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Ṛgvedic Environmental Vision: An Analysis in the Context of Sustainable Development

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ABSTRACT

From ancient times, the Ṛgveda has shaped ways of knowing within India's intellectual traditions, presenting a view of environment that values balance, respect, and continuity. Instead of treating nature as something passive, its verses see it as alive - entwined with duty and sacred presence. By looking at certain hymns addressed to figures like Pṛthivī (Earth), Varuṇa (upholder of law), Agni (Fire), and Vāyu (Wind), we begin to notice a pattern grounded in ṛta - a concept linking natural cycles with ethical conduct. Rather than placing humans above all else, these texts position people within larger networks of life, where care replaces control. Reverence becomes central; conquest fades into irrelevance. This piece draws from traditional commentaries and interpretive analysis to suggest Vedic views on ecology provide grounded, lasting perspectives for today's environmental challenges. Though old, these ideas remain useful when forming current ethical frameworks and regulations around nature. They also bring forward a significant but overlooked part of Indian thought into worldwide conversations about sustainable living.

Keywords: Ṛgveda, Environmental Ethics, Sustainable Development, Ṛta (Cosmic Order), Vedic Ecology.

Introduction:

The twentieth century world was increasingly considered one of environmental degradation, climate change, unsustainable development patterns; there was a growing consensus among academy and practitioners that a purely technocratic or utilitarian approach would not solve environmental crises. On modern lines, moral, philosophical, and cultural considerations have gradually come to be recognized as the very counterweights to bare scientific knowledge within environmental discourse. Thus, traditional systems of thought, particularly those that originated in very ancient civilizations, are being reconsidered for their ecological and sustainable worldviews. Among them, Indian Knowledge System (IKS), with its extensive textual and philosophical traditions, is endowed with a treasure chest of knowledge: deep-witted and ecologically oriented. *Ṛgveda,* literally referring to a collection of hymns and the earliest of the four Vedas, is one of the most fundamental and revered scriptures within this system and is traditionally held as *śruti (relealed knowledge)* or revealed knowledge and thus as the fundamental voice of Vedic thought and cosmology.

The *Ṛgveda* sees nature not as a mere setting for human activity, but recognizes it as a living, sacred being, filled with divinity and cosmic order. The concept of *Ṛta* frequently found in the Ṛgveda, sometimes translated as "cosmic order" or "universal law," sets the moral and ecological ambiance within which all beings, living or not, are intertwined and operate within a harmonious system. This notion rejects the dichotomy between man and nature that permeates Western thought beginning in modern times, thereby affirming a cosmology that is whole. Moreover, the Vedic reverence for forces such as *Agni (fire), Vāyu (wind), Pṛthivī (earth), and Āpaḥ (waters)* constitutes an ecological consciousness that endows nature with sanctity and agency.

The central aim of this article is to pick out from the *Ṛgveda* some hymns with environmental overtones and analyse how these can be reinterpreted in relation to *contemporary sustainability discourse.* Through a hermeneutic engagement with Ṛgvedic texts, the article will unearth an indigenous ecological ethic both adequately profound and still applicable. It is argued that the Ṛgvedic worldview prescribes principles of *sustainable development* like interdependent relations, conservation, and balancing, except that this prescription is given in an entirely different cultural and spiritual idiom. By foregrounding the Ṛgvedic vision of nature, this paper adds to the growing number of works that attempts to *decolonize environmental ethics* and restore epistemological dignity to indigenous knowledge systems. Hopefully, such investigations will contribute not only to academic thought on sustainability but also to pedagogical methods and policy formulations based on culturally relevant values.

Understanding the Ṛgveda and its Philosophical Framework

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Traditionally considered to be the earliest surviving Indo-Aryan scripture, the Ṛgveda has taken the central place in the Indian Knowledge System as the elementary text of Vedic literature. Written in primitive Sanskrit and passed orally from generation to generation till the period of documentation, the Ṛgveda contains *1,028 hymns (sūkta-s)* arranged into ten books (mandalas), with these hymns directed mainly toward natural deities and cosmic forces. These hymns present not merely a reflexive view of religiosity or rituals but rather of deep philosophical comprehension of existence constituted with metaphysical, ethical, and ecological concerns. The Ṛgvedic seers *(ṛṣi-s)* did not separate the human experience from the natural world; rather, they considered all facets of existence in the cosmos as interdependent expressions of one reality.

At the center of this Vedic worldview lies *Ṛta,* another word important to understanding Vedic cosmology. Ṛta, as it were, is the unchangeable cosmic order running the Universe with laws of nature, ethical behaviour, the changes in seasons, and even certain ritual exactitudes. In essence, the principle of Ṛta keeps the divine realm, the human realm, and the natural realm in harmony. In following the path of Ṛta, actions would remain in concert with the higher cosmic rhythm, thus maintaining ecological balance and intertie moral entities. *Dharma,* given greater honor in classical Indian thought, might then be seen as, in many respects, a moral and social construction of Ṛta. The Vedic gods invoked in the hymns were not anthropomorphic idols but rather personifications of natural elements and cosmic functions. The gods *Agni* (fire), *Vāyu* (wind), Indra (rain and thunder), *Varuṇa* (cosmic and moral order), *Savitṛ* (sun), and *Pṛthivī* (earth) are simultaneously invoked as divine entities and as living embodiments of the sacred cosmos. At the framework's heart lies the ritual (yajña), which is formally conceived as a metaphysical ecological exchange between humankind and the universe whereby the offering (havis) returns in blessings through natural processes operating in a cycle. Such a model of reciprocity stands against any exploitation of nature and instead proposes a sustainable ethic based on gratitude, balance, and self-restraint.

The philosophy that underlines the entire Ṛgveda is inherently *non-dualistic and syncretic.* Neither the world is considered to be separate nor inferior to the divine but rather an expression of the sacred itself. In Hymn 1.164.46, the much-quoted declaration—*"Ekam sat viprā bahudhā vadanti"* (Truth is one, sages call it by many names)—singularizes a pluralistic oriented worldview that eradicates the mutually exclusive categories vis-à-vis ecological inclusivity. Such a metaphysical basis allows the Ṛgvedic view to deem all things including plants, animals, rivers, and mountains as being part of one sacred continuum.

Methodologically, all the interpretations of the selected hymns conveying ecological consciousness are presented through a *hermeneutic lens,* drawing from both classical and modern commentarial traditions of the *Sāyaṇas* (14th century) Modern interpreters. These interpretations unveil that the ostensibly mytho-poetic language of the Ṛgveda conceals profound cosmological principles and ethical imperatives that relate strikingly well even to present considerations of sustainability and environmental stewardship. The Ṛgveda philosophical framework is tow-pronged-theocentric and ecocentric, along with spiritual cosmology in pragmatic ethics. It offers a view of the universe where human beings are not oppressors but custodians of the earth, engaging in a cosmic dance under the governance of Ṛta. This ancient philosophical framework could provide a zestful reenergization to the modern ecological paradigms to integrate ethical-spiritual values with environmental thought.

Key Environmental Hymns and Their Interpretations

The Ṛgveda is not an organized treatise on environmentalism in the modern sense; yet the hymns are deeply imbued with nature reverence and interdependence between cosmic forces and human life. Vedic seers (*ṛṣi-s*), through their hymns, expressed respectfulness, awe, and a sense of ethical responsibility for nature. A hermeneutic analysis of selected hymns brings out the deep ecological consciousness enshrined in poetic, ritual, and symbolic language. We will thus examine some of the hymns addressed to *Pṛthivī (Earth), Varuṇa (cosmic order and moral law), Agni (fire), and Vāyu (wind),* as well as those related to natural elements in general, emphasizing their environmental import and relevance today.

Pṛthivī Sūkta: Earth as Sacred and Sustaining

Though the *Atharvaveda* contains the full-blown *Bhū Sūkta (AV 12.1),* the Earth is glorified in 63 verses, the Ṛgveda contains scattered hymns and verses that present Earth (Pṛthivī) as the nurturer and sustainer of life. In *Ṛgveda 5.84.1* Earth is invoked as "firm, wide-spread, the mother of plants"—a phrase that captures her fecundity, stability, and nourishing character. She is very often paired with *Dyauḥ (Sky)* in the dual compound Dyāvāpṛthivī, representing the cosmic parents of existence. Such a conjunction also brings forth the ambiance of a bipolar and yet integrative cosmology as espied by the Vedic seers; were Earth and Sky function collaboratively as parents of sustenance. In connection with the funeral rites of *Ṛgveda 10.18.10,* the Earth is asked to "lie light upon the deceased" and protect him like a mother. This kind of imagery

shows a very deep emotional and ethical relationship that the Vedic idea envisages between a human being and the Earth and that binds even till death. The Earth as mother *(mātṛbhūmiḥ)* is not mere metaphor but carries with it a moral imperative: the Earth should not be exploited but nurtured and respected.

Varuṇa Sūkta: The Guardian of Cosmic and Moral Order

Varuṇa is said, in *Rgveda 1.25*, to be the greatest of gods and the upholder of *Ṛta,* the cosmic and moral law. He is *ṛtaṁ ca satyaṁ ca.* The omniscient guardian who "knows the path of birds in the sky and the course of rivers in the ocean." His domain encompasses not only human behaviour but natural regularity as well-the seasons and all celestial and hydrological phenomena. Here, nature is not forced through compulsion but through divine wisdom. Accordingly, the moral behaviour of humans is directly linked with ecological balance. Any violation of Ṛta, be it moral or ecological, calls for compensation *(prāyaścitta):* this establishes reciprocal responsibility between human beings and the natural world. Viewed so, the gaze of *Varuṇa* becomes a symbol of the moral demands that the ecology of survival places on human agency.

Agni and the Principle of Transformation

Agni, the god of fire, holds a prestigious position in Vedic rites and cosmology. From the very first hymn of the whole corpus of the *Ṛgveda (1.1),* Agni had been addressed as the "priest of the sacrifice" and the "mediator between gods and men." Agni stands for the *principle of transformation:* be it for physical, spiritual, or ecological transformation. Fire is a ritual medium *(yajña),* a purifying force, and a channel for metabolism and circulation of energy. In environmental thought, Agni stands for *reciprocity and balance.* Sacrifice, when viewed in the ecological light, is a responsibility to return to the earth treasures that it has granted to the sacrifice's beneficiaries, so that what is taken out is put back into life again. This is a profound ethical edict: any use of resources for sustenance must be counterbalanced by concrete acts of restoration and reverence. *Ṙgveda 6.16.13* also describes Agni as "carrier of oblations ... devours the forests." One may see Agni here as a force of irrevocable destruction, but often within Vedic symbolism destruction stands for regeneration. Forest fires clear the undergrowth and encourage growth for a new generation, thereby paralleling nature's own renewal cycles.

Vāyu and the Principle of Movement and Breath

Vāyu is the god of wind and air in the Vedic pantheon, and he is the second nature-related local deity. In *Ṛgveda 1.134,* he is extolled as one whose *invisible yet necessary* presence moves freely between heaven and earth. Vāyu is implored as the "life-breath of the gods"— reminding us that air is not merely a physical element but a sacred life force. The very nature of the hymn suggests that Vāyu is everywhere and above being neutral; that is an ancient idea conveying the idea that the air cannot belong to anybody, yet it serves to all. In this era of air pollution, industrial emissions, and climate-change concerns, such an ethical foisting to protect this vital resource gains even more prominence. The insight of the Ṛgveda that breath *(prāṇa)* is sacred and shared is a basic ecological standpoint: pollution of air not simply is a physical violation, but a spiritual desecration.

Symbolism of Rivers, Trees, and Celestial Bodies

The *Ṛgveda* contains hymns praising rivers, including the *Sarasvatī (6.61),* who is both a river and a goddess of wisdom. Rivers are praised for *nourishing, flowing, and purifying,* meaning knowledge, life, and continuation. They are invoked in gratitude and reverence, speaking for a culture of water ethics on respect and restraint. Trees and herbs stand acknowledged in *Ṛgveda 10.97,* which praises plants for their medicinal effectiveness and accepts them as divine healers. The personification of plants and trees shows an acceptance of their inherent worth and agency-this aspect remains elusive in anthropocentric worldviews. The Sun (Sūrya), Moon (Candra), and Dawn (Uṣas) are not only praised for their operations but *symbolically for fixing time and rhythms of life.*

Such symbolic associations build a *cosmopoetic ecology*-where the universe is considered a sacred text, nature is its language, and humans stand invited into reading rather than rewriting these natural patterns. Contrastingly, the Ṛgvedic hymns seem to convey a deeply textured ecological vision built around *sacrality, reciprocity, and cosmic order.* Far from these being archaic religious utterances, the hymns embed *a complex environmental ethic,* demanding reverence, restraint, and responsibility for nature. What makes them relevant even today is the fact that they convey not just a vision of seeing the world but also a *way of being in the world*-a vision much needed today in an age of ecological alienation and crisis.

Principles of Sustainability in the Ṛgvedic Vision

Contemporary sustainability means equilibrium in the utilization of resources so as to meet present requirements without compromising future generations'

welfare. While this is a new term, the philosophy of sustainable living finds a deep-rooted place in ancient Indian thinking, especially in the Ṛgvedic corpus. Through their hymns, the Vedic seers envisaged a cosmos ruled by *Ṛta* (cosmic order) in which every being, whether animate or inanimate, had its purpose, place, and duty. This conception of *ecological dharma* would mean that nature should be revered but balanced with moral responsibility for restraint, reciprocity, or balance. Environmental ethics relating to sustainability principles reflected in the Ṛgveda are discussed in this section.

The Ethic of Ṛta: Cosmic Harmony and Moral Order

This concept of Ṛta in the Ṛgveda is not a mere metaphysical entity but has an ecological meaning as well. It is the universal law of nature and morality that interlinks actions, natural phenomena, and moral consequences. These three elements are considered to be one and the same by virtue of Ṛta. A hymn in *Ṛgveda 1.164.42* says: "One is the Ṛta extending over the heavens, over the earth, and through the atmosphere; it is the law of gods and the foundation of the universe." In short, the concept is such that whenever human actions are in concordance with natural order so as to assure cosmic balance, Ṛta exists. When *Ṛta* is violated, there arises an imbalance both in the spiritual and in the environmental processes. The profound message of sustainability resides here: *Man, and nature along with all by-products of nature are co-operants in a system ordered by a cosmic principle.* Hence, sustainability from the Vedic perspective is not about domination; instead, it is about *coexistence with nature and voluntary restraint* of our behaviours.

Restraint and Moderation: Against Overconsumption

The Ṛgvedic sages, while suggesting *moderation in consumption*, urged humans to take whatever little was necessary from nature. *Ṛgveda 10.117.6* says: "One who eats without entertaining others commits a sin." Although this verse is usually interpreted in terms of hospitality, it also offers a more profound ecological viewpoint: It condemns hoarding and praises sharing-an attitude the world needs today to fight environmental degradation. Another verse (1.89.1) prays, "May we not injure Earth; may we not hurt the atmosphere." The prayer reflects a heightened awareness of environmental fragility and a call for the conscious treatment of the ecosystem. This ethic of *voluntary limitation,* very much akin to the aforementioned Gandhian principle of "simple living and high thinking," says that sustainability starts with *self-restraint and motto: "Necessary minimum."*

Interdependence of Life Forms

Not operating under a rigid hierarchy of life forms is a characteristic of the Ṛgvedic view of the world. The *Ṛgveda 10.191.4* hymn states, "Let your minds be in harmony, your hearts in union; so that together you may be as one." This clearly addresses human collectivity but implies a wider natural principle, i.e., that *unity is the base of prosperity.* Trees, rivers, fire, wind, sun, and animals-finance, and other such beings-would be resources. The hymns often personify these forces and deities not with the aim of granting them mythological recognition, but to sacralise their existence and demand ethical engagement. This realization about the negation of the anthropocentric dimension in the Ṛgvedic imagination is major for sustainability discourse, which is progressively leaning to *biocentrism and ecocentrism* as remedy solutions to ecological crises.

Yajña as Ecological Reciprocity

The Vedic ritual of *Yajña* has, for the most part, been misunderstood merely as a fire-sacrifice, though it is really a deeper symbol of reciprocity on the part of humans versus the cosmos. The offering of *havis* through the fire is not destruction but transmutation and restoration. Agni, in *Ṛgveda 3.1.17,* is said to be the “carrier of the offerings,” that is, Agni ensures the gods return their gifts through phenomena such as *rain and prosperity.* Yajña, thus, is an ancient *ecologic model for sustainability*—giving back to nature as much as has been taken. It propagates the *regeneration* cycle as opposed to consumption, saying thank you and accepting a whole lot of balance. On the psychological and moral level, Yajña is akin to modern notions like *"ecosystem services"* or *"circular economy"* in which continuousness and reciprocity take precedence over extracting and discarding.

Environmental Stewardship as Dharma

While expanded in later texts, the idea of *Dharma* has its roots in the Ṛgveda, where it implies duty in accordance with cosmic order. In *Ṛgveda 6.75.19,* the hymn prays that the people be "protected by truth and virtue," and that the land be "fertile and prosperous." This verse acknowledges human beings as stewards of the Earth rather than owners. Such stewardship is not enforced by law or coercion but *consciously chosen as an ethical response.* The *Ṛṣi-s,* on the other hand, are mindful not to assert an exclusive claim about the acquisition of knowledge or divine favour; rather, they present the universe as an open system of dialogue between man and nature. Thus, the Vedic Dharma *is inclusive, fluid, and ecologically minded,* on the premise that it is not an option to be sustainable; it is a sacrosanct obligation.

The Ṛgveda lays down in principle an ecological ethic based on *Ṛta (order), Yajña (reciprocity), Dharma (duty), and restraint.* These concepts converge to present a highly evolved notion of sustainability—one that is not purely about regulation and policy, but about a deeper *cosmic and moral understanding.* It is now the challenge of the modern environmental discourses not to mimic Vedic forms but to remind environmentally conscious discourses of the Vedic insight: Earth is not a commodity but a *living, sacred system* that deserves respect and protection.

Comparative Insights: Ṛgvedic Thought and Modern Environmental Ethics

The ecological wisdom within Ṛgveda thus stands as one of the earliest and profound statements of what modern discourse calls environmental ethics. While the terminology and conceptual apparatus may differ, the essential questions of a sustainable world, interdependent systems, and being morally responsible towards nature are strikingly resonant between the two. Those, then, would be the guiding points of accentuation in cross-checking the insights offered by Ṛgvedic ecological vision with modern environmental ethics. One could say that modern environmental ethics arose as a formalized philosophical discipline in the 20th century, under the shadow of anthropogenic ecological degradation, climate change, and biodiversity loss. Things like *deep ecology, land ethic,* and *eco-centrism* emphasized by Aldo Leopold, Arne Naess, and Holmes Rolston III, respectively, go beyond the utilitarian and anthropocentric views of nature. While the Ṛgveda was not spelled in such language, it saw eye-to-eye with those views on nature as being sacred, interconnected, and autonomous. The Vedic idea of *Ṛta,* the cosmic order that governs willed processes and moral dimensions alike, might be compared to Leopold's conception of a "land ethic," which entails expanding the boundaries of community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals.

One of the most distinguishing parallels is the *non-anthropocentric view* that Ṛgveda holds. Deviating from the dominion-centric model of nature so often associated with Western ideas of the early period, the Ṛgvedic hymns consistently portrayed humans as just one among many in a wider cosmic ecology. *Pṛthivī* or Earth, *Āpas* or Waters, *Agni* or Fire, and *Vāyu* or Wind are all deified, not only to mythologize them but to *recognize their power and inherent value.*[27] This is the same echoing of deep ecology, whereby intrinsically all life forms deserve respect, regardless of whether they serve humans. The notion that nature possesses value independent of a human-centric purpose would have been eerily alien to the Wagnerian perspective that informs modern environmental policies. Moreover, ethical *restraint and reciprocity* are paramount to both systems. The Ṛgveda condemns hoarding and praises sharing in 10.117.6, promulgating a value system opposed to consumerist excess. Ecological thought in the contemporary world views this overexploitation of natural resources where the principle of sufficiency is championed over excess. The Vedic idea of *Yajña,* discussed previously, is precisely an expression of this reciprocity: giving back to nature what one has taken. In the present-day discourse, one might see this represented as *ecological restoration* and *sustainable development.*

There are those important differences. In contrast to the Ṛgvedic approach, which is *normative and spiritual* in nature, the modern environmental ethics is mostly *secular and offered toward policy making.* Thus, in the Vedic ethic, the cosmic and scriptural authority grant legitimacy to duties, while modern systems turn to empirical science, constitutional rights, and rational moral systems. The distinction here affects the conceptualization of duties. For example, in traditional Vedic philosophy, injuring nature is against the Dharma; in modern interpretations, it could be analysed as matters of environmental justice or law. Nonetheless, from a comparative perspective, the *ancient wisdom and modern science need not be in conflict* but rather may complement each other. The Ṛgveda offers a *moral and spiritual basis* for the environmental cause, helping present-day ecological discourse with depth, meaning, and reverence for nature. Its knowledge reminds us that environmental problems are not technical ones; they are *ethical and civilization problems:* consciousness transformation is called for-a premise that fits well with our contemporary environmental situation.

Contemporary Relevance and Policy Implications

The Ṛgveda's ecological world view has far-reaching implications for the current environment discourse, policy-making, and development models. As the modern world struggles with climate change, ecological degradation, and patterns of unsustainable consumption, the Ṛgvedic world view offers a moral-ecological compass based upon reverence for nature, restraint, and a concern for the welfare of all. This section explores the ways by which the Vedic ideas can be used for the building of environmental governance and policy frameworks today. One of the most pertinent global problems today is that of development and environmental sustainability being seen as contradictory. The Vedic thrust on Ṛta—cosmic and moral order—gives the foundational concept where the environment is not considered as an offhand commodity but as a *sacred element crucial for life.* In this view, sustainable development is not only a technical issue of balancing resource use but also an ethical issue regarding the duty *(dharma)* to nature. This corresponds to the modern trend toward ethic-based environmental models

like the *Earth Charter Initiative,* which underscores respect for nature and intergenerational equity.

Indian environmental policy has traditionally tended toward emphasis on legislative interventions such as the *Environment Protection Act, 1986*, and the *Forest Conservation Act, 1980.* Yet such policies have systematically ignored community participation, cultural contextualization, and spiritual resonance. Incorporating Ṛgvedic ecological wisdom in policy debates would help build a stronger *value-laden environmental ethic* associating indigenous traditions and local belief systems. For instance, this could also include carrying forward Ṛgvedic concepts of *Yajña* (reciprocal offering and renewal) toward the establishment of environmental ceremonies and community-level conservation practices, which regard the act of conservation as something collectively done and sacred and separate from top-down legislation. Similarly, the Indian educational syllabus and environmental awareness programs need to consider *Indic ecological methods.* The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 underscores the inclusion of traditional knowledge systems in the mainstream education curriculum. Inducting Ṛgvedic environmental ethics under this provision can give rise to a culturally *contextual ecological pedagogy* that binds young learners strongly through emotional and moral ties to the environment. This would be in contrast to treating sustainability as an imported concept, and in doing so, they would work toward reclaiming it as an *integral part of India's civilizational identity.*

At the global stage, where climate negotiations and environmental treaties seek a common parlance for sustainability, the Vedic view offers a unique voice. Concepts such as *'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'* (the world is one family) from Vedic literature find an echo with the new ideas of *planetary health, ecological citizenship,* and *global commons.* Holding up the banner of unity and mutual dependence, Ṛgvedic ecology contests the extractive and individualistic reasonings that have brought onto the environmental crisis. Practically speaking, policies promoting *community-based resource management, traditional ecological knowledge (TEK),* and *bio-cultural diversity conservation* could be greatly enhanced by a Ṛgvedic outlook. This implies considering sacred groves, river deities, and agrarian festivals not merely as acts of cultural transmission but as *functioning ecological institutions* that have good reason to maintain biodiversity and local resilience through time. Legal measures, such as granting rivers legal personality (as in the case of the Ganga and Yamuna in Uttarakhand High Court, 2017), may even be *founded philosophically* in Ṛgvedic environmental ontology in due course.

To conclude, Ṛgvedic environmental vision, far from being an artifact of the past, needs actual, immediate reconceptualization of the human-nature relationship. Drawing from concepts such as Ṛta, Dharma, Yajña, and ecological restraint, policy promoters, and actors in civil society can erect frameworks with ecological sustainability on the one hand and cultural meaning and spiritual consideration on the other. The problem is the implementation of the numerous hints that this ancient knowledge gives to us in modern-day action, demanding a multidisciplinary dialogue, ethical investment, and innovative creative institutions.

Conclusion

The ecological sensibility embedded in the Ṛgvedic hymns stands out as one of the early expressions of an integrated vision of nature, divinity, and human responsibility in the universe. Far from serving as poetic eulogies for natural forces, the Ṛgvedic perspective is an expression of an ethical and metaphysical idea wherein every element in nature—earth, water, air, fire, and space—is reverenced as a conscious and sacred presence. This reverential attitude forms the very interconnectedness that binds, in this world, every living being and calls for a code of conduct emphasizing equilibrium, restraint, and quid pro quo. This approach stands diametrically opposed to exploitative and utilitarian views, whereby much of the present ecological predicament has come into being. Thus, the Ṛgvedic approach provides a civilizational ideal wherein ecological balance is consecrated as an expression of cosmic order and moral obligation. A renewal of contemporary environmental ethics would meaningfully take place when based upon these ancient insights in a critical manner-not in a romanticistic revival, but in a dialogic manner that integrates indigenous ecological values with contemporary science and policy. The relevance of Ṛgvedic environmental wisdom today is precisely that it can foster a consciousness that goes beyond acceptance and technological solutions and calls forth an attitudinal transformation of humanity towards nature. Such a transformation is, thus, essential if environmental stewardship is to become an intrinsic cultural value, rather than a draconian imposition. In Earth's present state of ecological disequilibrium, the call of the Ṛgveda emerges not just as an ancient voice-but also as a moral imperative for the future. It reminds us that the conservation of the environment is not just a concern for environmentalists but a sacred duty whose roots are deeply embedded in the very structure of existence. Thus, the Ṛgveda goes on speaking to humanity- not through whimpering echoes of antiquity, but instead in the stark tones of timeless concern.

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