

Influence of Eco-spirituality through Vedantic wisdom in Emerson and Thoreau Works

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Abstract:

The term eco-spirituality in Indian considerations is a philosophical approach to ‘unite human beings with nature through spiritual connection’ and the transcendental writers echoed this idea to the world, creating ecological awareness through their writings. This paper explores how age old Indian Vedantic eco-spiritual vision and concepts like Advaita (non-duality), Karma (right doings) and Brahman (universality), enriched the writings of Emerson and Thoreau, to explain an ultimate reality and sanctity of living beings.

Transcendental philosophy reverberated with the Indian Vedantic wisdom, underlying existence of divine soul adding an expression of ‘consciousness’ and ‘inner-self’, anticipating contemporary discourses on ecological balance, sustainability concerns, and spiritual scope of environmentalism. We demonstrate how American Transcendental Movement of 19th century, under the influence of Vedantic thought, developed a cross-cultural dialogue of eco-spirituality shaping human relationship with nature and how ancient Indian scriptures act as a philosophical bridge connecting Eastern wisdom to Western movement by Emerson and Thoreau.

Key Words- 1. Ancient Indian text, 2. Eco-spirituality, 3. Ralph Waldo Emerson, 4. Henry David Thoreau, 5. Transcendentalism,

Introduction

Eco-spirituality acts as a relationship between spirituality and human environment. It connects science of living organisms, such as humans, to a more cosmic transition. Lincoln Valerie defines Eco-spirituality as “a manifestation of the spiritual connection between human beings and the environment.” He further explains it “as exhibiting the spiritual link between humans and the natural environment” and defines eco-spiritual consciousness as

“assessing a deep awareness of one’s eco-spiritual relationship.”¹(Lincoln, 228) Eco spirituality endeavors to reconcile the disparity between the scientific field of ecology and spirituality. It delineates how individuals connect with the sacred within natural, global, and cosmic ecosystems.²(van Schalkwyk, 2011) Eco-spirituality is thus recognized as a blend of sacred values of humans with nature or Universe with its unbound potential, it is an approach to spiritual exposition that relates to environment’s divine potential. It is a sacred embodiment that connects us with an ecosystem that every individual is a part of.

Eco-spirituality is described “as pro-environmental and climate change mitigation actions.”³(Lestar and Böhm 56) The moral realm of eco-spirituality accentuates that genuine spiritual practice must be rooted in virtuous acts. This requires an implementation of our role as protectors of the soil, rather than its exploiters. The mystical vitality cannot exist without moral accountability. A rendezvous with eco-spirituality often sparks unfathomable spiritual arising, where human beings recognize their moral duties toward the environment and nature,¹Lincoln, “Ecospirituality,” 227.

²van Schalkwyk, “Sacredness and Sustainability,” 77.

³Lestar and Böhm, “Ecospirituality and Sustainability Transitions,” 56.

as an indispensable part of their spiritual expedition, “embodying a commitment to ecological justice and sustainability.”⁴(de Diego-Cordero et al. 1285-1306) One should be attuned to spirituality in terms of “shared humanity and morality rather than materialism.”⁵(Dhiman 1-6) Eco-spirituality is rooted to inner harmony; it integrates cherished and humanistic associations to achieve ecological justice. Human consciousness is pigeonholed by preconceived notions and ideological influences, which may bar them from embarking on an eco-spiritual odyssey to form a personal connection with the environment. Eco-spirituality also emphasizes the growth of inner experiences without the interference of revelatory figures, or other external agents.

Eco-spirituality fosters a sustainable lifestyle and practices for improving socio-economic paradigms, transforming the prevailing negative impacts of advancements in technology to new improved work ethics, growth in education, and creating a more dynamic environment for individuals. While eco-spirituality mirrors the reliability of spirituality as a vital force, this construction is profoundly rooted in innumerable Indian values, where nature is seen as sanctified and central to spiritual practices.

Research idea

The impact of spirituality is multi-faceted and traces its origin from the mysterious and dynamic land of India, which has acted as a perennial source of wisdom and sagacity endured through ages. Indian knowledge system, with its magnanimity, has inspired and illuminated innumerable regions including many countries, aiding them to combat the stringent laws and norms throughout the world. Spirituality helps human to realize, that, “The environment is a reflection or a by-product of our anthropological activities and

thoughts.”⁶ (Verma, R., & Mehra, S.1-17) It is important to highlight that, although this concept is fresh, indigenous

⁴de Diego Cordero et al., *Ecospirituality and Health*, 1285. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-023-01994-2>. ⁵de Diego Cordero et al., *Ecospirituality and Health*, 1285.

⁶Verma and Mehra, *Impermanent Nature of Environmental Advocacy*, 1. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15692108-bja10052>

people from India have already connected these dimensions for centuries, since their decolonial movement promotes socio-environmental justice, where through their knowledge, principles, and graces of inhabiting and caring for the land, approach the term ‘eco spirituality’.

Eco-spirituality signifies the relevance of spirituality in the contemporary world and historical sphere. One such Indian tradition, “Spirituality”, was successful in inspiring the capitalist and orthodox land of America during the 18th century, helping the inhabitants and runners of America to envision the vision of an *American Dream*, coined by James Truslow Adams in his book *Epic of America* and Ralph Waldo Emerson during mid 19th century, formulating an *American Transcendental Movement* while Henry David Thoreau together through their transcendental theories, embraced and developed a greater understanding of life,. This paper will scrutinize and contemplate the genesis of eco-spiritualism and its influence on the eco genre which is bathed with utopian impulse of equilibrium and sustainability. This research will show eco-spirituality as a universal element emanating from India, which cannot be curtailed into a narrow term, like a “movement”. Eco-spirituality constructs and holds the power to alter global landscape and its discourses as an important aspect of societal justice and ethics, which may embody or radiate different connotations and denotations to diverse people, but at its core, ‘ecospirituality’ is inclusive of all humanity.

American Transcendental Eco-spirituality derived from Indian texts

Eco-spirituality is to represent planet earth in the divine presence of spirit, highlighting impalpable, mysterious concepts of cosmos, paralleling to an act of sustainability. American transcendentalism can be regarded as a basis of motivation to “inform nascent deliberations on post-liberalism that invoke Platonism and the ‘transcendental’...American transcendentalism valued renunciation (of economic consumption, dogmatic theology, and political participation), nature, and spirituality as the means for attaining an ideal personal life, while also providing the building blocks for the attainment of a higher form of government and politics at the collective level.”⁷(Wolfel 291) “According to Native American Philosophy, there are many unique stories of how spirituality came to be a

⁷Wolfel, *American Transcendentalism and the Twenty-First Century*, 291.

common theme, in a number of them, is a discussion of a Great Spirit that lives within the universe and the earth represents its presence.”⁸ (Delaney 362). Tenets of American transcendentalism are the crux of eco-spirituality, which proportionally runs through sustainability as a measure. Eco-spirituality in America, intricately combines environmental

awareness and spiritual practices, highlighting a profound connection of all life. This approach often draws stimulation from a miscellaneous array of spiritual ethnicities, fostering a deep reverence for nature and encouraging ecological sustainability. American transcendentalist movement, which was a foil to American spiritual, environmental, and cognitive deprivation, achieved great significance at the time of its inception and continues to do so. American transcendentalism avows that reality is not limited to the corporal biosphere but has allegorical and literal dimensions as well. The interrelation of all life forms in transcendentalist aspects aligns with eco-spirituality's apprehension for the maintenance of the planet, and the recognition that environmental impairment affects both natural and spiritual health, as groundwork for eco-spirituality.

R.W. Emerson's literary works *Nature* and *Oversoul* undeniably mirror the weighty influence of Sanskrit *Vedanta* or 'the Indian philosophical wisdom' on his thinking and style. Franklin Edgerton also supports this notion, proclaiming that Vedanta's impact prolonged beyond Emerson, determining an academic current of both American and European literature. The edition of *Bhagavad Gita*, edited by Franklin Edgerton, states that R.W. Emerson's works not only showcase a deep print of 'Vedantic' philosophy, (a philosophy adopted from the Indian texts Veda) but his thoughts were mostly a fusion of eastern philosophies with his transcendentalist outlook. For R.W. Emerson, it was a meeting of American individuality with the wilderness, becoming a key to "the realization [sic] of a unique alternative destiny,"⁹(Madsen 1998, p. 74) which has to be fulfilled through the realms of eco spirituality.

Tat tvamasi "You are That." "That" is the characteristic way the Upanishads point to a Reality that cannot be described; and "you," of course, is not the petty, finite

⁸Delaney, *Eco-Spirituality*, 362.

⁹Madsen, *American Exceptionalism*, 1.

personality, but that pure consciousness "which makes the eye see and the mind think": the Self¹⁰ (Easwaran 1987, 21).

This quote from *Chandogya Upanishad*, highlights the infinite nature of universe, which can be in one aspect seen through wilderness, manifested through eco-spirituality.

"The Supreme Critic on the errors of the past and the present, and the only prophet of that which must be, is that great nature in which we rest, as the earth lies in the soft arms of the atmosphere; that Unity, that **Over-soul**, within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all other; that common heart".¹¹ (Emerson 3)

The statement by Emerson here indicates an ultimate underlying unity that transcends plurality and duality, thoroughly aligned with the philosophy of Indian eco-spiritual text *Advaita Vedanta*. 'Advaita' teaches that the (*Atma*) 'individual self' is not separate from the (*Brahma*) 'ultimate reality' but considered as same. This impression of unity is associated with *Advaita Vedanta's* idea that the creation and the multiplicity within,

are expressions of a singular, original essence of ecospirituality. Just as R.W. Emerson advocates that the “earth lies in the soft arms of the atmosphere,” demonstrating a calm and all-inclusive embrace of nature, *Advaita Vedanta* teaches that the physical world is also held in the grip of *Brahman*, which withstands and excels it. R.W. Emerson's avowal of “*The Supreme Critic*” here, metaphorically refers to ‘infinite nature’, capturing a philosophical conception of sustainability and eco-spirituality, befitting to be a decisive judge and surveyor of anthropoid actions and verdicts throughout history. R.W. Emerson endorses that being close to nature can divulge the flaws and gaffes of the present and past, serving as an administrative power or foresight for what is to come. He further elaborates:

¹⁰Easwaran, *The Upanishads*, 21.

¹¹Emerson, *The Over-Soul*, 1.

“The simplicity of the universe is very different from the simplicity of a machine. He who sees moral nature out and out, and thoroughly knows how knowledge is acquired and character formed, is a pedant.” ¹²(Emerson 1841).

This quote from *Spiritual Laws* by R.W. Emerson highlights the ease of universe, not politicized and tangled like artificial machines.

Manah prayatna-viśuddhaṁ, rūpaṁrājñyaṁ ca dṛṣṭam¹³. (Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 17) “A pure mind is capable of perceiving the supreme reality; but those who approach it with mechanical ritualism miss the true essence.”

This quote from *Bhagavad Gita* reiterates the thinking of Emerson, as ‘humans’ who understand the workings of the universe, are spiritually active, they comprehend the uniqueness of eco-spirituality, gaining its momentum from spirituality, shying away from artificiality.

American religious scholar Huston Cummings Smith researched a comparative study of Indian and American concepts of spirituality by approaching consecrated texts with an appropriate mindset, in order to grasp their profound and subtle teachings. This orientation aligning with Hinduism, on the nature of Indian eco-spirituality can be gasped from the pens of American scholars.

“Scripture is merely a key to the infinite storehouse of knowledge that lies within every human soul. And as for philosophy, its object is to enable the student to see the Truth—to realize it in direct experience. Hence certain moral and spiritual disciplines are necessary in order to create the right mood for the study of both philosophy and the scriptures. Hinduism lays down such disciplines: discrimination between the real and the unreal and renunciation of the unreal; and acquisition of the six virtues (control of the mind, control of the senses, restraining the mind from being distracted by worldly objects, faith in the scriptures and the words of the teacher, mental concentration, and lastly, the longing for liberation). The inwardness of spirit, cultivated through self-control and contemplation, enables the student of the

¹²Emerson, *Spiritual Laws*, 1.

¹³*Bhagavad Gita*, 17.16.

scriptures to grasp their subtle meaning, which otherwise remains hidden from the merely intelligent reader”¹⁴ (Smith 12).

The drive of all the great scriptures through the ecgto-spirituality is to teach “right knowledge” flowering into “right conduct.” “The aim of the spiritual lifecycle,” describes Huston Cumming Smith elsewhere, “is not altered states, but altered traits.”¹⁵ (Smith 97). These altered traits, derived from ancient Indian texts, like, *Upanishads*, *Bhagavad Gita*, to name a few, acknowledged by American pioneers, R.W. Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, enhanced and fashioned the destiny of America for eternity. American scholars also suggest that our comprehension of sustainability, morality, and ‘ethics should be informed by nature’s principles, which are manifestations of our actions’. This has been described ardently in an Indian holy book, **Karmanyevadhikaraste, Ma phaleshukadachana** (*Bhagavad Gita*, Chapter 2, verse 47) as a famous ‘shloka’ (verse) from *Bhagavad Gita* where Lord Krishna explains to the great warrior Arjuna- the theory of *Karma* (our doings). He said to ‘believe in yourself and do your *Karma* (action) and success will follow you automatically’. In an Indian concept, if an individual yearns to attain and maintain eco-spiritual balance they opt for *Karma*- ‘an Indian belief or a term to refer cause and effect of the actions of human being, that rules the unfolding of events and is based for a person on the integrity with which he has lived previous lives.’¹⁶ (Whitman 607-613) For Miller¹⁷ (2003) *Karma* is beneficial in a healing context, as it refers to one’s obligation to define the journey of one’s life. ‘To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you into something else is the greatest accomplishment’, says R.W. Emerson in his essay *Self-Reliance* (Emerson, 1983, pp. 259– 282)¹⁸, “a splendid rallying call for individual emancipation from the fetters of social convention and the expectations of others – essentially, conditions of worth.”¹⁹ (Dalton) reverberates R.W. Emerson’s position on what it is ‘to be yourself’ was a radical one in his time, and very much located in his sense of an essentially positive tendency of human beings, which will further push them to realize their eco-spiritual tendencies, imperative for sustainability. A parallel idea from the *Bhagavad Gita* can be found in Chapter 2, Verse 47,

¹⁴Smith, *The Bhagavad Gita*, 12.

¹⁵Smith, “Encountering God,” 97.

¹⁶Whitman, *Pain and Suffering as Viewed by the Hindu Religion*, 607.

¹⁷Miller, *Incorporating Spirituality in Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 1.

¹⁸Emerson, “Self-Reliance,” 259.

¹⁹Dalton, “An Unexpected Epigraph,” 235.

where Lord Krishna counsels Arjuna on the position of concentrating on one's own path without being distracted by external prospects:

*"Your right is to perform your duty only, but never to its fruits. Let not the fruits of action be your motive, nor let your attachment be to inaction."*²⁰ (Easwaran, *Bhagavad Gita*, 2.47)

As America sporadically but sub-consciously marched towards eco-spirituality, a path for sustainability, it encountered massive challenges; the answers to those challenges could be

uncovered from many Indian ancient texts. The effect and influence of diverse and distinctive eastern philosophies, non-dualism, karma, dharma, nonviolence, living in harmony with nature are thoroughly absorbed in the verses of *Vedanta*, is apparent, in the transcendental essays of R. W. Emerson and H. D. Thoreau *The Over-Soul*, *Walden*, *Self-Reliance*, which are developed on the ideas present in the Western canon, e.g., in the works of, Plutarch, and Plato. The junction of India and America defies all territorial politics and inadvertently explains the merging of East and West. The American transcendental writings read expansively, contained traces of Indian concepts from ancient texts and even the theology of Emanuel Swedenborg in *Heaven and Hell* and *Heavenly Doctrine* drew inspiration from Indian Knowledge System (IKS). He remarked that Indian notion of *Bhraman* (creator of the world) inspired RW Emerson, to a great degree, and in those moments of divine inspiration, he wrote a poem *Bhrama*, introducing the oblivious American population to this divine concept. As breath is inseparable from life, akin, the infinite divinity of *Brahman* cannot be gauged. It owns a potential to enlarge, advance and reproduce without limit, yet can also contract into nothingness. Before the advent of the prodigious world, there existed a singular, unpolluted core—*Brahman*, bereft of duality.

They reckon ill who leave me out;

When me they fly, I am the wings;

I am the doubter and the doubt,

²⁰Easwaran, *The Bhagavad Gita*, 2.47.

I am the hymn the Brahmin sings. ²¹

(Emerson, lines 9-12)

According to the ontological, phenomenological philosophy of Hinduism in Ancient Indian text *Upanishads*, ‘the ultimate reality of the whole lot is the *Brahma*’²², *Brahma* characterizes an idea of supreme existence or absolute reality, exemplifying the core of the universe and serving as a cradle of all humanity. The philosophy of *Brahma* in India also explains about ‘reawakening our spiritual bond with nature and environment’. *Bhrama*, also helps humans to identify, “a unique perspective for a young generation to value environmental advocacy in order to uplift societies and beyond.”²³ *The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* imparts that “the self (Ātman) is equivalent to the ultimate reality (Brahman),”²⁴ underpinning the notion that being indulgent in one's quintessence culminates in identifying the deific presence in nature. According to Sri Aurobindo, the Indian spiritual poet, “The Atman is the true Self of our being, the eternal essence, pure, self-existent, and unconditioned by the material universe.”²⁵ (Aurobindo Chapter 10). In Indian spirituality, the true self of humans is described as *Atman*. The confluence of inklings of *Ataman* within *Bhrama*, leads to the stimulation of spirituality within the dynamics of an individual, invoking his latent and unique traits and ethos, which drive him from his unmindful ‘self’. This process, unique to each, plays an imperative path in eco-spirituality, which leads to sustainable development.

Henry David Thoreau, a disciple of transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson, is known to propagate American transcendentalism, throughout the world, where his works painted the theological, ontological, neo-platonic, and phenomenological works in America, offering profound insights into the interconnections between spirituality, ecology, and economy. *Walden*, a popular text is an epitome of his American idea of sustainability through eco spirituality. His perspective emphasizes how theologians can cultivate a robust work ethics in our contemporary context marked by economic and ecological precariousness. By integrating

²¹ Emerson, *Brahma*, lines 9–12.

²² The Upanishads are a revered collection of sacred texts from India, believed to have been composed between the 8th and 6th centuries BCE.

²³ Verma and Mehra, “Impermanent Nature of Environmental Advocacy,” 1–17.

²⁴ Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. (1957). *The Upanishads: Breath of the Eternal* (S. Prabhavananda & F. Manchester, Trans.).

²⁵ Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, 45.

his principles, theologians can advocate for stewardship, prioritizing ecological sustainability and social justice. This holistic approach encourages a responsible engagement with environment reflecting a commitment to divine creation. As a transcendentalist, he articulately transports the eco-spiritual sustenance derived from nature and its intangible but sensed obscurities and mysteries which can easily transcend the ecological and sustainable perceptions into the essence of life. As, H. D. Thoreau, himself admits,

“We need the tonic of wildness... we require that all things be mysterious and unexplorable.”

...

“In the wilderness is the preservation of the world.”

“The earth is a great, living being, and we are part of it.”²⁶ (Thoreau)

Through the above quotes, H. D. Thoreau confesses that the concept of wilderness prevalent on the earth to run the society encapsulates humanity with its whims and fancies, which might not align with the conduct of sustainable environment but can be altered or elevated by human consciousness. This concept of protection and preservation of environment is adopted from a verse of an ancient Indian scripture *Rig Veda* which describes a term **Dyava Prithvi**, a compound word to describe Heaven and Earth together for the protection of our planet. This term reverberates 65 times in *Rig Veda* to understand the value of preservation and sustenance of our environment. Hymns of *Rig Veda* voices for replenishing the use of nature and respect for the earth, in the lines,

“You give me and I give you... Whatever I dig from Thee, O Earth, May that have quick recovery again, O Purifier May we not injure thy vitals or thy heart.” (Hymns of *Rig Veda*) The substance extracted from earth or natural material is replenished with an idea of promoting a responsible development for sustainability through the lines.

Thoreau's exposure to Indian concepts of sublimity, eternity, individuality and supremacy of divine, made him realize the impact of eco-spirituality. His work *Walden* resonates with his

²⁶Thoreau, Henry David. *Walden*. Macmillan Collector's Library, 2016.

unwavering faith in humanity, which also aligns with his notion of describing green religion as his way of life "that only a wild eco-environment is desired and needed for his spiritual, intellectual, and emotional cultivation. In his immediate intimate contact with elements of nature, he is seized with an overwhelming ecstasy and a feeling of awe."²⁷(Xie 252) Thoreau's emphasis on environmentally sustainable maintenance and actions is appreciated by Bron Taylor when he states, "such an effectively grounded spirituality of connection might not retain anything we would recognize in today's more common super-naturalistic metaphysics,"²⁸ (Taylor, A Green Future for Religion? 13)

Walt Whitman, an American transcendentalist was deeply influenced by Indian teachings of spirituality, nature, rebirth and *karma*. In *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman explores the themes of nature and humanity, with an idea of spiritual interconnectedness, resonating Eco-spirituality through a holistic appreciation for life in all aspects of nature; from "brown ants" to "mossy

scabs". His celebration of interconnectedness reflects a sense of transcendence, where existence after death was represented as "the beautiful uncut hair of graves," where even dead is seen to contribute through the cycle of life and decay. Whitman was inspired about the idea of universal truth of *Karma* or *Rebirth* through the reflections of Indian texts like *Bhagvad Gita* and *Upanishads* describing about a close relation of death and rebirth:

Of that which is born, death is certain, Of that which is dead, birth is certain. (Bhagvad Gita, verse 2.27).

In his poem "Death's Valley", he embraces death as a part of life itself, influenced by the *Gita*.

Holiest minister of Heaven- envoy, ushered, guide at last of all.

Rich, florid, loosened of the stricter-knot call's life,

Sweet, peaceful, welcome death. (Walt Whitman, *Death's Valley*, 1892)

²⁷ Xie, *Green Religion as a Way of Life: Thoreau and His Ecocentric Esthetics of Existence*, 252–262. ²⁸ Taylor, "A Green Future for Religion?" 995.

Walt Whitman frequently conveys a sense of interrelation of holistic life, his perspective about death leads to renewal rather than an end- aligning with Eco-spiritual beliefs and a transformative process, connecting humanity with a larger web of existence. His opinion of 'heavenly existence in nature', or 'in human body', and 'in all immortal and mortal beings', reflects the concept of *Brahman* from Indian teachings as the *universal spirit or soul*. His famous line, "I am large, I contain multitudes", from *Song of Myself*, replicates this harmony of presence that can be understood in Hindu wisdoms, which grace the spirituality for the world. Whitman's celebration of 'Self' in *Leaves of Grass* resonates with the symbolizations of individual uniqueness in Indian culture. To a great extent, the

transcendentalists successfully unleashed the aspects of spirituality, giving humankind an indication of its richness.

Critics believe that “The Transcendentalists were confident in their philosophical conclusions because they directed their analytical focus inward, by developing their intuitive capacity which they believed was divinely bestowed on all human beings. It was human intuition, they believed, that transcended space and time, uniting human beings no matter where or when they lived”²⁹ (McNally 409). The effect of inheriting intuition was eloquently stated by Ralph Waldo Emerson.

“To believe in your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your heart, is true for all men, - that is genius”³⁰, (Emerson 1)

Inclined to the Indian concepts of *Self* and *Karma Yoga* (a selfless ethical action), Emerson in *Self-Reliance*, elucidates human intuitions or thoughts innately present within an individual as a reservoir for their latent genius, guiding and commanding their anthropocentric activities, conducive to the environment. Anthropocene understanding in human consciousness are shaped by circumstantial discourse, which can be altered through eco-spirituality rooted in Vedantic wisdom. The contemporary American spiritual writers to an extent subconsciously and consciously follow the tenets of transcendentalism, whose foundations bear traces in Indian consciousness and ethical framework.

²⁹ McNally, “Analogous Exceptionalisms within Japanese and American History,” 412. ³⁰ Emerson, *Self-Reliance*, 3.

Reviving Ancient Wisdom

Eco-spirituality is gaining momentum in contemporary times, the term ‘spiritual consciousness’ is provoking natives to introspect and view the world from a longstanding, but ageless concept of spirituality. The hostile and tumultuous milieu has compelled the generation to pursue solace in spiritual content, traditions, literature, and practices. Current research directs that the prevalence of spirituality in America has surged to an impressive 60%. This momentous upsurge echoes a collective longing for meaning amid ambiguity, inadvertently signifying a transformative swing in the cultural discourse of America, restoring or retrieving their thoughts and ideas. The growing interest in spirituality among the citizens has led to important research, intended to analyze spiritual evolution in their culture. Spirituality is branded by its rich assortment, encompassing a massive selection of spiritual doings, attitudes, and individual experiences. Spiritual pursuers from West nowadays frequently draw from a heterogeneous mixture of traditions, including the basics of Eastern spirituality (such as Buddhism and Hinduism), Indian Knowledge System, New Age principles, mindfulness, psychological understandings, and indigenous knowledge. The varied and multifaceted American population, however, makes it hard to decipher Indian universal spiritual experiences. An obvious drift is a rising division between religion and spirituality, religion is repeatedly associated to be recognized by rituals and beliefs, while spirituality is associated with individualism, divine credence, and self-knowledge. A sense of Eco-spirituality through the concepts of ancient Indian texts began to pervade American

collective consciousness in 19th century, an era when glamorized notions of Oriental theology enchanted the thoughts of American philosopher-poets. The shift to eco-spirituality, to eco sensational awakening in America gained a wide secular propensity, recognized as *New Age Spirituality* echoing throughout the world and is branded by universal being, as an important aspect of self-discovery, global synchronization and pragmatic facts rather than being involved in traditional and orthodox approaches.

The theology of Eco-Spirituality considers that the ecosphere comprises of two things-spirit and matter. "Matter and life are his (human being's) actual basis, the thing (an entity) from which he starts and on which he stands and whose requirement and law he has to satisfy if he would exist at all on earth and in the body."³¹(Aurobindo 568) The oscillation of these eco spiritual elements exemplifies how matter (the physical world) and spirit (consciousness) are entwined, underlining an all-inclusive interpretation of reality. Thus, the Indian mystic, historical, skeptical, and rich texts were successful in unfolding or unleashing the secret of existence for the global world, inspiring and rejuvenating the West to create its history.

Epilogue: A march towards future

Emerson and Thoreau through Indian spiritual philosophies expanded eco-spiritual knowledge creating a holistic approach and a source of inspiration to lead the world for a better cause. The Indian and American literature of *Bhraman* justifies the existence of the universe, *Sarvamkhalvidam Brahma*"(All this is indeed Brahman), the essence of unity in diversity. In *Atharva Veda* 12.1.1 (Prithvi Sūkta Verse 1) it is mentioned that Earth has many qualities, and it should be preserved: "May that Earth, consort of all beings, grant us a wide and blessed world." The themes of understanding divine soul elevating consciousness and the inner-self, anticipate contemporary dialogs on ecological balance, its sustainable and spiritual nature in the environment. "Eco-spirituality urges a sense of belonging and prompts practical choices. Eco-spirituality fosters conscious unity with all living beings and the Divine, guiding towards sustainable routines."³²(Cloud and Redvers, 2023; Macy, 2020)

Deeply rooted in the concept of eco-spirituality, Indian and American literatures have successfully captured global attention by emphasizing the universal principle of interconnectedness—exemplified by the Indian ideal of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* ("we are all one global family") resonating within American tradition. Eco-spirituality is a powerful reawakening necessary for individualistic practices as well as thriving of societies, it is a unifying example to revive collective ecological and intellectual consciousness, guiding human actions toward sustainability. "The cosmic order that binds all life in an interdependent balance." (Rig Veda 1.22.18) This Vedic philosophy addresses life's profound

³¹Aurobindo, *Essays on the Gita*, 45.

³² Cloud, Q.Y., and N. Redvers. Honoring Indigenous Sacred Places and Spirit in Environmental Health. *Environmental Health Insights* 17 (2023). doi:10.1177/11786302231157507.

questions and challenges, bridging Eastern and Western worldviews. “With all the good qualities inherited by us from our planet”, *Atharva Veda (Book 12, Hymn 1)*, “May this earth expand and be favorable to us.” This prayer echoes ancient wisdom of a divine concept of Eco spirituality and holds a great potential to pacify the pressing sustainability issues faced by the world today. The fusion of Vedic thought with transcendental ideals reshaped environmental ethics making Eco-spirituality not only an instructor to a way of conduct for an individual, but also a guiding steer to the world.

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