

They offer² the Agni-Vishṇu rice-cake (*Purodâś'a*)³ which belongs to the *Dîkshanîya ishti* (and put its

the last deity ;" for these twelve liturgies belong to the fifth day of the Agnishtoma sacrifice, whilst the *Dîkshanîya-ishti*, in connection with which ceremony the Brâhmaṇam makes the remark "*agnir vai devânâm avamo*," &c. forms part of the first day. The ceremonies of the first and those of the fifth day have no connection with one another.

Equally inconclusive are two other arguments brought forward by Sâyaṇa. The one is, that in all the constituent parts of the *Jyotish-toma* sacrifice, of which the *Agnishtoma* is the opening, the first place is assigned to Agni, and the last to Vishṇu, and that the last *Stotra* (performance of the Sâma singers), and the last *Shashtra* (performance of the Hotri-priests), in the last part of that great cycle of sacrifices (the *Jyotishtoma*), known by the name of *Aptoryâma*, are devoted to Vishnu. The other argument is, that Agni is worshipped in the first, or *Dîkshanîyâ ishti*, and that the *Vâjasa-neyins* (the followers of the so-called White Yajurveda) use, instead of the last Ishti (the *avasânîyâ*), the *Pûrnâhuti* to Vishṇu.

Both arguments prove only, that the ceremonies commenced with the deity who is on earth, that is, Agni, and ended with that one who occupies the highest place in heaven. Though, from a liturgical point of view, Sâyaṇa's opinion might be correct, yet he does not state any reason why the first place in certain invocations is assigned to Agni, and the last to Vishṇu. But the translation "lowest and highest," as given here, does not only account for the liturgical arrangement, but states the proper reason of such an order besides. That these terms are really applicable to both respective deities, Agni and Vishṇu, and that the words *avama* and *parama* actually convey such meaning, has been shown above.

² The term of the original is, *nirvapanti* (from *vap*, to strew, to sow). This expression, which very frequently occurs in liturgical writings of all kinds, means originally, "to take some handfuls of dry substances (such as grains) from the heap in which they are collected, and put them into a separate vessel." It is used in a similar sense of liquids also. Sâyaṇa restricts the meaning of this common sacrificial term somewhat too much. He says, that it means "to take four handfuls of rice from the whole load which is on the cart, and throw them into the winnowing basket (*S'ârpa*)."³ In this passage, he further adds, the term means the bringing of that offering the preparation of which begins with this act of taking four handfuls from the whole load. Sâyaṇa discusses the meaning of the form "*nirvapanti*" which is in the present tense, and in the plural number. Referring to a parallel in the "Black Yajurveda," *agnâvaishṇavam ekâdas'akapâlam nirvaped dîkshishyamâṇaḥ* where the potential (*nirvapet*) is used instead of the present tense of (*nirvapanti*), and to a rule of Pânini (3, 4, 7,)