

The animal is the offering, the sacrificer the master of the offering. Thus he (the Hotar) makes prosper the sacrificer by means of his (the sacrificer's) own offering. Thence they truly say: for whatever deity the animal is killed, that one is the master of the offering. If the animal is to be offered to one deity only, the priest should say: *medhapataye*¹³ "to the master of the sacrifice (singular)"; if to two deities, then he should use the dual "to both the masters of the offering," and if to several deities, then he should use the plural "to the masters of the offering." This is the established custom.

Bring ye for him fire! For the animal when carried (to the slaughter) saw death before it. Not wishing to go to the gods, the gods said to it: Come, we will bring thee to heaven! The animal consented and said: One of you should walk before me.

They consented. Agni then walked before it, and it followed after Agni. Thence they say, every animal belongs to Agni, for it followed after him. Thence they carry before the animal fire (*Agni*).

Spread the (sacred) grass! The animal lives on herbs. He (the Hotar) thus provides the animal with its entire soul (the herbs being supposed to form part of it).

The mother, the father, the brother, sister, friend, and companion should give this (animal) up (for being slaughtered)! When these words are pronounced, they seize the animal which is (regarded as) entirely given up by its relations (parents, &c.).

Turn its feet northwards! Make its eye go to the sun, dismiss its breath to the wind, its life to the air, its hearing to the directions, its body to the earth.

¹³ This change in the formula is called *ûha*. See Sâyana's introduction to Rigveda vol. i., p. 10, 11, ed. Müller.