CHAPTER III

Vedic Religion and Water Gods
3.1 Vedic Religion

Hinduism is the world’s oldest major living religion. The history of the Hinduism is very much the history of the mankind. Hidden in depths are traces of earliest human civilization. The hymns of the Vedas are mainly invocation to Gods.

3.2 Vedic Conception of God

The religion of the Vedas is polytheism. The Gods are nothing but natural phenomena whether great or small. Each God is conceived as a glorious being who has his home in heaven and who comes sailing in his far-shining car to the sacrifice and sits down on the grass to hear his own praise recited and sung and to receive the offerings. The hymns sung by the priests were mainly invocations of the Gods meant to accompany the oblation of Soma-Juice and fire sacrifice of the melted butter.

In various texts of *Rig Veda* the Gods are spoken of as being thirty-three in number. Thus it is said in the *Rig Veda* “come hither Nasatyas, Asvius, together with the thrice eleven Gods, to drink our nector”. I.34.11

आ नासत्या तिभिरिक्षा कशीरिख देवोपर्यातं मघुपेययम्मिन्या न।

Rg I. 31.11

*Vedic Religion and Water Gods*
Again, “Agni the wise gods lend an ear to the worshippers. God with the ruddy steeds, who loves praise, bring hither those three and thirty”.

**Rg I. 45.2**

Propitiated by our praises, bring hither the three and thirty divinities.

In the *Sathapatha Brahmanas* this number of thirty-three gods is explained as made up of eight *Vasus*, eleven *rudras*, and twelve *Adityas* together with heaven and earth or according to another passage, together with *Indra* and *prajapati* instead of heaven and earth.

But the number thirty-three is not strictly adhered. Numerous Gods are mentioned in the *Rig-veda*. And *Rig-veda* itself says, “Three thousand, three hundred thirty nine gods have worshipped Agni”. The gods were believed to have had a beginning they were stated to be mortal, but capable of overcoming death by the practice of austerity. The *Rig Veda* says that the gods acquired immortality by drinking *Soma*.

The Vedic Gods can be classified as deities of heaven, air and earth.

### 3.3 Celestial Gods

According to this three-fold division the celestial Gods are *Dyaus*, *Varuna*, *Mitra*, *Surya*, *Savitri*, *Pusan* and the *Asvins* and the Goddesses *usas*, *Dawn* and *Ratri*.

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3.4 Atmospheric Gods

The atmospheric Gods are Indra, Apamnapat, Rudra, Maruts, Vayu, Parjanya and the waters. The most important God Indra is said to be releasing water by slaying vritra.

3.5 Terrestrial Gods

The terrestrial deities are Prithivi, Agni and Soma. Certain rivers are personified and invoked in the Rig Veda as terrestrial deities. Thus the Sindhu (Indus), celebrated as Goddess in one hymn (X. 75.2,4,6) and the Vipas (Bias) and the sutudri (sutlej), sister streams of the Punjab in another (III.33). The most important is the Saraswati (VI.6, VII.95) the goddess of Vak is treated as the river Goddess (X.71.125)

3.6 WATER GODS

In the Vedas Indra, Marut, Parjanya, Apamnapat, Varuna, MitraVaruna and Apah are regarded as water Gods.

3.6.1 Indra

The deity Indra appears in different forms in the Veda. The meteorological role of Indra is to make the clouds rain, when they do not shed rain and thereby cause drought. The long sukta I.32 of fifteen Rks is an example of this role of Indra.

Vedic Religion and Water Gods
I declare the former valorous deeds of Indra, which the thundered has achieved, he clove the cloud, he cast the waters down to earth, and he broke a way for the torrents of the mountain.

The Av hymn I.21.1 says that Indra saves people as the king saves his people.

Giver of well being, lord of the people, Vritra slayer, remover of scorners, controlling let the bull Indra go before us, Soma drinker, producing fearlessness.

Lightning is the flash of his sword which shrikes the demon preventing the clouds from raining.

Indra is having Golden Vajra

Indra took the powerful Vajra in his hands.
Earnest prayers are made to *Indra* whenever there is draught with clouds passing over the skies without shedding rain.

अद्वृत्य सद्भावः वादुधानः
अद्वृती दिवं पुष्पयातासि  ||

AV. XVII.1.12

He! *Indra*, in heaven and in earth you are uninjured and no one can reach your greatness, your great deeds are many fold.

“इन्द्रस्य नु सुकृत्य दैवं”

The divine force of Indra is well constructed.

इन्द्र सत्यार्थामा कृत्तिः सहि धीरो गर्वणस्वर्विदानः  ||

Rg.X.111.1

Indra is the hero, is capable of granting our wishes, is desirous of laudation.

अहि च दुःखास्वीतः

Av.XX.7.2

The killer of *Vṛtra*, *Indra* broke the clouds.

अहिनू अविमन्व परस्बरः

Av.II.5.5

This *Indra* broke the अहि (cloud) and released the water.

इन्द्रो महामहतो ब्रह्मामार्गिनिरोप्यानानः ।
पुष्पिणि चिदिष्ट तताना रजोसि दायाराय योग्युणं सत्यततां ॥

Rv.X.111.4

Indra is the giver of rains. Praised by the Angirasas, Indra, by

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*Vedic Religion and Water Gods*
his might, injured the functions of the mighty cloud; he has sent
down abundant rain. He has at times supported the cloud in heaven.

अयं जिन्म गोजितम् कत्राहुम् ।
Av.XIX.13.6

He! Indra you are having Vajra winning cattle and army.

Rig Veda says thunder is the roar of his chariot as Indra fights the drought
Demon Vrtra. In the Atharva Veda --

इद्ध ब्रुन्वाय हन्तवे ।
Av.XX.19.5

To end vritra (cloud) Indra has been called.

तमिन्द्रासि ब्रुन्वाः
Av. XX.93.6

He! Indra you are the destroyer of Vritra.

विवृषचद क्षेण ब्रुन्विन्मः
Av. XX.35.10

Indra destroys Vritra with his Vajra.

These Suktas indicate that draughts caused hardships to the people
(Punjab), hindering their cultivation of Yava and Barley extensively. All
they could do at that time was to invoke Indra to attack the demon hiding
inside the clouds preventing the clouds from shedding rain.

In the above Suktas, we have an ample elucidation of the original
purport of the legend of Indra’s slaying Vrtra, converted by the pauranika
writers into a literal contest between Indra and an Asura, or a chief of Asura,
Vrtra, sometimes also named as Ahi, is nothing more than the accumulation
of vapour condensed, or figuratively shut up in, or obstructed by a cloud.
Indra with his thunder bolt, or atmospheric or electrical influence divides the aggregated mass and vent is given to the rain, which then descends upon the earth, and moistens the fields or passes of in rivers. The language of *Rig* is not always sufficiently distinct and confounds metaphorical and literal representation.

अहि विवाहायेः ब्रह्मां वर्गः प्रपन्थराशी ||
स्वरासाविश्वसन विव्रधवाहै || श्रीपुष्पपुष्पावः ||

Rg I.32.5

We have here both names, *Ahi* and *Vrtra*, they are both given as synonyms of *Megha* a cloud, in the *Nighntu* "*Ahi* is derived from "*han*" to "strike" and *Vrtra* the “encompasser” or “concealer”, is from *Vr* to enclose or *vṛt*, to “be”, or to “exit”, or from "*vrdḥ*", to “increase”, the choice of etymologies intimating a vague use of the term. 

In *Yaska’s Nirukt 2.26.*

हन्त्र अर्थां अर्थक्षायांहर्पाहन्त्र ||

Ni.2.26

It has been said that *Vrtra* is not a Demon what we mean literally but it is a hard formation of cloud.

There are several hymns giving Indra the role of rainmaker. A large number of *Suktas*, nearly five hundred in which *Indra* is a fighter of all kinds of enemies earthly and non-earthly.

हन्त्र दस्युः नममवच्चचन्द्रति ||

Av III.10.12

Indra is the destroyer of *Dasyus*. He was the protector supreme of the race to which these Vedic poets belonged.
This Vedic Indra is different from the Indra of the puranas. In the Puranas he is described as the lord of the Devas, A Deva of easy virtue, living in the heaven under the constant protection of Vishnu. He is envious and afraid of any person doing tapasya or sacrifices and therefore sends celestial nymphs like Urvasi or Menaka to seduce those performing severe penance.

In the Vedas it is shown that the water streams reach the sea.

अश्येद् लेख्सा रत्न सित्यव: ।

Av.IX.35.11

The waters released by Indra are reaching the sea directly.

वेना समुद्रसुज्जो महीरप: ।

Av.XX.9.4

Indra with his power creates sea and big waters.

Thus we see in the Vedic Suktas, many Rics, which are related to water and rain, are connected with the God Indra.

3.6.2 Maruts

This is a plural deity connected with clouds and rain, but in their violent aspect – blinding lighting, deafening thunder, and violent winds shaking buildings and uprooting trees.

Vedic Religion and Water Gods
“He the son of heavenly waters” Marut you are as bright as “sun”.

In the Rigveda almost thirty-three hymns are attached to Maruts. The deities like Indra, Agni, Pusan, vayu, Prisni, Rodasi are always mentioned with Maruts. Maruts are the sons of Rudra Rg II.33. The brilliance of Maruts is referred as: they are golden, ruddy, shine like fires and are self-luminous. They are very often associated with lightning.

The hymns Rig I.37, 38, 39, 64, 85, 86, 87 etc. depict Maruts. They in undate the earth and spread darkness over it even during daytime with water laden rain clouds.

\begin{verse}
विश्विकाले कृष्णतात् परजनेनोपवाहन ।
यत्रूथिवि वामनति ॥
\end{verse}

Rg. I. 38.9

Through desire to rain the Maruts come forth with hail and exceedingly violent and roaring winds. They uplift the rain from the ocean and pour the torrents down. Obviously this is a reference to “water sprouts” in the Indus river. The rain clouds of Maruts are never dry.

\begin{verse}
विवस्त्रितं भवे सुप्राति ।
\end{verse}

Av IV.27.4

Maruts, bringing down the rain from the sky of sea vapour.
The noise made by them often mentioned as the roaring of the winds. They cause the mountains to quake and the two worlds to tremble and they rend trees, like wild elephants, devour the forest. One of their main activities is to shed rain.

Maruts, with full of water gives rain.

They cover the eye of the sun with rain, they create darkness with the cloud when they shed rain, and they cause the heavenly pail and streams of the mountains to pour. The waters they shed are often clearly connected with the thunderstorm. Their rain is often figuratively called milk, ghee or honey. They avert heat, but also dispel darkness, produce light and prepare a path for Sun.

Maruts, pleasing the earth by pouring out water and Ghee.

The evidence of the Rig Veda indicates that the Maruts are storm-bringing Gods. The name is probably derived from the root “mar”, “to shine”, thus meaning “the shining ones”.

Maruts carry the waters form the ocean, and then they pour form the sky upon earth.

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These statements suggests that Maruts came form west, they are said to dwell in the lofty mountains and move towards the various rivers like sarayu, Ravi, Chanab etc. It can be said that maruts represent the “cold frontal rain” associate with the weather disturbances of winter, which produced heavy rainfalls in Afghanistan, Pakistan and North-west India. These winter systems are now-a-days called Western disturbances. The cold frontal rains associated with these western disturbances have all the characteristics attributed to the maruts in _Rigveda Suktas._

3.6.3 Apamnapat

This deity is celebrated in one entire hymn of Rig Veda II.35 and is invoked in two stanzas of a hymn to the _waters_, and is often mentioned. Brilliant and youthful, he shines without fuel in the _waters_, which surround and nourish him.

इहं स्वस्मी हृद आ सुतर्क मन्त्रे बोधये कृतिद्वस्य वेदतः ।
अपों नापादवर्षस्य महा प्रिव्यालोक्या भुवना जजान ॥

Rg II.35.2

Let us address to him the prayer that is conceived in our hearts and may he fully understand, for He, the lord, the grand son of the _waters_ has generated all beings by the greatness of his might.

Clothed in lightning, He is golden in form, appearance and color
(Rg. II. 35.10)

हिरण्यकप: स हिरण्य सन्तुग्यां नपालेभु हिरण्यवर्गः ।
हिरण्यायापि योनेनिभ्या हिरण्यवः दद्यक्त्रयनमस्ते ॥

Rg.II.35.2

_Vedic Religion and Water Gods_
The grandson of the *waters* is of golden form, of golden aspect, of golden hue, and seated upon a seat of gold, the giver of gold present to him sacrificial food.

Standing in the highest place, he always shines with undimmed splendor. Steeds, swift as thought carry the son of *waters*. In the stanza Rg.II.35.15, he is invoked as *agni* and must be identified with him. *Agni* in some hymns addressed to him, is spoken of as *apamnapat*. But the two are distinguished. *Apamnapat* appears to represent the lightning form of *Agni*, which lurks in the cloud. *Agni* being directly called *Apamnapat* is also termed the embryo of the *waters*.

This deity is not a creation of the Indian mythology, but goes back to the *Indo-Iranian* period. For in the *Avesta* *Apamnapat* is a spirit of the *waters*, who lives in their depths, who is surrounded by females, who is often invoked with them, who drives with swift steeds, and is said to have seized the brightness in the depth of the ocean.

### 3.6.4 Parjanya

This deity occupies quite a subordinate position, being celebrated in only three hymns. His name often mean “rain cloud” in the literal sense but in most passages it represents the personification, the cloud then becoming an udder, a pail, or a water-skin. *Parjanya* is frequently described as a bull that quenches the plants and the earth. The shedding of rain is his most prominent characteristic. He flies around with a watery car, and loosens the

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water skin; he sheds rainwater as our divine father. In this activity he is associated with thunder and lighting.

In the *Rigveda*, *Parjanya* is mentioned as cloud as well as *Devata*. *Parjanya* is the deity of rain also accompanied by thunder lightning and winds.

बिद्वसा शरस्य पितरं पर्जन्यं शतवृष्ण्यम,
तेना ते तन्ने शं करं पृथिव्यां ते निषेचनं
बहङ्गेः अस्तु बालिति ॥

Av.I.3.1

We know the reed’s father *Parjanya* of hundredfold virility, with that will I make weal for thy body; on the earth be thine out pouring, out of thee with a splash.

*Parjanya* is also regarded as the generator of plants and living creatures.

The rainstorm is compared to that of the udder of the cow, pouring water instead of milk. Often the prayer to *Parjanya* is to withhold some of its water so that the land may not be heavily flooded.

There is also a reference to *parjanya* arriving regularly once a year, pouring water on parched land, and making frogs crock and plants sprout. There is a humorous statement, which compares the recitation of the Vedas to the croaking of frogs. Perhaps *Parjanya* refers to the advance of the monsoon into northwest India and Pakistan towards the end of the June terminating the hot season.

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3.6.5 Varuna

Varuna is the ruler of the worlds, the ordainer and enforcer of law and upholder of the world order. In one of the Rigvedic hymn he is described as the lord of the earth and heaven who sustains the tree that has its roots in heaven and branches down below.

निर्मितिः उ त्ये अमृता अमृावत्वं च मा वरुण काम्यासे ।
अस्तेन राज्यनृत्तं विविशेषतमं राजायं शाश्वतमेही ॥

Rg. X.124.5

These Asuras were deprived of their magical power; it you varuna, desire me, O king separating truth from falsehood, come and enjoy sovereignty over my realm.

*Varuna* is the knower of all and controller of all. He is the supreme God capable of controlling and dispensing justice.

वरुणोपापधिपितः स मावऽतु ॥

Av. V. 24.4.

*Varuna* lord of water – Let He save me.

He knows the pat of birds that fly through heaven and sea. He knows the pathway of the wind, the spreading high and mighty wind.

यर्तिरिति चरति यम्भ वरुणिति ॥

Av. IV. 16.2

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He knows the gods who dwell above varuna true to holy law, sits down among people; he most wise, sits there to govern all.

From the sky Varuna’s spies look over the earth. No one can escape from king Varuna.

Whose form is water itself.

Born to Aditi and friend and brother of Mitra, Varuna is the protector, the holy one, and helper of all mankind, the lawmaker whose holy laws remain unweakened. He controls world order.

Both this earth and sky are Varuna’s. The two Oceans are Varuna’s pouches. He is hidden in the petty Waters.

He causes the rains to come down and the sun to travel. He makes the rivers flow. The rivers that flow because of him know no weariness nor they cease flowing.

Varuna is the king of the earth.

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Varuna lost much of his importance as an omnipotent and omnipresent god after Indra assumed more prominence. He was subsequently relegated, or rather demoted to the position of a dikpala or ruler of a quarter and lord of the oceans and water.

In the iconography he is depicted as the rider of chariot drawn by seven swans, with four hands and an umbrella over his head. In some images the swans are replace by a crocodile, suggestive of his lordship over the aquatic life.

3.6.6 Mitravaruna

Mitra and Varuna, both are lords of the heaven. Together they uphold the law. In the Atharva Veda V.24.5.

मित्रावरुणी वृक्षाधिषिकी

AV. V.24.5

"Mitra and Varuna ‘O’ ‘Lord of the rains’ cause the cows to stream, the plants to flourish and "scattering swift drops, send down the rain flood.” Both are Adityas and mostly are invoked together probably because of their friendship.

अधारयतं पृथ्वीमुखं यानं मित राजाना वरुणामहीः।
वर्षायतीमौधि: पिन्यं गा अव दृष्टं सुखं जीवदानू।।

Rg. V.62.3

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Royal Mitra and Varuna, uphold earth and heaven with their energies. They cause the plants to grow, give nourishment to the cattle and send down the rain.

Both, *Mitra and Varuna* are guardians of the world, who set in a golden hued chariot. In *Rigveda*—

हिरण्यनिन्निग्यो अस्य स्वृणा वि भ्राजते विवयस्मावजनीव ।
भद्रे केषे निमिता तिलिवें वा सनेम गण्यो अधिगुल्लस्य ॥

*Rg. V. 62.7*

Their chariot is of Gold, its pillars are of iron and it shines in the firmament like lightning.

They are the guardians of water, observers of truth; they protect the people and send down the sweet showers from the sky. *Rig. V. 63.1*—

अकतस्य गोपावधि तिलियो रथं सत्य धर्मं द्रवुवे व्योमानि ।
यमन्त्र नित्रावररणाय युबं तस्मै त्रृष्टिधुमःपिल्लते दिवः ॥

Their chariot is regarded as running in the path of honesty—

यथो रथं सत्यवतः त्रजुरस्मः ।

*Av. IV. 29.7*

मन्त्रे वा नित्रावरणायुवातानां सवेतस्मि ।

*Av. IV. 29.1*

Mitravaruna favor the truthful one in conflicts.

This *Mitravarna* pair is most frequently mentioned next to *Dyavapritthivi*. The hymns in which they are conjointly invoked are much more numerous than those in which they are separately addressed. Both *Mitra and Varuna* have practically same attributes. They are conceived as

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young. Their eye is the sun. They are kings and universal monarchs. They are rulers and guardians of the whole world. They support heaven, earth and air.

They are lords of rivers and they are the gods most frequently thought of and prayed to as best owners of rain. They send rain and refreshment from the sky.

सम्राज या धुतोणी भिन्नव्योभा वरुणश्च ।

Rg. V. 68.2

The Mitra and Varuna who are both sovereign rulers, originators of the rain.

ऋतमूलेन सप्तशष्मिर वरुणाशाले ।

Rg V. 68.4

Rewarding with rain the holy rite, they favor the zealous worshipper.

Rain abounding in heavenly water comes from them. One entire hymn dwells on their powers of bestowing rain. In the Rig Veda itself more than ten suktas V 62-72 is on this dual deities. The dual invocation of these gods goes back to the Indo – Iranian period, for Ahura and Mithra are thus coupled in the Avesta.
3.6.7 Apah

The *waters* are addressed in some hymns as well as in a few scattered verses. Since water is used in sacrifices and other spiritual rites it occupies a high place in vedas.

인사ां आपो महिमानमुतां कार्यवाचाति सवने विवस्वतः ।

Rg.X.75.1

“Water* the worshiper addresses to you excellent praise in the dwelling of the institutor of the rite”.

They follow the path of God. *Indra* armed with the bolt dug out a channel for them, and they never infringe his ordinances. They are celestial as well as terrestrial and the sea is their goal. They are mothers as such produce *Agni*. *Atharva Veda* mentions *Apha* as medicine also.

हिरण्यवर्णः शुचयः पावकः बालु जातः सविता यास्वन्निः ।

Av. 1.33.1

“Water, of golden colour, clean, purifying, in whom born *Agni*”. They purify carrying away defilement. They even cleanse from moral guilt the sign of violence, cursing and lying. They also bestow remedies, health, wealth, strength, long life, and immortality.

आपो याचामि भेषजम् ।

Av. I. 5.4.

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*Vedic Religion and Water Gods*
“Of Waters, having mastery of desirable things, ruling over human beings I ask a remedy”.

आपो दिव्य अचारिणं रसेन समपुक्षिहि।

Av. X.5.46

“The heavenly waters have I honored, with juice have we been mingled, rich in milk”.

आपो अये विश्वामावनं अमृता ओत्तानः।

Av IV.2.6.

“Waters in the beginning favored all, assuming an embryo, they the immortal”.

आपशिष्यस्य पुत्रमित्रु बर्तति।

AV VII.18.2

“Waters veryly flow ghee for him”

अरिज्ञा आपो अय स्रीमस्वयल।

AV. X.5.24.

“Free from defilement are the waters let them carry away from us defilement, sin, mishap and evil dreaming”.

आपो हिष्या मयो भुक्त्वा न उच्चे बहातन।

Av. I. 5.1.

“He, waters, truly brings us bliss. So, help us to strength and power, that we may look on great delight”.

यासु देवीधेष्वे देव आसीत।

Av. IV. 2.6
“Waters divine, who had the God above them”

विश्व हि रिग्र प्रवहित देवी: ।

AV. VI. 51.2

‘Let the mother waters purify us by taking away all the evils’.

Their blessing and aid are often implored, and they are invited to seat themselves on the sacrificial grass to receive the offering of the soma priest.

The \textit{waters} are several times associated with honey. They mix their milk with honey, became the drink of \textit{Indra}, whom it gave heroic strength often they are invoked to pour the wave which is rich in honey to gladden the Gods.

All these hymns show the greatness of water and hence it has been given a status of God in the \textit{Vedic} Religion.

Rivers like \textit{Sindhu, Sutudri, Ganga, Yamuna, Gomati,Parushni} and \textit{Saraswati} were also given the status of goddesses since they are the main sources of water from the hills. Thus \textit{Saraswati has} been praised as..

अभितमे नवीतमे देवितमे सरस्वति ।
अप्रशापता हुव स्मासि प्रशस्तिसत्त्र नस्कृष्ठि ॥

Rg. II. 41.16

\textit{Saraswati} you are the best of mothers, you are the best of rivers you are the best of Goddesses, although we are of no repute, dear mother grant us distinction.

\textit{Vedic Religion and Water Gods}
The Vedic seers highly invoked *saraswati* and addressed her as
*Subhage* – beautiful lady,
*Sobhana Dhane* – radian with wealth
*Subhre* – Purest of the pure
*Stuvate Vachan Rasi* – bestower of food
*Nadinam Asurya* – most powerful among rivers
*Saraswati ketuna maho Amah* – *saraswati* mighty river with great floods.
*Chodayatri Sunritam* – encouraging those who speak truth
*Nadinam Suchi* – purest of rivers

The *Rigvedic* seers regarded *saraswati* as giver of wealth water and intellect.

### 3.7 Rtam in Vedas

The word *Rtam* in the Vedas carry a number of meanings. It is regarded as a deity, truth, sacrifice as well as Water. *Rtam* is closely attached with *Varuna* and *Mitra Varuna*. *Rtam* acts on the wishes of *Varuna*.

Thus :

> “प्र सीमादित्यो अस्तिणिधिघातो तत्त
> हिन्दुयो वरुणस्य यातित्।”
>
> Rg. II.28.4

The *Aditya*, the Upholder has created all this water. The rivers flow by the power of *Varuna*.
Mitra and Varun are augmenters of water and dispensers of water.

“The sacrificial offering of Mitra and Varuna makes the rivers flow. Mitra and Varuna are the protectors of the waters and the protectors of the Truth. They protect the sweet showers of rain.”

Rg.I.2.8

Rg.V.63.1

Here Mitra and Varuna regarded as guardians of water and observers of Truth. They protect the sweet showers of rain.

Rg.IV.23.10

The worshiper subjecting Rita to his will, enjoys Rita; the strength Rita is developed with speed, and is desirous of possessing water; to Rita belong the profound heaven and earth; supreme milch kine, they yield their milk to Rita.

Rita generally means truth but in the Vedas it imports also water and sacrifice.

Nirukta II.25

Nirukta IV.19

Actually Satyam and Ritam are the basis of Vedic morality. This world is governed by some external laws of nature. These laws must be

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By adopting the path of truth man becomes divine.

“The path of truth is the right one. If truth disappears from this world then all worldly operations will come to a standstill. Confidence will vanish. The truth is the fundamental thing.

In the Bhurisukta of Atharva Veda, the fundamental principles to sustain the peace of the earth are beautifully enunciated.

The basic factors that can sustain the peace of the earth are

- Truth
- Law
- Vow for service
- Austerity
- Faith
- Sacrifice.
The cementing forces that can sustain the peace of the earth are Truth, the irrevocable and inexorable law, vow for the service of mankind, living a simple and austere life, faith in the divine power and selflessness for the welfare of the others. Whereas untruth, lawlessness, selfishness, luxury, denial of the supreme power and violence destroy the earth. The world today is surely in need of peace which is eluding its grasp simply because we applaud truth but practice falsehood, we preach about service but we ourselves with selfishness and lead a luxurious life. This contradiction in our character is because we have less faith in the spiritual power, which supervises all the lives.

The creator has separated the falsehood from truth. The truth evokes loyalty while falsehood generates unfaithfulness.

Yajurveda says, “Walk on the path of truth”

“ऋतस्य पंचप्रेत”

Yaju VII.45

‘धुम ऋतस्य पथाम’

Rg VIII.31.13

Let the path of truth be easy to tread for pleasures of the world.

“ऋतस्य श्रृंगुमुर्विया विप्राये”

Rg VIII. 86.5

The power of Rita is omnipresent.
3.7.1 Vedic Religion and Ritam

The Vedic religion is not merely a blessing, but it presents a definite philosophy, ethics social order and administration for human welfare and for world peace. It includes science art and industry for the mankind. The principles, which are propounded in the Vedas, are for the progress of people. It is termed as a Religion. The preaching of the Veda not only save us from falling down but also constantly inspire us to rise above.

Salvation is the ultimate goal of human life. The intellect is not satisfied without knowledge and science. The salvation is needed for the soul. Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha are the ultimate goals of life. For the pursuit of these four Veda will lead us in a balanced way.

Man is his own knower, interpreter and creator. He wants to achieve pleasure without pain. But how does one avoid pain? The Rishis point towards “Self knowledge”. The learned people say, “Know thy self”. Knowledge leads to happiness of self. Hence, the Brihadaranyakopanishad says—

“आत्मा वा अरे इश्वर : !”

Bri.upa.2.4.5

The Kathopanishad gives a curious call to all humans to be awake, be cautious and keep the company of the learned to acquire this Knowledge of the “Self”.

“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राय्य वर्णिनिवोधत !”

Katha.upa.3.14

A learned man is a noble person with pure conscience. The evildoers never fallow the path of Truth.

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"स्वतंत्र्य पन्थां न तरात्ति कुश्कुलः।"

Rg.IX.73.6

As it is said in the Rg.3.13, the deities protect the observers of truth.

"स्वतंत्र्य यथे रोदसी दर्शं सचतः जूत मः।"

Rg.III.13.2

To promote human welfare the spiritual development is necessary. The spiritual tradition reiterates that, society is bondage and the development is possible only in the state of freedom from this bondage. The Vedas proclaim, as the spiritual knowledge is the path of human welfare. The Indian thinkers like Dr. Radhakrishnan also feel that, the pleasure and pains of an individual lie with in the personality*. For a good society, human values are very important. The individual and society should protect the moral values and the social equality.

Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore has mentioned that the unity of the soul and internal goodwill are the human virtues, which push man on the path of progress and welfare. The feeling of good is present in every human heart. Religion only reiterates it. A man, who is good at heart, can only help others. Human values are created by man himself and are not an ordinance from supernatural*.

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