

Vali, Ahimsā, and the Vedic Vision of Life: A Critique on Non-Violence in Vedic and Classical Sanskrit Texts

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ABSTRACT

This article studies the idea of vali (Animal sacrifice) and ahimsā in the Vedic and classical Sanskrit tradition. It is based on the supplied Odia article on Vali-prathā and ahimsā, and it rewrites its main ideas in simple English for a wider audience. The central question is clear: does Vedic religion support animal killing as a sacred act, or does it teach care for life? The article answers this question by reading important words and mantras carefully. It explains that vali, in many Sanskrit uses, means offering, gift, contribution, or tax. It does not always mean killing. Kālidāsa's Raghuvamśa gives a helpful example. King Dilīpa takes vali from his people only for their welfare, just as the sun takes water and returns it as rain.¹ The article then discusses yajña as adhvara, as a non-violent sacred act.² It also studies the word aghnyā, used for the cow, and shows how this word points to protection and care.³ Further, selected mantras from the Ṛgveda, Atharvaveda, Yajurveda, Mahābhārata, and Manusmṛti are used to explain the larger value of compassion. The article also clarifies that ahimsā does not mean weakness. It means not harming the innocent. It allows firm action for justice and protection. The study concludes that the Vedic moral vision, as presented in the built on self-control, kindness, food purity, respect for animals, and sarvabhūta-hita, the welfare of all beings. The article is not written to create anger against any community or practice. It is written to support careful reading. It reminds us that a sacred word should be understood through grammar, context, and moral purpose. When these three are joined, the meaning of dharma becomes gentle, strong, and clear.

Keywords: Ahimsā, vali, yajña, adhvara, aghnyā, Veda, paśu-rakṣaṇa, māṃsa, dharma, sarvabhūta-hita, Manusmṛti, Mahābhārata.

INTRODUCTION

The Veda is one of the oldest and most respected sources of Indian thought. For many people, it is not only a religious text. It is also a guide for life. It speaks about truth, order, duty, worship, nature, food, society, and the inner growth of the human being. A reader who comes to the Veda with patience can see that it is deeply concerned with harmony. It asks human beings to live with care. It teaches that life is not meant only for selfish pleasure. Life becomes meaningful when it helps others.

One important value in this tradition is ahimsā. The word ahimsā means non-injury. It means not hurting another being through thought, speech, or action. In simple words, it means: do not harm when there is no true need. Do not injure the innocent. Do not treat a living being as a mere object. This value is closely connected with dayā, compassion, and with sarvabhūta-hita, the welfare of all beings. This article strongly presents this view and argues that Vedic culture is rooted in ahimsā and not in cruelty.

At the same time, there is a common debate about vali and animal sacrifice. Some people use the word vali to mean killing an animal for a deity. Others argue that this is a later and wrong reading of an older word. The supplied text supports the second view. It says that the real Vedic sense of vali is offering, gift, contribution, or tax. This article follows that interpretive line and explains it in a clear and simple form.

The subject is important because wrong meanings can create wrong practices. A single word can change the mind of a society. If vali is understood as killing, then religion may look harsh. If vali is understood as self-offering,

service, and contribution, then religion becomes a path of giving. The difference is very large. This article therefore studies the meaning of words, the use of Vedic references, and the ethical message of the texts. It does not try to make the reader feel fear. It tries to make the matter easy to understand.

The study uses selected references from the Ṛgveda, Atharvaveda, Yajurveda, Mahābhārata, Manusmṛti, and Kālidāsa's Raghuvamśa. These texts are treated as sources for understanding the moral language of Sanskrit tradition. The article is written in simple English. Sanskrit words are given in Roman diacritical marks so that the reader can read them clearly. The aim is not to overload the reader. The aim is to make the main idea plain: the heart of dharma is not violence. The heart of dharma is careful living.

AIM AND METHOD OF THE STUDY

The main aim of this article is to explain the idea of ahimsā in relation to vali and yajña. The article asks three simple questions. First, what does vali mean in the Sanskrit tradition? Second, how do selected Vedic mantras speak about non-violence, animals, and food? Third, how do later texts like the Mahābhārata and Manusmṛti continue this value?

The method adopted in this study is textual and explanatory. It examines the references listed in the sources and arranges them in a logical sequence. First, it discusses the meanings of important terms. Next, it analyzes the relevant Vedic mantras. It then proceeds to examine the epic and Smṛti texts. Finally, it explains the practical significance of ahimsā in contemporary society. The style of presentation is kept simple and clear, as profound ideas need not be obscured by complex language. A clear and concise sentence can often convey more meaning than a lengthy and complicated paragraph.

This study also keeps one careful point in mind. In Indian religious history, different schools have understood ritual words in different ways. Some ritual traditions have read certain mantras differently. This article does not deny that such debates exist. Rather, it presents the ethical and non-violent reading found in the study. This makes the article focused and honest. It speaks from one clear point of view, but it avoids unnecessary anger and harshness.

The Meaning of Vali: Offering, Contribution, and Responsibility

The word vali is the starting point of the discussion. In common speech today, many people connect vali with animal sacrifice. They imagine that vali means the killing of a living being in the name of religion. But the Sanskrit tradition uses words in many layers. A word may have one meaning in one place and another meaning in another place. So the meaning must be decided by context. This is especially true for old Sanskrit words.

The supplied material explains that vali can mean gift, offering, contribution, or tax. It is connected with giving something for a larger good. It is not automatically connected with killing. This is an important point. A society may give vali to a king. A devotee may give vali as an offering. A householder may offer food or useful things. In all these cases, vali is a sign of responsibility. It is a way of saying: I give something for order, welfare, and sacred duty.

Kālidāsa gives a famous example in the Raghuvamśa. He says that King Dilīpa took vali from his people only for their welfare. The verse compares the king with the sun. The sun draws water from the earth, but it returns that water many times over through rain. In the same way, a good king takes tax from the people only to give back protection, prosperity, and public welfare. This verse makes the meaning very clear. Here vali does not mean killing. It means a just contribution collected for the good of the people.

This example is useful because it belongs to respected classical Sanskrit poetry. Kālidāsa is not discussing animal sacrifice in this verse. He is speaking about good rule. Yet he uses the word vali. This shows that the word has a wider meaning. If a reader sees vali and quickly translates it as sacrifice in the sense of killing, the reader may misunderstand the text. The safer method is to ask: what is the subject here? What action is being described? What meaning fits the context?

The larger moral idea is also important. A true offering is not an act of cruelty. A true offering should make the heart softer and the society better. When a person gives food to the hungry, knowledge to the student, protection to the weak, or wealth for public good, that is a noble vali. It is giving up selfishness. It is not taking the life of another being. This reading brings the word close to dharma.

Yajña and Adhvāra: Sacred Action without Injury

The next important word is yajña. Many people translate yajña as sacrifice. But again, the word needs care. Yajña means a sacred act of offering. It can also mean cooperation, worship, discipline, and shared duty. In the Vedic world, yajña is not merely an outer fire ritual. It is a way of joining the human world with ṛta, the order of truth. A real yajña should purify the person. It should also help the world.

The study places special attention on the word adhvāra in the Ṛgveda. In Ṛgveda, Agni is connected with the yajña that is called adhvāra. The text interprets adhvāra as a yajña that is free from violence. The basic idea is

simple. If a sacred act is meant to raise the human mind, it cannot be based on cruelty. If it produces fear, bloodshed, and pain for innocent beings, then its sacred character is lost.

agne yaṃ yajñam adhvaram viśvataḥ paribhūr asi | sa id deveṣu gacchati ||⁴

This line is read in the study as a strong sign that yajña should be non-injurious. The word adhvara is important because it places the idea of non-harm inside the idea of worship. It suggests that worship is not only a ritual act. It is also an ethical act. The fire outside must be joined with purity inside. The offering in the fire must be joined with kindness in life.

This point can be explained in a very simple way. Suppose a person lights a lamp and prays for peace, but at the same time hurts the weak. Such prayer is not complete. A sacred act should change conduct. It should make a person more truthful, more self-controlled, and more compassionate. This is the spirit in which the supplied article understands yajña.

The idea of adhvara also helps us understand why language matters. If yajña is only translated as “sacrifice,” modern readers may imagine killing. But if yajña is understood as a sacred act of giving, discipline, and purification, then the meaning changes. It becomes a path of harmony. The debate over one word can therefore change the moral picture of a whole tradition.

Aghnyā: The Cow as a Being to Be Protected

A major part of the study discusses the cow through the word aghnyā. This word means “one who should not be killed.” It is a strong word. It does not merely say that the cow is useful. It says that the cow is not to be harmed. The Vedic mantras quoted in the supplied text use this word to show the protective attitude of the tradition toward cattle.

Ṛgveda is cited to show that the aghnyā should grow for great good fortune. The idea is not only religious. It is also social and practical. In an agrarian society, the cow gives milk, supports the household, helps agriculture through cattle wealth, and becomes part of the rhythm of village life. To protect the cow is to protect nourishment, family life, and economic stability.

hiṅkṛṇvatī vasupatnī vasūnām vatsam icchantī manasābhy āgāt | duhām aśvibhyām payo aghnyeyam sā vardhatām mahate saubhagāya ||⁵

Another mantra of, Ṛgveda, speaks in a loving tone. The cow is asked to eat grass and drink clean water. The study explains this as a prayer for the health and prosperity of the cow. This is a tender image. It does not show the cow as an object of violence. It shows the cow as a living being that should be cared for.

sūyavasād bhagavatī hi bhūyā atho vayam bhagavantaḥ syāma | addhi tṛṇam aghnye viśvadānīm piba śuddham udakam ācarantī ||⁶

Ṛgveda is also cited for the welfare of the aghnyā. The prayer asks that good drinking water should be available for them. This is a very simple but powerful sign of care. A society that prays for water for animals is not thinking only of human comfort. It sees life as connected. Human welfare and animal welfare are not separate.

mahāntaṃ kośam ud acā ni śiṅca syandantām kulyā viṣitāḥ purastāt | ghṛtena dyāvāpṛthivī vy undhi suprapāṇam bhavatu aghnyābhyah ||⁷

The study also mentions the Nighaṇṭu, a traditional Vedic word-list. It says that words such as aghnyā, ahi, and aditi are connected with the idea that the cow is not to be killed or cut apart. This word-based argument is central to the article. It shows that the non-violent reading is not based only on emotion. It is also based on vocabulary.

The cow in this discussion is not only a religious symbol. It is a symbol of care. A human being must learn how to receive without destroying. Milk, service, and agricultural support can be received without killing the animal. This is an important moral lesson. The strong person does not destroy the source of nourishment. The wise person protects it.

The Ṛgveda and the Rejection of Cruel Food Habits

The study also cites mantras from the Ṛgveda that criticize cruel food habits. One important mantra of Ṛgveda speaks of sending away kravyād agni, the fire connected with flesh-eating and keeping the pure fire for carrying offerings to the deities. In the interpretation of the supplied article, this shows a clear difference between a pure sacred fire and a fire connected with meat.

kravyādam agnim pra hiṇomi dūram yamarājño gacchatu ripravāhaḥ | ihaivāyam itaro jātavedā devebhyo havyam vahatu prajānam ||⁸

The point is not hard to understand. Fire can cook anything, but sacred fire is meant for purity. A ritual fire is not merely a tool. It is a symbol of the human mind. If the mind is pure, the offering is pure. If the act is violent, the sacred meaning is broken.

Another mantra of, is cited to condemn go-hā and nṛ-hā, the killer of a cow and the killer of a human being. The supplied text reads this as a strong rejection of cow-killing. The comparison is serious. It places violence against the cow among grave wrongs. Whether a reader studies this as law, prayer, or moral warning, the direction of the mantra is protective.

daśasyanto no maruto mṛlantu varivasyanto rodasī sumeke | āre gohā nṛhā vadho vo astu sumnebhīr asme vasavo namadhvam ||⁹

R̥gveda is also used in the study. It refers to those who consume the flesh of humans, horses, or other animals, and those who destroy the milk-giving aghnyā. The language is strong. It asks for severe punishment for such destructive persons. The moral idea is that violence for taste is not noble. It is a fall of the human mind.

yaḥ pauraṣeṇa kraviṣā samañkte yo aśvyena paśunā yātudhāṇaḥ | yo aghnyāyā bharati kṣīram agne teṣāṃ śīrṣāṇi harasāpi vṛṣca ||¹⁰

These mantras are used in the article to build a clear argument. Vedic life, when read through this ethical lens, is not a life of uncontrolled appetite. It is a life of restraint. It asks the human being to choose purity over greed. It asks the stronger being to protect the weaker being. It sees food as part of character. What we eat, how we get it, and what pain it causes are all moral questions.

Atharvaveda: Food, Friendship, and Protection of Life

The Atharvaveda references in the study broaden the discussion. They do not speak only about one animal. They speak about the mood of social life. Atharvaveda compares mutual affection among people with the love of an aghnyā cow for her new-born calf. This is a beautiful image. The cow becomes a model of natural love. The text uses animal affection to teach human affection.

sahṛdayaṃ sāmmanasyaṃ avidveṣaṃ kṛṇomi vaḥ /
anyo anyam abhi haryata vatsaṃ jātaṃ ivāghnyā ||¹¹

The message is simple. A society should not be built on hatred. People should care for each other like a mother cares for her child. When the cow is used as an example of love, it becomes difficult to treat her as an object of ritual killing. The emotional world of the mantra supports protection, not harm.

Atharvaveda is cited in the study to show that human beings should eat grains such as rice, barley, māṣa, and sesame. The passage is read as a direction toward plant-based food and away from harming beings that can become mothers and fathers. The deeper idea is that food should support life without destroying life unnecessarily.

vṛhimattaṃ yavamattamatho māsamatho tilam /
eṣa vām bhāgo nihito ratnadheyāya dantau mā himṣiṣṭam pitaram mātaram ca ||¹²

Atharvaveda also praises grains like rice and barley as health-giving. The study explains that such food removes disease and supports a pure mind. This shows that ahimsā is not only about not killing. It is also about building a clean way of life. Food, health, and morality are linked.

śivau te stāṃ vṛhiyavāvalāsāvadomadhau /
etau yakṣmaṃ vi bādhete etau muñcato amhasaḥ ||¹³

Another mantra of Atharvaveda stated the study reads it as a rejection of raw flesh, cooked flesh, and the eating of eggs as forms of cruel habit. The exact historical and ritual context may be discussed by scholars, but the ethical reading in the supplied article is clear: such habits are treated as impure and destructive.

ya āmaṃ māmsamadanti pauraṣeṣaṃ ca ye kraviḥ /
garbhāṅkhādanti keśavāstānito nāśayāmasi ||¹⁴

Atharvaveda is cited to show that killing the innocent is a terrible wrong. The verse asks that the cow, horse, and human being should not be harmed. The study uses this passage to show a wide concern for living beings. It is not only go-rakṣā, protection of the cow. It is also protection of life in general.

anāgoḥatyā vai bhīmā kṛtye mā no gāmaśvaṃ puruṣaṃ vadhīḥ ||¹⁵

Atharvaveda calls the cow a seat of wealth. The expression “dhenum sadanam rayīṇām”¹⁶ means that the cow is a dwelling place of prosperity. The supplied material explains this as a sign that the cow is a source of milk, health, and social welfare. Again, the correct response to such a source of welfare is protection.

Atharvaveda is used to show a balanced idea of nourishment. It speaks of strength from animals, grain for humans, milk from animals, and the rasa of herbs. In the supplied reading, this means that one may receive milk and plant nourishment without turning to meat. The human being is asked to live from what sustains life, not from what destroys it.

puṣṭiṃ paśunām pari jagrabhāhaṃ catuṣpadām dvipadām yacca dhānyam /
payāḥ paśunām rasamoṣadhīnām bṛhaspatiḥ savitā me ni yacchāt ||¹⁷

Yajurveda: Protection of Two-Footed and Four-Footed Beings

The Yajurveda references in the discussion continue the same theme. The text is closely connected with ritual action, so its protective statements are very important for this discussion. If a ritual text asks for protection of animals, then ritual should not be reduced to violence. It must be understood with care.

Yajurveda is cited with the mantra line “aghnyā yajamānasya paśūnpāhi”.¹⁸ The supplied material reads it as a command to protect the animals of the yajamāna. The word aghnyā again reminds us that these beings are not meant for killing. They belong to the world of care, support, and sacred responsibility.

Yajurveda is even simpler: “paśūn trāyethām”,¹⁹ “protect the animals.” The meaning is direct. It is hard to make this into a command for killing. In the supplied article, this line becomes a strong support for paśu-rakṣaṇa, the protection of animals.

Yajurveda prays for strength and nourishment for both dvipada and catuṣpada, two-footed and four-footed beings. This is a wide prayer. It includes humans, birds, and animals. It does not pray only for human gain. It asks that all forms of life receive nourishment. This is close to the spirit of sarvabhūta-hita.

ūrjaṃ no dhehi dvipade catuṣpade /²⁰

Yajurved also support the same line of thought in the discussion. They speak of the aghnyā and of not harming the cow that gives milk and ghee. The cow is not seen as a victim. She is seen as aditi, a protected and nourishing presence. The ethical movement is clear: do not destroy what nourishes society.

vimucyadhvamaghnā devayānāganma tamasaspāramasya /²¹

ghṛtaṃ duhānāmaditiṃ janāyāgne mā hiṃsīḥ parame vyoman /²²

Yajurveda asks for the protection of both two-footed and four-footed beings. Yajurveda condemns go-ghāta, cow-killing. These references make the supplied argument stronger. They show that ahimsā is not limited to one passage or one book. It appears as a repeated concern.

dvipādava catuṣpāt pāhi divo vṛṣṭimeraya /²³

antakāya goghātam kṣudhe yo gām /²⁴

Yajurveda gives the deepest philosophical support. It says that the wise person sees all beings in the Self and the Self in all beings. When this vision appears, delusion and sorrow disappear. This is not only a ritual idea. It is a spiritual vision. If another being is not completely separate from me, then harming that being becomes a wound to my own soul.

yasminsarvāṇi bhūtānyātmaivābhūdviḥjānataḥ /

tatra ko mohaḥ kaḥ śoka'ekatvamanupaśyataḥ //²⁵

This verse gives the highest form of ahimsā. It is not fear-based. It is knowledge-based. A person who sees unity does not need to be forced to be kind. Kindness becomes natural. The person understands that life is one connected field. This is why the article treats ahimsā as the heart of the Vedic vision.

Mahābhārata: Ahimsā as the Highest Dharma

The Mahābhārata gives a wide and practical form to the Vedic moral vision. It is not only a story of kings and war. It is also a book of moral questions. It asks what is right when life is difficult. It asks how a person should act when duties clash. In this large text, ahimsā is praised again and again as a high form of dharma.

The famous line “ahimsā paramo dharmah” is quoted in the discussion from the Anuśāsana-parva. It means “non-violence is the highest dharma.” The passage expands the idea. Ahimsā is called the highest tapas, the highest truth, the highest self-control, the highest gift, the highest yajña, the best fruit, the best friend, and the highest happiness. The repetition is not accidental. It teaches the reader that non-violence is not a small rule. It is the center of ethical life.

ahimsā paramo dharmaḥ tathāhiṃsā paramaṃ tapaḥ |

ahimsā parama satyaṃ yato dharmah pravartate //²⁶

The study also cites the statement ‘ahimsā sakalo dharmah’, which means that the whole of dharma is gathered in ahimsā. This is a simple but deep idea. If a person performs many rituals but has a cruel heart, something is missing. If a person speaks holy words but enjoys the pain of the weak, dharma is not complete. Ahimsā tests the truth of religious life.

Mahābhārata, Ādi-parva is cited to say that ahimsā is the highest dharma for all living beings. This widens the field. It is not only kindness to one group. It is a principle for all prāṇabhṛt, all living beings. The word prāṇa, life-breath, is important. It reminds us that living beings feel, fear, desire safety, and struggle to live.

idaṃ covāca vacana rurumapratimaujasam /

ahimsā paramo dharmah sarvapraṇabhūtāṃ varaḥ //²⁷

Mahābhārata, Karṇa-parva says that not killing living beings is the best view. It even says that in certain situations one may speak an untruth, but one should never injure. This does not encourage lying. It shows how high the value of non-injury is placed in the moral scale of the text.

prāṇināmavadhastāta sarvajyāyān mato mama /

anṛtaṃ vā vaded vācam na tu hiṃsyāt kathamcana //²⁸

The Mahābhārata Śānti-parva says that wine, fish, meat, and similar items used in the name of ritual were promoted by crafty persons and were not established in the Veda. This is a strong statement. In the supplied argument, it directly rejects the claim that meat and violence are truly Vedic.

surāṃ matsyān madhu māṃsam āsava-kṛsarodanam /

dhūrtaiḥ pravartitaṃ hy etan naitad vedeṣu kalpitam //²⁹

The Mahābhārata therefore gives a bridge between Vedic references and social ethics. It does not leave ahimsā as an abstract ideal. It makes it part of conduct, food, speech, and ritual reform. It warns that people may misuse

sacred language to justify desire. The reader is asked to be alert. Not every action done in the name of religion is truly religious.

Manusmṛti: Moral Responsibility and the Problem of Māmsa

The discussion next turns to Manusmṛti. This text is often discussed and debated, but the selected verses used here focus on one clear value: the rejection of unnecessary violence. Manusmṛti praises the person who does not hurt any being. It says that such a person gains the object of thought and effort. In simple words, ahimsā gives strength to the will. A peaceful heart becomes powerful.

yad dhyāyati yat kurute ratim badhnāti yatra ca |
tadavāpnotyayatnena yo hinasti na kiṃ cana ||³⁰

Manusmṛti gives a direct reason for avoiding meat. It says that meat cannot be obtained without violence to living beings. It also says that killing beings does not lead to heaven. Therefore one should give up māmsa. The logic is plain and simple. If the food on the plate comes from killing, then the eater shares in that violence. A person who wants peace should not build life on another being's death.

nākr̥tvā prāṇināṃ hiṃsāṃ māmsamutpadyate kva cit |
na ca prāṇivadhaḥ svargyastasmān māmsaṃ vivarjayet ||³¹

Manusmṛti gives an even wider account of responsibility. It lists many people connected with killing: the one who permits, the one who cuts, the one who kills, the buyer, the seller, the cook, the server, and the eater. All are called ghātaka, killers. This is a very modern-sounding idea. It says that violence is not only the act of the hand that kills. It is also the chain that supports killing.

anumantā viśasitā nihantā krayavikrayī |
saṃskartā copahartā ca khādakaśceti ghātakāḥ ||³²

Manusmṛti explains the word māmsa with a moral warning. It says that the being whose flesh I eat here may eat me in another state of existence. This is not only a play on words. It is a teaching about karma. Actions return. Pain given to others does not disappear. It enters the moral order of life.

mām sa bhakṣayitā'mutra yasya māmsamihād myaham |
etatmāmsasya māmsatvaṃ pravadanti manīṣiṇaḥ ||³³

The study also cites the idea that ahimsā toward beings leads to amṛtatva, a higher immortal state. The verse reference is not fully specified in the supplied text, so it should be used carefully. Still, the idea fits the larger message. Ahimsā is not merely a social rule. It is a spiritual path. It cleans the heart and prepares the person for higher truth.

A common misunderstanding must now be removed. Ahimsā does not mean weakness. It does not mean that a person should allow evil to grow. It does not mean that society should never protect itself. The study makes this point clearly. It says that the tradition rejects cruelty toward innocent beings, but it does not teach cowardice. Dharma must protect the weak and resist injustice.

This distinction is very important. To harm an innocent animal for taste or ritual pride is one thing. To protect a child, a family, a village, or a nation from violent attack is another thing. The first is cruelty. The second may be duty. Ahimsā controls selfish violence. It does not destroy righteous courage.

The saying 'ahimsā paramo dharmah, dharma-himsā tathaiva ca' is often quoted to express this balance. The first part says that non-violence is the highest dharma. The second part says that force used for the protection of dharma can also become a duty. The discussion uses this idea to show that Vedic ahimsā is not helplessness. It is disciplined strength.

In daily life this means that a person should be gentle, but not careless. A student should not hurt animals for fun. A householder should not support food habits based on unnecessary killing. A leader should protect the weak. A society should avoid cruelty in the name of custom. But when injustice threatens life and order, dharma may require firm action. This is not against ahimsā. It protects the conditions in which ahimsā can live.

Misreading, Custom, and the Need for Reform

The wrong customs often grow from wrong meanings. When people do not study the śāstra carefully, they may follow only outer practice. They may hear that a word means sacrifice and then assume that killing is sacred. They may hear that a ritual is ancient and then stop asking whether it is moral. This is how misunderstanding becomes custom.

The article uses the example of the river Gaṅgā. At its source, the river is pure. During its journey, it may pass through places where dirt enters it. Yet the source remains pure. In the same way, the study says that Vedic dharma is pure at its source. Later practices may sometimes become mixed with ignorance, desire, or social habit. Reform means returning to the source. It does not mean rejecting the tradition. It means understanding the tradition better. This idea is useful for modern society. A living tradition must be able to correct itself. If a practice causes needless pain, people should ask whether it truly reflects dharma. If a word has been misunderstood, scholars and teachers

should explain it again. If religious emotion has been joined with violence, it should be purified. True faith should make the heart kinder, not harder.

It says that some foreign or careless interpretations changed Indian words according to their own cultural ideas. Whether one agrees with every part of that criticism or not, the main warning is valid: translation must be careful. Sanskrit words like *vali*, *yajña*, *adhvara*, *paśu*, and *ahiṃsā* carry cultural depth. They should not be flattened into one English word without context.

Good study needs humility. It must read the verse. It must read the word. It must read the setting. It must compare passages. It must avoid quick anger. When this is done, the reader sees that *ahiṃsā* is not a weak idea added later. It is woven into many layers of the Sanskrit tradition.

Practical Relevance Today

The discussion is not only about the past. It matters today. We live in a world where human beings have great power over animals, land, water, and food systems. A small choice made by many people can affect millions of lives. The Vedic value of *ahiṃsā* can help modern life become more responsible.

First, it teaches respect for food. Food should not be taken casually. It comes from nature, labor, animals, plants, rain, soil, and time. When a person eats with gratitude, waste becomes less. Greed becomes less. The mind becomes cleaner. This is close to the spirit of *yajña*, where receiving and giving are linked.

Second, it teaches care for animals. Animals are not machines. They feel pain, hunger, fear, and affection. The word *aghnyā* reminds us that useful animals deserve protection, not exploitation. Modern society can apply this through better animal care, humane farming, protection of cattle, and a general refusal to enjoy cruelty.

Third, it teaches that religion must be moral. A ritual cannot be called holy simply because it is old or popular. It must be tested by *dharma*. Does it reduce selfishness? Does it protect life? Does it create compassion? Does it make people truthful and disciplined? These questions are necessary.

Fourth, *ahiṃsā* supports social peace. A person who trains the mind not to harm animals also learns not to hurt people easily. The same anger that strikes a weak animal can strike a weak human being. The same compassion that protects an animal can also protect a child, a poor person, an old person, or a stranger. *Ahiṃsā* is therefore a school for the heart.

Finally, *ahiṃsā* is linked with the vision of unity. *Yajurveda* says that the wise person sees all beings in the Self. This is the highest reason for non-violence. It is not only a rule. It is a way of seeing. When vision changes, conduct changes. The world is no longer “mine to consume.” It becomes “ours to protect.”

CONCLUSION

This article has studied *vali* and *ahiṃsā* through the interpretive path given in the discussion. It has shown that *vali* need not mean animal killing. In important Sanskrit usage, it can mean offering, contribution, gift, or tax. *Kālidāsa*’s use of *vali* in *Raghuvamśa* supports this wider meaning. The article has also shown that *yajña* can be understood through the word *adhvara* as a sacred act free from injury. In this reading, a true *yajña* is not a celebration of violence. It is a disciplined act of giving, purity, and harmony.

The mantra from the *R̥gveda*, *Atharvaveda*, and *Yajurveda* used here point again and again toward protection. The cow is called *aghnyā*, not to be killed. Animals are to be protected. Two-footed and four-footed beings are to receive strength. Grains and milk are praised as nourishing. Cruel food habits are criticized. The larger message is clear: life should be supported, not destroyed without need.

The *Mahābhārata* and *Manusmṛti* continue this ethical line. *Ahiṃsā* is called the highest *dharma*. The killing of beings is rejected as a path to higher life. Responsibility is placed not only on the killer but also on the whole chain that supports killing. This is a serious moral teaching. It asks the reader to see the hidden cost of action.

At the same time, the article has clarified that *ahiṃsā* is not weakness. It does not ask society to accept injustice. It asks society to avoid cruelty. It protects the innocent and controls selfish violence. When *dharma* itself is attacked, firm action may become necessary. This balance makes *ahiṃsā* strong and practical.

The final lesson is simple. A sacred tradition should make human beings more humane. It should teach them to give, not to grab; to protect, not to destroy; to eat with care, not with greed; to worship with purity, not with cruelty. The Vedic vision of *ahiṃsā*, as presented in the study, is therefore not only an old teaching. It is a living guide for a kinder and wiser society..

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