Theme on peace in the *Atharvaveda*

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Abstract

In the *Atharvaveda*, we find the variety of customs and concepts current amongst the people relating to birth and burial, love and marriage, hearth and home, field and cattle, caste and community, Government and politics, trade and commerce, arts and industry, magic and medicine, anatomy and astronomy, theosophy and cosmogony and many more things. Overall, this Veda stands as a witness to the ancient Indian culture and traditions. There is a group of hymns in the *Atharvavedasamhitā* meant for bringing peace in the society. They are widely known as *Sāmanasasyāni* hymns. These hymns are applied for produce harmony. The theme is also revealed in the *Rksamhitā*, the *Taittirīyasamhitā*, the *Vājasaneyasamhitā*, and the *Maitrāyanisamhitā*. But nowhere is it treated as prominently or distinctly as in the *Atharvavedasamhitā*.

The main objective of the proposed paper is to search out all available information which was in practice at that time and also possibilities of their application in the present society.  
**Keywords:** *Atharvaveda*, *Peace*, *Sāmanasasyāni*

1. **Introduction:** The *Atharvaveda* is certainly the youngest of the four Vedas though it is doubtless old in material. This *Veda* which is a collection of 731 hymns containing nearly 6000 verses is divided into twenty books, these are represented by two recensions, i.e. *S’aunaka* and *Paippalāda*. In the *Atharvaveda*, we find the variety of customs and concepts current amongst the people relating to birth and burial, love and marriage, hearth and home, field and cattle, caste and community, Government and politics, trade and commerce, arts and industry, magic and medicine, anatomy and astronomy, theosophy and cosmogony and many more things. Overall, this Veda stands as a witness to the ancient Indian culture and traditions.

There is a group of hymns in the *Atharvavedasamhitā* meant for bringing peace in the society. They are widely known as *Sāmanasasyāni* hymns. These hymns are applied for bringing harmony. The theme is also revealed in the *Rksamhitā*\(^1\), the *Taittirīyasamhitā*\(^2\), the *Vājasaneyasamhitā*\(^3\), and the *Maitrāyanisamhitā*\(^4\). But nowhere is it treated

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as prominently or distinctly as in the Atharvavedasāṁhitā.

2. Analysis:
2.1 Atharvaveda III.30: Family peace is very important for peaceful society. The restoration of family peace is meaningfully described in this hymn. For restoration of harmony in our family we should remember the following:. . . . 
a) The relationship between husband and wife should be as like as cow and calf⁵. Harmony of mind between a cow and her calf is described in the hymn VI.70 so that she let her mind fix on her calf, desire her calf and hasten after it. This hymn is also uttered in a pacificatory rite for producing mutual attachment between a cow and calf⁶.
b) Each of the family members should maintain the unity of their heart and mind. They should not hurt one another⁷. Adam Smith wrote that a society may subsist among different men, as among different merchants, from a sense of its utility without any mutual love or affection, if only they refrain from doing injury to each other⁸.
c) Brother should not betray his own brother for their paternal property. In that way sister also should not betray her own sister⁹.

The hymn III.30 is an appeal for harmony in family. It is intended to pacify the quarrel between husband and wife or among the other family members and to restore harmony in the family. It is used for producing family peace in Sāṁmanasyāṇī Karmāṇī¹⁰.

2.2 Atharvaveda III.8: This hymn establishes harmony between teacher and pupil. The last two verses “sāṁ vo maṇāṃsi” and “aḥaṁ grbhnāmi manasā” of this hymn are uttered in the Sāṁmanasyāṇī Karmāṇī¹¹. But this whole charm is also used in Upanayana Karmāṇī¹².

2.3 Atharvaveda VI.42 & VI.43: These two hymns are meant to pacify anger in general. They are the converse of the two hymns IV.31 and IV.32 in which anger personified is made up to destroy enemies.
a) According to Sāyaṇa, the charm VI.42 is practised by a woman against her angry husband or lover¹³. On the other hand, it is used by a man to appease an angry woman. The person who desires to appease anger takes up a stone while reciting the 1st verse of this hymn. Then he places the stone upon the ground while reciting the 2nd verse and then he spits around the stone while reciting the last verse. At last he lays an arrow on a bow while standing in the shadow of the wrathful person. In this way an angry person can be pacified¹⁴. The hymn is also recited by one who is consecrated for the performance of the soma sacrifice, if he has been guilty of an outburst of anger¹⁵.
b) According to the hymn VI.43, the magic power of darbha grass is employed to appease anger. That is why darbha grass is known as manyuṣ’amanā.

The two hymns give us a message that the man and woman may be associated like friends in their relationship by thrown away anger.

2.4 Atharvaveda VI.64: In this charm, a prayer is devoted for union and concord in the Samiti, wishing for common aim and common mind. The two Atharvavedic charms II.27 and VII.12 are the most significant to secure influence in the Samiti or assembly. The former
undertakes with the aid of a talisman of the pātā planta to overcome the debate of a hostile disputant.

2.5 Atharvaveda VII.52: This hymn expresses a wish for harmony among one's own people and also among those unknown. There should be no conflict against the divine will. It is recited in the Sāmanasyāṇī Karmāṇī. It establishes harmony of mind among people and with the divine mind.

2.6 Atharvaveda VII.44 & VI.94: The hymn VII.44 brings back harmony between two enemies. The charm VI.94 expresses the word Saṁnam, i.e. 'to bend to one's will'. It brings about submission to one's will. The first two verses (VI.94.1-2) of this hymn are the repetition of the hymn III.8 (5-6).

2.7 Atharvaveda VI.73 & VI.74: These two charms allay discord. They are uttered in the Sāmanasyāṇī Karmāṇi to be united our bodies.

3. Conclusion: From the above discussion we can conclude that the Sāmanasyāṇi hymns were believed to pacify the anger or jealousy of a person, to establish good relationship between the husband and wife, the cow and its calf, and among the other family members, to bring back peace between two enemies etc. They have not only practical application to bring back harmony but also teach us how to live peacefully in a society.

End Notes:
1. Ṛksasmihiṇī X.83, X.84, X.166, X.191
2. Tiṣṭhitriyāsminhiṇī 3.4.4.1; 7.5.23.1
3. Vājasaneyiṣminhiṇī 7.25
4. Maitrīyanisminhiṇī 2.6.6; 1.4.14
5. Atharvavedasamhiṇī III.30.1
6. Kauśikasātra 41.18-20
7. Atharvavedasamhiṇī III.30.2
9. Atharvavedasamhiṇī III.30.3
10. Kauśikasātra 2.6
11. Kauśikasātra 7.6
12. Kauśikasātra 2.3
14. Ibid.
15. Vaitānasātra, 12.13
16. Atharvavedasamhiṇī II.27.1
17. Kauśikasātra 12.5-9
18. Atharvavedasamhiṇī VI.94.2
19. Kauśikasātra 8.23

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