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CONSERVATION OF ENVIRONMENT IN X -MANDALA RIGVEDA

Prof. M.V. Praphulla.

Christ College, Bangalore-560 029

भपचमे भूतानि भवन्तीतिकृकृपृथिवी वायुराकाचमापो ज्योतिष्मिम् । The चालंखायनब्राह्मण line defines the term environment. In general the environment includes forest, mountains, rivers, agriculture and rain. दिवस्पृथिव्योरव आ वृणीमहे मातृन् त्सिन्धून् पर्वता छर्यणावतः² A we solicit the protection of heaven and earth, the maternal rivers, the mountains with their lakes. Nature is inextricably bound up with the Hindus worship of gods. From greeting the sun in the morning, to touch the earth in apology before going to sleep, he spends the day, aware of the change of the hour. The awareness of every change in environment had helped him to live more happily on this earth. The conservation of environment was a part of his life style.

The conservation begins with understanding the origin and characters of earth, water, air, light and heat. These are basic needs for any living being indiscriminately on the earth. The Rigvedic man had identified there need for life and use for all beings continuously till the end of existence of the world, rather existence it self is presence of these in an naturally created levels. In any difference or alterations can alter the nature in a place and the change might have been observed by them in some place. Their experience might have given base for reflections to draw certain norms to control such situations to certain amount. In their reflections the creation of ecological factors exhibit the concern for conservation. The conservation was through devotion and unconditional love.

The origin of earth described as tree, and its branches as quarters. भर्जं उतानपदो भुव आद्या अजायन्त A Earth was born from³ the upward growing tree, the quarters were born from the earth.

What is the forest⁴? Which is the tree? Out of which, the gods have fabricated heaven and earth, ever stationary, and undecaying, giving protection to gods and men. The vastness of earth is described as

स्त गो न क्षामत्येति प थर्वी मिहं न वातो वि ह वाति भूमः ।

"The sun does not pass beyond the broad earth. The wind does not drive the rain from off the earth". The relationship of earth, air and water, their mutual earnestness to maintain balance can be visualized. The world or home of all living and non-living as created from un-decaying wood, as it has origin from water, existence with water, and substantiated till end with water. The wood can also be interpreted as the substance used by creator for creation of earth, floated on water, filled with pockets of water. Moreover without water

living beings can not survive. Therefore the wood never decays. The importance water are pictured thus; आपो हि ष्ठा मयोमूव स्ता न झर्जे दधातन । महे रणाय चक्षसे । भेंजमते!⁶ You are the sources of happiness, grant to us to enjoy abundance, and great and delightful perception. Since waters, you are the sources of happiness, grant us to enjoy abundance, and great and delightful perception"⁷. The abundance of food and water for animals and plants, which inter depend on each other.

चं नो देवीरभि टय आपो भवन्तु पीतये । चं योरभि स्रवन्तु नः । "May the divine waters be propitious to our worship for our drinking: may they flow round us and be our health and safety"⁸. The prayer for the pure waters to maintain good health and safety of animals, are the basic need of man. "Waters, sovereigns of precious [treasure], granters of habitation to men, I solicit of ye medicine "[for mine infirmities]. The purity is requested for preservation of life on earth. The fear of pollution and cause of destroying the ecological balance can be noticed.

यो व चिवतमो रसस्तस्य भाजयतेह नः । उचतीरिव मातरः⁹ ।

"Gives us to take part in this world of yours most auspicious juice, like affectionate mothers. The water is considered as mother for protecting beings, by providing food and water to drink". The water are highly appreciated for its help to produce food, and consumed even as drink by all the animals.

अ सु मे सोमो अत्रवी दन्तर्विनि भेडुजा अरिः च किंचमुवम्¹⁰ ।

"The soma has declared to me; all medicaments as well as Agni, the benefactor of the universe, are in waters". The curative value and the electrical energy present in waters helpful for health of living beings are indicated.

आपः प णीत भेडुजं वरुथं तन्वेदं मम । ज्योक्च सूर्यदये¹¹

"Waters bring to perfection all disease-dispelling medicaments for the good of my body, that I may long behold the sun". In this hymn man concentrates on his life for continuing generation. The essence of life live in water is brought our notice in

पयस्वतीरोपघयः पयस्वन्मामकं वचः । अपां पयस्वदित् पयस्तेन मा सह युञ्चत¹² ।

"Water's! the plants flourish by means of water. My prayer is effectual through water; the essence of water is vigorous through water; purify me". The term varyanam is also explained as "variprabhavanam vrihiyavadinam", the products of the water, rice, barley, etc. Bsheshajam is explained as happiness driving away sin. The water is followed by the worship of vayu. The greatness of vayu is thus

वातस्य नु महिमानं रथस्य रुजत्रेति स्तनयत्रस्य घोडुः ।

दिविस्व ग्यात्यरुणानि क प्य व्रुतो एति पृथिव्या रेणुमस्यन ॥

The greatness of the impetuous vayu¹³: his voice spreads the sky, tinting purple the quarters of the horizon, he advances, raising the dust of the earth. The movement of vayu maintains the environmental balance in a place. It has capacity to



move according to seasons, help nature to bring needed creation and protection. The movement is described as
अन्तरिक्षे पथिभिरीयमानो न नि कियते कतमच्चनाहः ।

अपरं सख प्रथमजा / ताया श्र स्वज्जातः कुत आ बभूव 14 ।

"Traversing the firmament by its paths, [vayu] rest not for a single day; the friend of the waters, the first born, the utterer of truth – where has he been generated. Where was he manifested"? The importance of vayu or air and its activity on earth in order to maintain the ecological balance or nature to nurture the creation is explained. The term truth might have been used for the importance of existence on earth. Which is thus

आत्मा देवानां भूवनस्य गर्भो यथाकथं चरति देव एङ्गः ।

घोड्वा इदस्य च ण्वो न रूपं तस्मै वाताय हविड्वा विधेम 15 ।

"The soul of the gods, the germ of the world, this divinity moves according to his pleasure; his voice is heard, his form is not seen; let us worship that vata with oblations".

"The vata or vayu is a soul of all beings. Its existence can be seen in the form of growth of other beings. The voice is heard due to strong movement". He is rightly recognized as the soul of all beings. Without air or vayu circulation no living being can exist on earth.

The character of vayu in two forms are described thus

द्वाविमो वातौ वात आ सिन्धोरा परावतः ।

दक्षं ते अन्य आ वातु परान्यो वातु यद्रयः 16 ॥

Rishi Bharadvaja address to vayu to fulfill his request; "these two winds blow to the regions which are far beyond the ocean; may the one bring you vigour, may the other blow away all sin". Here sage is concern for the other parts of world along with his place, to begin and later his thought for vigour, for any activity on the earth. clearly indicates his concern for ecological element. "Breath, wind, medicinal balm; blow away, wind, all evil; for thou art the universal medicine, thou movest as messenger of the gods"17. The air is described as life, medicine for all lives. The wind in reply states thus "I have come to you with pleasure and with protections: I have brought you fortunate vigor, I drive away your disease." The purity related to valuable life in relation to pollution. The reply for sages request after offering offerings to him in sacrifice indirectly purifying through sacrifice.

The Agni plays importance roll in preserving and for adding value to all the five ecological elements. The fire has importance to carry offerings to different gods and at the same time purifying air. The presence of aging in water, earth and plants are described."Agni18, Jatavedasa, who had entered into

water and plants, hides in three worlds, heaven, mid-air, earth, as three divinities, Agni, vayu, Adityaya, the water, the shrubs, the trees and the bodies of living beings". These are agni's ten hiding places.

The forest or Aranya is described as a peaceful place and it serves people, who visit there without destroying. It is describes the value of aranyas and their tolerant nature. They are maintainer of ecological balance.

अरण्यान्यरण्या न्यसौ या प्रेव नश्यसि

कथा ग्राम न प च्छसि न त्वा भीरिवं विन्दती ।

"who art, as it were, perishing there, why dost thou not inquire of the village, does not fear assail thee"19? The aranya is compared with the village and the fear with which forest is always protected is indirectly indicated. The fear of wild-life protects the forest. But at the same time people were using forest animals grazing, fire wood. It is described as

"This man calls his cow, another cuts down the timber; tarrying in the forest at eventide, one thinks there is a cry"20. The people using forest for their own needs may cause the destruction and ecological imbalance, causing it to express the sorrow.

"But Aranyani injures no one unless some other assail her; feeding upon sweet fruit, he penetrates at will"21. The forest welcome and nurture all the beings indiscriminately in her residence. This had been the experience of sages. Lastly the aranyas are described as " I praise the musk scented, fragrant, fertile, uncultivated, the mother of wild animals"22. The fertility of soil, fragrance of trees, plants and animals, adding grace to forest and supporting life.

Finally we can find the common prayers of sages for protection of environment in "Common worshippers, be your intention; common be the wishes of your hearts; common be your thoughts, so that there may be thorough union among you"23. Thus we can find our ancients through their prayers to different natural elements protected the precious and delicate natured nature.

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