

Strictly speaking, only the rule regarding the performance of a particular rite,⁴ or the authoritative opinion on a certain point of speculative theology went by this name, and we have accordingly in the works called Brâhmaṇas, nothing more or less than collections of the dicta of those Brahma priests on the topics mentioned. Afterwards the term Brâhmaṇam, which originally signified only a single dictum, was applied to the whole collection.

In a still more comprehensive sense we have to understand by "Brâhmaṇa," a whole kind of literature, including the so-called Aranyakas and Upanishads.

Each Veda has a Brâhmaṇam, or collection of the dicta of Brahma priests, of its own. But they also show in style, expression, line of argument, and object and tendency of their speculations, such a close affinity, and even identity, that the common origin of all Brâhmaṇas is indisputable. They owe mainly their origin to those Brahmans who constituted themselves into regular sacrificial congregations, in order to perform the so-called *Sattras* or sacrificial sessions, some of which could last for many years. The legendary history of India knows of such sessions which are said to have lasted for one hundred, and even one thousand years.⁵ Though these reports

⁴ So are, for instance, the rules given for the repetition of the *Dûrohanam* (4, 19) quoted as a "Brâhmaṇam" (in 6, 25). See also 8, 2.

⁵ See Mahâbhârata 3, 10513, where a Sattrâ, *Ishtâkṛita* by name, is mentioned as lasting for one thousand years.