

# Environmental Resilience Reflected In Ususuktha

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The term environment indicates the material surroundings of the whole living organism in the world. It also includes the social circumstances and objects particularly concerned to man in the formation of the distinct life style which is designed with the influencing features of everything around us. Having the form of all living and non-living things naturally occurring on earth, environment possesses a special kind of scientific structure and developing process. The ancient seers in India were very much aware of the scientific and philosophical aspects hidden in every natural phenomenon. They are aware of the basic elements of environment. A verse in Atharvaveda denotes a three-fold covering of environment. It is called as "Chandamsi". Wise utilize three elements variously which are varied, visible and full of qualities. These are water air and plants or herbs. They exist in the world from the very beginning. They are called as "Chandamsi" means coverings available everywhere<sup>1</sup>. In modern Sanskrit, the word Paryavaran (पर्यावरण) is used to denote environment which means all around in our surroundings.

In Atharvaveda Vritavrita<sup>2</sup>, Avrita<sup>3</sup>, Parivrita<sup>4</sup> etc are used as synonymms of environment. This shows that the modern concepts of environmental science can be well located in our ancient scriptures- Vedas, Upaniṣads and Puranas depict plenty of significant ideas and foresights on the proper structure and preservation of the environmental resources. Vedas deal with all sorts of knowledge, both physical and spiritual, especially the concept of nature and life. The beauty of life and

nature depicted in the Vedas are highly poetical. The vedic hymns are full of statement, ideas and unusual images which contain the truths of all Sciences.

### **Vedic approach to environment**

Vedic Aryans studied the Nature's drama very minutely. Sand storm and Cyclone, intense lightening, terrific thunderclaps, the heavy rush of rain, the swift flood, the scorching heat of the Sun, the cracking red of the fire etc. are witnessed by them as powers beyond the capability of man. The vedic seers felt the greatness and appreciated these forces. They worshiped and prayed these forces due to regard, surprise and fear. They realized instinctly that action, movement, creation, change and destruction in nature are the results of these forces and beyond mens control. And thus the Vedic people attributed adoration to nature.

### **Divinity to nature**

The most authoritative among the four Vedas is Rig Veda. Ṛgvedic hymns can be divided into many parts, but their main part belongs to natural hymns ; The hymns related with natural forces. The deities (Devatas) addressed through the hymns are strong, bright, Donar and powerful. There are also hymns for glorious brightness of the sun, the blaze of the sacrificial fire, the recurrence of the dawn etc. Vedic people considered this natural energies and foundational activities as personification of Devatas.

The physical aspect of the vedic god is anthro pomprhic. The head , eyes ,arms, hands, feet and other portions of human frame are ascribed to them. Their forms are Shadowy and their limbs are figuratively meant to describe their activities. Some of the Gods in Ṛgveda are appeared as equipped as Warriors and wear coats of mail and helmets, battle boxes, bows and arrows.

The people of Ṛgveda believed that these natural gods bestowed on them long life and prosperity. Vedic seers considered that the world consists of Agni and Soma<sup>5</sup>. Sun is the soul of all living and non-living things<sup>6</sup>. According to them Indra is the most powerful god. Ṛgveda mentions many female Gods too. Uṣas is the most celebrated Goddess along with Aditi, Prithvi, Ratri, Saraswati etc.

### 'Uṣas'

Ṛgveda expresses the Uṣas as the Goddess of dawn. She is almost the only female deity to whom the entire hymns are addressed. She is celebrated in the 20 hymns and mentioned more than 300 times. She is the only one deity in Ṛgveda, involved with high frequency. The word Uṣas means the shining one Uṣas is the most graceful creation of the Risis. The charm of the Uṣas is unsurpassed in the descriptive religious lyrics of any other literature. The Dawn becomes visible as decked in grey attire like a dancer, and comes into sight at the east and unveils her charms. She comes with light and drives away the darkness and removes the black robe of night. The Uṣas is ancient, but she appears as young due to frequent births. The dawn is epitomized in the Ṛgveda as the gatherer of wealth. She goes around the world in her well bound chariot in an intelligible manner and looks handsome with ruddy radiance. Her glowing rays bless us with enormous happiness.

Uṣas is applauded marvelously by the seer. She is depicted as beautiful mare. She is the glittering mother of the rays of morning light and is the lustre shining at the beginning of sacrifice. Uṣas is described as the friend of the aswins who are recognized as the agents for healing all kinds of illness pertain in to the universal creatures. This fact is evident from the peculiar nature of the auspicious rays emerging from the dawn like the showers of rain. She fills the world with ample light and sweeps out all darkness.

The dawn shines with a uniform complexion and wastes away the life of mortals. When she awakes, she baths the ends of the sky and opens the gates of heaven. Her radiant becomes appear like herds of cattle. She drives away evil dreams, evil spirits and the hated darkness. The treasures concealed by the darkness are disclosed by the dawn and distributes them bountifully.

Another peculiarity of the dawn is that she awakens every living being to motion. When she shine forth the birds fly up from their nests and men seek nourishment. Constantly she appears at the appointed place but never infringes the ordinance of nature and gods. She awakens all worshipers and causes the sacrificial fires to be kindled and there by provide good service to gods. Uṣas also carry

the soma drought to gods. Her ruddy steeds or kine probably represent the red rays of morning.

Uṣas is expressed as omniscient and luminous because she illuminates everything universally. She has been invoked plurally due to her shading diversely in the horizon. She sheds wonderful light and gives birth to the sun, to the sacrifice and to Agni.

'Uṣas' the dawn is portrayed as the wife, the mother, the sister, the daughter etc. In many suktas. The dawn shines with the light of her lover the sun. He follows her like a young man, a maiden. So she is called as the wife of sun. She is also praised as his mother because she precedes the sun. She is born in the sky and is constantly called as the daughter of heaven. Anyway the dawn have been associated with the sun in the plural as well as in singular. She is the light of the knowledge of the supreme and she alone is capable to make all living beings to recognize the right path of liberality and efficiency in life.

The beauty of nature is an art of god. The dawn 'Uṣas' is the most graceful creation of the Vedic poetry. She is ever young being born again and again. She spreads light all over the world. When she ; shines the birds fly up from their nests and men seek nourishment. She brings the worshipper wealth and prosperity. She is the breath and life of everything. She is the radiant mover of sweet sounds, the leader of the charm of pleasant voices. Day by day she appears at the appointed place and she goes straight along the path of order, and she never loses her direction. She is immortal as she shines in former days, shines now and she will shine in future too. Any way the Dawn is an instance of a transparent deity whose natural character cannot be obscured by personification.

Apart from these phenomenal features, the Dawn possesses a psychological meaning too. She is the inner dawn and brings to man the full force of vitality. So the man can enjoy the infinite delight of that vaster existence. The deity of the Dawn is a unique symbol of worship backed by heritage, experience and there is a sound philosophy underlying in it. The symbolic nature of the light removes enmity and evil and bestows protection and long life.

From the above detailed discussion some sort of light is thrown on the Awareness of our ancient seers about the environment and the constituents. The vedic vision to live in harmony with environment was not merely physical but far wider and comprehensive. The vedic people decided to live a life of hundred years and this wish can be fulfilled only when environment will be unpolluted clean and peaceful, The knowledge of the vedic science is meant to save the human beings from falling into an utter darkness of Ignorance. The Unity in diversity is the message of vedic physical and metaphysical sciences.

## References

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