CHAPTER II

The Multi Faceted Phenomena Of Water
2.1 The Multifaceted Phenomena of Water

Life originated from water. Without water there is no life. Every living soul requires water for its survival. Water is the principal raw material for food production, industrial production, electricity etc. In fact the civilization itself depends upon water. Without water, man cannot survive. For the growing population and industrial developments, Water demand is increasing day-by-day in every country. Water resources, which are naturally accumulated as ground water and other water deposits, for millions of years, are reducing due to indiscriminate usage of water. All over the world the ground water level is depleting. Population growth and global warming affects the water availability. The principal source of water, “rains” are decreasing on land. So, this creates a curiosity as well as necessity to study about the multifaceted phenomenon of water. To save our global life, we should think about, how to increase the rains, how to augment the ground water resources and how to conserve the water resources. In this aspect we can take the help of our sacred texts, Vedas and other ancient scriptures.

“श्रव्यशीर्षवर्गीयाम्”

Av. I.5.4

Waters, remedy for everything, master of all desirable things, have supreme control over men.

The ancient texts like Upanishads also narrate the importance of water. Thus in the Chandogyopanishad –

The Multi Faceted Phenomena of Water
He who meditates on water attains all desirable things and gets contentment. He who meditates on water as Brahman, gets freedom of movement as far as the range of water extends.

Water is even greater than food ---

आये वाचनादृ भूस्तत्समाधाया सुवृद्धिर्म भविति ---

Water is indeed greater than food. Therefore when there is lack of rainfall creatures are in agony thinking that ‘food will be scarce’. Again when there is abundant rainfall the creatures become joyous thinking that food will be plentiful. Water indeed is all these that have forms. The earth, the space, the heaven, the mountains, the gods and the human beings, the animals and birds, grass, trees, worms, ants and other creatures, --- it is water that has taken all these forms.

Vedic water is used in many ways. It is not only used for drinking and washing, it has served multi purposes like medicine, purifying agent, gives divine power, used in magical rites - Abhichara Karmas, used to take out poison, used in curing eye and heart diseases, used in agriculture etc. It acts as a cooling agent it removes all Dhoshas of our body, water giver of Sakti and Tejas (AV. XVI.1.3), it gives life to the earth. In the following chapters, I will be narrating all these multifaceted phenomena of water.
2.2 Facts about water

Water is a rich complex substance without which there would be no life. No other substance on the earth, which is so unique and mysterious. Scientists examined the property of water and it was established as the mysterious sacred source of life. The first great civilizations emerged alongside water, the great riverine cultures of the Nile, the Tigris and Euphrates, the Indus and the Yangtze. Water is vital to our physical life but it also sustains our mental and spiritual lives.

Water covers about 70 % of the earth’s surface in the form of oceans, lakes, rivers and glaciers. 97% of the water on the planet is in the form of salt water. Only 3 % is fresh and two thirds of that is ice. Chemically, water is a compound of hydrogen and oxygen, its molecule consists of two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen – H₂O. Water is linked with moon through the movement of tides. Pure water is a poor conductor of electricity. Water is one of the best-known solvents.

In China, water is considered as a specific abode of the dragon because all life comes from the water. Waterpower is of major economic importance. In natural water, various substances are found dissolved. The lotus stream of the Buddha or Bodhisatva rises up from the waters of the soul. The spirit illuminated by knowledge, frees itself from passive existence.
In one of many Hindu Creation stories, the god Brahma created the primal waters as the womb for a small seed. The seed grew into a golden egg. Brahma split it open, making the heavens from one half, and Earth and all her creatures from the other
2.3 Water as the first element

*Water* is the root cause of everything. *Taittiriya Samhita* V.6.42 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, and then he indeed formed support. Regarding water as the first element, *Aitareya Brahmana* II.1.6.1 states through a myth.

In the beginning this universe was water, nothing but a sea of water. The waters thought, "How can we be reproduced". They toiled and performed penance. When they thus becoming heated, a golden egg was produced. In a year's time, a man, *Prajapati*, was produced from that golden egg. There was no resting place for him except the golden egg bearing him. It was floated around a long time. At the end of the year he tried to speak. He uttered "*Bhuh*” this become the earth, *Bhuvah* this become air (i.e.Antariksha), and *Suvah* which become the yonder sky (*Dyaus*).

In the *Hiranyakarbarha Sukta* of Rv. X.121.7&8, it is stated that the mighty *waters* contained the universal germ producing *Agni*. Then was produced the one breath of Gods, the divine "*Ka". He by his might beheld the *waters* containing creative power "*Daksha". He is the supreme among the other Gods (also TS.5.5.12).
2.4 Water all pervading one

Since water purifies from all impurities it is regarded as mother

“आयो अस्मान्मातरः शुन्यनः, ”

Yaju .IV.2

It also purifies the three places Prithivi, Dyu and Antariksha, it exists in all the three places. It purifies the above places.

त्रीन्तु समुद्रानु समसूप्पु स्तरानां पति वृषदु हस्तक्षणामः |

Yaju XIII.31

It means that to satisfy every one and to make everyone happy water pervades all the three places in the form of Samudra. It has been said in the Brahmanas thus

समुद्रः श्रीवानामविषयति।

2.5 Water Sources

We get water from rivers, rains, lakes, wells, rock, sea and plants. These are all stated sources of water, which can be used for drinking and other purposes.

“पपः पृथिव्यां पप आदिधीयु 
पयोद्विप्पातिः पपो शा: ।
पपस्तति प्रदिशः सन्तु महयमः ||

Yajuv. XVIII.36
Yajurveda says water can be obtained on earth. *Prithiviyan*. We get water from big lakes and seas. The icy mountains bring water. Water can be obtained underneath the earth by digging wells as wells as bore wells.

Then पत्र औषधीयु - Plants and fruits with water content are sources of water. Coconut, Water Melon, Orange, Grapes, Mango etc. are all juicy fruits.

*Atharvaveda* says creepers are the constant source of sweet *waters*.

इव वीलमुखुण्ठानि सहुना त्व खजातासि ।
मद्योरै अष्टातासि सा नो मध्यमत वसृधि ॥

Av.I.34.1

"The creepers, coming up in the spring season, spread all over, and remain evergreen. Dig at its root and you will get ample sweet *water*".

In Vedic times, sages obtained sweet water from sea also. The seer says, "Sea is the largest collection of *waters*. Sea is everlasting source of *waters*. From the center of the Seawaters, pure refreshing sweet *waters* can be obtained. Pure water is flowing constantly underneath the sea waters and is dug by Indra who is mighty like a bull and that water may protect us". Thus *Rg* : VII.49.1

समुद्रशेषः सलिलस्य मध्यात्
पुनाना यत्नि अनिविशानाः ॥
इन्द्रो या बलीङ्गश्वो राताद
ता आयो देवीरिः मामवल्लु ॥

*Rg*. VII.49.1
Now-a-days we talk about de-salinating the sea water, but the vedic sages say that sweet water comes out of sea or ocean from its middle by drilling. A fountain in the middle of the sea gives nectar. Only wise men taste it and they know it.

"समुद्रांतरं मंगलं उद्यपजेतुः सममृतत्वमानान्।
Rg.IV.58.1
Hundreds of streams of water come from the heart of the ocean. I can see them. The ignorant enemies could not see them. This water is beautiful and precious like gold.

एता अर्ग्निति हृद्यात् समुद्रच्छ्वात्र रिपुणा नावस्ते।
Rg.IV.58.5
Sometimes water can be seen behind rocks. The constant flow of water in the soil is obstructed by dark black rock. It we remove the rock by digging we can get forceful constant flow of water. A seer says that Brhaspati broke the black stone with all his might, and then sweet water came out. The sages of divine sight drank the water to their satiety, which were plenty and coming constantly, canals were dug for irrigation purposes.
Rg.II.24.4

Atharvaveda gives other sources also like

शं न आपो धन्यः: श्रमु सत्ववूः।
शं न: बनितिमा आप: श्रमु या कुम्भ आप्रूतः:
शिवा न: सत्वु वार्षिकी:।।
Av.I.6.4
The Multi Faceted Phenomena of Water
"The waters bless us, all that rise in desert lands or marshy pools, bless us the waters dug from the earth, bless us the waters brought from the jars, bless us the waters of the rains". Atharvaveda also mentions sources like Av XIX.2.1 शैमकात - waters from the snowy mountains, जल - waters from the fountains or natural springs, सनिप्रहु - the constant running waters and Av. I.4.3. सैन्य - waters from the rivers समुद्रिय waters obtained from the sea bless us. Mentioning various types of waters, show that each type of water has its own effect on our body. Among all these rainwater supposed to be the best.

"पर्वतायं शल्यायम्।

Av.I.3.1

Rainwater is a hundred times powerful than the other waters.
Apart from this Yajurveda XVI. 37 and 38; Taittiriya 4.5.7. 1&2 and 7.4.13. Number of other waters like.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>स्वत</th>
<th>- Water of small pots</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>पत्य</td>
<td>- Water of untidy paths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>काट्य</td>
<td>- Water of small canals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>नीय</td>
<td>- Water of a valley or marshy ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>कुष्य</td>
<td>- Water of canals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>सरस्य</td>
<td>- Water of a pond or pool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>नदेय</td>
<td>- Water of river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>वैशान्त</td>
<td>- Water of small pond's tank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>कूम</td>
<td>- Well water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>टवद्य</td>
<td>- Water of small well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>हद</td>
<td>- Water of big lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>सूध</td>
<td>- Water of coarsy ground (clay soil)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.6. Formation of Water

According to Atharva Veda Water contains both Agni – Oxygen and Soma – Hydrogen. Here we should remember one thing. In the vedas the words like Agni, Mitra, Vaisvanara agni and Matarisva are used in the sense of Oxygen. Soma, Jala, Apah, Salila, Varuna etc. are used in the sense of Hydrogen. One mantra of Atharva Veda says that the Matarisvan (Oxygen) enters the Water. The Rig Vedic mantra says that Vaisvanara agni exists in Water.

अम्लोऽधोक्षिणति आप हत्तैः।

AV.III.13.5

The Multi Faceted Phenomena of Water
One of the mantras of Rig Veda gives the formula of Water as the combination of Mitra and Varuna.

Two molecules of Hydrogen and one molecule of Oxygen with the passing of electric arc, forms Water. But this is not directly mentioned in the matra. But we can infer that Mitra (oxygen), with high energy and Varuna (Hydrogen), the regent one (devoid of all doshas) when combined Water formation occurs.

Rig veda VII.33.10 to 13 narrates the birth of Agastya and Vasishtha rishi’s birth from a kumbha, pot. Both of them are regarded as Manasa putra of Urvasi. Urvasi also means electricity. The four mantras of Rig veda vii.33.10 to 13 are -------

The Multi Faceted Phenomena of Water
According to these mantras Mitra and Varuna combined to form Agastya, water with the help of electric current (विद्युति ज्योति). These mantras clearly indicate keeping the two gasses hydrogen and oxygen in one container kumbha or test tube and passing electric current – Uravasi and then the formation of water. Hence Agastya is known as “Kumbhaja”, “he who born from a pot” and Vasishta is known as Maitra Varuna –son of Maitra Varuna.

### 2.7 THE DIVINITY OF WATER

Water forms a very important part of all Sanskaras. Because of constant motion and sound, and its power, water was believed to be a living force in Vedic era. In addition, many lakes, rivers and many other water bodies have healing power, which made more mystic. Therefore its ritual use was incorporated into all Sanskaras.

\[ \text{इदम} \gamma: \text{प्रवहलावः } \text{च मले } \text{च तत्} \]

\[ \text{Yaju.vi.17} \]

Water purifies man from all sorts of impurities. Bathing is a precondition to performing a Sanskara, to cleanse oneself of all physical, mental and spiritual impurities. Sipping of water and being sprinkled with water are essential to many Sanskaras and symbolize ceremonial bathing.

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The Multi Faceted Phenomena of Water
For example, during Hindu marriage, the bride is sprinkled with water to rid her of any sins committed in the past and cleanse her for her new life.

अष्टि रीतिरसयुगमंशास्त्रीये न दस्मृगुप बन्यूना: ।

Rg.X.31.3

Here the word ‘Thirtha’ means a portion of water, when sprinkled in the act of tharpana, go to the assembly of the Gods. Water is regarded as a sanctifier. It has been seen that before commencing any auspicious thing, Punyahavachana is made. Punyahavachanam is nothing but purifying the place with a Holy Water. Again the Holy Water is nothing but the Water, which is charged with Varuna sukta.

After building the temple Kumbhabhishekam is made to the Sanctum Sanctorum and Abhishekam is done to the main idol for forty days. In day-to-day activities also Water is regarded as a purifier. Like Achamaniyam, while doing the pooja, doing Parisheshanam before taking the food, are all examples of purifying nature of Water.

आपो अस्मान्मातरः शुच्यन्ति शुद्धिन नौ गृहेष्वः पुनान्तिः

विश्व हि रिंग्व प्रवृत्तिये देवी रुद्रायण्य: शुचिरा पूले मि ॥

RG.X.17.10

May the maternal waters, purify us, may the shudders of water purify us with effusion: for the divine waters tear away all sin: I came from the purified (to heaven).
Water is a purifier since it has some divine power.

पत्सलीरोपचयः पत्सलनामकं वचः ।
अर्थं पत्सलित्यपस्वेन मा सह सुन्तात II

The Plants flourish by the means of water, my prayer is effective through water, the essence of water is vigorous through water, purify me with it.

Both Rigveda and Athervaveda depict, that water has divine power and all gods exist in water.

श्रवणदेवः सलिलानि आसनः ।
A.V.X.8.40
The gods were entered into the waters.

Since water is having divine power has been asked to satisfy all our sense organs.

मनों मे तर्पयत वाच मे तर्पयत चशुमें तर्पयत ।
श्रीर मे तर्पयतात्मानं मे तर्पयत II

Yaju.VI.31

O! ‘Waters’ blessed with my mind, speech, sight, ears and Atma.

Thus the divinity of Waters has been realized by the Vedic Seers in every aspect of life. The Sages wished the Waters to purify them from all, mental and physical impurities.

2.8.1 Water- In the Vedic and later Vedic texts.

Water is essential for life. Water — जलम् is involved from birth to death hence.

"यस्माज्ञायते यस्मिस्मच तीयते इति जलम्"
A number of synonyms used in our literature. The Nighantu gives almost five hundred names of water.

Amarakosa Gives:

आप: स्त्री भूमिन्या वाहिर सहिलं कमलं जलम्।
पशु: कीलातमस्थूं जीवनं पुजनं वनम्॥
कबन्धमुदकं पाथ: पुष्करं सर्व तेमुखं।
अभ्यंगांतोपानीय नौर शीरानु शम्भरस्॥

Figurative Speech: Simile

The role of water in the Sanskrit literature is very much distinguishable. The descriptions of seasons and nature in the literature use the word water in various ways. Like when comparing the saradkala rain, it has been said

“शरदि वर्ष बुझ स्यायते”

Dharma Sastra says –

“न वार्षिकलिना विभेदू” One should not take water without giving water oblation. When our mind is clouded with thoughts it has been said “अिच्छं मनः!” Water cools our body and relieves from tiredness “पानीं कलमनाशनम्” Water gives everything but sometimes too much of water leads to calamities, as it has been compared.
"जीव धन्य हमा आप:"
"राजानमन्त्रवु : सर्वेजीमूला हव वार्षिकः।"

Some people living an ordinary life lead a detached life from the worldly things, which can be compared with "जल कमलपत्रवन्दूः.

The two proverbs –
"पिरफ्सिनाब्यः"
"धाराचरो वर्षिते नालेष्टे।"

Illustrate, the greatness of, working for others. The monsoon rains make even the smaller rivers full। धारा कुंदिका लपि तपणाले।" Also we see this type of many usages in our literature.

"अगस्त्यस्य सागरपान्नः"
"गजगाजलमपि धारे चूरं सिम्बुना।"
"गंगा प्राप्य कुंदिका गडनेश पूजने।"

Sometimes certain tasks appear as if they are herculean to complete, which can be said –
"समुद्र हव दुस्तरः।"

Sarad washes the dirt of water.
"सलिलस्य शरदें शारदु धुनोति।"

The Multi Faceted Phenomena of Water
Also we find –

“जलं शिरस उपर्यंगतम्”
“जल तरड़यं चतुर्क्रमः”
“नामां तत्स्य नेत्रे जलम्”

Likewise many usages find using the word water. Jala Taranga, Jalanjali, jala Tarpanam, Sapa Jalam, Mada Jalam, Srama Jalam, Sitala Jalam, Srotajalam etc.

2.8.2 Etymology of water

Different names of water

Water has a number of synonyms in the classical as well as in the Vedic literature. Thus some of the examples are given below.

आपो देवी मद्यपायुः दुःखस्थः

Av. X. 9.27

This mantra says that the seers were able to get whatever they wished by giving oblations. Thus the sages were able to get heavenly waters, which is rich in honey and dripping with ghee. They become lords of wealth.

The seer Bhrigu depicts different names of water in Atharvaveda III.13. Since rain comes out of thunder when lightning strikes the clouds water is called as नबः.
When the water sent by Varuna, it was collected by Indra. Since Indra obtained it, water is known as Aapah.

When water flowing perversely, it was hindered by Indra’s powers. Hence water is “Var”

Water, which is created by the Advitiya almighty god, makes everyone to breath hence it is called Udraksh.

The Multi Faceted Phenomena of Water
1. अमुर - Since water saves our life it is named as अमुर-

“अस्व: प्राण: ले अनु उच्च:।”

Tai-Bra. 3.2.5.2

2. अब्जर: - That which exists in the form of truth always is known as ‘Brahman’ ‘अब्जर:’. जलयः water is also known अब्जर, because it satisfies every one, all living beings both plants and human beings. It always exists.

“अब्जरति कुन्तवमिति”

“तत: अब्जर: तल्यव मुष्णीवती”।

Rg.v. I. 164.42

Clouds bring abundant rain. The moisture spreads to the grain and the universe exists.

“पश्चो अस्वे अब्जर: चित्तवाय।”

Rg.v. I. 34.4

Thrice shower upon us food as Indra pours down rain.

सहस्मायस्व: Rg.v. I. 164.41

“Infinite number of streams from the highest heaven.”

3. अप: - Water

“वधकीला गणों अप्सामुपस्वत।”

Rg.v. I.95.4

Wisemen see Agni-in water

“अमुर ते राजन वरुण गुह:।”

AV. VII. 83.1

The Multi Faceted Phenomena of Water
4. अम्भ: - अम्भ: is also used in the sense of water, as in Rg X. 129.1

“अम्भ: किमानीद्गाहि गमीरस्त्रु।”

5. अमृतम्: -“न म्रियण्टे हि प्राणिनोजुनेन पीतेन।”

Otherwise, Since its taste is incomparable, water is known as Amritam.

‘अमृतस्य स्वराजः।’

Rg V. 58.1

“A rain of Amrita”.

Maruts are self-radiant preside over the rain which is like Amrita.

“भद्रा अमृत बन्धवः।”

Rg. 10.72 .5

Else where it has been said

“अमृतं वरेश्वरं योगश्रृवं वसितं चुते।
अपाचिते च मोक्षेऽ नष्टत्ति देवयो ।।”

Bhartruhari; 2.68

6. अणिः - अणिः Means sea.

“महो अणिः सरस्वती।”

Rg I. 3.12.

Here Arna means mighty river.

7. अमृतम्: - That which is near sun.

“अमृतम् उप सूर्यः।”

Av. I. 42.

The Multi Faceted Phenomena of Water
8. आपः - आपन्ते इति आपः

इद्वापः प्रवहत ........

Rg X. 9.8

इति आपः प्रभराम्यक्ष्मा यक्मनाशानी”

Av.III.12.9.

This water relieves from diseases. Atharva Veda says

“तद्ववैविन्द्रि वो यतीतस्तस्मावापो अगुष्टन्।”

Av.III.13.2

When Varuna sent the water, it was skipped and then obtained by
Indra therefore it was called water.

इति: आपौः - प्राप्तिति इति आपः।

9. उदकमुः - उदरचति इति उदकमुः

The word Udaka is a synonym of Apah occurs in the Jala Sukta of the
third Mandala of the Atharva veda and is etymologized as --

“उद्वानिषुर्गौर्ििरि तस्मालुदक मुख्यते।” AV.III.13.4

Because of which the great ones breathed up, therefore water is called ‘Udaka’.

उदः - आनयनि - उद्वानिषु : इति उदकमुः।

The etymology of the word is very interesting. This word can be split
as Ut+Aka. When the waters were flowing only one God set foot on them.
The mighty Waters breathed upwards fast. The word is traced from the
root (/an) ‘to breath’ with prefix ‘ut’.

The Multi Faceted Phenomena of Water
10th ḍrumu: - Jalam

Drinking the grateful libation at the sacrifice.

Rivers charged with water rest a moment.............

11 कम्र्: - जलम् | कम्रीयं भवति

The name कावेरी also comes from this कस्य जलस्य वेरम् - कावेरि वेरम् - शरीरम्

12th कूप्या: - कूपे भवा: | जलम्

"With pitchers, carry away water."
Here Kumbha means water.
14. क्षत्रम् -: उत्त बचा पुरुषविद्व क्षत्रम् ।

Rg. VI. 50.3

Kshatram is meant here for water.

15. कन्त्रितमः -: आयो भवन्ति ।

पुनः पुनेन जाता:

AV.1.6.4

The Waters, which are obtained by digging the ground.

16 गी: -

उदकम्

गोज्या:

Rg.1.169.8

Here Indra has been prayed to
Pierce the exhilarating receptacles of the waters.

17. शूलम् -

शूलमुक्षकं भवति

Nirukta.1.7.24

भित्त्वे येकु शूलिता शूलाची ।

Rg.I.167.3

शूलस्य भारा - उदकस्य भारा ।

"In whom the water shedding golden colored lightning”.
Here Maruts has been praised.

18. जलम् - जन्म मरणयो: कारणम् ।

जन्मन:- लक्षस्य प्रलक्षस्य कारणस्य जलम् ।

यस्माद्वायते यथिंश्च लीले ।

Water is the root cause of every thing. It is the Karanabhutha of
Creation as well as delusion.

19. \( \text{jalāṣṭha} \) - उदकम्

\( \text{जै जीते लूङ्यते बांछयते इति जलाष्ठा} \)

\( \text{स्वर्ग जलाष्ठा भेषजय} \)

Rg. I. 43.4

\( \text{Jalashabhesajam, he who has medicament-conferring delight;} \)

From Ja, one born and \( \text{Lasha, happiness: an unusual word} \)

except in a compound form, as \( \text{abhilasha, which is of current} \)

Use; or it may mean, sprung from \( \text{Water (jala), all vegetables} \)

Depending over Water for their growth. (Rg.v Wilson’s vol.I

Page no. 111 translation of Rg.)

20 \( \text{व्योति:} \) - जलम् - व्योतियो वा जलस्य

\( \text{प्रलं जातं व्योतिवदन्तस्य} \)

Nirukta 4.34

Rg. X. 55.2

21. \( \text{sīrṣṭa} \) - तत्ति जलमेनेन

The divine water is called \( \text{Tirtham} \)

22. \( \text{शेषु:} \) - शेष: - प्रीणिश्वर: ।

\( \text{आप: प्रिया इत्यस्य शेषवः} । \)

Rg.I.84.11

23. \( \text{नाधि:} \) - जलम् । जगतो

\( \text{नाधिपूत्रो} । \text{आधार पूत्रो} । \)

\( \text{अधि जिद्यन्ती भवनस्यनाधिन्} । \)

Rg. I. 185.5.

The Multi Faceted Phenomena of Water
Nabhi according to Sayana here means ‘Water’ Udakam, as the Binding of all beings – bhutajatasya bandhakam; and which may be regarded as the child of heaven and earth, as they both contribute to its production-Ubhayar udaka pradatvam; or the two here mentioned may imply water and the oblation, which are also connected.

24. पयः -

पिन्ने वा व्याप्ते वा
पयः पयोभि: ।

Nirukta 5.4.42

सं ते पयांसि समु सन्तु बाजः ।

Rg. 1. 91.18

“हिरण्येभि: पविभि: पयोवः उज्जिन्नत”

“Maruts are augmenters of rain”. Payah here means water.

25. पीवृष्टिः: पीवेवर्षिः

पीवृष्टिः प्रयस्यस्य सेजिरे

Rg. 10.94.8

26. पुक्करम: - पुस्तिकरम

आपो तै पुक्करम

Sa.Br.6.4.2.2

पुक्कराद्वधार्वाः निरमन्तत

Rg. 6.16.23

27. सधु - मल्यः मधी जले स्थनस्वे ।

Nirukta 6.27

The Multi Faceted Phenomena of Water
The white cows drink of the sweet water.

28 योनि: - कारण भूतं जलम्।
अक्षत्स्य योनिः।

Agni concealed himself in the, womb in the waters.

29. रज: - रणजयति तस्मात् रज उच्यते।
हिरण्यकेशो रजसो विसारे।

The golden haired Agni is the agitator of the clouds when the Rain is poured forth.

30. रेतः - रीति श्वरति - इति रेतः।
द्रवः कृष्णविनि शुद्धेनुषु रेतः।

The golden haired Agni is the agitator of the clouds when the Rain is poured forth.

31. वा: - The word ‘Vaah’ is a synonym for Waters and is etymologized as अपकारम् स्वदमाना अवीरतते वो हिक्रम्।

The etymology is supported by mythology. The Waters are called so because Indra restrained them with his might, but ‘Waters’ glided on their own and not in accordance with the might of the Indra.

32. समुद्रम् - Used in the sense of sea.

From the thunder the clouds shed abundant rain.
33. सिन्धुः - स्यान्नाशीलानि ।
स्यान्नाशीला आपः ।
सिन्धुः नन्दलम ।

Rivers flow abundantly.

34. सरस्वती जलम्
“अभि मते प्रदीपः देविते सरस्वते” ।

Here Saraswati indicates not only river but also water.

35. सलिलमः - जलम्
गैरी भिमाय सलिलानि तस्कति

“संजीवनं समस्तस्य जगतः सलिलात्मकम् ॥”
Satarudriya Samhita - Sivapuranam.

आपो वा इदमः सलिलेवास ।

Sa. Br. – 11.1.6.1

सलिलि ग्रहः निम्न प्रवाहील तरत आपः।
36. धिवः: - उवकस्मु
धिविषां जारो आप्पो विपिरले ॥

Aswins guide the Sun who is the evaporator of the waters.

विश्वकर्मनरू हविषा वाचुधानः:

Rg. X. 81.6

Viswakarman magnified by the oblation.

37. हिमस्त्रु - हिमावती। हैमवतीस्मु - उमा गढ़ना
हिमेन तुषारेण वारिणा

2.9.1 Divine Origin of Five Elements

Brahman is Smaller than smallest and bigger than the biggest. Brahman is all pervasive eternal witness, Brahman indeed is the self, and the self is Brahman.

The Vedas declare

“अनेष्णपीयाण्यं महतोमहीयाण्यं ॥”

Kathopanishad

“Brahman is subtler than the subtlest and vaster than the vastest”

Human body is made-up of five elements earth water, fire, air and ether. These elements are associated with five types of sensations ie. Smell, taste, form, touch and sound.
The five elements must be the oldest, most accessible way to understand the universe and our place in it. It is timeless. The five elements are references as independent of religion as of science and they are as inclusive of all religion and science. Any scientific development and advancement occurs within some or all of the five elements. Thus as our mind expands and our knowledge grows, be it scientifical or cultural, religious or spiritual, our awareness of the Five elements grows. This expansion of knowledge makes the concept of origin, universal and timeless. "May the five elements – Earth, water, Fire Air and Ether become purified. May I become the light free from impurity and evil. To this end, I offer this oblation into the consecrated fire Yajurveda - Taittiriya Aranyaka 10.66.

The ancient Vedic worship of Panchabhutas (Five elements) is a tribute to mother nature, which consists of Earth, water, fire air and Ether. These elements complement each other to create a harmonious world, which is millions of years old. They benefit all the living beings and contribute to each other in a cyclical process, which constitutes two harmonious flow of our past, present and future. The judicious use of these natural elements by human kind makes our environment a living paradise. The abuse of our environment brings disaster to the individual and mankind.

Another conception is that, we believe God as Nirguna Brahman, comes to take the forms of various Avatharas as Saguna Brahman and also manifests himself in the phenomenal universe as its five elements "Pancha Bhutam".
The Earth with its quality of smell, Water with its quality of taste, Air with its quality of touch, Fire with its quality of teja (glow), Akasa (space) with its quality of sabda (sound)---- may all these elements along with the element of Buddhi (intellect) make my morning auspicious for me!
Vedas say God Exists in the five elements Agama sastra and Bhootha Suddhi Mantra say that God manifests in sky (Space) as sound, in Air as sound and sense of touch, in Fire as sound sense and shape of things, in water as sound, sense, shape, and taste of objects, in Earth as sound, sense, shape, Taste and smell.

"त्वं भूमि आपो अनिलो अनलोनपदा।"

A verse from Ganapathy Atharva Sheershan Upanishad, which means that God is in Earth, Water, Air, Fire and Sky. Hence people worship the Lord as the various elements and receive the Divine blessings.

2.9.2 Water as one of the Five Elements

Water is essential for life without it, human beings, animals and plants die. Water is necessary for physical life. It is a symbol of spiritual strength. It provides peach comfort and contentment to those who seek it.

Two third of the Earth is filled with water. Two third of the human body too is filled with water. It is one of the five elements, one that can be experienced with all the senses but the sense of hearing. It is subtler than earth but grosser than fire. Its oxygen content gives if its life giving nature. It is the most essential of all food and its presence denotes life. We make an offering of it to God in gratitude for the great life – giving gift he has given us.

The Multi Faceted Phenomena of Water
We see the importance of water in *Taittiriya Aranyak* I.22. *Mantrapushpam*. Some of the most common occasions where this is chanted is during the end of the *pooja* as one of the *upacharas*.

### 2.9.3 Significance of Water in Mantra Pushpam

It is customary to recite Mantra Pushpam at the conclusion of all major prayer rituals in the temples and at home puja functions. Often we offer flowers to the deities at this time making some people to think that this is something to do with the flowers. This Yajurvedic mantra is actually a recitation about the origin and evolution of the natural forces like Water, Air, Fir, Earth, Sun and the Stars and not just praising God. This is to show that the Vedas are really texts of scientific knowledge and the recitation is one way to keep it in memory to pass it on to our progeny.

*Mantra pushpam* conveys to us the highest spiritual significance of water as the support for all and as the personification of all Divinities.

"योपं पुष्पं वेद पुष्पायान् प्रजावान् पशुमानाः भवति।"

If one understands and worship water from this perspective the person attains all good in this birth and beyond. For such visionaries, water does not appear as a mere entity to cleanse the physical body and to quench the thirst but as Divinity.

The *Sukta* starts with the benevolent statement that, He who knows about the blossom of water becomes endowed with the blossom of life,
Children, Cattle etc. Then an analysis pertaining to the relationship of water with other aspects of nature and universe is given. For example,

“चन्द्रमावा अपां पुष्यं पुष्यवानु प्रजावानु पशुपानु भवति।”

In the case of Chandra “moon”, it is believed that, when the Devas churned the milky ocean the “moon” blossomed out. Lord Shiva placed this flower on his head and so became Chandra Sekhara. Because Chandra was born from water, water is the abode for Chandra. “चन्द्रमावा अपां आयतनं” also the waters are generated by the coolness of the moon and in this way, the moon becomes the abode of water. आपो वै चन्द्रमास आयतनं” similarly this kind of dual relationship exists between water and fire (Agni) wind (Vayu) Sun (Surya) Stars (Nakshathra), Clouds (Parjanya) and Samvatsara. It is then concluded that, for the one who meditates upon the Divine water, this entire universe appears as a huge ship floating in water and one who has this knowledge becomes a “स्थितप्रमाण” and he is hailed by all योपुनार्व प्रतिष्ठितं वैद प्रत्येव किष्ठितः

The world is all made of Water and is the basic of everything and is worthy of our prayers. As Water is cool so also the Moon is cool like a flower of the Water. He who understands this gets all prosperity with progeny and cattle. Fire is also a product of this Water and the Air in turn comes from the Fire.

As the seawater rises as vapor to the clouds and falls as rain to give us warmth and prosperity, the Sun is related to the Water. As we see the Star through astrological position, which determines the rain and prosperity, we see the relation of Stars for all this prosperity through Water. Each year we
observe that the rainy season bringing the rains, the seasons of the year gets importance. On this Water the world revolves around like a boat sailing in the ocean and he who understands this gets all prosperity

2.10.1 Water Element in the Vedic cosmogony

Cosmology is an important aspect of ancient Indian thinking and wisdom. Vedas, the towering monuments of human race contain some important ideas on cosmology. Before attempting to examine the cosmological insights revealed in the Vedas, let us examine the modern scientific theories on the origin of the universe. Richard J.Ordway summarized the modern view of cosmogony in his book “Earth Science”. Nobody knows how big the Universe is, but astronomers estimate that it contains about 100 billion galaxies, each comprising an average of 10 billion stars. The most widely accepted theory about the Universe is the Big Bang theory, which states that the Universe came into being in a huge explosion, the big bang that took place between 10 and 20 billion years ago. The Universe initially consisted of a very hot, dense fireball of expanding, cooling gas. After about one million years, the gas began to condense and formed into protogalaxies. During the next five billion years, the protogalaxies continued condensing, forming galaxies in which stars were being born.

Thus the modern theory of cosmology assumes the Pre-existence of a rotating, hot, gaseous nebula, but is silent on how this came into being and
which motivated such rotation. With this background let us examine the cosmological ideas and cosmogony in Vedas.

Speculations about the origin of the Universe have occupied considerable space in the primitive religions. Cosmogony may be defined as “Attempts at finding out the common origin of the diverse phenomena of nature in itself”. Such speculations started not from unknown principle but from the tangible and knowable concrete.

Turning to the Vedic literature we find some ideas about the process of Evolution. According to Vedas, creation is not a single definite act as it is ever proceeding. The hymn of creation X.129 of Rig Veda explains the origin of the world as the evolution of existent from the non-existent. Water came into being first from it was evolved intelligent by heat.

"नासवासीन्नो सवासित्वत्वानी नासोऽन्नो नो व्योमः परोद्वता।
किमावरीवः कुह कस्य शर्मनामः किमावसीतवक्ति गच्छितम् II"

X.129.1

“There was not the non-existent nor the existent then. How could there be the deep unfathomable water.” Sayana explains this

इदम् अग्रे सलिलम् अति ।

This in the beginning was water.

अस्तु श्राविषाणवनिरपाय्यं नासितद् ।

Tai.Sam.VII.1.5.1

The Multi Faceted Phenomena of Water
Out of the five great Elements prithivi and AP are the most tangible elements. On the early Vedic cosmogony, the AP-tatva receives a good deal of attention. This was because of the historical background of the period.

Frequent floods in the Indus valley have influenced the thought process of Vedic Aryans, when they stated that water was the primordial substance out of which the Universe came into being.

अष्ट्र रिक्षे नगर गगीरम्

Speaking about the creation from primal matter we find out that AP-tattva plays a prominent role. In the Brahmanas water is described as co-eval with prajapathi. The Aitreya Brahmana XI.1.6 states that water is preceded by prajapathi. It was reasonable to vedic people who saw land growing out of accumulations of river-torn silt that water was the primary element and source of all that existed.

“तम आसीत्तमस पुष्करीमग्नं प्रकृतं
सलिलं सर्वं इत्यम.”

Rg X.129.2

Darkness was in the beginning hidden by darkness. This all was water.

The sukla yajurveda says आतपातब्रह्मा -- VI.1.3

In the beginning there was only the creator. From him the Water was formed, from the water the to foam was formed.
The *Brihadaranyakopanishad* says I.2.1 when *Hiranyagarba* was worshiping himself *water* was produced.

\[ \text{गैयेह किंचनाग्राम आसीत} \]
\[ 
\text{तस्माचे आपो अर्जयत} \]

Bri.upa I.2.1

Fire is called *Arka*, and water verily is *Arka*, what was there as in the form of water hardened and it became the Earth.

\[ \text{आपो वा अर्क: तत्दकस्य शर आसीततसमह्यत} \]

Bri.upa I.2.2

Atharva Veda mentions about cosmic *Water*.

\[ \text{अपस्यविलितम्यु भेषजम्} \]

*Water* is the elixir of life. *Water* has medicinal value. *Water* is the primary necessity of the human body. It frees the body from different *Doshas* hence it is known as *Bheshajam*. It gives good health, happiness and contentment.

\[ \text{आपो अर्के विश्वावनार्ध द्याना अमृता ऋत्तर:} \]

AV. IV.2.6

The *waters* in the beginning favored all, assuming an embryo. The evolved golden embryo was the sole lord of existence maintained the earth and heaven.

\[ \text{आपो दे दी:} \]
\[ \text{आपो दे दिव्यं नम:} \]

Sat.Br.6.4.1.9

Sat.Br.3.8.5.3

The Multi Faceted Phenomena of Water
According to these sentences, the earth’s atmosphere is water and everything is born from this atmosphere.

A striking feature of vedic cosmology is the distinction made between “AP” and “Salila” i.e., “Water and creative waters”.

समुद्रव्यंजना: सलिलस्य मद्यालयनानात्यन्तयनिविस्मानाः 

Rg.VII.49.1

The waters, with their ocean-chief, proceed from the midst of the firmament, purifying all things, flowing unceasingly, may the divine waters, whom the thunder-bearing, Indra sent, the showerer, sent forth, protect me here on the earth.

आपो हवे इदम्म्रे सलिलस्य स..... रोवरेरे 

Ait. Br XI.1.6

Before creation (अः) the Waters (आप) were salila.

The same Mantra says, “Entertaining a desire to create, they practiced tapas, as a result of which Hiranyagarbha was born. From it purusha was produced and there of prajapathi was created. Thus Ap came at a late stage in the hierarchy of creation. It was ordinary water created along with other diversities of the world, where as, salila, preceded prajapathi who gets fifth place in the creative process as could be seen from the passage.

“सास्पो स्वजाता”

Ait. Br.VI.1.1.8

The Multi Faceted Phenomena of Water
The distinction between Ap and salila lies in the fact that salila contains something in it which was beyond the ordinary knowledge and which later was going to manifest itself as the world. This fact has been made clear by the Nasadiya Sukta of the Rig Veda.

अभ्य: किमासीद्रवहनं गण्येऽर्दु ।

Was it water, deep and fathomless [i.e., beyond the limits of knowledge]. How could there be the deep unfathomable water?

यद्वेष्या: अद्व: सलिले सुसंवर्भा अतिष्ठत ।

Rg Veda X.72.6

“When the Gods were firmly established in this salila.” When the world was yet water as it was before creation the gods were uncreated.

This hymn describes the genesis of gods and mortals from Aditi. The concept of Aditi stands for infinity, eternity, immensity and bondage. Rg.I.89.10 says that will be born. In the present quotation salila stands for the womb of mother Aditi. The AV equates her with primal waters.

सलिलं एकोग्रेष्यात्तो भवति ।

Bri.upa IV.3.32

“There is only one seer, who is without a second in the salila”

The idea of the presence of energy or heat in primal waters, later gave rise to the conception of “Vadavanala” being present in waters. “Apamnapat”, according to oldenberg, was originally a water dragon. He later identified it with Agni because of its relationship with cloud-water, in

The Multi Faceted Phenomena of Water
the form of lightning. The presence of lightning in the water-laden cloud gave rise to the concept of fire being a child who resides in the watery womb of cloud before its birth.

The *salila* is the primordial substance containing the emergent world together with the necessary energy for emerging activity. *Water* is the carrier of important entities. The idea of *water* being the clothing of Brahman also expressed in *chandogyopanishad 5.2.2*.

The cosmological ideas in the Vedas can be thus summarized as

- In the beginning there was neither the non-existent nor the existent.
- The supreme cosmogonic force produced the Universe in the form of darkness enveloped in darkness.
- Cosmological *waters Ambhas* got manifested in the form of undifferentiated fluid in darkness where there was no light.
- From the cosmic *waters*, combined with the motivation to move as a consequence of friction, fire called *Arka* got generated.
- Due to the action of the fire and *water*, wind was produced and the combination of wind, fire and water produced a froth, got solidified subsequently to form the earth.
- The supreme Brahman like lightning makes the entire Universe to emerge and to move. Thus the cosmic fluid originates by the motion induced by the supreme soul moves the undifferentiated atoms into an undifferentiated cloud of dark fluid, which because of the friction of motion attains heat and gives rise to cosmic earth (the cosmic egg- Hiranyagarbha) which is the protostar of the modern concept of cosmogony. The further
motion of the cosmic fluid along with the cosmic earth produced the *Ekapada aja*, the sun and the *panchabhutas*.

Thus *water* plays a prominent role in Vedic cosmogony. The genesis of the universe takes place in the primal *water*. Therefore “water-element *Ap-tatva*” appears as one of the products of creative process. It has a role to play in the further development of the universe through its transformations.