

CHAPTER-II

THE *KAUŚIKA* AND *VAITĀNA* SŪTRAS OF THE *ATHARVAVEDA*

Atharva the fourth *Veda*, is one of the grand and timeless compositions in Vedic literature. It is a very rich and sophisticated composition from the point of view of both language and its contents. The subjects included in the *Atharvaveda* are concerned primarily with the life of the ordinary masses of Vedic people. And as such it is considered as the store house of ethnic culture of Vedic India. Traditionally *Atharvaveda* comprises of two recensions, viz., *Śaunakīya* and *Paippalāda*. The *Paippalāda Samhitā* is unpublished and only a single manuscript of the *Samhitā* text is found of that school, without any *pada* text or commentary, but the text of the *Śaunakīya* recension has a *Samhitā* with *Padapāṭha* and a commentary on it. Among the ancillary literature of the *Atharvaveda*, which has been discussed in the previous chapter, the most important are the *Sūtra* texts. There are two *Sūtra* texts available to posterity and these are i) the *Kauśika Sūtra* and ii) the *Vaitāna Sūtra*. In this chapter is given brief accounts of these works, because these are the texts which deal with Atharvaṇic rituals. Of these two texts the *Kauśika Sūtra* is a complete manual of Atharvaṇic magical rites.

These two *Sūtras*, specially the *Kauśika Sūtra* supplies important data on Atharvavedic *Ābhicārika* and *Kṛtyāpratiharāṇa* rites in which the relevant spells from this *Veda* are recited.

2.1. *Kauśika Sūtra*

It is considered that the *Kauśika Sūtra* belongs to as many as four Śākhās of the *Atharvaveda*. These are *Śaunakīya*, *Jājala*, *Jalada* and *Brahmavadā*¹. The *Sūtra* itself indicates its connection to the *Saunakīya* School of the *Atharvaveda*² and has also referred to a school called the *Devadarśīns*. This *Sūtra* is also known as *Atharva Sūtra* or *Vidhāna Sūtra* and is often referred as *Samhitā Vidhi*³. *Kauśika Sūtra* mainly deals with the *Gṛhya* rites and that is why, it bears the marks of a *Gṛhya Sūtra*. It gives description of domestic rites, from conception to funeral ceremony. The subject matter of this *Sūtra* however, is not confined simply to *Gṛhya* rites, but it also gives description of medicinal charms (*Bhaiṣajyāni*), love charms (*Strīkarmāṇi*), charms related to royalty (*Rājakarmāṇi*), black magic (*Ābhicārikāṇi*) and omens (*Adbhūtāni*) and so on.

It is said in an earlier context that some scholars have mentioned this *Sūtra* as *Atharva Sūtra* and as well as *Gṛhya Sūtra*⁴. They called it *Atharva Sūtra* because its text has the compressed style of the *Sūtra* texts and it primarily draws its topics from the *Atharvaveda*. Thus, it differs from a regular *Gṛhya Sūtra*, which has a broader style and uses *Śākalapāṭha* of Mantras from other Vedas.

¹ cf., *tatra atharvavedasya nava bhedā bhavanti/ tatra catarsu śākhāsu śaunakīyādisu kauśiko ayaṁ samhitābidhiḥ*//(Extracts from the *Paddhati* of Keśava) ; Bloomfield. M., *Kauśika Sūtra of the Atharvaveda* , Delhi,1889, p.307

² *KauS.*, 11.85.6-7

³ Bloomfield, M., *The Atharvaveda And The Gopatha Brahmana*, Allahabad, 1975, p.76

⁴ Bloomfield, M., *The Kauśika Sūtra of the Atharvaveda*, Delhi,1889, p. xxi

Weber however, recognizes that the style of the *Kausika Sūtra* is less concise than that of other Sūtras and is more narrative⁵.

2.1.1. Contents of the *Kausika Sūtra*:

Among the later literature of the *Atharvaveda*, *Kausika Sūtra* is considered as the prominent one because, it helps to understand the performance of Atharvavedic rites. Sāyaṇa the commentator of the *Atharvaveda* has said that as it makes use of most of the Mantras of the *Atharvaveda Samhitā* for *Śāntika*, *Pauṣṭika* and other rites therefore, it is called as *Samhitā Vidhi*⁶. The whole *Sūtra* text consist of 14 chapters called Adhyāyas and each chapter is subdivided into several Kaṇḍikās. Each *Kaṇḍikā* contains a number of Sūtras and these are numbered continuously from beginning to end through all the Adhyāyas. In this way, the *Kausika Sūtra* contains 14 Adhyāyas and 141 Kaṇḍikās.

Chapter I (Kaṇḍikās 1-9): In the first *adhyāya* of this *Sūtra* work, the author speaks about the sources of the book (1.1-8). Thereafter, the author explains some technical terms used in *Pākayajña*. (1.9-23). There it mentions about two types of Yajñas viz., *Devayajña* and *Pitryajña*⁷. According to commentator Dārila, *Devayajña* means *Śāntika Pauṣṭika* etc. and *Pitryajña* means *Pitṛmedha*, *Pinḍapitr yajña* etc. There are mentioned some general rules as well, which are

⁵ Weber, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, London, 1904, p 152

⁶ See Sāyaṇa's Introduction to his commentary on *Atharvaveda Samhitā*., Ed. by Sankar Pandurang Pandit, Vol.I-IV, Chowkhamba Krisnadass Academy, Reprint 2012, p.25

⁷ cf., *yajñāṃ vākhyāsyāmo devānāṃ pitṛnāṃ ca*, *KauS.*, 1.1.9

to be followed while performing the *Gṛhya* rites. The rites where oblations are offered to the Pitṛs are done by facing the south direction and oblations to the gods are paid by facing the east or the north, with the sacred thread in the *yajñapovīti* position. In case of rites to *Pitṛ* the sacred thread is held in *prācinavīti* position. Offerings to the gods are paid with the utterance of the word *svāhā* and *vaṣat* and for the manes by uttering *svāhā* and *nama*.

Thereafter, *Kauśika Sūtra* describes some general norms for the *pākayajña*. (1.9-23) and thereafter, it describes the rites of the *Darśapūrṇamāśa* sacrifice.⁸ Kauśika also describes in the first chapter (1.7.1-1.8.22) some technical terms used in his *Sūtra*. In this regard, Kauśika says the word *asnāti* is used to mean *sthālīpāka* which is meant to be eaten.⁹ The word *juhōti* indicates clarified butter, that is to be offered in the sacrifice. The word *āvapati* implies offerings of rice (*vrīhi/ dhānya*) barley (*yava*) and sesame (*tila*). When the word *bhakṣayati* is used it means *kṣīra*, *odana*, *purodāśa* and the Rasas. The word *pūrva* is used to indicate the first verse of the *Atharvaveda*. The word *samidh* is used keeping in mind the fuels for the ritualistic fire, but there is no mention about specific wood. There should be a collection of useful woods, which is used in the *homa* or sacred fire. The holy sticks are collected from the east or north direction of the residence of the sacrificer and herbs (*vanaṣpati*) are collected from elevated places which cannot be reached by cows and these should be

⁸ *KauS.*,1.1.24-1.6.37

⁹ *cf.*, *atra saṁhitāvidhau yasmin yasmin pradeśe asnātyāśayatīti vā codyate tasyāścodanāyāḥ sthālīpākaśeṣo vidhīyate*, Dārila on *KauS.*, 1.7.1

collected very early in the morning (*sūryodayakāle*). These rites are to be performed at daybreak in the east or north side of the residence in a forest near some water body. After completing the rites the performer should take a bath with the *Jalasūkta* viz., *amvayu yanti*....¹⁰ and come back without looking back. According to Dārila, *Kauśika Sūtra* viz., *śambhumayobhū*¹¹ refers to *Atharvaveda* I.33.1; VI.22.1; 23.1; 24.1 and 57.1. The devotee performs the Atharvaṇic rites seating upon a skin of an animal which is killed for this purpose. The performer of the rite keeps a fast by taking those particular foods which are allowed in fast and he takes a bath and wears a new garment while performing a rite¹². The same rule is followed in the *Svastyayana yāga*. It also mentions that an honorarium should be paid to the priest after performing the rite.¹³ *Darva*, *samidh* and *śāntasāmbhāra* etc. are used for *śāntakarma* and *raudra*, *āṅgirasa* etc., are used as *sāmbhāra* for *Abhicāra karma*. *Nitya*, *Naimittika* and *Kāmya* Karmans should be performed after a bath. *Palāśa*, *Udumvara*, *Jambuka* etc., are considered as *śāntavṛkṣa*, Kauśika has mentioned some *śāntauśadhīḥ*.¹⁴ Some special groups of Mantras such as *Vāstugaṇa*, *Mātrgaṇa*, *Cātanagaṇa*, *Mṛgārasūktāni* and *Śāntigaṇa* have been referred to in

¹⁰ *AV.*, I.4.1; V.1; VI.1

¹¹ Dārila on *KauS.*, 1.7.12

¹² *KauS.*, 1.8.1

¹³ *ibid.*, 1.8.5

¹⁴ *ibid.*, 1.8.15-16

this context¹⁵. Thereafter, Kauśika describes the *vidhi* of preparing the holy water which is specially an Atharvaṇic custom¹⁶.

Chapter II (Kaṇḍikās 10-17): The second chapter of the *Kauśika Sūtra* starts with the rites for acquiring wisdom, viz., *Medhājānanāni* (2.10.1-24). Here it is stated that the person who wants knowledge, should tie an amulet of the tongue of talking birds like, *śuka*, *sārikā* and *kṛśa*¹⁷ in one's neck by uttering the *sūkta ayam me varaṇa urasi...*¹⁸ This rite is performed on the full moon day of the month of *agrahāyana*.

Thereafter, Kauśika describes the rite for keeping up celibacy, which is known as *Brahmacārisāmpadāni* (11. 1-6). After the completion of a rite to Nirṛti on the full moon night, this rite is performed in the morning to the accompaniment of the recitation of the hymn *triṣaptā...*etc¹⁹. There is also mention of a rite called as *Grāmasāmpadāni* through which one can gain control over an entire village. Thereafter, it describes a rite called *Sārvasāmpadāni* for fulfilment of all desires. Some rites meant for securing harmony in a family or in

¹⁵ *ibid.*, 1.8.23-1.9.7

¹⁶ *cf.*, *Vait.*, 5.10; *AP.*, 19^b3.4

¹⁷ See *KauS.*, 2.10.2

¹⁸ *AV.*, X.3.11

¹⁹ *AV.*, I.1.1

a village are also described here. Such rites come under the charms called *Sāmmantasyāni*.²⁰

Some Mantras are used for securing power and the rites are called *Varcasyāni* ²¹. Some rites related to *Rājakarmāṇi* are described by Kauśika in 2.14.1-16.26. A rite is mentioned here by performing which a dethroned king may regain his state.²² The *Abhiśeka* rites of a prince and coronation ceremony are also described in the second *adhyāya* of *Kauśika Sūtra* (2.17.11-34).

Chapter III (Kaṇḍikās 18-24): The third chapter of *Kauśika Sūtra* describes the rite performed for warding off misfortune. The rite is known as *Nirṛti karma*.²³ The performer of the *Nirṛti karma* wears a blue garment. *Purodāśa* is fastened to the left leg of a crow, which is made to fly away supposedly to the lap of Nirṛti, the goddess of misfortune so that it may never return. The priest puts on a blue garment and wears a red turban. He throws into water the turban with a metallic hook by reciting the *Atharvaveda* verse VII.115.2. In this rite, the crow is used as the symbol of misfortune and this rite symbolizes the departure of misfortune clinging to the metal hook.²⁴ Following this, it mentions the *Citrākarma*, in which *Atharvaveda* I.1.1 is used for performing a *Pauśṭika karma*

²⁰ *KauS.*, 2.12.5-9; *AV.* III.30.1; V.1.5; VI.64.1, 73.1, 74.1, 94.1; III.8.5; VII.52.1; (These are not listed under the *Gaṇa* in the *Gaṇamālā* or in the *Atharvaveda Brhatsarvānukramaṇi*) *KauS.*, 12.10-13.12

²¹ *KauS.*, 2.12.10-2.13.12

²² *ibid.*, 2. 16.27-32

²³ *ibid*

²⁴ *ibid.*, 3.18.1-18

either in the full moon day of the month of *Caitra* or the night in which the *Citrā nakṣatra* is seen in the sky. The *barhi* grass is cooked with milk to prepare *sthālīpāka* and this is eaten.²⁵ The *Mantra* chanted during the time of eating it is from the *Salilagaṇa*.²⁶ Some chants mentioned in the *Kauśika Sūtra* 3.18.27-32 are recited to make a journey successful. Then *Kauśika* prescribes a rite that can be performed for securing all round prosperity of a family, by securing *dhanam*, *dhānyam*, *lakṣmī*, *putra*, *yaśas*, *medhā*, *dharma*, *āyus*, *balam*, *prajā*, *sampat*, *grāma*, *kūpa* etc. This rite is known as *Samudrakarma*²⁷. The *Kaṇḍikās* 3.19.1-12 describe a rite for securing prosperity of cattle. It is prescribed here that cows should be fed with consecrated salt in order to obtain healthy calves. There is also a description of tying up of a *maṇi* of *Palāśa* and *Yava* for fulfilment of all types of desires on the days of *Trayodaśī*, *Caturdaśī* and *Amāvaśyā*²⁸. 3.19.28-31 of *Kauśika Sūtra* describes a festival named *Āstika* which is performed in the morning of the month of *Māgha*. The subject matter of the twentieth *Kaṇḍikā* of this *Sūtra* is agricultural rites. Some of them are performed for putting the plough in the field as well as to ensure good health of the bulls. This rite is

²⁵ *ibid*, 3.18.19-26

²⁶ According to Dārila *AV.*, XVI.4.1; II.25.1; IV.1.1; (V.6.1); IV.7.7; V.6.3; IX.9.1; XII.1.25,26; XIII.2.1; XVI.3.1; XVII.1.1; Dārila says, *etāni pratīkāni salilāni ucyante.*, Dārila on *KauS.*, 3.18.25

²⁷ *cf.*, *hanadhānyaputralakṣmīyaśomedhādharma kāmahaḥ...āyurbalaprajāsampadgrāma kṛpādi...sāmpadyate samudra ityācakṣate karmeti vacanāt...* Keśava on *KauS.*, 3.18.32-38

²⁸ *KauS.*, 3.19.22-27

known as *anaḍutsāmpadam*²⁹. Thereafter, comes the rite for increasing the quantity of materials of any kind. The rite is known as *Sphātikaraṇa* (3.21.1-7). This is followed by two rites meant respectively for prosperity of the cattle and for obtaining nice garments (3.21.8-14). Next, comes a rite meant to be performed for peaceful division of ancestral property. Thereafter, comes a rite for prosperity called *Rasakarmāṇi* which is followed by a witchcraft practice in which menstrual blood and semen are used for obtaining possession of a variety of properties.

Some other rites mentioned in the rest of the *Kaṇḍikās* are for consecration of one's new residence, of a cow-stall, the fire-place, the village, the town and the like. Then there are special rites for sowing the seeds of barley, welfare of the cattle, and for a safe journey. The *Gr̥hya* rites called *Vṛsotsarga* and *Agrahāyaṇa* are described in *Kaṇḍikā* 24. Chapter III ends with descriptions of rites meant for obtaining prosperity of various kinds.

Chapter IV (Kaṇḍikās 25-36): The fourth chapter of the *Kausika Sūtra* is related to the employment of the chants which come under the group of hymns called *Bhaiṣajyāni* (4.25.1-32.27). It mentions that the way through which one can eliminate the diseases with their causes³⁰ is known as *Bhaiṣajya*. Diseases are divided into two types - viz., the ones occurring from bad food habits and the one's that arise from sin committed in one's past life. The first kind can be

²⁹ *ibid.*, 3.20.26

³⁰ *cf.*, *liṅgyupatāpo bhaiṣajyam*, *ibid.*, 4.25.2.

removed by the remedies introduced by Caraka, Vāhaḍ, and Suśruta and the second one is to be removed by the *Śāntikakarma* described in the *Kauśika Sūtra* 4.25.1-3. These rites are meant to be performed by chanting Mantras which fall under the group of hymns called *Śāntikāni*. In this chapter, *Kauśika* mentions various types of diseases which are believed to be results of the evil eyes along with remedies for warding off the curses or the ill effects of evil sight etc.

Thereafter, *Kauśika* mentions application of the rites related to *Strīkarmāṇi* (4.32.28-36.40) which include chants to obtain a good husband, ensure conception, love chants, chants for obtaining a son and its safe delivery, ensuring pregnancy in a barren woman, securing a husband for a maiden, for regular menstruation, chants against a rival or a co-wife, chants for depriving a man of his virility and so on. Various Saṁskāras like, *Puṁsavana*, *Garbhādhāna*, *Sīmantonayana* etc. have also been dealt with in this chapter.

Chapter-V (Kaṇḍikās 37-46): The fifth chapter consists of various kinds of *Vijñānakarmāṇi*. These are mainly related to predictions like, whether a lost object would be found or not, whether a married life of a maiden would be happy or not as well as predictions about marriage (5.37). Next, comes the rites that fall under *Naimittikakarma*. There are prescriptions for the plantation of *arka* tree for controlling excessive rain, for remaining safe from lightning for which the *Atharvaveda* Sūktas viz., *namaste astu...*etc (*AV.*, I.13.1; VI.11.1) are

employed. Next, comes the chants for two rites³¹ called *Dr̥mhaṇāni* and *Dr̥tikarmāṇi*. Next, Kauśika mentions about the rite which is performed for being successful in arguments and for success in studying the Vedas³².

The thirtyninth *Kaṇḍikā* of chapter V discusses about the counter-witchcraft, i.e., *Kṛtyāpratiharāṇa*. Mantras used in this rite are taken from the *Kṛtyāpratiharāṇa*, *Vāstospatya*, *Māṭṛnāmāni* and *Śāntigaṇa* and so on. Some Sūtras of *Kaṇḍikā* 40 deal with a rite meant for changing the direction of the flowing water of a river (*KauS.*, 5.40.1-11). *Kaṇḍikā* 40.12-13 deals with *Araṇisamāpanakarma*, which is performed for successful journey, *Sūtra* 40.14-18 is used for increasing virility in man. *Kaṇḍikā* 41.8-10 is related to the rite performed for being successful in business and 41.11-18 to victory in gambling. For increasing the affection of a cow towards her calf is mentioned a rite in *Kaṇḍikā* 41.18-20 and a rite for imbibing horses with good qualities is stated in 41.21-26. These are followed by some rites related to *Sāmmanasya*, *Prāyaścitta*, *Parimokṣa*, *Punarvighnanāśana*, *Vaśāśamanavidhāna*, *Vaśāśamanakarma*, *Duḥsapnanāśana* and so on.

Chapter VI (Kaṇḍikās 47-49): *Kauśika Sūtra* chapter VI deals entirely with practices of witchcraft, i.e., *Ābhicārikāṇi* and it is performed especially by the Atharvaṇic *Purohita*. The normal procedure of *Ābhicārika* rites mentioned here are as follows - the altar should be covered with blades of grass of the white reed

³¹ *KauS.*, 5.38.11-16

³² *ibid.*, 5.38. 17-30

(śara) with the tips of the blades cut at both ends. According to *Āṅgirasakalpa*, an altar is to be made to the south of the residence of the householder with a decorative flag and portals. All the materials meant for witchcraft should be placed on the southern side of the altar. The oblation for such rites is the oil of the *inḡiḡa* instead of clarified butter. The rite starts from the left side and ends on the right side. The performer offers oblations by facing the south direction and with his left hand. *Ābhicārika* rites should be performed under the constellation of *Kṛttikā* on the new moon day which is called *Kṛttikā Ārodha*. Following this, Kauśika mentions the initiation ceremony (*dīkṣā*) of *Ābhicārika* rite. It mentions about tying up the *tilakamaṇi* for the self protection of the performer and other members participating in the rites. The initiation ceremony is to be performed in the afternoon on the lunar day of *Trayodaśī* in the bright half (*śukla pakṣa*) of the month. Bamboo tree is used as the sacrificial staff in this rite. The performer should take a vow for three days and then this rite should be performed on the *Pratipada* of the dark half of the month. After this, Kauśika mentions a rite called *Ābhicāratantra* in which the performer of the rite should sleep continuously for twelve nights facing the western direction of the fire specially kindled for the rite. Then for three days the performer should take water in his hand and throw it away facing the south. He should eat just three handfuls of barley meal for three nights, two handfuls for two nights and one handful for six nights and on the twelfth day he can perform the *Ābhicārika* rite. The water is consecrated with the Atharvavedic *Mantra* II.12.1. There is also a mention of the

use of enemy's foot-print, cloth etc., to kill them. *Kaṇḍikā* 48 gives another type of witchcraft practice for the destruction enemies in detail. *Kaṇḍikā* 49 relates to another type of witchcraft practice which is performed for driving out evil spirits. The sacrificial fuel used for this purpose is made of the wood of *Aśvattha* tree which has naturally fallen from the tree (*svayam patita*). Following this, Kauśika mentions the offerings of the *Abhicāra* rite.³³ Keśava adds that through this practice, the devotee is able either to kill the enemy or to make them mad.³⁴

Chapter VII (Kaṇḍikās 50-59): This chapter deals with a variety of topics. *Kaṇḍikā* 50 starts with the *svastayanakarma* meant for the welfare of people in general, such as - safe walking, gaining profit in business, warding off serpents and other poisonous creatures like, scorpions, mosquitoes, bees, and worms etc., and also for safe sleeping and safe journey.³⁵ The offering of this rite is a combination of 13 elements and the sacrificial fuel is made from 22 different trees. The gods worshipped in this rite are Rudra, Bhūta, Lokopāla, Gṛhadeva, Mahādeva, Gaṇa and so on. Evil spirits like Rakṣas and Preta are also invoked in it. Performance of this rite is expected to bring in quick results.

The *Kaṇḍikā* 50 depicts *Svastayana-karma* for welfare and removal of fear from tigers, wolves, lions and thieves in a journey.³⁶ Next, the *Kaṇḍikā*

³³ *ibid.*, 6.49.10-27

³⁴ *cf.*, *maraṇam bandhanam vā praṇipāto vā unmattabhāvo bhavati...* Keśava on *KauS.*, 6.49.27

³⁵ *KauS.*, 7.50.12-16

³⁶ *ibid.*, 7.51.1-8

mentions a rite performed in a cow-stall. Thereafter, Sūtras 11-13 portray the rite performed to remove the bad effect of a cow giving birth to twins for the first time. It also mentions the rite meant for bringing peace in a house, the rite for the protection of crops or paddy from destructive insects and creatures.³⁷

Kaṇḍikā 52.1-11 mentions rites performed while starting a journey, for making it safe and for getting relief from fetters, for protection against fire and for safe journey by boat. Next is the rite for finding lost property (52.12-14). After that Kauśika describes *Svastyayana-karma* that is performed for removing sin, disease and *varṇa* etc. and then explains the rite for safe and sound long life and power. (52.15-21)

*Kaṇḍikā*s 53-57 deal with some *Gṛhya* Saṃskāras like *Godāna*, *Cūḍākarāṇa* and *Upanayana* etc. These Saṃskāras have a magic implication as they are meant for removing hostile influences and for attracting positive energy. *Kaṇḍikā* 58 deals with Atharvaṇic chants used for curing ear-itching, trembling eyes, effects of nightmare, removal of undesirable objects and for obtaining marvellous objects etc. (58.1-2). Thereafter, it mentions some rites for securing longevity and for averting death in war and the like (58.3-15). Then it prescribes some *Gṛhya* rites, like, *Nāmakarāṇa* (58.16-17); *Niṣkramaṇa* (58.18); *Annaprāśana* (58.19) and so on. *Kaṇḍikā* 59 describes *Kāmya Karma*. Through these rites is supposed to one can easily fulfil one's wishes.

³⁷ *ibid.*, 7.51.14-22

Chapter VIII (Kaṇḍikās 60-68): This chapter is related to *Sava Yajña*. This rite is peculiar to the *Atharvaveda*. The *Sava* rites are akin to *Śrauta* rituals. There are as many as twenty two types of *Sava* sacrifices which are based on offerings of *Brahmaudana*³⁸.

Chapter IX (Kaṇḍikās 69-74): *Kauśika Sūtra* chapter 9 deals with a type of *Śrauta* sacrifice where the eldest, who had inherited the sacred fire after his father's death performs the rite. This rite starts with the *Agnyādhāna*. A red coloured calf of two years of age is fastened to the stake in the lunar day (*tithi*) of *amāvāsya* in this sacrifice. Thereafter, the sacred fire is churned out and worshipped. The priests take meal twice a day in the morning and in the evening³⁹. The wife of the worshipper offers oblations to the household-fire (*āvasathya*) in the morning and evening. They also observe *yājñika* vow where they take food only in the afternoon (*aparāhna*). (73.1-19) In the last *Kaṇḍikā* is discussed the *Grhya* rite called *baliharaṇam*. It mentions that a certain amount of food from the household is offered at first to the gods. It is called *bali*. It has been stated there to give *dakṣiṇā* to the Purohita as per the capacity of household.

Chapter X (Kaṇḍikās 75-79): In this tenth chapter, *Kauśika* describes in detail the various norms meant for the marriage ceremony.

³⁸ Keśava on *KauS.*, 8. 64.1

³⁹ *KauS.*, 9.69.1-9.72.44

Chapter XI (Kaṇḍikās 80-89): The eleventh chapter deals with the funeral ceremony, called *Pitṛmedha*. The body of the dead person is washed and wrapped up with a new cloth. *Atharvaveda* XVIII. 2.57 is uttered during the time when the dead body is laid on the funeral pile. The person who performs the funeral ceremony takes *Yamavrata* for twelve days. He should wear either one or three clothes and sleep on the floor. In this context the *Piṇḍapitṛ yajña* (87-89) is also taken into account.

Chapter XII (Kaṇḍikās 90-92): The subject matter of this chapter is preparation and offerering of *Madhuparka* which is specially offered to the preceptor, guests and the gods. There are nine types of *Madhuparka*. These are as follows: *Brāhma Madhuparka*, *Aindra Madhuparka*, *Saumya Madhuparka*, *Pauṣṇa Madhuparka*, *Sārasvata Madhuparka*, *Mausala Madhuparka*, which is used in *Sautrāmoṇī* and *Rājasūya yāga*, *Vārūṇa Madhuparka*, *Śrāvaṇa Madhuparka*, *Pārivṛājaka Madhuparka*. These *Madhuparkas* are offered according to the divinities.

Chapter XIII (Kaṇḍikās 93-136): The thirteenth chapter consists of forty four *Kaṇḍikās* which deal with the omens and portents. It is the longest chapter of this text. Omens are the universally detested objects and occurances. It is mentioned here that omens are the symbols of misfortune created by the gods. The priest who is an authority of *Āṅgīrasa Vidyā* is qualified to perform *Śānti* rites against the omens. There are descriptions of as many as 43 omens in full detail.

Chapter XIV (Kaṇḍikās 137-141): The chapter fourteenth consists of five Kaṇḍikās that deal with the performance of *Pākayajñīya Tantra*. There it gives the descriptions of preparing the sacrificial house, the fire altar and the sacrificial fire. The *Kaṇḍikā* 138 gives the description of *Aṣṭakā* rite in which *Aṣṭakāhoma* is offered to Agni⁴⁰. Then it mentions the beginning of the recitation of the *Veda*. In this ceremony, the preceptor gathers the students for offering oblation to Brahmā, Prajāpati, Bhṛgu, Aṅgirā, Uśanas and Kāvya. *Kaṇḍikā* 140 deals with *Indramahotsava* - a ceremony which is performed by a king.

2.2 Vaitāna Sūtra:

Vaitāna Sūtra is a *Sūtra* belonging to the *Śaunakīya* recension of the *Atharvaveda*. The nature of this *Sūtra* is of *Śrauta* type⁴¹. It is the one and only *Śrauta* text of the Atharvaṇic tradition. It consists of eight chapters and these are again subdivided into 43 Kaṇḍikās. There are six supplementary chapters in *Vaitāna Sūtra*, known as *Yajñaprāyaścittasūtra* or alternatively *Vaitāyana*. There is only one commentary called *Ākṣepa* on *Vaitāna Sūtra* which is authored by Somāditya. The arrangement and material contained in this *Sūtra* are characteristically Atharvaṇic and the work quotes the *Kauśika Sūtra*, Yajus Mantras and the *Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra*. According to Indologists, the name *vaitāna* is coined from the word *vitāna* found in the very first *sūtra* of the

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, 14.138.2.

⁴¹ *Vait.*, 10.17; 14.1; 24.1

work⁴². However, one does not come evidences in support of this view. It is mentioned in the first half of this text that it follows *Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra*. The *Karkabhāṣya* of *Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra* refers to the *Vaitāna Sūtra* in its various places⁴³. This *Sūtra* is also known as *Vaitāna Kalpa* or *Vitānakalpa*⁴⁴. The author of this work is not known. The text of this work is available in verified passages. The specialty of this *Sūtra* is that the *Śaunaka*⁴⁵ sacrifice which is related to witchcraft practice is found only in this text.

2.2.1 Contents of the *Vaitāna Sūtra*:

Chapter I (Kaṇḍikās 1-4): The first chapter of *Vaitāna Sūtra* begins with the duties of the brahmaṇ priest, who is an authority on the *Atharvaveda*. The priest sits in the southern side of the altar for performing the holy (*śānta*) sacrifices. He offers four oblations to Agni with the Atharvavedic Mantras IV.39.9-10; V.29.1 and II.35.5. After preparing the oblation, the *Purastāddhoma* is to be completed⁴⁶ and then the priest performs the *Samsthita Homa*, i.e. the concluding offering. In *Abhicāra Karma* oblations are to be offered to Prajāpati. Two *Ajyabhāgas* are offered to him with the chanting of the Atharvavedic

⁴² *cf.*, *atha vitānasya| brahmā karmaṇi brahmavedavid
dakṣiṇato vidhivad upaviśati vāgyataḥ ||Vait.*, 1.1

⁴³ See *KŚS.*, 2.2.19; 3.2.6; 3.4.24; 3.7.19; 4.11.1

⁴⁴ As mentioned by Karambelkar, *op.cit.*, p.270

⁴⁵ *Śaunakayajño 'bhicārakāmasya, Vait.*, 8.43.25

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, 1.2.10

mantra viz., prajāpate na tat... (VII.80.3)⁴⁷. Then two *Prayāja* oblations are offered in summer and spring seasons. The third *Kaṇḍikā* starts with *Purodāsapradāna Homa* and in this *Homa* oblations are offered to Indra and Agni. Further, it mentions about an optional offering to Agni-Soma in the full-moon sacrifice⁴⁸. *Kaṇḍikā* 4 mentions the various subsidiary rites of full moon sacrifice such as *Patnīsamyāja*, *Dakṣināgni Homa*, *Saṁsthita Homa* and the closing oblations offered to the *Gārhapatya* fire with the *mantra viz., agne gārhapatye...*⁴⁹ The sacrifice is to be performed continuously for thirty years⁵⁰.

Chapter II (Kaṇḍikās 5-10): The second chapter discusses the rite of establishing the sacrificial fires (*Agnyādheya*). It mentions the rules of setting up the sacrificial fire by sacrificers of different castes. *Araṇis* are brought and the *Rātrikarma* is done. Then the worshipper prepares the holy water, i.e. *Śāntiyudaka* by putting into the water various sacred herbs. For this purpose, Mantras are employed from the *Cātana*, *Māṛṇāmā* and *Vāstoṣpatyagaṇa* of the *Atharvaveda*⁵¹. After this it deals with daily *Agnihotra*⁵². Thereafter, in the ninth *Kaṇḍikā* is mentioned some rules to be observed at the beginning of *Darśapūrṇamāsa*, *Punarādheya*, *Āgrāyaṇa* and the *Cāturmāsyayāga*. *Kaṇḍikā*

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, 1.2.12

⁴⁸ *Vait.*, 1.3.1-3

⁴⁹ *VS.*, II.27

⁵⁰ *Vait.*, 1.4.24

⁵¹ *ibid.*, 2.5.10

⁵² *ibid.*, 2.7

eight describes the third *Parvan* of the *Cāturmāsyayāga*, i.e., *Sākamedha*. This *Parva* is performed on the full moon day of *Kārtika* month. The oblations are offered to the gods, as follows - morning oblation to Agni with the *mantra acikradat...*⁵³ noon and evening oblations to the Maruts with the Mantras *sāmtapanā...*⁵⁴, *tigmam anikam...*⁵⁵. A description of *Trayambakeṣṭi* is also included here. The offering is to be made to *Trayambaka* in the cross roads. Next, they perform the fourth *Parvan* viz., *Śunāsīrīya* on the full moon day of the *Phālguna* month. Oblations are offered to the first five deities that are invoked in the *Vaiśvadeva parva* with the addition of Vāyu, Śunāsīrīya and Sūrya⁵⁶. *Kaṇḍikā* ten deals with the *Paśu Yāga*. The second half of the *Atharvaveda Mantra* viz., *uru viṣṇu* etc⁵⁷ is used to offer an oblation to Viṣṇu at the beginning of the *Paśubandha Yāga*. The *Mantra* viz., *arātīyovārṭṛvyasya...*⁵⁸ is used for cutting the sacrificial post. It also describes the employment of respective Mantras of the *Atharvaveda* X.6.3; XVIII.3.18 for washing and anointing the sacrificial post. Prayājas⁵⁹ are offered with the Mantras V.12.1 and V.17.2, 3 which are recited when the *paśu* is taken away to the killing place, near the fire called *Sāmitra* where the *Pramucyamāna* Homas are performed.

⁵³ *AV.*, III.3.1

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, VII.82.1

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, IV.27.7

⁵⁶ *Vait.*, 2.9.27

⁵⁷ *cf.*, *uru viṣṇu vi karmasvoru...* *AV.*, VII.27.3

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, X.6.1

⁵⁹ *Vait.*, 2.10.11

Then, the *Purodāśa Homa* and *Paśuavadāna Homa* are performed. The *Paśubandha* sacrifice is concluded with the *mantra* viz., *apsu te rājan...*⁶⁰.

Chapter III (Kaṇḍikās 11-24): The third chapter of the *Vaitāna Sūtra* mainly deals with *Agniṣṭoma*. The chapter starts with a general description of *Somayāga* and mentions that if a person wants to perform it, but his forefathers have not performed any *Somayāga* he should offer a bullock as a *Prāyaścitta* to *Indrāgni*. After this, it describes *Agniṣṭoma* from its beginning to completion. Sixteen priests are appointed in the *Somayāga* and at the fire altar a *Sadasya* priest is also appointed. In the *Dīkṣaṇīya iṣṭi* oblations are offered to *Agni* and *Viṣṇu* and then the *Patnīsaṃyāja* is performed. In *Somayāga*, three *Dīkṣās* are to be observed in *Ekāha* and twelve *Dīkṣās* are observed in case of *Ahīna* sacrifices. In the *Prāyaṇīya Iṣṭi* oblations are offered to the deities *Pathyāsvasti* and others with the Mantras viz. *pathyā revati...* and *vedaḥ svastiḥ...*⁶¹. The verse *divam ca roha ...*⁶² is recited while leading the cow called *Somakrayayṇī* that is to be exchanged for the *soma* plant in the *Agniṣṭoma* and then *Somakrayayṇa* is performed. Then the *soma* plant is taken to his throne (*āśandī*) with the *mantra* viz., *dhruvaṃ dhruveṇa...*⁶³ followed by the performing of *Ātithyā Iṣṭi* with the *Mantra - yajñeyna yajñam...*⁶⁴ Thereafter, the *Pravargya* and *Purastād Homa*

⁶⁰ *AV.*, VII.88.1

⁶¹ *ibid.*, III.4.7; VII.29.1

⁶² *ibid.*, XIII.1.34

⁶³ *AV.*, VII.99.1

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, VII. 5.1

are done with Mantras laid down for this purpose. Offering of *Gharma*⁶⁵ and summoning of the *Gharma* cow are done before concluding the *Homa* with respective Mantras. The *Samsthita Homa* is offered after that. *Kaṇḍikā* 15 describes *Devapatnī Dīkṣā*. It is mentioned here that *Pravargya* and *Upasad* should continue for three days for *Agniṣṭoma* sacrifice⁶⁶. *Atharvaveda* XII.1.13 is used in the rite of encircling of the sacrificial hearth, Agni is brought to the *Uttaravedī* with the *mantra* viz., *agne prehi...*⁶⁷. Then oblations are offered to the tracks of the *Havirdhāna* cart with Atharvaṇic Mantras and this is followed by the driving up of the two *Havirdhānas*. The cart is made to rest with the *mantra* viz., *viṣṇurnu kaṁ...*⁶⁸. The priest Adharyu follows Agni and Soma with the *mantra* viz., *somaṁ rājānaṁ...*⁶⁹. *Kaṇḍikā* sixteenth describes the carrying of the sacrificial water called *Vasatīvarī*. It is placed in the *Āgnīdhṛīya* with the Atharvavedic Mantras III.12.8 and I.4.2 respectively⁷⁰. Then *Vaitāna Sūtra* describes *Purastād Homa*, *Somābhiṣavaṇa* etc. Then come the *Kaṇḍikās* 18 and 19 which deal with various steps of the *Agniṣṭoma*. *Kaṇḍikā* 20 mentions the Śastras⁷¹ and Stotras employed in the *Agniṣṭoma*. *Kaṇḍikā* 21 narrates the *Praṣṭhita Homa* and the *Dakṣinā* which is to be given first to the *Ātreya* and then

⁶⁵ *Gharma* means *payah*. *Vait.*, 3.14.4.

⁶⁶ *Vait.*, 3.15.4

⁶⁷ *AV.*, IV.14.5

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, VII. 27.1

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, III. 20.4

⁷⁰ *Vait.*, 3.16.1-2

⁷¹ The śastras are *ājya*, *prauga*, *maitrāvaruṇa*, *aindra*, *aindrāgna*

to the assistant of the Udgāṭṛ. The last three Kaṇḍikās describe *Marutvatīya Homa*, the third *Savana*, *Avadāna Homa* and so on.

Chapter IV (Kaṇḍikās 25-27): Chapter four prescribes the Stotras and Śāstras to be recited during different Somayāgas. It describes the first *Atyagniṣṭoma* which contains one more *Stotra* than *Agniṣṭoma*. *Kaṇḍikā 25* describes *Ṣoḍaśin* sacrifice which is almost similar to *Agniṣṭoma*, but in which different Grahas are used. *Kaṇḍikā 26* deals with the *Atirātra* sacrifice. In this sacrifice a female sheep is offered to Sarasvatī and another oblation is offered to the Aśvins. *Kaṇḍikā 27* depicts *Vājapeya* sacrifice in detail. This sacrifice consists of sixteen Stotras and Śāstras. It should be performed in the autumn season. Further, it gives the description of *Aptauryāma* sacrifice, which is a note worthy variation of *Ekāha* sacrifice.

Chapter V (Kaṇḍikās 28-30): This chapter deals with *Agnicayana Yāga* which is to be performed on the full moon day of the month of *Phālguna* or *Pauṣa*. A goat is offered in it as an oblation to Prajāpati. *Kaṇḍikā* thirtieth describes *Sautrāmaṇi Yāga*. The *paśu* is offered to Indra and the *Ātithesṭi* is performed by offering boiled rice with the Atharvaṇic *mantra viz., dūre cit santam...*⁷²

Chapter VI (Kaṇḍikās 31-35): This chapter begins with the description of *Sattra Yāga (Gavāmayana)*. *Sattra Yāga* is carried on for a year and is made up of different subsidiary sacrifices. Among them *Prāyaṇīya*, *Abhiplava*, *Prṣṭha* are

⁷² AV., III.3.2

to be instituted in the first month⁷³ and after that *Abhijit*, *Svarasāman*, *Viṣṇuvat*, *Viśvajit*, *Udayanīya* etc. are to be performed accordingly. The *Sattra* sacrifice should be started on the eleventh day in the bright lunar half the month of *Māgha*.

Chapter VII (Kaṇḍikās 36-38): The seventh chapter gives a description of *Rājasūya Yāga*. It is mentioned here that a *Yāga*, called *Pavitra*, is to be performed before the full moon day of *Puṣyā*⁷⁴. There are ten *Yajñas*, known as *Samsrpa*, which are to be performed at one month's interval⁷⁵. Then the rite called *Abhiṣecanīyasoma Yāga* is performed on the full moon day of the month of *Māgha* in which the *Marutvatīya* and *Bārhaspatya* rites are to be included. These are followed by *Daśapeya Yāga*, *Cāturmāsya Yāga*, *Pratyavarohanīya Yāga*, *Vyuṣṭi Yāga*, *Pavitra Yāga* and so on. Thereafter, the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice is described which is to be performed on the full moon day of *Phālguna* where in *Brahmaudana* is offered to four priests. Three *Iṣṭis* are offered to *Savitṛ*. All the participants of the sacrifice sit down on a golden *āsana* to the southern side of the *vedī* to listen to the *Pāriplava Ākhyāna*. Then details about other performances which are to be performed in the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice are stated⁷⁶. The last *Kaṇḍikā* gives the details of the performance of *Puruṣamedha Yāga*.

⁷³ *Vait.*, 6.31.7

⁷⁴ *ibid.*, 7.36.2

⁷⁵ *ibid.*, 7.36.3

⁷⁶ *ibid.*, 6.36.14-33; 37;

Chapter VIII (Kaṇḍikās 39-43): The eighth chapter states the *strotriya* Mantras which are to be employed in the *Ekāha* and *Ahīna yāga*. It contains description of Stotras and Śastras. Then a list of various rites are given with their respective fruits.

2.3 Some observation on the *Kauśika* and the *VaitānaSūtra*:

From the contents of the *Kauśika Sūtra* it is noted that the contents of this *Sūtra* are an intermixer of *Śrauta*, *Gṛhya*, and certain Atharvaṇic materials. *Kauśika Sūtra* distinctly talks about the Atharvaṇic tradition with all of its various features like- ritual, sorcery, medicine, magic etc. So far as commentaries available on *Kauśika Sūtra* are concerned, there is *Dārila Bhāṣya*, which is also known as *Kauśikabhāṣya*. It deals with the text upto the 48th *Kaṇḍikā*. Another commentary known as *Keśava Paddhati*, was written by Keśava. But as it is seen, this commentary does not elaborate the *Sūtras* towards the end of the *Kauśika Sūtra*. There is yet another commentary or *Paddhati* on *Kauśika Sūtra* called *Atharvaṇīyapaddhati* which is related to *Gṛhya* practices. In this *Paddhati*, the names of three commentators of the *Kauśika Sūtra*⁷⁷ viz. Dārila, Rudra and Bhadra have been mentioned. It is said in the last part of the sixth chapter of this *paddhati* – *bhadramatenbhāṣyakāradārilamatena ca ebhiḥ tribhibhāṣyākāraiḥ*. Rudra has also been mentioned in the *Keśava Paddhati* 1.7.14. In *Keśava Paddhati* on *Kauśika Sūtra* 4.31.7; 5.46.9 and 6.49.3-27 is mentioned a verse which is written by Rudra. Bhadra is also referred to in

⁷⁷ Modak. B.R., *The Ancillary Literature of the Atharvaveda*, New Delhi, 1993, p.71

Keśava paddhati at three places⁷⁸. Sāyaṇa has mentioned these three commentators in the introduction to his commentary on the *Atharvaveda Samhitā*.⁷⁹

Paiṭhānasi is also supposed to be a commentator of the *Kauśika Sūtra*. It is mentioned by Dārila in his work on 1.6.29, 30, 37, and by Keśava in his work on 1.8.16; 5.45.19; 7.58.19; 10.79.7 and also by Sāyaṇa in his introduction of the *Atharvaveda Samhitā*.⁸⁰

The language of the *Kauśika Sūtra* is akin to the *Atharvaveda*. It invariably refers to the Atharvaṇic Mantras and uses Atharvaṇic terms like *śāntyudoka*, *sārūpavatsā*, *saṁvarta* etc. The style of the *Kauśika Sūtra* is less compressed than other *Sūtra* works. *Kauśika Sūtra* covers almost the whole of the Atharvaṇic material. This *Sūtra* can be considered as the most valuable supplement to the *Atharvaveda*. Bloomfield has considered it as an encyclopedia of Indian customs and manners.

From the study of the *Vaitāna Sūtra*, it is noticed that in reality this *Sūtra* is not related to Atharvaṇic magical beliefs and practices. There are only two *Sūtras* that are found to be related to *Abhicāra*⁸¹. This *Sūtra* describes the *Śrauta*

⁷⁸ Keśava on *KauS.*, 1.6.37; 4.36.39; 6.49.26.

⁷⁹ *Atharvaveda Samhitā*, (Introduction of Sāyaṇa commentary) SPP.p.29
Chowkhamba Krisnadass Academy, 2012

⁸⁰ Sāyaṇa's commentary on *AV.*, II.15.6

⁸¹ *Vait.*, 1.2.10; 8.43.25

sacrifices which are common to other ritualistics work. Many a times, *Vaitāna Sūtra* refers to the Mantras borrowed from other Vedas. However, there are internal evidence which shows that this *Sūtra* belongs to the *Śaunaka* School of the *Atharvaveda*. For example, it gives details about the duties of the *Brahmaṇ* priest and referes to some specific Mantras from the groups of spells like *Cātana*, *Māṭṛnāmā*, *Vāstoṣpatya* (2.5.10) etc. and sometimes describes the employment of the Atharvaṇic *vyāhṛti* at many places⁸². Another peculiarity of this *Sūtra* is that in case of some Mantras the texts are quoted in from the other Vedas as well as from the *Atharvaveda* of the *Paippalāda* school. But *Atharvaveda Śaunakīya* Mantras are not quoted full, otherwise, it would have not maintained any uniformity at this matter. So far as the style of writing is concerned *Vaitāna Sūtra* follows other *Śrauta* Sūtras. But its subjectmatter has not been arranged on the basis of its division into chapters or Kaṇḍikās. On certain instances the *Vaitāna Sūtra* seems to depend on the *Kauśika Sūtra*. Sometimes *Vaitāna Sūtra* treats the *Kauśika Sūtra* as a *Samhitā*. Therefore, this *Sūtra* can be considered as a distinctive manual of the *Athrvaveda*. It is very difficult to say about the authorship of the *Vaitāna Sūtra*. No specific reference regarding its author has been found in Vedic texts till date. However, one comes across the name of one Kāśyapa as its author in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*⁸³.

⁸² *ibid.*, 1.1.3,18; 1.2.1; 2.8.3; 3.17.4;18.17; 5.30.15 etc.

⁸³ *Bhāgavata Purāṇa.*,XII.7.1