CHAPTER VI

The Heavenly and Ordinary

Waters of Vedas
6.1 Heavenly and ordinary waters of “Vedas”

*Apah* have been regarded as the first and foremost element in the Veda. Water, *Ap* singular is the first creation. Thus in the Rg Veda X.82.1

"चबुधः पिता मनसा हि शीरो घुलमे अजनक्तन्त्रमाने ।
वदेवता अदुरुहं पूर्व आदितु यथा पृथिवी अप्रेतातर्तम् ॥"

“The makers of the senses, resolute in mind, engendered the water, and thou these two heaven and earth floating on the waters; when those ancient boundaries were fixed, then the heaven and earth were expanded”.

This states that *Vishvakarman*, first engendered the waters and then heaven and earth floating the *waters*. Further Rg. X.82.5

"परो दिवा पर पना पृथिव्या परो देवोमिरलुर्यैर्निवृत्तः ।
क्ष रिवृक्षार्थं प्रथमं द्रश्य आपो यथा देवा: समप्रयत्वं विश्वे ॥"

It is said that the waters were earlier than this earth and heaven, much before Asuras and the Gods came into being. The waters received the primeval germ when all the Gods came into being. The “*Bhumisukta*” of *Atharvaveda* [AV.XII. 1.8] says that in the beginning, there was flood of waters.

"याणविरजः सालिमग्र आसीत्"

Av.XII.1.8

‘She who in the beginning was waters (*Salila*) upon the ocean (*Aruava*), whom the skilful (*manisin*) moved after with their devices maya; the earth whose immortal heart covered with truth is in the highest
firmament let that earth (Bhumi) assign to us brilliancy, strength, in highest royalty. In the Nasadiyasukta of Rg Veda 10.129.3.

“तम आसीति समस गूढ़हम्ये प्रकृतें सलिल सर्वभाग इभम्।”

“There was darkness covered by darkness in the beginning, all this world was undistinguishable water ……”

Taittiriya Samhita (55.6.4.2), mentions that at first the universe was waters, the moving ocean. Prajapati becoming wind, rocked about on a lotus leaf on the waters. On it he piled the fire, that became this earth, then he indeed formed support. In the Hiranyagarbha Sukta of Rg Veda 10.121.7&8, it is stated that the mighty waters contained the universal germ producing Agni, then sprang God’s one spirit into being.

“आपो ह यदृ बृहत्तिविश्वमायानां यथाय जनयत्तिरस्मिन्।” Rg.X.121.7

The waters, Apah आपः play a very important constituent of space. This word occurs almost always in plural in about 500 passages in the RgVeda; though the singular is well known. The waters play a variety of roles, but the passages in which the word occurs are seem to be simple but contain some inner meaning. It appears that the word is used in the simple sense perform ordinary functions and that also so realistically, that scholars have taken them at their superficial value and failed to notice the deep underlying symbolism. Even scholars like Macdonell used this word in an ordinary manner [Vedic Mythology]. The wealth of information that the Rigveda provides about the waters is so concealed that the myths fail to provoke any curiosity or interest, only a careful examination and
analysis of the mantras can reveal the importance of the *water* in RgVedic thought.

The *RgVeda* uses this word to signify both ordinary as well as heavenly *waters*.

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श नो देवीरमिन्स्य आपो भवन्तु पीतवे ।
श योरवि भ्रवन्तु ॥
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Rg.10.9.4

May the divine *waters* be propitious to our worship, may they be good for our drinking, and may they flow round us, and be our health and safety.

Besides this, the *Rigvedic waters* are the powers which are responsible for many of the events occurring in human and other forms of life, but which are mysteriously hidden from the sight of man. The universe without the *Rigvedic waters* would be an empty space in which even the powerful *Devas* such as *Indra*, and *Agni* would become inactive, and be unable to influence events. In fact there would be no events, and no life to influence. In a sense, the water pervade the whole universe filling up all the available space, and so constitute, along with light, space and time, one of the fundamental principles of the universe. The *waters* are energy, supplying strength and vigor to even the *devas* themselves.

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यासु राजा वरुणो यासु सोमो विस्वे देवा यासुर्जः महति ।
देश्वानरायासु अभिधः प्रविष्टः ता आपो देवीरति मामवन्तु ॥
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Rg.VII.49.4

*The Heavenly and Ordinary waters of Vedas.*
Fires are in *waters*. That fire is energy and it maddens all wise men who know this secret and who take the fires out of *waters*.

The *waters* came into being from the very first act of creation. There are over 30 passages, which testify clearly to the appearance of the *waters* at the time of creation.

"ऋतं देवाय कृताय तम्स इत्यायि हि न रमन्त आपः।
अहरहर्या त्वस्तु च श्रापादा प्रथमं सर्वं आसामु॥"

Rg II.30.1

This mantra shows the eternity of the waters.

The waters cease not to the divine *Indra*, the sender of rain, the animator of all, the slayer of *Ahi*, day by day proceeds the current of the waters, at what period of time was their first creation.

आप: The heavenly waters contain everything in it.

"आपो हिष्ट भयो पुल्लता न उज्जे स्वातान।
महे रणाय चकसे॥"

Rg.X.9.1

Since, waters, you are the sources of happiness, grant us to enjoy abundance and great and delightful perception.

*Waters* are eternal. The heavenly *waters* is testified by over passages ----

"तस्मा आपो धूलमयति...."

Rg. 10.125.5

*The Heavenly and Ordinary waters of Vedas.*
The flowing water bears the essence. The region of this divine water mentioned in Rg. 3.22.3.


Rg. 3.22.3

Agni you animate the *waters* in the bright region above the sun.

Is said to be the loka or region where the fiery radiance burns.

*AtharvaVeda* I.33 very categorically states that the Devas came into being from the *waters*.

"हिरण्यवर्ण: शुचिः पावका यात्र जात: सविता यास्तिनः।
या मिं गर्भ देविरे सुर्यस्ता न आप: श्र येना भवनु।"

AV I. 33.1.

Of golden colour, clean purifying in whom was born *savitar*, in whom *Agni*, who of beauteous colour, assumed Agni as embryo, let those *waters* be weal, pleasant to us. And *varuna* is regarded as its king.

The divinity of the *waters* is stated in Av. I. 4.3

"आपो देवीरूप हृदये यात्र गावः विभिन्ति न।
सिंधुय: कर्त्य हविः।"

The heavenly *waters* I call on, where our kine drink; to the rivers are to be made oblation.

*The Heavenly and Ordinary waters of Vedas.*
There is a distinction between the heavenly *waters* and ordinary *waters*. Where the former is fixed and makes the later one to flow. Rg.V.47.5 makes an important contribution to this subject.

“इद्य वपु: निवचनं जनास: चरति यत् नष्टं: तत्स्नापः ।”

Wondrous, O people, is that mystical knowledge, that while the *Waters* stand, the streams are flowing.

The *waters* appear is deities in over 25 verses, being *Devas*, the spouses of *Devas*, or sisters of *Agni* and so on [Eg :Rg I.23.22, 10.75.1, 10.855.1, I.173.8]. We are even told that the principal divinity amongst them is *Sindhu* Av. VI. 24.3 & Rg. 8.24.14. One of the most important powers possessed by the heavenly Waters is the removal of sin.

“इदमापः प्रः वहत चकितं दुरितं मयि ।
ब्रह्मविवर्तेऽहि ब्रह्मश्वेष उत्तान्ततं ॥”

Rg. 10.9.8.

*Waters*, take away whatever sin has been found in the, whether I have knowingly done wrong, or have pronounced imprecations against holy men, or have spoken untruth.

The *waters* is soothing for both mind and body – Av.3.13.7

“इद्य व आपो हस्यमयं वस्तु तत्तार्थिः ।
इहक्षमते शक्तिर्ययंदं येश्वामिनि: ॥”

*The Heavenly and Ordinary waters of Vedas.*
The *Waters* rule over *Antariksha*, which would simply mean that at the time of creation, *Antariksha* was assigned as the dominion of Gods like *Agni* and other Gods. From their domain in *Antariksha*, the waters flow all over the universe. In many verses the principal abode *Antariksha* of *Waters* is mentioned. (Eg: Rg. 10.8.11, 10.65.9, 10.12.7).

Having *Antariksha* as the main domain, the waters have intimate relations with other denizens of the region, such as Soma and winds. Verses Rg. 2.38.2, 1.23.23, 8.26.25, etc. say about the Vata or Vayu as a wonderer.

"शृणौ जने: उर्जा पति: गिर: स: नम: तरीक्षान्तः इविर: परिज्ञ्या ।
शृणविन्यास: पुरो न शुभ्र: परि छुचो ब्रह्मणशान्तरे ॥"

Rg.V.41.12

May the lord of vigor, *Vayu*, hear our prayers, he who traverses the firmament, the circumambient, may the *Waters* hear, bright as cities, flowing upwards the towering mountains.

The *waters* are the sources of energy and that is made very clear with some of the verses attaching the three principal *Devas*, namely Soma, *Agni* and *Indra* with waters. *Agnis* association with the *Waters* is the closest. Both of them have common qualities in the matter of Energy, strength, vigor, fertilizing power and production of wealth. *Agni*’s wealth is revealed by *Vasus*. Many passages mention *Waters* as the storehouse of riches Eg.10.30.7, 11.30.12, 2.38.11 etc. Verse 10.30.12 especially mentions *Waters* as the queen of Riches.

"आयो रैवत: श्रयस्थ हि वस्ते: क्रृतं प्रभु विभूषणवृतं च ।
रायस्य मह स्वपनमस्य पल्ली: सरस्वती तद्विनं दन्ते को रायस ॥"

Rg.X.30.12

*The Heavenly and Ordinary waters of Vedas.*
Opulent waters you rule over riches, you support good fortune, Pious rites, and immortality, you are the protector of wealth and of offspring, may Saraswati bestow all this opulence on him who praises you.

Many passages like Rg. 2.13.1; V.41.10; 10.9.3; 10.121.8 etc. mention the productive force in the Waters. Verse 10.121.8 clearly says that the Waters contain productive force, and that is so even from the time of creation of the universe, by “ka” or prajapati.

Fire is the best, which is obtained from waters. They were used as energy and power to make things move, to make them take a speed. Fires increased revolving abilities. Fires propelled every thing Rg V. 6.6 says thus:

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"श्रे ते अत्मोऽभिन्नु विद्वं पुष्पमि वार्यमु ।
ते हिंदिरे त इंदिरे त इष्क्पत्यनन्तुष्टः ॥
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Rg.V.6.6

The wise people of Vedic times knew that fire is in waters and it can be taken out as energy, force and power. They have described Water as a mother of fire Eg. Rg III 5.3. Fires from waters are very much powerful forces. These fires can be joined on the slopes and they are mighty impelling forces. But there is no harm, and distress in them (Hymns to the mysticfire P.1).

6.2 Agni and Apaha

Agni is the most important deity after Indra in the Rgveda. Most of the hymns dedicated to Agni. Agni etymologically means one that leads. Related word “Artha” in Sanskrit means front. The conventional meaning of Agni is fire and therefore the Vedic people are considered as
fire worshipers. The intended meaning of Agni in the Vedic literature is extremely subtle and not as primitive as fire.

Agni means energy in the Vedas and other gods in the Vedic literature are simply transformations of energy in various forms. It is no wonder that Agni is equated with other Gods repeatedly in Vedas.

“Agni is indeed all the Gods”

ैैत्रेय यजुर्वेद साहित्य 6.8, 7.8, 8.5, and 9.7
शतपथ ब्राह्मणम् 1.6, 2.8, 3.1.3.1
जैत्य ब्राह्मणम् 1.3.42

In RgVeda II.1. 3 to 11 Agni has been called Indra, Vishnu, Varuna, Mitra, Rudra, Pusan, Saraswathi, and so on. No other God has been named to this extent. Rg. X 45. 1,2,3 says.

“सूक्ष्मे त्वा नूमच्छ अवस्थनःपक्षस्य ईश्व विद्व अन्तः रूपम्।
तृतीये त्वा रजसितमिर्तिवांसमपमवपस्ये महिषाम अवर्धनः ॥”

“Agni, we recognize your threefold station and your three forms. We know your place that is protected in various ways. We know what your supreme secret appellation is. We know the place from which you have been born. Agni is located in the observer space, but his form is hidden in Water. If one thinks about the apparent meaning, how can one justify the fire taking form of Water? Water is used to quench fire, and not to create fire. How ever the Vedas repeat this theme again and again Rg I.70.3 and I.95.4 “Agni stays in the womb of Waters”.

“अत्मान्यानामस्वपुष्य दिवस्य ग्रामों भिन्न ज्ञाते सावनः।”

Rg. III 5.3

The Heavenly and Ordinary waters of Vedas.
Agni, the embryo of the Waters, the friend of the pious, accomplishing with truth, has been placed by the Gods amongst men.

“आपो ह यदु बृहतीविश्वमायानांष दच्चाव जनयतीर्थिनं।”

Rg. X.121.7

“Waters pervade the whole Universe which hold fire in the womb. Then was produced one breath of gods—let us offer worship with an oblation to the divine Ka”.

“आपो अध्यन्त्वचारिपं रसेन समगस्महि।”

Rg. I. 23.23

“Agni stays in the waters”

“हत्वु कर्त्तु वरुणो अप्यविं दिवि सूर्य मद्यासोममहृ।”

Rg. V. 8.1

He has placed fire in the Waters, the sun in the heaven, the soma plant in the mountains. “Agni stays in the Waters. VII. 49.4 Rg I.65.9 says that Agni breaths in Water ‘धन्यसित्यपु’

The Atharva Veda also says thus

“या अभिनं गर्भ दधिरे सुवर्णता न आपः श्व स्योना भवतु।”

AV I : 33.1

The Rg Veda (Parisishta) V. 49.2 says

“वापीकृपतंद्राणां समूद्रं अभिनं गच्च स्वाह।”

The Heavenly and Ordinary waters of Vedas.
Fires were taken out of the Waters of sea, wells, tanks, rivers and reservoirs of waters.

So, obviously the Vedas are not talking about ordinary Waters. Every term in the Vedas has an intended meaning very different from its conventional meaning. That such a code is used in the Vedas is made explicit by the following Mantra of अपरान्नात्

“A pah were inded Salila earlier” Sa.Br. 11.1.6.1

The words Apah and Salila both mean water. So, it makes no sense to say that waters were indeed waters before. So what is the “waters” of the Vedas? It is the soup of matter and antimatter that pervades the universe. When the Vedas talk about Agni hiding or residing in waters, they are talking about the energy is residing in the matter.

6.3 अपरान्नात्

Apamnapat is the spring of Waters. A limited number of hymns discuss about the form, nature and place of this Apamnapat both in Rg Veda and Atharva Veda. The entire Sukta of Rg II.35 is about Apamnapat. Thus the Rg Veda II. 35.10 say.

“हिरण्यः स हिरण्यसन्नृपान्न पातसेवु हिरण्यार्थः ।
हिरण्याल्परि योनिनिश्चा हिरण्या दवस्यनमस्यै ॥”

Rg. II. 35. 10

The Heavenly and Ordinary waters of Vedas.
“The grandson of Waters is of golden form of golden aspect of
golden hue, and seated upon a seat of gold; the givers of gold present to
him sacrificial food.

_Atharva Veda_ VI. 3.3 says –

“आपण नपाऊँठी गोस्वाम विहुन्दैव तवष्टि वर्ततालये।”

The child of Waters, protect our houses from all sorts of
difficulties. Do thou, God Tvashtar, make us strong with health and
wealth.

_Atharva Veda_ VI 3.1 prays अर्पणपात्र for protection.

“अर्पणपात्र सिवास्व चतुरातनपात्र नो विश्वरुत द्वै।” Av. VI 3.1

O child of the waters, ye seven rivers protect; let Vishnu protect us,
also the heaven.

“अध्यूर्वोप इता समुद्रपातां हविषा यजां।
स ते वद्युर्मिन्दा सुपुर्ण तस्मै सोमण महुयं सुनोत ॥”

_Rg. X_ 30.3

Go, priests, to the Water to the reservoir, worship the grandson of
the Waters with oblations may he today give you the consecrated Water
and do you forth to him the sweet flavored Soma.

अर्पणपात्र is often quoted as the bestower of fortunes.
“अपां नपाधो वसुभि: सह प्रियो होता पृथिव्यां न्यसीद दृष्टिवः ।”

Rg.I.143.1

“The grandson of the waters, who present in due season, the friend and ministering priest of the sacrificer, sits upon the altar with many good things”.

स्वे स्वरूपे
न पालि न रक्षाति, आशु विनायित्वादात्

That which cannot save its own form it attains concealment (तिरोभाव) very fast, it manifests into some other form (रपत्तिरिति) It is infallible (अविनाशी)– to some extent we can link this to law of conservation of energy which says thus “Energy can neither be created nor destroyed, it can only be transformed from one form of energy to another”.

The Heavenly and Ordinary waters of Vedas.