

Humanity and the environment: Exploring religious resources for partnering anew

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Living in an age of anthropocene, we become immensely and acutely aware that we are in an environment, created and maintained by us, human beings. In ‘creating and maintaining’ the environment, it has been our ability of *techne* - the trait of the *homo faber*, that has been predominantly at work during the modern era. Unfortunately, it has made us so objectivise and instrumentalise the environment that we have ended up with *utilizing* it for our immediate narrower ends, losing sight of the broader and future horizons of the environment; our impulse for utility progressively is taking us to a dark tunnel, apparently with a dead end. How do we re-orient ourselves so that our utility impulse can be transformed into attitudes and behaviours of congeniality with the natural environment, to result in ‘just, participatory, and sustainable’ partnership? It is here the fields of knowledge and wisdom need to come together, as attempted in ‘environmental humanities’, to help reorient ourselves. They need to synergise our sensitivities of sociality, aesthetics, poetry, rituals, religion, etc in relating with the natural environment. In this background, the author would like to explore, in this paper, how religious studies, being an important field of knowledge and wisdom, can make an effective contribution. Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim [*Daedalus*, 2001, vol. 130, no. 4] speak about three ways in which religious resources can be explored in this regard: *retrieve*, *evaluate* and *reconstruct* the religious resources of humanity in order to re-orient our relationship to the natural environment. The author wishes to undertake to read *reconstructively* selected texts from Christian biblical psalms and Vedic hymns which relate themselves to human religious engagement with nature; by so doing, an attempt is made to contribute to inter-religious public conversations on new relationship with nature, characterised by aspects of transcendence rather than immediate utility.

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