



June 2021

Established 1985

Issue 1/2021

The world as we knew it has changed. We pray for the people of India and Palestine who are undergoing a humanitarian crisis. The covid pandemic has taken lives and affected millions. Vaccinations to protect us have been developed and programmes to reach us are underway.

In this issue we cover why "The value of water is about much more than its price". Water is a basic right and is necessary for life.

This year in October we will be holding local government elections. Everyone has a democratic right to vote. Regardless of status and position all are equal before the law. This gives us comfort that we are protected and secure to conduct our daily lives within the framework of Dharma. Selecting the party or candidate and deciding about your vote is important. We provide guidelines in this issue for you to make this decision.

The Arya Samaj proudly participated in opening of CODESA and the democratic parliament in the decade of the 1990's. The Late Pt Nardev Vedalankar shared the Sungatan Sutra chapter 10 Rig Veda at both these august institutions alongside other faiths.

"O God the fulfiller of all our desires, who pervades everything animate and inanimate. You are resplendent in this material world which we at best describe in words. You make available all the resources necessary for our survival. Please grant us material wealth and spiritual strength.

O citizens! Live in harmony and accord. Be organised and co-operative. Speak with one voice and make your resolutions with one mind. As our ancient saints and seers, leaders, and preceptors, have performed their duties righteously, similarly, may you not falter in executing your duties.

O Humanity! Let the object of your thought be the same, the place of your assembly be common, your mind be of one accord and your hearts be united. May you be inspired jointly in prayer, for you have been provided for equally so that you may receive and offer equally.

O Children of God! Let your object of life be one and the same, let your hearts be equal (in feeling) and let your minds be united so that there may be a worthy and equal life for all."

On 16 June we celebrate Youth Day in South Africa. We honour the sacrifices of the generations of youth of 1976 and 1980 who fought fearlessly for a South Africa that belongs to all who lives in it.

"कृण्वन्तो विश्वमार्यम्" Rig Veda 9.63.6- Make the world noble

'Mitrasya Chakshusha samikshamahe' Yajur Veda 36.18 May we Look at All with an Equal and Friendly Eye

# The value of water is about much more than its price

Although water is available to most people at the turn of a tap, large numbers of people struggle to obtain water. Their efforts to get water would make many of us blanch. The simple act of fetching water, generally the work of girls and women in Asia and Africa, takes hours and is backbreaking and hazardous. 2.2 billion people in the world live without access to safe water. This results in many diseases and even deaths. The lack of access to water was highlighted once more during the covid outbreak.

The world is changing in ways that worsens water scarcity and threatens the quality of the current water supply. Climate change, population growth, agricultural development and industrial pollution are putting pressure on existing water sources. South Africa is one of 30 countries in the world that is water scarce. There are serious water inequalities. Many water-stressed communities do not have access to clean water and many live without running water through taps in their homes. This means that their water needs are met through polluted rivers, faraway standpipes, or rapidly depleting boreholes.

Recognising the hardships of fellow humans, the Arya Samaj started project TRIPTI during the past drought in KwaZulu Natal to alleviate the suffering. Project TRIPTI has enabled many to have access to clean, safe, and continuous supply of water and in many schools, food gardens were set up.

On 31 March 2021 at the Virtual Bridge Series Webinar hosted by Arya Samaj Gauteng, Sudhira Sham shared this story: “In 1990 when we first began admitting African children at our school, a little girl who was in my class was kept at a distance by the Indian children because they felt she was not clean enough. In our English class I asked her to describe her mornings before she arrived at school. This little 10-year-old spoke of going to the river every morning and carrying buckets of water home for her family every morning. The well-off Indian children who were still tucked up in bed while this little girl struggled up a hill with her buckets realised how difficult life was for her. Years later during the drought her community was a recipient of the Project TRIPTI efforts.”

We are aware that water is a divine gift for all living beings. But the commodification of water has resulted in unequal access. The privatisation of water has resulted in high water rates, cut offs to the poor, reduced services, and broken promises with much of the world's water landing in the hands of a few multinational companies and has remained there.

As the first scripture for humanity what do the Vedas say about water? And more importantly how do we relate this to our Creator and what are our rights and responsibilities regarding water. The divinity of water is alluded to repeatedly in the Vedas and it is our duty to make ourselves familiar with this and use this precious commodity accordingly.

## Water is for all living beings!

**Rig Veda 4.26.2: *Aum aham bhoomimadadaam - aaryaayaaham vrishtim daashushe martyaaya. Ahamapo anayam vaavashaanaa, mama devaaso anu ketamaayan.***

**I (God) give the earth for use by noble people. I shower rain for the benefit of ALL living beings, I release the resonating waters (vibrant sound of rain). All of nature's bounties exist and function in harmony by My will.**

There are five essential elements: the Pancha Maha-Bhoota considered to be the basis of all cosmic creation. The five elements are: *Prithvi/Bhudev* – Earth; *Apas/Varuna/Jal* – Water; *Agni* - Fire; *Vayu* – Air and *Akasha/Dyaus/Ether* - Space. All of creation, including the human body, is made up of these five essential elements and upon death, the human body dissolves into these five elements of nature, thereby balancing the cycle of nature. These elements have different characteristics accounting for different faculties of human experience associated with the five senses. The five master elements act as the medium for the experience of sensations.

The earth is created using all the other elements and can be perceived by all five senses — hearing, touch, sight, taste, and smell. The next higher element is water. It has no odour but can be heard and felt. It has no taste. Then comes fire, which can be heard, felt, and seen. Air can be heard and felt. Space or “Akasha” (ether) is beyond the senses of smell, taste, sight, and touch; it is only accessible to the sense of hearing.





Rabindranath Tagore, a Nobel laureate for literature, in his book, *Pancha bhoota*, explained that the emotional faculty of the human mind is keenly sensitive to all objects of light, colour, sound, effect of speed, sun, moon and stars. In art – painting and sculpture, classical music and classical dance, sound, light, colour, and form are often linked to the play of light, flow of water, the space created by movement through the displacement of air, the sounds of space and fire.

## Who makes water?

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Humans have yet to manufacture or produce a single drop of water, milk or blood, or a grain of sand or salt. Simple knowledge and logic inform us that nothing exists out of nothing, nor by itself. There MUST be a process. A beginning and a result. A CAUSE and EFFECT. If humans cannot produce water, then Who or What produces it, and How? If water is a result, an effect, then Who or What is the Cause or Producer, and how does it happen?

We are taught by science that in the vast, 'empty, open space,' atmosphere – *antariksh*, 2 molecules of hydrogen and 1 molecule of oxygen combine to form water – H<sub>2</sub>O. The big question is: How and why have **these two** gases been selected and **combined** to form water, and HOW does this combination and precise ratio happen, unseen, silently, seemingly effortlessly?

As in a recipe, if these gases provide the material ingredients to produce water, then there MUST be the knowledge, and a Knower for the process and method. WHO, or What is that Knower? The term Knower implies a BEING with Knowledge and Intelligence, not a material or inanimate entity, a what.

Several gases exist in the atmosphere, in different proportions such as nitrogen, oxygen, hydrogen, carbon dioxide and many gasses. Some come together to support life, others come together and are dangerous to life.

The process of Creation, Preservation or Sustenance and Dissolution continues eternally. This must also have a FIRST Cause or reason. Yajur 40.11: refers to the term *Sambhuti cha vinaasham cha yastad-VEDO bhyaam sah*. – the world in which all substances are created (brought to exist *together – sam-bhuti sah*) and ultimately dissolved – *Vinaash; all with Knowledge - Vedobhyaam*. *Sambhuti* is also translated as God the (Great) Cause - Who brings together the elements.

Rig Veda 10.190.1, 2, 3... give the process – THE HOW, overseen by Him based on THREE firm, unyielding, divine, eternal LAWS: *Rtan cha satyan cha-abhibidaata tapaso...* *Rta* - law, due process, orderliness; *Satyam* - truth; and *Tapas* – arduous penance and impelling, spiritual effort.

All of this indicates that a Higher, Intelligent Cause makes water SACRED. In the Vedas, the term *Twashta* refers to God as the Great, Intelligent, Creative Designer, eg. Rig 7.35.6; Atharva 6.78.3; Atharva 19.10.6 (Shaanti Karan mantra 6).



Albert Einstein, the great scientist of our time declared: "There are times when I realise there is a greater force at work in the universe, which I am unable to fathom. Call it what you may." Hilton Ratcliffe, a South African astrophysicist, on the Big Bang theory: "There must be an Intelligent Designer."

Water is itself the material cause for different effects and forms like clouds, rain, ice, dew, frost, mist, moisture, steam, snow. How is it that formed in the atmosphere – ANTARIKSH, no two snowflakes (or clouds) are the same: each snowflake is a mathematically precise, unique CREATION? A core aspect of many missions into space is to search for water – so that life could be sustained there.

# Water is Life!

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In the Yajur Veda 25.13: *Aum ya aatmada baladaa... chhaaya amrtam...* recited daily in the Ishwar Upasana, we get a glimpse of the divine plan. ATMADA: Birth by His will and BALADA: life comes with a complete 'package' of the MEANS to live. The soul and body must mutually support each other. Food, air, and water are available. The family and society exist for social interactions. Spiritual knowledge is found in the scriptures of TRUTH.

The Vedas are *bal* "strength" and *chaaya*: "shade". In the shade or protection there is knowledge, and guidance. The Vedas are the "User's Manual" for humans on how to best live a pure life – *amrit*, to our optimum as humans. Our supreme, ultimate source of strength, support, and protection – *bal and chaaya* is God, the Creator of even the Vedas. This message is on one aspect of 'Bal' - the means and support or the strength for the system of life which is WATER.

Yajur 13.4: *Hiranya-garbhah samavartta - AGRE... bhootasya jaatah Patih EK AASEET. ONE LORD – Pati Ek* Who existed BEFORE creation – *agre*, that infused life – *bhootasya*, into primordial matter, which was also pre-existent. The 3rd eternal self-existent entity are souls. This ONE Lord must, therefore, be the FIRST Cause of everything, including WATER to sustain life – *bal*, *chhaaya*.

Yajur 3.5: *Aum Bhooh Bhuvah Swah dyauriva...* The earth, atmosphere, and heaven, created, sustained, permeated, and pervaded by God, are the three spheres which sustain all life on earth. God is the FIRST Producer of all that we NEED. Nature is His factory, and we are the consumers. So may there be peace in the heaven, atmosphere, and earth: *Dyau*, *antariksh*, and *prithivi shaanti*.

## Water has many names in the Vedas

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Rig Veda 1.164.46: *Aum Indram mitram varunam agnim ... EKAM sadvipraa bahudhaa vadanti ...* The wise, enlightened sages address the TRUTH (*sath*) of ONE formless God (*EK*) by various NAMES - *Indra*, *Mitra*, *Varuna*, *Agni* ... applies to water also. Whilst water has different attributes, it also takes many names and forms: *Paani*, *jal*, *aapah*, *parjanya*, *varshatu*, *poosha*, *adri barha* – humidity, *sindhava* – forming rivers, *apaam nipaata* – clouds in the sky at the right time, eg monsoons, spring, summer and winter rains in different hemispheres and regions, *varuna* (as in the sea, oceans, which surround, 'embrace' the earth) – God is also *Varuna* as He embraces the entire universe.

In metaphysics and Vedic philosophy as indicated in Rig Veda 10.75.5, words like *Ganga*, *Yamuna*, *Sarasvati* etc. refer to not external, physical rivers but vital arteries and blood vessels in the body (which in fact must be kept pure). This then poses the question of how pure the external river Ganges is today.

## Water is dynamic

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Moving ever **forward** by its force, water breaks through rocks and mountains to form rivers. Through the flow and intensity of water electricity is generated. Even the calmest oceans are dynamic.

Rig 7.35.8; Atharva 19.10.8 – *sindhava*. Whilst the two banks of a river may serve as boundaries to divide and separate, the water unites and sustains all life on each side: *Gobhil Grha Sootra – Sarasvati anumanyaswa*. Therefore, this is recited in the havan.

Stagnant water breeds disease, such as malaria.

Clouds are God's factory and storage for water and rain is God's supply of water. God's law (*Rta*) of GRAVITY ensures that rain comes DOWN. Rivers are God's DELIVERY system for water. Like the clouds, rivers also do NOT keep water for themselves – they unselfishly, unconditionally GIVE that which they receive, for life along their journey: *Nadiya na piye kabhi apna jal...* Therefore, every cloud and river in the world is SACRED. Water and rivers also exist below the surface of the earth.



Rig 5.51.15: *Swasthi panthaam anu charema... soorya chandra... sangamemahi* (Swastivaachan mantra 7). The sun and moon, representing the 'big needle and small needle of our part of the solar system,' exist and function in harmony and unity with each other for the good of all life on earth, resulting in TIME; the seasons, rain, foods, plants, flowers etc.

Can any form of life exist and survive without water and for how long? Is it a coincidence that, like the earth, the human body also comprises about 70% water? Water that is used up by nature is replenished with water, by the Knower. Animals and plants consume water only. Human beings also lose water by the bodily functions, but do **WE** replenish lost water with water to sustain the balance of 70% for peace in the body, comprising the five elements: earth, water, fire, air, and ether. Water is the 2nd in the order from gross to subtle. A dog has been seen to leave its bowl of water and drink from a puddle of rainwater.



*Soorya jal:* Our elders would start their day acknowledging and respecting the five elements of the universe by standing on mother earth and offering a little water in the presence of the rising sun as *agni* or fire. They would FIRST offer water to guests on arrival; and a few drops of water to a loved one at the time of death. Did they know something?

A Japanese scientist has shown that there is a reaction in water according to the way we communicate with it. God is All Pervading, All Powerful and All Knowing. The words Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient, all have the prefix OM!

What if the earth, moon, sun, oceans, rivers, plants, and trees could 'speak' and say: we are all tired, so we are going on a 'go

slow or protest,' and then stop working for just a few minutes? We must stop the nursery rhyme 'rain rain go away...'

Like God, none of the elements of nature discriminate in any way. Elements exist and work incessantly for the benefit of ALL life unconditionally and unselfishly. So, they are '*Devataas*' ever giving. God, being the Greatest of all *Devataas*, is Mahadev.

22 March each year is World Water Day. Let us observe it with these spiritually higher thoughts. This day is celebrated keeping in line with Sustainable Development Goal number 6 which is aimed at achieving water and sanitation for all by 2030.

### EVERY DROP COUNTS - COUNT EVERY DROP

## Selected Mantras on Water

1. Rig 10.151.6: Water is the FIRST medicine, and remedy for all ailments.
2. Yajur 13.6: O Mankind, harm not the winds movement, the ocean-wide waters which holds the earth, nor the earth-shaded waters of the rivers.
3. Atharva 3.14.5 (456): Water is auspicious and beneficial, the enhancer of strength. **Hydrogen and oxygen compose water.** May the satiating, strong nectar of water with its sweetness helps us with life and vigour.
4. Yajur 36.17: *Aapah shaanti aushadhi shaanti:* May water and the medicinal herbs bring peace to us. Only water quenches thirst. When the body is at peace, the mind and soul can be at peace. This mantra (from the Shaanti Paat), should be recited mentally, commencing with Aum each time water and medicine is taken, acknowledging God the Giver.
5. Saama: Ayendra, Dec. 4.1.5. 8 (339): Let us recite eternal Vedic verses for God, Who pours down waters from the sky, and supports and holds together the earth and heaven with His Knowledge and Wisdom.

# Guidelines for selecting candidates for Local Government

With the upcoming local government elections selection of representatives by Political Parties and Voters is an important process.



**Swami Dayanand Saraswathi (1824-1883) recommended following as the purpose of the state:**

1. to promote righteousness,
2. to dispense justice,
3. to destroy the wicked,
4. to work for the welfare of all and
5. to establish peace and the country.

**We need ethical, selfless, and competent Leadership in the state and in business, labour, faith-based and civil society to build a stable, peaceful, and prosperous country.**

Everyone has a role and responsibility to contribute. All need to work together and make constructive strides in realising the country's constitutional aspirations to create a harmonious, flourishing, and capable nation.

## Why is local Government important?

- Local Government is our first port of call to make our lives better. It is a vehicle for transformation and development.
- We must know and exercise our rights and responsibilities, reflect on the purpose of the state to bring about the standard of leadership required to run the state, and ensure the performance needed to improve service delivery and development.
- Socio—economic justice means that all residents must have equity, access, rights, and participation for sustainable development to be a reality.

*Local Government elections is set down for October 2021.*

*The **type and quality of leadership** that gets elected will determine how the places we live in are developed and managed.*

*It is therefore imperative that leaders chosen are **fit for purpose**.*

Are political parties taking this responsibility seriously? Are they presenting candidates who are up to the task of discharging their responsibilities with the commitment that it deserves? And do independent candidates have a commitment to all residents?

## Guidelines for Choosing Councillors

Municipalities have a constitutional mandate to perform important functions on urban and spatial planning, land development and land use management, infrastructure investment and provision of basic services. Performance on these functions determines the impact on the quality of life of people and the conducive environment for economic growth and development.

### What we expect of Councillors

- Be committed to ethical and selfless leadership and put the interest of the people above all else.
- Have a passion for service and upliftment of people and communities.
- Represent all the people irrespective of who voted for them.
- Understand and be committed to their party manifestos but not to factional interests.
- Be vigilant about private, conflicting, and dubious interests that even compromise the ethos, principles, and true spirit of their political parties.
- Be servants of the people, representatives of communities and leaders of the people who are committed to working with people and bringing about development

## Let us look for these qualities in Councillors standing for Local Government Elections

**Good character:** Councillors should be trustworthy, honest and have a track record of serving the community. They should be compassionate, wise, caring, and inspiring, with good listening skills.

**Competence:** Councillors must have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities. Councillors must strive to always be fair and objective. They must know the Councillor requirements outlined in legislation and the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) Guidelines.

**Commitment to build social cohesion:** Ward Councillors and proportional representatives must be committed to building social cohesion in a ward, village, town, and city. Councillors must facilitate processes for people to work together in developing themselves and their local areas.

**Commitment to objective decision-making.** Councillors should consider evidence, research, and data to support decision-making that is solution focused and promotes innovative and transformative approaches.

**Care and Compassion.** Councillors must be the face of a caring government. They must lead by example in promoting good governance and be responsive to the needs and aspirations of communities. They must build confidence in people that their problems will be attended to and there is follow up on enquiries, grievances and issues raised by community members.

**Commitment to Development.** Councillors must be resilient and committed to improving conditions on the ground and uplifting people. Councillors should focus on their core responsibilities and not on building patronage of voters in toxic ways by keeping people beholden to them for delivery of services, which is their right.

LET US EXERCISE OUR RIGHTS TO VOTE BY CAREFULLY CHOOSING RESPONSIBLE PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVES AND HOLDING THEM ACCOUNTABLE

*The Manusmrtiti (7-14) recommends that government leaders be selected with the following in mind: Maulan - leaders must be citizens, Shastravidah – leaders must be specialists, Kulobhavan – leaders must have good backgrounds and qualities, Labdhlakshan – leaders must have the capacity to achieve success in executing tasks, and Parikshitan - leaders must be brave and experienced.*

*Rig Veda 4.1.4; Yajur Veda 21.3: Aum twan no agne varunasya vidwaan devasya... Leaders must have the following qualities: Knowledge and enlightenment, be all-embracing – work for the welfare of ALL, be wise and have divine qualities.*

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To contribute to Project TRIPTI and other projects of the Arya Samaj contact [admin@aryasamajsa.org](mailto:admin@aryasamajsa.org)

Your contributions will go a long way to supporting water stressed communities.

Please send your comments and suggestions to [admin@aryasamajsa.org](mailto:admin@aryasamajsa.org)



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**This publication was possible through the generous sponsors**  
Palm Stationery Manufactures, Phoenix Industrial Park  
Standard Printers, Springfield Park, Tel: 031 579 7400

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