

ATHARVANIC MAGICAL PRACTICES RELATED TO STATE CRAFT

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[Politics is considered as backbone of Democracy. In Politics King was the chief one in Vedic era like today. There existed four castes in Vedic times. Viz., *Brāhman*, *Kṣtriya*, *Śudra* and *Baiśya*. Among them, *Kṣtriyas* are considered as very strong in physically and mentally. Therefore, the responsibility of protection of all people is laid upon the *Kṣtriya*. In *Atharvaveda* find many hymns related to the political system. These are technically known as *Rājakarmāni*. For smooth and systematic progress of the state a king was appointed. He is responsible for the protection of the state, human being of the state etc. King was considered as the ruler of all. But in Vedic time kingship was not based on hereditary. In that time also king was elected by common people like today. It is not possible for a king to rule without the satisfaction or co-operation of his subjects. He was deposed by the people when they were disappointed with him. Therefore, to increase his power, long ruled over the people and satisfactory rule over the people, increase his state the king took restore in magic by which he could do anything. The present paper is an attempt has been made to discuss the Atharvanic magical practices related to royalty.]

Vedas are the most ancient and basic scriptures of Hinduism. The word Veda is derived from the root \sqrt{Vid} i.e., 'to know'. Vedas represent the religio-spiritual knowledge which was transmitted orally from generation to generation. The Sage, *Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana*, known as *Vyāsa*, systematized and edited the vast Vedic literature with a view to preserve it for future generation. He is said to have divided the Vedas into four parts. These are known as *Rk*, *Yajur*, *Sāma* and *Atharva* Veda.

The last one i.e., *Atharvaveda* is also known by several names. *Atharvaveda*, *Atharvāṅgīrasa*, *Āṅgīrasa*, *Bhṛgavāṅgīrasa*, *Bhaiṣajya*, *Brahma*, and *Kṣhatra* Veda etc. All names denote their own special

characteristics. *Atharvaveda* is known as *Kṣhātra Veda* because this Veda is related with warrior class of people. Warrior class of people is known as *Kṣhatriya*. This Veda gives an account of the political system that prevailed in those days. During that time King was elected by the people like today. National and social problems are discussed in the *Sabhā* and *Samiti* (a parliament of the people) and they are considered as the daughters of *Prajāpati*¹ who took decision on political matters. The priest known as *Rājapurohita* occupies a prominent place in the state. The *Atharvaveda* vividly depicts the political life in India. The King always wants to be a good one and *Ekarāja*. Sometimes it is seen that the King and other person related to statecraft used some magical practices for winning the victory on enemy and some other purposes. Among the Atharvanic magical charms some are related to royalty or state craft. The king performs some rites, ties amulet, and involves some people for practicing that type of practices, which may be considered as magical practices. It gives some extra power and makes the king overpowered. In this paper it is an attempt to highlight all these aspects.

Atharvaveda 7.12 *sūkta* is known as *Rāṣṭrasabhā sūkta*. This *sūkta* is used to win the *sabhā*. In this *sūkta* the speaker addressed *sabhā* as *Nariṣṭā* the technical word which means not injured. The speaker practicing the charm takes with him the splendour and understanding of those who sit in the *sabhā*. The speaker won their mind and speech towards him. *Kauśika*² recommends this hymn for winning the *sabhā*. The king tied up an amulet known as *Abhibartamani* for increasing royalty i.e., *rāṣṭra*. This amulet has the power of destroying enemies, niggards and malicious people who work against the king. By putting on this amulet the king became free and rules over the fighting men and common masses³. There invoked the deity Brahmanaspati with tying of a wheel shaped magical amulet for increasing his power, the wheel is used there as a symbol of the *cakravartin* (universal ruler). *Purohita* was appointed for the protection of king from enemies and intrigues of rivals as well as causing hostile witchcraft to revert to its originators⁴.

praticīna aṅgirasoadhyakṣo naḥ purohitah/

VI.39 *sūkta* of the Athavaveda is employed for increasing the power and glory of the ruler by *purohita*. The *purohita* could increase that power. In the verse VI.98 of this Veda, Indra, the ruler of all kings is invoked to destroy not only human enemy but also non-human malevolent forces.

AV. III.22 hymn was employed in the ceremony of concretion of the King. The King wears an ivory amulet for acquiring longevity and the power of the elephant. AV. VI.38.39 hymn was employed for acquiring glory. *Kauśika* gives detail of the employment of this hymn in 13.3-6. It directs that an amulet composed of naval of a *Snātaka* hair from a lion, tiger, goat, ram and a king be pasted together with lac and covered with gold.⁵ To protect the king from diseased caused by demons, the King wears an amulet made from splinters of ten kinds of sacred trees. In the battle field he won the battle, as by the charms or magical practices of the *Purohita*, who is an indispensable helpmate to the King in peace and war. The *Purohita* officiating for his King claims that he was *Brāhmaṇa* (the magical potency), and power of his body is increased and sharpened by the mysterious charms.

AV. III. 5 hymn employed to gain prosperity. The amulet of *Parṇa* or *Palāśa* is able to crush the enemy. It gives the king strength, wealth by which he becomes supreme Lord. It protects the King from great harm and makes him superior to Aryamans (patrons) and Sañvids. The amulet shining with its luster is like a brother, a hero and protection of the body and makes him brilliant. The priest ties it on the King. *Sāyana* and *Kauśika*⁶ use it for securing luster, strength, and life.

AV.XIX. 24 hymn is also employed for prosperity with a garment⁷. This garment is the symbol of sovereignty. Bṛhaspati furnished this garment to king Soma for wrapping himself for that they became protector of the people against imprecation and live for hundred autumns. Wearing this garment the King become protector of his own allies against imprecation and lives a hundred numerous autumns, living with pleasant. The Priest presents this garment to the King. Winning the battle completely depends on the employment of charms by the *Purohita* as well as warriors activities. As a family member the role of *Purohita* is most mandatory and essential as a supervisor in the battle field.

AV. I.9 hymn is employed in a rite performing according to *Kauśika*⁷ (KauS.11.19) and *Keśava* for securing all prosperity which is related to coronation of an elected King. On the other hand *Kauśika*⁸ also said that this charm also employs for reinstatement of an expelled King at the entry time in his country for ensuring the confidence of his subjects. In the hymn 1.9 invoked deities like Indra, Pūṣan etc. to protect the wearer of the amulet in the highest light and to surround him with the sun, fire and gold⁹. The *purohita* was performing some rites against misfortune. AV.XIX.9.2 says that royal householder always performs some rites to avert any unforeseen calamity.

Use of magical missiles in the battle field is described in the *Atharvaveda*¹⁰. viz., *Arbudi*, *Nyarbudi* and *Triṣandhi*. Performance of the magical rites related to this purpose is described in the *Kauśika sūtra* 16.21. By using magical missile *Triṣandhi* and *Arbudi* enemies are made horrible to see. It has also power to make visible the arms, arrows, power of bows, sword (*asi*) axes (*paraśu*) missiles (*āyudhas*) and designs in the hearts of the enemy. They have also the power of shut in all sides of the enemy with *ādāna* and *sandāna* (fettors and shackles) AV. 11.9.1-2. It makes enemies arms and designs are confused¹¹. Their vital breaths are grasped¹². etc. are described in this *sūkta*. (11.9) The missile *Triṣandhi* is invoked for the destruction of enemy. In the *Atharvaveda* 19.10 *sūkta* *Triṣandhi* is gone with by its army. *Trṣandhi* is a thunderbolt of four feet white coloured and it is worked through *Kṛtya* or witchcraft to kill the enemy.

Atharvaveda III.6 hymn is used for tying an amulet of *Aśavattha* tree which grew up on *Khādīra* tree. The application of this *sūkta* is described *Kauśika* 48.3-6 used in a rite of sorcery against enemies. In the *sūkta*, the amulet is prayed by invoker to destroy the enemy which made from male *Khādīra* and female *Aśavattha* tree who hate. As *Aśavattha* breaks the interior of *Khādīra*, like that it (the amulet) splits the enemy and makes them subordinate¹³ and prays *Nirriti* the God of destruction to bind with non releasable fettors of death and destruction of his enemy whom he hate and who hate him. The enemy floats forth downward like a boat severed from its mooring, and they cannot return again. In *Atharvaveda* VI.104.1-3 Indra is invoked for contrivance for arresting the army. In this *sūkta* the seer Praśonan praised deity *Indrāgni* to tie up the vital breaths

of enemy by fetters, which are sharpened by the penance of god Indra¹⁴. The God Indra helps in the process of tying. *Atharvaveda* VIII.8 is considered as battle song by M. Bloomfield¹⁵ *Kauśika* employs this hymn in the rites for the destruction of enemy and for the encouragement of the army of the king, who practices these rites.

Atharvaveda VI.134 sūkta is employed in a rite of sorcery of magical practice. In this practice a staff is held in the hand and smiting down the stuff three times¹⁶ The staff is compared with the *vajra* or thunderbolt. According to Whiteny, this hymn is employed to crush an enemy with a thunderbolt.¹⁷ The thunderbolt smite down kingdom, life, neck, nape as Śachipati i.e., Indra smite down Vṛtra. The enemies' life are smitten down by the thunderbolt and they don't rise again¹⁸. Like this hymn *Atharvaveda* VI.135 is also employed to crush an enemy.

Moreover, there are some other hymns which are used against enemy in various purposes. From this it can be said that *Atharvaveda* is a Veda which provides all types of information to all people of all classes. From the charms of the *Atharvaveda* related to royalty it can be stated that during that time the Kingdom was accomplished not only by force but also by a firm belief in the efficacy of magical practices and charms. In magical charms many of them are related to increase power of Kingdom, increase strength of king, and offered oblation in rite which makes the king a conqueror.

Though, in ancient time these practices were frequently used in various royal purposes but in present time, these are not available because this era is modern era. Most of people are associated with science and technology. They do not believe in magical practices. Now a days, coronation ceremony exist in various countries like, Eran, Bhutan, Israil, Indonesia, Brunei, Combodia, Jeruslam, Nepal, Thailand etc., but in this ceremony they only use holy water and some other holy things like, ghee, butter for the purpose of bathing the King. It is believed the holy water washes away the king's impurities, and increase his prestige, and this ceremony involves the offering of various ritual prayers by the new King, the royal family and other notables. In present time this ceremony is performed not on any kind of magical beliefs. This ceremony is

religious and they may perform this for receiving homage from his subjects.

References :

1. AV., VII.12.1
2. KauŚ.38.27-28
3. AV., 1.29.1-6
4. Ibid., X.1.6
5. AV. III.22
6. KauŚ.19.22
7. AV., XIX.24.1-3
8. KauŚ., 16.27-28
9. AV., I.9.1-2
10. Ibid., 11.9-10
11. Ibid., 11.9.13
12. Ibid., 11. 9.11
13. Ibid., III.6.3-6
14. Ibid., VI.104. 1-2
15. SBE., p.,582
16. KauŚ. 47.14
17. *Atharvaveda Samhitā.*, p. 628
18. AV.VI.134.1-3

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