

Prosperity in the Shree Sukta an Exploration of Rigvedic Prayer

Dr. Madhavi Aniruddha Moharil

*Associate Professor Department of English R. Kewalramani Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Nagpur,
Maharashtra*

Abstract—This paper explores the concept of prosperity (Samruddhi) as presented in the Shree Sukta, a prayer from the Rigveda, highlighting its holistic and timeless relevance. It argues that prosperity in the Indian tradition extends beyond material wealth to include ethical values, emotional well-being, environmental consciousness, social responsibility, and spiritual growth. Through a detailed interpretation of well recited fifteen shlokas, the study shows that true prosperity integrates qualities such as humility, truthfulness, compassion, and dedication, alongside economic stability. The prayer emphasizes harmony between humans, nature, and the divine, advocating sustainable development and collective welfare over individualistic gain. It also critiques modern materialistic approaches that neglect inner peace and social balance. The paper demonstrates ancient wisdom with contemporary concerns like environmental degradation and social inequality and establishes the concept that the teachings of the Shree Sukta offer practical guidance for achieving balanced personal, societal, and global progress.

Index Terms—Shree Sukta, Prosperity, Rigveda, Shloka, Samruddhi

I. INTRODUCTION

Bharatiya shloka (hymn), mantras (chanting), kathas (stories) are timeless and universal. They are the products of extensive knowledge, keen observation and divine faith in the supreme cosmic power. It is said that the Rishis, the academically wise men of ancient India were divinely blessed. A period of twelve years invested in intensive research by them is termed as a Tapa. During this period of research, they used to go away from material life and delve deep into the process of gaining knowledge.

Their profound knowledge was imparted to the young generation in a systematic manner in Gurukula

Ashrama. At the Gurukulas, the Shishya, a disciple used to gain knowledge through recitation of ancient hymns and oral literature. The ancient wisdom was transmitted to younger generation through the teachings of different genres like Shloka (hymn), Sukta (prayer), Matra (chanting) or Katha (stories). In Gurukulas, value-based education was emphasized. Some prayers were regularly recited by the disciples at the Gurukula. Even in the family institutions, which were also believed to be centers of imparting education, some hymns and mantras were regularly recited. Gurukulas and the family institution were the pillars of social and national construct. It aimed at establishing peace and harmony as it is rightly said, 'sarve bhavantu sukhinah' means peace for all. These prayers, hymns are incorporated in the Vedas.

The fundamental principle of peace and harmony which had been advocated in the teachings of Gurukula has their expressions in ruchas of Vedas. Thus, the four ancient Vedas are considered as guiding force that had shaped society, encompassing the all-rounded peace and progress of the community. The four Vedas, the Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and Atharva Veda propagate knowledge about righteous living, spiritual wisdom, rituals, moral values and harmony between humans, nature and the divine. They teach truth, duty, discipline, meditation and ways to lead a meaningful and balanced life. Rigveda consists 1028 Suktas (prayers) collected in 10 Mandala (books) and well composed in 10600 Shlokas (verses). These Suktas are the prayers woven around health, wealth, success in battle and cosmic order. It addresses mostly the pastoral society, showing them the ways to lead a meaningful life. The special feature of these Suktas is that they are passed down through oral tradition to the generations to come. This has been recognized as a

part of the proud words of World Human Heritage by UNESCO.

The Vedas comprise a vast corpus of Sanskrit poetry, philosophical dialogue, myth, and ritual incantations developed and composed by Aryans over 3,500 years ago. Regarded by Hindus as the primary source of knowledge and the sacred foundation of their religion, the Vedas embody one of the world's oldest surviving cultural traditions ^{UNESCO}

Among many Rigvedic hymns, Shree Sukta (Prayer to Prosperity) is well recited from North to South India. The hymns in Shree Sukta define the concept of Samruddhi (Prosperity) as understood and implemented on the societal platform in ancient times. This paper aims to highlight and elaborate the concept of Prosperity, Samruddhi as explained in ancient Indian Literature encompassing all the significant features which makes life peaceful and sustainable in old times and even today with the same intensity. These are the timeless universal prayers for the welfare of the 'life' on the earth which need to be followed by current world community. The paper is an attempt to explore the concept of prosperity from the perspective of Shree Sukta, a prayer in the Rig Veda. The original Shree Suktam in Rigveda is comprised of core 15 verses however it is expanded up to 37 verses. 15 are commonly chanted so they have been taken into consideration in this treatise.

II. RIGVEDIC PRAYER SHREE SUKTA AND THE CONCEPT OF PROSPERITY (SAMRUDDHI)

Shree means Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity, Samruddhi, and Sukta means prayer. This is a prayer offered to the Goddess Lakshmi. It presents the Bharatiya concept of Samruddhi, which is different from that of the Western, Northern or Southern countries of the world. In today's context, prosperity is evaluated in terms of hoarding the material wealth and the monetary status of a person. In personal and professional life, the financial condition of an individual is regarded as significant. Unfortunately, this is not the only criterion to bring completeness to the life of a human being. In many cases, wealth fails to bring peace, social welfare, contentment, emotional stability and even environmental purity. Shree Sukta is an invocation to the Goddess Lakshmi to bring prosperity encompassing values such as humility,

environmental consciousness, quality human resource, responsibility, patriotism, industriousness along with material wealth. This seems much similar to the concept of sustainable development in today's context. Shree Sukta, a prayer in the Rig Veda, imparts managerial skills, bringing material and spiritual progress and stability to society and the nation. Modern world prefers to be logical and practical rather than emotional. Study of Shree Sukta arise some questions in the context of its significance in today's context such as, Can the preachings imparted in Shree Sukta be assessed logically and pragmatically? Can it contribute to make life fruitful not only for the human beings but to the entire globe to sustain with positivity? Will it be an answer to the western theories like existentialism, dadaism, Marxism and subaltern? The answers lie in the shlokas of Shree Sukta.

The prayer, Shree Sukta is addressed to Jatveda, the god of fire, form of energy which is the cause of life on the earth. It begins with the urge to come the Goddess Lakshmi who is transient but golden bright.
हिरण्यवर्णां हरिणीं सुवर्णरजतस्रजाम् ।

चन्द्रां हिरण्मयीं लक्ष्मीं जातवेदो म आवह ॥

The Goddess of wealth is adorned with gold and silver ornaments and possesses the luster of the moon. In the world of commerce, prosperity is often worshipped in the form of monetary existence. Here, Goddess Lakshmi, who represents wealth, is prayed to bestow material prosperity through her bright and radiant aura.

Today, the power of any nation is largely centered on its economic position on the global stage. India is currently among the leading economies in the world. Its aim is to attain the position of Vishwaguru, a global superpower, in the near future. To turn this dream into reality, every citizen must be imbued with great Urja energy. In this context, an appeal to Agni, the god of energy, remains relevant even today.

तां म आवह जातवेदो लक्ष्मीमनपगामिनीम् ।

यस्यां हिरण्यं विन्देयं गामश्वं पुरुषानहम् ॥

Here, there is an appeal to the transitory Goddess Lakshmi that she should come in the form of cows, horses, and trustworthy companions. In earlier times, a man's financial status was measured in terms of his possessions, especially cows and horses. The greater the number of cows and horses a man owned, the more materially wealthy he was considered. Similarly,

trustworthy associations were also given great significance. Along with monetary gains, the importance and acceptance of animals in making life meaningful were incorporated into the concept of prosperity.

Today, the idea of sustainable development emphasizes building a progressive society that highlights the significance of the animal world. In the cycle of life on Earth, every living being has its own contribution and importance. Animals such as cows and horses were considered indicators of a person's prosperity; hence, they were preserved and well cared for. Honest and trustworthy colleagues are also regarded as a form of wealth. In management, associations that are ethically and morally strong are highly valued and preferred. In this context, this shloka remains highly relevant.

अश्वपूर्वा रथमध्यां हस्तिनादग्रबोधिनीम् ।

श्रियं देवीमुपह्वये श्रीर्मा देवी जुषताम् ॥

It is said that the Goddess, riding on a chariot, surrounded by horses, and awakening to the trumpeting of elephants, may bless me. In the commercial world, pace and potential are given great importance. If one resolves to achieve great success, one must cast aside lethargy and proceed proactively and enthusiastically toward the desired goal. Riding on a chariot signifies courage, horses symbolize speed, and the trumpeting of elephants represents the great potential to face the challenges that come along the way to reaching the pinnacle of success.

Even today, success in the commercial world depends on these qualities. Here, courage, speed, and the capacity to work effectively are considered to be the elements of prosperity.

कां सोस्मितां हिरण्यप्राकारामार्द्रां ज्वलन्तीं तृप्तां तर्पयन्तीम् ।

पद्मे स्थितां पद्मवर्णां तामिहोपह्वये श्रियम् ॥

The Goddess is invited into the home as one who is resilient, adorned with golden ornaments, compassionate, lively, and contented, and who brings contentment to others, while seated on a lotus.

When a man achieves material progress, he comes into the limelight. At this stage, one should not be affected by ego. Ego is accompanied by arrogance and boastfulness. Instead of getting affected by ego, one's energy to work should continue to proceed further. The Goddess may bless such a person to remain compassionate, auspicious, polite, and always resilient. Material progress should not lead to

emptiness; rather, it should bring contentment and humility. These qualities enable a wealthy person to reach greater heights of fulfillment. Mere material possessions cannot bring true happiness; they must be accompanied by these invaluable values. The concept of prosperity includes all these aspects, which remain relevant even today.

चन्द्रां प्रभासां यशसा ज्वलन्तीं श्रियं लोके देवजुष्टामुदाराम् ।

तां पद्मिनीं मिमीत स त्वा वयमुद्यतां श्रियं वासयेमि ॥

The Goddess Lakshmi is invited into the home. She is as bright as the moon, associated with success, and beloved by the gods. The Goddess is called as Padmini, the one who sits on the lotus (Padma), is prayed to reside in the house.

The Goddess Lakshmi is appreciated by all the gods for her spirit of success. In social and commercial life, a person who works hard, is talented, and achieves success through great effort is loved and appreciated by all. His perseverance and success motivate many others. Such role models are the first inspirations for novice entrepreneurs. The Goddess Lakshmi is regarded here an inspiration.

आदित्यवर्णे तपसोऽधिजातो वनस्पतिस्तव वृक्षोऽथ बिल्वः ।

तस्य फलानि तपसनुदन्तु मयान्तरायश्च बाह्या अलक्ष्मीः

Goddess Lakshmi has a bright complexion like the sun. In her ascetic form, the Bael tree flourishes. Its fruit, which has ripened through the perseverance inspired by the Goddess's knowledge, may eradicate the presence of Alakshmi that is, ignorance within me. Financial stability brings the glory of richness. This is achieved through consistency and regular study. Just as the Bael tree grows with great firmness and eventually bears fruit, similarly, if a person remains consistent in their efforts and focused on their goals, their ignorance and scarcities gradually wash away, and they can attain prosperity. To invite Lakshmi in the form of success, it is necessary to expel Alakshmi means ignorance and poverty.

This shloka also highlights the significance of nature, which has the capacity to answer each and every question of human beings. It is full of beauty and abundance. Every element in nature teaches something or the other. The tree is the best example, as it creates everything for the betterment of humanity. It gives in the form of fruits, flowers, beauty, oxygen, wood, and medicine. It strengthens itself in harmony with nature and gives back to it.

A prosperous person should be like a tree. He or she should grow with the support of society and give back with great potential. Prosperity lies not only in earning money but also in giving back to society to one's fullest capacity.

उपैतु मां देवसखः कीर्तिश्च मनिना सह ।

प्रादुर्भूतोऽस्मि राष्ट्रेऽस्मिन् कीर्तिमृद्धिं ददातु मे ॥

It is prayed that Kuber, the God of wealth and a friend of all the gods, may come to me with all his jewels and prosperity. I am a product of this nation. May my nation bestow popularity and growth upon me.

Every businessman desire to be rich like Kuber, the God of wealth. He dreams of becoming like him. While chasing this dream, one must keep in mind their belongingness to the nation. The concept of individual prosperity is linked to one's contribution to nation-building. The boundaries of prosperity should be widened from "me" to "we." In defining prosperity, the circle should be broadened to include society and the nation, along with the family.

Individual prosperity should be connected with the prosperity of the nation. On the global platform, it is the nation that provides identity to a person. One should feel gratitude for achieving success by using the nation's resources, and it should be given back in some way or another. This is a sign of ideological prosperity.

If every businessman adopts and follows this kind of ideological prosperity, the nation will become great not only materially but ideologically as well. If the capitalists of a country feel indebted to the nation's greatness, that country achieves all-round progress. Such examples can be found in developed countries.

क्षुत्पिपासामलां जेष्टामलक्ष्मीं नाशयम्यहम् ।

अभूतिमसमृद्धिं च सर्वां निर्नुद् मे गृहात् ॥

As Goddess Lakshmi symbolizes prosperity, Alakshmi represents starvation, thirst, dirt, and lethargy. It is prayed that Alakshmi should be expelled from the home.

Along with virtues, vices also reside within human beings. It is important to recognize the vices within us and consciously overcome them. Lethargy, procrastination, and passivity exist in every individual. Poverty, which arises from lethargy, passivity, an untidy approach, and fear, are all forms of Alakshmi. In the presence of these vices, it is not possible to bring out the qualities within oneself. Alakshmi encourages all these negative traits.

An entrepreneur should be resolute enough to eliminate these vices that is, Alakshmi and strive to achieve qualitative success, which is considered true prosperity.

गन्धद्वारां दुर्वारां नित्यपुष्टां करीषिणीम् ।

ईश्वरीं सर्वभूतानां तामिहोपह्वये श्रियम् ॥

May Goddess Lakshmi, who is aromatic, immortal, and who strengthens all living beings, come to me.

A healthy lifestyle lies in an atmosphere filled with fragrance, which soothes and nurtures both the mind and the body. Fragrance is a sign of cleanliness and purity. It is an eternal force that preserves the healthy spirit of life on Earth. It represents the purity of the external environment as well as the inner thought process. This force is a form of prosperity. It keeps both the inner and outer environments clean and full of sustainable resources.

It is the duty of every citizen that, while attaining material progress, responsibility toward environmental cleanliness must also be shouldered. The clean environment handed down by the older generation must be preserved and passed on in the same condition to the next generation.

मनसः काममाकूतिं वाचः सत्यमशीमहि ।

पशूनां रूपमन्नस्य मयि श्रीः श्रयतां यशः ॥

May the Goddess bring noble thoughts into my mind and truth into my speech. May she also bring an abundance of animal wealth, food, and success into my life.

Material wealth and monetary gains alone are not sufficient to bring complete prosperity to a human being's life. When material progress is accompanied by purity of thought, it adds integrity to one's personality. A noble person can keep themselves away from unfair means. The material progress one achieves should be enriched by noble actions and sincere efforts. The strength of noble thoughts gives the people the courage to speak the truth. A truthful person is always inclined toward justice. The qualities of noble thinking and truthfulness in speech are of core importance in the concept of prosperity.

It is repeatedly emphasized that true prosperity is that which not only brings material progress but also nobility of thought and truthfulness in speech, along with animal wealth and abundance of food. A prosperous person should have value-based material affluence that does not ignore animal welfare. The world of animals and birds is acknowledged with the

understanding that without accepting and caring for other living beings on Earth, prosperity remains incomplete.

Unfortunately, in today's scenario, the wealthy person sans noble consciousness is given more significance and authority. Corruption is the ultimate result of the same. It is because of this reason that peace and contentment is missing in the social structure. For the ideal social construct, material progress has to be accompanied with noble thoughts, courage to speak the truth and environmental consciousness.

कर्दमेन प्रजाभूता मयि सम्भव कर्दम ।

श्रियं वासय मे कुले मातरं पद्ममालिनीम् ॥

Kardama Rishi is considered the son of Goddess Lakshmi. If Kardama resides in my home, Goddess Lakshmi will surely reside with me. May the success granted by the Goddess bless my entire kula (family). A rishi is a researcher and a scholar, regarded as an enlightened person. He gains knowledge through spirituality and consistent effort. The guidance given by such an expert holds great significance in both personal and professional life. Under the blessings of such an erudite and spiritual scholar, prosperity is believed to be attained.

This blessing should not be limited to me alone; its impact should spread to my entire family. In the prosperity of any individual, the family serves as a pillar of strength. The institution of family always provides a foundation for a person's stability and security. The importance of family in a person's life is highlighted here. Therefore, it is prayed that the entire family lives with peace and progress. True prosperity lies in the happiness and progress of the whole family.

आपः सृजन्तु स्निग्धानि चिह्नित वस मे गृहे ।

नि च देवीं मातरं श्रियं वासय मे कुले ॥

May the Goddess of water create emotional nourishment within me, and may Goddess Lakshmi reside in my lineage.

Water gives life to the entire world. It is a very valuable element for the existence of life on Earth. Just as water provides moisture, my life too should be nourished with emotions. Even in adverse conditions, like mire, I should gain the strength to create something new. It is believed that Goddess Lakshmi resides on a lotus that blooms in the mire. Mire symbolizes the adversities in life. Without facing challenging situations, one cannot attain worldly success. A person who learns through adversities is

able to develop a well-balanced and enriched personality. The material world has lost its emotional nourishment. This shloka evokes the need of the emotional nourishment to understand the world in a better way.

From another perspective it can be said that even though water is the life of the life, it's condition in the world is bleak. Every survey exhibits the result of scarcity of water and its day-by-day declining condition. The current civilization has to consider water as the goddess Lakshmi and avoids its wastage. Water management and water conservation has become the issue of great concern.

आर्द्रां पुष्करिणीं पुष्टिं पिबन्त्यां पद्ममालिनीम् ।

चन्द्रां हिरण्मयीं लक्ष्मीं जातवेदो म आवह ॥

Compassionate, moisture-giving, and a source of strength, yellow in complexion, adorned with the lotus flower, radiant like the moon may the golden goddess Lakshmi come to me.

An emotional approach toward humanity makes life more sensitive and deeply understandable. A person with prosperity should not live an emotionless life; rather, they should be sensitive enough to understand others in a better way. Goddess Lakshmi, the giver of emotional and intellectual strength, is invoked to help build a life that is prosperous in its complete sense.

आर्द्रां यः करिणीं यष्टीं सुवर्णां हेममालिनीम् ।

सूर्यां हिरण्मयीं लक्ष्मीं जातवेदो म आवह ॥

Lord of energy, God Agni, is appealed to bring forth such an embodiment of complete prosperity who is like moisture, enriched by golden glow of fire of tapa and energy which supports the performance of activities.

Here ardent invocation to the goddess Lakshmi is repeatedly done like the previous hymn. The Goddess is prayed to be with golden energy of the sun. Sun is the giver of life on the earth. Life will fail to exist on the earth without the Sun. It is the form and source of energy. Man may get great energy to work hard. Prosperity with material progress may be the result of great energy in the life of a man.

तां म आवह जातवेदो लक्ष्मीमनपगामिनीम् ।

यस्यां हिरण्यं प्रभूतं गावो दास्योश्चान् विन्देयं पुरुषानहम् ॥

Lord Agni is again prayed to bless with prosperity which is very inconsistent. All pervasively, it is underlined that all essence of beauty, cattle, servants, horses and progeny should be bestowed upon the worshipper. Here also values, animal beings, quality

human resource and authority is given prominence in attainment of prosperity.

Shree Sukta highlights the wellbeing of the humanity and the world. It is a kind of psycho-therapy which advocates an objective towards human welfare. The Rishis very well knew about the psychological and physical requirements for a happy and peaceful of a man on the earth. Man is the most beautiful and talented creation of Nature on the earth. They believed that he deserves a peaceful and meaningful life. The Rishis realized that he will run after material progress but only material progress will fail to satiate his thirst to attain prosperity. Hence, psychological and sociological nourishment of individual and community is addressed significantly. A comprehensive definition of prosperity Samruddhi explained in Shree Sukta exhibits the same. Contemplating the merits of this prayer, Pandit Rajamani says,

Almost without exception, all of us are caught in storms of doubt, fear, worry, anger, hatred, greed, resentment, regret and feelings of helplessness, unworthiness and despondency. These storms damage our trust in ourselves, in our loved ones, in justice and in divine providence. We become weak and impoverished from inside. Our inner weakness and poverty affect our family and our surroundings. Inner poverty blocks our ability to see the abundant gifts inherent in nature and in our relationships with others. The ultimate goal of Sri Sukta practice is to eliminate our inner poverty and empower us to experience the fullness of life ^{Pandit Rajamani}.

Devotees find the cosmic energy in the prayer. It is worshiped in the form of Shakti (strength). Shri Kamkoti Mandali interpret Shree Sukta as, Shree is that cosmic energy who is the refuse of all creatures. Shree exists as life and intellect the greatest of all wealth in every being. Hence Markandeya Purana says, या देवी सर्वभूतेषु शक्ति-रूपेण संस्थिता। नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः॥ means, I bow down to that great goddess who is present as Lakshmi in all creatures. When we go through varied aspects of the Lakshmi, in the form of prosperity, we come to know that it comprises various elements which shapes the personality in a very constructive, matured and poised form.

Careful readings of Shree Sukta bring out some concerning issues which are everlasting and implementable are as follow.

III. PROSPERITY AND MODERNITY

In the modern world, it is believed that happiness will be achieved with the attainment of monetary gain. People are running after material progress assuming it to be the only element of prosperity. The concept of prosperity (Samruddhi) in the Shree Sukta goes beyond the material advancement and monetary gains. It speaks about the holistic well-being rather than just material wealth. It encompasses all the elements that make human life meaningful. It expands its boundaries and leads a journey from “me” to “we all,” with the objective of nation-building and cosmic oneness. It includes family, animals, birds, trees, the environment, food, and, of course, wealth and material progress. However, this progress does not focus solely on physical satisfaction with a selfish approach. It aims to achieve success and growth with a sense of fraternity, striving for the welfare of all humanity. In the attainment of prosperity, values such as belief, selflessness, love, care, responsibility, and trustworthiness are given great significance.

Human civilization is full of the stories of individuals and the empires which had attained material prosperity and came back to the state of decay and degradation. The Roman Empire, Indus Valley Civilization are a few examples of the same. Many historical and contemporary individuals experienced material prosperity followed by dramatic degradation in the status of wealth. There are many reasons for this shift. Inconsistency is an inherent quality of monetary status in the corporate and capital sectors. Shree Sukta refers Lakshmi as Manapagamini, meaning the one who is very transient. Therefore, she is prayed to remain stable in the home. The fact remains that the status of any country depends on the material progress of its citizens but it is not enough to make the community qualitative and peaceful. Constructing a nation progressive materially, psychologically and ethically, the Shree Sukta advocates a harmonious combination of spiritual richness and material progress in society. A society that weaves together material progress with spiritual nourishment attains an ideal state. A utopian state of the community is possible only when society follows the principle of Samruddhi as referred to in the Shree Sukta.

Today we see that every human being is running in a race. Materially the people are getting more than they required but they have lost their peace. They are going

away from the human bonding. They have become self-obsessed forgetting their responsibilities to their society and nation. They have become narrow in their shells forgetting about their association with Nature. They are busy with the virtual world and going away from the real beauties of life. Values like truthfulness, love, care, selflessness, responsibility, respect all are fading up in front of the monetary gains. The concept of 'Prosperity' has become narrow. As a result, even though a person becomes financially rich, he is seen degraded as far as spiritual richness is concerned. The more the person attains material progress the more he is seen lonely and greedy. A rich person lives in his own world and goes away from the social responsibility.

As a wealthy person fails to shoulder the social responsibility, the gap between the rich and the poor widens and it disturbs the balance of the society. This approach divides the community into two groups 'haves' and 'have nots' as discussed in Marxism. It creates many social problems which are harmful to the nation. Can Shree Sukta be an answer to these theories? Marx says, 'Money is universal, self-constituted value of all things. Hence it has robbed the whole world, the human world as well as nature of its proper value. Money is the alienated essence of man's labour and life and this alien essence dominates him as he worships it'. This thought of significance of 'money' as alienated essence of man's labour and life is different as presented in Shree Sukta where money is one of the elements of prosperity. Samruddhi, wealth has a broader perspective than restricted only in the boundaries of monetary gains. The western concept of prosperity heavily emphasizes material abundance, high consumption, continuous economic growth and individual liberty where as Samruddhi in Indian philosophy advocates सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु means may all look good.

IV. INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY VS. INSTITUTION OF FAMILY

Industrialization in Europe in the 18th century greatly influenced the world. It changed the lifestyle of communities worldwide. Company culture was introduced in this period to emphasize the beliefs and behaviors of the employees. It was a way the employee should interact, behave and represent their company or

community to the world where individual approach was given prominence. Gradually, this culture spread over the world. Individualism gradually gained momentum, offering an alternative to the joint family structure and strong community bonds. Today, it has become one of the most significant features of our age. This shift from joint accountability to individual liberty has had a profound impact on people's lives. No doubt, individualism has its own significance; however, its boundaries have often turned into strict compartmental divisions. Excess of individualism started affecting the social fabric of the world and individuals started living like isolated islands without the connect of the outside world. It resulted in the psychological disturbances under the four walls of the homes. Emotional dryness and social detach is increasingly visible in society.

The Shree Sukta offers an answer to this sense of individual isolation through the idea of community and family accountability. The institution of family is a shelter to every human being. Connectedness and a sense of bonding begin with the family. Shree Sukta prays for the blessings for the family and lineage. श्रियं वासय मे कुले here, Kula means lineage or family. The verse seeks blessings for the betterment and success of the lineage. Such success is only possible if the family is nurtured and responsibilities are upheld in the present. This reflects an acceptance of family accountability, in contrast to individualism that can lead to isolation. Going further Indian philosophy accepts the world as one family to the great noble people, उदारचरितानां तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्. The boundaries of isolation will be broken and the problems causing due to the same will be solved with the blessings asked to Goddess Lakshmi in Shree Sukta.

V. ENVIRONMENT AND ANIMAL WORLD

Sanskrit quote, प्रकृति रक्षति रक्षितः means Nature protects those who protect her, highlights the co-existence of human life and Nature on the earth. In the conservation of the Nature, human life will be protected. Pure air, ample water, clear light, fertile soil are the primary requirements to exist and sustain life on the earth. Despite this fact, environmental pollution is the most severe concern to human life all over the world.

Previously, potable water existed in a pure and abundant form. Water, the elixir of life, was not contaminated with industrial waste. Air was in its purest form. Soil was much fertile and clean. Human lifestyle was environment friendly. It was not driven by material pace but was enriched by a deep understanding of environmental consciousness. Natural calamities did occur, but they were not the result of harmful human actions toward the environment.

With the advancement of science and technology, the use of chemicals and industrial waste has created a severe issue of environmental degradation in the form of pollution. Previously, there was no production of hazardous plastic waste, which today has challenged the purity of soil and air. Biofuels, minerals, and liquid gases remained intact beneath the ground, maintaining the balance of the Earth. Growing degradation of the environment has been creating a threat to the generations to come. Declining purity of the environment is a matter of urgent concern. Government policies alone, confined to paper, will not solve this growing problem. Active involvement of the masses is required. Our approach and habits need to change. There is an urgent need to follow the message of Rousseau, 'Go back to Nature'. Environment has the solution to many of the complications of human life. Indian Rishis understood the importance of the association of Nature in human life. Hence, ancient Indian literature is full of the concern and association with Nature. Affection to animals, love for trees, gratefulness to the soil and air and concern to water is seen in every walks of life in old Indian literature.

In the Skanda Purana, we find the shloka:

अश्वत्थमेकं पिचुमन्दमेकं

न्यग्रोधमेकं दश चित्रिणीकाः।

कपित्थबिल्वामलकत्रयं च

पञ्चाम्रवापी नरकं न पश्येत्॥

It means that one who plants specified numbers of sacred trees such as Ashwattha (Peepal), Neem, Banyan, Bael, and Mango avoids hell. At present, we are on the path to turning the Earth into a hell-like place, where all the natural resources are polluted. Shree Sukta also celebrates the beautiful company of the trees. The goddess of prosperity is believed as पद्मेस्थितां, to be seated in the pond on the lotus, completely in the company of Nature. आदित्यवर्णे

तपसोऽधिजातो वनस्पतिस्तव वृक्षोऽथ बिल्वः॥ The goddess is said to be flourished with the highly useful trees like Bael and its fruits. It is strongly accepted that prosperity can be attained in healthy company of Environment.

Animal existence on the earth has its own role to play for its balance. जीवो जीवस्य जीवनम्, means one living being is the food/ life of another living being. It shows the interconnectedness of the living beings upon each other. Nature has created every living being with its unique quality. As the earth is their abode, they have the same right to live as the human beings. Research indicates that good animal welfare is vital for Environmental equilibrium. It helps for sustainable production and improves disease resistance. It also reduces the need for antibiotics. In ancient India society, pets like ox, cow, hen, horse, pigs, dogs, cats etc were the part of the families. They were useful for the farm works and daily food needs. Hence, they were taken care of in the families. No home was an exception for this pattern. Unfortunately, industrialization changed the lifestyle of the urban area and in nuclear families' animals were remained the symbol of status. The family's wealth calculations in terms of Godhana cow as wealth or Ashwadhana horses as wealth were significant elements of prosperity are changed notably today. Shree Sukta boldly mentions the importance of the animals and incorporates them in the definition of prosperity. Hence, it prayed as पशूनां रूपमन्नस्य मयि श्रीः श्रयतां यशः॥ means, may the goddess Lakshmi also bring an abundance of animal wealth, food, and success into my life.

VI. PROACTIVENESS AND HYGIENE VS. LAZINESS, GRIME

Shree Sukta contains a strong emphasis on cleanliness and a proactive approach to life. Goddess Lakshmi symbolizes both spiritual and material prosperity, whereas Alakshmi represents poverty and an unclean, degraded life. Alakshmi symbolizes degradation and decay. Just as Lakshmi, or prosperity (Samruddhi), brings happiness and welfare, Alakshmi brings negativity and frustration.

Alakshmi is considered the elder sister of Lakshmi. It is believed that only when Alakshmi exits can Lakshmi enter. Therefore, a person must first expel Alakshmi from both the inner self and the external home ज्येष्ठाम् अलक्ष्मीं नाशयाम्यहम् a prayer for the destruction

of Alakshmi. Unless a person understands the importance of Lakshmi in the form of hard work, hygiene, and proactiveness, they cannot overcome inner laziness or external disorder.

It is believed that Lakshmi and Alakshmi do not live together. Lakshmi resides with the person who gives importance to cleanliness and proactive approach. On the other hand, it is believed that a lazy person who lives in grim and untidy surroundings remains poor and diseased, indicating the presence of Alakshmi in his home. Alakshmi is believed to bring negativity, ignorance, poverty, and illness into a person's life and Lakshmi brings cheerfulness and peace.

The term क्षुत्पिपासमला refers to the impurity caused by hunger and thirst due to poverty. A state of poverty leads to a lack of money, making it difficult for a person to fulfill basic life requirements. A lethargic and poor person fails to meet the essential needs of his family. This situation creates an environment that fosters dissatisfaction in the next generation, making them more prone to crime in society. Thus, it becomes a threat to the entire nation, symbolized by Alakshmi. The line अभूतिम् असमृद्धिं च सर्वा निर्नुद मे गृहात् expresses a prayer that all forms of poverty: mental and physical and lack of prosperity be driven away from one's home. The phrase गन्धद्वारां दुर्वारां नित्यपुष्टां करीषिणीम् highlights the importance of a clean, fragrant, and well-maintained environment, which contributes to a healthy and nourishing life.

For spiritual progress, mental hygiene is essential, and for physical strength, bodily cleanliness is equally important. Prosperity is impossible without purity and tidiness. Therefore, it is said that Lakshmi blesses only those who understand the basic requirements of a healthy human life purity of both soul and body. In today's context, 'Clean India, Green India' movement needs to receive a huge response in the country and voluntary participation of each and every citizen will be a form of worship to Goddess Lakshmi to bring prosperity on national level. Many countries have implemented nationwide cleanliness and green movements similar to India's 'Swaccha Bharat' mission targeting public health and environmental sustainability. South Korea's 'New Village Movement', Japan's 'Souji and Public Hygiene', USA's 'Keep Beautiful Movements' are some more examples in this regard. Can we say that these are a form of worship to Goddess Lakshmi?

Although, Lakshmi and Alakshmi are the two sisters but only one can reside at the home and in the mind of a worshipper. Alakshmi must be expelled from inner and outside state of a man. Lakshmi is worshipped within and outside in order to attain true prosperity.

VII. QUALITY COMPANIONS

Aristotle says that man is by nature a social animal. Fundamentally, he is an animal, but the processes of civilization and culture shape him into a noble and ethical being. The combination of conscience and emotional intelligence has groomed him into one of the finest creations of Nature. Indian Rishis studied the genetics, behavioral patterns and psychology of human race. They came to the conclusion that the noblest of the human beings can construct a good society and such noble company can be helpful to bring prosperity to individual. In Shree Sukta, it is highlighted with the term पुरुषानहम्, Purushanaham.

Purushanaham refers to a competent and strong person. An individual who is ethically and nobly determined can attain this state of Purushanaham. Such a person proves to be a very reliable companion. Society comprises people of different mentalities, including both the vicious and the virtuous. A strong social structure relies on upright, decent, and sincere individuals. When this section of society is guided by ethical resolve, they embody Purushanaham. Shree Sukta refers to such human jewels as an aspect of prosperity in the phrase विन्देयं गामश्च पुरुषानहम्. In today's context, significance of character building for a nation construct is much similar to the need of ethical association as expressed in Shree Sukta. Today, the corporate sector prefers the qualitative human resource to shoulder the responsibilities and emerging challenges in the field. Even at personal level, a happy life resides on the foundation of truthful and trustworthy companionship.

Material progress alone paints a picture of a desolate world devoid of purity and honesty. The decay of integrity, along with greed and the abuse of power, destroys the entire social structure. There are many evident examples of this in various sectors. On the contrary, ethically, academically, and culturally competent and strong individuals can build a healthy and harmonious society. In both personal and

professional spheres, such Purushanaham enhance the quality of personal, professional, and social life.

VIII. INNER PEACE AND SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

Shree Sukta prays for prosperity through all-encompassing elements of the external world that exist on the surface of the earth. It worships wealth in physical and visible forms such as monetary gains, trees, animals, and the environment. It also prays for the cultivation of virtues such as family bonding, ethical human behavior, and patriotism. However, all these achievements are meaningless unless one attains inner peace along with spiritual progress. Value based life and the life of gratitude can make a man experience peace and in peace lies the presence of the God. God is the matter of experience at inner and outer level. According to Swami Krishnananda,

This is to say that the Absolute can be reached only through the relative. The Invisible can be contacted only through the visible. The universe of perception and experience includes the very meditator, the seeker, the student or the devotee. Only an over-enthusiastic devotee can imagine that he is outside the world and then erroneously reject the values of life, forgetting thereby that in the act of such rejection he has rejected himself also, since he is a part of this creation. A truly transcendent devotion to God is impracticable, for God is not merely transcendent; He is also immanent

Swami Krishnananda

Inner peace is a state of mind in which a person experiences mental and emotional calm. It is the result of stability and contentment, irrespective of external circumstances. It enables a more balanced life and fosters emotional regulation. Many statistical analyses show that the more a person achieves material success, the more they tend to lose mental peace. Data of 'American Paradox' shows from the year 2000 indicated that while Americans were twice as rich as in the 1950s, they were no happier. Money and material achievements cannot be the criterion to measure inner peace and contentment. The 'Unhappy Rich' phenomenon indicates that for the 'least happy group', money only helps relieve unhappiness up to a certain point, after which more income does not improve their emotional state, suggesting money cannot fix fundamental internal distress.

Shree Sukta prays to Goddess Lakshmi with a calm and soothing demeanor. She is described as चन्द्रां हिरण्मयीं, meaning cool and calm like a golden moon. She is radiant like the moon चन्द्रां प्रभासां. Just as the presence of the moon provides a peaceful state of mind, prosperity too may bring tranquility to one's mental and psychological state.

Shree Sukta is a prayer. A prayer has magical effects on the disturbed human mind. It provides inner peace because at the time of prayer, a man is supposed to surrender worries, anxieties to the cosmic energy that is God. The objective is to attain mental tranquility. With the approach of gratitude, the devotee tries to connect with the higher power of the universe. It is a connect of a living being with the supreme authority of the universe. It is a spiritual connect. The highest thought in attainment of prosperity is to work with the inspiration of the Goddess Lakshmi and bow in front of its grandeur and magnitude. Thus, Shree Sukta concludes with श्री महालक्ष्म्यै च विद्महे, विष्णु पत्न्यै च धीमहि, तन्नो लक्ष्मी प्रचोदयात्, which means let me meditate on the great Goddess Lakshmi, the consort of Lord Vishnu. May the goddess of wealth and prosperity illuminate my mind and inspire me.

IX. CONCLUSION

Thousands of years ago, the requirements for a meaningful life were understood by the Rishis accomplished and enlightened sages of ancient India. They were the researchers of great potential. They studied human minds at its depth. They were not only aware of the thirst of human beings to attain material pleasures but their spiritual needs. They were well-versed with metaphysics also and imparted profound and eternal knowledge through the Vedas. Shree Sukta, the prayer in Rigveda is an example of the same.

The teachings in Shree Sukta, a prayer in the Rigveda, exhibit timeless wisdom. It reflects the richness of ancient Indian culture, which remains highly relevant even today. It is a prayer to worship the Goddess Lakshmi. It deliberates on the concept of prosperity. The concept of Samruddhi (prosperity) presented here is not limited to material progress alone but emphasizes a holistic development that every human being should strive to attain with responsibility and awareness.

It reflects a strong belief that physical pleasures must be complemented by ethics, environmental consciousness, competent and capable human resources, care for animals, strong family bonds, social awareness, and a sense of national responsibility. These teachings contribute to nation-building. The concept of Samruddhi, prosperity presented here goes beyond the boundaries of individual happiness and connects with the social and national wellbeing.

There is a strong relevance of Shree Sukta in present scenario of the society. No doubt that with the passing of the time and conditions many things have changed since thousands of years but some things are timeless. Basic values which are significant to life a quality life on the earth they will always remain the same. Shree Sukta celebrates such values. Dr. Amit Ray speaks about the scientific impact of the chanting of Shri Suktam on human body as, 'The scientific basis Mantra chanting combines rhythmic vocalisation, regulated breathing and focused attention. Together, these influence vagal tone, heart rate variability (HR), cortical synchronisation, promoting calm alertness and neural coherence' Ray.

If Shree Sukta is recited and its deeper meanings are imparted in every household and educational institution in India and around the world, the younger generation can be shaped accordingly. A spiritually and physically mature generation will undoubtedly contribute significantly to the betterment of their nation and humanity as a whole.

Such classical literature as Shree Sukta should be used to guide the world. It can be used as a mantra to construct a world of सर्वे सन्तु निरामया all should live in peace. It will help people understand the true meaning of "prosperity," and the ideal expressed in मा कश्चित् दुःखं भाग्भवेत् that no one should suffer can be realized.

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