Chapter XII

AŚVINS IN THE NĪTIMANJARĪ

Nothing much is known about the author of the 'Nītimanjari', Dya Dviveda, except that whatever is said in the colophon of the work itself. His parents were Laxmi and Laxmidhara, grand-father was Atri and great-grand-father Mukunda.

Nītimanjari is a collection of some 166 ethical maxims. The originality of the author lies in adducing the passages from the various ancillary texts of the Vedas for the support of his statement. Here we shall take only those which are related with Aśvins. They are 18 in number.

A noble man, though not a relative, is equal to a brother, while a real but crooked brother is equal to an enemy. Bhujya, who was thrown by his own relatives, into

\[1\text{ śrīmukundādvijāto atrerlakṣmīdharo mahān,}
\text{ tasya lakṣmīrmaṇahādevi dyādvivedamajījanat.}\]
a well, was rescued by the noble Aśvins. Similarly, an ill-doing father also (though having blood-relation) is not the father, in fact, but the man who helps in need is actually equal to a father. Rjrāśva was made blind by his cruel father but he regained his eye-sight with the help of Aśvins who were none of his relatives.

A truthful man should justify his wealth, obliging others by his good deeds, just as Aśvins made use of their prosperity by carrying Vīmada and Jāhuṣa in their chariot. So also, the wealth of the noble people is meant for helping others like the chariot of Aśvins which immediately goes to

1 anyah suhrjjano bhrata satrurbhrata sahodaraḥ, aśvibhyam tārito bhujyustrītaḥ kupe nipātitaḥ. v.28. Also at: RV.I.116.3-5; 118.6; 132.6; VI.62.6.

2 yo hito anyah pīta jīneyo hyāhito api pīta api, rjrāśvo andhaḥ kṛtaḥ pītra nāsatyābhyāṃ sulocanaḥ. v.44. Also at: RV.I.116.16; 117.17.18.

3 samṛddhim sarthakikuryātsupakāreṇa satyavān, vaimadyājjāhuṣājjātam nāsatyā no hi sarthakam. v.33. Also at: RV.I.116.20; VII.71.5.

4 upakāraya sādhunām ṛbhuṣāmiva sampadaḥ, harisyandagosampadindrasvīguruntuṇeabhavat. v.56. RV.I.161.6.
the worshipper to save them from distress and which also carries riches on it to give them.

The deeds of a son are very much like that of his father. Just as Aśvins, being the sons of a horse, presented a horse to Pedu

Praise of an intelligent man makes that very person (he who praises) intelligent just as Kaksivān became the great sage by the praise of Aśvins

Brahmins should not be tortured. He who protects them from demons is equal to a God like Aśvins who saved the sage Atri from the hands of devils.

He who gives water to the thirsty, for him untruth does not exist. The two Nāsatyas (not untrue) gave water from the well to Gotama and Śara. Here in this verse the author has

1 yadṛśajjājyate janturnāṃ karmasya tadṛ ṣām, aśvināśvāvāyāsvāvam dadatuḥ pedave sitam. v.34. RV.I.116.6; 117.9; 119.10; X.39.10.

2 vaidūṣyaṁiṁcchata kāryam vīḍūṣam gunakīrtanam, aśvin-orvīḍūṣoḥ kīrtyā kāksīvān-bhavatsudhiḥ. RV.I.51.41; 116.7; 117.6; 120.5.

3 viprāpīdākaro daityo viprarakṣākaraḥ suraḥ, daityer-baddhastamasyaatraśvībhyaḥ mocito vadhat. v.36. RV.I.116.8; 117.3; V.78.4; X.39.9.

4 Nāsatyaṁ vidyate tasya yo ambu dadyat pīpāsata, nāsatyaṁ dadatuḥ kūpād-gotamaya saraya va. v.37. also at: RV.I.116.9.
just played on the word 'Nāsatya' singular as well as dual standing for 'untruth' and the proper noun as well.

Everyone is tormented by old age, even the sages like Cyavana.¹

Wicked people are not worthy of being given any shelter because they are destined to commit cruel deeds just as Rebha and Vandana who offered shelter to the demons but were thrown into the well.²

Knowledge is meant for imparting, by any means, and even at the cost of one's own life, just as Dadhyān had to sacrifice his head for imparting the Madhuvidyā (the knowledge of mead) to Asvins.³

1 sarveṣamapi jantūnam sarvadukhādhikā jara, 
cyavano apyasvinau stutvā yayārto abhutpunaryuvā. v.38. 
RV.1.116.10; 117.13; 118.6; X.39.4.

2 na dadyaddosil'anāmāśrayam (yah?) krūrakarnaṇām, 
daitā dattasrayāh kupe prakṣipan rebhavandanaus. v.39. 
RV.1.116.11; 117.5; 119.7; X.39.8.

3 sīrāno api kartanam sahyam vidyaṁ datum prabuddhibhiḥ, 
dadhyān madhupradanartham tatyāja sīraso dvayam. v.40. 
RV.1.116.12; 117.22; 119.9; X.48.2 and in Ś.Br.(14.6.5.13) "idam vai tanmadhu dadhyān ātharvano aśvibhyāmuvāca, 
tadetadṛṣṭāḥ pasyannavocat", iti.
The group—beauty, prosperity, noble-family, learning and truth like Āśvins (being possessed of these qualities) become purposeful since that in the case of the two Āśvins, by giving, son to Viśvāka and Vadhrimati. This suggests the liberality of Āśvins.

Virtuous people have pity for the worthless persons also, as Āśvins relieved a tiny bird from the mouth of a dog.

No one should wander without fear at night as Viśpala had to loose her leg in the war (as she wandered) at night.

Victory lies in truth, as Āśvins the truthful ones,

---

1. rūpardhikulavidyartam satkaratsarthamasvivat,
   viśvake vadhrimatyām yat putradānatsvabhūttayoh. v.41.
   also at: RV.I.116.13.23; 117.2.4.7.

2. nirgunesvapi satvesu dayām kuru vanti sādhavaḥ,
   āśvibhyām mocita grastā pakṣini vartikā śūbha. v.42.
   also at: RV.I.112.8; 117.17; X.39.13.

3. na samcaraṇaśīlaḥ ayānīśi nisāmkanānasah,
   viśpala chinnapādā āśit khelasyajau yato niśi. v.43.
   also at: RV.I.112.10; 117.11; 118.8; X.39.8.

4. Here is a pun on the word 'nasatya'.
won Sūrya (as their bride) among gods. It shows that Aśvins, because of speaking the truth, were able to win Sūrya.

For manliness, verility is the cause and not the embryo. Aśvins born of the nostrils rendered Sayu's cow capable of giving milk. By way of emphasising and elucidating the importance of man as compared to woman this stanza is quoted.

A self-willed person performing a misdeed even, puts an end to his own distress. The two Aśvins, entering the private portion of Ghosa made her capable of giving birth to a progeny. It suggests that one must help the other even if he has to perform a misdeed.

Family-tradition should not be overlooked by anyone, as Aśvins, though being divine beings, did not leave their

1 prāpnyādviśayam satyāttamātsatyam samācaret, nasatyavāśvinau sūryam debebhyoh jigyatuḥ puraḥ. v.45. RV.I.116.17; 117.13.
2 pauruṣe karaṇam bijam yonireva na karaṇam, aśvibhyam nāsikajābhhyam dogdhri kṛta śayorhi gauḥ. v.46. also at: RV.I.116.22; 117.20.
3 śvīyapīdāmapi ghnanti kṛtvākaryam manasvināḥ, cakratuh subhagam ghoṣam praviṣya bhagamaśvinau. v.47.
tradition of helping others (bhisak-vidyā). They cured Kanva of his leprosy and deafness.¹

From these above verses, we come across with certain characteristics of Aśvins also. They (Aśvins) are like fathers who help their worshippers like sons; they are truthful as well as noble, intelligent, liberal, self-willed and virtuous.²

Thus we see that these moral teachings² are embellished with the passages of the ancillary Vedic texts, and by doing so, the author has successfully presented a picturesque description of his statements. Secondly, he has, in this way, praised the miraculous deeds of Aśvins (with which we have already come across in Chapter V). Lastly, these maxims present Aśvins as the gods of morality, and it may be suggested that the Aśvin-hymns, in the Rgveda also, indirectly serve the purpose of moral teaching.

¹ kulakramagato dharma na tyājayah prabhuh sada, kanvo aśvibhyāḥ bhīṣagbhīyāḥ hi sutvak suśruthaḥ kṛtah suṅḍrī kṛtah. v.48.
also at: RV.I.117.8; 118.7; X.31.11.

² Please see Appendix No.5.