



WAVES 2024

Conflict Management in Vedic Traditions

[Proceedings of WAVES International Conference, 2024]



World Association for Vedic Studies, USA

Conflict Management in Vedic Traditions

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Editors:

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Cover painting by Prof. Syagnik Banerjee: Arjun vows to end Jayadratha's life in return for the unjust murder of Abhimanyu on the 13th day of the Mahabharata war and to end his own life he fails. Kauravas successfully hide Jayadratha almost till sunset the next day, hoping for Arjun's demise and an easy victory. Shortly before sunset, Krishna uses his chakra to block out the sun, delivering the illusion that the sun has set ahead of time, luring Jayadratha to emerge from hiding to celebrate. Immediately, Krishna removes the illusion and Arjun completes his vow by killing him. Just as in the case of the Indra-Vritra conflict, while demons appear more powerful at the beginning of the conflict, by the end, the gods prove to be the victors. Revenge and justice continue to indicate the way to avoid the occurrence of conflict.

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Foreword

Dear patrons of the WAVES Conference 2024,
Namaste.

The *World Association for Vedic Studies*, or *WAVES International*, welcomes you to this collection of proceedings. Within these pages, we present a selection of papers from the 16th International WAVES Conference, which offer insights and scholarly perspectives reflecting the vigorous discourse and enduring relevance of Vedic studies. The conference featured many renowned keynote speakers and scholars from around the world, as well as aspiring youth scholars, with presentations and panel discussions on diverse Vedic themes. We trust you will find this volume both edifying and inspiring.

Special thanks are due to Prof. Kalyan Vishwanathan and the entire team at *Hindu University of America (HUA)*, who were instrumental in providing the physical and organizational infrastructure to promote undisturbed academic exchange throughout WAVES 2024.

The combined International Conference of WAVES International and *Wider Association for Vedic Studies, WAVES India*, hosted by the Hindu University of America, was held at the picturesque Pine Lake Retreat Center, Florida, on September 13th–15th, 2024, with the main theme of *Prevention, Management, and Resolution of Conflicts in Vedic Traditions*. Nearly a hundred papers were presented in English and Sanskrit on the main theme, as well as other Vedic topics, including Ayurveda and the Epics, by academics and scholars from India, the USA, and Nepal. We, on behalf of WAVES International, USA, and WAVES India, would like to express our sincere gratitude to Shri Brahm Ratan Agarwal, HUA President Prof. Kalyan Vishwanathan, and HUA staff members for their dedicated service in making the conference a great success. We are also grateful to our India team, led by Dr. Shashi Tiwari and supported by Dr. Umesh Kumar Singh, Dr. Aparna Dhir, Ms. Supriya Chopra, and other team members, for getting the papers peer-reviewed on time and setting up the detailed conference schedule.

Shri Sashi Kejriwal
President
WAVES International, USA

Shri Dharendra A. Shah
Director & Treasurer,
WAVES International, USA

Introduction



Namaḥ śivāya ca śivatarāya ca.

We have great pleasure in presenting this volume of WAVES publication, which covers the proceedings of the 16th International Conference of the World Association for Vedic Studies (WAVES International, USA) and the 28th India Conference of the Wider Association for Vedic Studies (WAVES, India), hosted by the Hindu University of America (HUA), and held at its prestigious campus in Florida from 13 to 15 September 2024. A large number of dignitaries, renowned scholars, and research students participated and presented their papers that covered different aspects of the main subject. Some papers were allowed on independent topics, while others focused on topics related to the Vedic tradition. We are proud to say that, as evidenced by the diverse lineup of papers, talks, participants, and activities, this conference was unique, distinctive, and very impressive. The present volume, titled '*Conflict Management in Vedic Traditions*,' comprises several selected papers presented by erudite and well-read scholars at the conference.

The main theme of the conference, '*Prevention, Management, and Resolution of Conflicts in Vedic Traditions*' is very appropriate due to the existing tense atmosphere among nations and the need for essential world order. Presentations covered a broad spectrum of topics connected to ancient Indian studies, especially the main theme of conflict management. We know that conflict persists in the outer world as well as in the inner world of a man. Generally, it is due to struggles over territories, national borders, religious issues, and nationalism. Now, the world is in persistent fear of nuclear weapons. This situation creates a serious threat not only to global peace but also to worldly survival.

Conflict is a natural phenomenon seen among all creatures as well as in human beings. Due to differences in language, religion, social relations, economic deprivation, culture, customs, and practices, etc., people think themselves distinct and unequal from one another and feel that they cannot coexist. Then, there persists a lot of intolerance and unrest. Peace is disturbed, conflict emerges, mental depression arises, and social discord appears. And then comes the role of the Vedas and Vedic views. Undoubtedly, Vedic seers were great visionaries who could visualize the truth of life and the universe for the benefit and understanding of humanity. Indian traditions believe that Vedic mantras communicate accurate thoughts and express authentic principles for world order. 'Vedas are the repositories of all awareness and, therefore, can answer all problems'—such a belief is the strength of inquisitive researchers of the conference.

Vedic traditions are based on the eternal law of nature and morality. *R̥gveda* inspires us 'to follow the path of well-being as do the sun and the moon'. *Svasti panthamānu*

crema suryacandramasaviva. (RV 5.51.15) Vedas refer to conflicts between right and wrong, virtues and vices, and symbolically between deities and demons. He who gives and works for the welfare of others is a deity, and he who holds on to things instead of distribution and works against the happiness of others is a demon. Opposed to the beneficent gods is a body of malevolent beings called ‘*Asura*’. *Paṇis*, a group of powerful demons, are primarily *Indra*’s enemies because they steal his cows, but then again, they are surpassed in might by *Indra*. *Sambarā*, *Namuchi*, and many other demons were defeated by deities in conflicts.

Indra-Vṛtra conflict is a well-known conflict in the Vedic literature (RV 1.80; 2.12). *Indra* is the mightiest God of intermediate space who controls rain, and also he belongs to be the king of heaven. *Vṛtra* is an *asura* or *dānava* who blocks the waters in clouds. Nature demands simply that waters must flow without restrictions for the benefit of all beings. That is why this type of blocking is considered an offensive act. King *Indra* punishes those who commit crimes and fail to follow the rules. A massive battle is fought between the two—*Indra* and *Vṛtra*. Moreover, finally, the demon king *Vṛtra* has to free the waters from striking clouds. With slight changes, this conflict story is repeated in several Vedic texts. The older *Ṛgvedic* notion of the conflict between a single god and a single demon, mainly exemplified by *Indra* and *Vṛtra* and known as *Indra-vṛtra-yuddha*, gradually developed into the nature of other gods. A frequent feature of the conflicts depicted in these texts is that, while demons appear more powerful at the beginning of the conflict, by the end, the gods prove to be the victors. Vedic conflicts teach us that they must be accomplished for a genuine purpose, and the Vedic dictum ‘*Satyameva jayate*’ (Muṇḍaka Up.3.1.6) should be remembered for the management of the Conflict.

Veda teaches us to be brave, bold, and fearless. Several instructions for warriors, such as ‘Victorious be our heroes with *Indra* as their constant friend’, ‘! O brave! strike the armies of your enemy and conquer them’ are given in the *Atharvaveda* (6.65.3, 8.8.1) for being aggressive and self-defensive. The annihilation of enemies and fulfillment of victory is the subject of a few hymns of this Veda. However, peace is always and everywhere desired and praised in the Vedas; henceforth, as a grand ritual, the ‘*Śānti mantra*’ is recited at the beginning and end of every work, whether it is *yajña* (sacrifice), teaching, or study. From the Vedic perspective, conflicts are demonstrated to delineate their causes, nature, and consequences, including revenge and justice, and also to indicate the way to avoid their occurrence.

The present volume is unique because it includes some interesting papers related to Vedic wisdom and traditions presented by young students. The present generation and the coming generations should be made aware of the true history and rich heritage of our country. They should not be confused or misled by the wrong and misguided narratives about *Bhārata*. The sensitivity hardwired in their collective psyche should not remain in its dormant state among such bright youths. WAVES has undertaken the responsibility of fostering their cultural and ethical consciousness, thereby keeping their energy on the right track. We are confident that this joint venture will be beneficial for the balanced growth of our youngsters. We wish great success to all of them for their earnest efforts.

As a practice in WAVES, we publish conference papers after they have undergone systematic assessment. This year, at WAVES 2024, approximately 100 papers were presented on various topics related to the main theme by the delegates. After being duly reviewed by eminent scholars, 63 research papers, written in three languages English, Hindi, and Sanskrit were selected. The three experienced and learned editors, Ms. Supriya Chopra, Dr. Umesh Singh, and Dr. Aparna Dhir, have conducted comprehensive editing and formatting of the selected papers. This work required some extra time, but with the full support of Respected Shri Sashi Kejriwal, President, WAVES International; Shri Dhirendra A. Shah, Treasurer, WAVES International; and Dr. Shashi Tiwari, President, WAVES, India, this significant academic work could be published.

The current volume covers many areas of study, such as — conflict resolution, consciousness, Yoga and Ayurveda, Vedic interpretation, *R̥gvedic sūktas*, Vedic *Yajña*, Vedic Gods, Vedic sciences, Vedic Philosophy, Karma, *Dharma*, Buddhism, culture, civilization, Kali-yuga, *Kauṭilya*, Epic literature, just to name a few. Our special thanks are to distinguished delegates whose contributions have enriched the present volume. This book is significant due to the authors of national and international repute, such as Dr. Subhash Kak, Prof. Kalyan Viswanathan, Dr. Aleh Perzashkevich, Adiguru Prakriti, Dr. Bal Ram Singh, Dr. C. Upender Rao, Dr. Deen Bandhu Chandora, Dr. Kalika Uttarkar, Dr. Narayanan M. Komerath, Nilesh Nilkanth Oak, Rupa Bhaty, Dr. Pratibha Gramann, Dr. Radhey Shyam Kaushal, Dr. Raj Vedam, Dr. Raju Sitaram Chidambaram, Dr. Syagnik Banerjee, Dr. Lallan Prasad, Dr. Uditā Bhattacharyya, and Dr. Paramba Shree Yogamaya.

Our special thanks are due to the esteemed Shri Sashi Kejriwal and Shri Dhirendra A. Shah for contributing an inspiring preface to this volume. Our utmost thanks are due to the respectable Shri Braham Ratan Aggarwal for his Blessings. We sincerely express our gratitude to Prof. Kalyan Viswanathana, a well-known scholar of Hindu Studies and the President, HUA, Florida for all his support and encouragement.

Finally, we dedicate this publication to all the members and friends of WAVES, who are the true torchbearers of the preservation of Vedic traditions and whose enthusiasm for Vedic Knowledge will be an inspiration to others as well.

I wish to share the words of the *Yajurveda* (32.15)—

‘Varuṇa grant me wisdom! Grant it Agni and Prajāpati!
Medhām me varuṇo dadātu medhāmagnih̄ prajāpatih̄.

Prof. Shashi Tiwari
President, WAVES (India),
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Keynote Talk

(Summary)

The *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, various *Purāṇas*, and the *Arthaśāstra* and *Nītiśāstra* speak at several places of four *upāyas* - *sāma*, *dāma* (*dāna*), *bheda*, and *daṇḍa* as ways to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts either at the personal level, in business dealings, or as statecraft.

Sāma means conciliation or forming an alliance. When conflict arises between individuals or states, the first step is to talk. There are five types of conciliations: praising the person, stressing the history of the relationship, pointing out common benefits, projecting future benefits, and lastly putting oneself at the other's disposal (*Kautilya's Arthaśāstra* 2.10.48–53).

Dāna or *dāma* is to give gifts or grants to appease the other party and thus make it share a goal or aspiration (*Arthaśāstra* 2.10.54). *Bheda* is to exploit the faultlines amongst the people who constitute the opposing party and thus sow dissension and discord in the enemy (*Arthaśāstra* 2.10.55). *Daṇḍa* is to punish the other side using tariffs and fines, and employing military force is the last resort (*Arthaśāstra* 2.10.56).

Kāmandaka's Nītisāra adds three more to this list: *māyā* (subterfuge), *upekṣā* (isolation or avoiding conflict despite provocation), and *indrajalā* (deception, as in faking military strength).

The main four *upāyas* are generally spoken together in a single colloquial phrase: “*sāmadāma-bheda-daṇḍopāya*” to manage and resolve conflicts.

The *upāyas* have wide applicability. *Sāma* means persuasion, underscoring the importance of effective communication and negotiation. By using logic, reasoning, emotional intelligence, and clear articulation of objectives, business leaders can foster consensus and encourage voluntary compliance among team members and stakeholders. *Dāma* is to offer incentives and rewards, which taps into the fundamental human drive for recognition. *Bheda* is to leverage individual strengths within a team so that tasks are assigned based on expertise and interests. *Daṇḍa* represents punishment and disciplinary action, which serves as a last resort to maintain order and uphold standards. All these strategies are applied within an ethical and *dharmic* framework. Each party must maintain open communication, fairness, and respect for all team members and a harmonious balance between the strategies. Overreliance on any single strategy can lead to negative consequences, such as a punitive environment or a culture of entitlement.

These strategies are to ensure that perverse incentives do not exist within the organization. Sadly, lack of careful thought has made Bharat get trapped in the Cobra

Effect. The story goes that over a century ago, the British colonial authorities faced a growing problem with venomous cobras in the city of Delhi. To address this, they introduced a bounty program, offering a reward for every dead cobra brought to them. Initially, the plan seemed to work as people brought in dead cobras in droves. But soon individuals began breeding cobras to kill them to claim the bounty, for this was easier than hunting wild snakes. As soon as the administration understood this, it cancelled the program, and in response, the snake-breeders released their now-worthless cobras into the wild, making the poisonous snake-bite problem worse.

The caste- and religion-based reservations in India are like the Cobra Effect, and they have increased the distance between social and religious communities. Likewise, asymmetric gender laws have led to a culture of entitlement and abuse of the law. The US realized how perverse incentives were weakening their society, and they canceled DEI programs that were the vehicles for this, but Bharat has not.

The cancellation of perverse incentives in India is hard because powerful organizations of the West support them, as we saw during the Farm and CAA agitations a few years ago. The West and China are using *bheda* to weaken their potential rival.

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