

What has been the historical role of Catholic asceticism in relationship to ecology and the spiritual, moral, and physical health of individuals and society? To answer this question we must confront the tragedy that much of Christianity has widely deviated from the ascetic moral discipline of the Apostolic Fathers. This failure in moral leadership has largely contributed to the fact that the human race is a threatened species, and that it is the pollution of our sin that is destroying us. The ancient Hebrew and Sanskrit word for dilemma due to sin is *tame/tama*, to be "polluted" or to be "in darkness," "defiled," or "ignorant." In Old Testament times the righteous one (*tsaddic, sadhu, satvika*, or "ascetic") was to battle sin, the cause of all filth/pollution. The English word *ascetic* derives from an ancient Greek word used to describe persons who practiced a religiously motivated discipline (called *sadhana* in Sanskrit). In ancient times asceticism was originally associated with the wide-spread, multi-ethnic religious alliances of the Old Testament Eli-Jahu (Vaisnavava Hart-Vasu).

With the coming of the gospel, Jesus Christ was received as the promised redeemer of Jew and Gentile alike. Within two hundred years of the age of the apostles, the Mediterranean regions' Sacred

Without God, the Human Race Is a Threatened Species

I have set before you life and death. . . . Choose life that you and your descendants may live. (Deuteronomy 30:19)

ALSO KNOWN AS H.H. BHAKTI ANANDA GOSWAMI

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Ascetic Theology, History, and Ecology

Choose Life