest good for a largest number of people. Religious foundations of Environmental Ethics are somehow ethical in its nutshell. Religious rules are faith based while ethical rules are argument based. Religion has been invalid if it looses ethical standard. Religious foundations in Indian culture are very much rooted in moral obligations. Though they are autonomous, we cannot always draw a firm line of separation between the two.
to support their demands and principles thought it significant to look into these religious moorings. Environmental Ethics had developed as a response to failure of each ethical theories or incapability of ethical doctrines to deal with problems faced by mankind in understanding man’s moral status vis-à-vis nature. It is an acknowledged fact that religions have not only determined the way we perceive the world but also set roles individuals play in nature. Consequently, neither religion nor environmental ethics can survive in all times unless and until they are tied up with appropriate hermeneutics. It may be necessary that a moral science of environment and its underpinnings in theological doctrines have to have redefined and re-coordinated for a proper interdisciplinary articulation. In the present Chapter, we attempt a brief journey through philosophical and theological concepts that have significant relation to a formulation of environmental ethics. 'Religious foundations of environmental ethics' call for detailed study of justifications, both implicit and explicit, offered in the respective scriptures of various religions regarding the general ethical doctrines contained therein.

From a religious and environmental ethical point of view, there are two perspectives that can be developed for a harmonious relation with nature, namely, sacred and secular. The sacred may in turn be at the level of mystical or religious experience. The secular in turn has ethical, political and legal dimensions. These perspectives at one level seem to be inseparable, but at another level seemingly separable treatment leads to problems that threaten the natural balance between the rational and the non-rational. The secular perspective expresses concern for nature not based on religious ideas. From
the sacred as well as existentialist perspectives that recognize man as an ‘authentic being’ to scientific humanism which recognizes man as the most superior and the ultimate stage of evolutionary process, the concern for man and nature has taken varied forms. Every religious tradition, even while upholding the supremacy of man, has condemned the needless exploitation of non-human beings and non-living beings. Most religions uphold the necessity of human intellect and rationality, which is a constructive line of approach rather than negative. Religion is ethical but it is autonomous in character in order to specify its dogmas. Each religion is an occurrence that is culturally determined by its history and geography. Religious beliefs are deemed to be sacred because they are based on revelations or claimed to be mystical.

In order to understand the influence of religions on environmental ethics, we must understand both the religious texts as well as inquire into the tradition that goes into the making of religions. Therefore, texts and its hermeneutics can be taken as the important aspects of their understanding of environment. In the present study we may not be able to exhaust the list of world religions and their contribution to the development of environmental philosophies. We shall concentrate on representative religions that have, prima facie, significant differences in their approaches to nature, and nature's relationship to man. We shall therefore discuss (i) Christianity, (ii) Islam, (iii) Hinduism and (iv) Buddhism in order to clarify the concepts that go into the making of religion-specific Environmental Ethics.
CHRISTIAN ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

In this section, we would like to discuss the principal aspects of Christian scriptural thoughts related to environment, methodology of theological vision and issues and questions of Christian environmental ethics. K. M. George while arguing for "reconciliation between man and nature as the second goal of God's Incarnation"\(^2\), points out that Christian tradition teaches that 'man as the crown of creation' is created in God's image and likeness and for the service of environment. We shall be able to see image and likeness of God in environment only if man has a speck of the divine. Christianity is defining 'nature' not on the basis of any traditions or historic events but on the basis of belief that God has created the nature and all that is in it. Theology claims that God has created certain qualitative differences between man and nature. It is man's responsibility to keep the nature as environmentally coherent. But man assumed the role of the master of universe. Man has forgotten the 'intrinsic' value of nature and taken to gross instrumentalism. But we should realize that environment itself is a 'being' and each being has its role to play in the teleological project of creation. Man is also a being, a conscious being and this consciousness is the source of the image and likeness of God. Theologically, consciousness means 'the ability to recognize' freedom, goodness and capacity to 'become'. Consciousness can also be defined as ability to understand God's love and desire about the world. World reveals God's presence of mystery and its processes show love and desire of God. The New Testament (second part of the Holy Scripture, Bible) recognizes sin of being rich (selfish motives) in a poor world. Therefore it is

man's responsibility to renew the "whole creation." The vision about the world (environment) is different in the opinion of the two Testaments of the Christian Scripture. Old Testament is anthropocentric and New Testament is ecocentric.

Let us now look into some of the important statements, which provide the basis for articulation of Christian environmental ethics. In Old Testament, God has given the dominion over the whole creation (anthropocentrism) to man but it means not to exploit beyond the limits of stewardship. The story of Noah and the flood gives (Genesis: 6: 1-22) the lesson that consequences of sins by man is not only to man but also to all creatures. We can see similar sentiment expressed in several other passages. Some of the passages in the Bible (particularly in the New Testament) point toward some form of ecocentrism in the Christian approach towards environment. However, whatever may be the interpretations of the texts from the book of Genesis to Revelations, whether Christian approach to environment is anthropocentric or eco-centric, Christian environmental ethics will remain theo-centric.

3 A more detailed discussion on anthropocentrism and ecocentrism is undertaken in Chapter III and IV of the present study.
4 "God created man, blessed them and said, Have many children so that your descendants will live all over the earth and bring it under their control I am putting you in charge of the fish, the birds and all the wild animals. I have provided all kinds of grain and all kinds of fruit for you to eat" (Genesis:1: 28) But simultaneously God ordered, "to till and keep the garden of Eden as a steward" (Genesis:2:15) Both dominion and stewardship was done for the goodness of everything (Genesis:9: 2-7).
6 Robin Attfield after a detailed study of Christian approach to environmental ethics points out that the presupposition that “God created universe” and the same exists for “God’s glory”, points to ‘theocentrism’ more than any other ‘centrism.'
Many Christian theologians claim that Christianity is not a religion but a "New Testament" not only meant for man but also to the whole creation. It may be remembered that because original sin has caused the fall of whole nature. Jesus Christ as the 'ordained redeemer' from God - the father, saved the world from the fallen stage. Holy Bible as the source of Christianity provides the background of Christian ethics, Theology, Christology, Pnuematology, Soteriology and other doctrines. These philosophically nurtured schools of theology aim to bring about harmony between man and nature for bringing the kingdom of God (Heavenly experience) into Earth. Harmony is the basic nature of Heaven. This kingdom of God is the temple of God\textsuperscript{7}. It says you are the temple of God and the spirit of God abides in you. Therefore man, who is the symbol of the 'temple of god', must take the initiative for the harmony with nature, to make earth as 'Heaven' where we can see the fullness of sharing (Coinonia) without which we cannot achieve Divine harmony\textsuperscript{8}.

This discussion, therefore, reveals the basic tenets of Christian thought. The relation between environment and man from the Christian perspective can be characterized from three perspectives\textsuperscript{9}: (1) Man's dominion over nature (2) Man's participation in nature and (3) Man's stewardship of natural environment. Among these three first one is more adequate and recognizable to various orthodox - conservative groups inside Christianity. Man's dominion over nature is more theologically defensible

\textsuperscript{7} 1 cor 3: 16.

\textsuperscript{8} Divine harmony has two sides (a) harmony towards God and (b) towards nature, which is supposed to be our brother. (Luke: 10: 27- 37 and John: 13: 34 - 35, 15: 12- 13) Brotherhood or neighbourhood includes Earth, animals as well as humans.

\textsuperscript{9} Reich, Warren T.: Encyclopedia of Bioethics, op.cit, p. 368.
rather than scientific and ethical. As K. P. Joy says, the dominion over every being by man who is having the image and likeness of God is more Christian oriented. Dominion however can be understood as caretaker, trustee or stewardship. Earth is Lord's because he created it. We define Sabbath as the day of rest for earth implies that every non-human being is also qualified for retreat.  

Methodology of Theological vision

We may consider "dominion over nature" by man as a methodology of theological vision to understand the necessity of human concern towards environmental ethics. Lester R. Brown believes that the immediate necessity of man is for pure water, air and soil in order to preserve the fish, plant and other resources in worldly order and to save our living planet from a great disaster. Investigations into the human eco-system from various angles have confirmed the interrelatedness of life on earth and the absolute dependence of the human species on its environment. Man is the custodian of the mystery of environment. We have to have a hope of oneness in theological methodology of environment in all aspects. The Christian theology always has a vision in understanding environmental ethics which speaks of the integrity of creation, the theology of creation, the organic relationship within creation and so on. One of the objectives of Christian ethics is to conserve the irreplaceable resources in order to save the living planet that is the locus of God's creation. The methodology of man's dominion determines

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the significance of man's participation in, and stewardship of, natural environment. Christian Environmental Ethics conceives the 'dominion over nature' as a special characteristic of man since man is known by 'image and likeness of God'. Paulos Mar Gregorious explains this in the following:

Image of God means participation in the very characteristics of God - to be the perfection of all good, all beauty, all love, all wisdom, and all power. This rather than sin, \textit{a la} Augustine, is the decisive and distinctive element in Man.\textsuperscript{12}

However, Christian Environmental Ethics developed a theological methodology, which suggests the dominion over nature as a best tool of environmental harmony and co-relation and accepts the importance of spirituality in human ethical life. Christianity is not negating dominion over nature, when we evaluate Scriptures and Patristics. But man should not be destructive when he is supposed to be creative in environmental affairs. There is a clear indication that concern for environment must start within human mind in the 'oikosomatic'\textsuperscript{13} model of reality where the material creation becomes 'my Father's house' (oikos) and 'my body' (Soma) may also help the re-discovery of the larger dimension of the image.

\textbf{Issues and Questions of Christian Environmental Ethics}

So far we have seen those supporting Christian Environmental Ethics. A brief critical evaluation may help us to put in proper perspective the traditional Christian position defending man vis-à-vis nature yet at the same

\textsuperscript{12} Gregorios, Paulos: \textit{Cosmic Man: The Divine Presence,} p. 138.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid (PP 45-55) Best example is Christ's Khenosis (God become man) which helps salvation and message of attaining kingdom of God.
time asserting the need of protecting nature. Robin Attfield\textsuperscript{14} considers the positions of John Passmore, Lynn White and William Coleman keeping in mind the Christian tradition. Passmore\textsuperscript{15} acknowledges that the object of nature is not to serve humanity but on the contrary, it is man's responsibility to behave as a steward. To 'serve the humanity' or dominion over the nature and exploit nature for his own (man's) ends is the Old Testament attitude towards nature. For example, the valleys are said to be watered for the sake of wild beasts (Psalms 104) and wilderness is given rain to support the plants (Job 38:26). Robin Attfield provides with counter arguments quoting Psalms 148 and Psalms 104.24, which express admiration of God's handiwork and the praise in which all his creatures join. Attfield questions Passmore's claim that for Christianity, nature 'exists primarily as a resource rather than as something to be contemplated with enjoyment'. Attfield accepts Passmore's point that in Bible nature is not sacred and this attitude allowed Christians to experiment with nature and investigate its secrets. Not only did God find 'everything that He had made very good' (Genesis 1:30) but also desires alongside the restoration of Israel that of nature's beauty and fertility (Issaiah. 41:17-20)\textsuperscript{16}. Attfield does not define man's dominion as exploiting nature or serve humanity. In the beginning the Old Testament authorized only a vegetarian diet to man (Genesis 1:29). When meat eating was later prescribed (Genesis 9:2), man's dominion was probably seen as applying simply to meat eating and to the domestication of animals. By using verses like Leviticus 19: 23,

\textsuperscript{14} Attfield, Robin: \textit{Environmental Philosophy: Principles and Prospects}, p.75.
\textsuperscript{15} Passmore, John: \textit{Man's Responsibility for Nature: Ecological Problems and Western Traditions}, p.78.
\textsuperscript{16} Deutro Isaiah, is the second part of the book of Isaiah from chapters 40-66. First part deals with events leading upto the captivity and this part contains predictions, warnings and promises. Issaiah is a major prophet described in Old Testament Era.
25: 1-1217, Deuteronomy 14: 4, 20: 19, 22: 6, 25: 418. Attfield argued against the view that God has directed man to exploit nature for his proper ends, as Passmore claims. Attfield explains dominion by using Genesis 1: 26-28, 9: 1-17, Psalms: 8: 5-8 when he shows how humanity is authorized to rule, but only in a way consistent with Hebrew notion of kingship. Kings among the Hebrews19 were regarded as responsible to God and to no one else. (Chronicles 29: 11-14). This domination by kings meant answerability and responsibility in matters of kingship. Genesis 2: 15 gives another example20. In the New Testament we can see a multi-dimensional account about the dominion and responsibility of man towards nature. New Testament speaks about God’s care for animals and birds such as sparrows (Mathew 10: 29, Luke 12: 6) and flowers such as lilies (Mathew: 7: 28-30). Jesus’ advocacy of rescuing ass and oxen, which have fallen into pits on the Sabbath (Luke: 14:5) is another example quoted by Attfield.21 This proves that man’s relationship with nature must be governed by moral principles. Attfield agrees with Passmore’s idea that nature is a system of symbols to be decoded for man’s enlightenment22. Humanity is responsible for the care of the natural world, whether for human use or for preservation. Modern period (unlike the Medieval period) is the world dominated by science and technology. John Passmore and Lynn White might, under the influence of science, question the

17 Leviticans, Third book of Old Testament, written by Moses, the Head of Prophets.
19 Kings of Hebrews was a new system of administration among Israelites. It transformed the prophetic system of rule.
20 It says: ‘And the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden’s beauty and protect it from harm as well as derive his food from it’.
21 The parable of the pain staking retrieval by a shepherd of the hundredth sheep (Luke: 15: 4 - 7) St. Paul’s comments (Romans: 8: 21- 22, I cor.9 : 10- 11) also might have been in this column. St. Paul regarded nature as merely instrumental one. Non- human nature is similarly involved in this salvation of man Kind (Colossians. 1: 15- 20) St. Paul is a later Apostle of Jesus Christ who enriches the New Testament scripture with 14 letters which is considered as basic Christology.
22 Attfield, Robin , Ibid, p. 27.
relevance of Christian concepts for an ecologically sound system. Passmore for instance argued that Christianity in the medieval period failed to preserve the beauty, usefulness and fruitfulness on the face of the Earth\textsuperscript{23}. Lynn White indicts Christianity for destroying the pagan culture, which held nature in reverence, and promoting the scientific culture through its natural theology\textsuperscript{24}. On the other hand, William Coleman writes:

Environmental stress is not peculiar to Christian cultures and holds that even if religious beliefs have contributed to the problems, their influences will have been indirect and is not better evidenced than the ties between Christianity and Capitalism\textsuperscript{25}.

Robin Attfield studies these criticisms with the help of patristics and medieval Christian concepts. St. Basil, for instance, was insistent upon 'Prayer for animals' in his daily routine. St. John Chrysostom urged kindness to non-human beings because they (animals) and we share a common origin. Origen draws our attention to the Stoic concept that irrational exists for the sake of the rational. Augustine declares that there are no moral ties between humans and animals. Attfield here points out that before 17\textsuperscript{th} century Christianity recognized that it is man's duty to preserve the face of the earth in beauty, usefulness and fruitfulness. St. Basil's theme of man as the furnisher and perfector of creation was echoed even more explicitly by Ambrose in the west and Theodoret in Syria. This idea can be summed up in the words of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{23} Passmore, John, \textit{Man's Responsibility for Nature: Ecological Problems and Western Traditions}, p.31.
\item \textsuperscript{24} White, Lynn, 'The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis' in Donald Van De Veer and Christine Pierce (ed.): \textit{The Environmental Ethics and Policy Book}, p.56.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Coleman, William, 'The Cultural Basis for our Environmental Crisis of Science', Quoted in Robin Attfield: \textit{Environmental Philosophy: Principles and Prospects}, p.17.
\end{itemize}
Attfield: "The Christian Topography of Cosmos ... (believes) God has prepared Creation like a house and appoints humanity to complete and adorn it". Augustinian concept held that humanity participates in God's work through arts, sciences and agriculture. Augustine rejects Stoic anthropocentrism and accepts the intrinsic value of non-human creatures. Patristics advice is that human action should not damage the environment. Orienting the mass to keep the natural beauty should be the motto of one who hopes for better generations.

Attfield discusses understanding of Environmental Ethics in the Post-Reformation period when he points out that John Calvin believed that everything in creation was made for human beings. Calvin combined his anthropocentrism with a belief in stewardship over the whole Earth when he says: "Nourishment of man is the motto of earth". Calvin concluded by demanding that every one regard himself as the 'steward of God in all things which he possesses'.

A brief review of modern period in philosophy will throw light on the influence of Christianity on the preliminary formulations of an environmental philosophy. Descartes believes 'commendation of reverence before nature are the sentiments of a man who believes that there are no moral constraints on human transactions with nature'. It is no wonder that Descartes justified killing of animals and non-vegetarianism as he believed in man's mastership

26 Attfield, Robin: op.cit, p. 27-30.
27 Quoted in Passmore, John: op.cit, p. 29.
and possession of nature. Francis Bacon and Rene Descartes are ideologically in one view when the former claims: “Knowledge is not to be sought for pleasure, profit, fame or power, but for the benefit and use of life and that they perfect and govern it in charity”.  

G. W. Leibniz was a Christian who believed that all created substances, whether high or low in the chain of being, had a perfection of their own to attain. Immanuel Kant denies the duties to animals. Kant remarks: ‘Supposing we regard nature as a technological system he (man) is born to be its ultimate end’. Passmore seem to accept Kantian framework when he denies duties to animals.

Attifed’s discussion of John Passmore and Lynn White and the criticisms thereof brings out a new vision in Christian environmental ethics. He recommends that Christians can accept that the survival of humanity is not supernaturally guaranteed and indeed have the resources in their traditions. In Passmore this is done by not accepting the God-given dominion or stewardship of humanity but by accepting the exercise of responsible dominion over nature thereby preserving both the earth and human civilization. Lynn White seems to be hostile to any active approach to nature through Christian ideology, however proposes alternatives to environmental protection as envisaged in Christian saints such as St. Francis of Assisi.

Philosophers like Richard Routley (later on identified as Richard Sylvan) accepts Passmore’s account of history, but disagreed with his ethical position which is too conventional and support a more radical position. The

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30 Bacon, Francis, Ibid , p. 17.
radical position of Peter Singer rejects the despotic position which views everything that exists in creation as being created for the sake of human kind and that, no moral constraints on the dealings of human kind with non-human nature exist. Passmore in his study of classical Christianity claimed that the notion of stewardship tradition is not the mainline tradition of Christianity. Further, he claims that the emphasis on 'stewardship' is of recent origin. Attfield on the other hand argues that 'stewardship of nature' is as primitive as ancient Christianity. Further, Rule of Benedict in the 6th century demanded 'gentle attitude' towards nature. Again, Aquinas did recognize the role of rational beings in the general framework of God's providence to impart perfection to irrational ones.

ISLAM AND ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

Islam is a Semitic religion like Judaism and Christianity. Etymologically Islam means 'Peace which abide with Lord'. The five pillars of Islamic faith according to its scripture are (a) Right creed (b) Five time prayer of a day (c) Arms giving (Sakkath) (d) Fasting in the month of Ramzan (e) Pilgrimage to Mecca. The basic doctrine of the Quran emphasizes the 'Pre-destination of man'. 'The Creation history of world' is nothing different from other Semitic religions. However, as far as Islam as a religious movement, it has a specific role in environmental ethics. As Lubis observes, in order to change the kufr (concealing of truth) world-view that is responsible for the present dismal state

32 St. Benedict, founder of monasticism in the West in the 6th century had proclaimed what is called "Rule of Benedict".
of our environment, Islam calls for a fundamental change in the way we live our lives both at the personal and societal level.  

Ethics in Islamic Perspective  

According to the Islamic Scripture law can be the ethics behind society. Islamic religious law insisting 'submission' to the will of God is a complete way of life. Orthodox Schools of Islam like Hanafi (India) Shafi (Jordan) Hanbali (Saudi Arabia) Jafari(Pakistan)etc. suggests 'law' as the 'path that leads to refreshment'. Al-Ruhuvi proclaims:  

God is the perpetrator of all actions and God is the creator of everything that exists. There is therefore a unity in the knowledge that human beings attain—no matter what its immediate source.  

Indeed, Reason and Revelation are complementary, confirming, enlarging and extending one another as they contribute to human understanding. Revelation establishes moral discipline for the masses. Revelation based Islamic Scripture and ethical laws embedded in it have to have a consensus, which provides the final check on any particular judgements of right and good. In Islam the only secure basis for ethics lay in texts revealed by God. George Howrain observes that Islamic theistic subjectivism proposes the commands of God as the basis of moral

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34 Kenslay, John: 'Islam and Medical Ethics' in Camenisch, Paul F., (ed), Religious Methods and Resources in Bioethics, pp 93-94.
35 Kenslay, John, Ibid,p 95.
judgement. According to the Quran, God created human beings with a basic knowledge of right and wrong, which established their responsibility before God. Quran reads:

And when thy Lord took from the children of Adam, from their lions, their seed, and made them testify touching themselves, "Am I not your Lord?" They said, 'Yes, we testify'- lest you should say on the day of Resurrection, "As for us, we were unaware of this", or lest you say, "Our Fathers were idolaters aforetime, and we were seed after them. What, wilt Thou then destroy us for the deeds of those following falsehood?"

Human beings are supposed to be rational according to Islamic morality. Knowledge is thus a gift of God in order to behave morally on Earth. Recognition of God as the source of wisdom and healing completes and protects the kind of character, which abide in human beings. Muhammad Iqbal points out:

The first thing in which a moralist must believe is that all in this world has only one able Creator, who performs all deeds willfully. He gives life and takes it, causes illness and cures. He is able and wise, the perpetrator of all actions.

The importance of God is not negotiable in Islamic Concept. God created humans as part of His creation to function within its original pattern.

36 George, Hourani F, *Islamic Rationalism: The Ethics of Abdal-Jabbar*, p.59. The Quranic man is not a stranger on this Earth. Quran is the external abode of righteousness.
37 Sura. 7: 171-72. This document includes an Arabic text with translation. See, Paul F. Camenisch (ed) op.cit, p.106.
Disciplined pursuit of virtues achieve proper order of souls. Asgar Ali Engineer an eminent authority on Islamic doctrines asserts:

There is no concept of a theocratic state in Quran or Hadis. The primary concern of Quran is to provide moral guidance and develop an appropriate atmosphere to setup a society which is just and benevolent to all, including people of other faiths. Human beings do not need religion or in particular Islam, to establish respect for life of other non-human beings. Man-Man and Man-Other beings have an implication and relevance in the case of question of value. Monotheistic tradition of Islam provides an important support for such a value

The experiences and conclusions of religious life is however not destructive but constructive for the uplift of Environmental Ethics. As humanity is subject to God's immutable laws, they are equal partners with the rest of the creation and nature. As the whole creation is the work of one Originator, every being works within a defined pattern. In fact the Quran speaks of heavens and the Earth as extensions of God's throne and thereby suggests that creation was designed to function as a whole.

Islam and the Sustainable Care of Nature

Religious rituals of Islam express the importance of environment and its need of existence. Islamic teachings show rituals as having a major role in social life. Rituals are socially made. Ritual actions do not produce any practical result on the external world— that is one of the reasons why we call

them ritual. It is only an internal constitution of the society. Joseph Schacht notes:

Rituals gives the members of the society confidence, it dispels their anxieties, it disciplines their social organization...Religious ritual is the prescribed performance of conventionalized acts manifestly directed towards the involvement of non-empirical or supernatural agencies in the affairs of the actors.\(^{40}\)

We do hope religious ritual may do much more than to merely symbolize, it validates and intensifies relationships. Relationships can be between man and man or man and his environment. Human beings through a screen of beliefs, knowledge and purposes see the Islamic concept of nature. Islam considers the earth as a source of purity and a place for the worship. Izzi Deen quotes Prophet Muhammad in holding the earth as a place for worship:

The earth is made for me [and Muslims] as a prayer place (masjid) and as a purifier. This means that the Earth is to be used to cleanse oneself before prayer if water is unobtainable.\(^{41}\)

Quranic notion of the world of phenomena and the natural environment is semantically and ontologically linked with the very concept of God on the one hand and with the general principle of the creation of humanity on the other. This means there is no conceptual discontinuity in the Quran between

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the realms of the divine, of nature and of humanity. Speaking
metaphysically\textsuperscript{42}, nature has a transcendent significance since it could not
explain its own being and thereby pointed out to something beyond itself.
Nature functioned as the means through which God communicated to
humanity, the means through which, one may say, God made an entry into
the flow of time. Speaking morally, human beings were created by God as His
vicegerents (Khalifa) in the physical world lying within the finite boundaries of
time, and they were world-bound even before they committed their first
transgression in the Garden. But the very principle of God's vicegerency also
made them His Servants ('abd', 'ibad') who were-by virtue of a Primordial
Covenant (mithaq) they had affirmed, and a Trust (amana) they had taken
upon themselves in pre-eternity – the custodians of the entire natural world.
Humanity was thus transcendentally charged not to violate the 'due measure'
(qadr) and balance (mizan) that God had created in the larger cosmic whole.
According to the Quran, Allah has created the world and the universe in
proportion, measure and balance taking a holistic perspective (Surah 13: 8
and 15: 21). Speaking naturalistically, the physical world exists to nourish,
support and sustain the process of life, in particular, the human life. And the
whole cosmos was an integral system, governed by unchanging natural laws
(amr), which were God's immutable commands. These laws explained the
regularity and uniformity in natural processes, which cannot be violated in the
general run of things.

\textsuperscript{42} Haq, S. Nomanul: 'Islam', in Jamieson Dale (ed.): \textit{A Companion to Environmental Philosophy}, p.112.
Thus, when we examine Islam we note that it has bequeathed in its normative tradition a large body of principles governing both the ethico-legal and practical issues concerning the physical world and our encounter with it. Thus the authenticated traditions (Hadith) function as a binding moral guide and more formally as one of the two material sources of Islamic law. There are to be found numerous reports concerning the general status and meaning of nature and concerning agriculture, livestock, water resources, birds, plants, animals and so on. Land distribution and consecration (hima and haram) the two fateful doctrines of material sources of Islamic law, have the sense of a protected, forbidden place or a sanctuary, developed into legislative principles not only of land equity but also of environmental ethics, notions that were subsequently incorporated into the larger body of the Islamic legal code. To be sure, the Quran's concepts of God, nature and humanity all have their roots in the transcendental realm (metaphysical) and then issue forth into the moral historical field. In the Islamic concept the purpose of human beings is to create a moral order in the real world. Islam literally means "submission" -- submission of the human will to the Divine command. So we observe that while the creation of nature has its roots in the transcendental realm, it manifests itself in historical time in the real world where humanity is charged to establish a moral order. No other creature is equipped to perform this task of protecting the environment God has entrusted the duty of protecting the environment to man, a duty so heavy with responsibility no other creature was willing to accept it. The Quran says:

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Lo! We offered the trust unto the heavens and the earth and the hills, but they shrank from bearing it and were afraid of it. And man assumed it.

It is precisely these metaphysical linkages between the immediate and the ultimate that constitute the most characteristic feature of Quran's entire philosophy of being. Quran says: "Surely, we are from God and to Him we return" (Surah 2: 156). The very human essence is that human beings are accountable before God, because of his superiority among created beings.

Quran is full of references to nature, natural forces, natural phenomena and natural beings. In Quran, out of its 114 chapters some 31 name nature and its adjectives. In the Quranic methodology, the metaphysical-transcendental and the natural-historical are interrelated but do not mix substantively, nor do they enter into a combat. Some of the injunctions of the Prophet points to the intrinsic goodness of creation: "When doomsday comes if someone has a palm shoot in his hand he should plant it." This hadith in fact captures the spirit of Islamic environmental ethics. It points out that planting continues the process of development that sustains life even if we do not anticipate any benefit from it.

HINDU ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

We can find an extensive literature on Hindu environmental Ethics in many of its scriptures. Among the Hindu scriptures, Upanishads and Bhagvad Gita are having more vital essences, which provide enough resources

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43 Surah 33: 72.  
44 Izzi Deen, Mawil Y.: op. cit, p. 238.
concerning environment. The general ethical framework and some specific
passages from the above texts, however help us to reconstruct traditional
views on certain issues like *ahimsa*, *dharma*, anthropocentrism,
anthropomorphism, question of value etc. In this task, it is often necessary to
make explicit what is implicit in order to show the importance of ethics towards
environment. The consciousness of ethical principles can definitely bring out a
new beginning towards nature. Hindu religious doctrines as a foundation for
environmental ethics provide us with certain normative criteria for our attitude
towards nature. We may well begin with an overview of sources, methods and
types of analysis in Hindu ethics. Then we may turn our attention to certain
discussions on scriptural passages in the Hindu religious tradition. Lastly, we
examine the concept of non-violence (*ahimsa*).

Sources, Methods and Types of Analysis in Hindu Ethics

Hindu ethics uses the term 'Dharma' to refer to what we call 'Ethics'. It
is one among the goals of human life – the *Purusharthas* (*Dharma*, *Artha*,
*Kama* and *Moksha*). It is the root of other goals. It makes other goals possible.
It gives life a purpose (telos). Dharma has been divided into two types: *visesa*
and *samanya*. Dharma sutras and Dharmasastra texts give description of
these two types of Dharma. Visesa refers to conditional and relative duties
with regard to castes, sex, stages of life, region, occupation and kinship.
Samanya refers to generic moral principles (*sadharana dharma*) and are
twofold: sacredness of life and gratitude for life. There are two classifications
of authority for dharma. There are six modes of Knowledge and four sources
of dharma. The six modes of knowing are *pratyaksa* (sense perception),
anumana (inference), Sabda (testimony, especially of scriptures), upamana (analogy), arthapatti (hypothetical supposition) and abhava (non-perception).

The four sources of dharma are Sruti (transcendent authority), Smriti (another category of scripture), Sadacara (the behaviour of good people), Anubhava (conscience or knowledge derived from personal experience). All these four sources are arranged in a descending order of authority. Sruti, smriti, sadacara and anubhava are considered as foundations of Hindu Ethics. Klostermaier points out that:

Dharma presupposes a social order in which all functions and duties are assigned to separate classes whose smooth interaction guarantees the well being of society as a whole and beyond this, maintains the harmony of the whole Universe.

This means that Dharma, at least theoretically is its own justification: dharma does not depend on a personal authority that could also make exceptions and pardon transgressors. In its strictest and fullest sense, dharma coincides with Hinduism. Though from an absolutist, Vedantist standpoint, good and evil are relative, the two sides of one coin as it were, the dharmasastra tradition of India has laboured continuously to sharply separate dharma from adharma to spell out quite unambiguously what is meant by ‘righteousness’ and ‘unrighteousness’. Hindu Ethics, however does an analysis of sanadhana dharma (eternal dharma). They are universally and unconditionally binding on all humans. They are the foundation or pre-condition for all duties. Crawford observes:

Sanadhana dharma performs the role of watch-dog over parochial and provincial egoism. The motivation behind sadharana dharma is two-fold: the sacred and secular. Samanya dharma is impersonal and Trans-subjective for it transcends the illusory duality between self and other.\textsuperscript{46}

The scope for interpretation of dharma brings out two facts: (a) If a norm appears just once in Sruti, in as much as that idea becomes popular in later ages it can be legitimised (b) Even ideas that never appear in Sruti can be introduced through one of the other foundations by arguing that they make explicit what is implicit in Sruti. These two facts influence the order of listed values and can be changed depending on what seems relevant for a certain epoch. Therefore traditions cause elimination of undesired prescriptions from Sruti passages and elimination of values which do not seem relevant to the times. Bernard Gest asserts another type of analysis in Hindu ethics. He writes: "Morality is a public system applying to all rational persons governing behaviour which affects others and which has the minimization of evil as its core". According to him ten moral rules can be the core of human virtues. They are do not kill, do not cause pain, do not disable, do not deprive of freedom, do not deprive of pleasure, do not deceive, keep your promise, do not cheat, obey the law, do your duty. These moral rules emphasize that prevention of evil is the most important goal of Hindu dharma. Gert thinks, the ultimate design (telos) of human life is to encourage spiritual development. In a better society it is less likely that a person will unjustifiably break moral rules. He analyses Hindu Ethics as a matter of morality, which is deontological. Gert confirms that according to the ancient Hindu thinkers,

Samanya dharma is universal, public morality and it encourages by rewards and punishments.\textsuperscript{47} From this we can see a shift from a focus on injunctions and prohibitions in Sruti to a focus on virtues in Smriti. Virtues in Smriti consider prevention of evil as their most important goal. The question of non-violence arises in this virtue of prevention of evil. Non-violence (ahimsa) defines the moral 'bottom-line'. Other virtues on the lists identify common values. Young writes: "Hindu moralists take into account the mundane goals of the individual's happiness and society's well-being as well as the supramundane goal of spiritual liberation".\textsuperscript{48} This type of analysis about dharma helps to ascertain the significance of Aristotelian method of analysis about dharma, even today, in the midst of elimination of undesired prescriptions from Sruti scriptures. MacIntyre quotes Aristotle that: "The virtues are precisely those qualities the possession of which will enable an individual to achieve eudemonia and the lack of which will frustrate his movement toward that telos.... To act virtuously ... is to act from inclination formed by the cultivation of the virtues"\textsuperscript{49}. This shows that the practice of virtues creates a stable and harmonious society by recognizing unity-in-difference. Similarly, Hindu idealism calls for benevolence and service to the world. Hindu virtues also encourage spiritual development, the ultimate telos (design) of human life. Virtues can redeem and completes nature through human-beings. In short we see that Hindu ethics (dharma) is largely virtue ethics. This emphasizes the importance of 'righteousness' and its analysis as a significant factor to define Hindu Ethics. Here, not the tutor but the pupil is

\textsuperscript{48} Young, Katherine K, 'Hindu Bioethics', in Paul F. Camenisch (ed), \textit{Religious Methods and Resources in Bioethics}, p.6.
\textsuperscript{49} MacIntyre, A: \textit{After Virtue: A study in Moral Theory}, pp. 139-149.
more important. Virtues defining dharma uphold the truth, justice and impartial attention. The assessment behind Dharma sutra and Dharmasastra texts analyse Hindu Ethics as a Tapas (self-realisation).

**Scriptural importance of Hindu Environmental Ethics**

General Ethics can be confirmed with concerned theories. But religious ethics is always obligatory to their respective scriptures. Unless and until there is definitely a matured moral thinking, scripture of a religion cannot be explicable. Acceptance by a group or a sect is not the issue. The issue is how far the moral law is justifiable to scriptures. The salient features must be disciplined according to the scriptural text even if it is revealed in different times and situations. The value of language, whether it is sacred or ordinary, is not important while its significance lies in the concurrence to scripture.

Vedas are the basic text of Hinduism. It contains the value of nature and its intrinsic capacity. The four Vedas Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva explain the patterns of worship and its dignitaries. Each Veda has mantra, Brahmana, Aranyaka and Upanishad. Mantras are Samhitas. It gives order of rituals. Brahmana explains the “Prajapati” as Ishwara or Almighty. Aranyakas are secret spiritual advices. Upanishads explain spiritual wisdom and noble paths to Moksa. Upanishads give ‘Jnana Marga’ while Gita gives ‘Bhakti Marga’ significantly, in the midst of Karma marga and jnana marga. Gita is the gospel for liberation from ajnana. Gita explains ‘Bhakti Marga’ as ‘Karma marga’. We can summarise Vedas as exemplifying Sanadhanadharma rather than Vishesadharma. But Gita emphasises Vishesadharma, that gives responsibilities of Brahmin, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudhras, which are
entirely different. Each category has each vishesadharma. But every life has equal ashramadharmanas – Brahmacharya, Garhasthya, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa.

Vedic Hinduism expresses concern for nature by providing a metaphysical union between the human and non-human beings, the adherence to which seems necessary for us to establish and sustain a proper relationship between the physical nature and us. In ecological terms the vedic hymns provide us with a number of insights. Vedas speak of an inexplicable unity of creation and a mysterious interconnectedness of everything to everything else. Each thing has an interest and purpose to fulfill in the web of being. It is this that makes each and everything worthy of moral consideration. As pointed out by Billimoria, a remarkable feature of the Hindu religious tradition is that ethical ponderings from its very beginnings were closely related to the awareness of nature. The principle underlying this perspective is Rta (the cosmic order). In this notion the highest good is identified with the total harmony of the cosmic or natural order. Crawford writes:

The ethical impact of Rta (order) on the vedic mind is seen in the confidence it generated in respect to the goodness of life in the world— consciousness of Rta imported the feeling of being at home in the world. It offered solidarity and security. The world was not a place where blind, capricious forces held sway, but was a benevolent habitat in which men could expect to enjoy all the good things of life --material and spiritual

Later in *Atharva Veda* Truth (satya) is identified with Dharma as the law that govern all beings, thereby rendering the notion of Rta in a deeper ethical sense.

With the Upanishads, the early ritualism of Vedas gave way to metaphysical knowledge that contributed significantly in evolving a worldview that accorded the highest or transcendental prominence to the supreme principle called *Brahman*. Brahman was conceived as the ultimate reality that characterizes the Self of all beings. In fact Brahman as the indivisible, ultimate reality of which no greater can be conceived becomes the presupposition for all other thinking, be it intellectual, social or moral. This metaphysical view is called Vedanta philosophy. However in some dominant forms of Vedanta, the reality of the world and all things and relations within them is taken to be illusory, the only reality being Brahman. Thus Advaita Vedanta speaks of the world as *maya*, as ultimately unreal. Now one might wonder what does this suggest in ecological terms. Nelson argues that if the world is considered as maya, then the motivation for maintaining or respecting it is virtually absent as the world is merely tolerated until it passes away completely. On the other, Deutsch maintains that according to Vedanta, this would imply that fundamentally all life is one, that in essence everything is reality and as such would merit moral consideration. According to Deutsch, Vedanta offers certain core ideas that would inspire us to institute a proper ecological ethics. The first of these is the idea that “everything in nature is interconnected with

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled Environmental Ethics: Problems and Approaches is the record of the original work done by Geeverghese Iype V. under our guidance. The results of the research presented in this thesis have not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or certificate of this or any other University.

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everything else." This means that the constitution of nature is such that any action performed will have its effect over a wide, complex and even unexpected domain. As Deutsch points out the doctrine of Karma gives a concrete expression of this idea of interconnectedness. The Karma theory proclaims that every action that one performs has its effect in the world. It conceives everything in nature as causally connected with everything else.

The second core idea that Vedanta offers is the notion of "continuity of man and all physical nature". As pointed out by Deutsch, in order to realize a proper relation with nature, we have to feel a deep natural kinship with nature and all life forms. The realization of the continuity of man with the rest of nature enables us to recognize that in essence all life is one and everything is reality. This in turn would bring forth reverence for all living things. The last core idea that Vedanta provides has to do with a "doctrine of creation". The Semitic notion of creation in some sense provides man with a privileged status. However the Vedantic notion of creation talks about a natural unfolding of Spirit in the world and accordingly it sees everything in nature as of intrinsic spiritual worth. This means that Vedanta attests to the full integrity of the whole54. Here we can see that Vedanta calls for a living care of everything in nature, as we are participants of, in the natural order and balance of things. But surely Vedanta accepts that nature does not belong to anyone. The fundamental unity of everything and the spiritual kinship with everything would rule out the possibility of gross exploitation of nature and us.

54 Ibid, pp.80-84.
Hinduism is a religious tradition where we can find the interconnected concepts of non-injury (ahimsa), the oneness of all living beings (Advaita Vedanta), and self-realization (moksha). Environmental ethics acquires a vital significance in Hindu scriptures. According to Naess all Hindu scriptures have become part of the vocabulary of environmental ethics. He interprets Bhagavad Gita and other texts of Hinduism as supporting Deep Ecology. Verse 6: 29 of Bhagavad Gita is very significant to Environmental Ethics. It reads: “Sarvabhuta-stham atmanam Sarva-bhutam catmani iksate yoga yuktatma sarvatra Samadarsanah”. It means, “He sees himself is yoked in discipline, and who sees the same everywhere.” It is but natural for any one with some knowledge of the religious traditions constituting Hinduism to find the interconnectedness between man and his environment, which provides Universal Harmony. Without self-realization that the Gita instructs (6: 29), the above-mentioned harmony will be impracticable.

However not all environmental thinkers would agree with the Hindu conception of discipline and the ideal of self-realization as necessary requirements for environmental ethics. Thus Jacobsen argues:

Environmentalism teaches neither liberation from the world, nor the ultimate value of the social order. On the contrary environmentalism has samsara, the world of the natural processes of birth, flourishing of life, decay and death as its ultimate concern.

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55 Naess, Arne, in *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, p.187. He reproduces the translation of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, although no reference to this translation is found: ‘He whose self is harmonised by yoga seeking the self’. The last words of Radhakrishnan’s translation, ‘everywhere he sees the same’ are absent in Naess’ rendition. See, *The Bhagavad Gita*, Sanskrit text, English translation and notes by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, P. 204.

If so, what is the relevance of the Gita verse 6: 29 and how does it relate to ecosophy? Jacobsen investigates to tackle these hurdles through Gita's commentaries. This helps us to acquire a co-ordinated concept, which forms a methodology in Hindu environmentalism. The Gita comprises chapters 23 to 40 of the Bhismaparva of the Mahabharata, but it has been treated as a separate work. It recounts the dialogue between the God Krishna and one of the Pandava brothers, Arjuna, just before the beginning of the battle of Kurukshetra between the Pandavas and Kauravas. Arjuna was a Kshatriya and it was therefore his duty to fight battles. At the beginning of the Kurukshetra battle Arjuna suffers a breakdown and wants to withdraw from the battle because he feels that killing other humans would be wrong and would destroy social order (dharma). But Lord Krishna convinces Arjuna that there is a superior order for ahimsa and it's 'dharma' is the knowledge of the self. It transforms the material principles of dharma to a conception of svadharma. This conception of dharma exhorts one to perform one's duties by forgetting the results of one's actions. The unique message of the Gita is that if one's duties are performed without attachment to the fruits of action, that is, without egoism, one is not bound to the world of rebirth (Samsara). Discipline is more important than ahimsa. Self realisation is nevertheless an acknowledged fact of discipline. Ahimsa is only a distinguished reality of discipline. Ahimsa cannot survive the entire gamut of being. If ahimsa is taken into account in its entirety the systems of organic life will collapse.
As Brokington points out: 'Dharma is incomplete, if it contemplates ahimsa alone.'

Ramanuja gives a purely religious interpretation of Bhagavad Gita. According to him the world is part of God and totally dependent on him, but it is a mistake to identify the self with the body and the natural processes. Inequality belongs to Prakriti. Living beings do not share one self, but the selves of beings are similar. Thus, when one knows one's own self, one knows that all other atmans have the same form. Madhva reads the import of Hindu texts not as espousing monism but as monotheism. He believed in a personal God (paramesvara). God controls everything. However all these commentators accord the real identity of the self and its relationships as conducive to a genuine environmental ethics.

The contemporary thinkers like Gandhi and Radhakrishnan have played a major role that could creatively reinterpret Hinduism as supporting the deep ecology to a great extent. Monastic traditions defined Hinduism with a focus on the liberation from the world. Contemporary thinkers used the religious foundations of Hinduism as a tool to eradicate the social evils in Hindu society. This improvement gave new meanings to the concepts of dharma, self-realization and the unity of all beings. Modern Indian thinking is radical in interpreting Bhagavad Gita as a science of salvation. Arvind Sharma affirms the combination of ascetic and contemplative ideas of Gandhi and

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Radhakrishnan to a programme for political action.\textsuperscript{58} Gandhi thought Moksha as inseparably related to one's social duty (dharma). He found the essence of the Gita in the last 18 verses of the chapter two (2: 55 to 2: 72). He calls them as the markings of a satyagrahi (sathaprajna). Naess notes:

Gandhi recognised a basic common right to live and blossom to self-realisation applicable to any being having interests or needs. Gandhi made manifest the internal relation between self-realisation, non-violence and what is sometimes called biospherical egalitarianism\textsuperscript{59}

Radhakrishnan comments on the Bhagavad Gita, verse 6: 29, in the following way:

Though, in the process of attaining the vision of self, we had to retreat from outward things and separate the self from the world, when the vision is attained the world is drawn into the self. On the ethical plane, this means that there should grow a detachment from the world and when it is attained, a return to it through love, suffering and sacrifice for it. The sense of a separate finite self with its hopes and fears, its likes and dislikes is destroyed.\textsuperscript{60}

Arne Naess' statement regarding Gandhi is also relevant to the above interpretation given by Radhakrishnan. From this discussion we can say, according to the philosophies of oneness, the path goes first inwards only to lead out again to everything. The path of action, Karma marga, leads a

\textsuperscript{58} Sharma, Arvind, The Hindu Gita: Ancient and classical interpretations of the Bhagvatgita, Quoted in Knut A. Jacobsen, op.cit., p. 226

\textsuperscript{59} Naess, Arne, op. cit, p. 26.

Karmayogi into contact with all creatures. This path enables one to see the greater self everywhere.

Ahimsa and Environmental Ethics

In this section, we examine the role of ahimsa (non-violence) as the ethical principle and virtue par excellence. Ahimsa as a central concept of ethics, and virtue in particular, creates some moral dilemmas with regard to certain environmental paradoxes. Ahimsa can be defined as 'sanctity of life' in western parlance while it is 'non-injury' principle in the east. We can see religious-moral connotations of ahimsa in Chandogya Upanishad, which speaks of non-injury, safety and protection. Ahimsa can be a universal moral principle, which keeps the ultimate goal of life as liberation. However, there are disputes on accepting ahimsa as moral principle because of its conditional, partial sense. Thus Young asks: "Can ahimsa be called as a moral principle when it is conditional and partial in sense?" But this issue is not very serious before modern ethical thinkers who encouraged 'ahimsa' as an immediate tool to solve several ethical issues. Hindu concept of ahimsa states 'what ought to be done rather than what is useful to do'. Heterodox Hindu movements (Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism) also upheld the validity of ahimsa. The desire to live and the avoidance of death are common to all sentient beings. We can see several passages from Mahabharata, which claims that one who is wise gives the gift of fearlessness (abbaya) to all beings. This improves our understandings about ethics and our environmental need. Our ethical life provides concentration in future security. Our violence is

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61 Young, Catherine K., 'Hindu Bioethics', in Paul. F. Camenisch (ed), Religious Methods and Resources in Bioethics, p 13
certainly reflective upon environmental ethics. The *Yajurveda* states ‘may all beings look at me with a friendly eye, may I do likewise and may we all look on each other with the eyes of a friend (*Yajurveda* 36: 18). A benevolent world is not automatic. It is the responsibility of the people as upholders of cosmic order to uphold life itself by holding back fear and ensuring confidence. This confidence in one’s life creates truly donors of life to others. Protect ourselves through causing no harm to others.

Ahimsa, through environmentally sound ethical principles, is given exemplary significance in Jainism. According to Jainism “The virtue of protecting a single creature is greater than the charity of the whole earth, for life is dear to man so much so that even by receiving the whole earth in his sway he does not want to die”\(^{62}\). At the core of Jainism lie the five vows that dictate the everyday lives of its adherents. These five vows are *ahimsa* (non-violence), *satya* (truthfulness), *asteya* (not stealing), *brahmacharya* (sexual restraint) and *aparigraha* (nonpossession). One undertakes these vows to ensure that no harm is brought to all possible life forms. For practicing Jainas, to hurt any being would result in the thickening of one’s Karma, which would hinder the progress towards liberation. As pointed out by Chapple, the worldview of the Jainas might be termed as ‘biocosmology’. The Jaina vows can be reinterpreted in an ecological sense as fostering an attitude of respect for all life forms\(^{63}\).

\(^{62}\) Walli, K, *Conception of Ahimsa in Indian Thought* p 61.

Gandhian theory of non-violence has been a great influence in keeping social and political moral values sincerely. The practice of ahimsa is not at the level of an abstract, intellectual, plane but is an experiential fact that has significance throughout our life. *Mahabharata* conveys non-violence with two terms—"abhayadanam" (the gift of fearlessness or security) and "sarvadanebhyahuttaman" (the noblest of all gifts). Gandhi realises that absence of wish or renunciation of the feeling of enmity is very much involved in implementation of non-violence principle. Gandhi does not exclude the non-human beings in the process of bringing harmony across the universe. Harmonious life is the life of life ("Jivo Jivasya Jivanam"). Gandhi gives a positive connotation to the notion of ahimsa by defining it as 'love'. This active love or non-violence is not a cloistered virtue to be practiced by the individual for his peace and final salvation, but a rule of conduct for society if it is to live consistently with human dignity. Gandhi makes non-violence as an obligatory discipline to all. It is a religion, which transforms all human relationship as a way of life. Gandhi sees ahimsa as an ocean of compassion. Ahimsa ruled out all forms of selfishness including 'blind attachment' to life. Gandhi affirms the doctrine of non-violence in such a way that preservation of life is not to convince others about the moral duty to protect life, particularly when one's life itself is uncertain. It is my conscience that judges at the end of my life if it permits harmony and non-violence.

Before we conclude we must note one clear difference between Hindu ethics and Environmentalism. Hindu ethics upholds the freedom from samsara but on the other hand environmentalism upholds the preservation of
samsara. However Hindu ethics and Environmentalism do not neglect the need of universal harmony, which we can confirm from the above mentioned findings. Environmentalism once more disagrees with Hindu ethics in the self-realization methodology. In Hindu ethics, particularly in Advaita, self-realization stands for the negation of plurality between beings while environmentalism defines self-realization as realization of the non-difference of oneself and the processes of the natural world without sacrificing plurality. Environmentalism is capable of a theory, which gives unity of all beings but does not mean that all beings share the same self as that of Hindu theology.

BUDDHIST ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

Historically Buddhism is viewed as a reformation or response to Hinduism that discriminated man versus man and man versus nature. The popular adage that 'Buddhism is Hinduism minus the caste system' is almost a truism in practice. But what is most significant of the 'enlightened' tradition of Buddhist faith is the recognition that human life and other forms of life have a continuum of existence. It is this aspect of Buddhism that renders this faith ecologically most significant.

The term 'Buddha' is used as a name for Prince Siddhartha after he declared his full awakening and hence the name describes someone who is 'an awakened one' or 'an enlightened one'. Buddhism accords 'dharmata' attitude or reverences to mother nature. When man attains enlightenment,

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65 James, William: Some Problems of Philosophy, p. 37.
he becomes part of nature through becoming \((bhava)\), evolution \((parinama)\) and dissolution \((nirvana)\). It is strictly teleological.

The notion of causal dependency confirms an environmental ethical concern in Buddhism with regard to everyday human life. We cannot survive without an ontological reality of consciousness to nature. William James reflecting similarly says: "If there is any higher moral nature in human beings which is not found among animals and physical nature that means moral nature should be founded on the recognition of self-interest, self-instigate or the fight for survival on the part of man as well as nature"\(^{66}\). Therefore, we might have knowingly or unknowingly introduced ontological parity between nature and man. It emphasizes the transcendence of duality, wherein being is being and nothingness is nothingness. Nothingness according to Buddhism is emptiness, which means absolute non-attachment. With reference to the theory of causality, it may be remembered that \(pratityasamutpada\) or Dependent Origination is the kernel of Buddha's teachings. In search of the cause of suffering, using theory of natural causation, early Buddhism accepted suffering as \(samsara\), and cessation of suffering as \(Nirvana\). Both were seen as aspects of the same reality, i.e. \(pratityasamutpada\) viewed from the point of view of relativity is \(samsara\), and viewed from the point of view of reality is \(nirvana\).

Another concept that deserves attention at this stage is the concept of emptiness. Buddhists use the term emptiness \((sunyata)\) to distinguish

\(^{66}\) Ibid, p. 39 (Italics are mine)
between the way things appear and the way things actually are together with attendant attitudes which are held to be spiritually beneficial. There are many uses of the term within Buddhist literature. What is of consequence to the present study is Nagarjuna’s interpretation of emptiness. Emptiness in this sense considers all things, no matter what, are empty of their own inherent or intrinsic existence because they are all relating to causes and conditions. Even the Yogacara view states the flow of non-dual consciousness as empty of hypostatized subject-object duality. The ontological dichotomy between human selves and nature seem to be irrelevant to the Buddhist thought. So, nature is having a beingness and it is like our own body system. There are distinctions in form and function among constituents of the whole body. We do not confuse the parts; we know where everything is and what it does.

Importance of Buddhist Ethics:

In Buddhism all actions are categorized into three types\(^\text{67}\): (a) Physical action (b) verbal action and (c) mental action. Among the three, mental action is considered as supreme to others, which is not just a potential for physical and verbal action but is an action in and of itself. In Samyutta Nikaya\(^\text{68}\) it is stated that "The world is led by the mind" and Dhammapada at the very outset says, "all the phenomena of existence have mind as their precursor, mind as their supreme leader, and of mind they are made".\(^\text{69}\). For Buddha physical

\(^{67}\) Types of actions are described in Buddhistic basic text- Pali. The Pali canon is called Tipitaka, meaning "The three Baskets". It is the name of the three main divisions of the pali Canon: Sutta Pitaka, the Basket of Discipline for monks and nuns and Abhidhamma Pitaka, the Basket of Psychological and Philosophical treatments of the Suttas.


\(^{69}\) Active experience is volition and its distinctive ethical quantity from certain other mental factors known as roots (mula) Roots are two types- skillful (Kusala mula) and unskillful (akusala- mula).
action is not important for ethical doctrine. He defined action (karma) as volition, which has an ethical quality. It is skillful (kusala-mula) and invariably present in every state of consciousness. In Buddhist ethics action (Karma) correctly speaking means "skillfull" volition (kusala-cetana). Unskillful volition (akusala-cetana) is unintentional action and is not important for ethical discourse, as there is no volition in such action. The ultimate goal of Buddhist ethics is gradual reduction of suffering (dhukkha) which is caused by self-centered desires (tanha). We can say that experiential reality is the outcome of every ethical norm. Experience in various levels causes either suffering or Buddhahood. Lobha (greed/attachment), dosa (anger/hatred), moha (delusion/ignorance) causes suffering. Alobha (detachment/renunciation), adosa (caring/forbearance), amoha (wisdom/insight) causes Buddhahood.

The most representative concepts of Buddhist doctrines are the following: suffering (dukha), impermanence (anitya), non-self (anatma), rebirth (samsara), liberation (nirvana), the middle path (madhya-pratipad), emptiness (sunyata), action (karma), relational origination (pratityasamutpada), wisdom (pranjna), compassion (karuna), etc. A quick glance at these doctrines will reveal that all focus on the nature of experiential reality. Each of these doctrines reveals the enlightened characters. Buddhism accords no difference between samsara and nirvana unlike Hinduism and Jainism. If we know reality in the form of one phenomenon, then we know all of reality. The concept of emptiness and interdependent existence give meaning and liveliness to environmental ethics in Buddhism.

Baird Callicot and Roger T Ames writes that in Buddhism: " The whole
cosmological process is the result of the collaboration of many individual parts each exerting its own partial casual powers." Actually emptiness (Buddha hood) is related to all five skandhas, namely, body (rupa), feeling (vedana), conception (samjna), volition (samskara) and sub-consciousness (vijnana). These five skandhas constitute the basic framework of Buddhist experiential reality. Buddhist ethical practice is based on the theory that a human being is capable of changing the causes and conditions without the help of any external agent such as "God". This is the basic ideology of Buddhahood. Buddhism rejects or negates the irrational human behavior, which is regarded as mental illness (roga). Buddhism significantly orients a person to make perfect decisions. One who reaches the highest state is called "Arhant" or perfect one or an enlightened one. Buddhist notion of mental action guides ones decisions and patterns. In Buddhist ethics 'mind' decides which decision is the worst or the best possible. Buddha reminds us of five universal laws which are operating in the world for mind-body, man-nature, being-nonbeing, ignorance-wisdom and such other opposite criteria. The five laws are (a) physical laws (seasonal or utu-niyama) (b) biological laws (seed or bijaniyama) (c) psychological laws (mind or cttaniyama) (d) moral laws (action or dhammaniyama). These laws bring universality or globalisation as a function. In reality, it makes one part of a cause as able to assume the role of a total cause. This interdependent causality emphasized in Buddhistic ethics defines the totalistic view of things as non-attachment view (Sarvum sunyam). This means, all is empty except 'the ultimate knowledge' of

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71 Aristotle says wrong actions performed due to ignorance are pardonable. This signifies the absence of real religious ethos in those periods.

consciousness that, interdependent existence giving meaning and liveliness. It gives support to environmental ethics too. Buddha said quite cryptically in reference to the four noble truths\textsuperscript{73}: He who sees dukha sees also arising of dukha, sees also the cessation of dukha, and sees also the path leading to the cessation of dukha. In the same way he asserted: whatever is of the nature of arising, all that is of the nature of cessation. The arising and falling of activity maybe segmented, but these segments find a common source or ground, which does not in itself differentiate the segments. Indeed, the common ground of existence is all that each of us has. It is the Alpha and Omega of all of one's life's pathways and its resolution completes, if that resolution is forthcoming at all. Buddhism says 'emptiness' is unifying principle without which the whole experiential process would not be what it is\textsuperscript{74}. Emptiness in Buddhistic idea gives enlightenment concepts such as identity, co-existence and interpenetration. Buddhistic enlightenment thus is supremely ontological. The above-mentioned laws and verses of Buddha pictured the importance of Buddhahood to humanity. It is enlightened one's responsibility to give integrity and beauty to nature and the cultivation of virtues in the midst of various adversities. At least because of these lessons of experience in spirituality we have begun to learn more harmonious and less harmful ways of dealing with our environment. It is our responsibility to help and guide our global family in the right direction. Even the minutest creature of this Earth has a role in sustaining our human lives. There can be no real ecological responsibility unless the mind enters a state of Universality. Radha Burnier accords: "We need the existence of everything, everything is an

\textsuperscript{73} Martin, Julia, Ibid, p.18.

\textsuperscript{74} Ariyasena, Ven Kambusupitiya: 'Developed Craving: A Meditation on the Eco-crisis', in Julia Martin (ed.): Ecological Responsibility- A Dialogue with Buddhism, p. 56.
emanation of what we may call Great mind."75 Buddha says in the 'sutras' that there are two types of people- (a) categories those constituted of persons (pudgalas) and (b) categories those forming vessels (Bhajanas). The world is a combination of the two. It is the body (Kaya), which makes the mind function and mind enables the body to function.

The four noble truths (caturaryasatya) are the core teachings of the Buddha. They are (a) duhkha (there is suffering) (b) duhkha samudaya (there is a cause of suffering) (c) duhkha nirodha (there is cessation of suffering) and (d) duhkha nirodha margā (there is a way leading to the cessation of suffering). We can transform these truths to the environmental ethical level such as (a) the crisis to be identified (b) the cause of the crisis to be eliminated (c) the cessation of the crisis to be achieved and (d) the method for doing so. These four noble truths are fundamentally based on the theory of causality (pratityasamutpada)76. Pratityasamutpada renders everything conditional and interdependent. Buddhism provides full analysis of all phenomena by discovering the causes and condition of human suffering and ways to overcome them. The general formula of theory of Dependent Origination is expressed as follows: When this is present, that comes to be, from the arising of this, that arises, when this is absent, that does not come to be, on the cessation of this, that ceases77. This simply means that when the causes and the conditions coexist, there is always an effect. If they do not co-exist there is no effect. But this is not a dogmatic principle. As David

75 Burnier, Radha, 'Gratitude Towards Everything that Lives', in Julia Martin, (ed) op.cit p. 11.
76 Taniguchi, Shoyo: 'Methodology of Buddhist Biomedical Ethics' in, Camenisch, Paul F. (ed), Religious Methods and Resources in Bioethics, p. 31.
77 Taniguchi, Shoyo , Ibid p. 32. We can translate this in a general form like this: when A is, B is, A arising, B arising, when A is not, B is not, A ceasing, B ceases.
Kalupahana states that Buddhist notion of causality is neither fatalism (strict determinism) nor accidentalism (unconditional arbitrarism), but it is a middle path, which avoids the above mentioned two extremes. The middle path is 'Enlightenment' (Bodhisatva). It is self-realization (Paripurnajnana), awakening (Budhata), perfection (Arahatta), freedom (Vimutti), liberation or non-attachment (Nirvana), knowledge and vision (Jnana-darsana) and freedom (Abhaya). It is the ultimate development of understanding, complete freedom from human insecurities, final elimination of all human mental weaknesses. One can sum up this thought in A.L. Basham words:

The middle path of awakening realisation promotes freedom and happiness, it is noble and fruitful. The attainment of enlightenment and freedom came only after he realised the non-substantiality not only of all experienced phenomena but also of views, conceptions and ideas about such phenomena.

From the above, we can observe the importance of nature and how it becomes an organic form with man as its head. When man becomes a Buddha (an enlightened one) one begins to attend to the need of protecting nature and hence the beginnings of a proper Environmental Ethics. Man is the custodian, guardian and overseer, but he cannot escape from his confirmed positions throughout the daily routine of nature.

78 Kalupaliana, David J., 'Casuality: The Central Philosophy of Buddhism', p 94.
From the above discussions we may note that Semitic and non-Semitic religious teachings have contributed significantly to environmental ethics. East-West hermeneutics helped Environmental Ethics to a greater extent in the midst of limitations of any one paradigm. As seen from our discussions on the religious ethical teachings, we note that both anthropocentrism and eocentrism have their roots in various religious doctrines. Thus in the next two chapters we take up these perspectives for a critical appraisal.