

## RIDDLE NO. 6

### THE CONTENTS OF THE VEDAS: HAVE THEY ANY MORAL OR SPIRITUAL VALUE?

#### I

If the Vedas are to be accepted as binding and Infallible then what they teach must have ethical and spiritual value. Nobody can regard a rag to be binding and infallible because a Philosopher like Jaimini came forward to lend his authority to such a proposal. Have the Vedas any ethical or spiritual value? Every Hindu who regards the Vedas as infallible is bound to consider this question.

Modern writers have expressed views which deny any spiritual value to the Vedas. As an illustration one may refer to the views of Prof. Muir. According to Prof. Muir<sup>1</sup>:

“The whole character of these compositions and the circumstances under which, from internal evidence, they appear to have arisen, are in harmony with the supposition that they were nothing more than the natural expression of the personal hopes and feelings of those ancient bards of whom they were first recited. In these songs the Aryan sages celebrated the praises of their ancestral gods (while at the same time they sought to conciliate their goodwill by a variety of oblations supposed to be acceptable to them), and besought of them all the blessings which men in general desired—health, wealth, long life, cattle, offspring, victory over their enemies, forgiveness of sin, and in some cases also celestial felicity.”

It would no doubt be objected that all foreign scholars are prejudiced and that their views cannot therefore be accepted. Fortunately we are not altogether dependent upon the views of foreigners. There are leaders of indigeneous schools of thought which have taken the same view. The most notorious example is that of the Charvakas.

The opposition of Charvaka can be seen from the following quotation which reproduces his line of argument against the Vaidikas<sup>2</sup>:

“If you object that, if there be no such thing as happiness in a future world, then how should men of experienced wisdom engage

<sup>1</sup> Muir. Sanskrit Texts. Vol. III (Page not mentioned).

<sup>2</sup> Sarva Darshan Sangraha p. 10.

in the agnihotra and other sacrifices, which can only be performed with great expenditure of money and bodily fatigue. Your objection cannot be accepted as any proof to the contrary, since the agnihotra, etc., are only useful as means of livelihood; for the Veda is tainted by three faults of untruth, self-contradiction, and tautology; then again the impostors who call themselves Vaidic pundits are mutually destructive, as the authority of the Jnan-Kanda is overthrown by those who maintain the authority of the Karma-Kanda and those who maintain the authority of the Jnan-Kanda reject that of the Karma-Kanda; and lastly, the three Vedas themselves are only the incoherent rhapsodies of knaves and to this effect runs the popular saying:

“The Agnihotra, the three Vedas, the ascetic, three staves, and smearing oneself with ashes,” Brihaspati says, “these are but means of livelihood for those who have no manliness nor sense.”

Brahaspati is another example of the same school of thought. Brahaspati was far more bold and militant in his opposition to the Vedas than the Charvakas. As reported by Madhava Acharya, Brahaspati argued<sup>1</sup>:—

“There is no heaven, no final liberation, nor any soul in another world; Nor do the actions of the four castes, orders etc., produce any real effect. The Agnihotra, the three Vedas, the ascetic’s three stages and smearing one’s self with ashes, .... were made by Nature as the livelihood of those destitute of knowledge and manliness; If a beast slain in the Jyotishtoma rite will itself go to heaven; why then does not the sacrificer forthwith offer his own father?

If the Sraddha produces gratification to beings who are dead, then here, too, in the case of travellers when they start, it is needless to give provisions for the journey.

If beings in heaven are gratified by our offering the Sraddha here, then why not give the food down below to those who are standing on the housetop ?

While life remains let a man live happily, let him feed on ghee even though he runs in debt;

When once the body becomes ashes, how can it ever return again?

If he who departs from the body goes to another world, how is that he comes not back again restless for love of his kindred?

Hence it is only a means of livelihood that Brahmins have established here.

All these ceremonies are for the dead, there is no other fruit anywhere. The three authors of the Vedas were buffoons, knaves and demons.

<sup>1</sup> Sarva Darshan Sangraha (Page not mentioned).

All the well-known formulas of the pundits Jarphari, Turphari, and all the obscene rites for the queen commanded in the Aswamedha;

These were invented by buffoons, and so all the various kinds of presents to the priests.

While the eating of flesh was similarly commended by night prowling demons.”

If the opinions of the Charvaka and Brahaspati are not accepted there is plenty of other evidence. That evidence is recorded in the books of the various schools of philosophy such as the Nyaya, Vaishashikha, Purva and Uttar Mimamsa. It must be said to the credit of the authors of the text-books of these philosophies that before proceeding to defend the authority of the Vedas they have been very careful to set out the case of their opponents who were opposed to the authority of the Vedas. This fact enables us to prove two things: (1) That there was a school of thought which was opposed to recognize the Vedas as books of authority; (2) That they were a respectable group of people whose opinions the defenders of the authority of the Vedas were bound to consider. I reproduce below the case of the opponents as set out in the Nyaya and the Purva Mimamsa.

Gotama the author of the Nyaya system of Philosophy was an upholder of the doctrine of the authority of the Vedas. He has summarized the arguments of his opponents in Sutra 57 which reads as follows<sup>1</sup>:

“The Veda has no authority, since it has the defects of falsehood, self-contradiction, and tautology. That verbal evidence, which is distinct from such as relates to visible objects, i.e., the Veda, has no authority. Why? Because it has the defects of falsehood etc.”

“Of these defects, that of falsehood is established by the fact that we sometimes observe that no fruit results from performing the sacrifice for a son, or the like. ‘Self-contradiction’ is a discrepancy between a former and a later declaration. Thus the Veda says ‘he sacrifices when the Sun is risen; he sacrifices when the Sun is not yet risen. He sacrifices, (I cannot explain the next words says Muir,) A tawny (dog?) carries away the oblation of him who sacrifices before the Sun has risen: and both of these two carry off the oblation of him who sacrifices. Now here there is a contradiction between the words which enjoin sacrifices and the words which intimate by censure that those sacrifices will occasion disastrous results. Again, the Veda has no authority, owing to its ‘tautology’, as where it is said, he repeats the first thrice, he repeats the last thrice. For as the

<sup>1</sup> Muir III. p. 113.

lastness ultimately coincides with the firstness and as there is a triple repetition of the words, this sentence is tautological. Now since these particular sentences have no authority, the entire Veda will be proved by these specimens to stand in the same predicament, since all its other parts have the same author, or are of the same character, as these portions.”

Coming to Jaimini. He summarises the views of the opponents of the Vedas in the first part of Sutras 28 and 32 of his Purva Mimamsa. Sutra 28 says<sup>1</sup> :

“It is also objected that the Vedas cannot be eternal, because we observe that persons, who are not eternal, but subject to birth and death, are mentioned in them. Thus it is said in the Veda ‘Babara Pravahani desired’, ‘Kusurvinda Auddalaki desired’. Now, as the sentences of the Veda in which they are mentioned, could not have existed before these persons were born, it is clear that these sentences had a beginning, and being thus non-eternal, they are proved to be of human composition.”

Sutra 32 says<sup>2</sup>:

“It is asked how the Veda can constitute proof of duty when it contains such incoherent nonsense as the following: ‘An old ox, in blanket and slippers, is standing at the door and singing benedictions. A Brahman female, desirous of offspring, asks, ‘Pray O King, what is the meaning of intercourse on the day of the new moon?’ or the following: ‘the cows celebrated this sacrifice’.”

This is also the view of Yaska the author of Nirukta who says:

(Of the four kinds of verses specified in the preceding section), (a) those which address a god as absent, (b) those which address him as present, and (c) those which address the worshippers as present and the god as absent, are the most numerous, while (d) those which refer to the speaker himself are rare. It happens also that a god is praised without any blessing being invoked, as in the hymn (R. V. i. 32). “I declare the heroic deeds of Indra,” etc. Again, blessings are invoked without any praise being offered, as in the words, ‘May, I see well with my eyes, be resplendent in my face, and hear well with my ears’. This frequently occurs in the Adhvaryava (Yajur), and in the sacrificial formula. Then again we find oaths and curses as in the words (R.V.vii. 104, 15), ‘May I die today, if I am a Yatudhana,’ etc. Further, we observe the desire to describe some particular state of things, as in the verse (R. V. x. 129, 2). ‘Death was not then, nor immortality,’ etc. Then there is lamentation, arising out of a certain

<sup>1</sup> Muir III. p. 77.

<sup>2</sup> Muir III. p. 80.

state of thing, as in the verse (R. V. x. 95, 14), 'The beautiful god will disappear and never return,' etc. Again we have blame and praise, as in the words (R. V. x. 117, 6). "The man who eats alone, sins alone, etc. So, too, in the hymn to dice (R. V. x. 34, 13) there is a censure upon dice, and a commendation of agriculture. Thus the objects for which the hymns were seen by the rishis were very various."

To quote the words of Yaska again—

"Each particular hymn has for its deity the God to whom the Rishi, seeking to obtain any object of desire which he longs for, addresses his prayer."

If this is not enough to prove that there is no ethical or spiritual Value in the Vedas further evidence could be added.

As to morality there is hardly any discussion about it in the Rig-Veda. Nor does the Rig-Veda contain elevating examples of moral life. Three illustrations of cases on the other side may well be given:

First is the conversation between *Yama* and *Yami* who were brother and sister.

"(Yami speaks). I invite my friend to friendship, having come over the vast and desert ocean may Vedhas, after reflecting, place in the earth the offspring (of thee) the father, endowed with excellent qualities."

"(Yama speaks), Thy friend desires not this friendship, for although of one origin, she is of a different form; the hero sons of the great Asura (are) the upholders of heaven, enjoying vast renown."

"(Yami speaks). The immortals take pleasure in (a union) like this which is forbidden to every mortal; let thy mind then concur with mine, and as the progenitor (of all) was the husband (of his daughter), do thou enjoy my person"

"(Yama speaks). We have not done what was done formerly; for how can we who speak truth, utter now that which is untrue? Gandharva (the sun) was in the watery (firmament), and the water was his bride. She is our common parent, hence our near affinity."

"(Yami speaks). The divine omniform generator Twashtri, the progenitor, made us two husband and wife, even in the womb; none frustrate his undertaking; earth and heaven are conscious of this our (union)."

"(Yama speaks). Who knows anything of this (his) first day (of existence)? Who has beheld it? Who has here revealed it? The dwelling of Mitra and of Varuna is vast. What sayest thou, who punishest men with hell?"

“(Yami speaks). The desire of Yama hath approached me Yami, to lie with him in the same bed; I will abandon my person as a wife to her husband; let us exert ourselves in union like the two wheels of a wagon.”

“(Yama speaks). The spies of the Gods, which wander upon earth, never stop, never close their eyes. Associate quickly, destructress with some other than with me, and exert yourselves in union, like the two wheels of a wagon.”

“(Yami speaks). To him (Yama) let every whorshipper sacrifice both day and night, on him let the eye of the Sun repeatedly rise; (for him may) the kindred pair (day and night unite) with heaven and earth. Yami will adhere to the non-affinity of Yama.”

“(Yama speaks). The subsequent ages will come, when sisters will choose one who is not a brother (as a husband); therefore, auspicious one, choose another husband than me, and make thine arm a pillow for thy mate.”

“(Yami speaks). Is he a brother whose sister has no lord? Is she a sister (whose brother) misfortune approaches? Overcome by desire, I strongly urge this one request; unite thy person with mine.”

“(Yama speaks). I will not unite my person with thine; they call him who approaches a sister, a sinner. Enjoy pleasure with some other than me; thy brother, auspicious one, has no such desire.”

“(Yami speaks). Alas, Yama, thou art feeble; we understand not thy mind or thy heart. Some other female exbrances thee as a girth a horse, or as a creeper a tree.”

“(Yama speaks). Do thou, Yami, embrace another; and let another embrace thee as a creeper a tree; seek his affection, let him seek thine; and make a happy union.”

“May Agni, the destroyer of the Rakshasas consenting to our prayer, drive hence (the evil spirit) who (in the form of) sickness assails thine embryo, who, as the disease durnaman, assails thy womb.”

“May Agni concurring in our prayer, destroy the cannibal who, as sickness, assails thine embryo, who, as the disease durnaman, assails thy womb.”

“May we exterminate from hence (the evil spirit) who destroys the impregnating energy, the germ as it settles, the moving embryo, who seeks to destroy (the babe) when born.”

“May we exterminate from hence (the evil spirit), who separates thy thighs, who lies between husband and wife, who entering thy womb, devours (the seeds). May we exterminate from hence (the evil spirit), who in the form of brother, husband, or paramour, approaches thee, and seeks to destroy thy offspring.”

“May we exterminate from hence (the evil spirit) who, having beguiled thee by sleep or darkness, approaches thee, and seeks to destroy thy offspring.”

Take some of the Hymns or prayers that are to be found in the Rig-Veda. The following are a few of them—

1. Oh ! God Vayu, how very beautiful you are. We have prepared the Somarasa (an intoxicating drink) with spices. Pray come and drink it and grant us our prayers—Rig. Ved. I. 1.2.1.
2. Oh! God Indra. Bring ye wealth for our protection. Let the wealth that you bring make us happy be increasing and everlasting and help us to kill our enemies—I. 1.8.1.
3. Oh! ye people whenever you are performing your yajna, fail not to praise the Gods Indra and Agni. Advance their position and sing their praises in the Gayatri Meter—I. 21.2.
4. Oh ! ye Agni, please bring the wives of the Gods and Twashta who are eager to come and drink Soma—I. 22.9.
5. We pray that the Gods’ wives come to us with all available wings and with all happiness—I. 22.11.
6. I am praying the wives of Indra, Varuna and Agni to come to my place to drink Soma.
7. Oh! Varuna, we are supplicating before you to remove your anger. Oh ! ye Asura, you are all wise, relieve us from our sins—I. 24.14.
8. Our Somarasa has been prepared by women who have churned it backward and forward. Oh ! ye Indra we pray you to come and drink this Soma—I. 28.3.
9. Your enemies who do not make any offering to you may disappear and let your followers who do prosper. Oh ! Indra give us best cows and best horses and make us famous in the world.—I. 29.4.
10. Oh! Agni save us from Rakshasas, from cunning enemies, from those who hate us and want to kill us.—I. 36.15.
11. Oh ! Indra, you are a hero. Come and drink the Soma we have prepared and be ready to give us wealth. Loot the wealth of those who do not make you any offering and give the same to us—I. 81-8-9.
12. Oh! Indra, drink this Soma which is the best, giving immortality and most intoxicating.—I. 84-4.
13. Oh ! Adityas, you come to give us your blessings. You give us victory in war. You are wealthy. You are charitable. Just as a chariot is pulled through a difficult path in the same way you pull us through our dangers.—I. 106-22.

14. Oh ! ye Marutas. . . .your followers are singing your praises.  
Be pleased to come and sit on the grass-cushion prepared for you  
for the purpose of drinking Soma.—VII. 57-1-2.
15. Oh ! ye Mitra-Varuna we have offered you worship in the yajna.  
Be pleased to accept it and save us from all dangers—VII. 60-12.

These are only a few verses out of a large bundle which form the Rig-Veda. But there can be no doubt that this sample small as it is is true to bulk.

I may state that I have deliberately omitted a good many obscene passages to be found in the Rig-Veda and Yajur-Veda. Those who have any curiosity in the matter might look up the conversation between Surya and Pushan in Rig-Veda Mandal X. 85.37 and between Indra and Indrani in Rig-Veda. Mandal X. 86.6. A further obscenity will also be found in the Ashvamedha Section of the Yajur-Veda.

Leaving these obscenities aside and confining oneself to the prayer portion of the Rig-Veda can any one say that these are morally or spiritually elevating prayers?

As to philosophy there is nothing of it in the Rig-Veda. As Prof. Wilson observes there is in the Rig-Veda, which is the stock Veda, scarcely any indication or doctrinal or philosophical speculation, no allusion to the later notions of the several schools, nor is there any hint of metempsychosis, or of the doctrine intimately allied to it, of the repeated renovation of the world. The Vedas may be useful as a source of information regarding the social life of the Aryans. As a picture of primitive life it is full of curiosity but there is nothing elevating. There are more vices and a few virtues.

## II

We may now turn to the Atharva-Veda and examine its contents. The best I can do is to present the following extracts from the table of contents of the Atharva-Veda.

Book 1. Charms to cure diseases and possession by demons of disease (bhaishagyan).

v, 22. Charm against takman (fever) and related diseases.

vi, 20. Charm against takman (fever).

i, 25. Charm against takman (fever).

vii, 116. Charm against takman (fever).

v, 4. Prayer to the Kushtha-plant to destroy takman (fever).

xix, 39. Prayer to the Kushtha-plant to destroy takman (fever) and other ailments.

- i, 12. Prayer to lightening, conceived as the cause of fever, headache, and cough.
- i, 22. Charm against jaundice and related diseases.
- vi, 14. Charm against the disease halasa.
- vi, 105. Charm against cough.
- i, 2. Charm against excessive discharges from the body.
- ii, 3. Charm against excessive discharges from the body, undertaken with spring-water.
- vi, 44. Charm against excessive discharges from the body.
- i, 3. Charm against constipation and retention of urine.
- vi, 90. Charm against internal pain (colic) due to the missiles of Rudra.
- i, 10. Charm against dropsy.
- vii, 83. Charm against dropsy.
- vi, 24. Dropsy, heart-disease, and kindred maladies cured by flowing water.
- vi, 80. An oblation to the sun, conceived as one of the two.
- ii, 8. Charm against kshetriya, hereditary disease.
- ii, 10. Charm against kshetriya, hereditary disease.
- iii, 7. Charm against kshetriya, hereditary disease.
- i, 23. Leprosy cured by a dark plant.
- i, 24. Leprosy cured by a dark plant.
- vi, 83. Charm for curing scrofulous sores called *apakit*.
- vii, 76. A. Charm for curing scrofulous sores called *apakit*.  
B. Charm for curing tumours called *gayana*.  
C. Stanza sung at the mid-day pressure of Soma.
- vii, 74. A. Charm for curing scrofulous sores called *apakit*.  
B. Charm to appease jealousy.  
C. Prayer to Agni, the lord of vows.
- vi, 25. Charm against scrofulous sores upon neck and shoulders.
- vi, 57. Urine (*galasha*) as a cure for scrofulous.
- iv, 12. Charm with the plant *arundhati* (*laksha*) for the cure of fractures.
- v, 5. Charm with the plant *silaki* (*laksha*) *arundhati* for the cure of wounds.
- vi, 109. The pepper-corn as a cure for wounds.
- i, 17. Charm to stop the flow of blood.
- ii, 31. Charm against worms.
- ii, 32. Charm against worms in cattle.
- v, 23. Charm against worms in children.
- iv, 6. Charm against poison.
- iv, 7. Charm against poison.

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- vi, 100. Ants as an antidote against poison.
  - v, 13. Charm against snake-poison.
  - vi, 12. Charm against snake-poison.
  - vii, 56. Charm against the poison of serpents, scorpions and insects.
  - vi, 16. Charm against ophthalmia.
  - vi, 21. Charm to promote the growth of hair.
  - vi, 136. Charm with the plant nitauni to promote the growth of hair.
  - vi, 137. Charm to promote the growth of hair.
  - iv, 4. Charm to promote virility.
  - vi, 111. Charm against Mania.
  - iv, 37. Charm with the plant agasringi to drive out Rakshasas, Apsaras and Gandharvas.
  - ii, 9. Possession by demons of disease, cured by an amulet of ten kinds of wood.
  - iv, 36. Charm against demons (pisaka) conceived as the cause of disease.
  - ii, 25. Charm with the plant prisniparni against the demon of disease called kanva.
  - vi, 32. Charm for driving away demons (Rakshas and Pisakas).
  - ii, 4. Charm with an amulet derived from the gangidatree against diseases and demons.
  - xix, 34. Charm with an amulet derived from the gangidatree against diseases and demons.
  - xix, 35. Charm with an amulet derived from the gangidatree against diseases and demons.
  - vi, 85. Exorcism of disease by means of an amulet from the varana-tree.
  - vi, 127. The kipuddru-tree as a panacea.
  - xix, 38. The healing properties of *bdellium*.
  - vi, 91. Barley and water as universal remedies.
  - viii, 7. Hymn to all magic and medicinal plants used as a universal remedy.
  - vi, 96. Plants as a panacea.
  - ii, 33. Charm to secure perfect health.
  - ix, 8. Charm to procure immunity from all diseases.
  - ii, 29. Charm for obtaining long life and prosperity by transmission of disease. II. Prayers for long life and health (ayushyani).
  - iii, 11. Prayer for health and long life.
  - ii, 28. Prayer for long life pronounced over a body.
  - iii, 31. Prayer for health and long life.
  - vii, 53. Prayer for long life.

viii, 1. Prayer for exemption from the dangers of death.

viii, 2. Prayers for exemption from the dangers of death.

v, 30. Prayer for exemption from disease and death.

iv, 9. Salve (angana) as a protector of life and limb.

iv, 10. The pearl and its shell as an amulet bestowing long life and prosperity.

xix, 26. Gold as an amulet for long life.

III. Imprecations against demons, sorcerers, and enemies (abhikarikani and Kṛityapratiharanan).

i, 7. Against sorcerers and demons.

i, 8. Against sorcerers and demons.

i, 16. Charm with lead, against demons and sorcerers.

vi, 2. The soma-oblation directed against demons (rakshas).

ii, 14. Charm against a variety of female demons, conceived as hostile to men, cattle and home.

iii, 9. Against Viṣṅkandha and Kabava (hostile demons).

iv, 20. Charm with a certain plant (śadampushna) which exposes demons and enemies.

iv, 17. Charm with the apamarga-plant, against sorcery, demons and enemies.

iv, 18. Charm with the apamarga-plant against sorcery, demons and enemies.

iv, 19. Mystic power of the apamarga-plant, against demons and sorcerers.

vii, 65. Charm with the apamarga-plant against curses, and the consequence of sinful deeds.

x, 1. Charm to repel sorceries or spells.

v, 14. Charm to repel sorceries or spells.

v, 31. Charm to repel sorceries or spells.

viii, 5. Prayer for protection addressed to a talisman made from the wood of a śrakṭya-tree.

x, 3. Praise of the virtue of an amulet derived from the varana-tree.

x, 6. Praise of the virtues of an amulet of khadira-wood in the shape of a ploughshare.

ix, 16. Prayer to Varuna for protection against treacherous designs.

ii, 12. Imprecation against enemies thwarting holy work.

vii, 70. Frustration of the sacrifice of an enemy.

ii, 7. Charm against curses and hostile plots undertaken with a certain plant.

iii, 6. The asvattha-tree as a destroyer of enemies.

vi, 75. Oblation for the suppression of enemies (naibadhyam havih).

vi, 37. Curse against one that practises hostile charms.

vii, 13. Charm to deprive enemies of their strength.

#### IV. Charms pertaining to women (strikarmani).

ii, 36. Charm to obtain a husband.

vi, 60. Charm to obtain a husband.

vi, 82. Charm for obtaining a wife.

vi, 78. Blessing for a married couple.

vii, 36. Love-charm spoken by a bridal couple.

vii, 37. Charm pronounced by the bride over the bridegroom.

vi, 81. A bracelet as an amulet to ensure conception.

iii, 23. Charm for obtaining a son (pumsavanam).

vi, 11. Charm for obtaining a son (pumsavanam).

vii, 35. An incantation to make a woman sterile.

vi, 17. Charm to prevent miscarriage.

i, 11. Charm for easy parturition.

i, 34. Charm with licorice, to secure the love of a woman.

ii, 30. Charm to secure the love of a woman.

vi, 8. Charm to secure the love of a woman.

vi, 9. Charm to secure the love of a woman.

vi, 102. Charm to secure the love of a woman.

iii, 25. Charm to secure the passionate love of a woman.

vii, 38. Charm to secure the love of a man.

vi, 130. Charm to arouse the passionate love of a man.

vi, 132. Charm to arouse the passionate love of a man.

iv, 5. Charm at an assignation.

vi, 77. Charm to cause the return of a truant woman.

vi, 18. Charm to allay jealousy.

i, 14. A woman's incantation against her rival.

iii, 18. Charm of a woman against a rival or co-wife.

vi, 138. Charm for depriving a man of his virility.

i, 18. Charm to remove evil bodily characteristics from a woman.

vi, 110. Expiatory charm for a child born under an unlucky star.

vi, 140. Expiation for the irregular appearance of the first pair of teeth.

#### V. Charms pertaining to royalty (ragakarmani).

iv, 8. Prayer at the consecration of a king.

iii, 3. Charm for the restoration of an exiled king.

iii, 4. Prayer at the election of a king.

iv, 22. Charm to secure the superiority of a king.

iii, 5. Praise of an amulet derived from the parna-tree, designed to strengthen royal power.

i, 9. Prayer for earthly and heavenly success.

vi, 38. Prayer for lustre and power.

vi, 39. Prayer for glory (yasas).

viii. 8. Battle-charm.

i, 19. Battle-charm against arrow-wounds.

iii, 1. Battle-charm for confusing the enemy.

iii, 2. Battle-charm for confusing the enemy.

vi, 97. Battle-charm of a king upon the eve of battle.

vi, 99. Battle-charm of a king upon the eve of battle.

xi, 9. Prayer to Arbudi and Nyarbudi for help in battle.

xi, 10. Prayer to Trishmdhi for help in battle.

v, 20. Hymn to the battle-drum.

v, 21. Hymn to the battle-drum, the terror of the enemy.

VI. Charms to secure harmony, influence in the Assembly, and the like (sammanasyani).

iii, 30. Charm to secure harmony.

vi, 73. Charm to allay discord.

vi, 74. Charm to allay discord.

vii, 52. Charm against strife and blood shed.

vi, 64. Charm to allay discord.

vi, 42. Charm to appease anger.

vi, 43. Charm to appease anger.

vii, 12. Charm to procure influence in the assembly.

ii, 27. Charm against opponents in debate undertaken with the pata-plant.

vi, 94. Charm to bring about submission to one's will.

VII. Charms to secure prosperity in house, field, cattle, business, gambling and kindred matters.

iii, 12. Prayer at the building of a house.

vi, 142. Blessing during the sowing of grain.

vi, 79. Charm for procuring increase of grain.

vi, 50. Exorcism of vermin infesting grain in the field.

vii, 11. Charm to protect grain from lightning.

ii, 26. Charm for the prosperity of cattle.

iii, 14. Charm for the prosperity of the cattle.

vi, 59. Prayer to the plant arundhati for protection to cattle.

vi, 70. Charm to secure the attachment of a cow to her calf.

iii, 28. Formula in expiation of the birth of twin-calves.

vi, 92. Charm to endow a horse with swiftness.

iii, 13. Charm for conducting a river into a new channel.

vi, 106. Charm to ward off danger from fire.

iv, 3. Shepherd's charm against wild beasts and robbers.

iii, 15. A merchant's prayer.

iv, 38. A. Prayer for success in gambling.

B. Prayer to secure the return of calves that have strayed to a distance.

vii, 50. Prayer for success at dice.

vi, 56. Exorcism of serpents from the premises.

x, 4. Charm against serpents invoking the horse of Pedu that slays serpents.

xi, 2. Prayer to Bhava and Sarva for protection from dangers.

iv, 28. Prayer to Bhava and Sarva for protection from dangers.

vii, 9. Charm for finding lost property.

vi, 128. Propitiation of the weather-prophet.

xi, 6. Prayer for deliverance from calamity, addressed to the entire pantheon.

VIII. Charms in expiation of sin and defilement.

vi, 45. Prayer against mental delinquency.

vi, 26. Charm to avert evil.

vi, 114. Expiatory formula for imperfections in the sacrifice.

vi, 115. Expiatory formulas for sins.

vi, 112. Expiation for the precedence of a younger brother over an elder.

vi, 113. Expiation for certain heinous crimes.

vi, 120. Prayer for heaven after remission of sins.

vi, 27. Charm against pigeons regarded as ominous birds.

vi, 29. Charm against pigeons regarded as ominous birds.

vi, 29. Charm against ominous pigeons and owls.

vii, 64. Expiation when one is defiled by a black bird of omen.

vi, 46. Exorcism of evil dreams.

vii, 115. Charm for the removal of evil characteristics, and the acquisition of auspicious.

### III

It will thus be seen that the Atharva-Veda is nothing but a collection of sorcery, black-magic and medicine. Three-fourths of it is full of sorcery and black magic. It must not however be assumed that it is only the Atharva-Veda which contains black-magic and sorcery. The Rig-Veda is not altogether free from it. There are in it Mantras relating to black magic and sorcery. I give below three Suktas which deal with this matter:

#### SUKTA XVII (CXLV)

The deity or rather the aim of the hymn is the getting rid of a rival wife; the Rishi is Indrani, the metre of the last verse is Pankati, of the rest Anushtubh.

1. I dig up this most potent medicinal creeper, by which (a wife) destroys a rival wife, by which she secures to herself her husband.
2. O (plant) with up-turned, leaves, auspicious, sent by the Gods, powerful, remove my rival and make my husband mine alone.
3. Excellent (plant) may I too be excellent amongst the excellent, and may she who is my rival be vile amongst the vile.
4. I will not even utter her name, no (woman) takes pleasure in that person; may we remove the other rival wife to a distance.
5. I am triumphing, thou art triumphant; we two being powerful will triumph over my rival.
6. I make thee the triumphant (herb) my pillow, I support thee with that more triumphant (pillow); let thy mind hasten to me as a cow to her calf, let it speed on its way like water.

#### SUKTA IV (CLV)

The deity of verses 1 and 4 is the averting of misfortune (Alakshmhigna), of verses 2 and 3 Brahmanaspati, and of verse 5 the Viswadevas; the Rishi is Sirimbitha, the son of Bharadwaja, the metre is Anushtubh.

1. Miserable, ill-favoured, deformed ever-railing (goddess), go to thy mountain; with these exploits of Sirimbitha we scare thee away.
2. May she be scared away from this (world), scared away from the next (world), the destructress of all embryos; sharp-horned Brihaspati approach, driving away Distress.
3. The wood which floats by the seashore far off, remote from man, seize that, (O, goddess) hard to destroy, and therewith go to a distant shore.
4. Utterers of discordant sounds, when swiftly moving you departed, all the enemies of Indra were slain, disappearing like bubbles.
5. These (Viswadevas) have brought back the (stolen) cattle, they have built up the fire; they have provided food for the Gods. Who will overcome them?

#### SUKTA XII (CLXIII)

The deity is the cure of phthisis; the Rishi is Vivrihan, the son of Kasyapa; the metre is Anushtubh.

1. I banish disease from thine eyes, from thy head, from thy nose, from thy ears, from thy chin, from thy brain, from thy tongue.
2. I banish disease from thy neck, from thy sinews, from thy bones, from thy joints, from thy upper arms, from thy shoulders, and from thy fore-arms.

3. I banish disease from thine entrails, from thy anus, from thine abdomen, and from thy heart, from thy kidneys, from thy liver, from thy (other) viscera.
4. I banish disease from thy thighs, from thy knees, from thy heels, from thy toes, from thy loins, from thy buttocks, from thy private parts.
5. I banish disease from thy urethra, from thy bladder, from thy hair, from thy nails, from thy whole person.
6. I banish disease from each limb, from each hair, from each joint where it is generated, from thy whole person.

Enough has been extracted from the Vedas to show that they contain nothing that can be said to be spiritually or morally elevating. Neither the subject matter nor contents of the Vedas justify the infallibility with which they have been invested. Why then did the Brahmins struggle so hard to clothe them with sanctity and infallibility ?

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