

(*The carrying of fire round the sacrificial animal.*)

When the fire is carried round <sup>20</sup> (the animal) the Adhvaryu says to the Hotar : repeat (thy mantras). The Hotar then repeats this triplet of verses, addressed to Agni, and composed in the Gâyatrî metre : *agnir hotâ no adhware* (4, 15, 1-3) *i. e.* (1) Agni, our priest, is carried round about like a horse, he who is among gods the god of sacrifices. (2) Like a charioteer Agni passes thrice by the sacrifice ; to the gods he carries the offering. (3) The master of food, the seer Agni, went round the offerings ; he bestows riches on the sacrificer.

When the fire is carried round (the animal) then he makes him (Agni) prosper by means of his own deity and his own <sup>21</sup> metre. "As a horse he is carried" means : they carry him as if he were a horse, round about. Like a charioteer Agni passes thrice by the sacrifice means : he goes round the sacrifice like a charioteer (swiftly). He is called *vajapati* (master of food) because he is the master of (different kinds of) food.

The Adhvaryu says : give Hotar ! the additional order for despatching offerings to the gods.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> This ceremony is called *paryagnikriyâ* and is performed by the *Agnid* priest. He takes a firebrand from the Ahavanîya fire and carries it on the right side, thrice round the animal which is to be sacrificed.

<sup>21</sup> Agni himself is the deity of the hymn in question ; it is in Agni's metre, *i. e.* Gâyatrî.

<sup>22</sup> This second praisha, or order of one of the Hotars, who is here the Maitrâvaruṇa to the Hotar to repeat his mantras, is called *upapraisha*. At the animal, as well as at the Soma sacrifices, the orders for repeating the Yâjyâ mantras are given by the Maitrâvaruṇa. As symbol of his power he receives a stick which he holds in his hand. The Adhvaryu gives at these sacrifices only the order for repeating the Anuvâkyâs.