CONSERVATION OF ENVIRONMENT IN X -MANDALA RIGVEDA

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The conservation begins with understanding the origin and characters of earth, water, air, light and heat. These are basic needs for any living being indiscriminately on the earth. The Rigvedic man had identified there need for life and use for all beings continuously till the end of existence of the world, rather existence itself is presence of these in an naturally created levels. In any difference or alterations can alter the nature in a place and the change might have been observed by them in some place. Their experience might have given base for reflections to draw certain norms to control such situations to certain amount. In their reflections the creation of ecological factors exhibit the concern for conservation. The conservation was through devotion and unconditional love.

The origin of earth described as tree, and its branches as quarters, 3 earth growing tree, the quarters were born from the earth.

What is the forest? Which is the tree? Out of which, the gods have fabricated heaven and earth, ever stationary, and undecaying, giving protection to gods and men. The vastness of earth is described as

"The sun does not pass beyond the broad earth. The wind does not drive the rain from off the earth". The relationship of earth, air and water, their mutual earnestness to maintain balance can be visualized. The world or home of all living and non-living as created from un-decaying wood, as it has origin from water, existence with water, and substantiated till end with water. The wood can also be interpreted as the substance used by creator for creation of earth, floated on water, filled with pockets of water. Moreover without water living beings can not survive. Therefore the wood never decays. The importance water are pictured thus; 

"May the divine waters be propitious to our worship for our drinking: may they flow round us and be our health and safety". The prayer for the pure waters to maintain good health and safety of animals, are the basic need of man. "Waters, sovereigns of precious [treasure], granters of habitation to men, I solicit of ye medicine [for mine infirmities]. The purity is requested for preservation of life on earth. The fear of pollution and cause of destroying the ecological balance can be noticed.

"The soma has declared to me; all medicaments as well as Agni, the benefactor of the universe, are in waters". The curative value and the electrical energy present in waters helpful for health of living beings are indicated.

"Waters bring to perfection all disease-dispelling medicaments for the good of my body, that I may long behold the sun". In this hymn man concentrates on his life for continuing generation. The essence of life live in water is brought our notice in 

"Water's! the plants flourish by means of water. My prayer is effectual through water; the essence of water is vigorous through water; purify me". The term vayanam is also explained as "variprabhavanam vrhiyavadinam", the products of the water, rice, barley, etc. Bheshajam is explained as happiness driving away sin. The water is followed by the worship of vayu. The greatness of vayu is thus

The greatness of the impetuous vayu; his voice spreads the sky, tinting purple the quarters of the horizon, he advances, raising the dust of the earth. The movement of vayu maintains the environmental balance in a place. It has capacity to
move according to seasons, help nature to bring needed creation and protection. The movement is described as अन्नेनी सतेनी वर्तनीमात्रां ते जीवनी कलात्मकानां।
अपरं सरस्वती महाभाषा /तत्त्वं शास्त्रम निमित्त आ बन्धु॥

"Traversing the firmament by its paths, [vayu] rest not for a single day; the friend of the waters, the first born, the utterer of truth — where has he been generated. Where was he manifested?" The importance of vayu or air and its activity on earth in order to maintain the ecological balance or nature to nurture the creation is explained. The term truth might have been used for the importance of existence on earth. Which is thus आत्मा देवस्य, भूमन्य सर्वं सत्यं वरीयां देव एवः।
घोषां इतरत्वां धिशो न च चापं तरंग्यां हृदयं विलेव॥

"The soul of the gods, the germ of the world, this divinity moves according to his pleasure; his voice is heard, his form is not seen; let us worship that vata with oblations". The vata or vayu is a soul of all beings. It existence can be seen in the form of growth of other beings. The voice is heard due to strong movement". He is rightly recognised as the soul of all beings. Without air or vayu circulation no living being can exist on earth.

The character of vayu in two forms are described thus द्वारविष्णुवासी वात आ वसंतो वायु वतानव।
छेदे ते अन्य आ बातु प्रवर्ज्यो बातु युद्ध॥

Rishi Bharadvaja address to vayu to fulfill his request; “these two winds blow to the regions which are far beyond the ocean; may the one bring you vigour, may the other blow away all sin”. Here sage is concerned for the other parts of world along with his place, to begin and later his thought for vigour, for any activity on the earth. clearly indicates his concern for ecological element. “Breath, wind, medicinal balm; blow away, wind, all evil; for thou art the universal medicine, thou movest as messenger of the gods”. The air is described as life, medicine for all lives. The wind in reply states thus “I have come to you with pleasure and with protections; I have brought you fortunate vigor, I drive away your disease.” The purity related to valuable life in relation to pollution. The reply for sages request after offering offering’s to him in sacrifice indirectly purifying through sacrifice.

The Agni plays important roll in preserving and for adding value to all the five ecological elements. The fire has importance to carry offerings to different gods and at the same time purifying air. The presence of aging in water, earth and plants are described. "Agni", Jatavedasa, who had entered into water and plants, hides in three worlds, heaven, mid-air, earth, as three divinities, Agni, vayu, Aditya, the water, the shrubs, the trees and the bodies of living beings”. These are agni’s ten hiding places.

The forest or Aranyā is described as a peaceful place and it serves people, who visit there without destroying. It describes the value of Arayyas and their tolerant nature. They are maintainer of ecological balance.

अरण्यवासिया वासी या प्रेरणासि
कथा गामन न प च। चरित्र न ला भीरित विन्दुती॥

"who art, as it were, perishing there, why dost thou not inquire of the village, does not fear assail thee"? The Aranyā is compared with the village and the fear with which forest is always protected is indirectly indicated. The fear of wild-life protects the forest. But at the same time people were using forest animals grazing, fire wood. It is described as “This man calls his cow, another cuts down the timber; tarrying in the forest at eventide, one thinks there is a cry”22. The people using forest for their own needs may cause the destruction and ecological imbalance, causing it to express the sorrow.

"But Aranyā injures no one unless some other assail her; feeding upon sweet fruit, he penetrates at will”21. The forest welcome and nurture all the beings indiscriminately in her residence. This had been the experience of sages. Lastly the Aranyas are described as “I praise the musk scented, fragrant, fertile, uncultivated, the mother of wild animals”. The fertility of soil, fragrance of trees, plants and animals, adding grace to forest and supporting life.

Finally we can find the common prayers of sages for protection of environment in “Common worshippers, be your intention; common be the wishes of your hearts; common be your thoughts, so that there may be thorough union among you”23. Thus we can find our ancients through their prayers to different natural elements protected the precious and delicate nature.

REFERENCE:
GRIFITH Tr THE RG VEDA. Motilal banarsi das.