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गुरुकुल-शोध-भारती 2005 अंक 3 (पृ0227-231)

Water in Vedas

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The importance of water had been described in our Vedas. According to yajurveda water is the elixir of life, it is source of energy and governs the evolution and functions of the universe on the earth.

आपो हि ष्टा मयोभुवस्ता न ऊर्जे दधातना महे रणाय चक्षसे। यजु०११:५०

In Yajurveda water has been described as " The gods drew waters with their store of sweetness, succulent and observant, king creating where with they sprinkled Varuna and Mitra, where with they guided Indra to past his foemen."

अपो देवा मधुमतीरगृभ्णन्नूर्जस्वती राजस्वश्चितानाः।

याभिमित्रावरुणावभ्यषिञ्चन् याभिरिन्द्रमनयन्नत्यरातीः॥ यजु० १०:१

Our Vedas also describes various types of water, according to which water has many synonyms; it has 101 names, which are described along with their importance. Pure water is pollutant remover and disease curer.

Paniya paryaya - Synonyms of Water

पानीयं सलिलं नीरं कीलालं जलमम्बु च।
आपो वारि कं तोयं पयः पाथस्तथोदकम्॥
जीवनं वनमम्भोऽर्णोऽमृतं धानरसोऽपि च ॥१॥
पानीयं श्रमनाशनं क्लमहरं मूर्च्छापिपासापहं,
तन्द्राच्छर्दिबन्धाहृद्यालकरं निद्राहरं तर्पणम्॥
हृद्यं गुप्तरसं ह्यजीर्णशमकं नित्यं हितं शीतलं,
लघ्वच्छं रसकारणं निगदितं पीयूषवज्जीवनम्॥२॥

Bhavaprakasa 6:1:2

Paniya, Salila, nira, kilala, jala, ambu, apa, var, vari, kam, toya, payas, pathas, udaka, jivana, vana, ambha, arna, amrta and ghanarasa - are synonyms

Paniya (Water) relieves fatigue, exhaustion, fainting, thirst, stupor, vomiting and constipation, bestows strength, words - off sleep, is nourishing, good for the heart, of concealed taste, mitigates indigestion, always good for health, is cold in potency, easily digestible clean, helpful for taste perception and is enlivening like nectar.

Classification of Water

Ayurveda classified water into two i.e. Atmospheric water (Divya) and Terrestrial water (Bhauma), atmospheric water i.e. Divya water is further of four types i.e. Rain water in torrents (Dharaja), snow melt water from hailstones (Karakabhava), vapor water/Dew (Tausaral and water from

snow fall (haima). The rain water in torrents i.e. Dharaja is purest form of water and is of two types Akashganga which is sweet, good and potable and samudra which is salty and impotable.

Another type of water i.e. Terrestrial water (Bhama) has been classified into three i.e. water from desert (Jangala), water from marshy land (Anoopa) and water from temperate/moderate (Sadharana).

Properties of water

Properties of different water has been described in details in Ayurveda. According to Bhavprakash torrential water/water on earth (Bhaumajala) is of three types as already mentioned i.e. Jangala, the water from deserts, Anupa, the water from marshy land and Sadharana the water from temperate/moderate lands. Out of these three Anupa, the water from marshy land is rich in water and Jangala, the water from deserts has scarcity of water, while the third one i.e. Sadharana, the water from temperate/moderate lands has mixture of these two features i.e. with moderate amount of water.

All these types of water have their own properties and cures many types of diseases and is good for health.

Types of water

Our vedas gives us the knowledge of water, The types of water is also described by Atharvaveda. According to Atharvaveda water is of following types:

शं त आपो हैमवतीः शमु ते सन्तूत्याः।

शं ते सनिष्यदाः आपः शमु ते सन्तु वर्ष्याः॥

शं ता आपो धन्वन्याः शं ते सन्वनूप्याः।

शं ते खनित्रिमा आपः शं याः कुम्भेभिराभृताः॥ अथर्व १९/२/१-२

The above ved mantras mention the following types of pure water:

1. हैमवती आपः (Water from Himalayas)
2. उत्स्याः आपः (Spring water)
3. सनिष्यदाः आपः (Perennial Water)
4. वर्ष्याः आपः (Rain Water)
5. घन्वन्याः आपः (Desert Water)
6. अनुप्याः आपः (Hygroscopic water)
7. खनित्रिमाः आपः (Underground water)
8. कुम्भेभिः अमृताः आपः (Pitcher water)

According to Ayurveda Water is of following types with different Qualities:

1. Dharajala (Torrential rain water)
2. Anartavajala (Unseasonable rain water)
3. Karakajala (Water from hailstones)
4. Tusarajal (Dew)
5. Himajala (Water from snow fall)
6. Bhaumajal (Terrestrial water/ Water on earth)

Water in Vedas

7. Nadeyajala (River Water)
8. Audbhida jala (Water from springs)
9. Nairjhaṛa jala (Water from streams/ water falls)
10. Sarasa jala (Water from natural lakes)
11. Tadaḃya jala (Water from ponds)
12. Vapya jala (Artificial tank with steps)
13. Kaupa jala (Deep well water)
14. Caunja jala (Rain water from pits in rocks)
15. Palvala jala (Water of small pool)
16. Vikira jala (Water of burrows in moist sand)
17. Kaidara jala (Water of cultivable fields)
18. Prasasta vrstijala (Good and bad rain water)
19. Amsudaka (Water exposed to rays of sun and moon)
20. Anya jal (other water)

Importance of water

As we already mentioned that water is the elixir of life and without water life is not possible of earth. Therefore it is an important resource, and plays an important part in survival of living organism on this vary planet i.e. earth.

Vedas also described the importance of water, some of the Richas with English translation are given below which highlights the importance of water: -

अप्स्वन्तरमृतमप्सु भेषजम्। ऋ०१/२३/१९

Pure water is like nectar and has medicinal properties.

इदमापः प्र वहत यत्किं च दुरितं मयि। ऋ०१/२३/२२

Bathing in pure water and drinking it drains the impurities of the body

आपो अद्यान्वचारिषं रसेन समगस्महि। ऋ०१/२३/२३

Using pure water a man becomes healthy.

शन्नो देवीरभिष्टय आपो भवन्तु पीतये । शं योरभिस्रवन्तु नः ॥

ऋ० १०/०९/०४

We can get healthy body by drinking pure water and taking bath in it.

आपो अस्मान् मातरः शुन्ध्यन्तु घृतेन नो घृतष्वः पुनन्तु ।

विश्वं हि रिप्रं प्रवहन्ति देवीरुदिदाभ्यः शुचिरा पूत एमि ॥

ऋ०१०/१७/१०

Pure water cleans our body like mothers. It makes us sacred with particles of energy present in it. And it drains all the pollutes and makes the man pious and energetic.

उर्जं वहन्तीरमृतं घृतं पयः कीलालं परिस्रुतम्। यजु०२/३४

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Pure water contains energy, Nectar, Vigor and digestive power.

श्वान्नाः पीता भवत यूयमापो अस्माकमन्तरुदरे सुशेवाः।
ता अस्मभ्यमयक्ष्मा अनमीवा अनागसः स्वदन्तु देवीरमृता ऋतावृधः॥

यजु०४/१२

Pure water enhances the digestive power when it reaches the stomach. It is divine, nectarous, tasty, disease prevention and curer, body purifier and life promoter.

The Ganga water

"Rivers are like mothers for the country and mountains like the father. This father is a magnanimous thought full resolute archaic man and the rivers are conscious liberators, swift and source of knowledge, when clouds which roam free in the open sky spend themselves at the bedstead of the horizon after creating a commotion, then Mother Earth conceives that life giving man with the halo through its river in arteries. These water filled streams fill the earth with the power of procreation and energy. It is these streams flowing on the land mass which as the blood pumping arteries in the body."

-Kalidas in Raghuvansham

In the Garhwal Himalaya the two main streams, the Bhagirathi and the Alaknanda, form Ganga river system. At Deoprayag the confluence of these two rivers is called the Ganga, which flows down and emerges on the river of plains at Rishikesh, Hardwar.

According to the Hindu mythology, the king Bhagirath brought down this river to the earth for the salvation of his ancestors.

शीतं स्वादु स्वच्छमत्यन्तरुच्यं पथ्यं पाक्यं पाचनं पापहारि ।

तृष्णामोहध्वंसन दीपनं च प्रज्ञां धत्ते वारि भागीरथीयम् ॥

The Ganga water is colorless, tasty pure, very delicious, cold, disease curer, fit for cooking, digestive, quench the thirst, satisfy hunger and enhancing the memory.

हिमवत्प्रभवाः पथ्याः।

"Ganga jal cures the diseases" (Maharishi Charak)

हिमवतः प्र स्रवन्ति सिन्धौ समह संगमः।

आपो ह मह्यं तद् देवीर्ददन् हृद्योतभेषजम् ॥ अथर्व० ०६/२४/०१

Water from Himalayas cures the heart diseases. Vridh Susruta tells about the water suitable for Health, it includes the time of collection of water (Jala grahanakala), according to it the best time for collection of water is morning hours. Time for drinking of water (Jala grahana Samaya), Drinking small quantities of water but frequently is best for human health. Drinking cold water (Sital jal pana) is helpful in several diseases. Drinking of water in very little quantity (Alpa jal pana) cures skin diseases, ulcers etc. Necessity of water (Jal pana avasyakata) is essence of life; hence avoiding water completely is not possible (According to Harita).

Suddha jala (pure potable water) is good in taste, odorless, cold relieves thirst quickly and pleasing to heart /mind. While Dusta jala (im potable water) has bad taste, bad smell, polluted and causes disease.

Purification of water

Water in Vedas

Our vedas also tells us about the purification of water, which is essential for proper survival of human beings on earth. Nirdoshikarana (Purification of water), water can be purified by boiling, makes smell sweet by putting karpura etc. filtering through sieve or clean cloth of fine mesh size can purify it.

To prevent water from pollution and to purify the polluted water, vedas have given many methods:

यासु राजा वरुणो यासु सोमो विश्वे देवा यासूर्जं मदन्ति ।

वैश्वानरो यास्वग्निः प्रविष्टस्ता आपो देवीरिह मामवन्तु ॥ ऋ०७/४९/०४

According to this mantra of Rigveda, water can be purified by water purifying air (Dissolved oxygen) or any other gas, Sunrays or fire (temperature) and ions.

सवितुर्वः प्रसव उत्पुनाम्यच्छिद्रेण पवित्रेण सूर्यस्य रश्मिभिः। यजु०१/१२

By the help of scientific methods or natural methods passing of sunrays through water purifies it. A grass (Kusha grass) also purifies the water.