

## CHAPTER-V

### THE *ĀBHICĀRIKA* CHARMS

It has been already stated in the first chapter that according to Bloomfield, the *Āṅgīrasa* part of the *Atharvaveda* refers to the *yātu*<sup>1</sup>, and the *ghora*.<sup>2</sup> The word *yātu* denotes the meaning of an evil spirit, a demon or Rakṣasas<sup>3</sup>, the word *ghora* means terrific, frightful, horrible and awful<sup>4</sup> whereas *Abhicāra* indicates the employment of magical spells for malevolent purposes. These charms are directed against demons, impersonal evil substances, sorcerers and enemies.<sup>5</sup> The application of charms against them is known as *Abhicāra*. Thus, Williams states the meaning of the word *abhicāra* as exorcism, incantation etc. employed for malevolent purposes<sup>6</sup>. In other words *abhicāra* is black magic or *himsākarma* in general involving the employment of the charms for harming other people out of enmity, hatred or envy or against evil beings like *Pisāca*, *Asura*, *Arāya* etc. The *Śabdakalpadruma* mentions that *Abhicāra karma* is of six types viz., *māraṇam*, *mohanam*, *stambhanam*, *vidveṣaṇam*, *uccāṭanam* and *vaśīkaraṇam*.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *ŚB.*, X.5.2.20

<sup>2</sup> Bloomfield, M., *Atharvaveda And The Gopatha Brahmana*, Allahabad, 1975, p.9

<sup>3</sup> Apte. V.S., *The Student's Sanskrit English Dictionary*, Delhi, 1970, p.457

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p.199

<sup>5</sup> Oldenberg, H., *The Religion of The Veda*, Delhi, 1988, p.256

<sup>6</sup> Williams M. M., *A Sanskrit English Dictionary*, New Delhi, 1984, p.62.

<sup>7</sup> *cf.*, *abhicāra: himsākarma, iti amaraḥ|....sa saḍvidhaḥ| māraṇam*1*mohanam*2*stambhanam*3*vidveṣaṇam*4*uccāṭanam*5*vaśīkaraṇam*6*iti tantrasāraḥ...., Śabdakalpadrumaḥ*, p.136

These are found in the *Tantrasāra*<sup>8</sup>. Sāyaṇa also says in his commentary on *Atharvaveda* that *abhicāra* is-*śatruvadhādyaudyānuṣṭhīyamānāni māraṇa-mohana-stambhana-vidveṣaṇoccāṭana-vaśīkaraṇāni tantropadiṣṭāni ṣaṭ karmāṇi*<sup>9</sup>. Thus, *Abhicāra* involves killing (*māraṇa*), stupefying (*mohana*), obstructing (*stambhana*), enmity (*vidveṣaṇa*), expulsion (*uccāṭana*), and subduing (*vaśīkaraṇa*). The word is derived from the root √*car* (to move) with the preposition *abhi* and the affix *ghañ*. Thus, the derivative meaning of the word *abhicāra* is - to move towards someone or something. And the connotative meaning is to move purposefully toward some persons or some beings with malevolent intentions. The word *abhicāra* has been used in the *Atharvaveda Samhitā* only for four times and only once occurs the word *abhicārin*<sup>10</sup>. According to Sāyaṇa, there are various obstacles that occur in the house of human beings like, *marāṇa*, *vyasana bandhana*, etc. When calamity occurs from these or from any one of them, *Abhicāra karma* is performed for destroying these evils.<sup>11</sup>

Practice of black magic aims at harming one's enemies or against people whom one hates or dislikes. In ancient societies people practised black magic for

<sup>8</sup> As quoted in the *Śabdakalpadrumaḥ*, p.136

<sup>9</sup> *Gopatha Brāhmaṇam (Mūlamātram)*, ed., Vijaypalo Vidyavaridhi, Calcutta, 1980(Introduction), p.18.

<sup>10</sup> See *AV.*, VIII.2.26; XI.1.22; XIX.9.9; X.3.7 and X.1.9

<sup>11</sup> *marāṇam vyasanam caiva bandhanam ca viśeṣataḥ| praṇipātonmattatā vā daivopahatireva ca...taduddyeśena yat karma tad abhicāra karma|etat nāmakaḥ karmaviśeṣaḥ|* Sāyaṇa in his introduction to *ibid.*, XVI.2

selfish reasons like, jealousy, revenge, aggression, greed etc. Black magic traditionally seeks the help of spirits which are evil or malevolent. Black magic is also targeted against those who the magician believes to be under the influence of malevolent spirits. In this connection one should take note of a new development regarding the connotation of the word *abhicāra*. Thus, for example Bali contends that ‘There is nothing to prove that the word *abhicāra* means black magic or unholy magic.’ He however also holds that Sāyana’s interpretations of the word *abhicāra* as *māraṇakarma*, *himsākarma* etc appears to be correct when considered with reference the contexts in which the word has appeared in the *Atharvaveda Samhitā*<sup>12</sup>. Bali’s opinion as it seems is based on the contention that in the *Atharva samhitā* the word has not been used to denote a rite that involves killing and that this word ‘means a kind of ritual activity which is meant to creat negative effect.’<sup>13</sup> Some of the meanings of the word negative as found in English dictionary are as follows –‘adversarial, antagonistic, destructive, grudging...’<sup>14</sup>

When considered from the point of view such connotations of the word ‘negative’, any ritual performed for affecting negative result cannot possibly be termed as not ‘unholy’ or not ‘black’. Furthermore Bali has stated that the word *abhicāra* under went a conceptual and doctrinal change and began to signify

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<sup>12</sup> *AV.*, VIII.2.26; X.3.7; XI.1.22; and XIX.9.9

<sup>13</sup> S.K., Bali, *op.cit.*, p.51

<sup>14</sup> Oxford Dictionary & Thesaurus, III, New York, 2001, Seventh impression 2007, p.499

ṣaṭkarma i.e., māraṇa, mohana, uccāṭana etc. as revealed by *Nāradīya Purāṇa* (5.7)” Bali holds that “works like the *Kauśika Sūtra* failed to get at the real meaning” of the Atharvavedic Mantras because of such puranic influence.<sup>15</sup> Bali’s afore stated contention however seems to be difficult to accept on the ground that in the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* 3.12.5.1. *abhicāra* has been connected to the act of cursing. There it is said *caturhotṛbhyo’dhīyajñō nirmitaḥ| nainam śaptam nābhicāritam āgacchati ya evam veda iti*||<sup>16</sup> It needs to be noted here that this particular *Brāhmaṇa* text which is accented like the *Śatapatha* is one of the oldest *Brāhmaṇas*.

One would also like to mention that while examining as to whether or not there exists black magic in the *Atharvaveda Samhitā*, one should also take into account the meaning of the word *Kṛtyā* which in this *Samhitā* (VIII.5.9) has been referred to as *āsurī* and *āṅgirasī*. It may not be out of context to recall that the mythical priests the *Aṅgirasas* are closely related to *Agni* who in the *R̥gveda Samhitā* has been called an *Aṅgiras* and also as the chief of the *Aṅgirasas*. (*RV.*, I.31.1; I.75.2, I.127.2; VI.11.3; X.92.15 etc.) Considering the fact that one of the primary qualities of *Agni* is to burn, it is possible that *Kṛtyā* has been called *āṅgirasī* to suggest the scorching effect of the application of *Kṛtyā*.

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<sup>15</sup> S.K., Bali, *op.cit.*, p.52

<sup>16</sup> *Kṛṣṇayajurvedīyam Taittirīyabrāhmaṇam*, bhāga III, ed. Pushpendra Kumar, Nag Publishers, Delhi, 1998, p.1264

The *Ābhicārika* charms of the *Atharvaveda* are connected with some rites which are dealt with in the *Kausika Sūtra* and the *Vaitāna Sūtra* of the *Atharvaveda*. The *Ābhicārika* charms are catalogued in the *Kausika Sūtra* under *Cātanagaṇa*.<sup>17</sup> These are as follows- *AV*, I.7.1; I.8.1; II.14.1; 18.3; 25.1; IV.20.2; 36.1; 37.1; V.29.1; VIII.3; The *Gaṇamālā* of *Atharvaparīśiṣṭa* lists four other hymns in the same category, these are I.16.1; 28.1; VI.32; and VI.34<sup>18</sup>. Bloomfield has recognized some other hymns as belonging to this category. These are : I.7; I.8; I.16; II.12; III.6; III.9; IV.16; 20; VI.37; VI.75; VII.14. Besides these hymns the *Kausika Sūtra* recognises some yet other hymns which bear the character of *Abhicāra*.

In *Atharvaveda Samhitā*, *Ābhicārika* hymns are found employed against Yātudhānas, Kimīdins, Attriṇs, Piśācas, Viṣkandhas, Kābavas, Sadānvās, Rakṣas etc.

#### **GODS ASSOCIATED WITH THE ĀBHICĀRIKA RITES:**

The gods associated with the *Ābhicārika* rites are Agni, Indra and Agni, Indra, Indra Sutrātman, Indra and Bṛhaspati, Indra and Soma, Bṛhaspati and Soma and Marut Santāpana etc.<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> *KauS.*, 1.8.25

<sup>18</sup> Karambelkar, *op.cit.*, pp. 93,185

<sup>19</sup> See *AV.*, V.7; 8; 28; III.9; II.14; VI.2; 34; 52; V.29; VII.34; VIII.3; XIX.65; 66; VII.110; VII.31; VII.91; 92; VII.51; VIII.4; VI.6; VII.57 etc. ; *cf.*, Karambelkar, *op.cit.*, p.15.

In the *Atharvaveda* Agni is praised as the chief killer of demons and other evil spirits. It is noticed that in the *Atharvaveda* various deities have been invoked for various purposes but to destroy evil spirits and demons it is the deity Agni who is prominently invoked. In some Mantras of the *Atharvaveda* he is invoked with Indra to kill demons.<sup>20</sup> It is believed that Agni knows the birth place of evil spirits which are always secret and that is why Agni is called upon, for destroying evil spirits and demons. Agni is also invoked to protect against the danger arising from human and non-human enemies. Agni is addressed in I.7 as *Jātaveda*, *Nṛcakṣa*<sup>21</sup> *Somapā* etc. Agni-Soma too is particularly able to drive away the demons<sup>22</sup>. Agni *Vaiśvānara*<sup>23</sup> and *Satyaujas*<sup>24</sup> are praised in *Atharvaveda* IV.36.1, 2 to destroy the evil beings. In *Atharvaveda* VIII.3 Agni is described as a demon slayer, protector of the sacrifice, supervisor of human beings etc. He is also mentioned here as remover of all demons, and he possesses the qualities of being bright, immortal, purifier and laudable. Agni is also projected as the destroyer of those who eat raw flesh<sup>25</sup>.

*Bṛhaspati* is invoked in the *Atharvaveda* I.8.2 to control the demons.

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<sup>20</sup> *AV.*, I.7;8

<sup>21</sup> *cf.*, *nṛṛn manuṣyān caṣṭe paśyatīti....*, Sāyaṇa on *ibid.*, I.7.5

<sup>22</sup> *AV.* I.8.2

<sup>23</sup> *cf.*, *viśvanarahitaḥ vṛṣā secanasamarthaḥ puṁstvopetaḥ agniḥ....*, Sāyaṇa on *ibid.* IV.36.1

<sup>24</sup> *cf.*, *satyam avitatham ojo balaṁ yasya....*, *ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *AV.*, IV.36.3

In *Atharvaveda* I.7.7 and II.3.6 Indra is invoked to cut the heads of the demons with his thunderbolt. In VIII.4.22 Indra is praised as *sahasrākṣa* and in *Atharvaveda* IV.20.4 he is invoked to find out the Yātudhānas, Kimidins and others. He is also called upon to crush the demons with a grinding stone<sup>26</sup>. He is also called upon to destroy sorcerers who appear in the guise of owls, dogs, cuckoos, eagles and vultures<sup>27</sup>. In the *Atharvaveda* VIII.4 the dual god Indra-Soma are prayed for destroying harmful demons.

Atri, Kaṇva, Jamadagni, Kaśyapa Asita, Gaya and Agastya are some seers connected with exorcism i.e. *Ābhicārika* practices in the *Atharvaveda*.

#### **TREES, PLANTS AND HERBS USED IN *ĀBHICĀRA*:**

A variety of plants and herbs have been mentioned in the *Ābhicārika* charms as having magical powers. Following is a brief introduction to these plants and herbs -

- (i) *Aśvattha* (*Ficus religiosa* Linn.): *Atharvaveda* III.6 describes the amulet made of the wood of the plant *aśvattha* as very powerful and praises it to drive away the enemy. *Kauśika Sūtra* 6.48.3 mentions the employment of this hymn in a rite of sorcery against enemies. According to Kauśika this amulet of *aśvattha* is included in the group of amulets called annihilators of rivals (*sapatnakṣayaṇī*) and in the *Ābhicārika* rite the fire sticks of this tree

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<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, II.31.1

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, VIII.4.22

are used as fuels in the fire which is kindled in the forest. *Aśavttha* is a tree which at times grows up from other trees. In this context it may be stated that according to Frazer in primal societies parasitic trees were believed to possess magical powers<sup>28</sup>.

- (ii) ***Bādhaka***: In *Ābhicārika karma* which is performed in the forest fire sticks for fuel are made from the *bādhaka* tree<sup>29</sup>. This rite is performed for slaying enemies<sup>30</sup>. This plant is also included in the group of ingredients called *saptnakṣayaṇī*<sup>31</sup>. Some other *Ābhicārika* rites described in different places of *Kauśika Sūtra*<sup>32</sup> mentions the use of the *bādhaka* tree. A bow made of this tree has to be broken up on the foot print of a eunuch in a rite performed against the paramour of one's wife<sup>33</sup>.
- (iii) ***Vikaṅkata*** (*Flacourtia ramontchi heril*): *Kauśika Sūtra* 6.48.8 mentions an *Ābhicārika* rite for destroying an enemy by reciting *Atharvaveda* V.8.1. In it the wood of *vikaṅkata* is used for fuel.
- (iv) ***Sraktya***: *Atharvaveda* II.11 is employed in a rite to counter witchcraft. There it has been prescribed that an amulet of the tree called *sraktya* should

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<sup>28</sup> Frezer, *op.cit.*, pp., 658,659

<sup>29</sup> *KauS.*, 2.16.14

<sup>30</sup> *AV.*, VIII.8.3,4

<sup>31</sup> *cf.*, *tasminnaraṇye sapatnakṣayaṇīrādadhātyaśvatthabadhaka...*, *KauS.*, 2.16.14

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, 6.47.48; 47.28; 49.20-21

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, 4.36.36

be used by the performer for self protection<sup>34</sup>. This tree is supposed to have the power of demolishing the *Kṛtyā*. According to Dārila *sraḱtya* is same as *tilaka* which is a flower-bearing tree<sup>35</sup>.

(v) ***Khadira***: (*Acacia catechu wild.*) Atharvaṇic *Mantra* VIII.3.3 requests the plant *khadira* to devour the enemies. The word *khadira* is derived from the root  $\sqrt{khād}$  which itself indicates the meaning of devouring. According to *Kauśika Sūtra* 6.47.51 a scoop made of the *khadira* tree is to be used in digging a hole for burying some magical substances in *Ābhicārika* rite. Kauśika includes this tree in the group of *saptnakṣayaṇī*<sup>36</sup>.

(vi) ***Jaṅgiḍa***: This plant is supposed to keep away all the dangers arising from hostile beings like demons and sorcerers<sup>37</sup>. Kauśika considers this as a holy plant<sup>38</sup>.

(vii) ***Vamśa***: (*Bambusa arundinacea willd. (Retz.) Roxb.*): It is considered that the bamboo tree has the capacity of driving away a person (*uccāṭana*)<sup>39</sup>. This indicates that *vamśa* is connected with black magical power. In the consecration ceremony of *Ābhicārika* rites bamboo is used as *āṅgirasa daṇḍa*, i.e., sacrificial staff related to witchcraft<sup>40</sup>. In another *Ābhicārika*

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<sup>34</sup> *AV.*, II.11.1-4

<sup>35</sup> See Dārila on *KauS.*, 1.8.15

<sup>36</sup> *KauS.*, 2.16.14

<sup>37</sup> *AV.*, II.4.1-5

<sup>38</sup> *KauS.*, 1. 8.15

<sup>39</sup> *AP.*, 26.5.3

<sup>40</sup> *KauS.*, 6.47.12

rite, *vamśa* stick is used to destroy the foe of the performer of magical rite<sup>41</sup>.

(viii) ***Palāśa***: (*Butea monosperma* (Linn.)Kuntze.): *Palāśa* tree is also included in the group of ‘rival annihilating’<sup>42</sup>. It has apotropaic power. *Kausika*<sup>43</sup> mentions that for the sake of self protection one has to tie an amulet of this wood. *Kausika Sūtra* 6.48.28 in a rite performed for destroying an enemy with the recital *Atharvaveda* VI. 37 mentions the use of the leaf of *palāśa* tree for offering husks of grain in the fire. There *palaśa* leaf is used as a ladle.

(ix) ***Bānaparṇī***: The plant called *bānaparṇī* is used in a rite to induce mutual hatred between two lovers. The plant has been described as rough (*trṣṭika*) and poisonous (*viṣātakī*) in *Atharvaveda* VII.118.1 and 2. According to Sāyaṇa this plant, is crushed and mixed with the milk of a red female goat and the same is sprinkled in the bed of the lovers. The plant according to Sāyaṇa causes a burning sensation to human skin<sup>44</sup>. This rite is referred to in *Kausika Sūtra* 4.36.38 and also 4.36.19. In the later case the rite is performed by a woman against her cowives.

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<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*, 6.47.24

<sup>42</sup> The word *āhvah* in the list of the trees in *KauS.*,2.16.14 means *Palāśa*. See Dārila on *KauS.* 4.16.14

<sup>43</sup> See Keśava on *KauS.*, 6.48.24; This amulet is made from *palāśa* wood. Also see Sāyaṇa on *AV.*VI.37

<sup>44</sup> See Sāyaṇa in his introductory portion of his commentary on *AV.*,VII.118 and also on *AV.*,VII.118.1

(x) **Apāmārga** (*Achyranthes aspera* Linn.): This plant falls under the plants of apotropiac nature. Its name indicates that it has the capacity of wiping away. The word comes from the root *mṛjūṣ* which means ‘to wipe away’<sup>45</sup>. *Atharvaveda* IV.17; 18 and 19 are employed in the preparation of consecrated water to counteract hostile sorcery and there the use of the plant *apāmārga* has been stated<sup>46</sup>. This plant is supposed to grow from the place from where the Asuras were wiped off by the gods. This plant was used by Kaṇva, son of Nṛṣada<sup>47</sup>. Other names of this plant are *sahadevī*<sup>48</sup> and *vibhindatī* and the name of its father is *Vibhindan*. It is also called *praticīnaphala* or having reverted (*pratyāñc*) fruit because the fruits curve inwards<sup>49</sup>.

(xi) **Darbha**: (*Imperata cylindrica* (L) Raeusch): In *Atharvaveda* XIX.28 and 29 have been mentioned a ritual where an amulet of *darbha* is used against enemy. In *Atharvaveda* XIX.28.1 it is said to be the destroyer of rivals and the burner of the heart of the hater. Kauśika 5.39.19 also describes a rite

<sup>45</sup> Verma, Nargis., *The Etymologies In the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.*, Delhi, 1991., pp.70,125.

<sup>46</sup> cf., *mantruktāyām darbhāpāmārgasahadevī... śāntyodakam karoti...*, Keśava on *KauS.*, 5.39.7

<sup>47</sup> cf., *brāhmaṇena paryuktāni kaṇvena nārṣadena| senevaiṣi tviṣīmatī na tatra bhayamasti yatra prāpnoṣyoṣadhe||*, *AV.*, IV. 19.2

<sup>48</sup> See Sāyaṇa on *ibid.*, IV. 19.1; IV.20.8

<sup>49</sup> *AV.*, IV.19.5,7

where a rope made from *darbha* grass is used by the performer of black magic in counter witchcraft practices.

(xii) **Sarṣapaḥ:** (*Brassica compestris* (L).) *Atharvaveda* VII.6 is employed in the *Sīmantonayana* rite in the eighth month of pregnancy with the binding of an amulet of *sarṣapa*, i.e, mustard seeds to guard a woman from demons. This has been mentioned in *Kauśika Sūtra* 4.35.20.

(xiii) **Prśniparṇī:** *Atharvaveda* II.25 is a hymn where the plant *prśniparṇī* is hailed for removing various evils. The employment of this plant is described by Kauśika in 1.8.25.

(xiv) **Ajaśṛṅgī:** This plant is used against Piśācas, Asuras and Gandharvas. It is said in the *Atharvaveda* that with the help of this plant the Atharvans killed the goblins<sup>50</sup>. The plant is called *ajaśṛṅgi* because the fruits of the plant look like the horns of goats<sup>51</sup>.

### **ĀBHICĀRIKA CHARMS:**

#### HYMNS FROM THE *CĀTANA GAṆA*:

Among the *Ābhicārika* hymns of the *Atharvaveda Samhitā*, the most important hymn seems to be 1.7. The hymn 1.7 is directed chiefly against the class of demons called Yātudhānas i.e. the class of evil spirits, demons, or

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<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*, IV.37

<sup>51</sup> *cf.*, *ajaśṛṅgākṛtiphalayuktatvād ajaśṛṅgītyucyate* | Sāyaṇa on *ibid.*, IV.37.2

sorcerers which are referred to by *Sāyaṇa* as *Rakṣasas*<sup>52</sup>. This hymn falls under the *Cātanagaṇa*<sup>53</sup> i.e., the group of charms meant for the removal of enemies for good. The employment of this hymn as mentioned by Whitney<sup>54</sup> is exorcism and such other purposes and in this hymn Agni is invoked for identifying the sorcerers. In the first verse of the I.7 Agni is invoked to destroy Yātudhānas and Kimidins. The verse runs as follows-

*stuvānamagna ā vaha yātudhānaṁ kimīdinam|*  
*tvaṁ hi deva vandito hantā dasyorbabhūvitha||*

[Bring the Kimīdin hither, bring the Yātudhāna self declared, For Agni, God, thou, lauded, hast become the Dasyu's slaughterer.]<sup>55</sup>

In the second stanza Agni *Jātaveda* is invoked as the supreme lord and the controller of human bodies, to destroy sorcerers. In the third stanza Agni and Indra are invoked for the same purpose. In the fourth stanza, Agni is invoked as the destroyer of sorcerers and the strong armed Indra is called upon to the place of sacrifice to annihilate every wicked sorcerer<sup>56</sup>. Commenting on this verse, *Sāyaṇa* says that Agni is prayed to destroy the Yātudhānas after becoming powerful from eating the oblations offered by the sacrificer. In the sixth and

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<sup>52</sup> Griffith., R.T.H., *The Hymns of The Atharva-Veda*, Vol.I, Varanasi, 1916, P.9

<sup>53</sup> *KauS.*,1.8.25

<sup>54</sup> Whitney., *op. cit.*, p.12

<sup>55</sup> Griffith, *op cit.*, p.9

<sup>56</sup> *cf.*, *agniḥ khalu vai rakṣohā*, *TS.*,6.1.4.313.

seventh stanzas also Agni and Indra are requested to find out the sorcerers and Indra is requested to tear their heads with his thunderbolt. The verses are as follows-

*ā rabhasva jātavedosmākārthāya jajñiṣe|*  
*dūto no agne bhūtvā yātudhānān vi lāpaya||*  
*tvamgne yātudhānān upabaddhān ihā vaha|*  
*athaiṣāmindro vajreṇāpi śīrṣāṇi vṛścatu||*

[O Jātaveda, seize on them: for our advantage art thou born: Agni, be thou our messenger and make the Yātudhānas wail. O Agni, bring thou hitherward the Yātudhānas bound and chained. And afterward let Indra tear their heads off with his thunderbolt.]<sup>57</sup>

Hymn I.8 is a continuation of hymn I.7. This *Sūkta* also falls under the *Cātanagaṇa*. In the first stanza Agni is invoked to direct the oblations towards the sorcerers like a river carrying foams, so that the man or woman shall proclaim himself or herself that he or she is the performer of that sorcery. In the second stanza attempt is made to make the *Yātudhāna* or sorcerer to come forward and confess his act of sorcery. The verse is as follows-

*ayam stuvāna āgamadimam sma prati haryata|*  
*bṛhaspate vaśe labdhvāgnīṣomā vi vidhyatam||*

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<sup>57</sup> Griffith, *op.cit.*,p.10

[This one hath come confessing all: do ye receive him eagerly. Master him thou, Bṛhaspati; Agni and Soma pierce him through.]<sup>58</sup>

In this second stanza Agni, Soma and Bṛhaspati are requested to destroy the sorcerers. In the third stanza of this *Sūkta* Somapā Agni i.e. Agni who drinks *soma* juice is invoked to kill the progeny of the *Yātudhāna*, to bring him to the place of sacrifice, and to make his upper eye and lower eye fall out. The fourth verse invokes Agni as the knower of the birth of the children of the demons who are the hidden devourers (*attriṇ*) and requests *Jātaveda* to slay them together with their children<sup>59</sup>.

*Atharvaveda* I.16 is employed in a rite of sorcery to kill enemy with the powder of lead. Sāyaṇa mentions it in the introduction to the *Sūkta* as follows –  
*ye amāvāsyām rātrim iti sūktena dveṣyamaraṇārtham  
abhimantritasīsacūrṇamiśrānnapradānam tadgātrasthābharaṇasaṃsparśanam  
svayaṃchinnaveṇuyastyā tāḍanam ca kuryāt*<sup>60</sup>. It is also mentioned in the *Kauśika Sūtra* 6.47.23 that powdered lead is sprinkled in the food or cloth and ornaments of the enemy by reciting this hymn. Whitney refers this *Sūkta* as *śatrubādhana*. This *Sūkta* is counted under *Cātanagaṇa*. The gods worshipped in this *Sūkta* are Agni, Indra and Varuṇa. In the first verse of this *Sūkta* Agni is requested to kill the *Attriṇ*s who harm people at night. The verse runs as follows-

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<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*, p.11

<sup>59</sup> *AV.*, I.8.3-4

<sup>60</sup> Sāyaṇa on *ibid.*, I.16.

*ye amāvāsyāyām rātrimudasthurvrājamattriṇaḥ|*

*agnisturīyo yātuhā so asmabhyamadhi bravat ||*

[May potent Agni who destroys the demons bless and shelter us, From greedy fiends who rise in troops at night-time when the moon is dark.]<sup>61</sup>

This rite is performed during the night of new moon day to kill and forbid the movement of the demons. Sāyaṇa says in his commentary- *amāvāsyāsambandhinyām rātrau rakṣasām sañcaraṇam nimittīkṛtya rākṣoghneṣṭirvihitā*<sup>62</sup>. Eight oblations are offered to Agni on new moon day. The Agni which is employed in the rite called *Rakṣoghneṣṭi* is referred to as the fourth Agni. It is mentioned in the commentary that earlier three Agnis, who carried oblations to the gods died away. Therefore, in *Rakṣoghneṣṭi* the fourth Agni is employed. In this context Sāyaṇa refers to *Taittirīyasamhitā*<sup>63</sup>. *Vaitānika*, *Gārhapatya*, *Sāmgrāmika* are the three Agnis. The fourth one is *Āṅgīrasa*. The *Āṅgīrasa* Agni is used to kill demons. Sāyaṇa says in his commentary *so'gniḥ yātuhā yātūnām rakṣasām hantā*<sup>64</sup>. The preceding stanza hails the ingredients (*prayugasādhanadravyam*) that are used to kill demons. According to Sāyaṇa (on I.16), to kill an enemy, food mixed with powered lead is given to him. The lead pierces the enemies, sorcerers and Attriṇs - the

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<sup>61</sup> Griffith, *op.cit.*, p.20

<sup>62</sup> Sāyaṇa on *AV.*, I.16.1

<sup>63</sup> *cf.*, *agnertrayo jyāyāmsō bhrātara āsan te devebhyo havyam vahantaḥ prāmīyanta...TS.*, 2.6.6.1.

<sup>64</sup> Sāyaṇa on *AV.*, I.16.1

devourers, who become strong in the night of the new moon and who kills cows, horses and men. The lead is able to eradicate demons. The *mantra* says this lead is blessed by Varuṇa. Agni helps the lead and this lead is a gift from Indra. It is really the slayer of demons<sup>65</sup>. The third stanza describes that lead can prohibit the movement of the demon *Viṣkandha* and demolish *Attriṇ*, and is also able to wipe out all obstacles along with their causes. The verse runs as follows-

*idaṁ viṣkandham saḥata idaṁ bādḥate attriṇaḥ|*  
*anena viśvā sasahe yā jātāni piśācyāḥ||*

[This overcomes Vishkandha, this drives the voracious fiends away: By means of this have I o'erthrown all the piśāchī's demon brood.]<sup>66</sup>

In the next stanza enemies are warned by the sacrificer not to harm the cows, horses and men and the demons are warned by saying that if they (demon) do so then the sacrificer will pierce them with the lead.<sup>67</sup>

According to *Kauśika Sūtra*<sup>68</sup>, *Atharvaveda* I.28 is employed in medicinal purposes to destroy the demon of leprosy and this falls under the *Cātanagaṇa*<sup>69</sup>. Whitney mentions it as the charm against sorcerers and witches. He uses the

<sup>65</sup> *cf.*, *sīsāyādhyāha varuṇaḥ sīsāyāgnirūpāvati/*

*sīsam ma indraḥ prācchat tadaṅga yātucātanam//*, *AV.*, I.16.2

<sup>66</sup> Griffith, *op.cit.*, p.20

<sup>67</sup> *cf.*, *puruṣam asmadīyam bhrtyādirūpam ...*, Sāyaṇa on *AV.*, I.16.4

<sup>68</sup> Dārila on *KauS.*, 4.26.26

<sup>69</sup> *AP.*, 34.3

term *rakṣoghna sūkta*<sup>70</sup>. In the first verse god Agni is praised as a demon-slayer, disease-expeller, and the destroyer of deceivers, sorcerers and Kimīdins. The verse runs as follows –

*upa prāgād devo agnī rakṣohāmīvacātanah|*  
*dahannapa dvayāvino yātudhānān kimīdinaḥ||*

[God Agni hath come forth to us, fiend-slayer, chaser of diseases, Burning the Yātudhānas up, Kimīdins, and deceitful ones.]<sup>71</sup>

Agni is named as *amīvacātanah* which means Agni has the capacity of curing diseases. The commentator Sāyaṇa remarks that the word *amīvā* means *roga*<sup>72</sup>. This hymn is used to remove distress and physical and mental weakness of a person. Keśava on *Kauśika Sūtra* says that this hymn is used to ward off the troubles caused by Rākṣasas, Apsarasas, Goblins and other evil spirits<sup>73</sup>. Sāyaṇa mentions about the employment of this *Sūkta* to reduce the trembling of a person by tying an amulet of *kuṣṭha* tree and by rubbing together two fire brands<sup>74</sup>. In his commentary Sāyaṇa states that Yātudhānas are considered as the eaters of young children. They are described as *dvayāvin* (double dealers), because they assume human appearance, with evil motives in their hearts. They are arrested

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<sup>70</sup> Whiteny, *op cit.*, p.48

<sup>71</sup> Griffith, *op.cit.*, p.33

<sup>72</sup> Sāyaṇa on *AV.*, I.28.1

<sup>73</sup> Keśava on *KauS.*, 4.26.29

<sup>74</sup> *cf.*, *upa prāgāt iti sūktena udvignasya udveganivṛttaye... ulmukadvayagharsanam ca kuryāt...*, Sāyaṇa on introduction to *AV.*, I.28

and destroyed by the Atharvaṇic spells. They are requested to eat their own children, sisters, daughters or great grandchildren and asked to destroy each other mutually instead of killing others<sup>75</sup>.

*AV.* II.14 is known as *dasyunāśana sūkta* and is used against a variety of female demons, conceived as hostile to man, cattle and home. According to Sāyaṇa this *Sūkta* is employed in the womens' rite to prevent abortion<sup>76</sup>. This hymn falls under the *Cātana* group of hymns designed to chase away demons and diseases<sup>77</sup>. This hymn also occurs in another *Gaṇa* (cycle) known as *Mṛgārasūktāni*' or '*Mṛgārāṇi* i.e. 'purificatory hymns' in *Kauśika Sūtra*<sup>78</sup>. This hymn is employed for the purpose of purifying the entrance of a house<sup>79</sup>. According to Bloomfield it is associated distinctly with difficulty in bearing offsprings<sup>80</sup> and is also employed in a charm for preventing miscarriage<sup>81</sup>. Bloomfield has given the translation of the practices, to be performed with this hymn as found in the *Kauśika Sūtra* 4.34.3-9. It runs as follows - 'While reciting II, 14 (the practitioner) pours dregs of ghee into water

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<sup>75</sup> *AV.*, I.28.3-4

<sup>76</sup> *cf.*, *niḥśālām iti sūktena mṛtāpatyāyāḥ striyā apatyanāśaparihāya triṣu...* etc., Sāyaṇa on *ibid.*, II.14

<sup>77</sup> See *KauS.* 1.8.25

<sup>78</sup> *cf.*, *ibid.*, 1.9.1 ; 4.34.3

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*, 1.9.1, 9.72.4 ;5.44;11.82.14

<sup>80</sup> Bloomfield. M., *Hymns of the Atharvaveda*, *SBE*, Vol -42, Delhi, 1987, p. 298; Also See *KauS.*, 4.34.3-11

<sup>81</sup> Keśava on *KauS.*, 4.34.4-11

(in tubs standing) in three huts which have doors to the west (*KauŚ.* 3.24.3), on behalf of the women afflicted with miscarriage, she being dressed in a black garment. Additional (dregs of ghee he pours) upon lead placed into the (the leaf of) a *palāśa* tree (*butea frondosa*). Placing (the women) over the lead he washes her (with the above-mentioned water). Having deposited the black garment (where she has been washed) she goes. The *Brahman* kindles the huts. The same performances take place in the two easterly (huts) in connection with materials brought on separately (for each hut). 9. He performs the practices with the branches, mentioned (above sū.1:) he pours consecrated water over her head as she is seated upon branches of *simsapa* [*dalbergia sisu* : *cf. KauS.*, 1.8.16] by the side of a body of water). 10. Having put down to the west of the fire two reeds upon a stalk (*?kānde ishīke* ), over the two doors (of the huts), he causes firewood derived from an *udumbara*-tree (*ficus glomenrata*) to be put on the fire. 11. To the woman as she comes home last (of those returning), cakes of rice, and ornaments of *pramanda*<sup>82</sup>, anointed with the dregs of ghee are given.<sup>83</sup>In the first verse of this *Sūkta* it is said that *Niḥśālā* the bold, the greedy demoness and *Dhiṣaṇa* the blood thirsty demoness with long drawn howl, the daughters of the wrathful one, the *Sadānvās* are all destroyed by the performer. The verse is as follows-

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<sup>82</sup> *KauS.*, Introduction, p.lii

<sup>83</sup> *ibid.*, 4. 32.29; 34,2 ; also see Bloomfield, M., *Hymns of the Atharvaveda, SBE*, Vol -42, Delhi, 1987, p. 299

*niḥśālām dhṛṣṇum dhiṣaṇamekavādyām jighatsvam|*

*sarvāścaṇḍasya nāpyo nāśayāmaḥ sadānvāḥ||*

[Forth from the hall the bold, the sharp, the greedy one, the single – voiced, Sadānvās, and progeny of Chaṇḍa we exterminate.]<sup>84</sup>

The content of this hymn is as follows: The sacrificer drives away *Magundī*, the daughters of goblins from cow-stalls, axle, wagon-body and from the houses and drives away all witches and sends them back to their own houses or underground. The sacrificer also invokes Rudra for driving away the witches and praises Indra to overpower the witches who are seated in the house. The 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> verses of this hymn which are addressed to witches called Sadānvās are meant to wipe them out. The commentary explains that the sacrificer performs the rite to destroy the female demons named *Niḥśālā*, *Dhṛṣṇā*, *Ekavādyā*, *Sadānvā*, *Magundyā*, *Māgundī Arāyā*, etc., and other demons who harm the womb of a woman. In the fourth, fifth and sixth stanzas of this *Sūkta* Rudra and Indra are praised for destroying the demons. Though, this *Sūkta* is employed in the women's rite yet the *Kausika Sūtra* includes it in the *Cātanagaṇa*, for that reason this charm is counted here. After the discussion of all *Sūktas* of the *Cātanagaṇa* it is seen that the characteristics feature of these *Sūktas* indicate that these are employed to destroy the demons.

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<sup>84</sup> Griffith, *op.cit.*, p.58

*Atharvaveda* II.18 is used for release from the evil powers of demons and foes. According to Kauśika (6.48.1) in a magical sacrifice, to kill rivals (Sapatnas) , Niggards ( Arāyas), Piśācas and howling female evil spirits, the Sadānvas, the fuel of *aśvattha*, *kṛkatasa* , *eraṇḍa*, (castor oil plant), *śleṣmānika*, *khadira* and reeds are offered in the fire. The offerings are directed to the removal of undesirable beings with the word *svāhā*.<sup>85</sup> Sāyaṇa says in his commentary that this hymn is used in the *Abhicāra karma* for doing away all evils at the time of sowing *vr̥hi*, *yava*, *tila* etc. and for keeping the sacred fire burning with the fuels of *śara* and *samidh*.<sup>86</sup> The first verse of this hymn is as follows –

*bhrātr̥vyakṣayaṇamasi bhrātr̥vyacātanaṁ me dāḥ svāhā*]

[Destruction of the foe art thou, give me the scaring of my foes. All hail!]<sup>87</sup>

Agni is addressed here as *homadhāro'gniḥ* and praised to kill the enemies. The word *bhrātr̥vya* denotes enemy and the word *kṣayaṇam* means destruction<sup>88</sup>. Thus, this *Sūkta* is used to destroy enemies and it belongs to *Cātanagaṇa*<sup>89</sup>. The preceding stanza uses the word *sapatna* to indicate enemy and in the last three stanzas the sacrificer invokes Agni to kill the demons called *Arāya*, *Piśāca*, and *Sadānvā*. The *Anukramaṇi* has a description of five hymns of

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<sup>85</sup> *AV.*, II.18.1-5

<sup>86</sup> Sāyaṇa on *ibid.*, II.18

<sup>87</sup> *cf.*, Griffith, *op.cit.*, p.61

<sup>88</sup> *bhrātr̥vyaḥ śatruḥ*...Sāyaṇa on *ibid.*, II.18.1

<sup>89</sup> See *KauS.*, 1.8.25

the *Atharvaveda* II.19-23 as *agne yaditi pañca sūktāni pañcāpatyāni pāñcajanyaṅ bhavati*. In these hymn Agni is invoked to expose and destroy the flesh-eating demoniac creatures. The Piśācas and other demons and evil spirits are chased away by Agni. In all such *Abhicāra* Karmans (witchcraft practices) five foreofferings (Purastādhomas) are made. These are offered to Agni, Vāyu, Sūrya, Candra, Apaḥ<sup>90</sup>. These are essentially the pre-requisites of witchcraft sacrifices. They are also employed in counter-witchcraft practices. In witchcraft practices the aforementioned deities are urged to burn him, who hates the Atharvavedin and whom the Atharvavedin hates with all their heat, rages, flash, burning and brilliance<sup>91</sup>. The Atharvaṅic priest always takes help of Agni to destroy evil spirits by offering ghee and particular types of fuels.

According to Kauśika, *Atharvaveda* II.25 also falls under the *Cātanagaṅa* and is used to destroy the demoniac spirits. This *Sūkta* is recited while preparing magical water for performing *Abhicāra* rites. *Kauśika Sūtra*<sup>92</sup> gives another employment of this *Sūkta* viz., in the rite of pounding the *prśniparṅī* plant and smearing it on the body of a leprosy patient. It is also used to cure all types of diseases. In the first verse of this *Sūkta* the plant *prśniparṅī* is invoked to make the patient contended by removing leprosy which is supposed to be the outcome of the wrath of Nirṛti. This plant also destroys *Kaṅva* i.e., sin. For removal of sin

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<sup>90</sup> See *AV.*, II.19,20, 21, 22 and 23

<sup>91</sup> *ibid.*, II.19-23,1-5

<sup>92</sup> Keśava on *KauS.*, 4.26.33-36

the crushed plant is used to smear the body of the affected person. In the second stanza of the hymn it is said that this plant is the first-born of all plants and has the most overpowering effect upon evils. Through this plant the invoker removes the disease named *kuṣṭha*. In the next stanza the plant is implored to destroy fiend, who drink blood, who takes away growth and the *Kaṇva*, who eats the embryo<sup>93</sup>. In the last two stanzas this plant is invoked as a goddess to burn the life-obstructing demons, the flesh-eaters and is requested to drive away all sins of the invoker to a dark place.

*Atharvaveda* IV.20 is addressed to a magic plant which is supposed to impart upon a person the power to expose hidden demons, wizards, and their hostile practices. But the name of the plant is not clearly mentioned in the hymn. This *Sūkta* is also counted in the *Cātanagaṇa*. According to Kauśika the name of the plant is *sadampuṣpā* which is similar to *apāmārga*. This plant is used to make an amulet for driving away evil influences<sup>94</sup>. Sāyaṇa mentions the plant *sadampuṣpā* as *trisanthyā*<sup>95</sup> and Keśava mentions this plant as *sandhyā*<sup>96</sup>. According to Sāyaṇa an amulet of the plant *sadampuṣpā* or *trisanthyā* is worn on the right hand<sup>97</sup>. The seventh stanza praises the plant *sadampuṣhpā* as follows-

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<sup>93</sup> *cf., arāyamsṛkpāvānaṃ yaśca sphātim jihīṛṣati| garbhādaṃ kaṇvaṃ nāśaya pṛśniparṇi sahasva ca||, AV.,II.25.3*

<sup>94</sup> *cf., ā paśyatīti sadampuṣpamaṇim badhnāti...,KauS.,4.28.7*

<sup>95</sup> Sāyaṇa's introduction to *AV.*, IV.20

<sup>96</sup> Keśava on *KauS.*, 4.28.7

<sup>97</sup> Sāyaṇa on *AV.*, IV.20

*kaśyapasya cakṣurasi śunyaśca caturakṣyāḥ|*

*vīdhre sūryamiva sarpaṅtaṁ mā piśācaṁ tiraskaraḥ||*

[Thou art the sight of Kaśyapa and of the hound who hath four eyes. Make the Piśāca manifest as Sūrya when he rides at noon.<sup>98</sup> ]

According to the verses 5 to 9 of the hymn by tying this amulet one will be able to detect the Yātudhānas, Yātudhānis, Piśācas, and Kimidins and thus one will be the monarch of all creatures.

*Atharvaveda* IV.36 is one of the *Cātana* hymns which is used to drive away demons and diseases<sup>99</sup>. According to Kauśika this hymn is employed in attempts to penetrate an enemy's line or territory and is called *bhūtagrahādyuccātana karma*<sup>100</sup>. This hymn also invokes Agni *Vaiśvānara* to overcome the evil spirits. Here the word *satyaujā* is used as an epithet of Agni *Vaiśvānara* because Agni *Vaiśvānara* has true strength and he is the well-wisher of human beings and is able to burn the poison of the enemy. In this hymn Agni *Vaiśvānara* is requested to burn all kinds of demons<sup>101</sup>. The sacrificer invokes Agni to burn him, who has abused the sacrificer, who seeks to harm him, who has become powerful by eating meat in the battle field, who has become powerful or who tries to harm human beings in the night of the new moon day

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<sup>98</sup> Griffith, *op. cit.*, p.160

<sup>99</sup> See *KauS.*, 1.8.25 See Sāyaṇa's introduction to *AV.*, IV.36

<sup>100</sup> Dārila on *KauS.*, ., 4.25.22

<sup>101</sup> Sāyaṇa on *AV.*, IV.36.1

(*amāvasyā*).<sup>102</sup> The priest takes help of the various gods for release from the evils that are in the rivers, and the mountains, so that the priests may procure cattle and other domestic animals. The priest declares himself as the vexer (*tapana*) of the Piśācas, because the Piśācas run away when they see the priest and they cannot find a hiding place and he destroys all demons with his power<sup>103</sup>.

*Atharvaveda Sūkta* IV.37 is also employed for warding off various superhuman foes with the help of a magical herb. This *Sūkta* too falls under *Cātanagaṇa*. According to Sāyana the employment of this *Sūkta* is as follows—the powder of the leaf of the *śamī* tree is placed inside the fruit of *śamī* and the same is given to the person inflicted by evil powers to eat, by reciting this hymn. This practice of eating magical potion also helps in curing diseases<sup>104</sup>. In the first verse the plant is addressed as an *auśadhi* and is hailed as a plant with which the sages Atharvan, Kaśyapa, Kaṇva and Agastya were able to destroy the demons in ancient time. The sacrificer wishes that he too would be able to destroy the demons by performing a ritual with this plant. The second stanza mentions the name of the plant as *ajaśṛṅgi*. This plant is supposed to have the power to destroy the *Gandharva* and Apsarases who seek to injure the sacrifice by its strong odour. The third verse mentions the use of the plant *guggulu* to drive the Apsarases. The succeeding stanzas explain the character of Gandharvas and

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<sup>102</sup> Sāyana on *ibid.*, IV.36.1-3

<sup>103</sup> *AV.*, IV.36. 6

<sup>104</sup> Sāyana's introduction to *ibid.*, IV.37; See Keśava on *KauS.*, 4.28.9-10.

Apsaras and the magical plant *ajāsṛṅgi* is implored to destroy them<sup>105</sup>. In this connection Indra is particularly invoked as a destroyer of Gandharvas.

*Atharvaveda* V.29 is used against demons. This hymn also falls under the *Cātanagaṇa* according to *Kausika Sūtra* 1.8.25. In this *Sūkta* Agni Jātavedas is invoked as a physician, a maker of remedies (*bheṣaja*) which he gives to human beings, cows, horses etc. Agni is invoked to destroy the enemies in concord with all the gods, enemies who stand against human beings, by seeking to devour them. The enemies are the ones who attack flesh and spirit (*asu*) and thus enter the human body and mislead his mind<sup>106</sup>. The sacrificer praises Agni as follows – “Pierce you into his eyes, pierce into his heart, bore into his tongue, destroy (*pra-mṛ*) his teeth; whatsoever *piśāca* has devoured of him, that one, O Agni, youngest [god], do you crush back.”<sup>107</sup> He invokes Agni to bring again into his body flesh and spirit that has been borne away by Piśācas. The Piśācas are said to disturb him, while he eats food, raw or cooked ripe or unripe and when he drinks milk and while he eats the grains obtained without cultivation (*akṛṣṭapacya*).<sup>108</sup> The sacrificer wishes that whatever has been eaten away by the flesh-eating demon in whatever way the *Piśāca* has injured him by lying in the lair of the demons let he atone that with his own life and with his progeny. Here,

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<sup>105</sup> Sāyana on *AV.*, IV.37

<sup>106</sup> *AV.*, V.29.1-3

<sup>107</sup> Whitney., *op.cit.*, p.457

<sup>108</sup> *AV.*, V.29. 5-7

the idea is that the *Piśāca* remains concealed in the drinking water and enters the body through it. The verse runs as follows-

*apām mā pāne yatamo dadambha kravyād yātūnām śayane śayānam|*  
*tadātmanā prajayā piśācā vi yātayantāmagado 'yamastu||*

[If one, flesh-eater, in a draught of water have wronged me lying in the bed of goblins, Let the Pisācas with their lives and offspring atone for this, and let this man be healthy.]<sup>109</sup>

The *Piśāca* is referred to as bloody and mind-slaying. Agni, Indra and Soma are here projected as the slayers of *Piśāca*<sup>110</sup>. Once the *Piśāca* is killed the person afflicted by him regains his strength, becomes pure and free of diseases. In the last three verses Agni is invoked to fill up whatever was eaten away from his body by the flesh-eating demon. Fuels which are capable of killing the demon (*piśācajambhaniḥ*) are offered to Agni for destroying the flesh-eaters<sup>111</sup>.

*Atharvaveda* VI.32 falls under the *Cātanagaṇa*. Kauśika gives the employment of this *Sūkta* in a remedial rite against demons. The rite is performed by circumambuling the ritualistic fire for three times along with the offering of a *purodāśa*<sup>112</sup>. In the first stanza of this *Sūkta* priests employed in this

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<sup>109</sup> Griffith., *op. cit.*, p.237

<sup>110</sup> *AV.*, V.29.9-10

<sup>111</sup> *ibid.*, V.29.11-15

<sup>112</sup> *antardāva iti samntamagneḥ karṣvāmuṣṇapūrṇāyām japaṅstriḥ parikramya purodāśam juhoti...*, *KauS.*, 4.31.3; Also See Sāyaṇa's introduction to *AV.*, VI.32

rite are requested to offer destructive oblations of ghee in the fire for destroying sorcerers and Agni is asked to burn the demons and is requested to be calm toward the sacrificer's house. In the next stanza Rudra is addressed as the god of destruction and is requested to tear up the necks of the demons and also to crush their ribs. The magical plants having universal power to destroy the evil spirits are implored to take them to Yama the god of death. Mitra-Varuṇa too are requested to make the abode of the sacrificer free from fear and to drive away the bloody, flesh-eating demons so that they may not find any place of dwelling for themselves. It is wished that the demons should mutually destroy each other<sup>113</sup>.

*Atharvaveda* VIII.3 which is employed against sorcerers and demons is included in the *Cātanagaṇa*<sup>114</sup>. There are 26 stanzas in this hymn. The hymn starts with the verse *rakṣohaṇam vājinam*...etc. Sāyaṇa mentions in his commentary that the *Sūkta* is used to kill demons who appear in a variety of forms<sup>115</sup>. The first stanza of this hymn invokes Agni to kill the demons. Agni is addressed here as *rakṣohana*<sup>116</sup> i.e. remover of the demons. There the sacrificer offers the oblation of ghee and seeks refuge in Agni so that he may protect the sacrificer through the ritual day and night. The verse is as follows-

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<sup>113</sup> *AV.*, VI.32.1-3

<sup>114</sup> *KauS.*, 1.8.25

<sup>115</sup> Sāyaṇa on *AV.*, VIII.3

<sup>116</sup> *cf.*, *rakṣasām apahantāraṃ*..., Sāyaṇa on *ibid.*, VIII.3.1

*rakṣoḥaṇam vājinamā jigharmi mitram prathiṣṭhamupa yāmi śarma|*

*śisāno agniḥ kratūbhiḥ samiddhaḥ sa no divā so riṣaḥ pātu naktam||*

[I BALM with the oil the mighty demon-slyer, to the most famous friend I come for shelter. Enkindled, sharpened by our rites, may Agni protect us in the day and night from evil.]<sup>117</sup>

The next stanza addresses Agni as Jātavedas (*jātānām veditaḥ*) and praises him so that he burns the demons with his blazing flame. In the third verse Agni is invoked to destroy the demons with his upper and lower teeth (*ubhayāvin*). In the fourth verse Agni is requested to tear the skin of the sorcerers, to destroy the demons with his thunderbolt and implores him to curse the groups of demons. The fourth verse is as follows-

*agne tvacam yātudhānasya bhindhi hiṁsrāśanirharasā hantvenam|*

*pra parvāṇi jātavedaḥ śṛṇīhi kravyāt kraviṣṇurvi cinotvenam||*

[Pierce through the Yātudhāna's skin, O Agni; let the destroying dart with fire consume him. Rend his joints, Jātavedas! let the eater of raw flesh, seeking flesh, tear and destroy him.]<sup>118</sup>

In the succeeding stanzas of the hymn this same trend of imploring Agni to destroy the demons continues. Agni is addressed here as Nṛcakṣa, i.e. the one who has the power to see all men and in the last i.e. 26<sup>th</sup> stanza praises him as

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<sup>117</sup> Griffith, *op. cit.*, p.392

<sup>118</sup> Griffith, *loc. cit.*

the remover of all demons and is said to possess a brilliant lustre which is immortal and is the purifier of all sins and hence, is worshippable .

#### VARIOUS OTHER HYMNS AGAINST DEMONS, SORCERERS, HUMAN ENEMIES:

These hymns are not counted under *Cātanagaṇa*.

*Atharvaveda* III.6 hymn is used for tying an amulet of *aśavattha* tree growing up from a *khadira* tree. The application of this *Sūkta* is described in *Kauśika Sūtra* 6.48.3-6. The hymn is recited in a rite of sorcery against an enemy. In the *Sūkta*, the amulet is implored by the invoker to destroy the enemy who hates him. Just as the *aśavattha* sapling breaks into the interior of *khadira*, so the amulet splits the enemy and makes him subordinate<sup>119</sup>. A prayer is offered to Nirṛti the goddess of destruction to bind the enemy who hates him and whom the performer of the magical rite hates, with fetters of death and destruction. The verse is as follows-

*sinātvenān nirṛtirmṛtyoḥ pāśairmokyaiḥ*

*aśvattha śatrūn māmakān yānahaṃ dveṣmi ye ca mām||*

[As thou hast rent and torn apart, Aśvattha ! In the mighty sea, So rend asunder all those men who hate me and whom I detest.]<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> *AV.*, III.6.3-6

<sup>120</sup> Griffith, *op.cit.*, p.48

As a result of the ritual and the charm the enemy floats downward like a boat severed from its mooring and never returns.

*Atharvaveda* III.9 is an *Ābhicārika* charm the application of which is mentioned by Kauśika by stating its employment against demons and the hindrances caused by them<sup>121</sup>. An amulet of *aralu* is tied on the sacrificer with yellow thread for overcoming challenges of enemies and for removing harms from snakes and fierce animals etc. This *Sūkta* is recited in a rite in which one takes a staff of bamboo and other weapons and shakes them, while wearing the amulet or *maṇi*<sup>122</sup>. In the commentary of the first verse of this hymn Sāyaṇa observes that in it the deities are prayed to remove the diseases caused by the demoniac animals like the tiger and others as well as by other animals with or without hooves or by snakes, bulls, buffaloes etc. The deity invoked in this charm is Dāvyāpṛthivī. The third stanza mentions the qualities of the *aralu maṇi*. The *mantra* runs as follows-

*piśaṅge sūtre khṛgalaṃ tadā badhnanti vedhasaḥ|*

*śravasyuṃ śuśmaṃ kābavaṃ vadhrim kṛṇvantu bandhuraḥ||*

[Then to a tawny-coloured string the wise and skilful bind a brush. Let bandages make impotent the strong and active Kābava.]<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> cf., *karśaphasyeti piśaṅgasūtram araludaṇḍam yadāyudham...*, *KauS.*, 5.43.1

<sup>122</sup> Sāyaṇa's introduction to *AV.*, III.9; Also see Keśava on *KauS.*, 5.23.1

<sup>123</sup> Griffith, *op. cit.*, p.92

Man fastens this *maṇi* in a yellow coloured thread and protects himself from all types of obstacles which are produced by various evil spirits who destroy all good efforts. The *maṇi* is expected to make ineffective the power of the demon *Kābava*. The fourth stanza addresses the people who want to gain food and fame by defeating enemies and who seek to stay active and strong like the mighty gods. The *aralu maṇi* is used by these people to drive away the demon *Kābava*<sup>124</sup>. In the fifth stanza the *maṇi* is eulogised while tying it up on himself by the sacrificer for destroying the obstacles generated by enemies like *Kābava*. The last stanza states that there are hundreds of obstacles in this earth which are overcome by tying the *maṇi*<sup>125</sup>.

*Atharvaveda* IV.16 is included in the *Ābhicārika* category of charms. According to Kauśika and Sāyaṇa this hymn is used in a rite of sorcery against an enemy<sup>126</sup>. The god Varuṇa is invoked in this hymn. In the first stanza Varuṇa is called as the great ruler of this universe, and the controller of the enemy, He can see all the deeds of the enemies. God Varuṇa knows all people who stand or walk or move in secret and who betray others that live a painful life. Varuṇa can effortlessly know about secret conversations of two men<sup>127</sup>. The atmospheric region is subservient to Varuṇa. The enemy who crosses the sky and enters

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<sup>124</sup> Sāyaṇa on *AV.*, III.9. 2-4

<sup>125</sup> Sāyaṇa on *ibid.*, III.9.5-6

<sup>126</sup> *cf.*, *br̥hannaṣāmityāyantam śapyamānamanvāha...*, *KauS.*, 6.48.7; See Sāyaṇa in his introduction to *AV.*, IV.16

<sup>127</sup> *cf.*, *yastiṣṭhati carati yaścha vañcati yo nilāyam carati yaḥ pratāṅkam | dvau samniṣadya yanmatrayete rājā tad veda varuṇastrīyah ||*, *AV.*, IV.16.2

heaven through a good path and thereafter take up the evil path are fastened by the fetters of Varuṇa. No human action can escape the wrath of Varuṇa<sup>128</sup>. Hence, no evil doer can escape Varuṇa<sup>129</sup>. In the sixth stanza of this hymn Varuṇa is requested to destroy falsehood of the enemy of the sacrificer with his threefold fetter and to release the truthful speakers from the same. In the next stanza Varuṇa is addressed as *nṛcakṣa* i.e., the observer of all men, for he knows properly about both the wise and the foolish people<sup>130</sup>. So he is asked to identify both kinds of people and to punish the foolish ones for their falsehood, with dropsy. The verse is as follows-

*śatena pāsairabhi dhehi varuṇainam mā te mocyanṛtavān nṛcakṣaḥ|*  
*āstām jālma udaram śramśayitvā kośa ivaābandhaḥ parikṛtyamānaḥ||*

[Varuṇa, snare him with a hundred nooses! Man's watcher ! let not him who lies escape thee. There let the villain sit with hanging belly and bendaged like a cask whose hoops are broken.]<sup>131</sup>

The eighth and ninth stanzas give descriptions of the different fetters of Varuṇa, known as *samānam* (which creates same type of disease), *vyāmya*

<sup>128</sup> Sāyana on *ibid.*, IV.16.4

<sup>129</sup> *cf.*, *sarvam tad rājā varuṇo vi caṣṭe yadantarā rodosī yat parastāt|*  
*saṅkhyātā asya nimiṣo janānām kṣāniva śvaghnī ni minoti tāni||*, *AV.*, IV.16.5

<sup>130</sup> *cf.*, *nṛṇām manuṣyāṇām sādhasādhu caritrāṇām vivekena draṣṭh...*, Sāyana on *ibid.*, IV.16.7

<sup>131</sup> Griffith., *op.cit.* , Vol.I, p.154

(which creates different kinds of diseases), *sañdeśya* (which creates diseases in the same region), *videśya* (which creates diseases in the different regions).

*Atharvaveda* V.3 is used in a witchcraft process against an enemy<sup>132</sup>. The hymn consists of 11 stanzas. In the first verse of this *Sūkta* Agni is invoked to help the sacrificer to destroy the enemy. In the next verse Agni is requested to protect the sacrificer by removing the cruelty of the enemy by destroying his thoughts. In this hymn a large number of deities like Agni, Viśvadevas, Ādityas, Rudras, Maruts, Aśvins, Soma, Indra, Savitr, Viṣṇu, Dhātṛ and Vidhātṛ has been invoked to protect the invoker from evil beings.

*Atharvaveda* V.8 is also used in a witchcraft ceremony against demons while giving oblation to the fire kindled with the wood of *vikañkata* tree<sup>133</sup>. Agni, Indra, Viśvadevas are prayed here. Agni is implored by the sacrificer to give him strength. In the third stanza all the gods are requested to avoid the sacrifice of the godless people and Agni is requested to keep away from bearing the oblations of such sacrifice to the gods. In the remaining stanzas Agni and Indra are requested to slay the enemy thereby protecting the sacrificer.

According to *Kauśika Sūtra*, *Atharvaveda* V.10 is used in a magical rite against malicious power coming from eastern, southern, western, northern, fixed mid point, upward and intermediate quarters<sup>134</sup>.

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<sup>132</sup> *KauS.*, 6.49.15

<sup>133</sup> *ibid.*, 6.48.8

<sup>134</sup> *ibid.*, 6.49.7-9

*Atharvaveda* V.13.1 is used in a witchcraft rite<sup>135</sup> connected with a ceremony for healing poisoned-wounds caused by snakes<sup>136</sup>. The sacrificer tries to remove the poison of snakes through his formidable spells. The rite aims at doing away with poisons through the powerful incantations and with the loud voice of the priest. The sacrificer says that he destroys the eyes and poison of the snake and curses the snake to death with his own poison. In the fifth to seventh stanzas the sacrificer seeks to compel the hateful creatures to leave the abode of his friends.

*Atharvaveda* V.15 and 16 are used in a magical ceremony meant to subjugate a man who speaks evil<sup>137</sup>. It is stated in Keśava's commentary of the *Kauśika Sūtra* as follows- *atha duṣṭavakṛnām mukhastambhamucyate| ekā ca me yadyekavṛṣo 'sīti sūktābhyām* (V.16) *kalāpapacchūvām madhūdakaṁ ca...ekatra kṛtvā ...byādhitāṁ pāyayati| duṣṭapuruṣabandhanaṁ| parukṣena vadanti*<sup>138</sup>. From these comments, it may be said that these hymns are used to control a bad man.

*Atharvaveda* V.17 is used in a witchcraft rite which is described by Sāyaṇa as follows - *goharaṇebhicāra karmaṇi te vadan iti sūktena netṛṇām*

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<sup>135</sup> *ibid.*, 6.48.9

<sup>136</sup> *ibid.*, 6.48.1-14

<sup>137</sup> *ibid.*, 4.29.15, ; See Sāyaṇa on *AV.*, V.15

<sup>138</sup> Keśava commentary on *KauS.*, 4.29.15

*padam vṛscati*<sup>139</sup>. Kauśika gives employment of this hymn meant for cutting the feet of the robber of the cows in *Sūtra* 6.48.11.

*Atharvaveda* V.18 and 19 are used in a witchcraft rite which has been described by Sāyaṇa in his commentary as follows -  
*goharaṇamāraṇaviśasanādhiśrayaṇapacanabhakṣaṇādiṣu kriyamāneṣu abhicārakāmo brahmacārī netām te devāḥ, atimātram avardhanta iti sūktadvayam śatrūn anvāha| dveṣyam manasi kṛtvā japatītyarthaḥ*<sup>140</sup> i.e., these hymns are employed for killing the robber of a Brahmaṇa's cow.

*Atharvaveda* VI.34 is employed to remove diseases and other evil influences of demoniac activities<sup>141</sup>. The sacrificer requests the priests to praise Agni, who is the lord of the universe and who is a destroyer of demons like *Rakṣa* and *Piśāca* etc with its blazing flame.

*Atharvaveda* VI.54 along with VII.70 are *Ābhicārika* charms with the recitation of which the same purpose the sacrificer offers oblation of husks of grain in the fire with a leaf of the *palāśa* tree<sup>142</sup>. It is also to be noted in this connection that so far as the hymn VI.54 is concerned it does not seem to indicate the fact that it is meant for witchcraft. One learns about the ritual from Kauśika 6.48.28.

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<sup>139</sup> Sāyaṇa on *AV.*, V.17

<sup>140</sup> Sāyaṇa on *ibid.*, V.18 ; *cf.*, *KauS.*, 6.48.13

<sup>141</sup> *cf.*, *prāgnaye preta ityupadadhīta...*, *KauS.*, 4. 31.4

<sup>142</sup> *ibid.*, 6.48.28; See Sāyaṇa in his introduction to *AV.*, VI.54 and VII.72

*Atharvaveda* VI.75 is employed in a magical rite of strewing of *darbha* grass upon which *inḡiḡa* is offered as oblation<sup>143</sup>. Bloomfield states that this hymn accompanies the oblation for the suppression of enemies<sup>144</sup>. In the first verse of this hymn the sacrificer offers oblation to Indra for the satisfaction of the god and asks him to destroy the enemy (who is gathering forces against the sacrifice) so that they cannot come back. The verse runs as follows-

*niramum̐ nuda aukasaḡ sapatno yaḡ pṛtayanti|*  
*nairbādhyena haviṣendra enam̐ parāśarīt||*

[Forth from his dwelling drive that man, the foeman who assaileth us: Through the Expellent sacrifice hath Indra rent and mangled him.]<sup>145</sup>

In the second stanza too the sacrificer requests Indra - the destroyer of Vṛtra to drive away the enemies so that they can never come back for many years. The invoker prays that his enemies should move away to the three different directions, beyond the abode of the five races<sup>146</sup>, beyond the three skies from where they will be able to return. It is expected that the enemy who is thrown into darkness by dint of the magical rite will not come back till the sun keeps shining in the sky<sup>147</sup>.

<sup>143</sup> *KauS.*, 6.47.10 ; See Sāyana in his introduction to *AV.*, VI.75

<sup>144</sup> Bloomfield, M., *Hymns of the Atharvaveda.*, *SBE*, Vol .42, Delhi, 1987, p. xi

<sup>145</sup> Griffith., *op.cit.* , p.285

<sup>146</sup> *cf.*, *niśādapañcamāscatvāro varṇāḡ pañcajanāḡ...*, Sāyana on *AV.*, VI.75.3

<sup>147</sup> Sāyana on *ibid.*, VI.75.2,3

*Atharvaveda* VI.133 according to Kauśika is recited in a rite of sorcery in connection with the preparation of the girdle (*mekhalā*) and staff for consecrating the magician<sup>148</sup>. The stanza 3 of the hymn alone is used in the rite while placing fuel of *bādhaka* in the fire<sup>149</sup>. The charm aims at making the *Abhicāra karma* of the magician fruitful and at freeing him from the evil intentions of the enemies. In the third verse of the hymn it is declared that the magician is a disciple of Yama - the god of death and by the grace of Yama he will succeed in his endeavour to kill his enemy. With this end in view he seeks to please Yama by offering unto him his enemy. The verse is as follows-

*mṛtyorahaṃ brahmacārī yadasmi niryācana bhūtāt puruṣaṃ yamāya|*  
*tamaḥaṃ brahmaṇā tapasā śrameṇānyainaṃ mekhalayā sināmi||*

[As I am now Death's Brahmachārī claiming out of the living world a man for Yama, So with Austerity and Prayer and Fervour I bind this Girdle round the man before me.]<sup>150</sup>

*Atharvaveda* VI.134 which begins with the words viz., *ayam vajraḥ* is employed in the sorcery practices involving the symbolic smiting down of the enemy three times with the help of a staff<sup>151</sup>. The first verse of this hymn praises

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<sup>148</sup> *KauS.*, 6. 47.14-15

<sup>149</sup> *cf.*, *mṛtyorahaṃ ityanayā vādhakīḥ samidha ādadhyāt...*, Sāyaṇa on *AV.*, VI.133

<sup>150</sup> Griffith., *op.cit.*, p.320

<sup>151</sup> *cf.*, *ayam vajra iti bāhyato daṇḍa mūrdhvamavāgagrayaṃ tiṣṭhīranvṛcaṃ nihanti...*, *KauS.*, 6.47.18

the thunderbolt - like staff which is supposed to smite down the enemy's kingdom and take away the life of the enemy king and tear his neck just like Indra, husband of Śacī who tore up Vṛtra's neck. The sacrificer requests the thunderbolt of Indra to smite the enemy and push him downward into the womb of the earth so that he cannot rise again.

According to *Kausika Sūtra* 6.47.20 *Atharvaveda* VI.135 is also used in sorcery practices. There are only three stanzas in it where the sacrificer tells himself that he is taking foods and liquids for acquiring strength for killing his enemy by taking up as it were, a thunderbolt like Indra who killed Vṛtra. He symbolically drinks water as if he is drawing unto himself the breath of his enemy. This act is apparently supposed to suffocate the enemy to death. The rite is aimed at killing a rival king. The first verse of the hymn is as follows-

*yadaśnāmi balaṁ kurva itthaṁ vajramā dade|*  
*skandhānāmuṣya śātayan vṛtrasyeva śacīpatiḥ||*

[WHATE'ER I eat I turn to strength, and thus I grasp the Thunderbolt, Rending the shoulders of that man as Indra shattered Vṛtra's neck.<sup>152</sup>]

*Atharvaveda* VI.138 is used<sup>153</sup> in a rite of sorcery consisting of acts of striking with a piece of wood, the place where the enemy relieves himself of

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<sup>152</sup> Griffith, *op.cit.*, p.321

<sup>153</sup> *KauS.*,6.48.32

urine and faeces. There the plant *bādhaka* is used to make the enemy impotent<sup>154</sup> and to turn him as it were, into a woman.

*Atharvaveda* VII.32 has only one verse which is employed in a witchcraft ceremony against enemies. The *Abhicāra* rite in which this charm is recited has been mentioned by Kauśika in his *Sūtra* 6.37.48. Sāyaṇa has stated in his commentary that the stanza is employed in a rite in which the sacred fire is kindled with the wood of a tree which has been destroyed by lightning<sup>155</sup>. The verse runs as follows-

*indrotibhirbahulābhirno adya yāvat 'śreṣṭhābhirmaghavañchūr jinva|*  
*yo na dveṣṭyadharaḥ saspadīṣṭa yamu dviṣmastmu prāṇo jahāto||*

[Rouse us to-day O Indra, Maghavan, hero, with thy best possible and varied succours. May he who hateth us fall low beneath us, and him whom we detest let life abandon.]<sup>156</sup>

Here Indra is invoked to protect the sacrificer and is requested to make people happy by killing those who hate them and whom the people hate.

*Atharvaveda* VII. 14. 1 and 2 are used in a rite of sorcery against enemies. Sāyaṇa says that the performer of the rite mutters the verses 1 and 2 as a prayer while looking at the enemy. This hymn is also recited in counter-witchcraft

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<sup>154</sup> *cf.*, *tvaṃ vīrudhām iti pañcarcena abhicāra karmaṇi sūtruktaparakāreṇa mūtrapurīṣasthānam bādhakena kāṣṭhena hanyāt...*, Sāyaṇa on *AV.*, VI.138

<sup>155</sup> See Sāyaṇa in his introduction to *ibid.*, VII.32

<sup>156</sup> Griffith., *op.cit.* ., p.342

ceremony. These two verses are also used in counter witchcraft<sup>157</sup>. The verses run as follows-

*yathā sūryo nakṣatrāṅāmudyamstejāmsyādade|*  
*evā strīṅām ca puṅsām dviṣatām varca ā dade||*  
*yāvanto mā saptnānāmāyantam pratipaśyatha|*  
*udyansūrya iva suptānām dviṣatām varca ā dade||*

[As the Sun, rising, taketh to himself the brightness of the stars, So I assume the glory of women and men mine enemies. All ye among my rivals who behold me as I come to you, I seize the glory of my foes as the Sun, rising, theirs who sleep.]<sup>158</sup>

*Atharvaveda* VII.35 is employed along with VII.32 against enemy for the same purpose<sup>159</sup>. This hymn (VII.35) too consists of only two stanzas. According to Kausika this hymn is also used in a rite concerning women, to prevent the birth of a male child<sup>160</sup>. In this hymn Agni is requested to destroy the rivals that have been born and will be born, rivals who want to fight against the invoker. Verse 2 of VII.35 is used to make a woman sterile. To make a woman sterile, the urine of a female donkey is used.

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<sup>157</sup> Sāyana in his introduction to *AV.*, VII.14

<sup>158</sup> Griffith., *op.cit.* , p.334

<sup>159</sup> See Sāyana in his introduction to *AV.*, VII.35

<sup>160</sup> *KauS.*, 4.36.33

In hymn VII.72 the goddess Nirṛti is invoked for the destruction of the enemy who engages himself in witchcraft rites against the invoker of Nirṛti. The hymn it seems, is aimed at nullifying the results of the rituals performed by the enemy.

*Atharvaveda* VII. 95 is employed in a *Ābhicārika* rite against one's enemy. The rite involves the tying up of the forelegs of a striped frog with two strings one blue and the other red. The frog is dipped in warm water and is poked at and squeezed at each magical offering, which apparently are three in number<sup>161</sup>.

Then *Atharvaveda* VII.96 is used in a rite against an approaching enemy<sup>162</sup>. The hymn invokes Indra to destroy the enemies. According to Keśava the sacrificer cooks *kṣīrodana* for birds that are related to *Abhicāra* rites and the food is given to the enemy to eat by reciting this hymn<sup>163</sup>.

*Atharvaveda* VII.113 too is recited in a rite of placing sticks in the fire for *Abhicāra* rite. The sticks are collected from a tree struck by lightning<sup>164</sup>. In the first verse of this hymn Agni is prayed to send harmful demons to harm the enemy, who tends to harm the invoker either secretly or openly. This enemy is the one who knows the ways of harming and harm all people. In the second

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<sup>161</sup> *ibid.*, 6.48.40

<sup>162</sup> *ibid.*, 6.48.41

<sup>163</sup> *cf.*, Keśava on *KauS.*, 6.48.41

<sup>164</sup> *cf.*, Sāyaṇa in his introduction to *AV.*, VII.113

verse Agni is requested to burn the enemy who harm people who are either asleep or awake, or are either moving about or not moving about.

*Atharvaveda* VIII.4 invokes Agni and Soma to destroy the demons. According to the *Kausika Sūtra* this hymn is used along with the preceding hymn in a rite meant for destroying demons<sup>165</sup>. Sāyaṇa states in his commentary about the hymn as follows - *indrāsoma iti sūktasya rakṣohaṇam ityanena [saha] uktā viniyogāḥ*<sup>166</sup>. The first verse of this hymn praises Indra and Soma to burn and destroy the demons who are the enemies of the sacrifice. Both the gods are requested to oppress the demons whose number increases in the dark. The verse runs as follows-

*indrāsomā tapataṁ rakṣa ubjataṁ nyarpayataṁ vṛṣaṇā tamovṛdhah|*  
*parā śṛṅṅitamcito nyoṣataṁ hataṁ nudethāṁ ni śiśītamattriṇah||*

[Indra and soma, burn, destroy the demons foe! Send downward, o ye Bulls, those who add gloom to gloom. Annihilate the fools, slay them and burn them up: chase them away from us, pierce the voracious fiends.]<sup>167</sup>

The gods are addressed here as *vṛṣaṇā* i.e the ones who bestow desired objects<sup>168</sup>. The demons are referred to as foolish, flesh- eaters, the injurers of Brāhmaṇas, worthless, fearful eyed and wicked. In the third stanza of the hymn

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<sup>165</sup> *KauS.*, 1.8.25

<sup>166</sup> Sāyaṇa on *AV.*, VIII.4

<sup>167</sup> Griffith, *op. cit.*, p.396

<sup>168</sup> *kāmānām varṣitārau.....*, Sāyaṇa on *AV.*, VIII.4.1

the gods are requested to send the wicked demons to the dark place from where they cannot come back. Indra-Soma are expected to collect all deadly weapon from the sky and the earth and too produce the sharp thunderbolt from the mountains for destroying the ever increasing demons. It is interesting to note that in the fourteenth and fifteenth verses of the hymn the priest himself appears to have been accused of being a *Yātudhāna*. Being thus accused he proclaims his innocence and purity of characters and says that should he be a *Yātudhāna*, he would perish immediately along with his progeny. If however, the accusation is false the accuser will die.

Atharvavedic verses XIII.1.1, 28 and 56 are employed in a number of witchcraft rites. The first half of the first verse is used in a rite against evil when a boat is sunk by thunderbolt. In this verse the sun god is invoked to rise from the waters. The 28<sup>th</sup> verse implores Agni with offerings of oblation and fuel to destroy the enemy. The last *mantra* i.e. *yaśca gām padā...* is used at the conclusion of a series of witchcraft ceremonies<sup>169</sup>. In the verse XIII.1.1 Sūrya is invoked to rise for protecting the people. The 28<sup>th</sup> stanza calls upon Agni, while offering unto him oblations and fuel, to destroy the enemies. The 56<sup>th</sup> stanza is a spell is aimed at a person who kicks a cow and offends the sun god. His foot is

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<sup>169</sup> *cf.*, *udehi vājinnityardharcena nāvaṃ majjatīm...| samiddho 'gnirya ime dyāvāpṛthivī ajaiṣmetyadhipāsānādadhāti...|yaśca gāmityanvāha...*, *KauS.*, 6.49.18,19,26

bound by a fetter as a punishment. Griffith too takes this verse as directed against demoniacal beings<sup>170</sup>.

*Atharvaveda* XVI.2 is used at the very end of a *Abhicāra* rite after the *Avabhṛtha* i.e. the ritualistic bath which marks the completion of a ritual. The *Sūkta* is recited for removing all sins committed during the performance of the ritual or for securing peace for the sacrificer<sup>171</sup>. This *Sūkta* is a *paryāya Sūkta*. It contains only six Mantras which are used for securing long life. According to *Kauśika Sūtra* only the first verse is employed in witchcraft ceremony.

*Atharvaveda* XVI.6.1 is a verse employed at end of an *Abhicāra* rite while putting on the *adhipāśā* i.e. the fetter on the enemy. All the four *paryāya Sūktas* beginning with XVI.7 are employed in the witchcraft ceremony for defeating enemy<sup>172</sup>. Griffith mentions about the employment of XVI.6.1 to avert evil dreams and to transfer them to malignant spirits and the enemy<sup>173</sup>.

#### CHARMS RELATED TO WOMEN:

Three hymns viz. I.14; II.18; VII.113 of this *Veda* are used against a rival woman. The rites are described in the *Kauśika Sūtra* 4.36.15-17; 3.19-21;

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<sup>170</sup> Griffith, *op.cit.*, p.142

<sup>171</sup> *KauS.*, 6.49.27

<sup>172</sup> See the introduction *AV.*, XVI.7, *Atharvaveda Samhitā*, ed. S.P. Pandit, Vol.3, Varanasi, 2007, p.350

<sup>173</sup> Griffith, *op.cit.*, p.204

*Atharvaveda* I.14 is employed in bringing ill luck to a man or a woman. Sāyaṇa in his commentary says that the aim of this charm is - *striyaḥ puruṣasya vā daurbhāgyakaraṇam*<sup>174</sup>. This hymn contains four stanzas. Kauśika gives the description of the employment of this *Sūkta* in 4.36.15-18. Kauśika states that in order to bring ill luck to a woman, the performer of the rite should make a garland from a tree which has been used by the woman concerned, and the pillow, tooth brush, and hair of the woman against whom the charm is undertaken are to be placed in the skin of a cow slain by lightning (Rudra) or in the skin of a funeral cow, and hidden in the cavity of a mortar under a pile of three stones uttering the hymn I.14. The wreath is to be crushed by uttering the hymn. Three tufts of hair are to be tied with a black thread and buried under stones. In the first verse the word *bhagam* implies luck i.e., *bhāgyam*. Sāyaṇa says in his commentary *bhagam bhāgyam varcaḥ tadhetubhūtam śarīram*... The performer of the sacrifice takes away the good luck and strength of the woman just like people collecting flowers from a flowering tree. She is cursed that she will remain unmarried in her father's house like a firm mountain that stays in one place. In the second stanza the woman is described as the bride (*vadhū*) of Yama, the verse use the word *kulapā*<sup>175</sup> to mean the bride. Sāyaṇa interprets the word *rājan* in the verse as indicating Soma because Soma is the first husband of a bride<sup>176</sup> and in the commentary of the earlier verse Sāyaṇa takes Yama as the

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<sup>174</sup> Sāyaṇa on *AV.*, I.14

<sup>175</sup> *cf.*, *pātivratena kulasya pālayitrī yā...*, Sāyaṇa on *ibid.*, I.14.3

<sup>176</sup> *RV.*, X.85.40; *AV.*, XIV.2.3

epithet of Soma because Yama is the controller of the bride<sup>177</sup>. Yama is requested to leave her and to send her to her parents' abode for good.

*Atharvaveda* I. 34 too is used for the aforesaid purposes i.e. securing the love of an unwilling woman.<sup>178</sup> It may be noticed here that as love involves mutual attraction, the rite attempts at gaining mutual attachment of man and woman. It may also be before or after marriage.

*Atharvaveda* II.30 is used to magically secure a woman's love. Here the two Aśvins are praised for help. The ritual connected with this hymn is described by Kauśika in 4.35.21. According to Kauśika this hymn is applied along with other three hymns viz., VI.8, 9 and 102 for *Strīvaśīkaraṇa* i.e. magically subjugating a woman's heart. While reciting the verses the performer places two chips of wood, taken respectively from a tree and a creeper that is climbing on the tree, an arrow, *sthākara*- powder (it is a fragrant powder), salve, *kuṣṭha* (*cotus speciosus*), sweet wood, and a stalk of grass which has been torn by the wind. The performer of the rite mixes them with melted butter and anoints the woman he intends to subjugate. There are only five Mantras in the hymn. The first *mantra* addresses the woman and implores her for her love. In the next verses he tries in various ways to secure the woman's love.

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<sup>177</sup> cf., *he rājan rājamāna Soma prathamātithitvena niyāmakatvāt yameti tasyaiva viśeṣaṇam...*, Sāyaṇa on *AV*, I.14.2

<sup>178</sup> Medicinal plant with a sweet root, *madhujaṣṭi* or the root of *lātumoni* tree.

*Atharvaveda* III.25 too is a charm meant to arouse the passionate love of an unwilling woman. Kauśika gives details about the rite in 4.35.22.

*Atharvaveda* VI.77 is used for capturing a runaway woman or for holding her in check. According to Keśava this hymn is used in a magical practice concerning woman. A rope is tied to a cross beam in the middle post of the house and also to a post of the bed woman's while the bed is tied to a stone<sup>179</sup>. Sesame grains are offered in the fire. In the three verses of this *Sūkta* Agni Jātavedas is invoked to turn the woman back to her home.

*Atharvaveda* VI.102 is used in a rite concerning women. According to Sāyaṇa this hymn is used to subdue a woman through black magic<sup>180</sup>. The first verse invokes the Aśvins to bring the woman's mind closer to the performer of the rite and to unite her with the invoker<sup>181</sup>. The sacrificer attempts at attracting her heart with magic. He magically covers the woman with a love compelling charm, by using an ointment of *madhugha*, *kuṣṭha* and *nalada*<sup>182</sup>.

Again, *Atharvaveda* VI.129, 139 VII.38; VI.130, 131,132 are used to arouse the passionate love of a man.

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<sup>179</sup> *KauS.*, 4.36.5-9.

<sup>180</sup> Sāyaṇa on *AV.*, VI.102, See *KauS.*, 4.35.21

<sup>181</sup> *cf.*, *yathāyaṃ vāho aśvinā samaiti saṃ ca vartate | evā māmaḥi te manaḥ samaitu saṃ ca vartatām||*, *AV.*, VI.102.1

<sup>182</sup> *cf.*, *āñjanasya madhughasya kuṣṭhsya naladasya ca | turo bhagasya hastābhyāmanurodhanamudgare||*, *ibid.*, VI.102.3

The hymns VI.130 to 132 of *Atharvaveda* are used to magically win a woman's heart. The magical rites involved here consists of scattering of beans, throwing out burning arrows in all the directions and piercing with an arrow the heart of an effigy of the woman<sup>183</sup>. According to the commentator Dārila of the *Kauśika Sūtra* these hymns are used in *duṣṭastrīvaśīkaraṇa karmāṇi*<sup>184</sup>.

*Atharvaveda* VII. 36 is also employed to prevent an enemy's wife from bearing children<sup>185</sup>. In this hymn there are only three verses. Among the three the second and third verses are used for this purpose. The sacrificer says in the second verse that he has covered with stone the hundred veins and the thousand tubes of vessels of the rival woman so that she cannot bear a child.

In the third verse it is wished that the rival woman will be made barren by the magical ritual<sup>186</sup>. The verse is as follows-

*param yoneravaram te kṛṇomi mā tvā prajābhi bhūnmota sūnuḥ|*

*asvām tvāprajasam kṛṇomyaśmānam te apidhānam kṛṇomi|| AV. VII.36.3*

[The upper part of your womb I make the lower; let there not be progeny to you, nor birth; I make you barren (*asū*), without progeny; I make a stone your cover.]<sup>187</sup>

<sup>183</sup> *KauS.*, 4.36.14; See Sāyaṇa in his introduction to the hymns *ibid.*, VI.130 to 132

<sup>184</sup> Dārila on *KauS.*, 4.36.13,14

<sup>185</sup> *KauS.*, 4. 36. 33

<sup>186</sup> *AV.*, VII.36.2-3

<sup>187</sup> Whitney, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, p.38

*Atharevaveda* VIII.6 is employed in a rite called *Sīmanta Karma*, which is performed to guard a pregnant woman from evil spirits. According to *KauśikaSūtra*<sup>188</sup> in the *Sīmantonayana* rite after giving oblation to fire, the effigy of a demon made of white and yellow mustard seeds is to be tied on the neck of the pregnant woman, which should reach down to her navel. This hymn is counted under the *Māṭṛnāmāgaṇa*<sup>189</sup>. It contains 26 stanzas. In this *Sūkta* all the verses deal with the prayers for various types of demons to leave the pregnant woman alone and not to harm her. The names and descriptions of the demons spoken of in this hymn have been already stated in the fourth chapter of this thesis.

*Atharvaveda* X.3 appears to belong to both in the *Ābhicārika* and *Kṛtyāpratiharaṇa* category. However, Kauśika has not stated its any employment in *Ābhicārika*<sup>190</sup> and *Kṛtyāpratiharaṇa* rites. Sāyaṇa's commentary is not available of this *Sūkta*. As a matter of fact, the contents of some stanzas of this hymn are related to *Ābhicārika* and *Kṛtyāpratiharaṇa*<sup>191</sup> charm and that is why Bloomfield includes this hymn in this category. The application of the hymn is mentioned by Kauśika in 3.19.22 in connection with the binding of amulets for welfare and long life. Whitney states that this hymn is a

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<sup>188</sup> Dārila on *KauS.*, 4.35.20

<sup>189</sup> *KauS.*, 1.8.24

<sup>190</sup> *AV.* X.3.1,2,3,7,9,10,11,13,14,15,16

<sup>191</sup> *ibid.*, X.3.4

*Sapatnakṣaya Sūkta*<sup>192</sup>. The first verse of this *Sūkta* implores the *varaṇa maṇi* to kill the enemy which has the capacity of destroying his rivals, is strong virile and destroyer of the sacrificer's injurers. The verse runs as follows-

*ayaṁ me varuṇo maṇiḥ sapatnakṣayaṇo vṛṣā|*  
*tenā rabhasva tvam śatrūn pra mṛṇīhi durasyath||*

[Here is my charm the Varuṇa, slayer of rivals, strong in act. With this grasp thou thine enemies, crush those who fain would injure thee.]<sup>193</sup>

The word *varaṇa* comes from the √vr. The word *varaṇa* means covering, screening, protecting<sup>194</sup> and the whole hymn is full of references to a connection with the tree called *varaṇa*. The preceding stanza says that the *varaṇa maṇi* leads forward the sacrificer and helps him to destroy his enemies. It is stated in this context that the gods warded off the hostile practices (*abhyācāra*) of the Asuras in ancient times with the help of *varaṇa maṇi*. Third verse of this hymn is a praise of the all-healing, thousand eyed, yellow and golden *varana mani* to destroy the foes and injure those who hate the sacrificer. The stanza runs as follows-

*ayaṁ maṇirvaraṇo viśvabheṣajaḥ sahasrākṣo harito hiraṇyayah|*  
*sa te śatrūnadharān pādayati pūrvastān dabhnuhi ye tvā dviṣanti||*

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<sup>192</sup> See Whitney on *ibid.*, X.3., *Atharvaveda Samhitā* ., Vol.II, p.308

<sup>193</sup> Griffith, *op. cit.*, Vol.II, p. 11

<sup>194</sup> Apte, V.S., *The Student's Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, p.492

[This charm, this Varāṇa healeth all diseases, bright with a thousand eyes and golden glister. This charm shall conquer and cast down thy foemen. Be thou the first to slay the men who hate thee.]<sup>195</sup>

In the seventh stanza *varaṇa maṇi* is prayed for protecting the sacrificer from Nirṛiti, (the goddess of misfortune), and also from sorcery, fear, and from the violent and deadly weapons of the god of death<sup>196</sup>. In the ninth stanza the *maṇi* is requested to drive away the sacrificer's enemies (*bhrātr̥vya*) to dark places in the lowest region of earth. The next stanza asks the *maṇi* to make the sacrificer unharmed, to save his cattle, to bless him and his family and also to guard him in every direction. The verse is as follows-

*ariṣṭo hamriṣṭgurāusmānsarvapūruṣaḥ|*

*taṁ māyaṁ varaṇo maṇiḥ pari pātu diśodiśaḥ||*

[Safe are my cattle, safe am I, long lived with all my men around. This Varāṇa, mine Amulet, shall guard me well on every side.]<sup>197</sup>

The sacrificer bears the *maṇi* in his bosom (*urasi*) and by dint of this act on his part makes Indra to do away with his enemies. In the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth stanzas the *maṇi* is implored to split all the rivals like the wind breaking down the trees with great force and like fire burning the trees. The

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<sup>195</sup> Griffith, *op.cit.* ., p.11

<sup>196</sup> *cf.*, *arātyāstvā nirṛtyā abhicāradatho bhayāt |*  
*mṛtyorojyaso vadhād varaṇo vārayiṣyate||, AV., X.3.7*

<sup>197</sup> Griffith, *op.cit.*, p.12

*maṇi* is urged upon to protect from enemies who were born before and after the sacrificer was born. The last nine stanzas praise the *maṇi* by mentioning its great qualities. It is seen from the text of the hymn that it is related to witchcraft practices.

#### BATTLE CHARMS RELATED TO *ĀBHICĀRA*:

According to Kauśika, the three verses of the hymn VI.98 are used as magical charms. A king who wishes to harm the army of a rival king is supposed to thrice circumbulate the rival-force by uttering this hymn. Sāyaṇa in his commentary on this hymn says *indro jayātīti tṛcena parasenāvidveṣaṇakarmaṇi rājā senām triḥ parigacchet*. The triplet of the hymn VI.67 too are employed in the same ritual<sup>198</sup>.

In *Atharvaveda* VI.104.1-3 Indra is invoked for contrivance for arresting the rival of the army. In this *Sūkta* the seer Praśonan prays to the deity Indrāgni to tie up the vital breaths of the enemy with fetters, which have been sharpened by the *tapas* (power) of Indra<sup>199</sup>. The god Indra helps in the process of tying up of the enemy.

*Athrvaveda* VIII.8 is considered as a battle song by M. Bloomfield<sup>200</sup>. Kauśika<sup>201</sup> states the use of this hymn in a rite for the destruction of rival army

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<sup>198</sup> *KauS.*, 2.14.7

<sup>199</sup> *AV.*, VI.104. 1-2

<sup>200</sup> Bloomfield, M., *Hymns of the Atharvaveda.*, *SBE*, Vol -42, Delhi, 1987, p.,582

<sup>201</sup> *KauS.*, 3.19.9-20

and for the encouragement of the army of the king, who practices the rite for subjugating the enemy in the battle.

*Atharvaveda* hymns XI.11 and 12 are used as witchcraft charms for destroying the enemy in the battle field. The charms are expected to reveal not only the weapons and physical strength of the enemy but even their very intentions of challenging their rivals in the battle-field. In these two hymns are invoked the two serpent-like weapons called *arbudi* and *nyarbudi* and also the missile called *triṣandhi*<sup>202</sup>. While XI.11 consists of six stanzas the hymn XI.12 has ten stanzas. In both the hymns total destruction of the enemy is sought and the desire for such destruction is expressed at length. The applications of the hymns have been stated by Kauṣika in 6.47.25 to 57 and the rites have been explained by Dārila as well as by keśava.

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<sup>202</sup> As per Vedic mythology *arbudi* and *nyarbudi* are the offsprings of Kadru the mother of the serpents. *cf.*, *AB.*, 6.1. Also see Sāyaṇa in his commentary on *AV.*, XI.11.1 so far as the missile called *triṣandhi* is concerned Sāyaṇa states that it is a *vajra sandhitrayopetavajrāyudha*, Sāyaṇa on *AV.*, XI.11.23