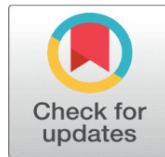
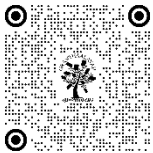


ECO-CENTRICITY IN *ATHARVAVEDA*: A STUDY OF THE SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANDSCAPE, CULTURE AND LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

The present paper endeavors to explore the eco-centricity with Eco-critical approach in *AtharvaVeda* and symbiotic relationship with modern relevance. Since, modern generation is facing serious ecological disasters and its multiple effects on flora and fauna. Scientific and technological knowhow are also masculinists in nature; they tend to exploit natural resources resulting in the complete extinction of these natural resources. Indian Classical texts, since earliest times, were very conscious about the vital role environment plays in human life, thereby strongly advocated the urgency regarding protection, preservation and propagation of mutuality between Man and Nature. Nature, for the sake of aesthetic beauty in literary creation was not the mere objective, it had deeper, philosophical as well as practical applications to sustain human life and culture. *AtharvaVeda* is one of the oldest texts which deals with and addresses the emergent issue which we all are facing in 21st century as it has the solution of the modern problems. *AtharvaVeda* is *BrahmaVeda* and it is the knowledge of Prakrti, Mother Nature, as well as of Purusha, the Soul, the individual Jiva as well as the Cosmic Soul, Brahma. *AtharvaVeda* celebrates the Earth as one Mother home of humanity and enjoins all to come and be a family.

The present study has adopted Eco-critical method and its application, Textual Analysis, Comparative method and incorporation of the recent studies in the area concerned; and strict adherence to latest MLA style sheet are the hallmark of the paper.

Keywords: Ancient Literature, *Atharvaveda*, Eco-Consciousness, Eco-Criticism, Sustainability

1. INTRODUCTION

The present paper aims to explore the Ecocriticism theory and its approach towards the study of Literature and the Environment concerning Nature. Scientific and technological knowhow are also masculinists in nature; they tend to exploit natural resources resulting in the complete extinction of these natural resources. We are in an anthropocentric world where men hold a master key towards everything. He is progressing scientifically and technologically but failing in his ethical values and culture. In this modern world, Ecological disaster is one of the major issues of the time including Global warming, floods and famines, climatic changes, forest fires, ozone layer depletion, extinction of many rare species from earth, life threatening diseases which ultimately lead us to the degradation and disaster. The need of the hour is to preserve, conserve and propagate the mutuality between Man and Nature. Our beliefs, morals, values and culture needs

to be thoroughly revived to evoke consciousness in humans towards the Landscape and ecology. Humans considered himself to be supreme and unique on this earth and now it's the high time that we should realize that we are not supreme rather, we are similar to all other million species or creatures of the Ecosystem. According to Christopher Manes, human beings are "one species among millions" (20).

Literature has the power of words and is a medium which always has a deep impression upon the psyche of the readers and thus sensitize the readers towards the emerging problems and issues. Eco-criticism, a branch of literary theory has a 'green lens' for all forms of Literature (fictional and non-fictional works) which study literature and environment with an aim to conserve and preserve our ecological inheritance. Eco-criticism analyses and investigates the texts eco-critically and unravel various aspects of Nature and detect ecological problems. Eco-criticism is the theory which came for the first time in Literature concerning Ecosystem and environment. It can initiate a change in the attitude and mindset of people and society towards Nature. By making a cojoined study of literature and environment, one can see through the lens of literature that in every epoch what was the state of ecosystem, how it works and its relationship with humans.

Indian Classical texts, since earliest times, were very conscious about the vital role environment plays in human life, thereby strongly advocated the urgency regarding protection, preservation and propagation of mutuality between Man and Nature. *Vedas* and other Indian Classical texts like *Bhagvat Gita*, *Ramayan*, *Puranas*, *Upanishads*, etc. represents the consciousness towards Nature and also gives us the importance of Nature and environment. The present paper talks about *AtharvaVeda* and some important *suktas* in *AtharvaVeda* to bring the consciousness and concern towards Ecosystem, which mainly talks about our Mother Earth and its relevance in our lives.

2. DEFINING ECO-CRITICISM AND ECO-CRITICISM IN LITERATURE

Eco-criticism is a word which encompasses two words 'eco' and 'criticism'. 'Eco' here refers to the 'Ecology' which is an umbrella term and includes the entire ecosystem be it sky, stars, planets, earth, moon, flora and fauna, humans, plants, animals, water, fire, rivers, mountains, landscape and everything that is visible through our naked eyes and the "interrelationship which exists among and between water, air and land, and human beings, other living creatures, plants, micro-organism and property" (Environment Protection Act). The second part is 'criticism' which refers to the literary evaluation of literary texts with deep critical insight from different approaches and destabilize various implications of a particular text. Thus, Eco-criticism evaluates both fictional and non-fictional works from an eco-conscious perspective and reveals the various levels at which Nature and literature is interlinked.

Different eco-critics defined Eco-criticism in different ways to establish their thoughts and concerns regarding Nature. Greg Garrard states the ecocriticism as "the study of the relationship of the human and non-human throughout human cultural history and entailing critical analysis of the term 'human' itself" (5). Thereafter, Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm who are considered as the founding figure of this movement has given the representative definition in his book *The Eco-criticism Reader*, he defines Ecocriticism by drawing an analogy with feminist criticism, "Ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender-conscious perspective...ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies" (xviii). Ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach to literary criticism rather than taking a human-centered approach as most of the literary criticisms do like Marxism, Feminism, Post-colonialism, etc. It encourages the readers to think more and more regarding environmental crisis or burning Ecological disasters and shows the path of ecological ethics through the power of words. Glen A. Love who is the author of the book *Practical Ecocriticism*, "too dwells upon the role and importance of Ecocriticism in the modern world which is surrounded by so many ecological disasters. Ecocriticism for him is an important device in evoking 'human consciousness'" (18) towards Ecology.

The term 'Ecocriticism' was coined by William Rueckert in his essay *Literature and Ecology* in 1978. In this essay, he stressed the importance of literature in the preservation of ecosystem, "We need to make some connections between literature and the sun, between teaching literature and the health of the biosphere" (109). Eco-criticism came into light during 1950s and 1960s with the publication of the two foundational texts for the ecological turn i.e. *The Silent Spring* (1962) by Rachel Carson and *Sand County Almanac* (1949) by Aldo Leopold. The first major work of Nature writing is *The Norton Book of Nature Writing* which is co-edited by Robert Finch and John Elder. It includes various works from British and American traditions in the form of anthology. Ecocriticism took its height and came as a theory of major existence during 1980s in USA and 1990s in UK as Green Studies. But there is major difference in both the theories of

USA and UK, as the ecocriticism exists in the USA by the American writers is celebratory in tone and the UK version of ecocriticism seeks to warn us of environmental threats. Ecocriticism exists in USA, takes its literary bearings from the transcendentalist 19th century writers whose works celebrate nature, the life force, and the wilderness such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, and Henry David Thoreau. Major works of these transcendentalist writers can be seen as the foundational works of American Ecocriticism. And the Ecocriticism exists in UK which is also called 'Green Studies', takes its origin from the British Romanticism of the 1790s rather than the American transcendentalism of the 1840s. Jonathan Bate paves the way for the Green Studies through his book *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition*. And in this way Ecocriticism flourished as an independent literary theory and a genre in Literature. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm is considered as the founding figure of the Ecocriticism and because of them Ecocriticism came into existence as a literary theory. They edited a book titled *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmark in Literary Ecology* which completely changed the face of ecocriticism as a theory in the world, also this book is considered as a landmark in the field of Ecocriticism. Ecocriticism can apply in any text i.e., modern or classical, fictional or non-fictional, prose or poetry, the only thing needed is 'Green lenses' through which we can interpret the environmental problems and can evoke environmental consciousness among readers and society. ASLE is an association founded by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm with an aim to conserve and preserve Nature and the ecosystem through literary writings. Here, in this paper the Ecocriticism is applied and interpreted in the Indian Classical text, i.e., *AtharvaVeda* which has deeper, philosophical as well as practical applications to sustain human life and culture. Here, there is a fusion of Indian Classical text and a modern Western literary theory.

3. ECO-CENTRIC APPROACH IN *ATHARVAVEDA*

Vedas are the most revered treasure of Indian culture. Hindu ancient literature ascribe *Vedas* are the preliminary ancient manuscripts available. There are four main *Vedas*: *RigVeda* (*Veda* of Knowledge), *YajurVeda* (*Veda* of Karma), *SamaVeda* (*Veda* of *Bhakti*) and *AtharvaVeda* (*BrahmaVeda*). All these four *Vedas* are believed as the ultimate source of Knowledge mainly focused on how human beings should live in harmony with Nature and other entities of the Universe. 'Veda' comes from the Sanskrit root 'vid' meaning 'the activity of knowing or to know'. This is the very first book of Indian culture which contains 'Highest Knowledge'.

AtharvaVeda or the *Brahmaveda*, which is different from the other three *Vedas* representing a 'popular religion' incorporating the daily rituals for initiation into learning (*Upanayana*), marriage and funerals. *AtharvaVeda* is the knowledge of existence both *Murtta* and *Amurtta*, i.e., 'concrete and abstract'. It is the knowledge of *Prakriti*, Mother Nature, as well as of *Purusha*, the soul, the individual *Jiva* as well as the Cosmic soul, *Brahma*. It begins with a celebrative description of the thrice-seven variants that evolves *Prakriti* and a prayer to *Vachaspati*, Lord of Nature and the World of Knowledge to bless us with the strength, energy, intelligence and knowledge emanating from those thrice-seven forms of the world of Nature and Spirit. *AtharvaVeda* acknowledges and honours the Divine, namely *Jyeshtha Brahma*. *AtharvaVeda*, being the last *Veda*, is of great significance in providing comprehensive understanding of many facets of existence, including life, childbirth, equilibrium, the natural world, and mortality. The term 'Atharvan' originally refers to a 'priest', and the *mantras* found in the *AtharvaVeda-Samhita* were discovered by the sage *Atharva*. The *Veda* known as '*Atharvangirasa-Veda*' is the earliest name by which it is referred to in Indian literature. This *Veda* is associated with the *Atharvans* and the *Angiras*. *Angiras* were a collective of educational institutions and clergy.

The *BrahmaVeda* is considered to be the result of the *Brahmakarma*, which has a high level of importance. The *AtharvaVeda* has also been referred to as the *BrahmaVeda* in books such as the *Gopatha Brāhmana* and the *Chandogya Upanishad*. *AtharvaVeda* consists of 730 hymns with 5987 *mantras*, which are categorized into 20 books known as *Kandas*. Approximately one-sixth of the *AtharvaVeda* consists of prose, namely two whole books (15 and 16), which are written in a manner and language akin to the *Brahmanas*. The remaining portion of the text is composed of lyrical poems. Patanjali states that the *AtharvaVeda* originally included nine *Shakhas*, but now, only two versions of the *Samhita* of the *AtharvaVeda* exist - the *Shaunaka* and the *Paippalada*. The *Shaunaka-Samhita* is often referred to in both ancient and contemporary literature when mentioning the *AtharvaVeda*.

Earth has been proclaimed as a divinely endowed by *AtharvaVeda*. Sages, academics, *Rishis*, and *Maharshis* are said to have attained the states of *Satya* (truth) and *Paramasatya* (absolute truth) by their penances at "Mother Earth," a sacred site of devotion whose example has been given in the very first *Kanda*:

*"Kanda 1 Sukta 1****Vachaspati Devata, Atharva Rshi***

ये त्रिषुप्ताः परियन्ति विश्वां रूपाणि बिभ्रतः । वाचस्पतिर्बला तेषां तन्वो अद्य दधातु मे ॥ १ ॥

"Ye trisaptāḥ pariyanti viśvā rūpāṇi bibhratah Vācaspatirbalā teṣām tanvo adya dadhātu me.

Thrice seven are the entities which bear, wear and comprise the entire world of forms in existence. May *Vachaspati*, omniscient lord of speech, awareness and the phenomenal world bless me with the body of knowledge pertaining to their essences, names, forms powers, functions and relationships here and now." (Ram 1)

The unique message and prayer of *AtharvaVeda* here refers not to just conservation of the environment, but prays that we develop a sense and an awareness towards eco-consciousness. Without the ability to think for the environment, we cannot protect it from the perils. Hence the first step towards preservation of Nature is to develop a consciousness towards it. This prayer asks the lord *Vachaspati* to bless us with the ability to think about Nature so that we can form a better and a functional relationship with it.

Further, it is necessary to clarify the "thrice-seven" of the phenomenal universe. *Prakrti*, also known as Nature, is the one fundamental material cause from which the phenomenal universe evolved. *Vachaspati*, the Supreme Spirit, is the driving force behind development. He is omniscient, immanent, and transcendent. Evolution is not a mindless process but rather a creative and intelligent process since it is both originated and maintained by the presence and will of the spirit enormous implosive in Nature. Initiation is analogous to the Big Bang or spark.

Prakrti, the one fundamental material cause, undergoes the evolutionary process of diversification with the great bang. The rules of evolution state that the phenomenal world—in whatever form it may take at any given moment—is the product of that one source. At its core, *Prakrti* lacks specificity or stagnation. The divine assumes the form of *Mahat* as it begins an evolutionary process of change and progress. Following this metamorphosis, *Mahat* becomes *Ahankara*, a generic identity that develops in two domains: the physical and the mental. The mind, intellect, and senses emerge from the psychic direction, whereas the five elements—*akasha*, *vayu*, *agni*, *apah*, and *Prthivi*—emerge from the physical direction.

From *Ahankara*, there are two distinct phases of bodily maturation: the subtle and the gross. *Tanmatras* are the subtle elements; from them, space (*akash*), energy (*vayu*), heat and light (*agni*), liquids (*apah*), and solids (*Prthivi*) emerge. The seven parts of the *mantra* are *Ahankara*, the five gross components, and their subtle predecessors. This beautifully shows that Nature and humans are made out of the same elements and thus have an innate sense of connectedness between them. This sense of oneness thus should be evoked, as this first *sukta* of *AtharvaVeda* appeals for, to increase the consciousness about the nature and consequently enhance the sense of perseverance towards Nature.

In addition, the *AtharvaVeda* serves as a unique channel for an unprecedented call to action, establishing as a matter of paramount importance the inalienable human duties towards the "*Prithivi Mata*" (the Earth)—a celestial bounty rich with hills, lands, seas, and rivers—and the preservation, continuation, and advancement of all forms of life upon it. The preservation of Nature and ecological balance are also more important than ever before, as they are foundational to the continuation of life on Earth.

The natural world is a source of vitality. It offers a shield for existence. Life is sustained by the components of nature, which include plants, water, and so on. Nature, in its purest form, provides for the needs of living things. A clean and adaptable environment is essential to the survival of all living things, and it plays a significant part in achieving this goal. There is a connection between breathing and the environment as breathing is a must for all living. No particular examination is necessary to understand the significance of this issue for life. Its eternal significance, continued applicability, imperativeness, and inevitable nature are well known to all of us. For this reason, *AtharvaVeda* aimed to promote the well-being of all sentient creatures and elements on Earth, especially water, by advocating for environmental harmony, cleanliness, prosperity, and health thousands of years ago.

AtharvaVeda in its *Suktas* discusses the unit of water very fervently. Water is that part of the natural cycle without which the existence of all organisms would not be possible. Humans, animals and plants all depend on water for survival and hence praying for water and water conservation is of prime importance as the following *mantras* show:

Kaand 1 Sukta 4

"१. अम्बययो युन्त्यध्वंभिर्जामययो अध्वरीयताम् । पृञ्चतीर्मधना पयः ॥ १ ॥

Apah Devata, Sindhudvipa Rshi***Ambayo yantyadhvabhīrjāmāyo adhvarīyatām. Prñcatīrmadhunā payah.***

Streams of nature's living energy, life giving mothers and loving sisters of humanity, performing the soma yajna of their life of love and non-violence, flow on by their divine paths on the vedi of life mixing the waters of living vitality with the sweets of honey and soma of joyous living for us".

2. “अमूर्या उप सूर्ये याभिर्वा सूर्यः सह । ता नौ हिनवन्त्वध्वरम् ॥ २ ॥

Amūryā upa sūrye yābhirvā sūryah saha. Ta no hinvantvadhvaram.

And may those waters which are close to the sun, and in the sun itself, with which the sun nourishes life, flow and advance our yajna of life with energy and enthusiasm without violence.” (Ram 10)

In these lines, *AtharvaVeda* calls water the streams of Nature's living energy which clearly shows how aware the text is about the importance of water and its role in Nature. The sun's rising and setting, the seasons' changing, the arrival of spring, and the end of harvest are all pillars of cosmic order that support Earth. It is water that provides vitality to humans and Nature and *AtharvaVeda* invokes that this should be done without involving any violence. The inherent justice and order that maintains the ecological balance of Nature the divine and through *yajna*, human beings can invoke the divine to maintain the ecological balance of the universe.

The importance of water has been seen in all the *Vedas*. According to the *RigVeda*, the Waters are the dwelling of *Nara*, the Eternal Being. As a result, water is considered *pratishtha*, the fundamental principle, or the basis of this world. Water is the first step in achieving *nirvana*, or spiritual sacrifice, according to the *AtharvaVeda*.

Apart from this, *AtharvaVeda* also mentions the importance of herbal and medicinal plants. It shows how Nature has healing qualities and has the capacity to keep diseases away if used properly:

Kanda 6/Sukta 96 (Herbs and Freedom from Disease)

Vanaspati, Soma Devata, Bhrgvangira Rshi

“1. या ओषधयः सोमराजीबृहवीः शतवचक्षणाः । बृहस्पतिप्रसूतास्ता ननौ मुञ्चन्त्वंहसः ॥१॥

Ya osadhyah somarājīrbahvīḥ śatavicakṣaṇāḥ. Brhaspatiprasūtāstā no muñcantvamhasah.

All the herbs of many forms and profuse growth and hundreds of medicinal efficacies, receiving their power and splendour from the moon, developed and reinforced by sagely scholars of the God-given gift of herbal medicine may, we pray, save us and cure us of all diseases, evil and sin.” (Ram 649)

In this *mantra*, the abundance of medicinal qualities that herbs have has been shown. The *mantra* mentions that these medicinal qualities are gifts given to us by God and hence we should use them wisely. As we use these herbs, we should also show reverence towards them and pray to them so that they cure us of all the diseases, evil or sin with their purifying capabilities.

Another Kanda that shows the importance of medicinal herbs is:

Kanda 8/Sukta 7 (Health and Herbs)

“अश्वत्थो दुर्भो वीरुधां सोमो राजामृतं हविः । व्रीहिर्यवाश्च भेषजौ दिवस्पुत्रावमत् यौ ॥२०॥

20. Aśvattho darbho vīrudhām somo rājāmrtam havih. Vrihīryavaśca bheṣajau divasputrāva- martyau.

Ashvattha, the peepal, Darbha, the durva grass, Soma, the chief of herbs and plants, the nectar of pure water, and pure food which is like the pure offering for the holy fire, natural rice and barley, both sanative gifts of heavenly light which save life from the pain of death and hunger, all these are the food of life.” (Ram 905)

In this *mantra*, specific herbs are mentioned along with other essential elements of Nature which are food for life. Again, these elements are called gifts of Nature to ensure that we remain grateful to the source that provides us. Here, are names of the several herbs and plants which are worshipped like, *Ashvattha*, *Peepal*, *Tulsi*, *Durva* grass (*doob*) that we use in *pooja*; and also they have medicinal properties in them. The concept of purity is repeated again and again in this *mantra* where the purity of herbs and plants is compared to the offering for holy fire. Here it shows that Nature should remain untouched with only a balanced interaction from us. It is important to maintain the purity of Nature which can only be done if we have a sense of respect towards it and ensure that we have the conscience to protect it from harm.

Kanda 12 Sukta 1 (The Songs of Mother Earth)

Bhumi Devata, Atharva Rshi

The *Shlokas* of the *AtharvaVeda* provide deep insights into different ecological sites and the variety of natural heritage. They advocate for environmental conservation in order to inspire sustainable attitudes and behaviours. The *AtharvaVeda* acknowledges the inherent worth of Nature. The *AtharvaVeda* centers on many important aspects of the interdependence of humans and Nature, and it has laid out a deep philosophy of ecological sustainability and complete reliance on the earth. In this *Kanda*, there are total 63 mantras which are completely dedicated to Mother Earth and they imbibe in us not only the consciousness of protecting the environment but also teach us the way in which we should preserve our beautiful and serene Nature. Some of the important *mantras* from this *kanda* are as discussed below.

Kanda 12/Sukta 1 (The Song of Mother Earth) *Bhumi Devata, Atharva Rshi*

“1. सत्यं बृहदृतमुग्रं दीक्षा तपो ब्रह्म यज्ञः पृथिवीं धारयन्ति । सा नो भूतस्य भव्यस्य पत्न्युरुं लोकं पृथिवी नः कृणोतु ॥ १ ॥

Satyam brhadrtamugram dikṣā tapo brahma yajñah prthivīm dhārayanti. Sā no bhūtasya bhavyasya patnyurum lokam prthivī nah krṇotu.

Pillars of the Earth: Truth of Constancy, Infinity, Law of Mutability, Passion for Truth and Law, inviolable Commitment, Austerity of discipline, Divine knowledge, *Yajna*, participative living for creativity and contribution: these sustain the Earth, the life on earth and the human family on earth. May She, *Prithvi*, Mother, sustainer of past, present and future of all living beings, provide and continue to provide a beautiful wide world of life and joy for all of us.” (Ram 131)

The first *mantra* of this *Sukta* invokes all the Gods and Goddesses and elements of Nature that sustain the life on earth. The *mantra* shows that not only are they responsible for providing life on earth, but also maintaining it as they continue to make life beautiful for all. Hence this shows that sustaining life on earth in a balanced manner requires continuous effort, even from the pillars of earth.

“12. यत्ते मध्यं पृथिवि यच्च नभ्यं यास्त ऊर्जस्तन्वः संबभूवुः । तासु नो धेह्यभि नः पवस्व माता भूमिः पुत्रो अहं पृथिव्याः । पर्जन्यः पिता स उ नः पिपर्तु ॥ १२ ॥

Yatte madhyam prthivi yacca nabhyam yāsta ūrjastanvah sambabhūvuh. Tāsu no dhehyabhi nah pavasva mātā bhūmiḥ putro aham prthivyāḥ. Parjanyaḥ pitā sa u nah pipartu.

Earth Mother, whatever is in the midst of your person, whatever is at the centre of your person, and your gift for us from the clouds and the sky, and all that is the nutriment and energy from your body, pray establish us therein, make us pure and strong. The earth is my mother, I am a child of the Mother Earth. The sky and the rain cloud from the sun and sky is my father. I am a child of Nature. May the father and mother give us total fulfilment.” (Ram 136)

In these lines, the intense oneness of Nature and humanity is shown. It is clear through these lines that we are made out of the same elements as clouds, sun, sky and rain as earth is our mother and sky our father. This interconnectivity with Nature is truly important to understand because it teaches us the way in which we can preserve Nature. Through

connecting ourselves with Nature, we give Nature and humanity a holistic relationship. Through this interdependent relationship, not only we have to preserve Nature for our sake but also for the sake of Nature itself because one cannot survive without the other. This verse says that Earth is our mother and we all are her children and sky is our father. We have like family relationship with the entities of Nature and obviously no one in this planet try to hurt his family. So, this *mantra* teaches us that consider the Nature as our family and treat it like that with all love, care and respect. Nature needs abundant love from us in the same way as Nature does.

“15. त्वज्जातास्त्वयि चरन्ति मत्र्यास्त्वं बिभर्षि द्विपदस्त्वं चतुष्पदः । तवेमे पृथिवि पञ्च मानवा येभ्यो ज्योतिर्मृतं मर्येभ्य उद्यन्तसूर्यो रश्मिभिरातनोति ॥ १५ ॥

Tvajjātāstvayi caranti martyāstvam bibharṣi dvipadastvam catuspadah. Taveme prthivi pañca mānavā yebhyo jyotiramyam martyebhya udyantsuryo raśmibhirātanoti.

Born of you, living and moving around freely on you, all the mortals, humans, animals, birds, you bear, support and sustain. Mother Earth, yours are all the children, all five classes, native as well as foreign; for all of these mortals, the immortal light, the sun, rising and radiating with its rays, shines far and wide.” (Ram 137)

This *mantra* once again depicts the interdependence of man and Nature with each other. As we are formed out of the same material, any action taken towards one entity will affect the whole web of being. We are all children of Mother Earth and it is important to remember our roots. This will allow us to develop a conscience towards Nature and inculcate in us the desire to love, care, protect and preserve.

The *mantras* in *AtharvaVeda* also serve as a call to action for mankind to fulfill their inherent and shared obligations to Mother Earth, particularly to treat Nature, the environment, and natural resources with kindness and fairness, bearing in mind the current terrible state of affairs that has resulted from long-term carelessness with these things. The following *mantra* invokes the blessings of the parental figure of universe to bless us with a balanced life, free of causing harm:

Kanda 18 Sukta 1

“बर्हिषदः पितर ऊत्यर्वागिमा वो हव्या चकृमा जुषवम् । त आ गतावसा शन्तमेनाधा नः शं योररुपो दधात ॥ ५१ ॥

51. *Barhiṣadah pitara ūtyarvāgimā vo havyā cakrmā juṣadhvam. Ta ā gatāvasā śantamenā-dhā nah śam yoraro po dadhāta.*

O parental powers of nature and humanity, scholars of the science of atmospheric and environmental management of the globe, for all round peace and protection of life here and here-after, we have prepared these yajnic materials for homage to you which please accept and use with love and faith. O masters, come always with peaceful modes of universal protection, bear and bring us showers of peace and freedom from sin, violence and fear.” (Ram 525)

Here, the environmental managers of the globe are evoked for maintaining peace and harmony. Through *Yajna*, *AtharvaVeda* advocates for love and faith. The divinity and the omnipotence of Nature is shown in these lines as it is Nature that can give us freedom from sin, violence and fear. Without the “powers of nature and humanity” together, achieving any of these would be impossible. *Vedas* affirm the unity of all sentient beings and their inherent kinship with one another. In a very touching passage, they encourage us to work toward a world free of war, grief, anger, and resource depletion. The *AtharvaVedic* commandment emphasizes the importance of bridging differences and making peace with others. It reflects the values of harmonious coexistence and the importance of interpersonal relationships within and between Nature and those from other parts of the world.

Further, from its dormant state, Mother Earth stimulates the fertility of the soil, earning her the name "Sacred Womb." As a mediator between the mysteries of life and death, she is also the place where all living things are born and eventually return. Despite her role as a provider for all living things, Mother Earth does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, creed, or nationality.

In honour of the Earth-Mother and the cyclical nature of human sacrifices to her, we celebrate the symbiotic relationship between humans and the natural environment and pray for eternal harmony and peace between man and Nature:

Kanda 19 Sukta 9

“पृथिवी शान्तिरन्तरिक्षं शान्तिर्द्यौः शान्तिरापः शान्तिरोषधयः शान्तिर्वनस्पतयः शान्तिर्विश्वे मे देवाः शान्तिः सर्वे मे देवाः शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिभिः । ताभिः शान्तिभिः सर्व शान्तिभिः शमयामोऽहं यदिह घोरं यदिह क्रूरं यदिह पापं तच्छान्तं तच्छिवं सर्वमेव शमस्तु नः ॥ १४ ॥

14. *Prithivī śāntirantarikṣam śāntirdyauḥ śāntirāpah śāntiroṣadhayaḥ śāntirvanaspatayaḥ śāntirviśve me devāḥ śāntiḥ sarve me devāḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntibhiḥ. Tābhiḥ śāntibhiḥ sarva śāntibhiḥ śamayāmo'ham yadiha ghoram yadiha krūram yadiha pāpam tacchāntam tacchivam sarvameva śamastu nah.*

May earth be at peace, firmament be at peace, heaven be at peace, waters, oceans and spatial vapours be at peace, herbs be at peace, trees be at peace, all divinities of the world be at peace, for me. May all divinities of nature and humanity bring me peace, peace and peace, with all forms and shades of peace in every phase of life, society and the environment. With all those forms of peace, all those modes and methods and sources of peace, let us all attain peace, let me be at peace. Whatever is awful here, whatever is cruel here, whatever is sin and sinful here, let all that be at peace, be good and beneficial, let all and everything be at peace, peaceful, and peaceable for us here in the world for all.” (Ram 643-644)

We must always pray, meditate, consecrate, and perform spiritual rituals to maintain this inherent connection for the sake of internal and external peace. As a people, we get our standards of ecological morality from the prayers and ceremonies performed in honour of the earth's subtle body, which includes trees, rivers, plants, and the stars. The ascetic need of minimizing resource usage and sustainable development stands out among the many qualities emphasized in the *AtharvaVeda*.

The supreme being, in this worldview, is not the one who controls, steals from, and destroys the natural resources, but rather the one who protects, maintains, and grows the ecosystem. Nowadays, living a simple life and being economical are seen as virtues that are demeaning. The *AtharvaVeda* stands out in its message, especially on the basis of suitable and orderly equilibrium of man and Nature, desirable fortification, and practical commitment to the principle of peaceful coexistence. It has also been proven to be the path to the uninterrupted continuation of life and its prosperity in the cosmic world.

4. CONCLUSION

Something fresh is required to solve the environmental crisis of today. When our whole way of thinking, seeing, and valuing things changes, it's called a paradigm shift. It is thus necessary to return to our canonical literature. Numerous gentle guidelines for adjusting to one's environment and primary religious lives characterized by pleasure are found in *Vedic* literature. The *AtharvaVeda* have given close attention to specific facts about many parts of the environment, and ecology has received even more attention. Consequently, humans play a pivotal role in achieving environmental harmony. Consequently, protecting humans from environmental disaster is of the utmost importance. Using what is known now thanks to scientific and medical studies, as well as strictly adhering to *Vedic* practices, guidelines, and principles. The philosophical and ecological principles found in the *Upanishads* stem from a shared cultural value of reverence for the natural world. A perilous environmental catastrophe was predicted by our great seer even in the absence of anarchy. In order to safeguard the environment, texts like *AtharvaVeda* have put specific regulations in place. The relationship between activities and beliefs in religion. Contrarily, contemporary culture is antagonistic. As *AtharvaVeda* mentions, Mother Nature is constantly restocking Earth's resources and there is no way that science and technology can restore depleted supplies. Thus, it is important to rekindle the latent power inside and allow it to direct one's actions towards saving what Nature is providing for us. A person with such a positive outlook and a willingness to help others provides joy, success, and harmony to the nation.

Humans, according to the *AtharvaVeda*, should be environmental stewards, replenishing the earth's resources rather than depleting them. Consequently, encouraging the preservation of our planet and its natural resources. Ecological responsibility has always been an integral aspect of Indian thought. The ancient people's respect for Nature is evident in their everyday rituals, routines, and lifestyles. The Indian people still hold their religious practices in the highest regard, and this respect is seen in their daily worship. Spiritual education with an emphasis on environmental

ethics is essential in today's world because we must influence people's thoughts. The virtue of living a simple life is taught to us by traditional wisdom that emerged in the ancient past. Our ancestors likely had a much better grasp of the environment than we have now, but we may still learn from their straightforward practices. So that we may achieve a more stable, clean, wealthy, and healthy environment in the near future, extensive research is required to extract, evaluate, and apply the ecological conservation strategies of ancient India to current cultures.

For the purpose of inspiring ecologically responsible attitudes and actions, the *Shlokas* of the *AtharvaVeda* provide extensive details on a variety of ecological sites and the richness of natural heritage. It acknowledges the inherent worth of the natural world. In its emphasis on the interdependence of humans and the natural world, the *AtharvaVeda* has laid out a deep ethic of ecological sustainability and complete reliance on Mother Earth. But the hidden significance of all these *Shlokas* of *AtharvaVeda* is that Earth needs Humans to reciprocate with peace, love, care, respect, and sustenance.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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