**Man’s Relationship to Nature in the Bible**

**Abstract**

The widespread western cultural perception that man is separate from nature and rules over it characterizes man’s relationship to the earth and its flora and fauna. The topic of sustainability deals, inter alia, with the relationship between humans and nature. The source of the problem lies in the perception that man is the master and owner of nature. In my research I explore this concept’s cultural roots as they appear in the biblical text. Religion is a clear cultural identifier; the values and systems of thought of a given culture are reflected in its religious doctrines. The religious-cultural roots of the aforementioned perception derive from Judeo-Christian monotheism. Its source is in the biblical text, in particular the creation myth in Genesis. Man’s perception of his own detachment from nature has endured over the ages in western culture, and has become a deeply rooted construct whose origins are religious, but whose continuation is secular.

The separation between man and nature in the Bible is expressed in two ways: First, through the separation of the divine from nature; and second, through the separation of man from nature, his placement at the top of the hierarchy of living creatures, and his ability to become a partner in creating the natural reality. This is utterly revolutionary when compared with the other religions of the ancient Near East, where the gods were subject to nature and fate. Greek theology and cosmology, too, are based on the assumption that the world is controlled by fate and destiny. In an eternal and deterministic world there is no free will; free will is a product of the Bible. This religious revolution, although it has undergone many transformations, is still present in our culture and has far-reaching implications to this day.

**Keywords:**

Separation from nature

God

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Free will

Culture