

Man, Nature & Environment as Envisioned in Indian Philosophy

Abstract

Man is surrounded by various environments, but our environment i.e. Nature is not a result of Man's Mental activities. It is an environment totally natural in its situation. This includes all the natural activities which provided to Man by nature like the earth, seasons, flora & fauna, rivers, mountains etc. All these natural things influence Man in many ways. Every inch of the earth is part and parcel of the human activities. Man & Nature are strongly related to each other. There is no doubt that nature is supreme and cannot be won. But we will have to accept this fact that nature influences Man's more strongly than Man's influence on Nature. To prove this, we can take the example of Indian social environment One can see a great impact of nature on Indian traditions as envisioned in Vedas.

Keywords : Nature, Man, Vedas, Space, Universe, Earth, Land, Sun & Moon.

Introduction

The traditional Hindu Culture is basically Nature based. Whether they are Vedas, Purans, Samirities or other religious books and try to understand the mystries of nature and try to analyse the effect of nature on Man's life. Environment is the representative of physical component of earth where in man is the important fact influences his environment¹. In other countries such intricate study of nature is not found. Our Indian traditional books deals with the formation of earth, its ultimate destruction, the dependence of Man on nature are discussed in detail. In the Homeric hymns the Earth is addresses as 'Mother of Gods, the wife the starry Heaven.'" Rig Ved is considered as the basis of all knowledge in which devtas' (semi-gods) regarded as the representatives of various forms of nature, are worshipped and held in esteem.² Earth and Heaven are the universal parents who give life to all creatures and grant them the moons of subsistence³.

The three types of devtas, which can be further divided into eight categories are symbolic of some natural and super-natural powers.

The main three types are-

1. Deities of the space - Air, Rain etc.
2. Deities of the universe - Sun, Moon etc.
3. Deities of the earth - Rivers, Earth, Fire, Water, etc.

It has been mentioned in various religious books that the cycle of destruction of world keeps on occurring from time to time and the world obliterates and merges with nature. After this powerful destruction, the creation has begun. The earth was in the form of water. Then arose fire out of it which was golden. Then the Prajapati or Parbrahm or man came into being. This man started going round and round in water and started meditation. As a result of his meditation and the help of air, the lower half of the Parbrahm became solid and was called 'the earth'. Initially earth was in the liquid form. Slowly and slowly, under the impact of fire and air it started becoming thick and then started the process of solidification. The upper portion of the supreme told was changing into the sun. Other planets and stars/satellites were coming out of it. Moon has also been turned. Slowly and slowly, sand particles were formed in the land. These gave rise to big rocks and mountains. The evolution was from particles to peoples to rocks, to mountains. Earlier mountain were also movable. But when land became solid, mountain also became fixed. With the help of the powers of Indra and Sun, the small land started expanding and this was called 'the earth'.

The sun, moon and earth are also revolving in their own orbits. With the birth of every new planet, a small variation occurs in the revolutions of these planets and in the end the speed of revolution and rotation these planets also become fixed. There was neither Being nor non-being, neither nor sky, neither death, nor immortality, neither night nor



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day: That one breathed calmly, self-sustained.⁴ Naught else beyond it lay. At first there was only night at some places and only light at the others. Now proper day and night were formed.

With a gap of many years, man was born on the earth. In ancient Man, Brahma, Bhrigu, Angira etc. are the famous Rishis, Then human race started to grow and develop. Twenty one Prajapati's belong to this era Rishi Kashyap and Daksh are very famous. Slowly Man started spreading in various parts of the earth. The modern scientists regard the Man of this era as uncivilized/sevage. Earth became distant from each other and clouds descended on earth. Rain fell and various herbs were both leading to the formation of various medicines. Earth became productive, Moon became cold and luminous. The first seed was born on earth and the whole earth became green with vegetarian. Forest play vital role in the economy as well as daily needs of the tribals. The tribals used wild plants in a variety of ways for curing various diseases⁵.

Earlier there were no villages and people lived under the trees. At that time metals like gold and silver has not been discovered because man has no use of them. At that time the earth produced grains without any agricultural activity.⁶ At that time there was no political organisations in the world. Man was not political by nature and people were religious and selfless. Earth and heaven are the universal parents who gave life to all creatures and grant them the means of subsistence.⁷ Slowly, in the process of development of human society, small states came into being. The son of Moon, Bharat is the person after whom this country was named "Bharat Varsh" Om rishis have written many great religious book But 'Vedas' are of the greatest importance. The scientific explanation given for the creation of the earth is on the basis of the Vedas. The creation, the destruction, the distribution of the ultimate soul into smaller units all these are elaborately mentioned in the Vedas.⁸

1. How many types of fire is there?
2. Where does the heat come from?
3. What is the power of the Sun?
4. How do the sun rays affect the earth?

How rain was born to make vegetarian possible the earth?

The process of solidification of the earth to formation of land & water. Answers to all these question are available in the Vedas. From this we can conclude that the Indian civilization was essentially scientific in nature from the very beginning.

Indian culture and traditions were so closely related to the scientific activities of the universe that they established a relationship with them. In Indian Philosophy Kanad is very famous because he was the first one to announce that the earth is made of atoms. Its main business is to deal with the category and to unfold its atomic pluralism. A category is called Padarth and the entire universe is reduced to six or seven Padartha.⁹ Udaynacharya declared that the sun was the only source of light and energy. Vachaspati, Mishr, says that light is a mixture of atoms. Chemistry developed in our country due to the efforts of Ayurved. India was a leader of the whole universe in the field of medicine. Charak, Suritu, Varbhat, and

Bhav Mishr are the four great scholars of the science of body and medicine. Whenever a new disease was born, these scholars searched for its cure and found the solutions in nature.

Kapil, whose period begins from the beginning of the Tretayug, gave the knowledge of the relation between man & nature to world. He has given a scientific analysis of all the natural happenings in the world. Kanad was a great Indian Philosopher. He used to gather the left over grains from the fields of the farmers and hence his name Kanad. With the help of his knowledge of Yoga, he proposed the doctrine of Vaisheshika Philosophy. In this philosophy we obtain knowledge of matter, substance, their categories in brief. Kanad believes in nine categories of matter.

Earth, Vapour, Energy, Air, Sky, Time, Space, Soul and Mind, these categories living in relation with substance. Even if one particle out of all is left out, they all fall back into their initial existence the theory of the creation & destruction of this world, proposed by samkhya philosophy have been proved by scientific methods. The scientific mysteries have been explained in a very simple manner, In the same manner, Rishi Gautam, the great logician has given explanations. The earth is the only place in the universe which is known to sustain life and the only planet in doubt with water all organism depend for their survival to the environment in which they live. It encompasses all living and non-living things, air, soil, water, man, animals, plants, towns, villages, rivers, mountains, earth etc.¹⁰

Conclusion

At last we can say our ancient Vedic culture gives a very impressive account of the relationship between human life and nature. It reminds us of the facts, that there is one earth, One Sun, one moon, and one sky with stars, planets etc. The knowledge of the earth is also one and the Vedas are the essence of this knowledge which has been given to Man from ancient times by the great rishis of this world. Indian traditions have a strong relationship with natural conditions and environment. The Rig, Ayur, Sam and Arth Vedas are all a source of various traditions and all are related to natural incidents. Then we can say that it is a fact that nature has great relation and influence on Man, human society, human culture, human behaviour and human qualities.

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