CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Generally speaking literature is the mirror of society. It records contemporary happenings of a society. Literature can be defined as creative imagination of human mind. It has different forms such as epic, prose, poetry, novel and story. Evidences suggest that India has a rich literary heritage that began from time immemorial. Thus glorification of Indian culture took place before man began to be civilized. It is mentionable that Indian literature like its western counterpart too encompasses the aforesaid literary form. The *Vedic* literature has been considered the oldest literary form of the world. Written in *Sanskrit*, one of the primitive languages of the world, the *Vedic* literature seems to carry all literary qualities though almost all the texts, belonging to the period, known as *Veda*, *Vedānta* were written in verse. The scholars opine that verse is the mother of all literary genres such as story, prose and novel from which our most familiar foreign language as well as the world's largest speaking language English is not different. It will be worth mentioning that some linguists find some resemblances between *Sanskrit* and the English language. They argue that the word 'father' has etymological semblance with the *Sanskrit* '*Pita*' as the later portions of these words have similar sound in pronunciation. Similarly, 'mother' has similar semblance with the '*Mata*' (E.M. Foster).

After a keen study of the literature belonging to the *Vedic* period we have found the *Vedas* were the oldest literatures of the period. However, the originators of the period are still unknown to us. At that time there was a culture known as Indus culture. But the identity of the originators of the early Indus culture is uncertain. They appear to

have professed a religion that was iconic and laid emphasis on the worship of the Mother-Goddess and a male deity who seems to have been the prototype of *Śiva*.

a) A Brief Introduction to the Vedic Literature:

The *Vedas* dominated literature of the *Vedic* period. The word '*Veda*' originates from the *Sanskrit* root '*Vid*' means 'to know' with the suffix '*ac*'. The word '*Veda*' literally means knowledge. The *Veda* is concerned with 'knowledge par excellence'. It refers to the sacred and religious knowledge. It is believed that the *Vedas* are the revealed knowledge and given the title of *Apauruṣeya* (not made by man) and *Nitya* (eternal). According to the *Yājñyavalkya Smṛti*: It enlightens one on the supersensible matters which lies beyond the domain of perception and inference, hence it is called the *Veda*.

Sāyaṇa in his introduction to the commentary on the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* remarks: '*Veda* thus, serves as a means to get knowledge to attain happiness and prosperity in this world and emancipation from the worldly bonds and achievement of heaven in the next'. *Veda* in its wider sense is not the name of any particular book, but the literature of a particular epoch extending over a long period of nearly two thousand years. In the words of M. Winternitz: '…..a large extent of literature that came into being in the course of many millennia and was transmitted centuries long from generation to generation by word of mouth, until at last by a later generation-of course in the hoary past-it was declared as sacred knowledge as divine revelation on account of its age as well as its content'.[1] *Veda* is also known as *Śruti, Āgam, Amnaya, Chandas*.

In our study we have found four *Vedas*, namely the *Ṛgveda*, the *Sāmaveda*, the *Yajurveda* and the *Atharvaveda* and the *ṚV* was the earliest among all dealing

[1]. M. Winternitz, A History of Indian Literature, p.47

primarily with religious ritual and worship of Gods and Goddess. The *SV* and the *YV*, believed to be written in later period to deal with prayers and religious ritual. Though the *AV* was somewhat different from others in content yet the *Vedic* literature could set up a religious base which is not seen any literature of the world. Thus, the *Vedas* were unique from any other primitive literature of the world not only for being the world's oldest literature but for its content. In the hands of the scholars a broad categorization of the *Vedic* literature comes into forefront. As such some scholars have come across four broad categories of the same of which the first refers to the *Mantras*. The second refers to *Brāhmaṇa*, the third refers to the *Āraṇyaka* and the fourth refers to the *Upaniṣad*. The word *Mantra* refers to the *Saṁhitā* (from '*saṁ*-together, and *hitā*-put'), which means, literally, a collection of hymns or *Mantras* used in the sacrifices. *Mantra* contains mostly prayers of Gods. Hence, the *Vedas* fall on this category. These *Saṁhitās* are the collections of hymn, prayers, benedictions, sacrificial formulas and litanies. The *ṚV* is a collection of prayers in verses, the *SV* is a collection of chanted songs, the *YV* is a collection of sacrificial formulas both in verse and prose and *AV* is a collection of prayers, benedictions, incantations.

The second category known as *Brāhmaṇa* contains discussion in details of the ritualistic performance, theosophical matters, mystical significance of the separate sacrificial rites and ceremonies along with the explanation of the *Mantras*. The scholars include *Āraṇyaka* (Forest text) and *Upaniṣad* (secret teaching) into this category. The basic difference between *Mantra* and *Brāhmaṇa* is that the former comprises prayers mainly while the later contains rules and regulations for the sacrifices and also reveals the meaning of the *Mantras*. Through the *Āraṇyakas* and *Upaniṣads* are appended to the *Brāhmaṇas* that is they often form only the concluding

part of several *Brāhmaṇas*, yet they are partly supposed to be independent work due to absolutely distinct character of their language and content.

Now we are going to discuss about general characteristics of the *Veda Saṁhitās*.

*The Ṛgveda Saṁhitā***:** The western scholars firmly said that the *ṚV* is the oldest and greatest among all the *Vedic* literature. Not only this, they also said it is the earliest of Indo-Europian literature. Maxmuller writes in his 'Origin and Development of Religion' as: One thing is certain, namely that there is nothing more primitive than the hymns of the *ṚV*, whether in India or the whole *Āryan* World. Being *Āryan* in language and thought the *ṚV* is the most ancient of our books. Macdonell support this in the preface of his 'Vedic Reader for Students' as the *ṚV* is undoubtedly the oldest literary monument of the Indo-European languages. The *ṚV* is the most important of among the four collections or *Saṁhitā* namely, *ṚV, SV, YV* and *AV*, being the indisputably considered as the oldest and the most detailed in nature. The *Mantras* from the *ṚV* have also found place in other *Vedas*. The sacred of nature of the *ṚV* is accepted everywhere from the Indian point of view. According to the *TS*, the rules given by the *Sām* and *Yajur* are very flexible, but the *ṚV* is very rigid in this regard. The *Ṛks* are the first out of all the *Vedas* to born from. The *Sahaśīrṣa Yajñaparameśwara*. This reflects the importance of the *ṚV*. The various recensions of this *Saṁhitā* have existed at a time; only one recension namely *Śākala* recension is available with us at present. According to *Patañjali*, the writer of *Mahābhāṣya*, there are 21 *Śākhās*, but *Caraṇbyuha* opines that there are five chief *Śākhā* in the *ṚV*, these are *Śākala, Vāṣkala, Āśvalāyana, Śāṁkhāyana* and *Māṇḍūkāyana*. The chapters in *ṚV* are divided in two different ways. The first is *Aṣṭaka, Adhyāya, Varga*, *Mantra* and the another as *Maṇḍala, Anuvāka, Sūkta* and *Ṛk*. According to the first way, there are

8 *Aṣṭka* in the *ṚV* and each *Aṣṭaka* is divided 8 *Adhyāyas*, thus total 64 *Adhyāyas*, 2006 *Vargas*, and 10,5801/4 *Mantras*. According to the second way, there are 10 *Maṇḍalas*, 85 *Anuvākas* and 1028 *hymns* including the '*Khila*' or supplementary hymns in the *ṚV*. As it has 10 *Maṇḍalas*, it is known as '*Daśatayī*', within these divisions the hymns are put together or arranged more or less in the order of the deities to whom they are addressed. *Vyāsa* taught *Veda* to his four disciples--*ṚV* to *Paila, SV* to *Jaimini, YV* to *Vaiśampāyaṇa* and *AV* to *Dāruṇa* or *Sumanta*. Though this *Veda* is considered to be the oldest yet there are some pieces which seem to be younger. It becomes evident from language of the *ṚV* which is not in a unitary form. The majority of the oldest hymns are found in the book II to VII, attributed to family reciters, for which they are also called family books. They are *Gṛtsamada, Viśvāmitra, Vāmadeva, Atri, Bharadvāja* and *Vasiṣṭha* respectively. The eighth book contains hymns which have been composed by two different families of priests that is the *Kaṇvas* and that of the *Aṅgiras*. But the *Anukramaṇīs* gives us also the names of the *Ṛṣis* or Author of every single hymn of the remaining books I, IX, X. The ninth book contains exclusively hymns which glorify the *Soma* drink and the *Soma* God and therefore it is known as '*Pavamāna Maṇḍala*'. The collection of hymns in book I and X differ greatly from one another in their character.

The hymns reflect the poetic thoughts of Indo-Āryan people of different periods of time. The beauty of nature amazed the ancient people which made them very imaginative. They searched for some kind of spirituality among the natural phenomena. As they could not find any proper explanation for some natural phenomena such as storm, lightning, big storm. They started worshipping and praying these natural elements in the form of various presiding deities. In the course of time, these prayers in praise of Gods got accumulated. These were then, traditionally

handed down to posterity with utmost care in accuracy. The *ṚV* is regarded as the most ancient record of religious thoughts of mankind both by ancient as well as modern scholars. The following words by M. Winternitz reveals the importance of the *ṚV*: Indisputably the oldest and the most important of all the works of the *Vedic* literature is the *ṚVS*, usually called simply 'the *ṚV'*.[2] The importance of the *ṚV* can also be understood from the fact that wherever *Vedic* scriptures are mentioned, the name of the *ṚV* comes first. Another evidence of the significance of the *ṚV* is that the contents of the *Saṁhitās* are at least partially similar to or are enlargements of those of the *ṚV*. Prof. Maxmuller remarks about the *ṚV* thus: 'As long as man continues to take an interest in the history of the race and as long as we collect the libraries and museums, the relics of former ages, the first place in the long raw of books which contains the records of the *Āryān* branch of mankind, will being forever to the *ṚV'*.[3]

The *ṚV* consists of metrical prayers. These are addressed to different divinities each of which is ascribed to a *Ṛṣi*, a holy inspired author. The hymns, in the form of prayers and praises, are uttered by the *Hotri* priest to invoke the deities and also invoking prosperity on himself and the hosts.

Roth also believes that the hymns are used 'for invoking prosperity on themselves and their flocks, in their adoration of the dawn, in celebration of the struggle between the God who wields the lightning and power of darkness and in rendering thanks to the heavenly beings for preservation in battle. The prayers are for health, wealth, long life, offspring, cattle, victory in battle and freedom from the bonds of sin'.

The *Ṛgvedic* hymns may be broadly divided into two classes namely religious and secular. Besides the eulogies of the deities, it contains some dialogue hymns, marriage

[2] M. Winternitz, A History of Indian Literature, p.51
[3] Max Muller, F. Ancient Sanskrit Literature, p.63

hymns, funeral hymns and some philosophical hymns. It is the source of early history of mankind.

*The Sāmaveda Saṁhitā***:** The *SV* has an important place in four *Vedas* or *Traividyā*. Its greatness and importance are told *God Kṛṣṇa* to *Arjuna* in *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* 10.22 as *vedānāṁ sāmavedosmi davānāmasmi vāsavaḥ*. According to ancient tradition the word *Sāman* is formed *Sā* and *Am*. In the *Nirukta* vii.12 of *Yāska* gives the etymological interpretation of the *word Sāman as sāma saṁmitṛcā. asyatervā. ṛcā samaṁ mena iti naidānāḥ*. In this way it is derived in three ways: (1) That which is measured by *Ṛk*, (2) or that which is produced from the root as, to throw, (3) or that which is produced from the root so, to destroy, to bring to an end, because it is the end of *Saṁhitā, Pada* and *Sāman*. Again *Sāma* means beautiful, happiness speech. The other meaning of *Sāma* is to chant, melody. The *SV*, a song book of *Vedic* rituals next in sanctity and liturgical importance to the *ṚV*. The *SV* is therefore the *Veda* of tunes. The *SV* has four books of songs, these are *Grāmageyagāna* (village song book), *Āraṇyagāna* (forest song book), *Uhagāna* and *Uhyagāna*. These were composed for the purpose of giving the *Sāmans* in the order in which they were employed at the ritual, the *Uhagāna* being connected with *Grāmageyagāna*, the *Uhyagāna* with the *Āraṇyagāna*. The *Ṛks* when chanted are called '*Sāmāni*'. The hymns of the *SVS* were to be sung or chanted by the priests called *Udgātri* to propitiate the Gods. These were used in different ceremonial occasions, especially at the performance of *Soma* Sacrifices in which offerings of the juice of the *Soma* plant, clarified and mixed with milk and some other things were offered to the deities. R.T.H. Griffith remarks thus: 'The collection is made up of hymns, portions of hymns and detached verses taken mainly from the *ṚV*, transposed and rearranged without reference to their original order, to suit the religious ceremonies in which they were to be employed. In these

compiled hymns there are frequent variations, of more or less importance, from the text of the *ṚV* as we know posses it, which variations, although in some cases they are apparently explanatory, seem in others to be older and more original than the readings of the *ṚV'*.[4]

According to *Patañjali* the writer of *Mahābhāṣya*, there are one thousand schools in the *SV*,[5] but at present only three recensions, namely *Kauthumiya, Rāṇāyaṇīya* and *Jaiminiya* recensions are available to us. According to *Kauthumiyaśākhā SV* consists of two parts- *Purvārchika* and *Uttarārchika*. The *Purvārchika* is known as *Ārchika* and *Chandaḥ*. The collection of *Ṛk* and songs are known as *Ārchika*. The first part *Purvāchika* is divided into six *Prapāṭhakas* or *Adhyāyas* and each *Prapāṭhakas* has two *Ardhas* or *Khaṇḍas* and each *Khaṇḍas* has one *Daśati*. The first *Prapāṭhaka* is known as *Āgneya Kāṇḍa*, because it includes collection of *Ṛk Mantras* related to *Agni*; second to fourth *Prapāṭhakas Aindra Parva*, as they praise *Indra*; fifth *Pavamāna Parva*, as it is a collection of *Soma* related *Ṛks*, which have been taken from ninth *Maṇḍala* of the *ṚV* and the sixth is known as *Āraṇyaka Parva*. In this part there are 650 individual stanzas (*Ṛk*), which were used during the sacrifice. This *Purvāchika* is also called *Chandasī* or *Chandasikā*.

In the *Uttarārchika* part there are nine *Prapāṭhakas*. The first five *Prapāṭhakas* are each divided into two parts, which are called *Prapāṭhakārdha* and the last four *Prapāṭhakas* are each divided into three parts. In this part there are 1225 *Mantras*, thus there are total 1875 *Mantras* in *Purvārchika* and *Uttarārchika* together. But 267 *Mantras* of *Purvārchika* are repeated in *Uttarārchika*. Out of 1875 *Mantras* only 75 are original and 1504 have been taken from *ṚV*. These *Mantras* are collected from the

[4] Griffith, RTH, The Hymns of the Sāmaveda
[5] सहस्रवर्तमा सामवेदाः

eighth and ninth *Maṇḍala* of the *ṚV*. Most of the *Mantras* are composed in *Gāyatrī* and *Pragāthā* (*Gāyatrī*+*Jagatī*) metre.

*The Yajurveda Saṁhitā***:** The *YV* are the prayer book for the *Adhvaryu-prist*. According to the sage *Jaimini* of *Pūrva Mīmāṁsā-Sūtra* he characterized the word *Yajus* as '*śeṣe yajuḥ śabdaḥ*'. The *Mantras* of the *YV* are written in both that is prose and poetry. This *Veda* consists of two traditions—*Brahma* and *Āditya.* The *KYV* represents the *Brahma* tradition and the *ŚYV* represents the *Āditya* tradition. This nomenclature also has a traditional story from the *Purāṇa*. It is said that *Maharṣi Vedavyāsa* taught *YV* to his disciple *Vaiśampāyaṇa*, who in turn taught it to *Yāgyavalkya*. But *Guru Vaiśampāyaṇa* was enraged with his disciple due to some reasons and he asked him to return back the knowledge of him. Therefore *Yāgyavalkya* had to vomit out the *Yajur* which other disciple pitched up by becoming a *Tittirīya*. Thus their *Veda* is known as *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* (*KYV*).

On the other side, *Yājñyavalkya* worshipped *Āditya (Surya)* and gained new *Yajus*, which was named *ŚYV*. As it is gained from *Āditya*, this *YV* is considered to be the *Āditya* tradition. It also has a story behind it, that *Surya* gave this *Veda* by representing as a *Vājina* (*Aśva*). Therefore it is popularly known as *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā*. The word *Yajus* means 'to sacrifice' or 'to worship', the *YV* means the knowledge of sacrifice or sacrificial texts or sacrificial formulae. It has five distinct *Saṁhitās* or schools called the *Kaṭha Saṁhitā*, the *Kapiṣṭhala- Kaṭha Saṁhitā*, the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā*, the *KYV* or *TS* and the *ŚY* or *VS*.

The *VS* is called *ŚYV*. It contains only the *Mantra* that is prayers and sacrificial formula which *Adharyu* priest has to say. The *TS* is called *KYV* as it is a mixture of both *Mantra* and *Brāhmaṇa* or theological discussion and therefore, it is mixed. It

also contains a description of the sacrificial rites with illustration of the *Mantras*. According to the discussion of the *Śrauta Sūtra* connected to this *Veda*, the distinction of name appears with regard to the establishment of fire for the new and full moon sacrifices. There is also another comment on the *Caraṇavyuha* which also distinguishes the two *Saṁhitās*. The *TS* is older than *VS*.

The *TS* of the *KYV* contains 7 *Kāṇḍas*, 44 *Prapāṭhakas*, 644 *Anuvāka* and 2184 *Kaṇḍikās*. *Sāyaṇa* and *Bhattabhāskara* wrote a commentary on this *Saṁhitā*. From the beginning of it *Darśapūrṇamāsa Iṣṭi* is described. *Darśapūrṇamāsa* means *Amāvasyā* and *Pūrṇimā*.

The White *YV* has two famous schools these are *Mādhyandina* and *Kāṇva*. It consists of 40 *Adhyāyas* or chapters, 303 *Anuvākas* and 1915 *Kaṇḍikās* verses. There are the mention of various types of sacrifices and rites of their performances. The first two chapters deal with new and full moon sacrifices, the third with the *Agnihotra* and the *Cāturmāsya* (quarterly) sacrifices. The chapters 4th to 8th deals with the *Soma* sacrifice, the 9th and 10th chapters with the *Vājapeya* and *Rājasūya* sacrifices. The description of building of the fire-altar or *Yajñavedi* is included in the chapters 11th to 18th, 19th, 20th and 21st chapters described the ritual namely *Sautrāmani*. The chapters from 22nd to 25th deal with *Aśvamedha* sacrifice 26th to 29th with *Soma* prayers and the 30th chapter with the great *Puruṣamedha* or Human sacrifice. The 31st chapter deals with famous *Puruṣa-sūkta*, 32nd and 33rd with *Sarvamedha* sacrifice 34th chapter deals with *Śivasaṁkalpa* mantra 35th deals with *Pitṛmedha* next four chapters 36th to 39th with *Pravargyas* (milk sacrifice). The last book that is the 40th book forms the famous *Īśopaniṣad*. Though most of the topics of discussion are common in the *KYV* and *SYV*, but they are placed and treated differently in these two *Saṁhitās*.

The Atharvaveda Saṁhitā: Out of all the *Vedas*, the *AV* is secondary to none and the last of the *Vedas*. This *Veda* is completely different from the other three *Vedas* and is next importance to the *ṚV* with regard to history and sociology. The reason behind this is that the other three *Vedas*, including the *ṚV* shows the path to attain goals of the other world through various religious rituals and *Yajñas*, whereas the *AV* shows the path to attain goals of both this and the other world. It also retains its importance from the point of view of religion on religious rituals. A keen observer of the *Yajña Karma Ṛtvik Brahmā* must compulsorily have the complete knowledge of it. Apart from it, *Yajñakarma* has been related to *Atharvan* in two places of the *ṚV*.[6] In another place of the same *Veda*, it has been stated that 'The *Yajñiya Mārga* was first shown by the *Atharvan*'. According to *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*, at first three *Vedas* can refine the first *Pakṣa* of the *Yajña*, while the *Brahmā* refines the other *pakṣas* of the *Yajña*. From the above citations, the importance of the *Atharvan* from *Yājñik* point of view is revealed more and more. The knowledge of this *Veda* is important for the priest as he prays for the peace, war and prosperity of the king.[7] The *AV* also has social, educational, scientific and economic importance, because it exists the subject related living, food habits, medicine and entertainment of the contemporary Indian people.

In the field of medicine, we can find five descriptions of various diseases their curing medicine and treatments in the *AV*. Its poetic beauty is also very nice illustration in which is available in the *Bhūmi Sūkta* contains *Prāṇa*, *Rātri*, *Dandubhi*. Some scholars prefer not to include *AV* along with the other *Vedas* by taking the help of the word '*Trayī*' found in the *Vedic* and post-*Vedic* literature. But this opinion cannot stand, as the ancient treatise mentioning '*Trayī*' also mentions about the fourth *Vedas*.

---

[6] यज्ञैरथर्वा प्रथमोविधारयद्देवादक्षैर्भृगवः संचिकित्रिरे ॥ ṚV.10.92.10
त्वामग्ने पुष्करादध्यथर्वानिरमन्थत ।..... ṚV.6.16.13

[7] AV.iii.4.7; iii.19.1, 4-5

In *Chāndogya Upaṇisad*, '*Vedatrayī*' is mentioned in one place, but it also mentions about the four *Vedas* in other places.[8] In the same way, the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, *Mahābhārata* also mention about the four *Vedas*. Thus, it is clear that for ancient times, *AV* was regarded as one of the *Vedas* and that it was regarded as a great treatise.

Its oldest name *Atharvāṅgirasaḥ* or *Bhṛgvāṅgirasa*, denotes its two types of magic namely Black and White. The black portion is known as *Aṅgirasa* where a magic is connected. The white portion is known as *Atharvan*, where beneficial charms are connected. Thus it has a double aspect being meant to appease and to bless as well as to cure. The chief constituent parts of the *AV* are charms and spells for the healing of diseases, prayers for health and long life, numerous benedictions, expiatory formula, women's rites, songs and charms for sacrificial purposes and some philosophical hymns. This *Veda* attains the position of the *Veda* at a very latter date and forms the transition from the *Saṁhitās* to the *Brāhmaṇas*. Though there are various recensions of the *AV*, the recension of *Śaunaka* School is best preserved for us. Here we refrain from detailed description of the *AV*, as next sub-chapter discusses the *AV* and its contents in detail.

The Brāhmaṇas: After the *Saṁhitās* or *Mantras*, the *Brāhmaṇas* are the second great class of works that belong to the *Vedas*. The word *Brāhmaṇa* (neutral) means primarily an 'explanation or expression of a learned priest, a doctor of sacrificial science on some point of the ritual'.[9] The *Brāhmaṇas* are composed in prose and have provided the priest with the details of sacrificial ritual and also contain the basis of grammar and etymology, subjects which were afterwards developed to such a great

[8] ऋग्वेदो भगवोअध्येमि....चतुर्थम्। Ch Up.7.1.2, 7.2.1
[9] Winternitz, History of Sanskrit Literature

extent as to attain the dignity of science. The *Brāhmaṇas* contain the germs of the later epic tales. Their main object is to explain the sacred significance of the ritual to those who are already familiar with the sacrifice. However, they do not describe it exhaustively, much being stated only in outline or omitted altogether. They are ritual text-books. They do not aim at furnishing a complete survey of the sacrificial ceremonial to those who do not know it already. According to *Āpastamba*, their contents may be classified under the six heads—*Vidhi, Arthavāda, Nindā, Praśaṁsā, Purākalpa* and *Parakṛti*. *Śavara* classified it under ten heads.[10]

The title *Brāhmaṇa* may be explained in several ways, either as works written by the *Brāhmaṇas* for the sacrificial ceremonies of the *Brāhmaṇas*, or as works relating to the *Brāhmaṇa* priest or as works dealing with the *Brāhmaṇa* that is prayer or sacrifice in general.

In the words of VS Sukthankar 'it is like passing from one word to another. The *Brāhmaṇas* are solely liturgical in character and presuppose an elaborate and most artificial development of the cult of sacrifice. All the trifling details of the sacrificial ceremonial are minutely treated and phantastic etymologies of words are given with a sacredness and significance beyond all proportion attached to them'.[11]

Not only the four main *Saṁhitās*, but also each *Śākhās* or recension of them possesses one or more *Brāhmaṇas*, because every school of the *Saṁhitā* required explanatory treatise connected to a particular text which it prefers to teach. Thus different *Brāhmaṇas* arose which are connected not only to the *YV*, which is closely connected to the ritual, but also to different schools of the four *Saṁhitās*. There was originally

[10] हेतुर्निर्वचनम् निन्दा प्रशंसा संशयो विधिः।
परक्रिया पुराकल्पो व्यवधारण कल्पना
उपमानम् दशैते तु विधयो ब्रक्श्मनस्य। Śavara Bhāṣya, ii.1.8

[11] Sukthankar, VS, V.S. Ghate's Lecture on Rigveda, p.33

but one body of *Brāhmaṇas* for each of the three *Vedas,* for the *ṚV,* the *Brāhmaṇas* of the *Bahvricas,* for the *SV,* the *Brāhmaṇas* of the *Chāndogyas* and for the *YV* in its two forms: The *Brāhmaṇas* of the *Taittirīyas* and the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. However, we find that though there arose many *Brāhmaṇas* connected to different recensions of the *Saṁhitā* texts only a small number of these were survived. The following are the important *Brāhmaṇas* connected to the four *Saṁhitās*.

Two *Brāhmaṇas* are attached to the *ṚV*. These are *Aitareya* relating to the *Śākalaśākhā* and the *Kauṣitaki,* also known as *Śāṁkhāyana* represents the *Vāskalaśākhā,* consisting of 40 and 30 chapters respectively. The *Brāhmaṇas* related to the *SV* includes the *Tāṇḍya* or *Pañcaviṁśa* or *Prauḍha Brāhmaṇa,* the *Sadviṁśa* which includes *Adbhuta, Jaiminīya* or *Talavakāra, Satyayana Ārṣeya* and *Vaṁśa*. Another *Brāhmaṇa* attached to the *Tāṇḍya* School is the *Chāndogya Brāhmaṇa*. The Black *YV* is attached to the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa,* which is a continuation of the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*. It consists of three *Kāṇḍas* and 40 *Prapāṭhakas*. To the White *YV* is attached the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa,* the *Brāhmaṇa* of hundred paths that is *Adhyāyas*. This *Brāhmaṇa* is divided into two recensions namely *Kāṇva* and *Mādhyandina*. In the *Mādhyandina* recensions of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* there are 14 *Kāṇḍas,* 68 *Prapāṭhakas,* 435 *Brāhmaṇa* and 7624 *Kaṇḍikā*. This work is considered as the most important production in the whole range of *Vedic* texts, next to the *ṚV Saṁhitā*. The *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* is a kin to the *AV Saṁhitā*. The main motive of this *Brāhmaṇa* seems to be the glorification of the *AV Saṁhitā* and 4th priest *Brahmā*. It consists of two books these are the *Pūrva Gopatha* and the *Uttra Gopatha,* the first containing five chapters and the second six. Though it has similarities to the *Brāhmaṇas* in the style, its language is more akin to classical *Sanskrit*. This proves its later origin.

The *Brāhmaṇas* are the theosophical treatises with distinctly different literary type that is prose style. There are the collections of rules for the application of the *Mantras,* directions for the performance of particular rites, citations of the hymns, or detached stanzas to be repeated on such occasions and illustrative remarks or narratives, explanatory of the origin and object of the rite. The topics of the *Brāhmaṇas* can be classified under eight classes namely *Itihāsa*, *Purāṇa*, *Vidya*, *Upaniṣad*, *Śloka*, *Sūtra*, *Vyākaraṇa* and *Anuvyākhyāna* these are history, old stories, esoteric knowledge about meditation, supreme knowledge, verses, aphorisms, explanations and elaborations. The *Brāhmaṇas* formed bridge, as it were, between the simple worship of the *Vedas* on one hand and the high philosophy of the *Upaniṣads* on the other. According to Prof. Macdonell- 'They reflect the spirit of an age in which all intellectual activity is concentrated on the sacrifice, describing its ceremonies discussing its value speculating on its origin and significance'.[12] The word *Brāhmaṇa,* etymologically, is derived from *Brāhman* that is, *Brahmā* priest, who must know the three *Vedas* and understand the whole course and meaning of the sacrifice. The *Brahmā* priest is the supervisor of the priests of the other three *Vedas*. Winternitz also states that the word *Brāhmaṇa* is a single explanation or utterance of a learned priest, of a doctor of the science of sacrifice upon any point of the ritual. All the trifling details of the sacrificial ceremonial are minutely treated and fantastic etymologies of words are given with a sacredness and significance beyond all proportion attached to them.[13] These sacrifices do not represent merely a cult of rituals; they are symbolic of the cosmic process.[14]

[12] Macdonell, AA., A History of Sanskrit Literature, p. 171
[13] Sukthankar, VS., Ghates Lecture on the Rigveda, p33
[14] Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa-yajño hi sarvam bhutani yunakti, 9.4.1.11

Though liturgical in character, the *Brāhmaṇas* are very important for the study of Indian religion. Without the knowledge of the *Brāhmaṇas*, the history of religion, philosophy, language and literature, the myths, narratives and symbolic interpretations in Indian lore cannot be properly understood. The *Brāhmaṇas* contained a fairly developed morality which became the forerunner of the highest philosophy of the *Upaniṣads*. As regards the date of the *Brāhmaṇa* works, it is difficult to limit the exact time of the rise and development of these works. It is generally believed that these works were produced after the final compilation of the *ṚV* and preceded by the works known as the *Sūtras*. It can be indicated form the geographical information that there was a gap of long period between the final compilation of the hymns of the *ṚV* and the rise and development of the *Brāhmaṇa* texts. The *Brāhmaṇas*, in the words of MaxMuller, presuppose the beginning of grammar, phonetics, astronomy, that is of those sciences which later on were pursued independently.[15]

Āraṇyaka: The *Āraṇyaka* is the concluding portion of the *Brāhmaṇas*, but which on account of the absolutely distinct character of their contents and language deserve to be reckoned as a distinct category of literature. The word *Āraṇyaka* means the text which is delivered in the forest or to be read in the forest. The *Āraṇyakas* are so called, as *Sāyaṇa* informs us, because they had to be read in the forest.[16]

Āraṇyakas were meant to give a preliminary training to those who aspired for relief from the bond of birth and rebirth. It is intended mainly for the *Vānaprasthis* only. The main contents of these *Āraṇyakas* are the sacrificial mysticism, sacrificial symbolism and the priestly philosophy. The *Āraṇyakas* are given over to secret

[15] M. Winternitz, A History of Sanskrit Literature, p.110, ibid, p. 210

[16] आरण्याध्ययनादेतदारण्यकमितीर्यते ।
अरण्ये तदधीयीतेत्येवं वाक्यं प्रचक्ष्यते ॥ Tai. Ār. Bhā Śloka 6

explanations of the allegorical meaning of the ritual and to discussion of the internal, meditative meaning of the sacrifice, as contrasted to its actual, outward performance.

In the *Ādiparva* of the *Mahābhārata*, the *Āraṇyaka* from the *Vedas* are like nectar from medicinal plants.[17] It is also called *Rahasya*.[18]

It is quite possible that originally the *Āraṇyaka* literature was larger, but many are lost and only six *Āraṇyakas* are available at present:

1. *Aitareya Āraṇyaka* which belongs to the *ṚV*
2. *Śāṁkhāyana Āraṇyaka* which belongs to the *ṚV*
3. *Talavakāra Āraṇyaka* which belongs to the *SV*
4. *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* which belongs to *KYV*
5. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* which belongs to the *ŚYV*
6. *Maitrāyaniya Āraṇyaka* which belongs to the *Charaka* recension of the *ŚYV*.

Upaniṣad: The *Upaniṣads* are generally the last portions of the *Āraṇyakas*. Of the existing *Upaniṣads,* those which are stated to belong to any particular portion of the *Vedas*, all form part of the *Brāhmaṇas* and often of their *Āraṇyaka* section, except one. This exception is the *Īśa Upaniṣad*. It forms the last chapter of the *ŚYV*. The *Vedas* fall into two distinct portions based on their theme: one dealing with performance of rituals (*Karma Kāṇḍa*) and the other mainly devoted to knowledge (*Jñāna-Kāṇḍa*). The *Upaniṣads* come under the *Jñāna-Kāṇḍa*. The word '*Upaniṣad*' is derived from the prefixes *upa* (near) and *ni* (perfectly) and the verbal root *sad* (to set), that is sitting down near. *Śaṁkara* derives it as a substantive from the root *sad*, in three senses namely to loosen, to reach and to destroy with *upa* and *ni* as prefixes and *kvip* as termination. Thus the word means *Brahma*-knowledge by which ignorance is

[17] Mah.1.265
[18] G. Br. 2.1

loosened or destroyed. In the words of VS Sukthankar, the word *Upaniṣad* originally meant a 'sitting, confidential secret sitting' (in contrast to *Pariṣad* or *Saṁsad* an assembly) and 'then, a secret teaching, secret doctrine', a *Rahasya*. *Upaniṣads* are frequently spoken of as *iti rahasyam* (*Nṛsiṁha Up*.,8), *guhya ādeśaḥ* (*Ch. Up*.3.5.2), *paramaṁ guhyam* (*Koṭha Up*.3.17). The great commentator of the *Upaniṣads Śaṅkarācārya,* in his introduction to the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, defined it as: 'Those seekers after liberation who, being averse to things of the sense, whether here or hereafter, take up this knowledge and practice it with steadfast devotion, have their ignorance which are the seeds of their transmigration, shattered or destroyed…or it makes those aspirants attain the supreme *Brahman'*. In the introduction to the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, he says: '*Upaniṣad*' means 'knowledge, either because it slashes or shatters the miseries of passing through the mother's womb, birth, decay or because the highest good is established in it. Books also are as designated as they contribute to the knowledge'. So the word primarily means knowledge or philosophy, and secondarily books relating to it. On the other hand, the term *Upaniṣad* literally implies sitting down of the initiated pupil near the teacher or '*Guru*' for the purpose of communication of the secret doctrine (*Rahasya*) concerning the relation between creation and the created individuals. The *Upaniṣads* are also popularly called *Vedānta*, literally meaning 'the end of the *Veda*'. It may be because they form the closing part of the *Vedic* cannon or the knowledge contained in the *Upaniṣads* form the subject of teaching at the last stage of education or they contain the highest goal of the *Veda* as they deal with *Mokṣa* or Supreme Bliss. Only qualified initiates had access to them under the direct guidance of the teacher. So, they are also called *Rahasya*, or secret.

We have different *Upaniṣads* connected to every *Śākhā* of the four *Vedas*, just like the *Brāhmaṇas*. The *Muktikopaniṣad* (i.30.39) gives a list of one hundred and eight *Upaniṣads* and they are derived from the four *Vedas* as follows:

1. 10 *Upaniṣads* from the *ṚV*;
2. 19 *Upaniṣads* from the *ŚYV*;
3. 32 *Upaniṣads* from the *KYV*;
4. 16 *Upaniṣads* from the *SV*; and
5. 31 *Upaniṣads* from the *AV*.

Conventionally, ten are considered as the principal *Upaniṣads* known as *Daśopaniṣads* are *Bṛhadāraṇyaka, Aitareya, Chāndogya, Taittirīya, Îśa, Kena, Kaṭha, Praśna, Muṇḍaka* and *Māṇḍukya*. But *Śaṅkarācārya* commented on eleven that is ten principal *Upaniṣads* and *Śvetāśvatara*. At present the following *Upaniṣads* are popular, *Aitareya* and *Kauṣitaki* belonging to the *ṚV*; *Kaṭha, Taittirīya* and *Śvetāśvatara* to the *KYV*; *Îśa* and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* to the *ŚYV*; *Kena* and *Chāndogya* to the *SV* and *Praśna, Muṇḍaka* and *Māṇḍukya* to the *AV*.

Some scholars categorize the *Vedas* as *Saṁhitā, Brāhmaṇa* and *Sūtra*. *Saṁhitā* and *Brāhmaṇa* have already been discussed. So, we are now going to the *Sūtra* literature or *Sūtra* period. The *Sūtras* are considered as *Smṛti Śāstras*. It means these can be remembered or composed. On the other hand the *Śruti* can only be heard. The *Mantras* and *Brāhmaṇas* fall in this category. The scholars opine that *Smṛtis* are of human origin. These are based on the *Sūtras* that is the contents of the *Smṛtis* are supposed to be confirmed by something corresponding to *Śruti*. The distinction between *Śruti* and *Smṛti* is clearly stated in the *Sūtras* rather than in the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* where the word *Smṛti* is used for the first time mostly in the sense of *Śruti*. Along with the *Sūtras*, *Smṛti* also embraces some metrical works, such as the laws of

Manu, *Yājñyavalkya*, *Parāśara*. These are sometimes mentioned as *Smṛtis*, in the plural. Most of these are found on *Sūtras* though the texts of the *Sūtras* have been superseded by these later metrical works.

Max Muller divided the *Vedic* Age into four distinct periods. They are *Chandas* period, *Mantra* period, *Brāhmaṇa* period and *Sūtra* period and each of the latter presupposes the former one. It has been said that the *Mantra* or hymns were composed during the *Chandas* period and compiled during the *Mantra* period. So, these two periods can be reduced to one that is *Saṁhitā* period. The *Brāhmaṇa* period can be sub divided into two parts. During the first stage of the *Brāhmaṇa* period, the *Brāhmaṇas* were composed while the *Āraṇyakas* and the *Upaniṣads* were composed in the second part of this period. The well known *Sūtras* that are the *Śrauta Sūtra*, the *Gṛhya Sūtra*, the *Dharma Sūtra* were composed during the *Sūtra* period.

The *Sūtras* were the manuals of instruction in brief but definite language. These works are of very peculiar style and stands unrivalled in the history of all the literatures of the world. The word '*Sūtra*' means a string. The *Sūtra* literature contains some works which are nothing but some uninterrupted string of short sentences, put into the most concise form as per as practicable. Shortness is the great object of this *Sūtra* literature. Max Muller quotes a proverbial saying about the shortness of the *Sūtras*, such as: 'An author rejoiceth in the economizing of half a short vowel as much as in the birth of a son'.

The *Sūtras* are the interesting source of information of social, religious and economic aspects of the Indians. It is the works form the connecting link between the *Vedic* and post-*Vedic* literature. The style of these works, the *Sūtra* style, is very peculiar and stands unrivalled in the history of all the literatures of the world. A *Sūtra* means an

aphorism, a sentence highly artificial, enigmatic and as brief as possible. It is defined by the grammarians.[19]

The philosophers have also defined a *Sūtra* almost in the same spirit.[20] A *Sūtra* may be of six types *saṁjñā*, *paribhāṣā*, *vidhi*, *niyama*, *adhikāra* and *atideśa*. The most important works belonging to the *Sūtra* literature are the *Vedāṅgas* or the parts of the *Veda* that is the auxiliary sciences of the *Veda*, which are divided into six parts. These are necessary for reading, understanding and proper sacrificial employment of the *Veda*. The six *Vedāṅgas* are *Śikṣā* (pronunciation), *Chandas* (meter), *Vyākaraṇa* (grammar), *Nirukta* (etymology), *Jyotiṣa* (astronomy) and *Kalpa* (ceremonial).

Śikṣā (pronunciation): *Sāyaṇa* defines a *Śikṣā* (pronunciation) as *śikṣyante vedanāyopadiśyante svaravarṇādayo yatrāsau śikṣā*. According to *Pāṇinīya Śikṣā*, *Śikṣā* is the nose of the *Vedas*.[21] *Śikṣā* is the science of the pronunciation of letters, accent of *Vedic* texts. It is a modern work. According to *Taittirīyopaniṣad* the *Śikṣā* has six limbs—*śikṣāṁ vyākhyāyamaḥ. varṇaḥ, svaraḥ, mātrā, balam, sāma, santānaḥ ityuktaḥ*. These *Śikṣā* works were originally embodied as chapters in the *Brāhmaṇas* but were later included in more scientific treatises known as *Prātiśākhyas*. These *Prātiśākhyas* were written for practical purposes. Their style is free from cumbrous ornaments and unnecessary subtleties. It is their object to teach and not to edify; to explain, not to discuss. The word *Prātiśākhya* literally means that which belong to every *Śākhā*. Different *Vedas* has different *Prātiśākhyas* and *Śikṣās* such as *Śaunakas*

[19] अल्पाक्षरमसन्दिग्धंसारवद् विश्वतो मुखम्।
अस्तोभमनवव्यं च सूत्रं सूत्रविदो विदुः॥
[20] लघूनि सूचितार्थानि स्वल्पाक्षरयदानि च।
सर्वतः सारभूतानि सूत्राण्याहर्मनीषिणः॥
[21] शिक्षा घ्राणं तु वेदस्य.....। Pāṇinīya Śikṣā, 42.

Ṛkprātiśākhya, *Kātyānas Śuklayajuḥ Prātiśākhya*, *SVs Puṣpasūtra, Taittirīya Prātiśākhya* and *Atharva-Prātiśākhya*.

Kalpa: Out of six *Vedāṅgas* the *Kalpa Sūtras* are considered to be the most important for us. The importance of the *Kalpasūtras* has been illustrated by VS Sukthankar through a passage by Max Muller: 'the *Kalpa-Sūtras* are important in the history of *Vedic* literature because they not only make a new period of literature, and a new purpose in the literature and religious life of India, but they contributed to the gradual extinctions of the numerous *Brāhmaṇas*, which to us are, therefore, only known by name. The introduction of *Kalpa-Sūtras* was the introduction of a new book of liturgy. …. In a short time the authors of *Kalpa-Sūtras* became themselves the founders of new *Caraṇas*, in which the *Sūtras* were considered the most essential portion of the sacred literature, so that the hymns and *Brāhmaṇas* were either neglected or kept up under the name of the hymns and *Brāhmaṇas* of the new *Caraṇas* having ceased to form by themselves the foundation of an independent tradition or school'.[22] The *Kalpasūtras* are based upon the *Brāhmaṇas*. They contain the rules referring to sacrifices. But they omit all the things which are not immediately connected with the ceremonial. They are more practical than the *Brāhmaṇas* which are mostly taken up with mystical, historical, mythological, etymological and theological discussions. Thus *Sāyaṇa* says in his commentary on the *Baudhāyana Sūtra,* 'The whole mass of *Vedic* literature consists of three parts: *Mantras*, *Vidhis* and *Arthavādas*. The *Vidhis* enjoin an act, the *Arthavādas* recommend it, and the *Mantras* record it. In order to make the understanding of the prescribed ceremonies easier, the revered *Baudhāyana* composed the *Kalpa*. As the *Brāhmaṇs* are endless and difficult to understand, the old masters have adopted the *Kalpa-Sūtras* according to different

[22] Maxmuller, A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature, p.188, ed. 1859

Śākhās. These *Kalpa-Sūtras* have the advantage of being clear, short, complete and correct'.[23]

According to *Pāṇini*, the *Kalpa* is the hand of the *Vedas*.[24] *Kalpasūtras* are clear, short, complete and correct. There are four categories of *Kalpa Sūtras*, namely *Śrauta*, *Gṛhya*, *Dharma* and *Śulva* written in *Sūtra* style. The *Śrauta Sūtra* deals with a large number of ceremonies that is it contains rules regarding the performance of sacrifices, rituals of various types and other procedures pertaining to particular sacrifice. The *Gṛhya Sūtra* deals with ceremonies performed by the married households, chiefly for the benefit of the family where as the *sāmayācārikasūtras* deal with rules to be observed by the rising generation regulating the various relations of everyday life. It is also called as *Dharma Sūtras* in which are to be discovered the originals of the later metrical law-codes such as the *Manusmṛti*, *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* and others. The *Śulva Sūtra*, which are regarded as forming the part of the *Śrauta Sūtras*, deals with the construction of the place of the sacrifice, measurement of different kinds of fire altars.

We find different *Kalpa Sūtras* belonging to the four *Vedas*, such as:

ṚV—Śrauta Sūtra: Āśvalāyana ŚS, Sāṁkhāyana ŚS

Gṛhya Sūtra: Āśvalāyana GS, Sāṁkhāyana GS.

Dharma Sūtra: Vasiṣṭha DS

SV— Śrauta Sūtra: Lātyāyana ŚS or Maśka ŚS or Ārṣeyakalpa ŚS, Drāhyāyana ŚS, Jaiminīya ŚS

Gṛhya Sūtra: Drāhyāyana GS, Gobhila GS, Jaiminīya GS, Khādira GS

Dharma Sūtra: Gautama DS

[23] Maxmuller, A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature, p.170, ed. 1859

[24] ....हस्तौ कल्पोऽथ पठ्यते। Pāṇinīya Śikṣā, 41

KYV— Śrauta Sūtra: Baudhāyana ŚS, Āpastamba ŚS, Mānava ŚS, Satyāṣādha ŚS or Hiraṇyakeśī ŚS, Vaikhānasa ŚS.

Gṛhya Sūtra: Baudhāyana GS, Āpastamba GS, Mānava GS, Vādhūla GS, Vaikhānasa GS.

Dharma Sūtra: Mānava DS, Āpastamba DS, Vaikhānasa DS

ŚYV—Śrauta Sūtra: Kātyāyana ŚS

Gṛhya Sūtra: Pāraskara GS or Vājasaneyi GS

Dharma Sūtra: Śaṅkhalikhita DS

AV—Śrauta Sūtra: Vaitāna ŚS

Gṛhya Sūtra: Kauśika GS

Dharma Sūtra: Paṭhināsī DS

Vyākaraṇa: The third *Vedāṅga* is *Vyākaraṇa* or grammar. According to *Pāṇini*, *Vyākaraṇa* is the mouth of *Veda*.[25] It is necessary for the understanding of the *Veda* and the work which now passes for this *Vedāṅga* is *Aṣṭādhyāyī* of *Pāṇini*. Originally the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* is not a proper *Vedāṅga*. The *Mahābhāṣya* of *Patañjali* has mentioned five principal purposes of studying grammar. They are *Rakṣā*, *Ūha*, *Āgama*, *Laghu*, and *Asandeha*—'*rakṣohāgamalaghvasandehāḥ prayojanam*'. *Aṣṭādhyāyī* mainly deals with the classical *Sanskrit* and only rarely with the *Vedic Sanskrit*. It is more reasonable to suppose that the work marks the last attempt in this province, which on account of its great merits acquired such a great celebrity as to surpass almost all that had been written on grammar before it.

Two other *Sūtra* works on grammar are also important. Both belong to a period anterior to *Pāṇini*, the *Sūtras* on the *Uṇādi* affixes and the *Phiṭsūtras*. The *Uṇādi*

[25] ….मुखं व्याकरणं स्मृतम्। Pāṇinīya Śikṣā, 42

affixes are those by which nouns are formed from roots, the nouns being used in a conventional sense, and not in strict accordance with their radical meaning. They are called *Uṇādi* because in the *Sūtras*, *Uṇa* is the first-mentioned affix, in their present form. The *Sūtras* seem to treat the *Vedic* words as exceptions. The *Phiṭsūtras* treat only of the accent and as the accent is used in *Vedic* words only, this second collection of *Sūtras* is only meant for the *Vedic* dialect.

Nirukta: *Nirukta* [26]is the commentary work of *Nighaṇṭu* or *Naighaṇṭuka*. It is written by *Yāska*. *Nirukta* concerning the derivation or etymology of works and it is important for the understanding of the *Vedic* text. According to *Pāṇini*, *Nirukta* is the ear of *Veda*.[27] It is the fourth *Vedāṅga*. The *Nighaṇṭu* or *Samāmnāya* has five chapters. It consists of three portions divided according to the subject matter of the words. The first three chapters are called *Naighaṇṭuka Kāṇḍa*, where, for the most part list of synonymous words are given. The fourth *Adhyāya*, which forms the second portion of the *Samāmnāya* or the vocabulary, is called *Naigamakāṇḍa*. For the most part, it consists of obsolete *Vedic* words and homonyms. For this reason, it is also called *Aikapadika Kāṇḍa*. The fifth that is last chapter of the *Samāmnāya*, forms the third portion called *Daivatakāṇḍa*. It consists of the names of the *Devatā* or deities. *Durgāchārya* mentions fourteen *Niruktakāra* in his commentary work Durgāvṛtti—'*niruktaṁ caturdaśaprabhedam*'.

The *Yākas Nirukta* consists of twelve chapters followed by two more *Pariśiṣṭa* chapters. Of these the first three chapters forms the *Naighaṇṭuka Kāṇḍa* dealing with the words in the first three *Adhyāyas* of the original *Nighaṇṭu*. Chapter 4-6 form the *Naigama* or *Aikapada Kāṇḍa* with the obsolete *Vedic* words contained in *Adhyāya*

[26] अर्थावबोधे निरपेक्षतया पदजातं यत्रोक्तं तन्निरुक्तम्

[27] …निरुक्तं श्रोत्रमुच्यते। Pāṇinīya Śikṣā, 41

four of the *Nighaṇṭu*. And the remaining six *Adhyāyas* form the *Daivatakāṇḍa*, corresponding to the fifth *Adhyāyas* of the *Nighaṇṭu*.

Chandas: The *Vedāṅga Chandas* is designed for the purpose of securing the proper reading and reciting of the *Vedic* texts. According to *Pāṇini*, *Chandas* is the feet of *Veda*.[28] *Yāska* derives the word from *chad*, 'to cover'. *Chandas* is so called because it is the covering of the *Vedic* texts. At present *Piṅgalas Chandah-Sūtra* is known as *Vedāṅga*, which deals with the *Vedic* as well as classical metre. *Vedic* metre is measured by counting of syllables. In *Veda*, seven metres are there these are *Gāyatrī, Uṣṇik, Anuṣṭup, Bṛhatī, Paṅkti*, *Triṣṭup* and *Jagatī*. The number of syllables of the metre increases by four in each next metre. Thus the number of syllables of each metre is as follows— *Gāyatrī*—24, *Uṣṇik*—28, *Anuṣṭup* —32, *Bṛhatī* —36, *Paṅkti* —40, *Triṣṭup* —44, *Jagatī* —48. There are many sub varieties of this metre.

Jyotiṣa: *Jyotiṣa* is the last *Vedāṅga*. It is related with *Veda* and sacrifice. According to *Pāṇini*, *Jyotiṣa* is the eye of *Veda*.[29] It is obligatory to know the time of *Yajña*. Without knowing the *Vedāṅga Jyotiṣa*, it is impossible to perform sacrificial ceremonies. The *Pāṇinīya Śikṣā* mentioned two *Jyotiṣa* books these are *Yājuṣa Jyotiṣa* and *Ācārya Jyotiṣa*. *Yājuṣa Jyotiṣa* is related to *YV* and has 43 *Ślokas*. *Āacārya Jyotiṣa* is related to *ṚV* and has 36 verses, 30 being common to both. The *Atharvaṇa Jyotiṣa* of 162 verses dealing with *Muhūrta* (a particular division of time), *Karaṇa* (an astrological division of day), *Yoga* (leading star of a lunar asterism; a variable division of time), *Tothi* (lunar day), and *Vāra* (week-day), falls outside the *Vedic* period. It is important as it also treats of *Jātaka* (astrology), a branch of *Jyotiṣa*.

[28] छन्दः पादौ तु वेदस्य...। Pāṇinīya Śikṣā, 41

[29] ज्योतिषामयनं चक्षुः...। Pāṇinīya Śikṣā, 41

Apart from these, there are some other secondary works which can hardly be accepted as *Vedic* literature. There are the '*Anukramaṇis*' or the indexes containing the list of contents of the *Vedic Saṁhitās* with reference to the sages, the deities and the meter. The word *Anukramaṇis* is formed by the two words *anu* meaning 'along' and *karma* meaning 'to step'. The most important *Anukramaṇi* is the *Sarvānukramaṇī* of the *ṚV* by *Kātyāyana*. It gives the first words of each hymn, the number of verses, the name and family of the poets, the names of the deities, and the metres of every verse. *Sadguruśiṣya* wrote a commentary called *Vedārthadīpikā* on *Sarvānukramaṇī*. Before *Kātyāyana Śaunaka* composed ten *Anukramaṇīs* for the protection of *ṚV* these are *Ārṣānukramaṇī, Chandonukramaṇī, Devatānukramaṇī, Anuvākānukramaṇī, Sūktānukramaṇī, Ṛgvidhāna, Pādavidhāna, Bṛhaddevatā, Ṛgvedaprātiśākhya,* and *Śaunakasmṛti*. The *Anukramaṇī* for the *YV* is *Śuklayajuḥ Sarvānukramasūtra*; for the *SV* are *Kalpānupada Sūtra*, *Upagranthasūtra*, *Anupadasūtra*, *Nidāna Sūtra*, *Upanidāna Sūtra*, *Pañcavidhāna Sūtra*; for the *AV* is *Bṛhatsarvānukramaṇī*. Besides these *Anukramaṇīs* there is a class of works called the *Pariśiṣta* (appendices), which deserve a mention in passing. The style of the *Pariśiṣtas* is less concise than that of the *Sūtras*. The simple *Anuṣṭubhśloka* preponderates. Still the *Pariśiṣtas* have not yet fallen into that monotonous uniformity, which we find in works like the *Mānavadharmasūtra* or the later *Purāṇas*. They therefore, may be considered the very last offshoots of *Vedic* literature but they are *Vedic* in their character and they must be supposed to have originated at the last moments of the *Vedic* ages. Their object is to supply information on the theological or ceremonial points which had been passed over in the *Sūtras*. It may be because they were not deemed of sufficient importance, or because they were supposed to be well-known to those more immediately concerned. The perfunctory and superficial treatment of the subject matter in these

works bears witness to incipient intellectual and literary degeneracy. The most important *Pariśiṣṭa* is *Caraṇavyuha* of *Śaunaka,* which is a treatise on various schools into which the *Vedas* had branched off. It briefly narrates the traditions relating thereto.

b)AV and its Contents:

The *AV* is the last of the *Vedas.* Some scholars did not consider it as part of the *Vedas*. Generally the three *Vedas*—the *ṚV*, the *SV* and the *YV*—are known as *Trayī* or *Trayīvidyā*. Many scholars also agree that *Trayī* means *Ṛk*, *Sām* and *Yajuḥ Mantra*. According to *Kauṭilya,* the *AV* is not included in the *Trayī*. However, some scholars did not support *Kauṭilya*. For instance, sage *Jaimini* gives arguments against this. The group of *Mantras* of the *Veda* containing meaningful meters and *Pāda* are known as *Ṛk*. The *Ṛks* which are sung are known as *Sām*. The other group of *Mantras* besides the *Ṛk* and the Sam are known as '*Yaju*'. It comprises both *Padya* and *Gadya Mantras*. The characteristics of the *Mantras* of *AV* have no differences from the characteristics of *Ṛk* and *Sām Mantras*. Therefore, the need of any fourth type of 'characteristics of *Mantra*' did not arise. Thus, *AV* is also considered as *Trayī*. According to this school, though *AV* does not have its unique characteristic, it has independent *Vedatva*.

The *AV* consists of spells and charms prevalent at its time, and portrays a clearer picture of the *Vedic* society.

The *Nirukta* explains and interprets the word *Atharvan*. The '*Atharvan*' is etymologically derived as: '*tharatiścarati karmā, tasya pratiṣedhaḥ*'.

'*Tharvan*', it says, denotes movements. '*Tharvan*' means dynamic and '*Atharvan*' means static or motionless. *AV* also means so to say 'the *Veda* of the *Atharvans*' or 'the knowledge of the magic spells'.

In the *Vedic* literature, the *AV* has other titles like *Amṛtaveda, Ātmaveda, Aṁgiroveda, Atharvāṅgirasa, Bhṛgvāṅgirasa, Kṣatra, Bhaiṣajya, Mahīveda* and *Chandoveda*. The *AV* presents its own name as *Atharvāngirasaḥ*. The *AV* is also addressed as *Brahmaveda* after *Brahmā*, the chairperson of the *Yajñasaṁsad*-offering council. *Brahmā* should be well learned with four *Vedas*, with outstanding knowledge in *AV*. The *AV* is compiled in 20 *Kāṇḍas*-books, comprising 750 *Sūktas*-*Vedic* hymns, which in turn have about 6000 *Mantras*. About one sixth of these *Mantras* are in prose, the rest in the various *Chandas* related to the *Vedas*.

Unlikely the other three *Vedas* which indicate their contents by their very names (*Ṛg*-praise, *Yajus*-worship through sacrifice, *Sāma*-musical chants), the *AV* cannot do so, since it deals with various subjects. This is one reason that the *AV* has many names that give an idea of that specific kind of context, for example its name *Bheṣajāni* indicates the subject of medicinal remedies.

Brahmā is the *Ṛtvija* of the *AV*. The place of *Brahmā* among the four *Ṛtvijas* of council of offering is at the top, that is he is the chairperson. The *AV* has practically no connection with sacrifice, except in its last portions. The *AV* describes the application of both types of ceremonies namely peaceful affirmation and the witchcraft (*Abhichārikā*) ceremonies.

The language and metre of the hymns of the *AV* are the same as those of the *ṚVS*. Yet in the language of the *AV* some are directly later forms and some more of popular forms: as the metre is not nearly so strictly handled as in the *ṚV*.

The two main post-*Saṁhitās* texts associated with the *AV* are the *Vaitāna Sūtra* and the *Kauśika Sūtra*. The *Vaitāna Sūtra* deals with participation of the *AV* priest in the *Śrauta* ritual while the *Kauśika Sūtra* contains many applications of *AV Mantras* in healing and magic.

The *AV* has one *Brāhmaṇa*, that is *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*. It has no any *Āraṇyaka*. There are three main *Upaniṣads* of the *AV*, these are *Praśna*, *Muṇḍka* and *Māṇḍukya*. *Śaunakiya Caturādhyāyikā*, *Māṇḍūki Śikṣā*, *AV Prātiśākhyasūtra*, *Atharva Prātiśākhya* are *Prātiśākhya* of the *AV*. *Vaitāna Śrautasūtra*, *Kauśika Gṛhyasūtra* and *Paṭhināsī Dharmasūtra* are *Atharvavedic Kalpasūtras*.

The *AV* is generally known for its magical charms, which are broadly divided into two parts-Black and White. The black portion is known as *Aṅgirasa* which is related to magic. The white portion is known as *Atharvan*, which is related to beneficial charms. The *AV* represents a wide variety of subjects as its content. The contents of the *AV* can be classified under as many as fourteen heads:-

1) Charms to cure diseases and possession by demons (*Bhaiṣajyāni*).
2) Prayer for long life and health (*Āyuṣyāni*).
3) Imprecations against demons, sorcerers and human enemies (*Abhichārikāni* and *Kṛtyapariharānāni*).
4) Charms pertaining to the various kinds of relationship with women (*Strīkarmāṇi*).
5) Charms to secure harmony in domestic, social and political spheres (*Sāṁmanasyāni*).
6) Charms pertaining to the royalty (*Rājakarmāṇi*).
7) Prayer and imprecations in the interest of the *Brāhmaṇas* (*Brāhmaṇyāni*).

8) Charms to secure prosperity and freedom from danger (*Pauṣṭikāni*).

9) Charms in expiation of sin (*Prāyaścittāni*).

10) Cosmogonic and theosophic hymns.

11) Ritualistic and general hymns

12) The books dealing with individual themes (books 13-18)

13) The twentieth book and

14) The *Kuntāpa* hymns.

1) *Charms to cure diseases and possessions by demons (Bhaiṣajyāni)*: The *Bhaiṣajyāni* is the term used in the *KS*, to denote the medicinal and remedial charms found in the *AV*. *Jaundice* (i.22), *Takman*-fever (i.25; v.4; vi.20; vii.116; xix.39), dropsy (i.10; vi.24,127; vii.83) consumption (ii.33; iii.11; ix.8; xix.36, 44), leprosy (i.23, 24), abscesses (vi.127; ix.8), scrofulous swelling (vi.25, 57; vii.74, 76), wounds and fractures (iv.12; v.5), inherited disease (ii.8, 10; iii.7), paralysis (vi.8), flow of blood (i.17), poison of all kinds (v.13, 16; vi.12; vii.56, 88), worms (ii.31,32; v.33) are main diseases named and treated in many hymns. Charms to cure all these diseases are given in the *AV* and the practice, concerning these charms are given in the *KS*. In this respect Winternitz writes, 'One of the chief constituent parts of the *AV Saṁhitā* consists of songs and spells for the healing of disease, which belong to the magic rite of healing'.

2) *Prayers for long life and health (Āyuṣyāni)*: The prayers for long life and health, called by the Indians '*Āyuṣyāṇi Sūktani*', that is 'hymns achieving long life are but little different from magic spells for healing' —says M. Winternitz. There are prayers used chiefly at the family festivals, such as the first hair cutting, first shaving of beard of youth, the initiation the *AV*.2.28 and 29 are two such typical charms. Hymn 2.13, 7.32 are also other such examples.

3) *Imprecations against demons, sorcerers and human enemies (Abhicārikāni* and *Kṛtyapariharānāni)*: Imprecations against demons, sorcerers and enemies form the subject of many hymns in the *AV*. These are directed against demons, sorcerers and enemies. This class of hymn concerned the central ground as what is known as *Abhicāra* and *Yātuvidyā*—the terrible side of the *Veda*. The *Abhicāra* class of hymns such as *AV*.1.7, 8.28 are directed against human enemies, are more numerous again, some of which are quite general.

4) *Charms pertaining to the various kinds of relationship with women (Strīkarmāṇi)*: The *AV* comprises a numbers of charms pertaining to the women. The majority of such hymns invoke both the sexes—male and female. There is love charms aimed at men exercised on behalf of woman and also there are charms through which men tries to get response from his counterpart. There are hymns which belong to the peaceful sphere of conjugal life as well. Beside this there are charms to secure birth of a child and charms to protect the embryo of the womb.

5) *Charms to secure harmony in domestic, social and political spheres (Sāṁmanasyāni)*: We find in the *AV* a number of spells for the restoration of harmony, which stands mid way between the expiatory formulas and benedictions. These are known as the *Sāṁmanasyāni Sūktani*. These hymns are used to achieve peace and harmony in the family which is affected by discord. The hymn *AV* 3.30 is a glorying example of this type. In this hymn we found the *Mantra*-'*sahṛdayaṁ saṁmanasyaṁ vidveṣaṁ kṛṇomi vaḥ.*' such as reconciliation spell could be used in restoration of unity between the husband and wife and also preserving harmony in an assembly.

6) *Charms pertaining to the royalty (Rājakarmāṇi)*: Charms pertaining to royalty are also abundantly seen in the *AV* due to which it is called *Kṣatraveda*. The consecration of a king forms the hymn *AV*.4.8, in which dignity of royalty is upheld. So there are also number of hymns designated to ensure superiority of a king over other kings and ruler. Hymns *AV*.4.22, 6.54, 86-88 and 7.84 may be mentioned as examples of this type of charms.

7) *Prayers and imprecations in the interest of Brāhmans (Brāhmaṇyāni)*: Prayers and imprecations to ensure the safeguards of the interest of the *Brāhmans* are also frequently found in the *AV*. In a number of hymns *AV* 5.17-19, 12.5, inviolability of *Brāhmans* and there belong from the subject. In certain hymns the *Brāhmins* assert the importance and power of the *Purohita*. *AV* 3.19, 5.24, 7.16 and 19.63 are the important example such kind of charms.

8) *Charms to secure prosperity and freedom from danger (Pauṣṭikāni)*: The charms containing benediction are found to be closely connected with the above prayers, under these we find a prayer which is used at the building of a house, benedictory spells for ploughing, for the growth of crop and exorcism against field vermin, spells against danger due to fire, prayers for rain used at the time of conjuring up rain, numerous benedictory spells for the prosperity of herds of cattle, exorcism of a merchant for good business and for good fortune on his journey, charms for a gambler for good luck with the dice, exorcism against snakes and so on.

9) *Charms in expiate on of sin and defilement (Prāyaścittāni)*: Under the head of *Prāyaścittāni* or expiatory formulas and spells for purification from guilt and sin are less different from the spell of healing. An expiation, generally intended not only for cleansing from sin or guilty but also offences that may occur as a result of imperfectly

performed sacrifices and ceremonies for crimes consciously or unconsciously or committed for sins of thought for nonpayment of debts, especially gambling, death, for a prohibited marriage. There are number of such charms used in expiation in rites in the *AV* and the hymns *AV* 4.23 to 29 which are generally known as *Mṛgārasūktani* and are reckoned among the class of the hymns.

10) *Cosmogonic and theosophic hymns*: The *AV* knows more of cosmogonic and theosophic hymns of the *ṚV*. The book XIII is entirely devoted to this aspect, where *Rohita* is uphold as a central principle. In the third hymn of this book the sun principle is found in exalted form of theosophic diction. In some hymns, *Brahmodānam* is praised as the supreme creative and sustaining principle, iv.35.3, 5.

In respect of the *AV*, Winternitz writes, 'Many a deeper and truly philosophical thought flashes out sometimes from the mystical fog of these hymns, but in most cases one may be able to say, that the originator of these thoughts was not the *AV* poet, but that he has made others' mind serve his purpose. Thus it is a thought worthy of a philosopher that *Kāla*, the time is the foundation of all being. But it is the language of the mystic and not the philosopher, when we read *AV* xix.53 and 54. *Kāla* is said have through forth each and every thing and this is stated in the remaining verses of the hymn'.[30]

11) *Ritualistic and general hymns*: The *AV* contains hymns which owe their presence in the collection from the start to the existence of *Atharvanic Śrauta*-rites. Since the *Śrauta*-manual of the *AV*, the *Vaitāna-Sūtra* is late, the appearance of many hymns of the *Śaunakiya-Śākhā* in it is non-significant and otiose. The *Vaitāna-Sūtra* rubricates

[30] Winternitz, A History of Indian Literature, p.140

practically the entire 20th book of the *AV*, but this is itself a late *Śrauta* supplement to the collection, proving nothing for its original scope and intention.

12) *The book dealing with individual themes (book 13-18)*: The six books 13-18 are devoted to special themes. Book 13th contains four long hymns addressed to a form of the sun-God called *Rohita*. *Rohita* is not merely the heavenly body or its divinity, but he is swelled out by means of theosophic notions, so as to appear as the creator and preserver of the universe, a form of *Prajāpati*. Book 14th contains the wedding stanzas of the *Atharvan*. The book 15th which is similar to the *Brāhmanas* in contents and style is divided into 18 short chapters. It glorifies the *Brātya*, the representative of unorthodox *Āryan* groups with traditions. The book 16th contains two parts not related in any way. The first four *Anuvākas* consist of ritualistic formulas dealing to some extent with the praise of the water. The rest of the book is an elaborate conjuration against nightmare which is driven out from one's self and imposed upon enemies. The single hymn, book 17, known as the *Viṣāsahi*, is one of the most prominent of the *Āyuṣyāni* and figures especially in the rites connected with the life of the young *Āryan*. Book 18th in four hymns contains the funeral stanzas which may be called as another version of the corresponding materials in the *ṚV*.

13) *The twentieth book*: Of the 143 hymns of book 20, only 13 are any way peculiar to the *AV*, namely 2, 48, 49, 127-136. Of these the so called *Kuntāpa-Sūktāni*, 127-136, in their *Atharvanic* form and extent are original, and no *Pada*-text of them appears to exist. The remaining hymns of the book, mostly addressed to *Indra*, are derived bodily, without a single variant, from the *ṚV*.

14) *The Kuntāpa hymns*: The *AV*.20.127-136 are known as *Kuntāpasūktani*. The exact scope of the designation *Kuntāpa* is not certain.

The *AV* presents a good variety of contents which are not similar to those of the *ṚV*. The contents of the *AV* however, appeared to be complementary to those of the *ṚV*. Thus this two *Vedas* appear to be very important for proper understanding of the *Vedic* religion and the culture.

AV and its related literature:

The *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* is the only available *Brāhmaṇa* of the *AV*. It has been divided into two parts-*Pūrva Gopatha* and *Uttara Gopatha*. *Pūrva Gopatha* has five chapters whereas *Uttara Gopatha* has six. These chapters are further divided into sub-chapters. *Pūrav Gopatha* has 135 sub-chapters and *Uttara Gopatha* has 123, thus we have total of 258 sub-chapters. It does not have any *Āraṇyaka*.

Upaniṣads of the AV: According to *Muktikopaniṣad* the *AV* has 31 *Upaniṣads*, these are *Praśna, Muṇḍaka, Māṇḍūkya, Atharvaśiras, Atharvaśikhā, Bṛhajjābāla, Nṛsiṅhatāpani, Nārada Parivrājaka, Sītā, Śarabha, Mahānārayaṇa, Rāmarahasya, Rāmatāpani, Śāṇḍilya, Paramahansaparivrājaka, Annapūrṇā, Sūrya, Ātman, Pāśupata, Parabrahman, Tripurātāpinī, Devī, Bhāvanā, Brahman, Jābāla, Gaṇapati, Mahāvākya, Gopālatāpinī, Kṛṣṇa, Hayagrīa, Dattātreya, Garuḍa*. Out of these the first three are main *Upaniṣads*. *Praśnopaniṣad* belongs to the *Paippalāda* School, whereas *Śaunakīya* School has two *Upaniṣads* that is *Muṇḍaka* and *Māṇḍūkya*.

Prātiśākhya and Śikṣā: Three editions of the *AV Prātiśākhya* have been published. The *Atharva Prātiśākhya* or *Śaunakīya Caturādhyāyikā* has been edited by W.D. Whitney. The *AV Prātiśākhyasūtra* has been edited by Śrī Viśvabandhu Śāstrī and the editor of *AV Prātiśākhya* is Sūryakānta Śāstrī. The book *Māṇḍūkī Śikśā* deals with the method of knowing the vowels and letters of the *AV*. The book contains 179 *Ślokas*.

Kalpasūtras: The *AV* has three *Kalpasūtras*, these are *Vaitāna Śrautasūtra, Kauśika Gṛhyasūtra* and *Pathināsī Dharmasūtra*.

Sub-Vedas of the AV: The *Gopatha Brāmaṇa* records five sub-*Vedas* of the *AV*. They are *Sarpaveda, Piśācaveda, Asuraveda, Itihāsaveda* and *Purāṇaveda*.[31] This indicates that the origin of these five branches of learning is there in the *AV*.

c) Recensions of the Atharvaveda:

According to a tradition represented by the *Charaṇavyūha, Pāṇini, Patañjali*, the *Purāṇas* the *AV* has nine schools. They are *Paippalāda, Tauda, Mauda, Śaunaka, Jājala, Jalada, Brahmaveda, Devadarśa, Cāraṇavaidya*. Of these, the text of only two-*Śaunaka* and *Paippalāda* are available. Others are found in references only. *Paippalāda* recension is older than the *Śaunaka* as the *Praśna* and *Garbha Upaniṣads* are assigned to it. Like the title of the *Veda*, the *Śaunaka Saṁhitā* is also named after the sage *Śaunaka*, who was an ancient teacher.[32] The *KS, VS* and the *Caturādhyāyi* belong to this school. It is not clear about how these *Śākhās* differ from each other. A comparison of the *Paippalāda* and the *Śaunaka* text shows that the *AV Paippalāda* is richer in material. It contains approximately 6500 stanzas against 6000 stanzas of the *AV Śaunaka*; the *AV Paippalāda* opens with '*sam no davaḥ*' while the *AV Śaunakiya* begins with '*ye trisaptaḥ*'.[33] In the *AV Paippalāda*, hymn is called a *Kāṇḍa*. Its arrangement differs very much from that of the *AV Śaunaka*. A given stanza appears in different parts and in different contents in the two recensions. The same is about the hymns. Similarly the book XIX and book XX of the *AV Śaunaka* are not found in the

[31] G. Br. i.1.10
[32] Mun. Up. i.3.3
KS. 85.8
[33] Atharva Pariśiṣṭa.34.20
Gop. Bṛh. i.29
पूर्वं त्रिषप्तीयम् KS.7.8

AV Paippalāda. The variants between the two texts range all the way from inconsiderable differences to complete change. Many matters of the *AV Paippalāda* are not to found in the *AV Śaunaka* as well as in the other *Vedic Saṁhitās*. Even the first twelve books of the *AV Paippalāda* have 3126 stanzas (=430 hymns) and of these 1538 are given for the first time. In the first twelve books of the *AV Paippalāda* there are twenty one hymns pertaining to royalty. Perfect textual correspondences between the parallel stanzas and hymns of the *Śākhās* are very rare. *AV Paippalāda* is richer in *Brāhmaṇa* style passages, in charms and incantations. The *Paippalāda* School seems to preserve neither a *Brāhmaṇa* nor a *Sūtra*.

d) Commentaries of the Atharvaveda:

Āchārya Sāyaṇa had written commentary on the entire *AV*. It is the most famous commentary, but he does not comment whole of the *AV*. R.T.H. Griffith, W.D. Whitney and M. Bloomfield translated it into English. But Bloomfield does not translate the whole. C.R. Lanmann edited it in 1905. A. Ludwig and J. Grill translated some of the texts of *AV* into German. Its Hindi translations can be found by Śrī Śrīpāda Dāmodara Sātavalekara and Śrī Jayadeva Śarmā Vidyālaṁkāra. He has succinctly explained the *Mantras* of the *AV*. Śrī Jayadeva Śarmā Vidyālaṁkāra has written commentary in Hindi on all the four *Vedas*. The whole of the *AV* has also been translated into Hindi. Śrī Kṣemakaraṇa Dāsa Trivedī has translated whole of the *AV* into Hindi, adopting the method of the *Nirukta*.

e) *Importance of the Atharvaveda*:

The *AV* ranks quite high among the *Vedas*. It has cultural, philosophical, spiritual and sociological significance. It presents a detailed discussion of the culture and civilization. It is replete with valuable material on all the aspects of culture. The more

this *Veda* is contemplated, discussed and analyzed, the more useful material can be obtained from it. The chief characteristic of *AV* lies in the variety of its subject-matter, enunciation of broadest to minutest elements and the admixture of the practical and the academic.

The *KS* gives elaborate description of the subjects dealt within the *AV*. It appears that the *AV* is the store-house of knowledge. It discusses in detail all the aspects of the four *Puruṣārthas—Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kāma* and *Mokṣa*. From the academic point of view, it includes all the elements related with religion, philosophy, spiritualism and metaphysics. From the sociological stand-point, it contains the vast treasure of politics, economics, theology and science. From the literary point of view, it contains rasa, rhetoric, metre, felicity of ideas and diction. From the point of view of everyday use, the *AV* contains emotional inspiration, contemplation meditation, preachings for duties and moral and ethical teachings. It presents a substantial discussion of both the individual as well as the total facets of society. All the three levels of culture-high, middle and low- are manifested in it. It contains all that is required for the manifold development of life. The *AV* is concise in words and pithy in meaning. The chief characteristic of *AV* lies in the variety of its subject-matter, enunciation of broad to minutest elements and the admixture of the practical and the academic.

Sāyṇa highlighted the importance of the *AV*, saying that the other three *Vedas* yield only the otherworldly fruits, whereas the *AV* yields fruits both worldly and otherworldly.[34] As the *AV* provides worldly pleasures in addition to the otherworldly, it excels other three *Vedas*. Various rituals have been provided in this *Veda* for the attainment of worldly happiness, peace, progress, relief from trouble and disease, exorcism, elimination of enemies and gaining popularity.

[34] Av. bh. Intro. 1oth Śloka

Narrating the importance of the *AV* the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇ* states that there are four performers of *Yajña* (*Ṛtvij*)- *Hotā*, *Adhvaryu*, *Udgātā* and *Brahmā*. Of them, *Brahmā* must be well-versed in the *AV*. He is capable of conducting the performance of a *Yajña* all alone by himself.[35] *Brahmā* is the scholar of all the four *Vedas*, but his main specialization is the *AV*. It is *Brahmā* who supervises various rituals and corrects the imperfection of *Yajña*.

According to the *Gopatha* and *Aitareya Brāhmaṇas*, *Yajña* has two aspects-vocal and mental. The *Ṛk*, the *Yajuḥ* and the *Sāma Vedas* strengthen only the vocal aspect, but the mental aspect of the *Yajña* is confirmed by *Brahmā* only. Speech and mind are the two means of *Yajña*. Only a harmonious co-ordination between the two can bring about the entirety of the *Yajña*.[36] It highlights the importance of the *AV* as well as of *Brahmā*.

Some other factors which may be attributed to the significance of the *AV* assumed are as follows:

1. *Spiritual knowledge*: *Brahman* and spiritualism have been described in detail for the first time in the *AV* only. It elaborately discusses the nature of *Brahman*, its all pervasiveness, oneness of *Brahman*, deliverance through the knowledge of *Brahman*. Philosophical doctrines like monotheism and non-dualism have originated from the *AV*.
2. *Its pragmatic value*: The *AV* deals with almost all matters of practical importance. The *Veda* contains discussion on topics like medical sciences, politics, ethics, social, economic and religious life, various crafts and

[35] Go. Br. i.3.1
[36] Go. Br. i.3.2; Ar. Br. 5.33

industries. It widely discusses pharmacology, treatment of diseases, nutrition, rituals of mitigation, black magic practices and exorcism.

3. *Folk-culture*: The *AV* tells about the nature of folk-culture. The *ṚV*, the *YV* and the *SV* mainly deal with the *Yajña* practices, but the *AV* highlights the nature of the common man's culture. It has been stated in the *Āpastamba Dharma Sūtra* that the true nature of public life can be known through the lives of the women and the *Śūdras*, who represent the folk-culture. The *AV* has given an elaborate description of folk-culture.[37]
4. *Family rituals*: The other three *Vedas* including the *ṚV* deal with the *Śrauta Yajñas* and *Vedic* rituals, whereas the *AV* is primarily concerned with family rituals. It describes the methods of performing these rituals. It also deals with subjects such as election of the king, his coronation.
5. *Peace and prosperity in the worldly life*: The other three *Vedas* mainly deal with the other worldly pleasure, whereas the *AV* tells us how to be happy in this very world. It discusses the ways leading to material prosperity.
6. *Praised in many Vedic literature*: Many other factors contribute to the importance of the *AV*. In the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*, the *AV* has been hailed as the best of all the *Vedas*. This *Veda* originated to eliminate all such elements that destroy *Brāhmanic* culture.[38] The *Mantras* of the *AV* contain power and through them one can attain all types of achievements.[39] The *Kamalālaya* section of the *Skanda Purāṇa* shows the importance of the *AV*, asserting that the desired attainments can be achieved by reciting its *Mantras*. It has been stated in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* that the knowledge of the *AV* only can make one *Brahmā* who alone should be engaged for the performance of the ritual of

[37] Ap. DS. 2.29-11-12
[38] G. Br. 1.1.9
[39] Av. P. 2.5.5

peace and powers for the king. According to the *Atharva Pariśiṣṭa*, the kingdom where a scholar of the *AV* resides remains free from disturbances and attains prosperity.[40] The *Matsya Purāṇa* prescribes that the king should appoint only the scholar of the *AV* as his priest. The *Prasthānabheda* regards the *AV* as a unique *Veda*. Although this *Veda* is not suitable for the performance of *Yajña*, it is marvelous as far as the rituals of peace, vitality and black magic practices are concerned. It can be concluded that the *AV* is rated quite high in the entire *Vedic* literature.

f) *Objective of the Study:*

The *AV Saṁhitā* represents a wide variety of subjects dealing with ritualistic and non ritualistic aspects. In the hymns of the *AV* some essential aspects of human life are described. Among them warding off the enemies, demons and monsters, remedy of the diseases like – tuberculosis, hemorrhage, vein binding, worms, snake bite, jaundice and many others are described. The healing devices of these diseases are found in the *AV* through a magico-religious process. The charms and spells used in this magico-religious process include a wide variety along with medicinal plants and therapeutic measures. Prayers for human welfare, a plentiful and timely rain, prosperity, health, wellbeing of the king, harmony of the family also occupy a very important place. Welfare and wellbeing of mankind is one of the important features of the *AV Saṁhitā*.

The *AV Saṁhitā* initially was not included in the realm of the *Vedas* (*Trayī*). The variety of the contents of the *AV Saṁhitā* and its magico-religious practices barred its inclusion in the '*Trayī*'. The proposed research work has been undertaken to study the

[40] Av. P. 4.6.1

charms and spells of the *AV Saṁhitā* with special reference to the medicinal discourses and human welfare to ascertain the contribution, importance and its relevance in the present study. The objective of the study is to find an account of the cravings for wellbeing and welfare of mankind as found in the *AV*. A study of the healing devices and a survey of the medicinal plants is also an added objective of this study.