



Ahimsa Foundation for Cattle Protection

AFFCAP September -- October 2015 Newsletter



**WANNA STOP CLIMATE CHANGE?
STOP EATING MEAT**

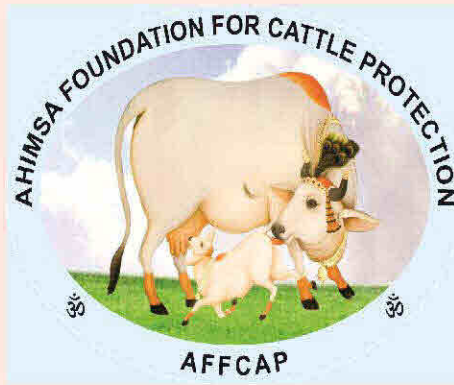
PICTURE PERFECT

THERE IS NO BEEF IN VEDAS

STORM OVER MOVE TO BAN COW KILLINGS



**No
Slaughter**



**No
Slaughter**

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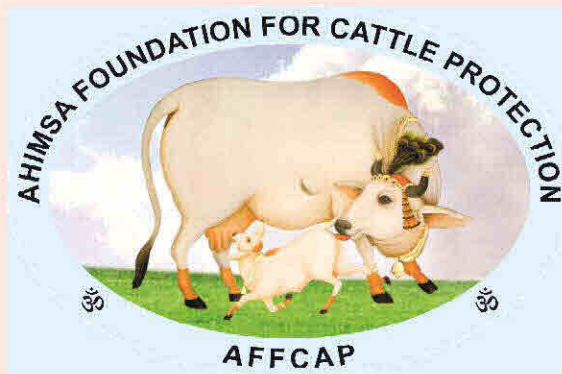
THERE IS NO BEEF IN VEDAS

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***STORM OVER MOVE TO BAN
COW KILLINGS***



**No
Slaughter**



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Slaughter**

Welcome to the September - October AFFCAP newsletter.

This edition contains a challenging article (pge. 17), found on islamawareness.net, entitled *Storm over move to ban cow killings*, which advocates the continuance of cow slaughter, and is critical of recent legislative changes against the practice in India.

One of their arguments relates to the depriving of meat to the poor of the country. They report that the cost of beef is lower than other meats, with the costs of mutton and chicken double that of beef. Consequently, it is claimed to disadvantageously affect the poor if access to beef is withdrawn.

	LENTILS	PORTERHOUSE STEAK
SERVING SIZE:	1 cup	4 oz.
PROTEIN:	17.9 g	22 g
EWG CARBON FOOTPRINT RATING:	BEST out of 20 analyzed	2nd WORST out of 20 analyzed
COST:	20c	\$4
FAT:	0 g	22 g
SATURATED FAT:	0 g	9 g

At the risk of being painted heartless, one solution is to let these unfortunate souls change to a vegetarian diet. The subsistence provided by meat is substandard both nutritionally and ecologically, when compared to a vegetarian regime. A meat diet is a violent and hideous form of nourishment, so it is to everyone's benefit that an alternative fare be adopted.

The article alleges that Vedic scripture permits the eating of meat, and that Brahmans were known to ingest this ration, since the activity of slaughtering and eating of cows is reported as scripturally-approved.

Every group has their deviants and this is the likely explanation of these rogue Brahmans. The consumption of beef is only permitted during times of starvation and the use of slaughterhouses is never condoned.

This conclusion is supported by another of the newsletter's articles entitled *There is No Beef in Vedas*. Please refer to it for some scriptural details supporting the denial of animal slaughter and meat eating.

Even the teachings of Islam disagrees with the premise of animal slaughter. The prophet Muhammad proffered:

"Do not allow your stomachs to become graveyard of animals." Hadith





The renowned Vedic teacher and *Acharya*, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, states:

The bull is the emblem of the moral principle, and the cow is the representative of the earth. When the bull and the cow are in a joyful mood, it is to be understood that the people of the world are also in a joyful mood.

(Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.16.18, purport)

Subsequently, cows play an essential role within the ecology of a spiritual society, which is difficult to understand by those whose judgement is dictated by taste buds. A non-violent diet bears fruit well beyond the dictates of the tongue — so why resort to a slaughterhouse in order to appease the tongue's lust? And why the doggedness of pushing a low class, unhealthy diet onto the masses, when a more affordable, nutritious, and nonviolent alternative is available at the corner market?

Bulls and cows are considered sacred due to their being the favorite animals of Lord Krishna. As well, on their body, all demigods find shelter.

In addition:

According to scriptures also, there are seven mothers: (1) the real mother, (2) the wife of the spiritual master, (3) the wife of a brāhmaëa, (4) the wife of the king, (5) the cow, (6) the nurse, and 7) the earth. All of them are mothers.

SB 1.11.28 (purport)



How can a society which butchers its mother prosper? It is typical that once one weans from the real mother's breast, the next milk consumed is from a cow. No one would ever think to ingest one's real mother, so why is a different fate offered to our bovine matriarchs?

We are the first to admit that the current situation in India is less than ideal. The islamawareness.net article legitimately points out the dire situation in which some urban cows find themselves encircled.

In order to survive, they are forced to scrounge through garbage, often ingesting plastic bags in search of nourishment. The plastic loads their system resulting in disease, pain and death.

To my knowledge, no one is satisfied with the status quo. At least, let us hope not.

Regrettably, human nature's stinginess is found at the heart of misguided animal husbandry. The price paid for milk is not sufficient to maintain a protected animal throughout its life. So malnourished, overcrowded gaushalas are found throughout the Indian countryside and city animals are imprisoned by the inappropriate and beggarly resources available street side.

Fortunately, some *gwallas* are able to fundraise to support their charges. This is very much welcomed; however, those who consume milk should pay a premium in order to protect the dairy herd. It is the only logical and moral remedy short of personally engaging in cow protection.

In North America, milk is also sold at a miserly rate. Unfortunately, profitability is fortified through culling herds of older and less-productive animals. The University of Wisconsin inelegantly informs:

Determine when to cull a non-pregnant cow by calculating her contribution to fixed cost per day. When her contribution to fixed cost becomes negative she should be culled. This



calculation requires knowing her current production (pounds per day), butterfat test, protein test and SCC [Somatic Cell Count]. Other pieces of information required are the base milk price and the feed, labor and miscellaneous costs per hundredweight.

Yes, protecting cows brings additional costs and challenges. But it is a necessary expense in developing a rational counterculture where:

“There is a sweet transcendental interrelation between all living entities, irrespective of not only caste, creed, and colour between man and man, but between man and beast, man and birds, man and reptiles, man and plants, etc., and so also between man and God, and between God and others, and so on....as such the [farm] shall be the centre for such supreme culture of knowledge. [It] shall set the example that neither God nor the living being nor Nature is in any way antagonistic toward one another, but that all of them exist in harmony as a complete whole unit.” – Srila Prabhupada (Conception of Gita-nagari, Part 2)

Such wisdom reveals — that based on the interrelationship of all living entities — one species does not suffer separately from another. It is only a question of time when all will share a similar fate if this wholesale slaughter is allowed to continue.

Let us develop a society which offers respect to all. The cows and bulls, who are willing to produce the most wonderful foodstuffs, must be allowed to share in their rightful esteem.



Such a development is to the advantage of all.

An important responsibility of those placed in positions of governance, is to direct society in a harmonious and equitable direction. That is what is embedded in these legislative legalities, and unsurprisingly, they agitate the battle between conflicting social viewpoints.

But it is self-evident that a nation based upon non-violence provides dividends for one-and-all.

Even to those with cross purposes.



James Cameron: Wanna Fight Climate Change? Stop Eating Meat.



by Sarah Von Alt - September 17, 2015

James Cameron, famed director and well-known climate change activist, has a message for the masses: go vegan to fight climate change.

Cameron, who has been vegan for four years, spoke at a climate change summit in Los Angeles earlier this week about the impact of food systems and diet on climate change.

In an exclusive interview with Fortune, Cameron explains:

[T]he thing that became abundantly clear to us when we met with the experts who are working in nutrition and energy sustainability and climate change is that we can't actually meet our emission goals if we don't address animal agriculture, and that's the thing that's been left out of the conversation.

This message is crucial because many people who care about the environment still have no idea that raising animals for food is so incredibly destructive.

Consider some of these facts:

- **Going vegan immediately cuts your CO2 emissions in half**
- **It takes 2,500 gallons of water to produce just one pound of beef**
- **80 percent of land deforested in the Amazon is for raising cattle**
- **Factory farms grossly contaminate rivers and ground water**
- **While the widespread negative repercussions of animal agriculture can be overwhelming,**

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Cameron's message is one of hope:

The simple resounding message is that you can be healthier and your planet can be healthier based upon a very simple thing that you do today. And you'll save money because eating a plant-based diet is just frankly cheaper. It's cheaper to produce plants. It's less carbon footprint, less water footprint, less money footprint and better for you.

Of course, one of the best reasons to ditch animal products is to prevent unnecessary animal suffering and death

<http://www.mfablog.org/james-cameron-wanna-fight-climate-change>

There is no Beef in Vedas

December 4, 2008 By Sanjeev Agniveer

This article is also available in Hindi at <http://agniveer.com/4387/there-is-no-beef-in-vedas-hi/>

This article is also available in Tamil at <http://agniveer.com/no-beef-in-vedas-ta/>

The material presented here is based on a thorough and objective analysis of roots of Vedic words, the context in which they appear, Vedic Vocabulary, Philology, Grammar and other tools critical for correct interpretation of the Vedic mantras. Thus this research series does not merely rely on blind reproduction of works of Max Muller, Griffith, Wilson, Williams and other indologists on Vedas and Vedic language. While they are more popular in contemporary western academia, we have objective reasons to conclude that their works are far from authoritative. We shall explore this facet in more detail in this research series.

Welcome to this first part of the research series on critical evaluation of Misconceptions surrounding the Vedas – the first books of knowledge on earth.

For centuries aspersions have been cast upon the Vedas; the primary holy scriptures of the Hindus of having unholy contents. If one really started believing in those aspersions, the entire Hindu philosophy, culture, and traditions would reduce to nothing but savagery, barbarism and cannibalism.

The Vedas – the very roots of Hinduism, rather the first source of knowledge on earth – are meant for guiding the actions of human being in order to lead a blissful life.

This slanderous campaign has been unleashed by different vested interests to embarrass Hindus around the world citing specific references from the Vedas.

This also comes handy in convincing poor and illiterate Indians to give up their faith on the grounds that their fundamental holy books – the Vedas – contain all the inhuman elements like denigration of women, meat-eating, polygamy, casteism and above all – beef eating.

The Vedas are also accused of animal sacrifice in sacrificial ceremonies popularly known as the YAJNA. Interestingly a section of home-bred intellectuals claiming to have deep study of ancient India has also come up, who cite references from works of western indologists to prove such unholy content in the Vedas.

Saying that the Vedas permit beef-eating and cow-slaughter amounts to striking a lethal blow to a Hindu's soul. Respect for cow forms a core tenet of Hinduism. Once you are able to convince him of flaws in the foundation of this core tenet and make him feel guilty, he becomes an easy prey for the predator faiths. There are millions of ill-informed Hindus who are not empowered to counter argue and hence quietly surrender.

The vested interests that malign the Vedas are not confined to foreign and home-bred indologists alone. A certain class among Hindus exploited the rest of the population including the socially and economically weaker sections by forcing them to believe and follow what they said in the name of Vedas or else face the wrath.

All the slanders heaped upon the Vedas can be attributed mainly to the interpretations of commentaries written by Mahidhar, Uvat and Saayan in the medieval times; and to what Vam-margis or the Tantra cult propagated in their books in the name of the Vedas.

In due course the falsehood spread far and wide and they became even more deep rooted when western scholars with their half baked knowledge of Sanskrit transliterated these interpretations of commentaries of Sayan and Mahidhar, in the name of translating the Vedas.

However, they lacked the pre-requisite understanding of Shiksha (Phonetics), Vyakarana (Grammar), Nirukta (Philology), Nighantu (Vocabulary), Chhanda (Prosody), Jyotish (Astronomy), Kalpa and so on that are critical for correct interpretation of the Vedas.

The purpose behind Agniveer movement is to objectively evaluate all such misconceptions about the Vedas – the foundation of human knowledge and establish their piety, sanctity, great ideals and philosophy that cater not only to Hindus but to every human being without bars, bias or discrimination of any kind.

Section 1: No violence against animals

Yasmintsarvaani bhutaanyaatmaivaabhuudvijaanatah
Tatra ko mohah kah shokah ekatvamanupasyatah
Yajurveda 40.7

“Those who see all beings as souls do not feel infatuation or anguish at their sight, for they experience oneness with them”.

How could people who believed in the doctrines of indestructibility, transmigration dare to kill living animals in yajnas? They might be seeing the souls of their own near and dear ones of bygone days residing in those living beings.

Anumantaa vishasitaa nihantaa krayavikrayee
Samskartaa chopahartaa cha khadakashcheti ghaatakaah
Manusmrithi 5.51

Those who permit slaying of animals; those who bring animals for slaughter; those who slaughter; those who sell meat; those who purchase meat; those who prepare dish out of it; those who serve that meat and those who eat are all murderers.

Breehimattam yavamattamatho maashamatho tilam
Esha vaam bhaago nihito ratnadheyaaya dantau maa hinsishtam pitaram maataram cha
Atharvaveda 6.140.2

O teeth! You eat rice, you eat barley, you gram and you eat sesame. These cereals are specifically meant for you. Do not kill those who are capable of being fathers and mothers.

Ya aamam maansamadanti paurusheyam cha ye kravih
Garbhaan khaadanti keshavaastanito naashayaamasi
Atharvaveda 8.6.23

We ought to destroy those who eat cooked as well as uncooked meat, meat involving destruction of males and females, foetus and eggs.

**Anago hatya vai bheema kritye
Maa no gaamashvam purusham vadheeh
Atharvaveda 10.1.29**

It is definitely a great sin to kill innocents. Do not kill our cows, horses and people.

How could there be justification of cow and other animals being killed when killing is so clearly prohibited in the Vedas?

**Aghnyaa yajamaanasya pashoonpahi
Yajurveda 1.1**

“O human! animals are Aghnya – not to be killed. Protect the animals”

**Pashunstraayethaam
Yajurveda 6.11**

Protect the animals.

**Dwipaadava Chatushpaatpaahi
Yajurveda 14.8**

Protect the bipeds and quadrupeds!

Kravy da –kravya[meat obtained from slaughter] + Ada [the eater]—the meat eater.

Pisacha — pisita [meat] +asa [eater]—the meat eater.

Asutrpa — Asu [breath of life] + trpa [one who satisfies himself on]—one who takes others life for his meals.

Garba da and Anda da – the foetus and egg eaters.

Mans da – the meat eaters

Meat eaters have always been looked down in Vedic literature. They have been known as Rakshasas, Pisacha and so on....All these words are synonyms of demons or devils that have been out-cast from the civilized human society.

**Urjam no dhehi dwipade chatushpade
Yajurveda 11.83**

“May all bipeds and quadrupeds gain strength and nourishment”

This mantra is recited by Hindus before every meal. How could the same philosophy which prays for well-being of every soul in every moment of life, approve of killing animals?



Section 2: No violence in Yajna

Yajna never meant animal sacrifice in the sense popularly understood. Yajna in the Vedas meant a noble deed or the highest purifying action.

Adhvara iti Yajnanaama – Dhvaratihimsaakarmaa tatpratishedhah
Nirukta 2.7

According to Yaaska Acharya, one of the synonyms of Yajna in Nirukta or the Vedic philology is Adhvara.

Dhvara means an act with himsa or violence. And therefore a-dhvara means an act involving no himsa or no violence. There are a large number of such usage of Adhvara in the Vedas.

In the post-Mahabharata period, misinterpretation of the Vedas and interpolations in other scriptures took place at various points intime. Acharya Shankar reestablished the Vedic values to an extent.

In the more recent times, Swami Dayanand Saraswati – known as the grandfather of modern India – interpreted the Vedas as per the correct rules of the language and authentic evidences. His literature, which includes commentary on the Vedas, Satyarth Prakash loosely translated as Light of Truth, An Introduction to the Vedas and other texts led to widespread social reformation based on Vedic philosophy and dispelling of myths surrounding the Vedas.

Let us discover what the Vedas have to say on Yajna.

Agne yam yagnamadhvaram vishwatah pari bhurasi
Sa id deveshu gacchati
Rigveda 1.1.4

O lord of effulgence! The non-violent Yajna, you prescribe from all sides, is beneficial for all, touches divine proportions and is accepted by noble souls.

The Rigveda describes Yajna as Adhvara or non violent throughout. Same is the case with all the other Vedas. How can it be then concluded that the Vedas permit violence or slaughter of animals?

The biggest accusation of cattle and cow slaughter comes in the context of the Yajnas that derived their names from different cattle like the Ashwamedh Yajna, the Gomedha Yajna and the Nar-medh Yajna. Even by the wildest stretch of the imagination the word Medha would not mean slaughter in this context.

It's interesting to note what Yajurveda says about a horse

Imam ma himsirekashafam pashum kanikradam vaajinam vaajineshu
Yajurveda 13.48

Do not slaughter this one hooped animal that neighs and who goes with a speed faster than most of the animals.

Aswamedha does not mean horse sacrifice at Yajna. Instead the Yajurveda clearly mentions that a horse ought not to be slaughtered.

In Shathapatha, Ashwa is a word for the nation or empire

The word medha does not mean slaughter. It denotes an act done in accordance to the intellect Alternatively it could mean consolidation, as evident from the root meaning of medha i.e. medhru san-ga-me

Raashtram vaa ashwamedhah
Annam hi gau
Agnirvaa ashwah
Aajyam medhah
(Shatpath 13.1.6.3)

Swami Dayananda Saraswati wrote in his Light of Truth:

A Yajna dedicated to the glory, wellbeing and prosperity of the Rashtra the nation or empire is known as the Ashwamedh yajna.

“To keep the food pure or to keep the senses under control, or to make the food pure or to make a good use of the rays of Sun or keep the earth free from impurities[clean] is called Gomedha Yajna”.

“The word Gau also means the Earth and the yajna dedicated to keep the Earth the environment clean is called Gomedha Yajna”

“The cremation of the body of a dead person in accordance with the principles laid down in the Vedas is called Narmedha Yajna”.

Section 3: No beef in Vedas

Not only the Vedas are against animal slaughter but also vehemently oppose and prohibit cow slaughter. Yajurveda forbids killing of cows, for they provide energizing food for human beings

**Ghrtam duhaanaamaditim janaayaagne maa himsiheeh
Yajurveda 13.49**

Do not kill cows and bulls who always deserve to be protected.

**Aare gohaa nrhaa vadho vo astu
Rigveda 7.56.17**

In Rigveda cow slaughter has been declared a heinous crime equivalent to human murder and it has been said that those who commits this crime should be punished.

**Sooyavasaad bhagavatee hi bhooyaa atho vayam bhagvantah syaama
Addhi trnamaghnye vishwadaaneem piba shuddhamudakamaacharantee
Rigveda 1.164.40 or Atharv 7.73.11 or Atharv 9.10.20**

The Aghnya cows – which are not to be killed under any circumstances– may keep themselves healthy by use of pure water and green grass, so that we may be endowed with virtues, knowledge and wealth.

**The Vedic Lexicon, Nighantu, gives amongst other synonyms of Gau[or cow] the words Aghnya, Ahi, and Aditi. Yaska the commentator on Nighantu, defines these as-
Aghnya the one that ought not to be killed
Ahi the one that must not be slaughtered.
Aditi the one that ought not to be cut into pieces.**

These three names of cow signify that the animal ought not to be put to tortures. These words appear frequently throughout the Vedas in context of the cow.

Aghnyeyam saa vardhataam mahate soubhagaaya

**Rigveda 1.164.27
Cow – The aghnya – brings us health and prosperity**

**Suprapaanam Bhavatvaghnyaayaah
Rigveda 5.83.8
There should be excellent facility for pure water for Aghnya Cow**

Yah paurusheyena kravishaa samankte yo ashwena pashunaa yaatudhaanah

**Yo aghnyaayaa bharati ksheeramagne tessaam sheersaani harasaapi vrishcha
Rigveda 10.87.16**

Those who feed on human, horse or animal flesh and those who destroy milk-giving Aghnya

cows should be severely punished.

Vimucchyadhvamaghnyaa devayaanaa aganma

Yajurveda 12.73

The Aghnya cows and bulls bring you prosperity

Maa gaamanaagaamaditim vadhishtha

Rigveda 8.101.15

Do not kill the cow. Cow is innocent and aditi – that ought not to be cut into pieces

Antakaaya goghaatam

Yajurveda 30.18

Destroy those who kill cows

Yadi no gaam hansi yadyashwam yadi poorusham

Tam tvaa seesena vidhyaamo yatha no so aveeraha

Atharvaveda 1.16.4

If someone destroys our cows, horses or people, kill him with a bullet of lead.

Vatsam jaatamivaaghnyaa

Atharvaveda 3.30.1

Love each other as the Aghnya – non-killable cow – loves its calf

Dhenu sadanam rayeenaam

Atharvaveda 11.1.34

Cow is fountainhead of all bounties

The entire 28th Sukta or Hymn of 6th Mandal of Rigveda sings the glory of cow.

Aa gaavo agnamannuta bhadramakrantseedantu

Bhooyobhooyo rayimidasya vardhayannabhinne

Na taa nashanti na dabhaati taskaro naasaamamitro vyathiraa dadharshati

Na taa arvaa renukakaato ashnute na samskritramupa yanti taa abhi

Gaavo bhago gaava indro me achhaan

Yooyam gaavo medayathaa

Maa vah stena eeshata maaghanshasah

1. Everyone should ensure that cows are free from miseries and kept healthy.

2. God blesses those who take care of cows.

3. Even the enemies should not use any weapon on cows

4. No one should slaughter the cow

5. Cow brings prosperity and strength

6. If cows keep healthy and happy, men and women shall also keep disease free and prosperous

7. May the cow eat green grass and pure water. May they not be killed and bring prosperity to us.

What more proofs does one need to understand the high esteem in which not only the cow but each living being is held in the Vedas.

The learned audience can decide for themselves from these evidences that the Vedas are completely against any inhuman practice... to top it all the Beef and Cow slaughter.

There is no Beef in Vedas.

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Addendum on 14 April 2010:

After this article, there was severe reaction from various sources who cannot live with the fact that Vedas and ancient culture of our nation could have been more ideal than their current communistic ideals. I received several mails that tried to refute the articles by citing additional references that support beef-eating. These include 2 mantras from Rigveda, and some Shlokas from Manu Smriti and a few other texts. An example is the comment from Avtar Gill on this page itself. On these, I have to say the following:

a. The article has given evidence from Manu Smriti itself which states that even one who permits killing is a murderer. Thus all these additional shlokas are either from adulterated Manu Smriti or misinterpreted by twisting of words. I recommend them to read Manu Smriti by Dr Surendra Kumar which is available from <http://vedicbooks.com>

b. A typical example of foul play by those hell-bent on justifying their obsession with beef in ancient texts, is to translate Mansa as 'meat'. In reality, 'Mansa' is a generic word used to denote pulp. Meat is called 'Mansa' because it is pulpy. So mere presence of 'Mansa' does not mean it refers to meat.

c. The other texts referred by them are among dubious ones not considered authoritative evidence. Their modus operandi is simple – state anything written in Sanskrit as Dharma and translate the way they want to prove whatever they want. This is how they have been fooling us all by filling our textbooks with all unverified demeaning claims.

d. With regards to Vedas, they could come up with two mantras that supposedly justify beef eating. Let us evaluate them:

Claim: Rigveda (10/85/13) declares, “On the occasion of a girl’s marriage oxen and cows are slaughtered.”

Fact: The mantra states that in winter, the rays of sun get weakened and then get strong again in spring. The word used for sun-rays in 'Go' which also means cow and hence the mantra can also be translated by making 'cow' and not 'sun-rays' as the subject. The word used for 'weakened' is 'Hanyate' which can also mean killing. But if that be so, why would the mantra go further and state in next line (which is deliberately not translated) that in spring, they start regaining their original form.

How can a cow killed in winter regain its health in spring? This amply proves how ignorant and biased communists malign Vedas.

Claim: Rigveda (6/17/1) states that “Indra used to eat the meat of cow, calf, horse and buffalo.”

Fact: The mantra states that brilliant scholars enlighten the world in the manner that wood enhances the fire of Yajna. I fail to understand from where did Avtar Gill and his friends discover Indra, cow, calf, horse and buffalo in this mantra!

In summary, I continue the challenge to everyone – cite one single mantra from Vedas that justify beef-eating and I shall be eager to embrace any faith that he or she may decide for me.



If not, they should agree to revert back to the Vedas.

This article is also available in Hindi at <http://agniveer.com/4387/there-is-no-beef-in-vedas-hi/>

Storm over move to ban cow killings

By Praful Bidwai

http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/EH19Df01.html

NEW DELHI - Faced with uncertain prospects in elections to five state legislatures due within three months, India's pro-Hindu coalition is bringing in a bill in the national parliament to ban the killing of cows and win the sympathies and votes of Hindus, but this is likely to stir a hornet's nest.



To start with, it means pandering to a particular religious group - many but by no means all groups of Hindus consider the cow a sacred animal - in India's multi-cultural, multi-religious society.

Indeed, the preamble to the bill exhibits a strong religious bias - unprecedented for parliamentary legislation in India. It says that "the cow is the embodiment of divine virtues like love, compassion, benevolence, tolerance and non-violence", and that it commands reverence and cultural sanctity.

This is not universally true, even of the Hindus, who form a little over four-fifths of India's billion-strong population. Many Hindus, who keep cows as milch and draught animals and use bullock power in agriculture, sell them once their economic life is exhausted.

India has a sixth of the world's cows and 57 percent of the world's buffaloes. Apart from slaughtering millions of cows and buffaloes for domestic consumption, India also exports over US\$200 million worth of meat, mainly beef.

Bringing in a national law on a subject that falls within the domain of India's 32 states and territories is itself a highly questionable move. More than a quarter of these states, including Kerala in the south, West Bengal in the east and some Christian-majority states of the north-east, and Jammu and Kashmir, permit cows to be killed for their meat.

Some of the states have registered an angry protest against the proposed bill. For instance, the deputy chief minister of north Meghalaya says, "A particular diet may be poison to one community, but food for another, as in the case of hill people in the northeast whose main diet is beef." Neighboring Mizoram state's chief minister argues, "If a bill banning cow slaughter is passed, it could set the ball rolling for efforts to ban the slaughter of pigs. But both beef and pork are part of the food habits of the people."

Kerala agriculture minister K R Gowri, herself a Hindu, has termed the proposed bill "detrimental to the interests of Kerala". In Kerala, beef accounts for an estimated 40 percent of all meat consumed. Some 80 percent of Kerala's people regularly eat beef. They include 72 Hindu communities, besides Muslim, Christian and indigenous people.

Even more undemocratic is the government's crude attempt to regulate, dictate and censor the dietary habits of Indians. Banning cow slaughter involves preventing people from choosing what they eat. Permitting it would not impose a particular diet on an individual or group.

A blanket ban on the killing of cows, bulls and calves, irrespective of age, utility or health status, is a draconian measure that will inflict a heavy burden on the peasant-owners of such animals, besides increasing the proportion of unhealthy bovines in the total population.

Animal husbandry experts have often warned against the overpopulation of cattle in India and the emaciated state of a high proportion of cows. K R Ramaswamy, a former director of the Indian Institute of Management in Bangalore, has argued that India must cull half its bovine population, which is extremely unhealthy and cannot be looked after.

There is yet another economic angle to cow slaughter. Beef in India costs less than half the price of lamb or chicken. It is the preferred source of first-class protein for the poor, who constitute a majority of India's population. The absence of beef will raise the food bill for the underprivileged.

Even more important, surveys of butchers in different states show that three-fourths of all beef is consumed by non-Muslims, largely Hindus. A higher proportion of the sellers of cattle are Hindus.

Abstinance from beef-eating is largely a caste or class question among Hindus. The low castes prefer beef to other meat for reasons of taste and habit too.

Yet, to impose this ban on cow slaughter, the government, led by the Hindu-chauvinist Bharatiya Janata Party, has conjured up, of all things, an ecological and animal rights argument. The bill seeks to shift the constitutional subject matter from the purview of the states to items common to both national and state legislatures under measures for prevention of cruelty against animals.

This is patently duplicitous. If the real objective is to prevent cruelty to animals, then why single out the cow? Why not extend the law to hundreds of other animals and birds that are maltreated or vulnerable to abuse?



It is not as if Indian society is particularly caring of animals. One can see thousands of ill-fed, sick cows roaming the streets of Indian cities, including the capital. Most are left to forage through garbage. They end up consuming rotten vegetables, meat, and above all, an enormous amount of plastic bags.

India is notorious for its overconsumption and unsafe disposal of recycled, ugly plastic carry-bags, which are not required to be separated from biodegradable matter. Autopsies on cows turn up literally hundreds of plastic bags in their stomachs. Indian cows suffer from a range of ailments, including foot-and-mouth disease. The bill is hypocritical in evading issues at the center of the professed concern for the welfare of the cow.

The proposed law is open to objection on two other grounds too. It originates in the mistaken

belief that cow slaughter was "brought" to India by invading Muslims in the Middle Ages, and that Hindu scriptures unanimously proscribe cow slaughter.

In reality, eminent Indian and European historians have conclusively shown, on the basis of contemporary accounts, that beef eating was an integral part of the dietary customs in ancient India. Animal sacrifice, including the killing of cows, was the prescribed ritual in many Indian traditions. Non-Hindu cultures, including that of the indigenous people or even Buddhists, permitted beef-eating.

Rich evidence of this is found in the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Dharmashastras and other Hindu scriptures. For Vedic Aryans, cows were an important form of wealth. They were gifted to the priestly class of Brahmins as fees. Cows were defined as "food" in these texts.

There is evidence that in a later period, many Brahmins stopped eating beef. But they formed less than 5 percent of the population. In no major scripture, says Professor D N Jha of Delhi University and author of *The Myth of the Holy Cow*, "is killing a cow described as a grave sin, unlike drinking liquor or killing a Brahmin".

http://www.islamawareness.net/Asia/India/india_atimes_2.html

"It is only in the 19th century that the demand for banning cow slaughter emerged as a tool of mass political mobilization by right-wing Hindu communalists, out to isolate Muslims by aggressively challenging their dietary practices as 'alien'," says Jha.

(Inter Press Service)

