



RESEARCH ARTICLE

KALKIISM: ESCHATOLOGICAL RE-IMAGINATION OF DHARMA IN CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores Kalkiism as a modern reinterpretation of Hindu eschatological theology rooted in the myth of *Kalki*, the final avatar of Vishnu. While traditional Hindu cosmology presents *Kalki* as a future divine warrior who will end the *Kali-Yugas* and restore dharma, *Kalkiism* reimagines this figure as a symbolic and philosophical response to contemporary global crises. Drawing on ancient scriptures such as the *Bhagavata Purana*, *Mahabharata*, and *Kalki Purana*, the article outlines the moral, ecological, and societal decline characterizing *Kali-Yugas* and the conditions prophesied for *Kalki's* emergence. The study proposes *Kalkiism* not as a rigid religious doctrine but as an evolving ethical movement emphasizing accountability, environmental justice, spiritual militancy, and collective moral awakening. It also critiques the political co-optation of *Kalki* imagery and addresses challenges in coherence and interpretation. Ultimately, *Kalkiism* offers a hybrid framework that blends myth, ethics, and activism to inspire transformative change in an age of systemic collapse. This academic paper also presents: belief in the Consequences of Human Action, Restoration of Dharma, Apocalyptic Ethics, Technological and Environmental Critique, Collective Messiahship, Accountability and Responsible Humanity as seven Key Tenets of *Kalkiism*.

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INTRODUCTION

Most major religions share a central belief in divine or spiritual guidance as essential to human life. A common theme across different traditions is the idea of a chosen or divinely appointed figure, such as an avatar, messiah, or prophet - who acts as a bridge between the divine and humanity. Though these figures have different names and forms, they often play a similar role in offering hope, delivering truth, and bringing about spiritual renewal (Lee, 2025; Abdul Muthaliff&Abd Rahman, 2017). In Judaism, followers await the coming of the Messiah, a leader who will establish justice and peace (Jacobs, 1995). In Christianity, Jesus Christ is believed to be the Messiah who has come and will return in a second coming (Wright, 2012). Buddhist texts predict the arrival of Maitreya, a future Buddha who will renew the Dharma (Khan, 2025; Harvey, 2013). In Zoroastrianism, the Saoshyant is expected to defeat evil and restore the world (Boyce, 2001). Some Confucian writings speak of a future "true man" who will bring harmony through perfect moral leadership (Chan, 1963). These shared hopes reflect a widespread human desire for a transformative figure who will guide the world toward truth, justice, and spiritual order. In Hindu cosmology, time is divided into four cyclical ages called Yugas. The current age, *Kali-Yugas*, is seen as a time of moral decay, spiritual ignorance, and social disorder. Hindu scriptures such as the *Bhagavata Purana* describe the end of this age with the arrival of *Kalki*, the final avatar of Vishnu, who is prophesied to destroy *adharma* (unrighteousness) and restore cosmic order (Bhattacharyya, 1993; Prabhupada, 1998). While *Kalki* remains a future figure in traditional Hindu belief, the term *Kalkiism* has emerged in recent theological, philosophical, and even political discussions. *Kalkiism* is not a formal religious movement but rather a

symbolic and narrative framework that draws on the image of *Kalki* to discuss contemporary issues such as justice, social reform, and moral renewal (Malinar, 2007). In this context, *Kalkiism* informs modern eschatological ideas and ethical thinking by reinterpreting ancient prophecies for the present age.

Eschatological Theology in various religions

Zurvanism Eschatological Theology: A now-extinct branch of Zoroastrianism, presents a unique eschatological framework rooted in its dualistic cosmology. Central to Zurvanite belief is the god Zurvan, representing infinite time and fate, from whom both Ahura Mazda (the god of light) and Angra Mainyu (the spirit of darkness) originate. Unlike orthodox Zoroastrianism, which sees Ahura Mazda as uncreated, Zurvanism views both forces as twin sons of Time, giving a deterministic tone to cosmic events (Boyce, 2001). Eschatologically, Zurvanism still affirms a final cosmic battle in which good ultimately triumphs. However, the deterministic nature of Zurvan as a neutral time-force complicates moral responsibility, since both good and evil arise from the same source. Despite this, the tradition ends in *frashokereti*—the final renewal of the world, where evil is destroyed, and the righteous are resurrected, mirroring broader Zoroastrian eschatology (Zachner, 1966).

Christian Eschatological Theology: Christian eschatology is the study of "last things," including beliefs about death, the afterlife, judgment, and the future of the world. It involves key ideas such as the second coming of Jesus, the resurrection of the dead, final judgment, and the creation of heaven and hell [Khan, 2025; Lee, 2005]. All of these reflect God's ultimate plan for creation.

Lee KH (2005) writes: liberal theologians like Schleiermacher, Ritschl, and Harnack reinterpreted eschatology in the nineteenth century, by focusing on its spiritual and ethical aspects. They denied the Kingdom of God as a future, objective reality and instead viewed it as a present, inner experience. Martin Werner later criticized this approach, arguing that it replaced the biblical hope of a future Kingdom with a personal and symbolic understanding [Lee, 2005].

Sikh Eschatological Theology: In Sikhism, eschatology is closely connected to the soul's journey after death. Sikhs believe that after death, the soul goes through cycles of birth and rebirth (reincarnation) until it achieves union with God (*Mukti*), which is the ultimate goal (Cole & Sambhi, 1995). Sikh teachings reject the idea of a final destruction of the world; instead, focus is placed on spiritual liberation through devotion, truthful living, and remembrance of God (Mandair, 2013).

Jain eschatological Theology: Jain eschatology is rooted in a highly detailed cosmology. Jains believe in an eternal universe that goes through endless cycles of time, with alternating periods of rise and decline (Jaini, 1998). There is no creator or destroyer God; instead, liberation (*moksha*) is achieved by freeing the soul from karma through strict ethical discipline and ascetic practices. Both traditions emphasize personal responsibility and liberation over a final judgment or end-time event. However, while Sikhism stresses devotion to a personal God, Jainism focuses on self-effort and non-violence to achieve freedom from the cycle of rebirth.

Muslim eschatological theology: It refers to Islamic beliefs about the end of the world, the Day of Judgment, and life after death. Central to this theology is the belief that history will end with a final judgment by Allah, where every soul will be held accountable for its deeds (Khan & Ali, 2025). The Qur'an and Hadith describe a series of events leading to the end times, including the appearance of the Mahdi (the rightly guided one), the return of Isa (Jesus) to defeat the false messiah (al-Dajjal), and the resurrection of the dead (Campo, 2009; Nasr, 2003). After judgment, individuals will be sent to either Paradise (Jannat) or Hell (Jahannam) based on their faith and actions. These teachings emphasize moral responsibility, divine justice, and the temporary nature of worldly life (Esposito, 2011). While interpretations may vary between Sunni and Shia traditions, the core eschatological themes are widely shared and serve to guide ethical behavior and spiritual reflection in the present.

Buddhist eschatological Theology: Buddhist eschatological theology centers on the cyclical nature of time and the eventual decline of the Dharma, or the Buddha's teachings. According to traditional belief, the current era is a period of moral and spiritual decay, known as the "decline of the Dharma" (Mappō in Japanese Buddhism), which will culminate in the appearance of the future Buddha, Maitreya (Khan, 2025). Maitreya is prophesied to be born when the dharma has completely disappeared, to restore the path to enlightenment (Harvey, 2013). This eschatology is less focused on a final end of the world and more on the moral responsibility of individuals to preserve ethical conduct, which can influence the timing of Maitreya's arrival (Keown, 2013). In some Mahāyāna and Theravāda traditions, eschatological ideas are also linked with cosmological cycles, involving the destruction and rebirth of worlds. Thus, Buddhist eschatology blends ethical, spiritual, and cosmological elements in a unique theological framework (Gethin, 1998; Jackson, 2022).

Hindu eschatological theology: 'KALKIISM'

Hindu eschatological theology focuses on the cyclical nature of time and the recurring rise and fall of moral order in the universe. Unlike linear end-time views found in some other religions, Hinduism sees time as divided into four repeating ages, or Yugas: Satya, Treta, Dvapara, and *Kali*, the current and final age marked by spiritual decline, corruption, and chaos (Flood, 1996) is *Kali*. According to Hindu scriptures such as the Bhagavata Purana, the *Kali*-Yugas will end with the appearance of *Kalki*, the tenth and final avatar of Vishnu, who will destroy evil and restore righteousness (Dharma) (Hudson,

2008; Khan, 2025). After this, a new cycle will begin with the return of the Satya Yugas, a golden age of truth and harmony. This eschatological vision emphasizes the eternal rhythm of creation, destruction, and renewal rather than a one-time final judgment. It also reinforces moral responsibility, as one's actions (karma) influence future rebirths and the overall state of the world (Kumar, 2003).

Historical and Scriptural Foundation: The earliest references to *Kalki* are found in the Mahabharata and Puranas (esp in Vishnu and Bhagavadpurana). *Kalki* Purana is also one of the puranas which talks about Life of *Kalki* – 10th Avatar of Vishnu in every cycle is written as past event of *Kalki*. These texts describe *Kalki* as a Warrior- Messiah who will appear riding a white horse, wielding a blazing sword, to annihilate the forces of *adharma* and usher in a new satya-Yugas (age of truth) (Khan, 2025; Lee, 2005; Narayanan, 1992). The blazing sword is a gift provided by Lord Shiva. The original version mentions that Lord *Shiva* provides *Kalki* with the most powerful weapon along with the '*Tota*': The Parrot' which knows everything (Vyasa, 2008). This parrot can be compared with the AI-tools like Chat GPT, Gemini, ... etc. A parrot can learn whatever is taught to it and so is all AI-tools which can be fed with all the information and algorithm so that it acts as a parrot which knows many or all things. *Kalki*'s emergence is associated with a specific sign: the breakdown of familial bonds, widespread corruption, the perversion of dharma by religious institutions, and a world overtaken by greed and violence. *Kalkiism* extrapolates these signs as a metaphor of modern crisis-Capitalism's excesses, climate change, political authoritarianism, and technological alienation.

Properties of Kali-Yugas at Its Rise

Kali-Yugas, the fourth and final age in Hindu cosmology, marks a period of spiritual decline and moral deterioration. Its onset and rise to peak is characterized by several key features, primarily described in texts like the *Bhagavata Purana*, *Vishnu Purana*, and *Mahabharata* after which *Kalki*- Messiah will appear, to annihilate the forces of *adharma*:

- **Moral and Ethical Decline:** Dharma stands on only one leg (out of four: viz. satya, tapas, saucha (purity), daya/ahimsa), symbolizing the collapse of truth, compassion, and righteousness (Bhagavata Purana 12.2.1). Corruption, dishonesty, and immorality become widespread.
- **Decay of Relationships:** Traditional family structures weaken. Respect between parents and children, teachers and students, and spouses diminishes (Mahabharata, *Shanti Parva* 302.20).
- **Materialism and Greed:** Wealth becomes the standard for virtue and social status. People pursue selfish desires over spiritual or communal values (Vishnu Purana 4.24).
- **Religious Hypocrisy:** Rituals are performed without understanding or sincerity. False gurus and shallow spirituality rise.
- **Environmental and Social Disorder:** The weakening of dharma leads to an imbalance not only in moral life but also in the natural world. As greed and materialism dominate human behavior, nature is exploited beyond its capacity to renew itself. This excessive consumption disrupts ecological balance, resulting in irregular climatic patterns, frequent natural disasters, and the loss of environmental stability. Social harmony also deteriorates — communities become divided by inequality, injustice, and conflict. Such disorder reflects the broader moral decline described in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (1.17), where the erosion of righteousness in the Kali Yuga leads to suffering both in human society and the natural environment. The degradation of nature, therefore, mirrors the inner decay of human values and the loss of balance between humanity and the cosmos.

Kalkiism as a Philosophical system and A Modern Eschatological Framework: Modern interpretations of *Kalkiism* often take a philosophical or symbolic approach, emphasizing the function of *Kalki* rather than the literal return of a divine being. In this context, *Kalkiism* represents the doctrine of radical ethical intervention- a

belief in the necessity of forceful moral correction when gradual reform fails. *Kalkiism* appears to be a modern speculative-framework rather than an ancient, canonical school, the references mix traditional texts, modern commentaries, and recent manifestations. Here author wish to present the following Key tenets of *Kalkiism*:

Key Tenets of *Kalkiism*

Belief in the Consequences of Human Action ("Belief of All Good"): *Kalkiism* holds that current human actions—driven by greed, unethical behavior, environmental destruction, and misuse of technology—have long-term consequences that shape the future. This belief aligns with the Hindu principle of *karma*, where every action has a reaction (Flood, 1996). *Kalkiism* emphasizes ethical responsibility in preventing chaos and restoring cosmic balance.

- **Restoration of Dharma:** At the heart of *Kalkiism* is the cyclical collapse and restoration of *dharma* (righteousness). Unlike linear or purely progressive ideologies, *Kalkiism* draws on the concept that moral balance will be re-established through decisive, spiritually guided action, as exemplified by the coming of *Kalki* in texts like the *Bhagavata Purana* (Hudson, 2008). It may not be by single individual but by some mass movement or revolution against misdeed, corruption, exploitation of resources. Some part of it can be natural calamities. In this regard the author has presented covid-19 as an overhauling process of the earth and process of re-structuring it by nature which can be looked upto as process of restoration of dharma (Upadhyay-Dhungel, 2021).
- **Apocalyptic Ethics:** *Kalkiism* does not promote despair or nihilism. Instead, it treats apocalyptic crises—environmental, moral, or social—as opportunities for moral reawakening and ethical restructuring. The figure of *Kalki* is viewed symbolically as a transformative force or forces that catalyzes this rupture (Davis, 2010). The forces can be combination of natural calamities, mass movement or revolution against misdeed, corruption, exploitation of resources.
- **Spiritual Militancy:** Unlike pacifist spiritual traditions, *Kalkiism* advocates for a kind of spiritual militancy—not necessarily involving physical violence, but demonstrating an uncompromising commitment to truth, justice, and the defense of dharma (Wilkins, 2004). This mirrors traditional descriptions of *Kalki* as a warrior avatar who combats *adharma*.
- **Technological and Environmental Critique:** *Kalkiism* offers a strong critique of modernity, viewing much of contemporary technological development as contributing to alienation, exploitation, and environmental crisis. However, when aligned with dharma, technology is seen as a potential tool for liberation and collective good (Narayanan, 2001). This reflects a dual understanding of technology—both as a risk and a solution—depending on its moral alignment. Bottom-line of *Kalkiism* on technology is 'Technology should be in alignment with protection of nature, humanity, justice to all and ethics'.
- **Collective Messiah-ship:** In many modern interpretations, *Kalki* is not seen as a singular figure, but as a symbol of **collective awakening**. This decentralization reflects the idea that moral and spiritual renewal can emerge from communities, movements, or institutions that embody dharmic principles (Rambachan, 2006) or some revolutionary movements' uncompromising commitment to truth, justice, and the defense of dharma.
- **Accountability and Responsible Humanity:** *Kalkiism* stresses that belief alone is insufficient. The framework encourages people to ask: "What kind of world do we want for our children and for the Earth?" (Sen, 2006). Individuals must take responsibility for shaping a better future. Ethical awareness, environmental stewardship, and social responsibility are key.

DISCUSSION

Kalkiism thus draws on traditional Hindu eschatological motifs (avatars, Yugass, restoration of Dharma) but re-contextualizes them for present challenges—environmental crisis, ethical decay,

technological alienation, corruption, inequality. It offers an ideology that is neither purely myth nor purely secular: rather a hybrid symbolic-ethical theology. Insofar as it influences political, economic, spiritual practice (e.g. through institutions in Nepal), *Kalkiism* demonstrates how ancient religious symbolism can be repurposed in modern movements for justice, sustainability, and moral transformation.

Political and Cultural appropriations: In contemporary South Asia, elements of *Kalkiism*—the belief in the prophesied tenth avatar of Viṣṇu, who restores righteousness at the end of the Kali Yuga—have been reinterpreted within political and cultural discourses. Certain nationalist and authoritarian groups have appropriated the *Kalki* narrative to legitimize their ideologies, portraying specific leaders or regimes as embodiments of the divine restorer of order (Brookes, 2020). This politicization of myth is controversial, as it blurs the line between religious symbolism and political propaganda, raising ethical concerns about the instrumental use of sacred traditions for temporal power. Conversely, some progressive, leftist, and ecological movements have drawn upon *Kalkiism* in a metaphorical sense, interpreting the myth not as an impending divine intervention but as a symbolic call for moral, social, and environmental renewal. In this view, the apocalyptic vision of *Kalki* serves as a transformative metaphor—urging humanity to rebuild civilization in balance with nature and aligned with the cosmic principles of *dharma* and harmony.

Criticism and Challenge: Critics argue that *Kalkiism*, particularly in its militant and or politically charged forms, risks undermining the pluralistic and nonviolent ethos of dharmic traditions. They warn of the danger of eschatological determinism—the belief that destruction is inevitable and redemptive. From the academic standpoint, *Kalkiism* also faces the challenge of Coherence, as it spans theology, ethics, politics, and aesthetics without a formal canon or institutional base. Some advocates that it represents end of Hinduism, Baishnavism, and end of Bishnu or India. End of India as *Kalki* also is last avatar of Bishnu who ends the world (India or Indian religions).

CONCLUSION

Kalkiism, whether as mythic imagination or speculative philosophy, reflects a growing global interest in spiritual responses to civilization crisis and entropy. In a world gripped by ecological collapse, moral ambiguity, and technological disruption, the figure of *Kalki*—and by extension *Kalkiism*—offers a compelling, if controversial, vision of renewal through disruption. Whether interpreted as prophecy, metaphor or ideology, *Kalkiism* forces contemporary thought to reckon with the possibility that salvation may come not through gradual reform, but through cataclysmic reordering— a new dharma born from the ashes of the old.

Author present *Kalkiism* as not merely an ideology alone but a transformative movement **committed** to reimagining and reshaping socio-economic and political systems toward greater justice and equity. Rooted in ethical responsibility and spiritual consciousness, *Kalkiism* envisions a society guided by truth, accountability, and collective well-being. Through the active mobilization of youth, strategic collaboration with thought leaders, and meaningful community engagement, the movement seeks to cultivate a broad network of change-makers. These individuals are united by a shared commitment to ethical leadership, sustainable development, and systemic reform. *Kalkiism* aspires to move beyond theory into action—building structures that reflect the principles of Dharma in a contemporary context, and empowering people to challenge injustice, resist corruption, and co-create a future grounded in moral clarity and social responsibility.

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