CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION
INTRODUCTION

The Atharva-Veda which is one of the four Vedas represents another stream of ritualistic and popular stanzas which was flowing parallel to the Rg-Vedic stream of poetic excellence and grandeur. Being popular in nature Atharvanic tradition has not been preserved so meticulously as the Rg-Vedic one, and this fact explains the present state of Atharvanic text which abounds in numerous variants and is not so accurate as the text of the Rg-Veda. But it does not detract from the importance of the Atharva-Veda. This Veda is also named as Atharva-Āṅgirasa in ancient texts associating the names of two ancient seers called Atharvan and Aṅgiras. Both these seers are mentioned in the Rg-Veda a number of times. Although some of the hymns of the Atharva-Veda are very short and vague in places, the philosophic hymns of the Atharva-Veda are very important and compare favourably with the hymns of the Rg-Veda. A large number of hymns of the Atharva-Veda are concerned with the performance of such popular rites as are found described in the Grhya-Sūtras. This is why
the Atharva-Veda has little connection with Śrauta sacrifices and is not included in Trayā-Vidya. In order to make up this deficiency a number of verses from Rg-Veda were later on appended to the Atharva-Veda in the form of its last two Kāṇḍas, i.e., nineteenth and twentieth. The ritualistic texts of the Atharva-Veda, namely the Gopatha-Brahmana and the Vaitāna-Śrauta Sūtra draw their mantras mainly from the last two Kāṇḍas, to place the Atharva-Veda at a par with the other three Vedas in regard to the performance of Śrauta sacrifices and to associate the fourth priest called Brahman with the Atharva-Veda.

Besides the last two Kāṇḍas the other Kāṇḍas of the Atharva-Veda also contain a considerable number of mantras borrowed from the Rg-Veda. Thus nearly one fifth of the Atharva-Veda is composed of the mantras borrowed from the Rg-Veda (i.e., nearly twelve hundred out of approximately six thousands mantras of the Atharva-Veda belong to the Rg-Veda). The Rg-Vedic mantras incorporated into the Atharva-Veda exhibit many variants and show a later stage of linguistic development. There can be no doubt that the Atharva-Veda in its present form is certainly later than the Rg-Veda. Therefore, the language
of the Atharva-Veda represents a definite stage in the development of Vedic idiom.

A comprehensive study of the language of the Atharva-Veda would go a long way in understanding this important text. The object of the present thesis is to give a clear and detailed study of the language of the Atharva-Veda. Although the Atharva-Veda has been subjected to various types of researches during the last hundred years, no special study, to the best of my knowledge, has been devoted to the language of the Atharva-Veda. Hence my present attempt in this direction.

In my grammatical study of the Atharva-Veda, I have made use of the technical terms employed in modern grammatical works, giving Pāṇinian terminology in brackets wherever necessary. Though my study is mainly concerned with the Saunaka recension of the Atharva-Veda, linguistic peculiarities found in the Paippalāda recension have also been noted. My thesis has been divided into the following ten chapters, viz. Introduction, Phonology, Euphonic-Combination, Declension, Compounds, Conjugation, Primary Suffixes, Secondary Suffixes, Syntax and Accent.
The main points which deserve special mention have been briefly noted below:

**Phonology**

The language of the Atharva-Veda contains forty-nine sounds out of which thirteen are vowels and thirty-six are consonants. The three sounds $\text{jh}$, $\text{lh}$ and $\text{jh}$ which are found in the Rg-Veda do not occur even once in the Atharva-Veda, though the palatal sound $\text{jh}$ is met with in the other Vedic texts and in later Sanskrit. The lingual sounds $\text{lh}$ and $\text{lh}$ which are substituted for $\text{dh}$ and $\text{dh}$ respectively between two vowels in the Rg-Veda have vanished altogether from the later Vedic language and classical Sanskrit.

Among the guttural series of the Atharva-Veda, $\text{k}$ is the commonest of all. It occurs more often than all the other four sounds taken together.

About the palatals of the Atharva-Veda, it may be mentioned that the sound $\text{c}$ is three times more frequent than $\text{j}$, the sound $\text{c}$ occurs seven times more often than $\text{ch}$.

Dentals in the Atharva-Veda occur just about as
frequently as all the other four classes of mutes taken together.

As regards the labial sounds of the Atharva-Veda, \( b \) is exceeded in frequency by \( bh \). In the Atharva-Veda \( b \) occurs one hundred and nineteen times only, while \( bh \) is the commonest sound of all the sonant aspirates, and \( ph \) is the least common of surd sounds. The sound \( m \) is the most frequent of all the nasal sounds of the Atharva-Veda.

In the Rg-Veda the sound \( r \) is seven times more frequent than the sound \( l \), while in the Atharva-Veda the sound \( l \) becomes certainly more frequent than the sound \( r \). However, some words which contain the sound \( l \) in the Rg-Vedic text have the sound \( r \) in the Atharva-Veda, e.g.,

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{āngūli (RV)} & = \text{āngūri (AV. IV. 18.6)}, \\
\text{sahamūlān (RV)} & = \text{sahamūrān (AV. V. 29.1)}, \\
\text{mayūra lomabhīḥ (RV)} & = \text{mayūrromabhīḥ (AV. VIII. 117.11)}, \\
\text{āśva vālah (RV)} & = \text{āśva vārah (AV. X. 4.2)}, \\
\text{paruṣasya vālah (RV)} & = \text{paruṣasya vārah (AV. X. 4.2)},
\end{align*}
\]
According to the general rules, simple vowels are combined together, but the Atharvan text affords some examples where the vowels remain in hiatus, e.g.,

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ena} & \text{ ehjfr (AV. XII. 3.33),} \\
apaga & \text{ asah (AV. I. 34.5),} \\
prthivi & \text{ uta (AV. XVII. 1.5).}
\end{align*}
\]

And the Atharva-Veda does not contain a single example where initial and following r's are combined with each other.

The Atharva-Veda contains a single instance, where a + u are coalesced into au instead of o, e.g.,
pra + ūdhah = praudhah (AV. XV. 15.4).

In the Atharva-Veda a + ṛ are often coalesced with each other and become ar, e.g.,

\[ \text{ava} + ṛtih = \text{avartih} \text{ (AV. IV. 34.3)}, \]

\[ \text{yajña} + ṛtah = \text{yajñartah} \text{ (AV. VIII. 10.4)}. \]

While in the Rg-Veda they never result into ar.

According to a general rule, when a is followed by e then the fusion of two sounds will be ai. But the Atharva-Veda Saṁhitā shows that it was not observed by the authors of the hymns. According to them the single substitute is the form of the second vowel, e.g.,

\[ \text{upa} + ṣantam = \text{upesantam} \text{ (AV. VIII. 6.17)}, \]

\[ \text{sakalva} + esi = \text{sakalyesi} \text{ (AV. I. 25.2)}. \]

The Atharva-Veda has only one example of its own kind, where Vṛddhi takes place instead of guṇa, e.g.,

\[ ā + rchatu = \ārchatu \text{ (AV. II. 12.5)}. \]

Another example of the same category is that when the augment a is followed by ṛ then it results into ar,
One also observes that the final r and l in the Atharva-Veda do not stand before initial vowels. According to the general rule, following a must merge with final e and o vowels, but in thirty-four per cent usages of the Atharva-Veda this rule is not observed and a remains unchanged, e.g., ye agnayah (AV. III. 21.1) and so on. So it indicates a period of transition, where in later Vedic language its usages are not so frequent, and in post Vedic period, we find the total loss of a.

According to the general rule, the pluta vowels are not combined together. But in one example of the Atharva-Veda they are combined together before iti, e.g., avasa\~iti = avaseti (AV. XII. 4.42).

The most important point of the Atharva\~nic euphonic combination is metrical-prolongation of vowels(ch\~andasad\~rgha) through which we can discuss the various types of
prolongation. It has a very wide scope. When we follow the usages of the Atharva-Veda Samhita, where the lengthening is not ordained by any of the rules of grammar, but occurs in the writing of standard authors (Rsis), there we should accept such lengthening as valid, e.g.,

\[ \text{svavasum} = \text{svāvasum} \text{ (AV. VII. 50.3), etc.} \]

The Atharva-Veda Samhita contains a large number of usages of such prolongation of vowels.

According to the euphonic combination of the Atharva-Veda, a final \( r \) disappears before an initial \( r \), e.g.,

\[ \text{purucir} + \text{rayah} = \text{purucirāyah} \text{ (AV. II. 13.3), etc.} \]

\( n \) changes into a nasalized \( ŋ \) before \( l \), e.g.,

\[ \text{sarvān} + \text{lokān} = \text{sarvānī lokān} \text{ (AV. II. 38.5).} \]

And in some manuscripts of the Atharva-Veda \( m \) is also found nasalized \( ŋ \) before \( l \), e.g.,

\[ \text{tanī-lokam} \text{ (AV. III. 28.5),} \]

\[ \text{svini-lokena} \text{ (AV. II. 29.3).} \]

According to the general rule, \( n \) is changed into \( ŋ \),
when it is preceded by r, r, r and s, but the Atharva-Veda contains some instances, where n does not change into ū, e. g.,

praminit (AV. VI. 110.3),

parihinomi (AV. VIII. 4.6), etc.

According to the general rules of the Prātisākhyaśas, Visarjanīya is converted into r, when it is followed by vowels (excepting a and ā) and sonant mutes. But the Atharva-Veda contains some instances where this rule is not observed by the authors of the hymns, e. g.,

ahah + rātre = ahorātrē (AV. XI. 6.5), etc.

Declension

An important point to be noted in regard to the declension of nouns is that many stems which end in consonants in the Rg-Veda are found to end in vowels in the Atharva-Veda. This change must have gradually taken place and for sometime both types of stems were used in the language side by side. Gradually the stems ending in vowels became more popular and those ending in consonants went out of use. To illustrate this point we
may cite the example of the word Dharma. In the language of the Rg-Veda we find the neuter word Dharman (RV. V. 15.2; 9, IX. 7.1; 110.4; X. 170.2) and masculine word Dharman (RV. X. 20.2), while in the Atharva-Veda the word Dharma (AV. XI. 9.17; XII. 6.1) ends in a vowel only. In Classical Sanskrit the word Dharman went out of use completely. There Dharman was considered as the supplement of the word Dharma (cf. Panini, V. 4.24).

We find a large number of instances of this category in the Atharva-Veda, e.g.,

\[\begin{align*}
\text{vistap} (RV.) & = \text{vistapa (AV.)} \\
\text{dvār} (RV.) & = \text{dvāra (AV.)} \\
\text{pur} (RV.) & = \text{pura (AV.)} \\
\text{kakud} (RV.) & = \text{kakuda (AV.)} \\
\text{pad} (RV.) & = \text{pada (AV.)} \\
\text{mas} (RV.) & = \text{māsa (AV.)} \\
\text{purodās} (RV.) & = \text{purodāsa (AV.)} \\
\text{vāman} (RV.) & = \text{vama (AV.), etc.}
\end{align*}\]

Some radical stems ending in ā in the Rg-Veda
are shortened in the Atharva-Veda, e.g.,

\text{nāmadhāh} (RV. X. 82.3),

\text{nāmadhāh} (AV. II. 1.3),

\text{carsanipraḥ} (RV. I. 117.1),

\text{carsanipraḥ} (AV. IV. 24.3),

\text{somapāḥ} (RV. I. 54.8),

\text{somapāḥ} (AV. I. 83.3), etc.

The ā is substituted for the ending au in nominative and accusative dual masculine, e.g.,

\text{devā} (AV. VI. 3.3) for devau,

\text{ubhā} (AV. V. 3.9; 25.3) for ubhau.

In the Atharva-Veda the use of the ending au is seven times more frequent than ā.

The Atharva-Veda has twenty-four-fold usages of the ending as in comparison with the ending asas, while the Rg-Veda has only two-fold usages of as than asas, e.g.,

\text{devāḥ} and \text{devāsah}.
In the Atharva-Veda final ending ni of nominative and accusative plural neuter is dropped, e.g.,

bhuvanā (AV. II. 1.3) for bhuvanāni,
bheṣajā (AV. XI. 6.14) for bheṣajani,
dhanā (AV. V. 2.4) for dhanāni.

In the Atharva-Veda inflections ending in āni are one and a half-time more frequent than those ending in ā. But in Classical Sanskrit inflections ending in ā are not found.

Declensional forms of instrumental plural ending in ais are five-times more frequent than the forms ending in bhis in the Atharva-Veda, e.g.,

devaiḥ and devaḥbhiḥ.

Compounds

The following six categories of compounds are met with in the Atharva-Veda.

1. Co-ordinative or compitative compound.
2. Determinative compound.
3. Possessive compound.
4. Adverbial compound.
5. Iterative compound.
6. Anomalous compound.

In the Atharva-Veda we do not find long compounds consisting of more than three words. Most of the compounds found in the Atharva-Veda contain two members.

The use of co-ordinative compounds in the Atharva-Veda is quite common. Under this category of compounds we include Devatā-dvandva compounds. The Atharva-Veda has got twelve instances of this compound, which take dual number, and both the members retain their original accent, e.g.,

mitrā-varuṇā (AV. III. 4.4),
agnī-viṣṇū (AV. VII. 29.1),
īdrā-puṣaṇā (AV. VI. 3.1).

In some instances of the Atharva-Veda the first member of Devatā-dvandva compound gets the acute accent, e.g.,
In some examples of the Atharva-Veda the last member of Devatā-dvandva compound gets the acute accent, e.g.,

- *indrā-soma* (AV. VIII. 4.1).

- *deva-manusyah* (AV. VIII. 10.9),
- *ukthā-madani* (AV. V. 26.3),
- *bhadra-pāpaḥ* (AV. XII. 1.47).

In the Atharva-Veda we come across the compound *vātā-prajanyā* (AV. X. 4.16), in which the independent circumflex of the final member is retained as the accent of the entire compound.

Some co-ordinative compounds found in the Atharva-Veda are used in the plural number, and their last syllable gets the acute accent, e.g.,

- *agni-soma* (AV. I. 8.2),
- *indrā-soma* (AV. VIII. 4.1).

In some examples of the Atharva-Veda the last member of Devatā-dvandva compound gets the acute accent, e.g.,

- *indrāgni* (AV. I. 35.4),
- *indrayu* (AV. III. 20.6),
- *bhavārudraḥ* (AV. XI. 2.14).
In the Determinative compound of the Atharva-Veda the affix a comes after the word Ratri, when compounded with a numberal or an indeclinable, e.g.,

sat-rātra (AV. XI. 9.11),
dvi-rātra (AV. XI. 9.10),
ati-rātra (AV. X. 9.9).

In the Determinative compound of the Atharva-Veda the substitution of aha for ahan takes place after a numeral, when it forms a collective noun meaning a number of days taken as unity, e.g.,

sadaha (AV. VIII. 9.16),
bhadraham (AV. VI. 128.1).

In some instances of the Determinative compound of the Atharva-Veda, final consonants receive an a, e.g.,

brahma-varcas = brahma-varcasa (AV. VIII. 13.16) etc.

The Atharva-Veda contains over fifty examples of the Interative compound.
In the Atharva-Veda nouns, adjectives, and numerals are generally repeated, while in the Rg-Veda pronouns, adverbs, and prepositions are also repeated. Thus the Atharva-Veda differs from the Rg-Veda in not having all those classes of this compound that are available in the Rg-Veda.

Anomalous compound is rarely found in the Atharva-Veda. It is too anomalous in formation, e.g.,  

\[ \text{māmpasya} \text{ (AV. VII. 39.1).} \]

But according to Pāṇini it can be treated under the Determinative compounds.

**Conjugation**

The Atharva-Veda contains five hundred and fifty three roots. Some of them are conjugated in more than one class e.g., \( \sqrt{\text{kṛ}} \) is conjugated in the first, sixth and eighth classes, \( \sqrt{\text{yaj}} \) in the fourth, seventh and tenth classes and \( \sqrt{\text{cāl}} \) in the first, sixth and tenth classes.

It is significant to note that Pāṇinian Dhatupāṭha contains about seventeen vedic roots. Out of them seven ( \( \sqrt{\text{ghṛ}}, \sqrt{\text{ḥṛ}}, \sqrt{\text{ṛ}}, \sqrt{\text{bhas}}, \sqrt{\text{kī}}, \sqrt{\text{gā}} \) and \( \sqrt{\text{ṛi}} \) Vedic roots
are met in the language of the Atharva-Veda.

Another feature of the AV. is that no root beginning with ph is used in the conugalional system of the Atharva-Veda and there is only one root beginning with la e.g., lālapiti (AV. VI. 3.1).

In the Atharva-Veda the active voice is much more frequent than the middle voice. And the verbs conjugated in the active voice are nearly 65% and those conjugated in the middle voice are 35%.

The verb which are conjugated in both the voices are not more than fifty in the Atharva-Veda.

The root 'dūh contains so many peculiarities in the Atharva-Veda. It contains the forms adhok (Pai., XVI. 135.1) and aduhat (AV. VI. 16.1) side by side in the third person singular of the aorist tense in active voice. And in the third person plural of the present tense middle voice it contains two additional forms, e.g.,

duhrate (AV. IX. 14.5) and
duhre (AV. X. 10.32) instead of the general form duhate.
Primary Suffixes

The Atharva-Veda contains about thirty five verbal derivatives which end in *vas*, while the Rg-Veda has about seventy five such derivatives.

The Atharva-Veda has only one example where *tavat* is employed, e.g., *asitavati* (AV. IX. 8.8) but in Classical Sanskrit it is very common.

About *ta* it can be said that it is more frequent in the Atharva-Veda than *tavat*, and declinable in the three genders, e.g.,

\[ \text{bhūta (AV. XVIII. 3.19)}, \]
\[ \text{jitam (AV. XVI. 8.1)}, \]
\[ \text{jitā (AV. I. 24.1)}. \]

The Atharva-Veda has about thirty verbal formations, with the suffix *tvā*, while the Rg-Veda has about nine. In Classical Sanskrit it has become very common.

The language of the Atharva-Veda contains different suffixes to indicate the sense of infinitive. They are as follows:
It is important to note that in Classical Sanskrit the sense of infinitive is indicated by tum only. In the Atharva-Veda we do not find Locative infinitive.

In the Atharva-Veda the accusative and dative forms are very common, and the datives outnumber the accusatives in the proportion of three to one. In the Atharva-Veda there is eight formations where tum is employed in the sense of an infinitive.

Secondary Suffixes

The use of the secondary suffixes in the Atharva-Veda is not so common as in Classical Sanskrit. They are added to nouns, pronouns and indeclinable words.

In the Atharva-Veda they are mostly employed to denote the following senses: action noun, possession, like that, descendant, measure, manner of being, cases, time, direction, collection, small quantity, relationship. The terminations forming the superlative and comparative
degrees are included amongst the secondary suffixes.

Syntax

The syntactical arrangement of the Atharva-Veda consists of nouns, adjectives, pronouns, indeclinables, verbs, nominal verbs and participles.

With the exception of a few hymns, the Atharva-Veda Samhitā is composed in verses which are of various types, and the construction of sentences has consequently been subordinated to the necessities of rhythm. So it is difficult to define the order of words in the Atharva-Veda Samhitā. However, the Atharva-Veda contains some hymns in prose order by which we can judge the normal order of words in a sentence. In the Atharva-Veda, subject generally opens a sentence while the verb ends it, the remaining parts of the sentence coming in between, e. g.,

\[
\text{sa praśāpateḥ pasān mā moci (AV. XVI. 8.11),}
\]

\[
\text{sa ātharvēpām pasān mā moci (AV. XVI. 8.17) and so on.}
\]

Accent

The accent is marked in the whole of the Atharva-Veda
Samhita of the Saunaka recension. The Atharva-Veda has three accents, viz., acute, grave and circumflex.

The most important peculiarity of the Atharva-Veda regarding marking of the independent circumflex is that it is marked by a line which runs up through the word (akṣara) either down or through the middle, i.e., \( \overset{\text{yātudhānya}}{\text{h}} \) (AV. IV. 20.6).

The Atharva-Veda contains seven instances of this category in all.

In the Atharva-Veda when an independent circumflex is followed by an acute vowel, then the independent circumflex is marked by the sign of \( \overset{\text{= c^u}}{\text{but when circumflex}} \) vowel is short or long, then it is marked by the perpendicular line of circumflex and the bottom of grave side by side, e.g.,

\[
\text{devyu}^\div_\text{ }\text{ṭ }\text{sasah} \quad \text{(AV. X. 8.30)},
\]

\[
\text{tanve}_\text{ }\text{\'sam} \quad \text{(AV. I. 3.1)},
\]

\[
\text{bhāgo}_\text{ }\text{\'p}\text{ṣ}\text{v\'ntah} \quad \text{(AV. X. 5.15)}, \text{ etc.}
\]

The Atharva-Veda Samhita contains some examples
where both the members of the compound are accented,
e. g.,

mitrā-varūṇā (AV. XVIII. 3.13) etc.

Some words in the Atharva-Veda are enclitic, viz.,
enā, tvā, sama, mā, tvā, me, te, nau, vāṃ, nas, vaṣ, īm,
ca, u, vā, iva, gha, ha, cid, sama, svid.