SS-7
Vedas on meat consumption

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The very fact that "Vedas on Meat Consumption" is one of the suggested topics for World Congress on Vedic Sciences, clearly reflects that there are different opinions about the subject, but a bird's eye view of the available literature of the World may help us to conclude that **'Meat Consumption'** is against the Vedic principles.

Eminent scholoars and noted educationists of the World concur with Romain Rolland, the great French savant, a Nobel laureate who held the view that Swami Dayanand Sarswati possessed an unrivalled knowledge of the Vedas and was an ardent scholar of Sanskrit language. Swamiji in his immortal *granth* **'Satyarth Prakash'** emphatically and unreservedly condemns killing of animals not once, but time and again in his lecturers delivered at various places eg. at Raj Kumar College, Rajkot in January 1875; at Poona in 1875; at Multan in March 1877; at Fatehgarh from 25th September to 8th October 1879 &c. He averred that the Vedas unequivocally condemn meat consumption.

If one may enquire as to whether the ancient Aryans were meat eaters? The answer is big 'No'. In fact, in those days consumption of meat was permitted neither by the society nor by the religious laws and bye-laws not only in India but to every extent in the 3/4th of the world which is logically inferred from the fact that **'Botany'** is a branch of science dealing with plants, and it is a Latin word which literally means, **"What I eat"** This undoubtedly supports the fact that the people of Latin speaking countries like France, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Rome and also the people of those countries of the Western hemisphere of U.S. in which the language spoken was either Portuguese or French (because both these languages have been derived from Latin) were vegetarians and their deit was the flora and not the fauna of their respective areas. Rg, Yajur, Sam a and Atharvavedas comprise a good number of mantras which strongly uphold that the Vedas nowhere permit '*hinsa*' and slaughter of animals for food. Some of the important relevant mantras are quoted below:

1- The second half of **Rgveda** VII.56. 17

are goha nriha vadho vo astu sumnebhirasme' vasabo namadhvam.

This part of the verse strictly ordains that those who injure cows (*goha*) and those who are destroyers of man (*nrha*) to keep their fatal weapons far from us. Similarly.Rigveda verse (1.114.10) emphatically reiterated in clear words almost the same what has been said in the previous verse.

are te goghnam uta purushaghnam.

2. Rgvedas verse (X.87.16) envisaged below mentions the norms of the punishment for sin of slaying animals.

Yah paurusheycna kavisa samarikte yo asvheyena pasuna yatudhanah I
Yo aghnyaya bharati kshiram agne tesham sirshani harasapi vrisea II

Those persons who eat meat and those 'Rakashasas' who subsist on the flesh of horses, etc., deserve death at the hands of the ruler.$ The *'Yajurveda'* is unique in its emphatic declaration in clear words not to kill animals which contribute towards the attainment of happiness of Mankind and add to their prosperity and physical strength. I shall quote here few more striking verses or part thereof in support of the above ordain.

mitrasya ma cakshusha sarvani bhutani sa mikshntam.mitrasya' ham cakshusha sarvani bhitani samikshe.

To me every animal is my friend and I behave with them like a true friend. We know that ancient Aryans had full faith in the doctrines of the Vedas and used to follow them religiously. Under such an righteous and godly atmosphere if the Western thinkers surmise that a friend (a man) can slay a friend (animal) for momentry taste and contentment, then they are sadly mistaken and badly misled.

Strict prohibition of killing innocent animals like bipeds, quadrupeds, birds etc. isevident from the verses of **Yajurveda** whose relevant parts or lines are given below:

(2) (i) bea ek fg lhf}Zikna i'kqa -------- ***Imam ma hansi davipadam pasum.....***Yajur 13.47

Don't kill bipeds

(ii) ----------xka ek fga lhjfnfr fojkte~AA
.....gam ma hinsiraditi virajam.
Don't kill the cows
Yajur 13.43

(iii) ekfga lh% iq#"ke~ --------
ma hansi purusham.....
Manslaughtering is also strictly forbidden.....

yajur 16.3

Sama Veda : First Adhyaya, Kand 8, Mantra 8 says:

Sanadagne mrisi yatudhanan no tva rakshansi prinasu jimyuh.
Anu dah sah muram kayado mate hetya mukshat d vya yah.

Samaveda 1.8.8

O Supreme Leader! From days of old thou slayest demons (evils) never can evil or wicked persons over come thee in battles.

Burn up the foolish wicked ones, flesh devourers; let none of them escape thy divine weapons. This verse clearly shows that meat-eating is against the teachings of the Vedas.¥

The **'Atharvaveda'** is not only crystal clear but also proclaims strongly that animal killing is an ungodly and sinful act. The verses or the parts thereof from the Atharavveda envisaged below amply show the same

Ya anam masamadanti pourupeyam ca ye kuvi I
Garbhankhadanti keshavastani to nasayuamasi II

Av. VIII 6.23

Those who eat raw meat, human flesh & flest of hairy animals or eat unborn foetuses are not righteous and we would drive them away. Here the word ' hairy animals' qualifies a class of animals covered under class ' Mammalia' characterised by:

(i) Presence of hair on the body
(ii) Give birth to young ones.
(iii) Presence of mammany glands.

Therefore, we can say that killing of large numner of animals

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belonging to this class is prohibited by this single verse of Atharvaveda.

2. Av.VI 70.1 has stricly warned man to abstain from meat, wine and gambling. Similarly verse XIX 31.5 says, "I have obtained plenty of animals, both bipeds and quadrupeds and food grains too. May God grant me milk of the cattle and sap of the plants. In other words, this verse of the Atharvaveda gives a clear cut indication of maintaing Bio-ecological balance between plant and animal life & man is responsible for its imbalance.

AV 1.16.4 given below gives a strong warning to the killers of men and animals

Yadi no gam hansi yadhasavam purusham I
Tam tva sisen vidhyamo yatha noso avirha II

If you kill our cow, our horse or our man, we shall kill you. Another explaination that can be logically drawn fits well in the present context. We know man is the greatest enemy of nature if he kill animals, the Natural Bio Ecological balance would get disturbed. Deforestration would be the consequence & the animals of the forests would enter cities, Towns & villages in search of food & water & would hurt injure or kill the inhabitants. That is why it has been said in this verse that if you kill us, we would kill you.

Ecological imbalance and Animal killing

The most important burning problem of the World today is the Ecological imbalance which might become a cause of havoc if not of catastrophe for the prosterity. The only way to escape from this is to minimise this imbalance and in order to achieve this goal, the man had to follow the divine doctrines of the Vedas. It is abundently clear from a large number of the Vedic mantras (AV XIX 31.4.5 and 9 & c) wherein protection and safety of animals like the bipeds, the quadrupeds, the birds & c has been solicited. At the same time in the same mantra, preservation of the forests, herbaceous sap and food grains is supplicated. Therefore, there in no other option except the protection of both the impotant components of Ecosystem- the animals & the plants. Hence the Vedas neither permit the killing of animals nor destruction of vegetations.

I, in support of the fact stated above, quote a well known example of a large flightless bird of Mauritius named 'Dodo'. They were shot to naught during the short period of about 300 years for their delicious meet. The consequence was that with the disappearance of 'Dodo' a small sized bountiful tree-***Tambalacoque*** which was abundantly extant in 17th century in Mauritius island became extinet in 1970. To-day there are only 13 plants available in the World. This is because of the fact that the seeds of Tambalacoque germinate only when they are passed through the alimentary canal of 'Dodo'. When the birds were finished, Seeds failed to germinate, consequently the trees of Tambalacoque were also finished. This gave birth to the common saying, 'almost as dead as dodo'. Hence to eseape from this hazardous situation, kill not the animals and devastate not the vegetation. This is the ordain of the Vedas.

Why misgivings?

The mistrust and suspicion that has crept into the minds of the multitude that meat consumptions is permissible in the Vedas stems from the misinterpretation of the Indian commentators like **Sayana & Mahidhara,** but the Western translators have crossed the limits. In the galaxy of the western scholars, the most prominent were; Professors Roth, Ludwig, Max. Muller, W.D. Whitney, Bloomfield, H.H. Wilson, Monier-Williams and Griffith etc. Their English translations of the Vedas try to justify that Ancient Aryans were meat eaters and the same was permitted by the Vedas. The reasons for this inference were:-

Their specific malignant aim was to convert natives of our country into Christians and uprooting the Vedic religion which is evident from the following facts.

1. Max Muller wrote a letter to his wife in August 1868, which reads as, "This edition of mine of the Rigveda and the translation of the other Vedas will hereafter tell to a great extent on the fate of India and on the growth of the millions of souls in that country. **If it is the root of their religion and to show them what root is, I feel sure, the only way of uprooting the same"**

In another letter to Duke of Orgoil, Max Muller writes, **"The ancient religion of India is doomed and if Christianity does not step into, whose fault will it be?@**

E B Pussey, an intimate friend of Max. Muller wrote a letter to him, **" your work will form a new era in the efforts for conversion of India."^^**

The ulterier aim of formation of 'Sanskrit-English Dictionary by Monier Williams is amply clear fom Col. Borden's WILL dated August 15,1811 which goes."The special object of this munificent bequest was to promote the translation of our Scriptures into Sanskrit, so as to enable his country men to proceed in conversion of the natives of Inida to Christian religion." *

Another very important factor was that the Western scholiasts were misled by Sayanas translation of Vedas. In fact Griffith's transtation of the Rgveda depends on the text of Max Muller (Six volume edition). He had consulted the commentry of Sayana for general sense of every verse, and for the meaning of every word.

Prof. H.H. Wilson's translation of the Rgveda is rather a version of Sayana's paraphrase, hence we should not have any hesitation if we say that the magnitude of confusion of Western scholars was contributed to a large extent by Sayana's interpretations which were loaded with errors and falacies as mentioned below: #

(i) **'Sruti'** is known for deep spritual, philosophical meanings which aseribes sanctity to the text, but Sayana always refused to enter these depths.

(ii) Sayana is led away by **'pauranic myths'** & **mythological** events. He doesn't go deeper into the root meanings or etymologies or mystic sense behind these terms.

(iii) The Historical element admitted by Sayana, so says Aurobindo, was readily seized on and enlarged by new renderings and new explaination of obscure illusions of the Vedas.

The Vedas are loaded with eliose & decorative epithets which were inconceivable for Western scholors. Extraordinary coherance in the Vedic Hymns and the natural meaning of the Vedic terms was much beyond the intelectual excellence of Westerns scholoars. In fact the blinds were showing way to the blinds. Examples given as under will make this point clear.

Suryaya vahatu pragat savita yam avasrjat.

Aghasu hanyante gavo junyo paryuhate.

The correct translation of this mantra is " The bridal procession of the sun's (Savita's) daughter, which is divine mother creator despatches moves along ***(hanyante)*** the oxen of the chariot are whipped along in the MAGHA constellation, she is taken to her husband's house in the ARJUNI (Phalguna) constellation".

Unfortunately the Western scholars adhere to one and only one meaning of ***'hanyante'*** i.e. to kill or to slay and had taken ***gavah*** = oxen which in the real sense

means rays of light = ***'sushmna'***. This is the reason that Macdonee-Keith have given in the Vedic Index as under:

"The marriage ceremony was accompanied by the slaying of oxen, clearly for food"¶

In fact, ***'hanyante'*** stands for movement and ***'gavah'*** (xko%) for rays, especially ***'susumna'*** (lq"kqE.kk) and not for cow or ox.

Go (xks) is another important vedic term which has been ill-defined by Western scholors to show that ancient Aryans were meat eaters. This Vedic ***'Go'*** has about 14 meanings as per Monier to Willioms Dictionary. The great sage Yaska in his compilation of lexicons of the Vedic terms` - ***'Nighantu'*** (Nig) and its commentary known as ***'Nirukt'*** had given various meaning of ***go*** (xks) such as, the earth (Nig-1-1); cow-(Nig-1-1): rays of sun (Nig-1-5) Speech (ok.kh) Nig-1-11; milk and other product of cow. Vedic Index mentions, "the term Go (xks) is often applied to express the products of cow, this frequently means the milk curd & butter etc., but rerely the flesh of the animals. In many passages it designates leather used as the material of various objects." ¦¦¦

Despite all this the western scholors had spared no stone unturned to

give a vicious translation to hurt the Vedic doctrines, for example, the Rgveda mantra, 10-16-7 would make the point clearer.

Agner varma pari gobhir vyayasva sam pronushva pivasa medasa ca I

net tva dhrishnur harasa jarhrishano dadhrig vidhakshyan paryankhayate II

The factual natural translation of this mantra is that when the dead body is being entirely consumed with the flame brightened by (xks) 'gau' (ghee of the cow) another body with new fat and new marrow is being produced. May not this bold fire exulted in his fierce heat and full of pride, embrace and cousume your new body to ashes.

It is not known as to how the Western scholors could mutilate the real translation of the mantra under reference and could dare write the following lines in the Vedic index.

"The ritual of the cremation of the dead body required the slaughter of a cow as an essential part, the flesh being used to envelop the dead body. #

ma brahamanasya rajanya gam

This actually means, O Prince, don't desire to eat an intellectual's cow (brahma - gavi) which indeed is not eatable. But the Western thinkers explain it as if the the Vedas accept that Brahmin's cow is eatable. In the first part of this very mantra, a word 'ad' **'vn'** has been use which actually mean, "to eat" and misusing their intellect, the Western scholars associate this word 'ad' with meat & proclaim that meat eating is permitted by the Vedas, but they don't want to understand that the word 'eat' is used in may other ways where mouth has nothing to do with eating e.g. to eat ones words, my head is eating circles and the river had eaten away the banks etc.

The use of 'ad' ***'dhatu'*** (vn) in this 'sukta' has been variously used as to suppress **(to eat =Hk{k.k)** the speech **(go = xks)** the Brahmna.

Two important Vedic terms ***'vrishabha'*** o`"kHk and ***'pacanti'*** ipfUr appear together in many verses of the Veda viz.10-27-2 and 10-28-3.

The common meaning of ***'vrishabha'*** is bull but other meanings are not uncommon e.g. manly/vigorous/an epithet for the God Indra/Showerer of bounties/ a widow/ a medcinal plant named ***Mucuna prusiens*** and clouds (Nri 9-22-1) etc. But western scholars with their self centred interest have called it a 'bull' espcially when it appears associated with pacani **(ipkfu)** which gives the sense of cooking. Supporters of the wrong notion that meat consmption is permitted by the Vedas advocate as under.

"Then will I cook vigorous bull for them and will sprinkle

(upon the fire) the fifteen fold guice of soma"

-H.H.Willson

In fact ***Pacanti*** **(ipfUr)** is derived from the Sanskrit root **'ip'** ***pac*** which means to cook, to burn, but don't forget that it ¼**ip**½ ***pac*** has other meaning like ripening of crops; to mature; to bring perfection and to burn one's self. Unless and until one is aware of the correct usage of these terms with reference to context, he is liable to bemisled.

The Rgveda mantra (1-164-430 is an unique example which has been translated with an ulterior motive both by W.D. Whitney and Griffith.

ukshanam prisnimapacanta virastance dharmani pvathamany asan.

-Rg.1-164-43

W.D. whitney has translated this half of the mantra as " The mighty men have dressed the spotted bullock. These were the customs in the days aforetime" This very mantra also appears in Atharvaveda of 9-10-25 and Griffith had translated its last part as. "The heroes cooked and dressed the spotted bullock." While explaining the meaning of the Sanskrit root 'ip' Grittith unforunately equated it with cooked and dressed" In fact they could never dive deep into the sea of Etymological interpretations of words and that is why they have prejudicially interpreted ***ukshanam*** as ox and not as cloud, Similarly the **'ip'** ***pac*** dhatu of the word ***apacnta*** **'vipUr'** as to cook & eat but they failed to understand that here it means to attain maturity.

The facts highlighted herin may help us to conclude that meat eating doesn't go with the inherent Spirit and Philosophy of the Vedas.

'Aum, Santi, Santi, Santi A'

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