
MYSTICISM AND ENVIRONMENTALISM

AN APPRAISAL OF OSHO'S ECOCENTRIC INTERPRETATION OF RELIGION

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Abstract

Theological approaches to religion or reduction of religion to Theology and philosophical understanding of religion has largely been responsible for not only a great deal of confusion on the very notion of religion but has also led to distortion of proper relationship of religion and environment. The present paper discusses mystical ecocentric view of religion as presented in the writings of Osho. Osho's interpretation of religious experience or mystical experience is ideally suited to an ecocentric philosophy. His critique of Philosophy, Theology and Science converges with and echoes certain typical environmentalist critiques of them.

Keywords: environmentalist, divine immanence, affirmative transcendence, existence, transcendence of ego

1. Introduction

The question of relationship between religion and environment has been hotly debated though there seems to be some agreement over the idea that mystical dimension of religion is ecofriendly. Theological approaches to religion or reduction of religion to Theology and philosophical understanding of religion has largely been responsible for not only a great deal of confusion on the very notion of religion but has also led to distortion of proper relationship of religion and environment. The criticisms directed at religion from scientific and other than scientific environmentalist quarters presuppose a theological instead of mystical view of religion. The fundamental issues in the debate on religion vis-à-vis modernity and Science need different formulation if we foreground mystical dimension of religion. What is religion? What is its fundamental claim? And what are the implications of its fundamental claim on our relationship to environment? Here it is proposed to present Osho's interpretation of religion and foreground its implications on environment. Osho Rajneesh was one of the most

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influential (though controversial for some) mystics who presented a postmodern reconstruction of Eastern religious and philosophical thought. He was one of the most modern amongst mystics and had the great knack to present it for the masses in lucid and forceful style. An important focus of his thought has been care for the environment that he saw as a necessary corollary of mystical worldview. In the paper it will be argued that:

- Osho's interpretation of religious experience or mystical experience is ideally suited to an ecocentric philosophy.
- His interpretation of meditation and prayer seems to be geared towards an ecocentric worldview.
- His critique of Philosophy, Theology and Science converges with and echoes certain typical environmentalist critiques of them.
- He brings all religions in his comprehensive view and thus problematizes the assumption that certain religions are more ecofriendly and that the present ecological crisis owes a great deal to Christianity.
- We need not propose a separate or new religion of the environment or ecofriendly religion but only see the deeper mystical and metaphysical import of fundamental claim of religion. We need to shift from theological to metaphysical plane (as the perennialists understand the term) to appreciate the transcendent unity of religions as well as their fundamentally similar understanding of the environment.
- His interpretation of certain traditional religious myths such as the Fall of Adam is ideally on environmentalist lines.

We shall first of all briefly summarize those characteristics of Western modernity, itself the product of antireligious and antimystical worldview, which contributed directly or indirectly to the loss of ecological health. It needs hardly any argument to prove that environmental crisis is peculiarly a modern Western phenomenon and is connected with its background worldview.

The first and foremost is the loss of sacred character or ambience of Nature and it being seen as an autonomous object that exists in its own right and doesn't symbolize anything that transcends merely natural. It is there as a brute fact. Natural world is cut off from the higher invisible world that alone sustains it in traditional worldview. There is no such thing as Infinite or transcendence. The Universe isn't the manifestation of the Divine Principle. It isn't immersed in the ocean of the sacred or suffused with the perfume of the sacred. The world isn't a theophany. Modern science was based on rejection of hierarchic vision of the Universe – one which sees the physical world as reflecting the higher states by means of symbols which have remained an ever open gate towards the invisible for that traditional humanity which had kept alive the 'symbolist spirit'. Modern science attempted to read the cosmic book without the aid of the grace issuing from religious experience or intuition and revelation. Nature therefore didn't reflect a paradise which according to the traditional religions is in its essence and which man carries at the depth of his being. Nature thus carries no spiritual message and is reduced to conglomeration of atoms in motion in vacuum. The forms of nature are not for modern scientist "letters and words of a

sacred language written by the creative power of the Divinity upon the tablets of cosmic existence” [1]. Modern science due to its rejection of traditional hierarchic vision is “impervious to the symbolic significance of nature and illiterate regarding the primordial message written upon the face of majestic mountains, withering autumn leaves or the shimmering waves of the sea” [1, p. 187]. The traditional idea of man as microcosmos and Perfect Man which connected nature with Supernature or Heaven disappeared with the triumph of secular humanist conception that informs modern outlook.

Traditional cosmologies connected closely with esoteric interpretation of religion and traditional metaphysics aim at revealing multiplicity in the light of unity — and lead man from the Cosmos to that metacosmic Reality wherein alone is the spiritual significance of nature perceived on the highest level. Desecration of knowledge led to its profanation and ultimately to disenchantment of nature. Nature isn't living as the spirit that gives life to it in premodern world was declared nonexistent. No longer did man hear in the silence of virgin nature the call of the spirit and the music of the heavenly abode, which is also the call of his origin. Modern man could not participate in nature's prayer as the emphasis on horizontal dimension meant that vertical dimension was to be sacrificed/ignored. The sensualist and empirical epistemology, which has been the prerogative of modern period has succeeded in reducing reality to the world experienced by the external senses, hence limiting the meaning of reality and removing the concept of 'reality' as a category pertaining to God, as Nasr [2] has noted. Cut off from the twin sources of metaphysical knowledge, namely revelation and intellection and also deprived of that inner spiritual experience which makes possible the concrete realization of higher levels of being, modern man has been confined to such a truncated and limited aspect of reality that of necessity he has lost sight of God as Reality [2]. Nature couldn't be encountered ethically with awe and reverence and addressed as 'Thou' if it is divorced from God as Reality and reduced to a gratuitous absurd autonomous brute fact. The several centuries of rationalistic thought in the West reduced both the objective and subjective poles of knowledge to a single level. As the cogito of Descartes is based on reducing the knowing subject to a single mode of awareness, the external world which this knowing self perceives is reduced to a spatio-temporal complex limited to a single level of reality, as Nasr has observed. This leads to impoverished and fragmentary dualistic view of nature as object, as 'It', alienates man from it and prepares the way of manipulation and desecration that leads to the state of affairs modern world is facing in different forms. Mysticism is based upon a hierarchic vision of both reality's subjective and objective pole. Mystical conception of different degrees of divine presence connecting self awareness with ultimate selfhood, relative and the Absolute and as a complete and integrated view of Reality is simply incommensurable with post-Cartesian modern view of the reality and nature. Nature in modern scientific view is no more alive and thus can't be trusted. It is something that stands over and against self or subject. Thales had announced that *physis*, the ultimate 'nature' of all things, is water and concomitantly is alive, has soul in it

in the sense that there is a soul in the animal body. The thought that the world is alive inspires trust. Modern science has destroyed this 'myth' and contributed to distrust of Nature that paved the way for its loot and plunder.

Western anthropocentrism and humanist tradition can not conceive of addressing nature as 'Thou'. Nothing is living, not even life (as reductionist science implies) in the West. Man is not a theophany. He is not organically and metaphysically linked with the whole of Nature. Man is at bottom a lonely creature caught up in the absurd world. He is not responsible for even his own salvation, not to speak of the others and nature. He rebels against the heavens, falls, and is, unfortunately caught up in the plague of life. He is in exile. He has been exiled from the Heaven and from this Earth. He is stranger to himself. Sartre, Becket, Ionesco and others well portray this predicament of man (more precisely the Western man) who seems incapable of just keeping living, not to speak of winning salvation. The titles of Camus' works (that well portray and represent a case for modern man) *The Fall*, *The Rebel*, *The Outsider*, *The Plague*, reveal modern man's disequilibrium. Such a man can hardly think of the rights of the others, and of the non-human world. He has forgotten even himself and can at best be self-centred only. Absolutizing of the human state by humanism has paradoxically resulted in destruction of man himself. It has led to worst kind of unredeeming pessimism. The deification of the earthly man by the modern West has directly led to environmental crisis.

Humanism has advocated self centric individualism and this notion is linked to capitalist mindset. Man is not defined by the supraindividual Spirit that is in him. Psyche and not Spirit, mind and not no-mind defines man. Reason and not Intellect is the faculty of knowledge. The scientific view of man that informs humanistic conception hardly sees any scope for self transcendence. The traditional Platonic ternary of body, soul and Spirit is reduced to binary of body and soul by modern episteme and even soul has a very constricted notion. Postmodernism would reduce this further to only body.

Modern science has also tried to demystify nature and this besides contributing to desacralization of it has led to the presumption that it has no claims, only uses. Man takes it complacently as something that could be appropriated in the way he likes. Nature gets commodified. It becomes a capital. It is objectified and thus reduced to a mere thing, an 'It'. In antiquity it was taboo to cut a tree or dam a brook. Woodland's sacred presence was personified. Nature throbbed with all kinds of spirits. Primitive tribes still preserve the profound ecological wisdom. A Red Indian Chief in his reply to the President of the US who wanted to buy some land from the Red Indian wrote back to him that the idea of selling land was strange to their people. It was nature's land. They didn't own land in the same way as they didn't own the freshness of the air, the sparkle of water. Compare this attitude with that of the modern man who has been buying and selling land, waging wars and killing people to capture the land on which others have been living. Western imperialist colonialist enterprise based as it is on very anti traditional (and anti ecological) view of the self as ego that encounters the world as an other, an object, usually hostile one. There is no

parallel in history to modern man's greed and acquisitive instinct. Capitalism and traditional renunciatory ethic are simply incompatible. It is only in the anti-traditional modern world that capitalism could grow and precipitate present environmental crisis. For the modern technological humans world is a huge filling station as Heidegger has said, Gods have fled from the nature and there is hardly a poet who can show the track of fugitive gods Romanticism is long dead that celebrated nature and almost divinized it. There is no dialogue possible with nature for modern man who suffers from alienation at all the levels. A Tuscarora Indian once remarked that, unlike his people's experience of the world for Westerners, "the uncounted voices of nature are dumb" [3]. Nature is silent in Western culture in the sense that the status of being a speaking subject is jealously guarded as an exclusively human prerogative. Animistic cultures, and in a ways mystical cultures see the natural world as inspirited, not just people, but also animals, plants, and even 'inert' entities such as stones and rivers are perceived as being articulate and at times intelligible subjects, able to communicate and interact with humans for good or ill. In addition to human language, there is also the language of birds, the wind, earthworms, wolves, waterfalls — a world of autonomous speakers whose intents one ignores at one's peril [4]. Manes rightly critiques idiom of Renaissance and Enlightenment humanism for creating immense realm of silences, a world of 'not saids' called nature, and emphasizes the need of new language that incorporates a decentred postmodern, post-humanist perspective — a language of ecological humility that deep ecology, however gropingly, is attempting to express. Many factors have contributed towards modern fraudulent version of the species *Homo sapiens*: the character 'man', what Muin calls 'Lord Man'. And this 'Man' has become the sole subject, speaker, and rational sovereign of the natural order in the story told by humanism since the Renaissance. Curiously postmodern antihumanist reaction against all this and absurdist parody of the same is equally inimical to ecological enterprise. Mysticism transcends the limitations of both anthropocentrism and biocentrism. It is mysticism that shows the way to talk about human freedom, worth and purpose without eclipsing, depreciating and objectifying the non-human world. Humanism wedded to the monologue of human subject and postmodernism with its reduction of subject to site/victim of power relations or sometimes to nullity can't deliver. One is too respectful and the other too depreciatory towards autonomy and sovereignty of human subject. It is privileging of reason in humanist discourse that has contributed significantly to problematic of modern attitude towards environment. However, postmodern attack on reason and rationally does only the negative job and hardly provides a launching pad for practising viable ecology. The quantitative, analytical and reductively economic rationality characteristic of modern culture posits an autonomous and isolated individual for whom nature is mere material or property. However to repose faith in postmodernist way of doing ecology would be a folly. Nietzsche, the great critic of modern humanist rationality and notion of self defined life in such a way as would seem to justify worst form of social Darwinism and exploitation. His postmodern followers have no faith in life's

purpose (teleology) and its sacrality and its essential unity with the inanimate world that the 'grand narrative' of Unitarianism upholds.

Now religions have provided quite another divergent worldview which restores ecocentric vision. However there have been certain influential critiques of religion, especially nonmystical exoteric religion and theology from environmentalist perspective. This paper critiques J Krishnamurti's environmentalist critique of religion who has argued that without exception, religions have divorced man from Nature as they have all sought to relate Man directly to the Ultimate Reality, leaving him fundamentally unrelated, or only negatively related, to the intervening scheme of Manifestation or Environment. One and all, they have preached, according to him, that man's spiritual realization could be achieved in opposition to, or outside Nature. They have taught mankind to look for the true life, not to the manifested order of things, but to the primal Reality outside and beyond Manifestation. What should have been an organic Truth, descending through Nature to Man, has been short circuited. Nature plays no role in man's salvation or *nirvana*. Manifestation has been made into an unhappy thing. Nature has been an enemy and not a friend, destroying the organic continuity between Reality, Nature and Man. Ecofriendly attitude could hardly be nurtured in this view and if this view is correct it is fatal to religious solution to the environmental crisis. Osho's interpretation of religion shows that Krishnamurti's charges are unwarranted. Traditional religions, far from having alienated man from Nature have in fact related him to Ultimate Reality through it and have posited organic continuity between Reality, Nature and Man [5]. Nature plays no role in man's salvation or *nirvana*, he does not receive "the gifts of the Spirit from the hands of the Great Mother. He is told to seek them from Reality direct" [5]. Manifestation has been made into an unhappy thing. Nature has been an enemy and not a friend, destroying the organic continuity between Reality, Nature and Man. Ecofriendly attitude could not be nurtured in this view. All accepted religions have started from the assumption, according to Krishnamurti, that life in form and matter is, fundamentally, an imprisonment, that Manifestation is a burden and preach self realization in terms of neutralization or escape. He can either neutralize the burden by setting up some active principle within him, strong enough to prevent him feeling its weight, or he can throw it off and break free from it altogether. Escapist route says, "Turn your backs on whole order of Manifestation and seek your fulfillment in the realm of pure unmanifested Being" [5]. Woodhouse asserts that the feeling of inherent burdensomeness of life in form and matter has been, throughout the ages, the keynote of the world's, spiritual life. At the root of that life has been a profound pessimism about the This, the Here and the Now and focus on the That, There and the Hereafter [5]. Even mysticism and occultism are said to "reject Nature or the Natural order, and see the fulfillment of life outside it. Both ... are active protests against things as they are" [5].

Osho's importance as an environmental thinker lies in his brilliant environmentalist rereading of religion and mysticism. He has read religions in such a way that seems to be ideally tailored for ecocentric vision and action. Osho's interpretation of religion and mysticism provides a corrective to ego-centred, other-directed, aggressive, dualistic, alienating, possessive, manipulative, utilitarian, marginalizing perspective that has been the dominant perspective in the modern West. Osho aims at transcending ego and desire, breaching all dualities and dualisms in the Unitarian or monistic *Weltanschauung*, consecrating nature by seeing it as the manifestation of the One, tracing everything to its Origin, renouncing all desires and possessions, reenchanting the world as the garden of the Beloved, experiencing world as reflection of the archetypal paradise and transforming everything through the vision of love. He provides the needed correction that exoteric accounts of religion and restores Manifestation to its proper place in the trinity of Man, Manifestation and Reality. For him, as for Krishnamurti, the Ultimate Reality is dynamic. Perfection is of the particular in Krishnamurti's universe. This life is absolute, pure and free. Nature is the Reality. 'Naturalness' and perfection are synonymous. Universe is purposeless, relationless, discrete and having no further meaning for life than that of simple manifestation. Life just is.

Mysticism, in Osho's view, simply means a love affair with God, with the ultimate, with the whole. Referring to Sufism he says that it means that one is ready to dissolve into the whole, that one is ready to invite the whole to come into one's heart [6]. Ultimate Reality or God comes only when ego disappears in '*fana*'. Then only can God speak. Thought must be transcended to commune with the Reality (*Al-Haqq*) because conceptual intellect divides and posits dualism of subject and object. 'I' must be annihilated in *fana* so that one mirrors Existence or God. Ego divides part from the whole, man from Existence or Divine Environment. So the mystic's insistence on *fana* is a pro-environmental move. When one claims nothing over and against Existence or Reality or God and submits one's the will to cosmic will or will of Existence or God's will, real harmony is achieved. The fall of man is because of the rise of separative consciousness that insists on living outside the Divine Environment that is paradise. The mystic has no name, no separate consciousness and therefore no identity. Ideally the mystic can't be characterized or named. That is where Sufism resists definition. To define is to limit, to exclude, to set apart, to give some identity. And Sufi implies that by definition against God. It is communion with the whole, the infinite. The Sufi partakes of divine infinitude. God seeing Himself in the mirror and God knowing Himself through God is what *Irfan* is really. There is no subject who experiences God because that means duality. Only God is – there is none besides God. Neither experiences nor experienced is there; only pure experience is there. Only God is and God is infinite, All-Possibility thus totally inclusive reality. Nothing exists besides Him. And God is Truth, Beauty, Goodness, Light, Knowledge, Perfection. And the mystic is one who realizes all this. And that is why he blesses the whole existence, as God blesses it. Thus division between self and non self, man and Nature, man and

divinity isn't real as the mystic realizes the doctrine of unity or oneness of existence. No environmentalist could go so far as the Unitarian mystic who effaces himself to let only Existence speak. If environmentalism demands sacrifice of the one thing that is so dear to everyone it is in the self-denying mystic that we find this exemplified. The self denial allows him to celebrate the Universe as theophany and epiphany of God. The Universe thus becomes the visible face of the Beloved.

Mysticism is a means of silencing the voice of self and letting the voice of nature to be heard. Man disappears so that only God or Existence lives. Mysticism breathes life into nature, appreciates its impenetrable mystery. It celebrates nature as God's visible Face. It doesn't make it an object but one's exteriorized Self. As an object it is the Beloved. Meditation silences the mind that divides.

We shall first focus on the central issue in religion which informs its relation to environment. This is the issue of religious experience which has been increasingly recognized as the most important datum of religion which make religion and mysticism possible.

2. Experiencing God

Religion's fundamental claim concerns the possibility of transcendence which is signified differently in different traditions by such terms as the Garden of Essence, the Kingdom of God, enlightenment, *moksha*. Mystical and metaphysical realization is what religious experience is about. Religious experience, union with the divine, gnosis, self realization, *satori*, enlightenment, rebirth in the Kingdom of God and all such things which are the fruit of faith or religious/mystical vocation represent a change in perception which is ecocentric perception *par excellence* as will appear from the following interpretation of numinous experience from the perspective of Osho, the 'postmodern' mystics who influentially popularized a reading of perennial philosophy that grounds all religions and mysticisms.

The *summum bonum* of religion promised to those who choose to move on the path is union with God or the Unconditioned Absolute. Now what exactly is this too abstract, distant and mystical sounding religious experience? Osho's genius lies in showing how this experience is so close at hand and how it is simply relating in ecofriendly way to the environment. For him experiencing the divine is nothing but experiencing the environment in a certain way. For him, as for Nagarguna, *samsara* is *nirvana*. He asks, like William Blake, to cleanse the doors of perception, to experience the world as it is really, Infinite. The world is charged with the grandeur of God and it is for man to be sensitive enough to feel the grandeur. The great music of Oum, the cosmic or divine sound, the soundless sound, the sound of one hand clapping, is ever being played and it is up to man to hear it. The Beloved is everywhere. We can see Infinity in the grain of sand. Eternity is here and now. The Garden of Eden is not in a far off country or in the next world but here. For the mystic or gnostic every tree is a Bodhi tree. Even

stones have Buddha nature. The Kingdom of God is within us. Osho tells how the flowers of enlightenment bloom everywhere if we are aware. What religions demand is cleansing of perception. All the prayers and meditations and *japas* or *azkar* are for this end. To live in God consciousness or to live according to Tao is a way of living in tune with the environment. Here we discuss in detail what experiencing God implies and how it relates to the environment.

Experiencing God or deliverance for Osho is not a goal in future, a search for some metaphysical abstraction, a super terrestrial Being out there, a vision of something, an experience as distinct from other 'ordinary' experiences, a secret journey or adventure into the higher realms or the next world. It is simply conscious experiencing of the world of phenomena. The vision that is not egocentric but simply a pure witnessing, a pure observance where no desire is projected into the observed, a perception unhindered by conceptual construction of the mind or desires is experiencing God. It isn't achieved; it happens. Rather it is. It is not a cognitive encounter with the objects, this worldly or otherworldly. It is not a state, a special ecstatic state distinguishable from the normal conscious state. It is not the revelation from the supernatural world. The mystic is extraordinarily ordinary person. Enlightenment is dropping of all seeking, all future oriented enterprises. It is simply to be as one is in pristine innocence. It is just to be oneself without all conditionings. Experiencing God is experiencing world with open eyes, the eyes unburdened by the past memories or future dreams. It is like looking at the world with fresh eyes of the child. It is to experience the world without experiencer. It is pure experiencing where experiencer and experienced have dissolved as distinct entities. It is pure knowing as distinguished from ordinary knowledge that presupposes the subject-object or knower-known duality. It is seeing with a still mind. Meditation helps to achieve such a cleansing of perception, a still mind, a vision without ego. It is simply seeing things as they are and not as they appear to manipulating analytical desiring mind. It is pure seeing or better witnessing. It is what traditions call as seeing through God's eyes or disinterested seeing. Borrowing a phrase 'choiceless awareness' from J. Krishnamurti Osho says, "when you don't choose things are as they are that is suchness – that is *tathata*" [7]. It means prelinguistic witnessing of phenomena. Suchness can't be thus deconstructed. The natural man is the enlightened man. To be natural is to be enlightened. To be a natural as animals and trees and stars, to have no imposition upon one self, to have no idea of how one should be, is to be enlightened [7, p. 169]. One must transcend all ideas, all constructions of mind, even the ideas of enlightenment. Osho says, "And the ultimate *Satori* is dropping of all *Satories*, of all *Samadhies*. The ultimate enlightenment is when you forget the very idea of enlightenment. Then there is innocence. Then there is just simple nature." [7, p. 339]

For mystics like Osho nothing is so common place as experiencing God, and nothing is so truly descriptive of human state. God is not a being among other beings, an object out there, that could to be perceived in some ecstatic state. God is a percept rather than a concept as Ibn Arabi said. God, in the Unitarian Sufistic perspective, is the essence of existence. He is the Isness of things. He is Existence in its totality. God constitutes all pervasive Environment (*al-Muhit* in the Quranic parlance) that normal man lives, moves and has his being in Him. Adam saw God, the essences before the fall as the fog of passions and desires had not blurred his vision. Things are metaphysically transparent; only we need to possess the right view as the Buddha said. God is there so close and in fact the light of the eyes, the light with which everything is seen, and everything is illumined as Ghazali said. God is the Light of the world, in the picturesque phrase of the Quran. If we see without blinkers, without the lenses of conceptual intellect we see God and nothing but God. Mystical discipline is simply for cleansing the perception. From a Unitarian perspective we are ever in God's presence, ever breathing the fragrance of the Beloved. God in His immanence is the whole world of perception, the positivity of manifestation. This is the metaphysical meaning of Muhammad's messengership in Sufism. Muhammad is the principle that makes existence manifest out of the archetypal forms, the revealer of otherwise unmanifest Absolute. The Son of Christian theology understood as the Logos amounts to the same thing. God would be unknown but for the Son, the Logos. The Father (Essence) is known through the Son. Metaphysically speaking to live truly is to live in God as God is Life, the Larger Life. The life of love is the life divine. God is love and for Osho one could well say that love is God. The experience of love, of beauty, of goodness are experiences of God and for a gnostic all experiences are experiences of God. The finite can't be outside the Divine Infinitude. So the world is necessarily in God or God's visible Face. As the Quran says God is both the Manifest (form) and the Hidden (essence). Osho has put more emphasis on the immanent God. Experiencing God is experiencing life in its full splendour. Life is the only God for Osho as indeed for all religions as C.R. Jain has argued in his provocative study on comparative religions titled *Key to Knowledge* [8]. Vedantic ternary describing God as Existence, Consciousness, Bliss, is found elsewhere also. Life, larger or higher life, life divine, the life of Spirit, the life of Love, is indeed the promise of all religions and mysticisms. Evelyn Underhill's classical presentation of mystical viewpoint also foregrounds this point [9]. *Moksha*, beatific vision, *nirvana* — all are symbols of richer or larger life. So nothing is simpler or more accessible than the experience of God. In fact God is the Environment, *al-Muhit*, in the Quranic phrase. The self builds an illusory boundary that demarcates or separates. The self is illusory. God is All-Pervading. He alone exists. God alone is real; all else has derived existence but the essence is one. The Spirit is one.

Osho sees meditation as the art of finding eternity here and now. Eternity is in living moment to moment, in dying to the past and being open and vulnerable to future, and experiencing life with fresh and innocent eyes. Just to live for a single moment with authenticity, totality, integrity, is to live in eternity. To quote him “A single moment of total experience is far bigger than the whole of eternity” [10]. He is a great pagan mystic, quite at home with modern paganism. He simply seeks a space “to dance, to sing, to celebrate” [10]. For him this whole existence is the Garden of Eden [10, p. 53]. “This very body the Buddha. And this very place the lotus paradise” [10, p. 53]. “There is no other buddhahood and there is no other lotus paradise” [10, p. 53]. We have not been thrown out of the Garden, but miss it because we are not aware, we have fallen in a dream-like trance state. The dream consists of one's desire to reach somewhere else [10, p. 54]. How far away it is from the typical modernist scientific humanist or absurdist's constructions of the world – opacity, absurdity and what Camus calls density of the world. Such key modern figures as Camus are opposed with all their might to the world and in fact he defines the world as something to which he is opposed. The world is the other. Its sight provokes nausea. We are thrown into it, says Heidegger. Far from being the enchanted Garden it is a place of torture where man pays for some unknown sin as Beckett would have us believe. Modern thought contests the notions that the world is our home and that we can be at peace with the world. The world simply is, a brute fact, an absurd reality and we suffer meaninglessly. There is no providence, no design, no sacred mystery, no soul-making, no higher destiny. How can trust and gratitude towards existence be developed in such a context? For Osho gratitude and trust are key religious demands, in fact they define the religious attitude towards the environment.

Seeking for metaphysical abstractions, airy nothings, heavens out there is despised by him. He makes finding heaven look such an easy thing. He says: “Just sit silently and look around, sit silently and look within. You have never been anywhere else! *Aes Dhammo Sanantano* – this is the nature of things – you can't be anywhere else” [10, p. 54]. For him there is no ultimate goal; “there is no goal as such, hence there is no question of being an ultimate goal....There is nothing ultimate anywhere; the immediacy itself is the goal. Each step is the goal, each moment is the goal” [10, p. 56]. Referring approvingly to Zen he declares: “all is as it should be, nothing is missing. This very moment everything is perfect... This very moment is the only reality. Hence, in Zen there is no distinction between methods and goals, means and goals” [10, p. 56].

It is the constricted and fundamentally a dualist concept of religious experience in modern philosophical discourse coupled with the foregrounding of divine principle's transcendence in mainstream Judeo-Christian-Islamic (exoteric) theology that seems to block the understanding of modern man vis-à-vis God as Reality and this also contributes to hazy perception of the environment. Modern agnosticism and skepticism is a reaction to absolutization of theological understanding of God and reduction of Being to God at the hands of Christian Church. Personal Godism (Absolutizing personal or qualified God

or *Saguna Brahman*, identifying *Ishwara* with *Paramatma*, Being with Pure Being or Beyond-Being, understanding God only as a person and taking a more or less literal sense of His Essence and attributes) is the heresy of which the East is unaware. Metaphysical understanding of God as Infinite and All-Possibility subsumes everything and transcends mere believing posture and theistic/atheistic binary. Osho's identification of God with Existence, Isness or 'what is', to use Krishnamurti's phrase, can't be questioned by agnostic/atheistic scholarship. We will discuss the status of ego or 'I', in traditional nondualistic Eastern framework which is the background of Osho's thought as well. Thus Osho is able to situate religion and ecocentric appropriation of it from a more inclusive trans-theistic perspective.

3. Nature as immanent God

Osho is a non-dualist or Unitarian. He sometimes sounds like a nature mystic. He seems to overemphasize immanence of God and may sound as a pantheist. "Creation is the visible God. He is green in the trees and red in the roses and gold in the rays of the sun. He is silver in the surface of a lake when the moon is mirrored. He is laughter, he is tears. He is this life in its totality." [11] In the same vein he says: "The beloved is *always* here. He is the breath of your heart, he is the breath of your heart. He is the green in the trees. And he is the red in flowers. He is the wave in ocean. And he is in the stars in the night. And he is the silence of the darkness. And he is the joy of light." [12]

And again: "We should not ask 'Where is the beloved?' but 'Where is he not?' Jesus says to his disciples: Break a stone and you will find me there. Remove a rock and you will find me there. Where is he not?... Even when the wind knocks on your door, he has knocked. And when the dog starts barking in the neighbourhood, he is barking. And when a friend comes to see you, he has come to see you. Because there is nobody else except him." [12, p. 178]

He further makes clear: "He is the breeze that comes and plays with your hair, and he is in the sunrays dancing on your face, and he is in the lake" [10, p. 71]. Such expressions have been universally used by mystics and most characteristically by the Sufis. This is seeing God as Indwelling Life, the immanent God. Christian mystics, for whom Christ is Divine Life Itself, see His active Spirit in the ecstatic and abounding life of the world. Evelyn Underhill's following words converge with Osho's view perfectly: "In the rapturous vitality of the birds, in their splendid glancing flight: in the swelling of buds and the sacrificial beauty of the flowers: in the great and solemn rhythms of the sea – there is somewhat of Bethlehem in all these things, somewhat too of Calvary in their self giving pains" [9, p.169].

4. The concept of self

In the metaphysical perspective (here Metaphysics is not to be identified with Aristotelian and post-Aristotelian use of the term but is to be understood as the science of supraphenomenal, the Infinite, Non-Being or Pure Being, and this is possible not by means of reason but intellectual intuition as the perennialists have explicated) the reality of the 'I' doesn't belong to man or *nafs* but to the Spirit (which Osho calls witnessing self) which is the divine spark at the centre of man's being identical with the unmanifest consciousness or Divine Essence. The crucial distinction between soul and Spirit is necessary to understand both Oshoan and perennialist metaphysical conception of religious experience. This distinction is largely forgotten by most philosophical critics of religious experience. To quote Huston Smith on the distinction between soul and Spirit: "If soul is the element in man that relates to God, Spirit is the element that is identical with Him, not with his personal mode, for in the celestial plane God and soul remain distinct, but with God's mode that is infinite. Spirit is the *Atman* that is Brahman, the aspect of man that is the Buddha-nature, the element in man, which exceeding the soul's full panoply is that 'something in the soul that is uncreated and uncreate'" [13].

The Eastern conception of religious experience involves annihilation of self as something separate. Man ceases to be for the final goal of union which constitutes metaphysical realization. Mysticism demonstrates that man can undo the existentiating and cosmogonic process inwardly so as to cease to exist or be 'annihilated' in *fana*. It should also be noted that metaphysical realization is not against the essential reality of 'I' or the person whose roots are contained in the Divine Infinity but dissolves its independent separate nature in the face of the Reality which alone is as Islamic *shahadah* implies before whose 'Face' all things perish according to the Quranic verse "All things perish save His Face" [14]. Once the soul or *nafs* has withered away in the experience of *fana*, the self-identity of mystic realization is transformed into the Self-identity of metaphysical realization by foregrounding the still centre of Spirit which is only a witness to the phenomena, just pure awareness, rather than something which identifies with the actions or mind. It is a principle of transcendence. It is the soul and the mind which impose a pattern, a structure on the environment and puncture the unity of man and environment. The ego which is the principle of separation is the soul. The Self, the *Atman* is Spirit. The self is a compounded fragmentary divisive entity. It is subject to change or becoming. That is why Buddha denied it. Osho seeks to transcend the self through various meditational methods to realize the Self, the principle and seat of awareness, choiceless awareness. The choosing self is the principle of separation and exploitation.

It appears that the very foundations of Western thought which is objectifying, which doesn't grant the great value of objectless consciousness identifying it with death or mere negativity, is inimical to environment. Man is treated as a subject who encounters the world as object, as other. The world is there as an object, as an absurd, opaque, dense thing with which man must

negotiate terms. Realist prejudice that takes the empirical world as real, as something that exists in its own right, as given from Aristotle onwards has been the reigning philosophy of the modern West. Here the Eastern worldview radically differs. The world is not ontologically real. It is Maya. This is asserted universally, though in different ways, by all traditions from Islam to Vedanta. Only God is real; all else has only a derived reality and is made of the stuff of dreams. This may seem to imply that the world is therefore ignored or rejected as unworthy of attention and care and that mayaistic philosophies are therefore not quite ecofriendly. However this would be a mistake. We have irrefutable evidence from the traditional cultures that, generally speaking, the world was never ignored or bypassed in the pursuit of contemplation of the Good and the Beautiful. What is really implied is that this world is illusory when seen in the light of the ideal world, the world of forms, the world of Spirit. For a nirvanic consciousness *samsara* is not. The notion of *maya* only implies that the world is not anything in separation or apart from God. It is real only so far as it is the manifestation of God, the creation of God. Both the self (ego) and the world which constitute the given, the universe of modern scientific humanist thought, are unreal for mysticism as for Osho. It is the West's (especially the modern West's) deep seated prejudice that the world apart from God is ontologically real which perpetrates the ecocidal mentality. The world if real and separate from God, as something that is there, absurdly so in a way can't be an enchanted garden. Man is a puny little creature in comparison with it. Indeed life is a futile passion. The thesis of world's reality implies God's unreality and the unreality of everything beautiful and noble. Modern absurdism reduces man to nothingness and world to hell because man is not related to the world. If the world is real and if the self is real oneness of existence is not realizable. Oneness of existence, the corner stone of deep ecology and related environmental movements is only possible if we have some grounding reality or common essence of every existent. Now in the modern philosophies which are not idealistic there is no ontological single essence. The unity of existence is understandable and realizable in mystical philosophies only. Certain quasimystical trends in modern philosophical and scientific thought are poor substitutes (some are indeed positively harmful in ecological terms) for traditional mystical philosophies. Osho has remarked that for the West, generally speaking, consciousness is consciousness *of* something

Environmental enterprise is ultimately linked with certain Western philosophical and theological assumptions. All the defining characteristics of post-Renaissance and Enlightenment Western modernity – rationalist, masculine or androcentric, subject centred or egoistic, logical, dualist, outward looking or extrovert, aggressive, scientific, capitalist, desacralizing or secularist, humanistic, individualistic – create an environment, a worldview that is not congenial to environmental enterprise. The series of asymmetrical binaries and privilegings of one term over the other and consequent marginalization of the other as 'Other' in the binaries listed below (Table 1) in which the first term

is generally privileged as the following is what has sustained the project of ecodegradation.

Osho reverses all these hierarchies and argue for God-centric or Reality-centric, suprarational, contemplative, quietist worldview. The rationale of scientific discourses Foucault identified with the transformation of human beings into knowable – that is, controllable ‘subjects’. It is the self-other binary representing the exclusionary relationship between subjects who occupy opposite positions on centre/margin model of political and other power relations which is the basis of ecodestructive ideology. The binary relationship between self and other suggests that the ‘I’ of the self can’t exist without the ‘non-I’ or the other. It is Buddhism and in fact all mysticism (which is the kernel of religion) that cuts at the root of the problem. The self-other dichotomy can’t be challenged without questioning the whole tradition of Western philosophy or its metaphysics of presence and the *cogito* principle of Descartes, the father of modern Philosophy, which establishes human self and its material reality independent of human thought.

Table 1. Modernism vs. Traditionalism.

Modernism	Traditionalism
Reason	Unreason
Man	God
Self	Other
Anthropocentrism	Theocentrism
being	Being
Becoming	Being
Kingdom of Earth	Kingdom of Heaven
Thinking	Meditation
Masculine	Feminine
Science (Positivism)	Metaphysics
Scientist	Mystic
Modernity	Tradition
Body	Soul
Matter	Spirit
Time	Space
Speech	Silence
Head	Heart
Activism	Quietism
Modern	Primitive

The absolutization of subject-object duality is the very foundation of modern western philosophy and colonialist project would claim legitimacy from this basic metaphysical position. All fundamental antagonisms and dualisms of the West stem from the great cleavage between form and matter as W.S. Haas [15] has noted in his exposition of Eastern philosophy. This split is predicated upon that peculiarly Western relation between the subject and the non-subject, in

which the two stand in opposition to each other. This is true both chronologically and ontologically. For in establishing this opposition, the mind detached itself from the world and initiated the theme of Western thought and civilization which is 'objectivation of the given', its controls by the human subject, I-it relationship with it and all this necessitating and culminating in outwardly directed war against Nature and against the Other as other appears as hell to it. The history of both colonialism and ecocidal science is so to speak mirrored in the history of Western thought and civilization which is more interested in *via active* than in *via contemplativa*, in domination or mastery over the object, the other. By virtue of the incessant urge or the will to posit objects, the subject itself creates its own antagonists. It is the same will which also constitutes the means of mastering them. The modern science with its profound interest in the outer world (rather than the inner one) and its very methodology of objectivation is the logical development or illustration of this mind structure and attitude of the West. Even the Absolute is conceived as an object in the West. All this is alien to Eastern mystical spirit – the entire construction with its schism between the logos and the empirical world and the ensuing pairs of irreconcilable opposites as Haas [15] has noted. The Eastern mind isn't interested in shaping the non-subject as the other and encounters this other in almost Levinasian ethical sense. The Eastern framework of juxtaposition and identity and its both/and logic of polarities or logic of 'contradictions' is to be contrasted to Western either/or logic and its vain attempt at unity in variety as the genuine – otherness of the other is subsumed in some abstract higher category.

In contrast to this the Eastern attitude is thus presented by Osho: "Consciousness has no idea of 'I', of ego. It has no idea of one's separation from existence. It doesn't know any barrier. It has no boundaries – It is one with existence, it is in deep at-onement... But in a self-conscious man something has gone wrong. ...He goes on making boundaries around himself so nobody can trespass.... A self is a dead thing, alive only in name. Consciousness is infinite life, life abundant. It knows no boundaries. But ordinarily everybody is self-conscious.... ...Self-consciousness is a nonsurrendering attitude- it is the attitude of conflict, fight, struggle" [6, p. 40].

For Osho self-consciousness, separative knowledge is the fall. He has critiqued scientific, analytical, dualist thought in a number of discourses.

5. The concept of mind

Promethean or Faustian spirit is essentially irreverent towards the sacred mystery of life or Universe that religion always had preserved. Will to know is essentially rapist. As Osho says: "The mystic has come to see the point that knowledge isn't possible. That the life, existence, God or whatever you call it, is basically not only unknown but unknowable. All effort to know is futile. Relax and live." [7, p. 525] The scientist is trying to see reality so that reality can be manipulated [7, p. 524]. "The seeker after knowledge is a rapist; he is violent,

aggressive.” [7, p. 525] Applauding the Zen in relation to modern rationalistic thought and science he says: “Zen is device, not an analysis of life ... the universe is unknowable, absolutely, because it is alive. Analysis kills Only dead things can be known ... The moment you know you have killed something Zen people aren't interested in knowledge because they aren't interested in power Never be a seeker after knowledge otherwise you will become a killer. That is what science goes on doing..... Nobody thinks of the philosopher as violent, but he is also violent. He goes on analyzing everything.” [7, p. 141] “I am here to make you ignorant again if you cooperate with me this will happen, you will become ignorant, innocent. Your knowledgeability will disappear – and in that very disappearance you will find for the first time the mystery of life dancing around you, and the benediction of that mystery- that mystery is God The original sin is the sin of knowledge. Remember the Biblical story again and again. It is one of the most precious parables of human history: Adam has been turned out of the Garden of Eden because he had eaten of the tree of knowledge. His sin is his knowledge Vomit the apple! Become innocent and ignorant again. And you will be attaining to a second childhood – and fortunate are those who can attain to second childhood, because through it, and only through it, is one bridged to God.” [7, p. 401]

Mind and thought have been privileged in the Western thought. Nondualistic philosophies have especially privileged them. But the roots of environmental crisis could be discerned in this privileging. Osho instead champions no-mind, thoughtlessness or supramental intelligence. To quote him again: “He (Sage) doesn't act out of the mind, to act out of the mind is the sin... Whenever you act out of the mind is your act going to be fragmented, because mind is split phenomenon. Mind is not one: it is many, it is a multitude Whenever you act out of the mind, only a part acts – against the whole.” [16] “All that comes from the mind is from the devil – devil is just a way of saying it, because the mind separates. Let me define devil as one who separates, and God as one who unites.” [16, p. 229] “It is impossible for the part to fight with the whole. One can't “maintain the self against the universe. It is impossible to exist separately” [6, p. 41]. “You can succeed only with the whole, never against him. You can succeed only with the whole, never against it” [6, p. 41].

6. God as Nature and relating to Nature

Osho's environmentalist sensibility is reflected in the names that he gave to his disciples. To give just one example. Ma Prem Sylvia. This love means love that dwells in the forest, love that dwells in nature, love that is courageous enough to be wild [10, p. 21]. He attributes the failure of modern civilization to its war against nature. “We are part of nature! How can we conquer it? We are nature; to fight with nature is to fight with oneself. It is so foolish and so suicidal that later generations will not be able to believe how man committed such a crime.” [10, p. 21] He says that we need to befriend nature and that his *sanyas* is an attempt in this direction. His following observations are expressive of his

ecotheology. “Man can live joyously only with nature, not against nature. The moment we are against nature, our love energy, turns into hatred. If we flow with nature in total harmony, love grows, matures, becomes more integrated. And the maturing of love is the greatest gift of life. To know a mature kind of love is to know God, because it brings joy, it brings freedom, it brings blessings.” [10, p. 22] “The greatest arbitrariness is the invention of the ego; it is the greatest lie there is. We are not separate from existence, but we believe that we are separate, and in that very belief the doors of hell are opened. We enter into hell-fire the moment we think we are separate.” [10, p. 91]

Bliss, according to Osho, is possible only if you become related with the existence in a personal way. That is what the word ‘good’ implies - a personal relationship with existence. “The person who doesn’t believe in god does believe in existence but there is no personal bridge, there is no love affair. He can’t address existence as thou; existence remains ‘it’ – dead.” [10, p. 23]

Osho’s emphasis on love – which in fact is key to his whole thought – makes him an environmentalist thinker *par excellence*. Osho’s emphasis that we are not strangers to earth but the part of existence and that salvation lies in union with the whole, in trusting existence, in willing the will of existence, in becoming a hollow bamboo, in surrender of ego and all claims of separate ego or personality, in transcendence of mind which is the principle of separation, in prayer which expresses our dependence on the whole, in grace which is born of love – all these make his interpretation of religion environmentalist. To quote him: “But the Western mind has been very aggressive. Nature has to be conquered. You have to fight amongst yourselves, you have to fight with nature, you have to fight with yourself. When man fights with other men it is politics. When man fights with nature it is science. And when man fights with himself it is religion.” [6, p. 90] “God is found only in the heart of one who is utterly in praise of existence because it is so incredibly beautiful, so utterly valuable. We have not earned it, we are not worthy of it. To be is a gift. Life is a gift, love is a gift, and all that is, is a sheer gift from god. All that we can do is to praise him. That very praising is enough, because that praise becomes prayer- prayer is nothing else. Prayer is the heart in tremendous rejoicing, thankfulness, saying the existence is good.” [10, p. 71]

This implies that the world is to be celebrated, cared for and loved with abandon. It is the visible face of God. The objects are not mere objects; they are mysterious, partaking of the mystery of Existence or God. Everything is charged with the grandeur of God. Everything, seen with the eyes of a mystic, is sacred, the Infinite. Wherever we turn, there is the Face of God. The mystic sees the essences, the world of ideas or archetypes. He sees through God’s eyes and that is why everything appears as it really is, Infinite. The Beloved is expressing in countless forms. The statement that God is exalted means that “the whole existence is exalted, because god is not a person but another name for the totality of existence” [10, p. 469]. As Osho says: “The beloved is not a person: the beloved is life itself...Think of God in all this manifestation! Think of God as the world. God has become the world! Your scriptures say God created the

world. I say unto you: God became the world.” [12] He further says: “God is our nature” [12, p. 182]. “God is your very consciousness, your very being, your very existence.” [12, p. 200] “The divine is pure being, hence it is indescribable. God is the pure essence of this existence. An image of a flower can be made, but how can you make an imager of your fragrance... God is the fragrance of existence.” [17] “God is existence. He is not beyond it; he is hidden in it. He is one with it.” [17, p. 178]

Nature, both in its inner (psychological or mental) and outer (phenomenal world) manifestations is the key word for him. Living in tune with it is the right path, the path that leads to salvation. “To be in tune with nature is to be religious. My definition of religion is, to be in tune with nature. And that is the meaning of the Indian word Dharma; it means ‘nature’, intrinsic nature. Trust nature and don’t violate it” [18]. Religion asks man to be natural, to be true to his nature, to be ordinary and as Zen Buddhism puts it ‘*samsara is nirvana*’. Islam repeatedly emphasizes its natural – all too natural character. The Sage – in Taoism is above all the wholly natural man. The aim of the Sage is to be in harmony with his own nature for through this harmony comes harmony with men and this harmony is itself the reflection of harmony with God. The aim of spiritual man is to contemplate nature and become one with it, to become ‘natural.’ Religion is innocence of becoming. Religion intends to de-alienate man, to help him to be himself. God has to be existentially experienced, discovered within the depth of our being or self. There is no beyond, no remote realm of being or no otherworldly destination, in the pursuit of which one is asked to leave this world. Heaven is won only in and through this world. This world is the ground or soil on which the tree of hereafter grows. *Nirvana* must be won here, every moment. God has to be remembered with every breath. Nothing is profane, all is holy ground. The following words of Iqbal [19] show this ‘secular’ theological spirit of all true religion “There is no such thing as a profane world. All this immensity of matter constitutes a scope for the self-realization of spirit. All is holy ground..... The spirit finds its opportunities in the natural, the material, the secular. All that is secular is, therefore sacred in the roots of its being.” [19] Religion seeks to make man co-partner of God in creation as the Quran implies. “God became man so that man may become God” said a great Christian authority. God pursues man as is evident from the fact that God initiates revelatory discourse. Faith is not belief or consenting to a certain proposition but vital appropriation of whole Universe. God is not to be taken as a proposition, but direction, as perennialists authors say. Thus there is no question of alienation from Nature or from this world in religious pursuit of salvation. Belief in God’s immanence in one or the other sense, forms essential part of all religions. Personal God, conceived as the other, for whose sake one needs to relinquish this world or body is not the Ultimate Reality in religions. *Nirguna Brahman* or Impersonal Absolute Beyond-Being (symbolized by Void) or Transcendent principle is the Ultimate Reality in religions which has no relationship to Man or Manifestation and is not concerned with Man’s Salvation, as exoteric theology ordinarily conceives. Theologian’s God is even dispensable

in Eastern religions and thus the question of alienation of man from his own self due to presence of God conceived as the Other does not arise. We need not kill God so that man may live as Nietzsche would demand.

Against the Western dualist approach which usually absolutizes subject – object or Man-Nature dichotomy (and this fatally affects its policy toward environment) the East has monistic approach which is so important for sound ecology, as against modernist humanist ecology cultivated in the West. Cooper [20] illustrates this with reference to Taoism in the following words: “In the natural there is a total cooperation with life. Modern man tends to be an observer rather than a partaker, he imagines he can stand apart from life, view it from outside and look at it with analytical mind... it is impossible to be in accord with a world one regards as wholly other, it is to be a split personality, the modern Schizophrenia.”

He further comments: “...once he [man] has become divorced from nature and has lost the sense of communion with all things, the oneness, he starts on the downward path which leads to destruction not only of nature but of his own spiritual life, for the two are intimately associated as he kills nature so he kills himself” [20].

There do exist a significant minority of theologians who moving against the tide of the general modern trends of Theology bring to life once again the Sacramental character of all creation and to return to things the sacred nature of which recent modes of thought have deprived them. They emphasize the forgotten truth that from the Christian point of view incarnation implies the Sacramental nature of material things. They argue that the outward and material aspect of things acts as a vehicle for the inward, spiritual grace indwelling in all things, by virtue of their being created by God. It is also argued that if creation were not in some way revealed there would be no revelation possible. Temple makes important points in this connection. He says that God’s creation is Sacramental of Himself to His creatures but in effectually fulfilling that function it becomes sacramental of Him to Himself – the means whereby he is eternally that which eternally He is [21]. The world, which is the self expressive utterance of the Divine Word, becomes itself a true revelation, in which what comes is not truth concerning God, but God Himself’ Either all occurrences are in some degree revelations of God, or else there is no such revelation at all; for the conditions of the possibility of any revelation require that there should be nothing which is not revelation. Only if God is revealed in the rising of the sun in the sky can He be revealed in the rising of the son of man from the dead [21, p. 65t]. Eliade says: “The feeling of the sanctity of nature survives today in Europe chiefly among rural populations, for it is among them that a Christianity lived as a cosmic liturgy still exists” [21, p. 47] Osho has similarly argued for creation theology. He has appropriated Tantrism and its key notion of affirmative transcendence for his ecospirituality. Just think a little: remove God and you have removed all beauty, you have removed all love, all prayer. The temple bells of the heart will not ring again, there will be no offering in prayer and gratitude - all has been taken away [17, p. 437].

7. Concept of Renunciation

Renunciation is the key word of traditional religions and mysticism. A renunciatory ethic is ideally environmentalist ethic. However, according to Osho, it has been mostly misunderstood as renouncing the world rather than the ego and the mind that create an artificial, an illusory world. To quote him: "Religion is renunciation of all that which belongs to the ego. It is not really renunciation of the world: it is renunciation of the world that the ego creates... How can you renounce the world? You can't go out of it. And who are you to renounce it? It is God's world. He has created it- how can you renounce it? Who are you? You are not the master of it. You can only renounce that of which you are the master." [12, p. 274] "If indeed man renounced ego the Earth could turn the Garden of Heaven. Religion is innocence, it is trust, it is faith. It is trust in the whole and the goodness of the whole. It is a let-go, it is surrender." [12, p. 279] "Real prayer is not yours. It is by existence for existence. You are only a medium, a hollow bamboo. It is the divine that sings a song through you. Only then is prayer true. And then only does prayer liberate." [17, p. 355]

8. Meditation as ecocentric activity

Not concentration but relaxation, let go, choiceless awareness is meditation for Osho. Via contemplativa that the modern West has largely forgotten as Guenon complained is brought back by Osho. Concentration is not an ecocentric activity.

Pessimist absurdist vision that deeply informs much of modern thought and is not congenial for an engaged ecocentric philosophy is thus rejected by Osho: "...be cheerful because you are carrying the seed of ultimate flowering in you. Be cheerful because the Kingdom of God is yours. Be cheerful because we are not accidental, because we are not meaningless, because we are the very crown of existence, we are the very salt of the Earth" [10, p. 89].

9. Environmentalist Appropriation of Sufism

Osho's environmentalist thought can be gleaned from his explication of the symbolism of wool associated with Sufi concept of poverty and renunciation. To quote him: "The symbolism is that wool is the garb of the animals and a Sufi has to become as innocent as an animal. The Sufi has to attain to a primal innocence. He has to drop all kinds of civilizations and cultures, he has to drop all conditionings, he has to become again an animal.... He is in tune with existence as deeply as any animal. He has dropped all kinds of philosophies, he carries no conceptualizations in his mind, his mind is without content. He is, but he is no more in the mind. To be without mind — that is the meaning of woollen robe. To be like innocent animals, not to know what is good and what is bad and then the highest good arises, the '*summum bonum*'..... The animal doesn't choose. Whatsoever is, is. The animal simply accepts it; its acceptance is total. It

knows no choice. So does a Sufi. A Sufi knows no choice. He is choicelessly aware. Whatsoever happens he accepts as a gift, as a God-given thing. Who is he to choose? He doesn't trust his mind, he trusts in the universal mind." [6, p. 12] "[Animal] has nothing and yet will find great peace, silence, joy celebration." [6, p. 14] "By asserting animal symbolism Sufi declares that he is not doer on his own record." [6, p. 14]

It is generally accepted that environmental crisis hasn't been the serious problem of traditional cultures and premodern civilizations. Tribal societies, primitive people don't know it. Mind, reason, civilization, desires, possessions, divisions, conflicts, disequilibrium, disharmony go hand in hand. Intellect as traditionalist perennialist writers conceive it isn't distanced from nature. It is a sort of mirror reflecting Reality. It is pure consciousness and that is why identical in essence to divine consciousness. It is choicelessly aware of the flow of events. Tribal people are closest to 'animals' in above defined sense of the term and that is why they possess ecological health. Animal doesn't possess ego-consciousness and thus doesn't look at the world as the other, as an object. He lives in the world. He is tuned to the rhythm of nature. He flows with it

Modern man has lost the innocence of animal and that is why he is alienated. He doesn't trust the given as God given. He can't thank Existence for the gift of life. Animals never complain. They are reconciled with their fate. They have submitted in the real sense of the word. They can't rebel. They don't hoard as they are not possessive. They know nothing of greed. Animals look at nature without having any ideas, choices, wants, interests. They just delight at seeing creation. They know no exploitation of nature because they are content with what they have, with what nature has bestowed them. The 'Sufi' word could also have been derived from *sufa* which means purity and by implication transcendence. It means renunciation. One renounces and becomes a *faqeer*. The Sufi has to renounce all possession or at least attachment to possessions or things.

Osho's other observations on Sufism also express his ecocentric thought. Non-doing, actionless action or *wu wei wei* is one of the important motifs in Osho. The Bhagwat Gita and Taoism have explicated this conception. It is an ideal mode of ecocentric action. Eliminating the doer and letting Existence do its will. It is the posture of surrender and trust in the action of the whole. In fact God is the only doer. It is illusion to believe that we are the real agents of action. The Sufi is a hollow bamboo, a flute on which nature plays the notes and what conflict can there be in such a case with environment. He doesn't look at it egoistically, capitalistically. He believes more in giving than in taking. His dwellings are usually caves, forests, country sides, or what comes closest to virgin nature. The Sufis have given voice to mute nature. For them chirping birds deliver sermons and brooks are books. Even trees are reported to have developed some sort of relationship with him. He must be content to be nothing. He must not be to let Existence speak through him, to let God play on the note of his life. The Sufi is one 'who has arisen in the morning and doesn't know whether he will be dead in the evening.' He is utterly resigned to the present

moment. He has no will to be worried about his state tomorrow and that is why he is perfectly at peace. He is *ibn-al-waqt* (the child of time) or rather for him time doesn't exist. Not in time but out of time he lives and are executed his actions. So his relationship with nature can't be dictated by calculating utilitarian aggrandizing morality. As the Sufi doesn't act out of the mind and it is mind which separates man from nature and distorts his primal innocence so his actions can't be but in tune with nature. He doesn't flow against the stream. He is at *maqami-raza* which is a state of absolute submission. Not his but God's will is done and God is the totality of existence. Transcendence of mind, thought, ideas, ego means nothing now separates a Sufi from nature, his primal or paradisiacal innocence. Sufism as love affair with the world or whole (at whatsoever terms it sets as love doesn't negotiate but willingly surrenders as it transcends ego boundaries by very definition) means he is reconciled with the environment (environment understood in widest sense of the term). He isn't opposed to it unlike Camus but loves it with all his heart and soul. He doesn't mourn the fact of being born. He isn't therefore alienated or rebellious. He delights in creation. He sings the praises of all forms as they manifest the Essence or God. All creation sings the praise of God by virtue of mere existence (which is a state of submission). He joins trees, brooks, birds, and stars in consenting to the state in which God chose him to be. He doesn't resent. It is he who experiences innocence of becoming. He sees God everywhere, in every atom, in every leaf blade. He sings, dances in mad ecstasy because everything comes from his Beloved. He accepts every misery as a kiss from the Beloved. *Raza*, the station of Sufi means total acceptance. He is pleased with God as God is pleased with him. Accepting servant-hood means he consents to his creaturely status. He doesn't want to be superman, to be God. Rather he chooses not to be at all, chooses to annihilate ego so that only God can say I am. And not he. It is extremely humility on the part of Mansur when he said, 'I am the Truth'. This is because it is God who said this as Mansur himself had got annihilated in the experience of *fana*.

Sufism treats environmental crisis by keeping sacred alive, by seeing Universe as God's *zahir*. Thus numinous is restored. One can't take lightly what expresses the immanence of God. Nature by being made dependent on supernature becomes sanctified, adorable, worthy of not only respect but also of love. As nature is not other to self, or spirit but its exteriorization or what amounts to the same as God's manifestation or revelation, alienation disappears. One sees nothing but God or Self. Nature becomes prayerful, in need of blessing from man. The practice of blessing the Prophet of Islam recommended in Islam amounts to, according to Schuon, blessing whole existence or life [22]. To be is to be blessed. Man can't be but steward if Nature and Khalifatullah in such a view. Earth belongs to God (*al-a arda-lillah*) not to man and thus can't be looted, exploited indiscriminately. Man environment relationship becomes I-Thou rather than I-It and this is key to Sufi perspective on environment. Since only one or God exists and ego doesn't so no dualism is there which is at the heart of environmental crisis. Metaphysical unity (expressed in *tawhid*) means

Order, Balance, Harmony, Equilibrium. If we take the famous Lyn White critique of Christianity for desacralizing nature by overemphasis on divine transcendence and thus converting nature to a 'mere stuff' or the realm of manifestation seriously, Osho's emphasis on affirmative transcendence, on God as Existence implies taking the realm of manifestation seriously as real and partaking of divinity in a way. The realm of manifestation represents the *Shakti* of Siva (God) and we can't separate Siva from *Shakti*. Sometimes in the history of religion people have not clearly seen the metaphysical transparency of phenomenal world and tried to ignore it or escape from it or not be much concerned with its love and preservation by seeing it as illusory or not quite real or authentic expression of divine immanence or exterior face of God who otherwise remains hidden in his inwardness. Osho in contrast reinterprets maya in tune with Kashmir Saivism and other affirmative thought currents resurrects the world's reality, seeing it as God's actual pole, His visible face. Understanding of Maya as illusion (by certain misinterpreters of Vedanta) rather than Shakti implies ignoring the metaphysical transparency of phenomenal world. Saivism-Tantrism don't ignore the phenomenal world or escape from it. They are much concerned with its love and preservation as they don't see it as illusory or not quite real or authentic expression of divine immanence. Osho qualifies the misunderstanding of *Maya* as illusion.

To conclude we can assert that Osho's ecocentric reinterpretation of religion is worth reckoning both from religious and environmentalist viewpoint. His mystical instead of theological approach deserves serious attention from environmentalists who have expressed doubts regarding relevance of traditional religion, especially Semitic religions to ecocentric activism. It is better to explore vast potential of religion that still remains, at one or the other level and in different guises, potent force for action for the vast majority of men for fighting the menace of ecocidal thought and practice.

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