

girasas were contending with one another as to who should gain first the heavenly world. The Añgirasas, had seen (in their mind) that, by dint of the Soma sacrifice they were about to bring on the next day, they would be raised to heaven first. They therefore despatched one from among themselves, Agni by name, instructing him thus : "Go to the Adityas and announce to them that we shall, by dint of our to-morrow's Soma sacrifice, go to heaven." As soon as the Adityas got sight of Agni, they at once saw (in their minds) the Soma sacrifice by which they would reach heaven. Having come near them, Agni said, "We inform you of our bringing to-morrow that Soma sacrifice by means of which we shall reach heaven." They answered, "And we announce to you that we are just *now* contemplating to bring that Soma sacrifice by means of which we shall reach heaven; but thou (Agni) must serve as our Hotar, then we shall go to heaven. He said, "Yes," (and went back to the Añgiras). After having told (the Añgiras the message of the Adityas) and received their reply, he went back (to the Adityas). They asked him, "Hast thou told our message?" He said, "Yes, I have told it (to the Añgiras); and they answered, and asked, 'Did'st thou not promise us thy assistance (as a Hotar),' and I said, 'Yes, I have promised.' (But I could not decline the offer of the Adityas). For he who engages in performing the duty of a sacrificial priest, obtains fame; and any one who prevents the sacrifice from being performed, excludes himself from his fame. Therefore I did not prevent (by declining the offer)." If one wishes to decline serving as a sacrificial priest, then this refusal is only justified on account of oneself being engaged in a sacrifice, or because of being legally prohibited to perform the sacrificial duties.