

## Some Aspects of Ecology from Vedas : A Commentary



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Vedas are the most ancient and oldest scriptures available to mankind. They were directly transmitted from the God, therefore, they are ascribed divine origin. Most of the information in Vedas is symbolic and is very difficult to understand. Vedas contain systemic scientific knowledge of a high order and the Vedic truths are absolute & unchangeable. The Vedas were revealed to sage **Brahma**, by the Supreme Being through his divine powers viz. *Agni* (Fire), *Vayu* (air), *Aditya* (Sun) and *Angira* – *Rgveda* through *Agni*, *Yajurveda* through *Vayu*, *Samveda* through *Aditya* or *Surya* and through *Angira* as said in *Atharveda* (10.7.20). The **Rishis** made contact with these divine powers through deep meditation and obtained Vedic Mantras from them therefore, Veda is divine knowledge obtained by Rishis in a state of Samadhi or communion with divine (Gutpa, 1999;Sarma, 1990). During the period of **Satyuga** some 16500 years ago, a race of highly spiritual people arose in India. The secrets of creation were known to them thus they tried solving the riddle of origin of sun, moon, stars, plant and animal life (Gupta, 1999). They also taught about time and space and extent of the universe and above all, the original substance from which all living and non living things were created.

It is known from the Vedic times that the nature and human being (***Prakriti and Purush***) form an inseparable part of life support system. This is what that reflects the concept of the present day Ecology. This system has five elements viz., ***air, water, land, flora and fauna*** which are interconnected, interrelated and interdependent and have coevolved and co-adaptive. Deterioration in any one affect the four other elements (Khoshoo, 1985).

Ecology is the science that deals with the interrelations of plants and animals together with their environment. Environment includes its surroundings and atmosphere (Bhatia and Kohli, 2004; Trigunayat, 2004). Many aphorism from **Rgveda** tells about the physical factors and abiotic factors of the present day Ecology eg. Fire(*Agni*), Light (*Surya*), Water (*Jal*) and Precipitation or Rains (*Varsha/Vristi*), Air (*Vayu*), Rivers and the flow of water, Physiographic factors like mountains and hills (Trigunayat, 2004).

### Some Interpretation On Physical or Abiotic Factors

The sun is the ultimate source of energy in an ecosystem that sustains all sorts of life. The abiotic factors like temperature, water or precipitation, soil, fire, tides, physiographic factors like mountains and hills affect the life of organisms in one way or other. In many mantras from **Rgveda** the mention of these present day ecological factors can be made. There are **Mantras** which clearly tells the role of **air** by which all living world is survived e.g.

~~वेदोऽस्य तु कस्यै चिदपि न ज्ञेयम्~~

**Rgveda. 7.87.1**

Based on the commentary of Satvalekar (1985), it indicates that the survival is through air (that is oxygen). It also tells about the sand particles that are flown about by the action of wind and that help in bringing rains. The facts are scientifically correct in the modern science.

Water is another important physical factor which is available in the form of humidity and precipitation. It is available from rain, underground water from digging well, and fountains, stored water from step wells and streams etc. It is reflected from the mantra in Rgveda :

ikvksa f0km d L-dfr [kf-fakm d i% La t%  
 laktZ i% 'qp% lok lrvksa nsi fjeadiq

**Rgveda. 7.50.2**

Dependency on water is reflected by the following mantra –

lrv: Rn- Hdr lvrn n Bholatisp , i%  
 fiq i% i%iax Ekkre ksu fik oZisru iq%

**Rgveda. 7.101.3**

ikfa f0bfu h0bfu n q fuis k0sk l0j k%  
 =% dsk kmlsp kse & Jst r faks foj. k-

**Rgveda. 7.101.4**

The commentary given by Satvalekar, 1985, states that all living beings are dependent on water. The water which comes is the form of rain goes to wells, pond and rivers. The food grains are grown by this water.

There are several many instances of these physical factors in Vedas eg. Agni.

f0s- f0d0wks v0k% 'qs 'qp jir  
 r f0z kls f0i% suk ok off r k' k% t i%

**Rgveda. 6.6.3**

Based on the commentary of Pt. Satvalekar it is as o' pious fire, your flames are expanding all sides flickering by air bright, your flames bring destroying darkness and devours forest.....etc.

In the present day ecology fire is mentioned as one of the physical factors that influence life. The devastating flames destroy the forest by burning and afterwards the land becomes arable and promote congenial growth of vegetation.

**Interpretation on Water cycle & Diel Periodicity**

**The Rgveda collation 7,87.1, 7.87.2 and 7.101.3**, clearly states the concept of **Water cycle** in the present day ecology. It also tells about the occurrence of days & night as the sun moves. The day and nights constitutes the periodicity .Twelve hours of illumination of sun refers to the photoperiod or day, this exhibits **diel periodicity** as the phenomenon reoccurs at the same interval everyday.

jr- ihs o% mZ ikkf l frkumle  
 bszul "Vs vzhok k j gnhij%

**Rgveda 697:1**

**Interpretation on Sustainability**

bZk d LabalZ i f d p t R i a t r  
 ru Rhsu h q a B k x' k d i p r k e

**Yajurveda 40.1**

This **sholka** states that the whole universe together with its creatures belongs to the Lord (Nature). One can enjoy bounties of nature by giving up all greed. Implicit in this statement is that no creature is superior to the others and human being should not have absolute power over nature. Let no one species encroach on the rights and privileges of any other species. The element of sustainability is ingrained in it because the emphasis is to use nature without greed. Once an element of greed enters, exploitation starts and we cease to utilize nature for the good, the benefit and welfare of our fellow human beings.

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