CHAPTER - VI

RELATION BETWEEN ATHARVA-VEDIC OCCULTISM AND PURANIC RITES.

A close study of some of the occult rituals in the Purāṇas will testify to the fact that these might have been influenced by the AV occultism. Some of the Purānic texts show close acquaintance with the AV mantras and in certain cases, the AV as a Vedic text has been extolled.

Matsya-Purāṇa recommends that to avert evils, signified by pigeons & owls entering into the house, the AV mantras 'devah kapota' etc. should be recited by five brahmins.(1)

In the AV mantra used for curing snake-bites, prayers are offered to the rivers to shower anti-poison honey.(2)

Vishnu-purāṇa mantra to counter snake-bites also offers salutation to river Narmadā and invokes her to protect them from poisonous snakes.(3) In both the cases prayers are offered to rivers.

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(1) 'Devah Kapota' (AV. vi. 27.1) iti vā japtavyāh pancabhirdvijaiḥ.

(2) Madvā prince nadyah .... AV. vi.12.6

(3) Narmadāyai namah prati narmadāyai nāmō niśi
Namo 'stu narmade tubhyam raktā. mām viṣasarpatah.

Vishnu pu. 4.3.10
The AV prescribes remedial measures for many evil omens and augeries, so do the Puranas; augeries which are branded as evils in the AV are also classified as such in the Puranas. As for example:

Entry of pigeons and owls into a house

(4) Ekta avat na pratishya

Sayanabhasya (AV. vi. 27)
cf. Kaus. 46.7

Gham kapotah praviṣet

Mat. Pu. 237.6

Ulūko dṛṣyate yatra nṝpadyāre tathāgreh I
Jñeyo gṛhapatermṛtyurchanaṇāṣas tathalva ca II

Mat. Pu. 237.12

Śṛgāloḷukatamkārah

Bhāg. Pu. 3.17.9

Mṛtyudūtah kapoto'yam ulūkah kampayan manah I
Pratyulokaśca kuhvānairanidrau śūnyanīcchatah II

Bhāg. Pu. 1.14.14

Kākah kapoto va gṛdhro va niliyeḍyasva mūrdham

Vā. Pu. 19.6
Excessive rains, earthquake, appearance of fire in fire-retarding place, and gross contradictions in Cow-milk.

(5) Divo nu mā (AV. vi. 124.1) ityabhimantrya udakam śāriram prakṣālayet ākāśodakapīvānasāntyartham.

Sāyaṇabhāṣya (AV. vi. 124).
cf. Kauś. 45. 41, 42.
Ativrātiramāavrstih . . . . . divānanta vrṣṭirjñyā bhayānakā I

Mat. Pu. 233.1

(Vide also Mat. Pu. 228.7)

(6) Śam no bhūmirvepamānā ............

AV. xix. 9

Bhūkampe ca samutpanne ............

Mat. Pu. 228.6

(7) Agnirahitapradēse agnidāskalanakṣaṇe aubhute tacchāntyaretthamagnī rāksāmsi (AV. viii. 3. 26) ityanayājyam juhuyāt.

Kauś. 130. 1, 3

Anganīra dīpyate yatrasāstra nirindhanah I
Na dīpyate cendhanavān tadrāstraṁ dīpyate .... II

Mat. Pu. 231.1

(Vide also Mat. Pu. 231.6)

(8) Śam gāvo lohitakṣirāh ....

AV. xix. 9. 8

Kṣaṇaṁ sarvatra gokṣīre śnehe durbhikṣalakṣaṇam I
Bāhanāpacayam mādyē rakte saṃgrāmaṁadiśet II

Gāvo trasannasraḍhastoyadāh pūyayārṣaṅgah I

Bhag. Pu. 3. 17. 13
In the Purāṇas there are numerous rites which in spirit and purpose are akin to those of the AV; as for example, Purāṇic rites for growth of hair, curing from poison-bites, obtaining a wife, protection from serpents, removing obstacles, curing of eye-diseases, desiring children and destruction of enemies\(^{(9)}\).

All these indicate clearly that Purāṇas were well-acquainted with the Atharva-vedic incantations and rites, and this is well-proved by various references to the AV\(^{(10)}\) in the Purāṇas. Some of

\(\text{(9)}\) Gar. Pu. Pūrvakhanda. 182.11

182.13, 7,8,27
Bhav. Pu, 20th Adhyāya & 32nd Adhyāya.
Barā. Pu., Adhyāyas 48, 59, 60, 62 & 63

\(\text{(10)}\) Pathya ca mānāvī kanyā tisro bhāryāstvatharvanah I.

Vā. Pu. 65.98

Ityetaṅgiraśah patnyastāsu vakṣyāmi santatim II

Atharvaṇastu dāyādāstāsu jātāḥ kulodvahāḥ I

Utpannā mahatā caiva tapasā bhāvitātmānam II

Vā. Pu. 65.99

Rcāmātharvanāṁ pañca sahasrāṇī viniścayah I

Sahasramanyadvijneyamṛśibhirvimśatim vinā II

Vā. Pu. 61.72

Amṛto tharvanāṁ pūrvam māthitah puṣkarodadhau I

Vā. Pu. 29.7

So' tharvā laukāgniṣtu. dābyango tharvanāṁ sutāḥ II

Vā. Pu. 29.8
the Puranic texts, even, refer to the severity and usefulness of the AV.

Atharvā tu bṛgurjñeyo'pyangirātharvaṇah sutah I
Vā. Pu. 29.8

Bhāruṇḍāni ca sāmāni cchandogah paścime japet I
Atharvāṅgirasām tadvānīlam raudram tathaiva ca II
Mat. Pu. 255.28

Sraddhāmangirase yacchat pulastyāya havirbhuvam I
Bhāg. Pu. 3.24.22

Atkarvane dadācchāntīṃ yāyā yajño vitanyate II
Bhāg. Pu. 3.24.24

Atharvā kaśyapo dhaumyo rāmo bhārgava āsurih II
Bhāg. Pu. 10.74.9

(11) Atharvaṇāmatho vaksye saṃhitānāṃ saṃuccayam I
Atharvavedaṃ sa muniḥ sumanturamitadyutih II
Viṣ. Pu. 3.6.9

Srēsthāstvatharvaṇāmete saṃhitānāṃ vikalpakh II
Viṣ. Pu. 3.6.15

Atharvāṅgirasāmāsīt sumanturdārūṇo muniḥ I
Bhāg. Pu. 1.4.22

Purohito tharvaviddhai juhāva grahaśāntaye .... I
Bhāg. Pu. 10.53.12
The words Atharvan, Atharvāngirasas and Atharvaveda are often mentioned in the Mahābhārata (12) which shows that Atharvan practices must have been quite prevalent during that period.

Pāndava's mother Kuntī was conversant with mantras. Atharvāngirasah, for compelling the gods to appear (13). In one instance Atharvāngirasah (personified) is mentioned with respect along with other Vedic rishis (14). Angīras praises Indra with AV Mantras and Indra declares that this Veda shall henceforth have the name Atharvāngirasa (15). In a number of places, weapons are said to be fierce and efficacious as the sorcery-practices of the Atharvan — Krityāmatharvāngirasimiva (16).

(12) Mahābhārata. iii. 203.15
     "   iii. 189. 14
     "   ii. 11.32
     "   i. 70.39, 40
     "  xiii. 90.29
(13) Mahābhārata. iii. 305.20
(14) Mahābhārata. ii. 11.20
(15) Mahābhārata. v. 18.5-7
(16) Mahābhārata. viii. 91.48
In one place, it is said that Karna refuted Arjuna's arrows by applying Atharvan weapons (17).

Mention of AV is also found in the Ramayana. Sage Rṣyasrīga performed a sacrifice according to the Atharvan technique, praying for birth of sons to the king Daśaratha (18).

All these instances represent that Atharya-vedic rites were in an indisputable position of usefulness during the period of Ramayana and Mahabharata.

**RELATION BETWEEN THE ATHARVAVEDIC OCCULTISM & THE TANTRIKA RITES**

The rites of Tantra-śastras have in many cases, a close similarity to those of the AV. The Tantric rites for driving away demons, causing injury to enemies, winning over certain persons; rites for acquiring wealth and wisdom, curing of diseases and snake-bites, wearing amulets are apparently mere modified forms of the Atharva-vedic rites.

A few illustrations can be cited in support of the statement, e.g., for destruction of enemy, Kauśika-Grhya-Śūtra applies the

(17) Mahābhārata. viii.90.4
(18) Iṣṭam te'ham kariṣyaṁ putriyāṁ putrakāraṇāt I
    Atharvasirasī prokṣermaṇai siddham bidhānatah II
    Ramayana. 1.15.2
AV hymn ii.18 in an abhicāra-rite in which black paddy, black barley and black sesame are used (19). In the tantras also we find that black water, black pitcher, black flowers are used in similar rites (20).

Both in the Tantras (21) and Kauśika-Grhya-sūtra (22) we find that funeral fire, and human bone are used for abhicāra-rite.

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* Blackness is universally associated with darkness, things hidden from view, clandestine activities and objects of fear.
* Black objects, therefore, were invariably used in maleficent rites both in the Tantras and the Kauśika-Grhya-Sūtra.

(19) Bhṛatṛvyākṣayanamiti prathamaśūktena (AV. ii.18) abhicārakārmāni sarasamidādhānam kṛṣṇabrīthiyavatilādyāvapanam ca kuryāt.
Kauś. 48.1,2

(20) Kṛṣṇatoiyāśca sampūrṇe kṛṣṇakumbheṭha kālikām
Pūjayet kṛṣṇapuṣpena śmaśāne dakṣiṇāpathah I
Mahākālīmantraprayoga,
Brhattantrasāra. 3.95

(21) Anena mantreṇa manuṣyāsthimayam kilakām yasya gehe nikhatet tasya .... parivāra naśyanti.
Jvālāmalinīmantra (Fetkāriya)
ibid. 3.3

(22) Yām te cakruḥ puruṣāḥthe agnau samkasuke ca yām I
Mrokaṁ nirdāham kravyādam punah pratihaṇāṁ tāṁ II
AV. v.31.9
For vaśikaraṇa-rites, use of red-coloured objects is recommended both in Kausika and Tantra-sāstra: red flowers, red sandal woods in Tantra-sāstra (23) and tying of red-thread around the finger in the Kausika (24).

In vaśikaraṇa-rite, making an image of the person (to be won over) and throwing something at it is found both in the Kausika (25) and Tantras (26).

Red colour has a dynamic effect on human mind. It is regarded as symbol of attraction. This probably suggests the reason of using red-coloured objects in the rites for winning over the desired person.

(23) Amukimiti pada dvandamākarṣaya dvidhāpadam

Sātkoṇām ca samālikhyā raktacandana kunkumāh

Raktapuspāṃ satadhūpādinoivedaiḥ pariṣṭitāyam I

Bṛhattantrasāra. 3.30 (Ākaraṇaṃ)

(24) Anena sūktena (AV.i.34.1) madhukarmanī raktasūtreṇa badhvā angulyāṃ badhnīyāt. Sāyaṇabhāṣya (AV.i.34)

cf. Kauś. 75.8

(25) Tatraiva karmanī āvalekanīṃ strīpratikrtim kṛtvā sūtroktrapra-
kāreṇa dhanurīṣum ca kṛtvānena pratikrtim ṣrīdeye bidhyet.

Sāyaṇabhāṣya (AV. vi.129)

cf. Kauś. 36. 13, 14

(26) Pratimām strīniḥbhāṃ kṛtvā tasyāḥ kṣpettathodare I

Gulikāṃ pātayet pātre pratimām sādhyarūpinīṃ II (Ākaraṇaṇavidhi)

Bṛhattantrasāra. 3.31
Use of some mystic words like 'Phat' is found in Tantrika maleficent rites\(^{(27)}\). In the AV, we find the initial conception of such mystic words and their uses. As for example, in the AV the same Tantrika work 'Phat' is used in the mystic sense of abhicāra-karma\(^{(28)}\).

From the above facts, it is clearly apparent that the underlying principles of the Tantras are enshrined in the AV as well\(^{(29)}\). It is also however probable, that the maleficent rites of the AV have undergone development and diversification in form of Tantrika rites, and the healing rites of the AV have gradually developed and emerged as entirely subsidiary veda, named as the Ayurveda.

\(^{(27)}\) Uccātane vaṣat proktam hūṃ phadantaśca māraṇe I
Stambhane ca namah proktam svāhā śāntikapauṣṭike II
Brhat tantra sāra. 4.35 (Āsanādikāmanam)

\(^{(28)}\) Bahulāḥ phat karikrati

'Phat himśākarma'

Sāyaṇabhāṣya (AV. iv.18.3)

\(^{(29)}\) In the Atharva-veda, we meet with many rites and rituals, which are quite similar to what we find in the Tantras. These go to support the view that the underlying principles of the Tantras are enshrined in the Vedas as well.

D. N. Bose, Tantras; Their Philosophy and Occult Secrets, 'Authority and antiquity' p.5.
Many people, particularly the Westerners, often confuse occultism with Yoga-practices as much as they confuse an occultist with a Yogi; doubt naturally arises whether the Atharva-vedic occultism has any relation with Yoga system or not.

In the AV, we find the curious and enigmatic figure of 'Brātya' exalted into the cosmic power, but the origin remains obscure. Some suggest that Brātyas are a type of wandering Yogis who are held in high esteem, as they are believed to be capable of bringing prosperity by their ecstatic practices. This suggestion is ingenious, but lacks probative value.

References to Brātya practices in the AV however outlines a system of elaborate breath-control and regulation by the Brātyas. The Brātya-practices therefore appear to contain some elements which appear to be systematised in later Yoga-practices, but it would be a mistake to exaggerate the degree of correspondence and identify the Brātyas with Yogis.

Yoga means cessation of mental functions or modifications, whose ultimate goal is to attain liberation of Mokṣa.

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(31) AV. xv. 15,17
(32) 'Yogascittavṛttinirodhah' Samādhipādah. 2. Yogasūtra(Patanjala)
Similar statement is found in the Upanisads. (33)

A Yegin however acquires certain extraordinary powers by the practice of various austerities in different stages; we are told that the Yogins can tame ferocious animals; procure any object by mere wish; know the past, present and future; can see through closed door; pass through stones; walk on the rivers; appear at different places at the same time and so on. While these may be possible, the Yoga-systems warn the religious aspirants not to get entangled in the quagmire of supernormal powers, and practise Yoga with these ends in view. (34)

Therefore occultism as preached in the AV and Yoga-system are entirely different in purpose, though, there may be some similarities in the patterns and practices.

(33) *Tamp yogamiti manyante sthiramindriyadharanam* I

Kath. Up. 6.11

Vide also *Śvetā. Up. 2.8*

(34) *Te samādhāvupasarga vyutthāne siddhayah.*

Yogasūtra. 3.36

(The powers of pre-science prove to be obstacles when they appear in a mind which has reached the state of trance, because they oppose knowledge.)

Vide also Yogasūtra. 3.51 & 4.1
In the Āyurveda, there are two systems of curing diseases:

(a) Scientific system i.e. curing of diseases by application of medicines, herbs, drugs, surgery etc.

(b) Occult system - beyond the scope of scientific analysis which is a matter of extrasensory perception, e.g., curing of diseases by charms and incantations, propitiatory rites (Syastayana), offerings (Vali), auspicious oblations (mangalahoma), penances (niyama), purificatory rites (prāyaścittā), fasting (upavāsa) etc. (35)

The AV also contains a specific and separate chapter on demonology, called Bhūtavidyā, which deals with the causes, symptoms and treatment of diseases believed to be caused by evil spirits (36).

(35) It is probable that the Āyurveda, within the orbit of their knowledge, endeavoured most to find out proper and pathological causes for diseases: may be where the Āyurveda failed to attribute or find out reasons, prognosis and diagnosis of diseases conceded to the AV. Spirit of conception of demons and evil spirits, as causes of such diseases.

(36) Amānuṣaṇiṣedhasa tathāpaṃśārikoparāh I
Unmādapratiṣedaśa bhūtavidyā nirucyate II

Susrutasaṃhitā, Śūtraṣṭānam. 3.11
In the AV we find that the evil spirits are the causes of diseases and a particular demon causes a particular disease.

This conception of disease-causing demons is explicit in large number of AV hymns. The AV also contains an indefinite number of disease-bringing demons such as Yātudhanakimīdīn, piśāca, piśāci, amīvā, dyāvin, rakṣah, magundī, alima, batsapa, palala, anupalal, koka, malimluca, palajika, babrbāsas advēsa, rakṣagrīva, pramī, durṇāma, sunāma, kūkṣila, kakubha, srīma, avāya, kārumā, khalaja, śakdhūmaja, urūpa, matamata, kumbhamsukā, sāyaka, magnaka, tangalba, parināsa, gandharva, apsaras, kanva, atrin, skanda.

According to Suṣruta-saṃhitā the asuras- gandharva piśāca, nāgarākṣasa, skanda, apasmāra, sākuni, revati, putanā, andhaputanā, śitānāma, naigamesa, mukhamandikā, etc. are causes of diseases.

(37) AV. vii. 43.1; i.28.1; viii. 2.28; xix.44.7; iv.37.1; vii. 16.1; ii. 25.4,5; vi.32.2
(38) Skandagrahastu prathamah skandāpasmāra eva ca I
Śakunī revatī caiva Putanā cāndhaputanā II
Putanā śitānāma ca ta-haiva mukhamandikā I
Navamo naigamesa-īcā yah pītr-grahasamgītah II
Susṛutasamhitā, Uttarajñāna. 27.2-3
Vide also
Athāto'pasmaridānaṁ vyākhyaśyāmah.
Caraka-saṃhitā, Nidāna-sthānam. 8.1
Svapne harati tam mṛtyurāpasmārarupahsarah.
Caraka-saṃhitā, Indriya-sthānam. 5.23
The Ayurvedic spirits Skanda and Revati are found in the AV.

The demons, mentioned in the AV and in the Ayurvedic samhitās are of like nature in their habits and actions. In both the cases, the demons are stated to devour the flesh of the victims, drink their blood, prey upon the children, steal away the senses, bring insanity, enter the bodies of the victims through the medium of some materials in direct contact with the body like ulcers, unclean clothings etc., and they can be got rid of by charms, incantations and performance of various propitiatory rites.

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(40) AV. iv. 36.3; v. 29.5; ii. 25.3
Suśruta-samhitā, Sūtra-sthānam. 19.15
ibid, Uttaratantra, 60.12-13

(41) AV. ii.25.3; ii.2.25; xi. 2.25 (Paippalāda samhitā);
vi. 113.2
Suśruta-samhitā, Uttaratantra. 27.2-3

(42) AV. ii. 2.5
Suśruta-samhitā, Uttaratantra. 27.5-6

(43) AV. v. 29.6
Suśruta-samhitā, Sūstraṅhānam. 29.15

(44) AV. i.14; i.18; ii.9; ii.12
Suśruta-samhitā, Uttaratantra. 27.15; 28.7; 29.2; 30.2;
31.2
The Ayurvedic spirits and demons therefore appear to be of Atharvavedic descent.

There are other instances of likeness between the AV and the Ayurvedas. As in the AV, in the Ayurvedic Samhitās also consideration of omens and augeries is a great influencing factor in the matter of prognosis. In the Ayurveda, incantations are also resorted to for curing poisonous snake-bites, for averting fruition of evil dream, for protection of child etc.

(45) Susruta-samhitā, Caraka-samhitā, Indriya-sthānam. 1: 30-32; 1.29; 29. 34,35; 29. 54-56, 116.

Caraka-samhitā, Indriya-sthānam. 12: 68-70
(46) Aṛṣṭāmapi mantraścā badhnīyān mantra kovīdah.

Susruta-samhitā, Sarpaviṣacikitsā, Kalpasthānam. 5.5
Mantrairdhamanībandho vamārjanam kāryamātmaraṇaṃ ca.

Caraka-samhitā, Cikitsā-sthānam. 23.61
(47) Svapnānevambidhān drstvā prātarūtthāva yatnavān ...

Japeccāpi subhān mantraṃ gāyatrīṃ tripadmām tatha.

Susruta-samhitā, 29.31
Vide also - Caraka-samhitā, Indriya-sthānam. 5 (Aṛṣṭabhūtāḥ svapnāḥ)
(48) Madhusarpisī mantropamantite yathā maṇīṣam prathamaṃ prāśītumasmāi dadyāt.

Caraka-samhitā, Sarīra-sthānam. 8.47
In the Ayurvedas there are also various direct acknowledgments with gratitude to the AV\(^\text{(49)}\).

It therefore may be stated that the Ayurveda has derived significant inspiration in matter and spirit from the AV.

\(^{49}\) Tatra cet prastaraḥ syuh scaturṇāṁkṣamsāmayajurārthavavedānām kaṁ vedam upadiśanti ayurvedavidah, kimāyuh kasmādyurvedah ... kati kāni cāsyānāni kaiścāyamadhyetavya kimartham ceti. Tatra bhisaja prṣṭenaivaṁ caturṇāṁkṣāmayajurādharvavedānāṁmaṇomānārthavavede bhaktirādeśyāḥ. Veda hyāadhvarvānāvāldinangahomaniyam aprāścittopavāsamantarādī parigrahā-vā-cikitsāṁ prāha.

Caraka-samhita, Sūtra-sthānam. 30-18-19

Jha khalu Ayurvedam namopangamatharvavedasya.

Susruta-samhita, Sūtra-sthānam. 1-3