



# Environmental Education in The Vedic Scriptures

Alok Dahal

Research Scholar, Sanskrit Vyakarana, KBVS&ASU.

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**Abstract:** Vedas are the oldest Scriptures of Hindu Religion. The word Veda means knowledge. Vedas are the main sources of Knowledge and Wisdom. Vedas have the knowledge of society, Nation, Religiousness and Environment. Rigveda Yajurveda Samaveda and Atharvaveda are the four Vedas. As in Veda the word environment is describe as Prakriti. The ancient Vedic texts comprise a deep and comprehensive outlook of the environment. In the Vedas different kind of natural sources like, sky, wind, fire, and water honoured as God and Goddesses. As in the Vedas the Earth is revered as mother. The Air is worshipping as Vital force. The Fire is also revered as God. The Four Vedas have contained theory which promote the environment durability. As the Rigveda contains the different Hymns which praise of many divinities associated with nature. Yajurveda mainly focus on the animals and it contains about the order against the injuring helpful animal like cow. Samaveda also contains different melodies chants which promoting a sense of harmony. the Atharvaveda have a lot of things of ecological awareness as the Bhumi Sukta have describe about different things of earth and call to protect the mountains, forests and other natural resources.

**Keywords:** Vedas, Environment, Water, Earth, Glory, Worship.

**Introduction:** Vedas are the eternal source of knowledge and wisdom. Vedic scriptures are the source of physical, metaphysical and spiritual knowledge. Vedas which are set up on this basis of Indian culture are the eternal base of truth spirituality. Vedas are the expository text of धर्म-अर्थ-काम and मोक्ष. धर्म which means righteousness, अर्थ which means wealth, काम which means desire and मोक्ष which means liberation. Vedas are known as “अपौरुषेय” which means it's not created by Human being. Manu described Vedas as वेदोऽखिलो धर्ममूलम्<sup>1</sup> which means

<sup>1</sup>. मनुस्मृति 2.6

the substructure of righteousness are recline in the Vedas. The four Varnas, the world and the stages of life, the present past future all of these are emerged from the Vedas. As we found-

“चातुर्वर्ण्यत्रयोलोकाश्चत्वारश्चाश्रमाः पृथक्।

भूतं भव्यं भविष्यं च सर्ववेदात्प्रसिध्यति” ॥<sup>2</sup>

Vedic mantras were not written these mantras were heard directly so they known as shruti. The shruti which means heard are the mantras. The groups of many mantras are known as Sukta. And the bunch of Sukta is called Samhita. There are four Samhitas (i) Rigved Samhita, (ii) Yajurveda Samhita (iii) Samaveda Samhita (iv) Atharvaveda Samhita.

Rigveda is the oldest Veda. Rigveda Contains the hymns in praise of God. In Yajurveda we found the different kinds of things which is related to karma Kanda. Samaveda relates to the music and the melodic recitation of Vedic Mantras. The Atharvaveda contains information about medicines.

### Environmental Concepts in Vedas:

The knowledge of environment is found in the Vedas. In Vedas Environment is known as Prakriti. From the ancient time Indian Culture believes that the whole world is a family and the human life is considered as the part of the universe. In the ancient times people fulfil their basic needs by taking only what was necessary for their development from the nature. But over the few decades, the rapid destruction of the environment due to an imbalanced development model has led to a situation where the entire world's existence is threatened. The Vedic sages have always emphasized the importance of the environment for the welfare of all the living being. The sages considered the earth as God and in different mantras of Vedas we found the worship of Bhumi which means the earth. And Vedas have also mentioned various methods of protection and preservation of Bhumi. As we found

“समुद्रवसने! देवि ! पर्वतस्तनमण्डले।

विष्णुपति ! नमस्तुभ्यं पादस्पर्शक्षमस्वमे” ॥<sup>3</sup>

Here the earth is worshiped as a Goddess who is decorated with mountains and oceans wife of the sustainer of the earth Vishnu. Here the prayer mainly seeks pardon for crushing her underfoot. That's how Vedas. In this way, the elements of nature are honoured and respected in the Vedas.

In the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of Atharvaveda, the Bhumi sukta is found. In this sukta the Vedic sages express profound connection of earth while offering praises to the geographical and natural beauty of the land. Through the 63 mantras of this sukta we gain knowledge of various elements of nature. Bhumi sukta mainly offers knowledge into the relationship of this world with sea, rivers grains, agricultural resources and more. As found in Atharvaveda-

“यस्यां समुद्र उत सिन्धुरापो यस्यामन्त्रं कृष्टयः संबभूवुः।

यस्य यामिदं जिन्वति प्राणदेजत्सानो भूमिः पूर्वपेये दधातु” ॥<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup>. मनुस्मृति 12.97

<sup>3</sup>. मदनपारिजातः; कर्मठगुरौ पृष्ठ 3

<sup>4</sup>. अथर्ववेदः 12.1.3

This means that the earth, which have oceans, rivers and water, on which the agriculture has emerge, and on which the living being are born and in which the living creatures carry out their activity may that Bhumi gives us prosperity. These mantra of Atharvaveda says the glory of the earth. How the earth gives us everything from the food to a place to live.

Agriculture is important for the environment and for keeping the planet in balance. It's the best way to keep the soil healthy and fertile. The Vedic 'Krishi sukta' is found in the Atharvaveda, in which Sage Vishwamitra describe agriculture as a kind and universal beneficial act for all living beings like human, animal birds. The life sever food originate from agriculture. As found in Aranyaka- "अन्नं बहुकुर्वीता तद्वत्तम् पृथिवी वा अन्नम्"<sup>5</sup> this means more food should be produced, this is pledge, The earth itself a food. This mainly focus on agriculture. agriculture is the only way of food cultivation.

The cooperation of cows is essential in success of agriculture. Therefor the Mantras of Vedic "Gou sukta" tells us cows are the primary sources of our physical, spiritual and divine progress. Theist people got wealth, strength, food and glory from the cows. That's why to make human life auspicious cows should be protected.

According to the Dharma Shastra Goddess Laxmi stays in the cow dung which provides purity and auspiciousness. In the ancient time cows dung was primarily used in cultivation. As found in the Atharvaveda- "संजग्माना अबिभ्युषीरुस्मिनोष्ठे क्रीषिणः।

बिभ्रतीः सोम्यं मध्वं नमीवा उपेतन"॥<sup>6</sup>

This mantra is about the cows. These means the healthy cows come and stay in the cowshed who provide dung in excellent manure and milk in the sweet nectar. This mantra tells us about the value of cows and also tells us about animal protection and importance of animal in Vedic age.

The other main element of nature is water. It is an important element of universe. The existence of human life and the beauty of the world depends on water. In the ancient Vedic texts water is considered as life. In the Vedic Nighantu there are many synonyms words are used for water like Salila, āpaḥ etc. In Vedic mantras we found the glory of water which is a necessary thing of our life. As found in the Rigveda-

"शन्नो देवीरुभिष्टयु आपो भवन्तु पीतये।

शंयोरभिस्रवन्तुनः"॥<sup>7</sup>

This mantra said about the of water. The pleasant water may beneficial for us, and fulfil our desire. Here we found the importance of water in our life. Any things of the universe can't live without water.

Water is the main source of environment. Vedas tells us about the protection of water. How to protect this necessary source for upcoming period. As we found-

"नाप्सु मूत्रं पुरीषं वाष्ठीवनं वासमुत्सृजेत्।

अमेध्यलिप्तमन्यद्वा लोहितं वा विषाणि वा" ॥<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup>.तैत्तिरीयोपनिषद् भृगुवल्ली, 9.1

<sup>6</sup>.अथर्ववेदः 3.14.3

<sup>7</sup>.अथर्ववेदः 1.6.1

<sup>8</sup>.मनुस्मृति 2.6

This mantra means don't throw urine faces, spittle or any impure things into water. These things pollute the water and harm the environment. In this way Vedas teach us about the protection of environment.

Air is most important for the survival of living beings. According to the Vedas the origine of air is from the life-force (Prana) of the Hiranyagarbha. As found in Atharvaveda “बातौहप्राणउच्यते”<sup>9</sup>. There are many mantras of Vayu in the Vedas which divided air as pure and unpure. As found in the Vedas –

“द्राविमौवातौवातआसिन्धोरापरावर्तः।

दक्षतेअन्यआवांतुपुन्योवांतुयद्रपः”<sup>10</sup>

Two types of winds are blowing all the way to ocean and far. One provides strength and other one is polluted air. Air is the mixture of many gases; all of these have separate prose and cons. Fresh air is a medicine for all the living creatures. By having the fresh air, the health condition of people will increase.

The decrease of ozone gas in the atmosphere poses a serious threat to life on earth. Due to continuous depletion of the ozone dangerous ultra violet rays from the sun reaching the earth surface, which can result a harmful disease like skin cancer, eye cataracts etc. The problem of ozone is currently seen as a very serious problem in the environment. protection of environment should be happened by the abundance of large tress and forests. It is mentioned in the Vedas that large trees and medical plants have been considered as protector of environment. We found in the Vedas that the pollution can be destroyed by the trees and water, trees are the ultimate saviour of human and nature. As found in the Rigveda-

वनस्पते शुतवल्शो वि रौह सहस्रं वल्शा वि वयं रुहेम।

यं त्वामयं स्वधितिस्तेजमानः प्रणिनाय महते सौभगाय ॥<sup>11</sup>

In this mantra of Rigveda emphasizes the importance of planting trees. It states that we should plant tress because the tress are the safeguard of the water sources and environment. Again, we found about the protection of environment in the Rigvedic mantra -

कथामहेरुद्रिययायब्रवामकद्रायेचिकितुषेभगाय।

आपुओषधीरुतनोऽवन्तुद्यौर्वनांप्रियोवृक्षकेशाः॥<sup>12</sup>

In this mantra of the Rigveda, water, tress, forest, herbs, mountains, and the sun are described as the protectors of human. These things protect the human, environment and the earth.

From the Vedas we gain the knowledge on how to protect the environment by planting tress and plants. In the Vedas we can find the knowledge of protection of environment.

**Conclusion:** Vedas are the ultimate source of knowledge and wisdom. In the Vedic Mantras we found the knowledge of life, culture, society, environment etc. from the Vedas we found the knowledge of environment which is describe as prakriti in the Vedas. In the Vedas we found the worship of earth which is known as Bhumi in Atharvaveda. Atharvaveda describe the earth as our mother and we are the son of the earth. The 63 mantras of Bhumi sukta tells us about the relationship of the earth with other elements like water, river, forest etc. Vedas describe about the agriculture and the importance of it. food should not be produced without

<sup>9</sup>.अथर्ववेदः 11.4.15

<sup>10</sup>.ऋग्वेदः 10.137.2

<sup>11</sup>.ऋग्वेदः 3.8.11

<sup>12</sup>.ऋग्वेदः 5.41.11

agriculture. agriculture is the only way of food cultivation. The mantras of Vedas describe the importance of Agriculture which is known as Krishi in Vedic hymns. Vedas describe the importance of animal in our life, especially the cow is the primary sources of our physical spiritual and divine thoughts. In the Vedas we found the importance of water. Water is the main source of environment. The beauty of the world depends on water. Water is the main source of life. Human cannot survive without water. Vedas describe about the importance of air. Air is known as Bayu in the Vedic scriptures. Air is the main thing for the survival of living creation. Vedic scriptures tell us about the formula for create a healthy environment. It tells about the importance of Planting tress and how the tress saves us and our environment.

Mainly Vedas are the mentor of our life. In the Vedas we found the knowledge of environment and everything. Which helps us to live a better and peaceful life.

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