

CHAPTER III

ANIMAL SACRIFICE IN VARIOUS VEDIC RITUALS

In the language of the Brāhmaṇas and Śrautasūtras animal sacrifice is known as Paśubandha or Niruḍhapasūbandha. The word pasūbandha means tying up of the animal to the sacrificial stake (Yūpa). It is called Niruḍha because in it is offered an eviscerated animal. According to SB 11.7.2.1 animal sacrifice is of two types. One is of the Haviryajña order and the other is of the order of Soma sacrifice and is included in the Soma rituals themselves. According to SB in the Haviryajña type of animal sacrifice the sacrificer is required to observe a vow. Two other characteristics of this type of sacrifice are the carrying forward of the 'Praṇīta' water and the taking up of 'Viṣṇu' strides (Viṣṇukrama) by the sacrificer who follows the Praṇīta water carried by the Adhvaryu.¹

The primary deity of the Haviryajña type of animal sacrifice is Prajāpati. Three other deities namely, Sūrya, Agni and Indra are also regarded as its deities.² It is to be

1. The word Praṇīta means that which has been fetched. This water is carried in a vessel by the Adhvaryu from the north of Gārhapatya to the north of Āhavanīya. Cf. Ap.ŚS, 1.15.7; 16.3.5.

Viṣṇukramas are four steps taken by the sacrificer to the recitation of four Mantras each of which begin with the words 'viṣṇoḥ kramōsi. Cf. KŚS, 6.2.4; 16.5.11 Ap.ŚS, 4.14.6.7.

2. Cf. SB , 11.8.3.2; KŚS, 4.3.26.

performed every year when there is abundant fodder i.e., in the rainy season.³ It is performed at the house of the sacrificer for the sake of securing cattle. SB 11.8.3.5 has equated this animal sacrifice with the Asvamedha and has stated that through it the sacrificer attains as great a world as can be attained through Asvamedha.

While the Pūrvamīmāṃsā of Jaimīni (8.1.13) considers Nirudhapasubandha as a modification of the Agniṣomīya Pasūyāga, the Srautasūtras treat it as an independent ritual. Āśvalāyana (3.8) calls it nirmita and states that its deities are Indra and Agni and that it should be performed every year or every six months. As against this there is the other animal sacrifice which belong to the Soma order.⁴ Commenting on this view Nārāyaṇa states that this Nirudhapasubandha is the model of all independent animal sacrifices, while Agniṣomīya is the model of all animal sacrifices of Soma order, i.e., the Savanīyapasūyāga and the Anubandhyā ritual. According to Srautasūtras Nirudhapasubandha is one of the seven Haviryajñas. These seven are — Agnyādheya, Darsāpūrṇamāsasayāgas, Pasubandha, Cāturmāsya, Sautrāmaṇī and Pākayajña.⁵ All the Srautasūtras such as Āśvalāyana (3.10.1-8), Kātyāyana (Chapt. 6), Baudhāyana (Chapt. 4), Āpastamba (Chapt. 7),

3. SB , 11.7.1.1,3; KSS, 6.1.1.

4. Cf. 'saumyaśca nirmitaśca/nirmita aindrāgna/ṣaṇmāsasya sāmavatsaro vā/'

5. ĀpSS, 23.10.8; Lāt.SS, 5.4.

Vaikhānasa (chapt. 10) etc. have dealt with this Nirudhapaśubandha. It being considered a Haviryajña, it shares some of the common features of the Darsāpūrṇamāsayāgas. It is performed by an Āhitāgni either on the full moon day or new moon day. It is a sacrifice of two-days duration, the first day being devoted to preliminary preparations. Construction and erection of the Yūpa is treated in detail in all the Śrautasūtras.

The ritualistic details of Nirudhapaśubandha are almost same as those of the animal sacrifice of the Soma order, except for certain differences pertaining to certain details of the Yūpa, of the animals and deities as well as some procedural details. So far as the procedural differences are concerned three of these are the ones stated in SB 11.1.7.2.1.. Some other differences are as follows — In Nirudhapaśubandha two Vedīs are constructed following procedures laid down for constructing the Vedī for Varuṇapraghāsa. Construction of the Vedī is preceded by an oblation accompanied by the recitation of the Ṣaḍhotṛmantras.⁶

According to some the ritual of choosing of the priests by the Adhvaryu is done only in the animal sacrifice of the Soma order.⁷ Maṇḍapas like Sadaḥ, Havir

6. Cf. KŚS, 6.2.1,2; 6.1.33; Bh ŚS, 7.1.1. Ṣaḍhotṛs are recited by a group of six priests. Cf. SB, 11.7.2.6; ApSS, 7.1.2. The Mantras are found in Taittiriya Āraṇyaka, 3.4.

7. ĀŚS, 3.1; ŚŚS, 6.1.23,24.

dhāna etc. are not required in Nirudhapasūbandha.⁸ In the animal sacrifice of the Soma order during the Vapāhoma the omentum is twice basted with ghee. This is not done in the Nirudhapasūbandha.⁹ Another difference between the two is that in the former the lungs, spleen, the upper part of the scrotum and the pericardium are not offered. Whereas in the latter one may or may not offer them.¹⁰ Another difference between these two types of sacrifices is that in the one belonging to Soma order Pasūpurodāśa in eleven potsherds is offered, which is not done in the other.¹¹ In Nirudhapasūbandha the Sūla Avabhṛtha, i.e., concealing of the heart spit in the soil which is partly dry and partly moist is not followed by the purificatory bath taken at the end of a Soma sacrifice.¹²

ANIMAL SACRIFICE OF THE SOMA ORDER

The Prakṛti of all Soma sacrifices is Agniṣṭoma, i.e. praise of Agni. It is a one-day ritual. The actual performance of Agniṣṭoma which consists in pressing and offering of soma-juice is preceded by four preparatory days. Of these the fourth day is known as Upavasatha and on this day the sacrificer observes fast. It is on this day

8. KŚS, 6.10.14.

9. Ibid, 6.7.21.

10. Ibid, 6.7.12.

11. Ibid, 6.7.17

12. Ibid, 6.10.1-8.

that an animal is offered to Agni and Soma.¹³ Animal sacrifice plays an important role in a Soma sacrifice. As can be gathered from the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa in a Soma sacrifice the sacrificer is supposed to offer himself to the gods. This being not feasible he sacrifices an animal and thus frees himself from becoming an offering to the gods. The same idea has also been expressed in the TS.¹⁴ The animal thus sacrificed is called Agniṣomīya, for, it is offered to Agni and Soma, who represent all the gods.

This animal sacrifice has been dealt with in detail in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, the Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa, the Sātapatha Brāhmaṇa as well as in the Taittirīya Saṁhitā.¹⁵

As to the kind of animals offered in a Soma-ritual an Arthavāda in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa mentions five animals viz., man, horse, cow, sheep, and goat as offerings. The Aitareya does not mention the kind of animal offered in the Agniṣṭoma. According to the Sātapatha Brāhmaṇa the Agniṣomīya animal is a bi-coloured

13. Cf. AB , 14.2; 15.1; SB , 3.9.2.7. The day is called Upavasatha because, on this day the gods are believed to have come and resided in the dwellings of the sacrificer. Cf. Ibid, 2.1.4.1; SB , 3.7.2.3.4, AB , 6.3; SSS , 5.15.1.

14. TS , VI. 1.11.6.

15. Cf. AB , 6.3; 7.4; KB , 10
SB , 3.7.2; 3.9.1.
TS , VI. 3.6; VI.3.11.

goat,¹⁶ its colours being either black and white or reddish and white. The Aitareya Brāhmaṇa gives the colour of the animal as black and white and concludes that the only requirement is that the animal should be healthy.¹⁷

Killing of the animal in the Agniṣṭoma sacrifice has been described in detail in both the Brāhmaṇas, especially in the Sātapatha. At the very outset the Adhvaryu brings a portion of Āhavanīya fire and the animal to the altar. Then taking a rope he makes a noose and throws it over the animal and binds it to the Yūpa which has already been erected. It is tied to the post with a rope fastened to the left fore-foot, round the back and over the left horn.¹⁸ To make the animal sacrificially pure the Adhvaryu sprinkles water over it and invokes permission from its parents as well as relatives for killing the animal. By giving water for drinking the Adhvaryu makes the animal internally pure. He anoints the fore-head and the other parts of the animal body with clarified butter.¹⁹ The Hotṛ proceeds with the Āprī hymns and Adhvaryu offers the ten fore-offerings (Prayājas).²⁰

16. SB , 3.8.2.26; 3.3..4.23

According to KB ,(10.3) a black and white goat is the symbol of day and night which constitute a ritual day, whereas, a red and white goat is a symbol of Agni and Soma.

17. Cf. AB , 6.3.

18. Cf. Sāyaṇa on TS , 1.3.8.'

19. Cf. SB , 3.7.3.4.

20. Cf. SSS, 5.16.8; 18.2.

Total number of fore-offerings are eleven. The eleven²¹ offering comes after the killing of the animal and before offering its omentum to the gods. The slaughtering knife and a chip of the Yūpa (Svaru) are anointed with ghee and the fore-head of the animal is touched with the ghee thereafter. The Āgnidhra takes a fire-brand from the Āhavanīya fire thrice around the animal to the accompaniment of recital of Paryagnikaraṇa Ṛks.²¹ Then holding the fire brand he leads the animal to the slaughtering place where the Sāmitra fire is lit from the fire-brand. The sacrificer along with the Adhvaryu and Pratiprasthātr accompanies it. Significantly the sacrificer does not hold on to the animal directly but touches the Adhvaryu who in turn holds on to Pratiprasthātr who touches the animal from behind with two omentum roasters.²² This description is not available in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa which refers only to the Sāmitṛs i.e., officials who slaughter the animal.²³ According to Āpastamba while Āgnidhra walks with the fire brand in front, the Sāmitā i.e., the slaughterer leads the animal to the slaughtering place.²⁴ According to Aitareya Brāhmaṇa 6.6 while slaughtering the animal its legs are placed towards the north. Before slaughtering its eyes are dedicated to sun, its soul to Vāyu, its life to

21. Cf. ĀpSS , 7.15.2.

22. Cf. SĀ , 3.8.1.9.

23. Cf. AB , 6.6

24. Cf. ĀpSS , 7.15.10.

to Antarikṣa, ears to the Directions and body to Earth. The animal is not killed with the slaughter knife, but is either choked to death by keeping its mouth closed or strangled by tightening the noose. According to Aitareya Brāhmaṇa 6.6 the idea behind this manner of killing is to keep its life breath confined in side its body.²⁵ In the language of the Sātapatha the animal is not "killed" but "quieted". It is to be noted that when the animal is being thus quieted the sacrificer and the priests turn away from the slaughtering place and sit facing the Āhavanīya fire so that they may not be witnesses to the animal being strangled to death.²⁶ The dead body is then cleansed by the wife of the sacrificer in order to ritually revive its organs so that it may become fit for the immortal gods. The rest of the water left out by the Yajamānapatnī is sprinkled over the body by the Adhvaryu and the Yajamāna. The body is then turned over so as to make it lie on its back. The Adhvaryu applies the edge of the knife over it and it is skinned thereafter. Skinning is done in such a way so that the entire skin comes out without any tear on it. Before cutting the navel of the animal, the omentum (Vapī) is taken out and gathered around two roasting sticks called Vapāśrapāṇis. This omentum is cut off from the belly

25. Cf. KŚŚ , 6.5.17.18.

26. Cf. ŚB , 3.8.1.15; ĀŚŚ , 3.4.

the Adhvaryu from all sides and is heated first at the cooking-fire (Sāmitra) then at the Āhavanīya. The animal is roasted at the Sāmitra by the Pratiprasthātr. The Aitareya Brāhmaṇa gives in detail the procedure to be followed for cutting up the rest of the body. A particular description is not found in the Sātapatha. According to the Aitareya the breast of the animal is cut out to look like an eagle. The two upper fore-legs are cut in the shape of hatchets, while the lower fore legs are made to look like spikes. The shoulders are cut in the shape of two tortoises. The loins are cut out intact. The thighs are cut out in the shape of shields and the ribs in the shape of oleander leaves. The ribs, twenty six in number, are to be taken out in the same order in which they are found in the rib cage. The rectum is not cut out. Its excrements are buried under ground. According to Kātyāyana its blood is also buried under ground. The blood is regarded as the share of the Rakṣas.²⁷ The purport of this description found in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (6.6) is that the various parts of the animal are cut out in the very shapes in which they are found in the body.²⁸ According to Sātapatha, the animal is cut into pieces after it has been cooked by the Sāmitra. The cutting is done by the Pratiprasthātr. At the very outset he cuts out the

27. Cf. ŚB , 3.8.2.13-15; AB , 6.7; KB , 10.4; KSS , 6.7.

28. Cf. TB , 3.6.6; Sāyaṇa on AB , 6.6.

heart. Then the tongue, the breast, the left fore foot, flanks, the liver and the kidneys are cut off one by one. The hind part is divided into three parts of which the broad piece is reserved for the Upayājas i.e., the by-offerings. The middle portion is divided into two parts and are placed in the Juhū. The remaining small portion is divided into two parts and reserved for offering to Agnisviṣṭakṛt. Then the right haunce i.e., the part between the last rib and the thigh is cut off. Then the upper part of the right fore foot and the left haunce are cut off. These two parts are also meant for offering to Sviṣṭakṛdagni. According to Sātapatha no cuttings are made of the head, the shoulders, the neck and the hind thighs.²⁹ The tail of the animal is cut off and reserved for the Patnīsaṁyāja.

The most significant of the animal offerings has been the Vapāhoma which succeeds the last of the eleven fore-offerings. The Aitareya Brāhmaṇa states that the most important part of the animal body is the omentum : 'sa etāvāneva paśuryāvatī vapā.'³⁰ The offering of the omentum has been compared to the "offering of nectar" to the gods.³¹ The sacrificer after his consecration becomes indebted to the gods. He is freed from this debt through

29. Cf. SB , 3.8.3,5,9,10,15-19,27; TS,VI. 3.7.

30. Cf. AB , 7.3.

31. Ibid , 7.4.

the Vapāhoma. Prior to this offering he is referred to as the "Dikṣita". It is only after the Vapāhoma that he attains the status of a Yajamāna.³² According to Sātapatha when the Adhvaryu before offering the omentum pours ghee on it, the entire animal, as it were, becomes basted with ghee.³³ In other words offering of the omentum almost equals the offering of the whole animal. Both the Aitareya and the Sātapatha Brāhmaṇa describe the procedure of offering the omentum. First an under layer of ghee is placed on the Juhū. On it is placed a piece of gold. Then the omentum is placed over it, which again is topped by a second piece of gold and then basted with ghee. According to Aitareya Brāhmaṇa these five layers are made up of ghee, pieces of gold and the omentum, make the Vapāhoma five-fold. Through this five-fold offering to gods the sacrificer attains heaven, for he too being made up of hair, skin, flesh, bone and marrow is five-fold.³⁴ According to the Sātapatha Brāhmaṇa (3.8.2.7) the basting of the contents on the Juhū should be done twice. It holds that the offering of the omentum with two pieces of gold, one underneath and one above it, results in bestowing immortality to the victim in the other world.³⁵ The omentum together with the roasting spits is finally thrown away

32. Cf. Ibid, 6.9.

33. Cf. ŚB , 3.8.2.25.

34. Cf. AB , 7.4; ĀpŚS, 7.20.9-11.

35. Cf. KŚS , 6.7.21.

into the sacrificial fire. The Vapāhoma is followed by the offering of a Purodāśa. Thereafter offerings of other parts of the animal are made. First, the Adhvaryu offers the Vasā i.e., the melted fat and juice of the cooked animal to Agni and Soma. Next comes the offering to the deity called Manotā.³⁶ As a matter of fact, the Vasā is offered in between the recitation of two half verses of the Yājñyā belonging to the Manotā-offering. This offering is followed by an oblation of butter and curd (Pṛṣadājya) to the lord of the forest i.e., Vanaspati. While the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa holds that Vanaspati symbolises Prāṇa and hence this oblation to Vanaspati endows vitality to the offerings, the Sātapatha states that Vanaspati is Soma and therefore through this Vanaspatiyāga the sacrificial animal becomes Soma itself.³⁷ This Manotā offering consists of the left over of the Vasā, the heart, the tongue, the breast, the broad piece of flesh from the back of the animal, the kidneys and the rectum.³⁸ According to Aitareya Brāhmaṇa three deities namely, Vāk, Gau and Agni are known as Manotā.³⁹

Offering to Manotā is succeeded by offering of the meat portions to Sviṣṭakṛdagni. Whatever Vasā is left

36. According to some the Manotā offerings are not done. Cf. ĀSS , 3.4.

37. Cf. AB , 6.10; SB , 3.8.3.33.

38. Cf. SB , 3.8.3.25,30.

39. Cf. AB , 6.10.

out after the Sviṣṭakṛdyāga, with that the Adhvaryu sprinkles the quarters.⁴⁰ Just as there have been eleven fore-offerings i.e., Prayājas so also there are eleven after-offerings known as Anuyājas and eleven by-offerings known as Upayājas. The Anuyājas are performed by offering Pṛṣadājya to the Āhavanīya fire.⁴¹

The Upayājas are performed by the Pratiprasthātr by offering meat portions reserved for the purpose to the hearth (Dhiṣṇya) of the Hotṛ priest into which hot coal from the Sāmitra fire has been thrown by the Āgnidhra priest.⁴² Of these eleven by-offerings the last four are called Atyupayājas i.e., supplementary by-offerings.⁴³

As can be gathered from the Sātapatha Brāhmaṇa the head, neck, the shoulders and the hind thighs are not offered to the deities and according to Kātyāyana the lungs, spleen and the upper part of the scrotum are also not offered.⁴⁴ This Agniṣomīya Paśūyāga ends with the performance of four Patnīsaṃyājas by offering the inner side of the tail of the animal to the wives of gods, Soma, Tvastṛ and Agni Gṛhapati.⁴⁵

40. Cf. SB , 3.8.3.34,35.

41. Cf. KŚS , 6.103, 104.

42. Ibid , 6, 206-208.

43. Cf. SB , 3.8.4.9-18; 3.8.5.1-4.

44. Ibid , 3.8.3. 27-29; Karka on KŚS , 6.7.

45. Ibid , 3.8.5.6, 7; ŚŚS, 1.15.1,2.

So far as partaking of the animal offering by the sacrificer is concerned there appears to have been two opposite views. According to one view he should not partake any portion of the animal-offering, the other view, however, prescribes such partaking of animal flesh.⁴⁶

This Agniṣomīya Paśúyāga according to some serves as the role model for all animal sacrifices. Thus, the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa 14.2 says : paśurupavasathe bhavati/ tamevānu ye ke ca paśubandhāste sarveṅniṣṭomamapi yanti/" Commenting on this Sāyaṇa says : "sutyādivasāt pūrvo divasa upavasathākhyah/ tasminnagnīṣomīyah paśuranuṣṭhīyate /tad vikṛtirūpā vedoktāḥ sarve paśubandhāḥ/ paśudravya-sāmyād agniṣomīyasadrśāḥ sarve paśubandhā apyagniṣṭomam yanti/"⁴⁷ Besides this, on the fifth day, i.e., on the day of the Agniṣṭoma is performed another animal sacrifice. In this ritual either one animal is offered to Agni or Indrāgni, or a set of eleven animals is offered to eleven deities namely, Agni, Sarasvatī, Soma, Puṣan, Bṛhaspati, Viśvedevāḥ, Indra, Marutaḥ, Indrāgni, Savitā and Varuṇa.⁴⁸ Agniṣṭoma attains completion with the performance of the Samiṣṭayāgas. This is followed by another animal sacrifice to Mitra and Varuṇa after the Udayanīya or concluding

46. Cf. AB , 6.3; ĀŚŚ , 11.20.14; ŚŚŚ , 7.8.

47. Cf. Ibid , 6.1.1.

48. Cf. ĀŚŚ , 5.3; ŚŚŚ , 6.9. 1-3; KSŚ , 8.25.

oblation in which a barren cow is offered to these two deities.⁴⁹

SAVANĪYAPASÚ OR EKĀDASĪNI RITUAL

As it has already been mentioned on the 5th day of the Agniṣṭoma which is the actual day of the Soma ritual there takes place an animal sacrifice. The Yajur Veda and the Srautasūtras like those of Kātyāyana, (Chapt. 8), Āpastamba (Chapt. 14), Baudhāyana (Chapt. 18) etc. prescribe eleven animals for eleven deities. Sāṃkhāyana 6.9.1-3 prescribes either one or eleven animals whereas, Āśvalāyana 5.3 prescribes only one. Thus, it says 'atha savanīyena paśunā carati/yaddevato bhavati/āgneyo agniṣṭoma aindrāgna ukthye dvitīya aindro vṛṣṇiḥ ṣoḍaśīni tṛtīya sarasvatī meṣyatirātre caturthī iti 'kratupaśavaḥ/.' This ritual is known either as Savanīyapaśuyāga or Ekādasīniyāga.⁵⁰

When there is only one Yūpa to which the animal dedicated to Agni is tied and to its body the other animals, it goes by the name of Savanīyapaśuyāga. This name also applies when there is only one animal offered to a single deity. The Ekādasīni in which there are eleven

49. Cf. SB , 4.5.1.5. The word Samiṣṭayajuh stands for the nine Yajuh Mantras which indicate completion of a sacrifice. With it an oblation is offered to Vāyu. Cf. TS , VI.6.2; SB , 4.4.4.3; ĀpŚS , 3.13.2; BŚS . 1.2.1.

50. Cf. Dictionary Of Vedic Rituals, Delhi, 1978, pp. 58, 62.

Yūpas corresponding to eleven animals is modelled on Savanīyapaśūyāga. All these have been discussed in Jaiminī's Pūrvamīmāṃsā.⁵¹

Detailed description of Ekādaśinipaśūyāga is available in the SB (3.9.1) as well as in TS (VI.6.4,5). For this ritual thirteen Yūpas are erected. The middlemost Yūpa is placed just opposite the sacrificial fire. In fact this Yūpa is erected before the Agniṣomīya Paśūyāga.⁵² Then the second is erected to the north of the middlemost one and then the one to its south is erected. In this way there are erected six Yūpas on either side of the middlemost Yūpa. The height of the Yūpas gradually increase from north to south. According to TS the twelfth Yūpa (when counted from the extreme north) is called Upaśaya because it is not erected and as such lies on the ground. Two cords are tied around it and it is placed at the southern side of the sacrificial fire. No animal is tied to it. TS states that the sacrificer should mentally attribute his enemy to the Upaśaya. If however, he has no enemy he should attribute a wild animal, e.g., a mole to it. The thirteenth Yūpa is reserved for the ritual meant for the wives of the gods and hence known as Patnīvat. To the middlemost Yūpa is tied the animal dedicated to Agni.

51. Cf. Jaiminīsūtra, 8.1.14,15. Also see Sandal, M.L., Mīmāṃsā Sūtras of Jaiminī, Vol.II, Delhi, 1980, p. 461, under Sūtra 8.1.15.

52. Cf. SB, 3.7.2.3,4.

To the one on its immediate north is tied the ewe to Sarasvatī. To its immediate south is tied the goat for Soma. Then again to the next northern Yūpa is tied the he-goat to Puṣan. Then to the next southern Yūpa the he-goat to Bṛhaspati, so on and so forth ending with the animal meant for Varuṇa. Besides the above stated six deities the other five deities honoured in the ritual are Indra, the Maruts, Vis'vedevāḥ, Indrāgni and Savitr̥. All the eleven animals dedicated to the eleven deities have been described in the VS (XXIX.58).

Killing and offering of each of the animals are done by following the procedure laid down for Agniṣomīya ritual. The ritual begins with the offering of a he-goat to Agni and is followed by those of others.

After the offering of the omentum of the barren cow in Anubandhyā, begins the ritual called Patnīvat.⁵³ To the thirteenth Yūpa reserved for the purpose is tied an animal to the wives of gods as well as to Tvastṛ. This animal according to some is a hairy uncastrated tawny bull. According to others it should be a goat. This animal is however, not killed but let loose after Paryagni-karaṇa.⁵⁴

53. Cf. TS , VI.6.6.

54. Cf. SB , 3.7.2.8; KŚS , 8.9.1; ĀpŚS , 14.7.12-18; BSS , 18.15.

The above mentioned animal sacrifices form the basis for the performance of animal offerings incorporated into various sacrifices. As such the Brāhmaṇa texts or the Śrautasūtras do not repeat all the details involved in their performance, but mention only the variants along with their corresponding reasons. Thus, e.g., with reference to Gavāmayana the TB (1.2.5) prescribes nine extra Savanīya animals for the nine days at the end of the sacrifice which remain uncovered by the usual Ekādaśins.⁵⁵ Then again on the middle most day of Gavāmayana known as Viṣuvat there are two Savanīya animals offered to Sūrya and for Anubandhyā there are three barren cows dedicated to Mitrāvaruṇa Viśvedevāḥ and Bṛhaspati.⁵⁶ Similarly in Aśvamedha there are many variants and hence these have been recorded in detail. Some other sacrifices in which animal rites are marked by certain distinctive and noteworthy features are Agnicayana, Sautrāmaṇī, Puruṣamedha and Sarvamedha. These rituals have been treated in detail in the Brāhmaṇas and the Śrauta texts. Hence, we have taken account of these sacrifices separately.

ANIMAL SACRIFICE IN AGNICAYANA

The SB. (Kāṇḍas 6 and 7) provides us with a very detailed account of the process involved in building the

55. Cf. BhaṭṭaBhāskara on TB, 1.2.5.

56. Cf. SB , 4.6.3.3; KŚS , 13.2.10,29.

fire altar meant for various rituals. This process of building fire altars begins with an animal sacrifice which proceeds the making of bricks for the altar. The ŚB (6.2.1.5,15) first relates an ancient custom of slaughtering five animals namely, a man for Viśvakarmā, a horse for Varuṇa, a bull for Indra, a ram for Tvastr and a he-goat for Agni. The heads of these animals were cut off and put aside while the trunks were allowed to float in a stretch of water. The sacrifice was completed by offering another he-goat. According to Kātyāyana (16.1.14,19,22) the body of the he-goat meant for Agni was not placed in water, but rather was offered in the sacrifice. What remained of it after the offerings were made, was placed in water. The water in which the trunks of the slaughtered animals were placed was gathered for mixing with the clay which too was gathered from that very stretch of water. These two were later mixed together to make the bricks.⁵⁷ The heads that were kept aside were later put on the fire-pan (Ukhā) and then after making an oblation on the human head all the heads were removed from the fire altar.⁵⁸ ŚB clearly states this to be an ancient custom. It says that Prajāpati was the first to slaughter the animal and Śyāparṇa Sāyakāyana was the last human being to perform this sacrifice. Thus, it says – 'tān hyetān prajāpatiḥ prathama ālebhe/śyāparṇa sāyakāyanotha ha smaitānevān-

57. Cf. ŚB , 6.2.1.8; KSŚ, 16.1.20.

58. Cf. ŚB , 6.1.2.30; 7.5.2.1-13.

tareṇa ālabhata ' /⁵⁹ SB. further tells us of people apparently posterior to Śyāparṇa who procured the afore mentioned animal heads somehow or other without killing them in a sacrifice and had put them in the altar. Then there were others who used golden or earthen replicas instead of the real animal heads. It may be noted in this connection that Kātyāyana (16.1.32-35) prescribes these as three alternative practices that one may follow. SB however, forbids such practices and states that the prevailing practice is to perform the required animal sacrifice with either an animal dedicated to Prajāpati or with one to Vāyu. Thus, it says 'atha etarhīmau dvāvevālabhyete prājāpatyaśca vāyavyaśca/'⁶⁰ It should however, be noted that SB 6.2.2.15 prescribes the ancient custom of killing five animals as an alternative. But it has also stated that this one may do if he is free enough to do so.⁶¹

The animal sacrifice to Prajāpati as stated in the SB is performed by the Carakas i.e., the followers of the Caraka school of Black Yajur Veda. From this it follows that this practice is not upheld by the SB. The animal meant for Prajāpati is a hornless dark grey he-goat. The one dedicated to Vāyu is a bearded hornless he-goat of

59. Ibid , 6.2.1.39.

60. loc.cit.

61. loc.cit.

white colour. This animal for Vāyu is looked upon as representing the five animals killed in ancient times.⁶² Both these animal sacrifices are based on the Paśubandha ritual. The animal is slaughtered in the month of Phālguna on the full-moon day, after the full-moon offering has been made.⁶³ While in the Prakṛtiyāga the Paśupurodāśa is offered after the Paśuhaviḥ (meat offerings), in the present case offering of the Paśupurodāśa precedes the Paśuhaviḥ.⁶⁴ Besides the Samiṣṭayajuh offerings and the Hṛdayasūla followed by Avabhṛtha are also not done. This animal sacrifice is looked upon as the first Dikṣā of the sacrificer.⁶⁵

The head of the he-goat sacrificed either to Prajāpati or Vāyu is filled with gold chips and placed on the Ukhā and later is moved out of the fire altar. As pointed out by Kātyāyana the animal head is moved out by uttering the same Mantras that were used for removing the heads of the five animals.⁶⁶

THE SAUTRĀMAṆĪ RITUAL

The Sautrāmaṇī is so called because, it is dedicated to Indra Sutrāman i.e., the 'good protector'.⁶⁷

62. Cf. Ibid , 6.2.2.15; VSS , 18.6.

63. Cf. SB , 6.2.2.16-19.

64. Ibid , 6.2.2.13.

65. Ibid , 6.2.2.38-39.

66. Ibid , 7.5.2.10,28; KSS , 17.5.22.

67. Cf. 'te devā abrūvan sutrātaṁ batainamatra āsātāmiti tasmāt sautrāmaṇī nāma', SB , 5.5. 4.12.

In the RV ⁶⁸ the word sutrāman has been used as an epithet of Indra.

The SB treats this ritual in its fifth as well as in the twelfth Kāṇḍa. The one recorded in the fifth Kāṇḍa forms a part of Rājasūyakratu and according to the S'rautasūtras is known as Carakasautrāmaṇī. The one recorded in the 12th Kāṇḍa is an independent rite and the S'rautasūtras calls it Kaukilisautrāmaṇī.⁶⁹ According to Hiranyakesī 13.23 the former is a general ritual whereas, the later is performed by one who wishes to attain heaven. Here it may be mentioned that the TS (I.8.21) deals only with the Carakasautrāmaṇī, whereas, the TB (11.7) deals only with the one which is an independent ritual.

As stated in the SB (12.7.2.10,12,21; 8.2.21) Sautrāmaṇī is both an Iṣṭi or Haviryajña, a Paśubandha as well as a soma sacrifice. According to the S'rautasūtras of Āpastamba (19.1.2; 5.2) and Kātyāyana (15.10.1) Sautrāmaṇī is a Paśubandha ritual. It is a four-day ritual of which the first three days are taken over by the preparation of surā which here replaces the usual soma juice. The animal sacrifice takes place on the fourth day.⁷⁰ On this day three animals are offered respectively to the Asvins,

68. Cf. RV , VI.47.12,13; X. 63.10; X. 131. 6,7.

69. ĀpSS , 19.5.1; LātSS , 5.4.20. Also see Nārāyaṇa Vṛtti on ASŚ , 3.9.9.

70. Cf. SB , 12.7.3.6; TB , 1.8.5; KSS , 15.10.1; 19.1.14,22.

Sarasvatī and Indra. In Carakasautrāmaṇī one offers a white he-goat to the Asvins, a ewe with a dew lap (Avimalhā) to Sarasvatī and a bull to Indra. If however, this particular set of animals can not be acquired one may offer three he-goats to the three deities. In this case however, the he-goat for the Asvins should be reddish in colour.⁷¹ According to Āśvalāyana (3.9.9) there is also a fourth animal offered to Bṛhaspati.⁷² According to TB 1.8.5 the he-goat meant for the Asvins should be grey in colour whereas, to Sarasvatī one should offer a ram. As pointed out by the Vājasaneyins the grey he-goat for the Asvins and the ram for Sarasvatī are offered when Sautrāmaṇī is performed as an independent ritual.⁷³

For Sautrāmaṇī two Vedīs are prepared, one northern and one southern to the Āhavanīya and two fires are kindled in them.⁷⁴ On the northern fire the animal offerings are prepared. Into this very northern fire the Adhvaryu offers milk and thirty three hoof-cups (Śapha Grahāḥ) of animal fat.⁷⁵ Into the southern fire the Pratiprasthātṛ offers three cups of surā to which the hair of a wolf, a tiger and a lion have been added.⁷⁶

71. Cf. ŚB , 5.4.1; KŚS , 15.10.3-6.

72. Cf. VāŚS , 10.2.

73. Cf. ŚB , 12.7.2.3; KŚS , 19.3.1.

74. Cf. ŚB , 9.7.3.7; 9.3.10.

75. Ibid , 9.9.3.11, 14; 8.3.13.

76. Ibid , 9.7.2.8; 9.3.12,15.

The three animals are tied to one single Yūpa. To the north and south of this Yūpa are erected two other Yūpas to which two other bulls for Indra are tied.⁷⁷ Of these the bull tied to the northern Yūpa is offered to Indra at the very beginning of the sacrifice before or after the Caru offerings to Aditi. The other bull is offered to Indra Vayodhā i.e., the 'giver of strength' at the end of the ceremony after the second Caru offering to Aditi. This animal offering to Indra Vayodhā replaces the usual Anubandhyā ritual performed in the Udayaniyeṣṭi i.e., the closing ritual of the Soma sacrifice.⁷⁸

On the fourth day of Sautrāmaṇī a unique Abhiṣeka of the sacrificer takes place with the remnants of the thirty three fat-offerings. First the Adhvaryu offers sixteen fat-oblations with sixteen verses from VS (XIX. 80-94) to the Asvins, Sarasvatī and Indra. Each oblation consists of two hoof-cups of animal fat. The residue after each oblation is poured into a bowl (Sata). With this the sacrificer is sprinkled after the thirty second hoof-cup has been offered.⁷⁹ This Abhiṣeka takes place just before the Sviṣṭakṛt ritual and after the oblation to Vanaspati.

77. Ibid , 9.9.3.16; KŚS , 19.3.6,7.

78. SB , 12.7.2.16; KŚS , 19.1.5-7, 16,17;
Keith. A.B., The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads, Part II, Delhi, 1976, p. 353.

79. Cf. KŚS , 19.4.12,13 Also see Karka on Ibid, Sūtra 14.

The sacrificer who has been purified by the Adhvaryu and Pratiprasthātr̥ with two feathers of an eagle, sits on a throne on which a black antelope skin has been placed. Before sprinkling him with the fat he is anointed with aromatic substances. Then Adhvaryu sprinkles him with fat, first with a Yajuh̥ to the Asvins, then with one to Sarasvatī and finally with one to Indra. Then he is sprinkled with fat on all sides. According to Kātyāyana (19.4.14) the sacrificer should be sprinkled in such a way that the fat trickles down his head on all sides. After this consecration the Adhvaryu offers the thirty third hoof-cup of fat to all the gods.⁸⁰ The residue of this thirty third cup is drunk by the sacrificer.

The above stated description of Abhiṣeka is recorded in chapters 7 and 8 of the twelfth Kāṇḍa of SB which deals with Kaukili Sautrāmaṇī, as the S'rautasūtras call it. This description is not available in the TB.

While Sraut'rāmaṇī is performed at the end of Rājasūya sacrifice by a Kṣatriya, the other variety is performed by a Brāhmaṇa who is a Somayājī. It can also be performed by a king who has lost his kingdom.⁸¹

As to the result of Sautrāmaṇī through this sacrifice one obtains cattle, offspring, long life,

80. Cf. VS , XX. 11,12.

81. Cf. SB , 5.5.5.9; 9.9.1.1; 9.3.1; KSS , 15.10.13; 14.1.1-3.

immortality, heavenly abode and destruction of one's enemies,⁸²

Besides the texts already referred to, Sautrāmaṇī has also been dealt with in KB. (chapt. 16), GB. (chapt. 2). The Śrautasūtras of Sāṃkhāyana (15.15), Baudhāyana (17.31-38), Hiraṇyakeśi (chapt. 13) etc.

ANIMAL SACRIFICE IN VĀJAPEYA

While a detailed discussion on the various characteristics of Vājapeya sacrifice is available in the ŚB (5.1), it has also been dealt with in TB (1.3), JB (2.192), TMB (chapters. 13 and 18) and GB (2.5).

According to TB 1.3.2,4 Vājapeya is a Soma sacrifice, but it is neither an Agniṣṭoma nor an Ukthya. It is not a Ṣoḍaśī nor an Atirātra. Hence, steps have been taken to bestow on it these characteristics so as to make it a full fledged Soma sacrifice. These steps consist in special animal offerings to special deities. The JB 2.192 calls it an Atiriktayajña, i.e., a distinct ritual. As to the significance of the name Vājapeya ŚB (5.1.3.3; 4.12) says the word Vājapeya means annapeya. Commenting on this Sāyaṇa states that the word anna here stands for 'annavikā-rabhūtaṃ surādravyam', which is drunk in this ceremony. According to TB 1.3.2 the word is actually vājāpya. Thus,

82. Cf. ŚB, 12.7.3.4; 8.2.3.28; 9.1.7,11,17;
GB, 2.5.6.

it says 'vājāpyo vā eṣa'. It is called so because, gods obtained Vāja i.e., Anna by means of this ritual. Commenting on this Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara states that this ritual is called Vājapeya because in it soma is drunk for the sake of attaining food : 'vājāya annāya pīyate somo'sminniti vājapeya.'

It is a sacrifice performed by both Kṣattriyas and Brāhmaṇas in the autumn.⁸³ According to Āsvalāyana (9.9) it is performed by one desires of 'Ādhipatya'. According to Kātyāyana (14.1.10) Vājapeya consists of seventeen Dīkṣās. Āsvalāyana however, states that it either has seventeen Dīkṣās or it attains completion within seventeen days : 'saptadaśā dīkṣāḥ/ saptadaśāpavargo vā.' The vāSS. (9.5,6) while stating that Vājapeya consists of thirteen days of Dīkṣā, three days of Upasad and one Sutyāday says that according to some Vājapeya being a Prājāpatya ritual consists of seventeen Dīkṣā days in honour of Prajāpati, which is followed by three Upasads and the Sutyā.⁸⁴

83. Cf. SB., 5.1.1.11; TB , 1.3.2; KSS , 14.1.1.

84. Dīkṣā is consecration of the sacrificer at the beginning of a Soma sacrifice and takes place after the preliminary Iṣṭi and Āhuti. Upasad is an Iṣṭi consisting of a group of rites performed after Dīkṣā and before Sutyā. It is performed twice a day for at least three days. Sutyā is the day of pressing the somarasa. It is on this day that the actual Soma sacrifice is performed.

Cf. Dictionary Of Vedic Rituals, Delhi, 1978, pp. 73, 54 & 119.

On the Sutyā day on which Vājapeya is performed there takes place Vapā offerings to the gods. Thus, on this day are offered one he-goat to Agni, one to Indrāgni, one to Indra and one ewe to Sarasvatī. These animals make the Savanīyas of Vājapeya. Besides these there is a dappled barren cow for the Maruts. SB states that if a cow which is both dappled and barren cannot be acquired a barren cow of any colour is to be offered.⁸⁵

In Vājapeya there is also a set of seventeen he-goats offered to Prajāpati. These should all be grey in colour, hornless and capable of procreation. If however, seventeen animals with all these qualities are not available, at least a few of them (according to Kātyāyana at least eleven of them) should have these three qualities.⁸⁶ According to SB. 5.1.3.12 the animals dedicated to Prajāpati are killed and their omenta are offered. But according to TB 1.3.4 these animals are set free after Paryagnikaraṇa and there is a final animal offering to Sarasvatī. This is in addition to the Savanīya Paśu offered to Sarasvatī.

The omentum of the barren cow to the Maruts is offered in the Mādhyandina Savana after the Māhendragraha has been offered.⁸⁷ In this connection SB 5.1.3.5

85. Cf. SB. 5.1.3.1,3; TB ,1.3.4;KSS ,14.2.9-11;VāSS ,9.18

86. Cf. SB , 5.1.3.7,10; KSS , 14.2.12,13.

87. Māhendragraha is a Soma offering drawn on a bowl called Graha and is offered to Mahendra at the Mādhyandina Savana i.e., the midday pressing of Soma juice. Cf. ApSS , 13.8.4,6.

refers to the view of another school of ritualists according to which portions from the body of the barren cow are cooked separately in two parts. The first portion is offered to the Maruts as well as to Agni Sviṣṭakṛt while the second portion is given away to human beings.⁸⁸ This same view is upheld by Kātyāyana (14.2.16,17). However, this view has not been accepted by the ŚB according to which all the portions are cooked together and offered to the deities and human beings do not have any share in it.

So far as the omenta of the Prājāpatya offerings are concerned there is one single offering of omenta of all the seventeen animals. This offering takes place in the Mādhyandina Savana after the Vāmadevya Sāman i.e., the Sāman belonging to sage Vāmadeva has been sung.⁸⁹

As to the results of Vājapeya sacrifice it is said that it besides leading to the attainment of food also leads to a) Prajāpati, b) heaven, c) to the attainment of Brahmavarcas and d) to the attainment of all that one may wish to have.⁹⁰

88. According to Sāyaṇa the first meat portion of the barren cow consists of the heart, chest, liver, tongue, right fore-leg, the right hip etc. whereas, the second portion consists of left fore-leg, left hip and one third of the anus.
Cf. Sāyaṇa on ŚB, 5.1.3.5.

89. Cf. *ibid*, 5.1.3.14,12; KSŚ, 14.1.18.

90. a) Cf. ŚB, 5.1.2.9,10,13; TB, 1.3.6; TMB, 13.6.4; JB, 2.192, b) ŚB, 5.2.1.12; TMB, 18.7.1; GB, 2.5-8, c) JB, 2.192. d) TMB, 13.9.20.

ASVAMEDHA

The RV records its knowledge of Asvamedha sacrifice in Sūktas 162 and 163 of Maṇḍala 1. The AB does not deal with this sacrifice but contains references to it. According to this Brāhmaṇa a Kṣattriya king who at the end of the Rājasuya sacrifice gets symbolically consecrated according to the precepts of Aindramahābhīṣeka becomes a Sārvabhouma ruler and thus qualifies for performing the great Asvamedha sacrifice.⁹¹

Asvamedha has been dealt with in great detail in the SB (Kāṇḍa 13) as well as in the TS (chapters IV, V, and VII) and TB (chapter 3). The VS records the Mantras recited in the Asvamedha sacrifice in chapters XXII to XXV.

Asvamedha falls under the category of Soma sacrifice. Although the actual sacrifice lasts only for three days the preparatory rites extend over a period of one year. The noteworthy feature of this great sacrifice are the animal offerings in which along with the horse which constitute the main offering, as many as three hundred and forty nine domestic animals and two hundred and sixty wild animals are offered to the deities. Another characteristic feature of the Asvamedha is the performance of a good number of popular rites in it. Asvamedha is a Kṣattriya Yāga performed by a king along with his four

91. Cf. AB, 8.4.7-9; ĀpSS, 20.1.1; BS, 15.1.

queens. According to Āpastamba (20.1.4) it is performed in the month of Phālguna. Kātyāyana (20.1.2,3) however, holds that timings of its performance may vary. According to it this sacrifice may be held either on the eighth or ninth day before the full-moon day of Phālguna or is held in summer session. According to TB 3.8.1 preparations for Asvamedha begin when the moon is near Citrā Nakṣatra. According to SB 13.4.1.4,5 preparation starts six or seven days before the full-moon day in the month of Phālguna.

As to the physical description of the horse the SB (13.4.2.1-4) offers three opinions. Thus, it says that the horse should be a multi-coloured one (Sarvarūpa) or one which is perfect in speed (Javasamṛddha). It should be in its prime and worth a thousand cows and matchless in its qualities. The Brāhmaṇa quotes two other authorities namely, that of Bhallaveya and Sātyayagni. Bhallaveya holds that the horse should be a bi-coloured one and one of its colours should be black. According to Sātyayagni it should be of three colours, its forepart being black, the hindpart white and there being the mark of a wain (Kṛttikā) in its forehead. The colour of the wain however, has not been given. In the AB (39.7) we come across the description of a horse sacrificed by Janamejaya. This horse was of golden brown colour with a white mark on its fore-head.

The Adhvaryu fetters the horse with a twelve or thirteen cubits long halter made of Darbha grass and smeared with clarified butter. After the prescribed purificatory rite a dog with white marks above its eyes and hence called Caturakṣa is killed by clubbing it to death and is plunged in water under the feet of the horse. According to TB 3.8.4 the dead dog is made to float away by the right side of the horse. As can be gathered from SB 13.1.2.9 and TB 3.8.4 the purificatory rite and killing of the dog to ward off all evil are performed with the horse standing over some stagnant water. TB says that the horse is pulled out of the water with the help of a lift made of reeds.

Before the horse is let loose the Adhvaryu offers one thousand oblations of drops (Stokīya) to all gods represented by Agni, Soma, Savitr, Vāyu, Viṣṇu, Indra, Bṛhaspati, Mitra and Varuṇa. According to Kātyāyana (20.2.3-5) one should make as many oblations as required till the dripping of the purificatory water from the horse. This is followed by three Iṣtis of twelve potsherds of Purodāśa to Savitr in the morning and four Dhṛti offerings called so because they are made for the safety of the horse while it roams about for a year and for consequent successful completion of the sacrifice. The Dhṛti offerings are made in the Āhavanīya in the evening.⁹²

92. Cf. TB, 3.9.13.

After each Iṣṭi a brāhmin lute player sings three self composed Gāthās in praise of the sacrificer. Similarly, the Dhṛti offerings are followed by the singing of three self composed Gāthās by a Kṣattriya lute player.

After the first Sāvitrī Iṣṭi the horse is set free towards the north east which is believed to be the region of both gods and human beings. The horse is symbolically placed under the care of four divine guardians of the quarters, namely, the Āptyas, Sādhyas, Anvādhyas and the Maruts.⁹³ As the horse roams from quarter to quarter he is guarded by four hundred guards comprising of one hundred armoured royal princes (who according to ṬB 3.8.9 are related to the royal sacrificer), one hundred warriors carrying swords, one hundred sons of royal attendants and village head-men carrying bows and arrows and one hundred sons of chamberlains bearing staffs. The sacrificial horse is also accompanied by one hundred horses which according to Harisvāmīn should be over twenty four years old.⁹⁴

During the absence of the horse the four priests namely the Adhvaryu, Hotā, Udagātā and Brahmā together with the sacrificer sit on golden seats. Then at the request of the Adhvaryu, Hotā begins narrating the Pāriplava i.e., the 'revolving' legends, called so because they are renewed every ten days throughout the year.⁹⁵

93. Cf. ŚB, 13.4.2.15, 16.

94. Cf. Harisvāmī on Ibid, 13.4.2.5.

95. Cf. Ibid, 13.4.3.15.

Each days narration is followed by the singing of Gāthās.

The first day's narration of Pāriplava legends and singing of Gāthās are followed by forty nine oblations known as Rūpa or Prakrama performed by the Adhvaryu either in the Dakṣināgni or the Āhavanīya or on a foot print of a horse.⁹⁶ This ritual is not repeated during the following nine days of recounting the Pāriplava. According to the followers of White Yajur Veda at the expiry of the year, after the performance of the last Sāvitrī Iṣṭi which is preceded by the usual Paśubandha ritual belonging to the Somayāga, Dīkṣā of the sacrificer begins. Dīkṣā continues for twelve days and is followed by twelve Upasads and three Sutyās.⁹⁷ The followers of Black Yajurveda as can be gathered from the TB 3.9.22 , however, hold that the act of sacrificing the horse should be completed before the expiry of the year. Commenting on this Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara says that the horse is made to return within the ninth day of the twelfth month of the year. Then Dīkṣā is held for seven days which is followed by twelve Upasad days which include the Agniṣomīya Paśuyāga. Then are held the Agniṣṭoma and Ukthya rituals.

In Asvamedha twenty one Yūpas are raised. The middle Yūpa is called the Agniṣṭha which is flanked by two rows of ten Yūpas on either sides. Before the Sutyā days

96. Cf. Ibid , 13.1.5; 4.3.4.

97. loc. cit.

Agniṣomīya Paśūyāga is held in which as many as twenty one animals are offered to Agni and Soma as against the normal practice of offering one goat in an ordinary Agniṣoma Paśūyāga. The first Soma day is an Agniṣṭoma, called so because it ends with the singing of the Agniṣtomastotra. The second day which is the central day of Asvamedha is the Ukthya day i.e. the day in which the day's sacrifice is completed with the Ukthastotra. The last sutyā day is known as Atirātra, because in it the Śāstras and stotras are completed over night.⁹⁸ On the first two Sutyās twenty Savanīya animals are offered to Agni on each day. The number of Savanīya animals offered on the last Sutyā is twentyfour.⁹⁹ Kātyāyana (20.4.25) however, holds that Savanīya animals for each of the Sutyās are twentyfour in number. The twentyfour animals prescribed by the ŚB for the third day should all be multicolour cows.

The Ukthya is the most important day of Asvamedha yāga because, on this day the horse along with a large number of animals both domestic and wild are offered to the deities. The sacrificial horse along with three other horses is yoked to a chariot and driven to a pond for bathing the horse.¹⁰⁰ The horse is anointed and decorated by the first three wives of the king, each weaving into

98. Cf. RV, VII. 103.7.

99. Cf. SB, 13.2.5.2; 5.1.3; 5.3.11.

100 Cf. KSŚ, 20.5.11-14.

hair one hundred gold beads.¹⁰¹ Food consisting of rice of Annahoma¹⁰² performed in the previous evening offered to the gods. This is followed by a dialogue between Brahmā and the Hotṛ priests known as Brahmodva¹⁰³ with the central Yūpa between them.¹⁰⁴ To this Yūpa a horse is tied along with a hornless goat and a wild cat. While the horse is associated with Prajāpati, Varuṇa and Āditya, the other two animals are dedicated to Prajāpati.¹⁰⁵ Twelve animals called Paryāṅgyas because they are attached to different parts of the body of the horse are tied to the horse. Thus, a black necked horse sacred to Agni is tied to its fore-head, a ewe sacred to Sarasvatī to its jaws, two he-goats black in the loe part of their bodies and sacred to the Asvins to its front legs, a dark grey he-goat dedicated to Soma and Puṣ to its navel, two he-goats one white and one black sacred to Sūrya and Yama to its flanks, two goats with bushy tails meant for Tvastṛ to its hind legs and lastly to

101. Cf. SB, 13.2.6.8; TB, 3.8.23; KSS, 20.5.15.16.

102. Cf. ĀpSS, 20.10.5.

103. Cf. VS, XXIII. 9-12. This dialogue consists of eight questions and their corresponding answers in the form of riddles. According to KSS, 20.5.20-23 the first four questions are asked by the Brahmā with the answers coming from Hotā. The latter four questions are put by Hotā and the answers are provided by the Brahmā.

104. Cf. TB, 3.9.5.

105. Cf. SB, 13.2.2.13; 3.1.1; TB, 3.9.16,23; VS, XXIV.1.

tail are tied a white goat dedicated to Vāyu, a barren cow dedicated to Indra and the dwarf animal dedicated to Viṣṇu. According to Kātyāyana (20.6.4) as well as Mahīdhara (on VS.XXIV. 21) a rope is wound round the horse just as one would wound a rope around a bottle gourd and to this rope the Paryaṅgyas are tied.

According to TB 3.8.23 however, there are eleven Paryaṅgyas. The description of these animals too is different from that of the SB. According to TB two animals are tied to the fore-head of the horse while a dark necked he-goat instead of the one black necked he-goat as stated in the SB. While a dark necked he-goat sacred to Agni is tied to the upper part of the horse's fore-head, one sacred to Puṣan is tied to its lower fore-head. One sacred to Indra and Puṣan is tied to its neck. To its fore legs are tied two black necked he-goats sacred to Agni. The two animals tied to its hind legs are same as those described in the SB. Then there are two white-backed animals dedicated to Bṛhaspati tied to its back. One with white spots on its belly and dedicated to Dhātṛ is tied to the horse's belly. Finally a white eyed animal sacred to Sūrya is tied to the horse's tail.

According to SB to the Agniṣṭha are tied besides the three animals mentioned above fourteen other animals all dedicated to various dieties. Of these fourteen, twelve animals are the ones described in VS XXIV.2 , while the

remaining two belong to the twentytwo Savanīyas.¹⁰⁶ Thus, the total number of animals tied to the Agniṣṭha becomes seventeen. To each of the rest of twenty Yūpas are tied sixteen animals.¹⁰⁷ This makes the total number of animals tied to the twenty Yūpas as many as three hundred and twenty. Of these twenty are Savanīyas tied to twenty Yūpas and the other three hundred which include the animals offered to Cāturmāsyā deities are the ones described in VS XXIV.3-19.¹⁰⁸ These animals together with the seventeen tied to the Agniṣṭha and the twelve Paryāṅgyas make the total number of animals killed and offered to the deities as many as three hundred and forty nine. All these are domestic animals consisting of cows and goats of various descriptions.

According to TB. (3.9.2; 1.2), however, to each of the Yūpas other than the Agniṣṭha are tied nine domestic animals. This Brāhmaṇa does not state the total number of animals tied to the Agniṣṭha. It mentions two sets of Ekādasīns and the Cāturmāsyā animals which according to Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara are one hundred and thirty five in number.¹⁰⁹

In each of the twenty spaces between the twenty one Yūpas are placed thirteen wild animals, thereby making

106. Cf. Mahīdhara on VS, XXIV. 2.

107. Cf. SB, 13.2.2.13.

108. Cf. Mahīdhara on VS, XXIV. 2-19.

109. Cf. Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara on TB, 3.9.2.

the total number of wild animals as many as two hundred and sixty. This makes the total number of animals involved on the central day of the Asvamedha six hundred and nine.¹¹⁰ The TB. (3.8.19) while prescribing wild animals for the spaces mentioned above does not mention the total number of animals. This number is however, available in the TS (V.5.11-21) where one comes across one hundred and eleven wild animals.

The wild animals comprised of beasts and birds and even of insects of numerous variety from the biggest like the elephant to the smallest like the bee.¹¹¹ Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara states that according to some drawings of wild animals which are difficult to catch are to be used in place of the real ones, whereas, a second opinion is that such animals should be put in cages.¹¹² The wild animals are however, released after Paryagnikaraṇa.¹¹³

The sacrificial process begins by the usual sprinkling of the animals. The Hotṛ recites eleven Ṛks from RV (I.163.1-11) in praise of the horse. Thereafter, two pieces of cloth one small called 'Vāsa' and one large called 'Adhivāsa', which is large enough for covering the horse are spread on the ground, the larger one is being placed over the smaller one. These are spread for the

110. Cf. SB, 13.5.1.15.

111. Cf. VS, XXIV. 20-40.

112. Cf. Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara on TB, 3.8.19.

113. Cf. SB, 13.2.4.3; TB, 3.8.19; 9.1; KSS, 20.6.9.

horse to lie upon. The horse is killed on this cloth.¹¹⁴ According to TB 3.9.20 the horse is quieted with the help of a rug (Tārpyam) which is smeared with ghee. After the horse has been killed the wives of the sacrificer walk around it and then they accompanied by one young maiden and four hundred female attendants wash the feet of the horse. The chief queen lies down beside the horse and unites with it. Both are covered by Adhivāsa. Thereafter the priests, the chamberlain, the wives of the sacrificer and the female attendants take part in a ribald dialogue.

The horse and the other domestic animals are cut up and cooked. After the omenta have been cooked there takes place another Brahmodya between Hotṛ and Adhvaryu, Brahmā and Udgātṛ and the sacrificer and the Adhvaryu.¹¹⁵ The second Brahmodya is not found in the TB. The offering of the omenta is preceded and followed by the Soma libation to Mahendra.

The horse's flesh is offered to Prajāpati. But in order not to deprive the other deities who are supposed to be Prajāpati's co-sharer, the Adhvaryu performs Śarīrahoma in which as many as thirty two oblations of ghee are made to various divinities. The portions of ghee in these

114. Cf. SB, 13.2.8.1. Commenting on this Harisvāmī says : "vāso yadantardhānāya alam/ adhivāso yadācchādanāya apyalam/".

115. Cf. Ibid, 13.9.5.12-21; VS, XXIII. 45-62; KSS, 20.7.10-14.

offerings are supposed to represent flesh offerings from various parts of the body of the horse.¹¹⁶ The last of these Śarīrahomas is performed on the third day after the Avabhṛtha. This oblation is offered to Jumbaka (who has been identified with Varuṇa) on the head of a man.¹¹⁷ This Śarīrahoma is followed by Prāyaścittahoma, Asvatomiyahoma and Dvipadahoma. Thereafter, is held the Sviṣṭakṛt offering. In between Asvatomiya and Sviṣṭakṛdhoma the horse's blood which has been arranged into three portions is offered to Rudra. The first portion is offered in the gullet of the Gomṛga (wild cattle), the second in a horse-hoof and the third in an iron bowl.¹¹⁸ This appears to be the only instance in which animal blood is offered to a high god in the Veda, for otherwise blood has been considered in Vedic texts a share of the Rākṣasas.

Asvamedha comes to its completion with the performance of the Udayaniyeṣṭi at the end of which twenty one barren cows are offered to Mitrāvaruṇa, Viśvedevā and Bṛhaspati. In the following year the sacrificer is required to perform animal sacrifices to the seasons in which in spring six animals are offered to Agni, in summer six to Indra, in the rainy season six to Parjanya or Maruts, in autumn six to Mitrāvaruṇau, in Hemanta six to

116. Cf. SB, 13.3.4.1; TB, 3.9.11; VS, XXV.1-9; XXXIX. 8,9

117. Cf. SB, 13.3.6.5; TB, 3.9.15.

118. Cf. SB, 13.3.4.3-5; TB, 3.9.11.

Indrāviṣṇu and in winter six animals are offered to Br̥haspati.¹¹⁹

While concluding this great animal sacrifice it may be noted that Asvamedha as it was known to the RV was a much simpler ritual involving only two animals, one being the horse and the other a goat which led the horse to the gods.¹²⁰

ANIMAL SACRIFICE IN PURUṢAMEDHA

Vedic texts consider man as one of the five sacrificial animals. In fact man has been considered the foremost of all animals fit to be offered to the deities.¹²¹ Thus from the point of view of Vedic texts Puruṣamedha is an "animal sacrifice". Both Kṣattriyas and Brāhmaṇas are given the right to perform this ritual in which human beings (according to SB one hundred and sixty six men tied to sixty six Yūpas) as well as abstract ideas and objects both natural and man made are offered to the gods. The human beings are set free after Paryagnikaraṇa.¹²² According to the Śrautasūtras of Sāṃkhāyana (16.1) and Vaitāna (37.10; 38.9) the Puruṣamedha is modelled on Asvamedha. It is of interest to us because, in it besides a human being a horse, a wild cattle and a

119. Cf. SB, 13.5.4.28.

120. Cf. RV, I.162.3.

121. Cf. AV, IX. 2.9; AB, 6.8; SB, 7.5.2.6; JB, 2.42.

122. Cf. SB, 13.6; VS, XXX.5-22; KS, 21.1-18; ĀpSS, 20.

hornless goat are offered as the principal offerings. It is also being taken into account here because in it on the Upavasatha day eleven Agniṣomīya animals are offered and on the Sutyā days which are five in number, eleven Savanīya animals are offered on each day. Then again on the Udayanīya day eleven barren cows are offered to Mitṛāvaruṇa, Viśvedevāḥ and Bṛhaspati. This makes the total number of animals involved in Puruṣamedha as many as seventy seven.

ANIMAL SACRIFICE IN SARVAMEDHA

Sarvamedha is a Soma sacrifice performed by a Kṣātrīya for the attainment of supremacy, sovereignty and lordship over all beings. As stated in the SB in Sarvamedha which consists of ten Sutyā days, are offered "all that are fit for being offered" ('sarvān medhyān') on the seventh day which is known as Aptoryāma.¹²³ On this day animals with and without omenta are offered to god. Of those which have omenta inside them, only the omenta are offered. Of the others that do not have any omenta only their skins are offered.¹²⁴ From this it follows that other portions of these animals are not offered. This has all been taken note of by Harisvāmī.¹²⁵

123. Cf. SB, 13.7.1.1,9. Aptoryāma is the seventh Saṁsthā of Soma sacrifice. It is a further development of Atirātra. Etymologically the word means that through which ritual one can obtain one's desire.

Cf. TMB, 20.3.4,5; KSS, 23.1.19.

124. Cf. KSS, 21.2.5.

125. Cf. Harisvāmī on SB, 13.7.1.9.

According to Karka¹²⁶ the word sarva stands for the five sacrificial animals namely, Puruṣa, As'va, Go, Avi and Aja. According to him these are offered to each of the deities hailed by the Āptoryāmastoma.

Besides the Aptoryāma day in Sarvamedha there is a ritual day called As'vamedhika and as suggested by its name a horse is offered on this day.

As can be gathered from the Mantras employed in Sarvamedha this ritual is dedicated to the supreme Lord hailed as Prajāpati, Puruṣa or Hiraṇyagarbha manifested through Agni, Āditya, Vāyu, Candramā and Āpa.¹²⁷

SPECIAL ANIMAL SACRIFICES

The TS (II.1-10) as well as TB (11.8.1) have enumerated a good number of animal sacrifices meant for the fulfilment of various desires (Kāmas). As such they fall under the category of Kāmya rituals. Here these animal sacrifices are being summed up as follows:

A person who desires prosperity should offer either a white beast to Vāyu or a beast with a spot on its fore head, and with horns bent forward to Indra or a barren cow to Indra or twin cows to the As'vins. A person who desires a village should either sacrifice an animal to

126. Cf. Karka on KSS, 21.2.22.

127. Cf. VS, XXXIII. 1-17.

Vāyu or an animal with dappled thighs to Indra and the Maruts or a white backed animal to Br̥haspati or an animal of variegated colour to Viśvedevā. One who wishes to have abundant food should offer any one of the following animals — (a) a brown animal to Soma, (b) a dark coloured animal to Puṣan, (c) a dappled animal to the Maruts, (d) an animal of variegated colour to Viśvedevā, (e) a black cow to Varuṇa, (f) a white cow to Mitra and a black one to Varuṇa. A person desiring offspring is required to offer any one of the following animals — (a) an animal sacred to Vāyu, (b) a hornless he-goat dedicated to Prajāpati, (c) a barren ewe meant for the Ādityas, (d) a brown he-goat and one with a black coloured neck sacred respectively to Soma and Agni, (e) a barren cow dedicated to Oṣadhis, (f) a bi-coloured cow to Mitra and Varuṇa. A person desiring cattle should sacrifice either a hornless he-goat to Prajāpati or the third goat belonging to a triplet to Puṣan and Soma or a barren ewe to the Ādityas or a hump-backed bull to Indra or a horse to Tvastṛ. A person who seeks cure of his illness should offer any one of the following animals — (a) an animal sacred to Vāyu, (b) a he-goat with a black neck sacred to Agni as well as a brown he-goat to Soma, (c) a hornless he-goat to Prajāpati, (d) two cows one white and one black sacred respectively to Mitra and Varuṇa. A man who desires splendour should sacrifice any of the following animals —

(A) animals with dew laps sacred respectively to Agni, Indra and Bṛhaspati. Of these the first should have a black neck, the second should be of variegated colour and the third should be a white one. The animals sacred to Agni should be sacrificed on a spring morning, the one for Indra on a summer midday and the one sacred to Bṛhaspati should be sacrificed on an autumn afternoon. (B) Nine bulls in sets of three sacred to the Sun, as well as a bull reddish brown in colour sacred to Prajāpati should be offered. The first set of three bulls should have spots on their foreheads and should be offered on a spring morning. The second triplet with white backs should be offered on a summer midday and the third triplet with white tails on an autumn afternoon. The bull for Prajāpati should be sacrificed at the end of the year. (C) A beast with a white back or a bull and a cow, all of them sacred to Bṛhaspati should be offered. (D) A white cow should be offered to Sūrya. A person who seeks mastery over speech should sacrifice a ewe to Sarasvatī. One who has been struck by Varuṇa's wrath should offer a black animal, one of whose four hooves is white in colour to Varuṇa. A Brāhmin who in spite of being learned fails to attain fame should offer a black necked he-goat to Agni along with a brown he-goat to Soma. These very rituals should be performed by a Brāhmin who seeks priest-hood. A Kṣatriya seeking kingship should sacrifice either a brown animal to Soma or one with a spot

on its fore-head and with its horns bend forward to Indra. This particular animal sacrifice to Indra should also be performed by one who wants to win a contest. On the other-hand one who desires to reach an agreement in a contest should offer a white animal to Mitra. A person who is engaged in strife should either offer a dwarf animal to Viṣṇu or a cow to Viṣṇu and Varuṇa. A person who wishes to prevent skin disease should sacrifice a dark coloured he-goat to Puṣan and Soma. A man who seeks some kind of gain should offer a spotted animal to Savitr̥. One who has been long in exile and wants to return home should offer either a cow to Dyāvāpṛthivī or a calf to Vāyu. A person desirous of rain should sacrifice either a bi-coloured cow to Mitrāvaruṇa or a black he-goat to Prajāpati. In order to achieve freedom from evil a person should offer either an animal with a spot on its fore-head and horns bend forward to Indra or a black necked he-goat to Agni together with a bull to Indra. A person in whose family no one has acted as a priest in a Soma sacrifice for three generations and hence seeks priesthood in such a ritual should offer a bull to Indra and Agni. He however, should let the animal loose after Paryagnikaraṇa. A person who has not been able to become a Yajamāna and wishes to be one should offer a dwarf animal to Viṣṇu. A person inspite of being a bad Brāhmin seeks priesthood in a Soma ritual should sacrifice a darkish animal having spots on its fore-head to the

Asvins. A person who has been falsely accused of murder should offer a Gayal to Vāyu so that he may free himself from the slander. A man to whom the sun remains invisible during the performance of the Āśvinaśāstra brings darkness and evil unto himself. In order to free himself from this evil he should offer an animal of variegated colour to Sūrya. A person who wishes to be successful in magical rites should offer either a hornless he-goat to Brahmanaspati or a red cow to Rudra.

TS along with the above stated rituals has also prescribed an animal sacrifice with a dwarf animal dedicated to Viṣṇu by one who has obtained a thousand cattle. This ritual appears to be a thanks - giving one, inspite of the fact that the text says that through this ritual one is able to protect his cattle.¹²⁸

All these animal sacrifices barring certain procedural peculiarities are performed following the rules laid down by the Agniṣomīyapasūyāga.

SŪLAGAVA AND AṢṬAKĀ

Sūlagava is an animal sacrifice belonging to the order of Grhya rituals. It has been dealt with in Āśvalāyana Grhyasūtra (chapt. 4.9.1-40), Pāraskara

128. All these rituals enumerated in TS have been repeated in ĀpSS, 19.16.

Gṛhyasūtra (3.8.1-14), Baudhāyana Gṛhyasūtra (2.7.4-28), Mānava Gṛhyasūtra (2.5.1-5) and Kāthaka Gṛhyasūtra (52.5-11). This sacrifice is called so because, in it the meat of the animal sacrificed is cooked on spits.¹²⁹ According to Āśvalāyana it is performed in autumn or spring. According to Baudhāyana it is an annual ritual performed on the full moon day of the month of Mārgaśīrṣa i.e. the month which falls in November and December. As pointed out by Āśvalāyana this ritual is based on the Paśubandha sacrifice. In it the omentum of a disease free uncastrated bull or a cow is offered to Rudra. The omentum is offered with a Pātri i.e. a wooden bowl or with a leaf. According to Pāraskara Gṛhyasūtra the cut off portions of meat are mixed with the Sthālīpāka which is a dish of cooked rice or barley and are offered to Agni, Rudra, Śarva, Paśupati, Ugra, Aśani, Bhava, Mahādeva and Isāna all of which are in reality different forms of Rudra himself. The deities of Patnīsaṃyāja are Indrāṇī, Rudrāṇī, Śārvāṇī, Bhavāṇī and Agniṛhpati. According to Pāraskara and Mānava the animal's blood is offered to Rudra and his hosts. According to Āśvalāyana however, the blood should be offered to the serpents. The contents of the stomach, the entrails, the skin, head and feet of the animal are either thrown into the fire or buried underground. According to Baudhāyana one may sacrifice a sheep or a

129. Cf. BGS, 1.1.9; 2.7.14; Nārāyaṇa on ĀGS, 4.9.1; Devapāṭa on KGS, 25.1.

goat in place of a cow. This ritual is performed at a place away from the village and should not be viewed by the villagers. The sacrificer does not partake of any of the offerings and nothing of it is taken back to the village. According to Āśvalāyana on an expressed injunction the sacrificer may partake of the sacrificial food in order to bring prosperity unto himself. As pointed out by Pāraskara a portion of the domestic fire is taken to the forest. Out of it the three Śrauta fires, viz., Gārhapatya, Āhavanīya and Dakṣināgni are produced and the ritual is performed in them. Animal sacrifice is also performed in a ceremony called Aṣṭakā which as can be gathered from AV. III.10.2,3,5,8,12 is a new year festival. In it a cow or a goat is offered. The Baudhāyana Gṛhyasūtra (2.11.51-61) mentions a number of animals both domestic and wild, any of which one may offer in the Aṣṭakā ceremonies which are four in number.¹³⁰ These animals are a cow, a ram or a he-goat, a buffalo, a rhinoceros, a deer, a spotted antelope, a red deer, a boar, a hare, a partridge a blue partridge a pigeon and a crane. The Mānava Gṛhyasūtra 2.9 mentions a peculiar ceremony in which in the evening of the fourth Aṣṭakā a cow is killed and cut into pieces at a road crossing where four roads meet and the flesh is given to the passers by. Then on the following day another cow is killed and her omentum

130. Cf. GGŚ, 3.10.3.4, ĀŚŚ, 2.4.1; PGŚ, 3.3.13.

is offered to the deities. The deities of the Agni ceremony are stated differently by different Gr̥hyasūtras. The deities thus mentioned are Agni, Prajāpati, Visve-devā, Indra, Sūrya, the night, the Nakṣatras, the seasons, the fore-fathers. This ceremony has been dealt with in AGS (2.4.3-7), PGS (3.3.3.8,13), KGS (61.3).

The PGS (3.11.10.11) mentions a particular animal sacrifice unto the dead. According to the commentators Jayarāma and Harihara the animal should be other than a cow. The omentum and meat of the animal is offered to the deity unto which the animal is considered to belong.

While concluding this chapter on animal sacrifice it is necessary that one should take into account the attitude of the Vedic Aryans towards killing of animals. It has already been observed that in the Agniṣomīya ceremony the priest and the sacrificer avoid watching the slaughtering of the animals. The use of words like jagmāraya are avoided. The animal is in the language of the Brāhmaṇas not "killed" but "quieted" and it is not "dead" but has "gone to the gods."¹³¹ Thus, there has been an attempt to say in the language of Thite "to soften euphemistically the 'killing' element involved in the sacrifice."¹³² Cruelty involved in the act of slaughtering mute animals has been felt and one

131. Cf. ŚB, 3.8.1.15.

132. Thite G.H., Sacrifice In The Brāhmaṇa Texts, Poona 1975, p. 147.

discern the feeling of guilt on the part of the Vedic ritualists in the way attempts are made to atone as it were, the cruelty done to the animals by trying to mystically revive them. Thus, the SB (3.8.2.8,30) says that the priests and the sacrificer take bath in the Cātuvāla because, by queiting and cutting up the animal they perpetrate cruelty unto it (krurī kurvantī). It further states that the animal is soothed and held by water for water is peace in itself. Here we find an attempt to wash away the sin comitted by killing an animal. Here one may refer to a verse from TS (III.1.4) which says "should the victim utter a cry or strike its breast with its feet, may Agni release me from that sin and from all misfortune."

Even at the very beginning while binding the animal the priest is required to recite a Mantra the purport of which is that whatever is being done is done at the will of god. After the animal has been killed it is sprinkled with water in order to revive it.¹³³ The dead animal is not only ritually conferred upon with life but is also believed to have attained immortality. Thus, it is declared in SB 3.8.3.10 that first of all the heart is basted with clotted ghee because the heart is the soul and mind and clotted ghee is life breath. Through this act the priest puts life into the animal's body and makes the animal a living offering to the immortal gods. In this

133. Cf. SB, 3.8.2.9; VS, VI.15.

connection one may refer to the Mantra recited at slaughtering the sacrificial horse in the *Asvamedha*. It says "O! horse you do not die, nor do you perish. Following easy paths you go to the gods. Let god place you there, where the pious dwell, where they are gone."¹³⁴

As it has been pointed out by Thite (p. 14) the *Brāhmaṇa* texts are concerned about the nature and origin of *Paśubandha*. The Vedic ritualists have tried their best to elevate the practice of sacrificing an animal by giving it the distinct status of a *Haviryajña* as well as by making it a part and parcel of the great Soma sacrifice. The *ŚB* 11.7.2.8 mystically connects even the *Haviryajña* to the animal sacrifice with the great Soma sacrifice. The fore-offerings are identified with *Prātaḥsavana*, the after-offerings with *Tr̥tīyasavana* and the *Paśupada* with the *Mādhyandinasavana*. Over and above these the animal itself is very often identified with the soma juice.¹³⁵

134. Cf. *ŚB*, 13.2.7.12; *VS*, XXIII.16.

135. Cf. *ŚB*, 12.7.2,3; *TB*, 1.4.7; *KB*, 12.6.