INTRODUCTION

Human life is fully dependent on five basic elements. Among them, water and air are most important for the survival of humans. With the help of wind, people breathe, and proper watering keeps the blood circulation of the body in a right way and regulates all organ activities. So, it is a common fact that water is life. Because, every life in this earth is nourished by water. Drinking of water, bathing with fresh water has a great importance for removing the impurities from body. So, in our ancient scriptures, the usefulness of bath through freshwater is discussed very seriously.

Bathing is purifying, libidinal stimulant and life-giving. It reduces fatigue, sweating and dirt. It brings about strength in the body and enhances ojas. The Indian philosophy through its Vedas, Upanisads and Brāhmaṇas has given some effective statements to the importance of water. Water is considered according to Hindu religion as the source of purity. It makes us pure and fresh. Our ancient Dharmasūtras, literature also established this concept in a gentle way. Boudhāyana Dharmasūtra says-

अः निवृत्यं गृहस्थमायी (वै त 1.5.8.2)

IMPORTANCE OF WATER

Means, our body becomes fresh and clean through water. This water is very much important in sacrificial works also. In sacrifice, the first work is to pure himself through Ācamana, which we can be achieved through water. Ācamana is the way, by which a sacrificer purifies himself. Boudhāyana says- विनितं रहस्य माया (वै त 1.5.8.15) that a sacrificer should sip the water three times in this way, that it reaches till his heart. This concept of sipping is clearly defined by Goutama in his sūtra- सूर्यम् करते तस्मं मन्त्रान्वितानि या नारकं बुद्धिमानं कन्यार्गानांप्रथमानेन निर्माणस्याप्सुन्दरम् आपनानु (वै त 1.1.135) that he should seated in a pure place, placing his arms between his knees, arranging his dress and after washing his hands silently sip water three or four times that reaches till his heart. This method of sipping is reserved for Brāhmaṇas. The procedure of sipping is different for different castes. The warrior caste (Kṣatriya) should sip the water three or four times that reaches till his throat. For Vaiśyas this sipping water should be tasted and a Śūdra should touch the water by his lips for sipping. In Manuṣyā, this method is clearly defined. And through the Ācamana the sacrificer becomes blameless and faultless. Haradatta also explains this concept in Mitākṣarā commentary- अश्राव्यस्य विनितं रहस्य माया (सूर्यम्) विनितं रहस्य माया (सूर्यम्) विनितं रहस्य माया (सूर्यम्) विनितं रहस्य माया (सूर्यम्)

Means, water make the world pure, pure world make me pure, Brāhmaṇaspati make me pure, Brahma make me pure, I have made which sins by eating uneatable foods and which endowment I have taken from worthless persons, water make them all faultless.

Again, in Dāna Karma also the water is important. Āpastamba says that a person should relief some water before commenting the giving work- सर्वस्यस्यामान्यानि (वै त 2.5.8.11)

Here is another statement said by Boudhāyana about the importance of water-

अत नर्मदाय रिविद्योजस्य विद्येऽवधानेन बुद्धिमानं कन्यादर्शानांप्रथमानेन निर्माणस्याप्सुन्दरम् (वै त 2.4.9.8)

Means, if a person utters the mantra “अत नर्मदाय रिविद्योजस्य” three times standing in water, he reliefs from all sins. Gautama also declares this concept in his sūtra- अत्यंतिधित्र विद्येऽवधानेन बुद्धिमानं कन्यादर्शानांप्रथमानेन निर्माणस्याप्सुन्दरम् (वै त 3.6.11) that if a person goes down in the water and utters the verse of Aygīmarṣaṇa three times his intentional and unconscious sins shall go away. These are the statements present that to purify himself and protect himself from any type of sins everywhere water is considered.
The destructive power of waters has also been prescribed in one verse where there are enemies with this mantra of matches the water with thunderbolt and throws it in that direction.

The scriputures and Brahmanical texts were intimately connected with the people of Vedic period. There are instructions on religious rituals for households in the Dharmaśātras. On the other hand, in the Brāhmaṇa texts, there are the discussions on the rules of sacrifice. Water has been identified as one of the most sacred elements in the Vedic period- 

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**In this hymn, seer prays to the god of water, to lead forward the sacrifice, to lead forward the sacrifice's lord, take good care of the sacrificer and take him closer to god. So, it is ordered to drink water before commencing the sacrificial work, and thus the Brahmacārī suffers no harm of any kind. As it is declared in Satapatha Brāhmaṇa, the person who gives water to his forefathers, even when he himself also gets satisfaction. Even when a donation. Not only that, the person who gives water to his forefathers, one garment, facing towards south gives water three times to the dead.**

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