

CHAPTER – VI

**DICHOTOMIC INTERPRETATION OF THE MAJOR
AND MINOR SACRIFICES**

DICHOTOMIC INTERPRETATION OF THE MAJOR AND MINOR SACRIFICES

In this chapter an attempt is made to find out the dichotomic interpretation of the major and minor sacrifices of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* so far as possible through interpretative methodological derivatives. The major and minor sacrifices of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* like *Rājasūya*, *Vājapeya*, *Aśvamedha*, *Puruṣamedha*, *Sarvamedha*, *Agnicayana*, *Cāturmāsya* and *Sautrāmaṇī* are being discussed briefly with dichotomic interpretation here under :

MAJOR SACRIFICES :

RĀJASŪYA :

Among the various *soma* sacrifices the *Rājasūya* is one of the prominent sacrifices in ancient India. It is a *soma* sacrifice to be performed by a *Kṣatriya Yajamāna*. Performance of the *Rājasūya yajña* is always considered to be a pride and honour for a king. It has been discussed in the chapter-IV that he who performs the *Rājasūya* assuredly gains for himself all sacrificial rites, all offerings, even the spoon-full oblations. The *Rājasūya*, a time old ceremony of royal inauguration has some popular rites and rituals accompanied with it. Among the various rituals of the *Rājasūya* sacrifice some rituals have both political as well as ritualistic significance which are as follows :

- In the *Rājasūya* ceremony, we have seen that the consecrated king makes offerings to the houses of the eleven *Ratnins* known as '*Ratninām*

haviṃsi' ceremony. The king goes to the houses of each *Ratnins* and makes offering except the *Kṣatra* and *Akṣāvāpa* and *Govikartana* together. For them offerings are made at the royal palace.

The offerings made by the consecrated king to the houses of *Ratnins* are very significant. These *Ratnins* actually represent different classes of people in the society. The consecrated king makes offering to the houses of *Ratnins* with the intension to seek their support, which speaks and supports for mass contact and connection.

Besides this, in the list of the *Ratnins* we find the four social classes of people, such as, the *Brāhmaṇa* (the *Purohita*), the *Kṣatriya* (the king himself), the *Vaiśyas* (*Grāmanī*) and the *Śudras* (the *Akṣāvāpa* and the *Govikartana*). The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*¹ mentions that the participation of the *Śudras* in these offerings are sanctified by a purificatory rite known as '*Soma-Rudra iṣṭi*'. In the same *Brāhmaṇa* it is recorded that once upon a time *Svarbhānu*, the *Aśura* struck the sun with darkness and stricken with darkness he did not shine. *Soma* and *Rudra* removed that darkness of him (Sun) and released him from the evil. And in like manner the king when he put those unworthy of sacrifice either in contact with the *Śudras* or whomever else performed the *Soma rudra iṣṭi*. The *Soma* and *Rudra* removed that darkness of him and he becomes consecrated.

¹ Śat.Brā – V/3/2/2-“Svarbhānur ha vā āsura | Sūrya tamasā viyādha sa tamasā viddho na vyarocata tasya somārudrāvevaitat tamo 'pāhatām.....etad yajñena prasajati sudrāstvadyāstvattasya somārudrāvevaitat tamo 'pahata | ”

Thus, from the above discussion it can be said that the ‘*Ratninām havīṃsi*’ or offering to the houses of the *Ratnins* is politically as well as ritualistically very important.

- The purificatory rite in the consecration ceremony mainly consists in sprinkling the king with holy waters collected from various seventeen sources. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*² gives the reason as to why the seventeen kind of water is mixed together is that the *Prajāpati* is seventeen fold and *Prajāpati* is the sacrifice. This is why he (*Adhvaryu*) brings together seventeen kinds of water and elevated this sprinkling ceremony as high as *Prajāpati*.

Moreover, this sprinkling or anointing ceremony is not only considered as sacred bath but it is regarded as the bestower of kingship. Regarding this ceremony the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* makes the statement that –“he (*Adhvaryu*) there by makes the people steady and faithful to him”³. As a matter of fact, this consecration ceremony symbolizes some holy power or character of the king such as- the flowing river symbolizes vigour, flood for plenty, sea for dominion and so on. Hence, the priest sprinkles the sacrificer with the intention that he should possess such quality in him. It is expected that the king should be vigorous like flowing river, loyal to the people, should be sincere and harmless

² *Śat.Brā* –V/3/4/22-“*Saptadasāpa sambharati saptadaśo vai prajāpati |*”

³ *Ibid* – V/3/4/14-“*Rāṣṭramuṣmai dattetī tabhirbhisincati viśamevā’smā etadsthāva rama napa kraminīm karotyētā vā ekā āpastā evaitatsambharati |*”

like the waters of a stagnant pool and so on. Hence, by performing this ritual, the priest connects the sacrificer with constitutional power.

- The consecration ceremony of *Rājasūya* sacrifice begins with the offering to the eight gods, which are known as ‘*Devāṣu*’ offering or Divine Quickness. The offerings are made to the eight gods with their epithets are described in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*⁴ as follows :

i) For *Sāvitrī Satyaprasava* of true impulse.

ii) For *Agni Gṛhapati* (the house lord).

iii) For *Soma Vanaspati* (the wood lord or tree).

iv) For *Bṛhaspati Vāk* (the lord of speech).

v) For *Indra Jyeṣṭha* (the most excellent).

vi) For *Rudra Paśupati* (lord of beasts).

vii) For *Mitra, Satya* (the true) and

viii) For *Varuṇa, Dharmapati* (the lord of the law).

The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* gives the reason as to why these offering are made is thus-“that those gods have the power of quickening, whence their name ‘*devasu*’ (Divine Quickeners). It is those gods who quicken him

⁴ *Śat.Brā* – V/3/3/2-9

(sacrificer) and thus quickened (consecrated) by them he will be consecrated on the morrow”⁵.

Besides this, these epithets also give the pattern of royal duties and functions which are expected that the king designated may follow these ideals.

- In the *Rājasūya* sacrifice we have come across that the *Brāhmaṇa* hands over the sacrificial wooden sword to the king as a mark of royal power and military strength. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* declares the sword as *Indra's* thunderbolt⁶. In the same *Brāhmaṇa* it is also clearly mentioned that the receiver of the sword becomes weaker than the giver⁷. Thus the king receives the sword from the *Brāhmaṇa* and hands it over to his brother. His brother hands over the sword to *Suta*. Then the *Suta* to *Grāmanī* and finally *Grāmanī* hands over the sword to a *Sajāta*, a tribe's man. Thus, from the above statement it is clear that the king's position is next to the *Brāhmaṇa* as he receives the sword from the *Brāhmaṇa*. And in like way the King becomes stronger than his brother, his brother than the *Sūta*, the *Sūta* than the *Grāmanī*. And in last the *Grāmanī* becomes stronger than the *Sajāta*. Hence, it can be said that this ritual corroborates the gradual deficiency in power which is intended for the proper functioning of the body of politics.

⁵ *Śat.Brā -V/3/3/13- “Etā ha vai devatā savasyeśate | Tasmāddevāsvo nāma tadenamatā eva devatā suvate tābhi suta śva suyate | ”*

⁶ *Ibid -V/4/4/18-“Indrasya vajro'si tena | ”*

⁷ *Ibid- V/4/4/15-20-“Taṃ rājā rājabhrātebhya prayacchati.....rājabhrātā sūtāya vā sthapataye vā prayacchati.....sūto vā sthapatirvā grāmanye prayacchati.....grāmanīm saajātayā prayacchati.....atha saajātascca pratiprasthātā ca | | ”*

Besides this, the same *Brāhmaṇa* text also gives the reason as to why this ritual is performed is stated thus-“they mutually hand it on in this way, they do so lest there should be a confusion of classes and in order that society may be in the proper order”⁸. These rituals actually reflect the ideal of monarchy and that of a class society.

- The game of dice or mimic cow raid is a part of the *Rājasūya* sacrifice. In this ritual the sacrificer who has been elected for king, places a hundred of cows of his relative to the north of the *Āhavaniya* fire and takes part in a sham fight. The king or the sacrificer pulls up his chariot in the middle of cows which is guarded by a *Rājanya* with a bow in hand. The king then shoots his arrow at him and having thus, as it were, he wheels round. Then the sacrificer touches the cow with the end of his bow and says-“Together with energy, I overpower them, I seize them”⁹. The mimic cow raid is actually an imitation of the cow raids of the earlier pastoral tribes. The successful leadership in such raids was once regarded as an essential qualification for the ruler. In later times when the institution of kingship was established, the kings in the time of royal inauguration used the feasts like mimic cow raid, which their ancestors once performed in reality.

⁸ *Śat.Brā* -V/4/4/19-“*Tadyadeva samprayacchante netpāvasyasamasdhyathā pūrvamasaditi tasmātdeva samprayacchante | |*”

⁹ *Ibid* – V/4/3/10-“*Atha dhanurātnyā gāmupasprśati | Samindriyeṇe ’tīndriyaṃ vai vīryaṃ gāva indriyamevaitadvīryamātmandhatte ’thāha jināmimā kurva imā iti |*”

According to J.Gonda-“this race like the cow raid and a dice play in the inauguration ceremonies represents a test for recognizing the ruler’s superiority in valour and physical prowess, and a means of enabling him the fittest man for kingship”¹⁰. We may here note that in this ceremony the sacrificer has to win cows not from any enemy, but from one of his relative. Therefore, it is an event of sham raid. This rites associated with the sprinkling ceremony imply the unrivalled greatness which every king should possess.

Besides this, the importance of this ritual can be interpreted in another way. In the Vedic age cow was regarded as an asset and desire for cows was used in the *R̥gveda* and in the *Atharvaveda* as a means of war¹¹. Hence, the cattle were regarded as a form of wealth and successful leadership in cattle raids was regarded as one of the essential qualifications for the candidature of kingship in the early Vedic age. Thus, it can be said that the cattle is used in the ‘cow raid’ as a means of asset or wealth.

- In the consecration ceremony of the *Rājasūya* the *Adhvaryu* spreads the Tiger-skin in front of the *Maitrāvaruṇa*’s hearth and says- “you are *Soma*’s beauty. For because when *Soma* flowed through *Indra*, he (*Indra*) thereupon became a tiger, therefore he is *Soma*’s beauty: that is why he (*Adhvaryu*) says-You are *Soma*’s splendor-may my beauty

¹⁰ Gonda, J, Ancient Indian kingship from the religious point of view by, Leiden E.J.BRILL, 1966, Page-85.

¹¹ *R. V-I/91/22-23* “*Tvamima oṣadhīḥ soma viśvāstvamapo ajanayas tvamogāḥ | Tvamā tatanthor vantarikṣaṃ jyotiṣā bi tamo babartha | |*”
“*Devena no manasā deva soma rayo bhāgaṃ sahasāvannabhi yudhya | Mā tvā tanadīṣiṣe viryasyo bhayebhyaḥ pra cikitsā gaviṣto | |*”

become like unto you! He thus bestows the tiger's beauty on him"¹². After that he offers the *Pārtha* oblations. These oblations are twelve in number as there are twelve months in a year. The *Adhvaryu* offers six before the consecration and six after the consecration and thereby he (the *Adhvaryu*) places the sacrificer in the very middle of the *Prajāpati*, as *Prajāpati* is year. Now which he offers before the consecration, *Bṛhaspati* is the last (recipient) and those of which he offers after the consecration *Indra* is the first. *Bṛhaspati* is the priestly dignity (*brahma*) and *Indra* is might vigour¹³. Therefore, the *Adhvaryu* by making these offerings encloses him (the sacrificer) on both sides with two kinds of vigour.

Moreover, as to why the tiger's skin is spread, the reason is mentioned above. Besides this, we may make our own opinion that spreading of the tiger's skin indicates the symbol of gaining the strength and the pre-eminence of the tiger. As the tiger is the king of all beasts, hence, the spreading of the tiger's skin is the symbol of royal dignity and power.

In the *Rājasūya* sacrifice, the *Adhvaryu* makes the sacrificer to ascend the regions and says¹⁴ –

¹² *Śat.Brā* –V/3/5/3-“*Agreṇa maitrāvaruṇasya dhisnya | Śārdula carmopaṣṭṛṇāti somasya tviṣirasītī yatra vai soma'indramatya pavata sa yattata sārdulame tviṣirbhuyāditi | |*”

¹³ *Ibid* - V/3/5/7- “*Brahmya vai bṛhaspatirindriyaṃ viryamindra |*”

¹⁴ *Ibid*-V/4/1/3-7 “*Ahainaṃ dīśa samārohayati | Prācīmāroha gāyatṛ tvā'vatu rathantara sāma trivṛtstomo vasanta riturbrahma dravinām | |*”
“*Dakṣināmāroha | Triṣṭupatvā'vatu vṛhatsāma pañcadaśa stoma grīṣma ṛtuṃ kṣatram dravinām |*”
“*Prācīmāroha | Jagatī tvā'vatu vairupa soma saptadasastoma varṣā ṛtuvid dravinām |*”
“*Udīcīmāroha | Anuṣṭupatvā'vatu vairāja sāmāikviṣṭoma saradṛtu śalam dravinām |*”
“*Ūddhvārmāroha | Panktistvā'vatu śākkor rai vate sāmanī trinavtrayastri śau stomau hemanta śiṣirābṛtu varecho dravinamiti | |*”

“Ascend thou the East! May the *Gāyatrī* metre protect thee, the *Rathantara-sāman*, the three fold *stoma*, the spring season, the priesthood, that precious treasure.”

“Ascend thou the South! May the *Triṣṭubh* protect thee, the *Bṛhat-sāman*, the fifteen fold *stoma*, the summer season, the knighthood, that precious treasure!”

“Ascend thou the West! May the *Jagati* protect thee, the *Vairūpa-sāman*, the seventeen fold *stoma*, the rainy season, the Peasantry that precious treasure!”

“Ascend thou the North! May the *Anuṣṭubh* protect thee, the *Vairāja-sāman*, the twenty fold *stoma*, the autumn season, fruit, that precious treasure!”

“Ascend thou the upper region! May the *Pañkti* Protect thee, the *Sākhvara* and *Raivata sāmans*, the thrice nine fold and three thirtyfold *stomas*, the winter and dewy season, spiritual lusture, that precious treasure!”

Thus, having mounted the quarters the sacrificer wins the season, the year and becomes high above everything and everything is below him¹⁵. In spite of this, the kings symbolical walking towards the various quarters is an indication of his universal rule. Hence, ascending of the four quarters has the great constitutional import. As by ascending the four quarters it is thought that

¹⁵ *Śat.Brā – V/4/1/8-“Tadyadenaṃ disaṃ samārohayati | Ṛtunāmevaina metadupamṛtunevaitat saṃvatsara samārohayati sa ṛtuna saṃvatsara samāruhya sarvamevedamuparyapari bhatarvāgevā śmādid sarvaṃ bhavati | | ”*

the king is to be protected by the four estates of the realm¹⁶. So, by ascending the quarters, the king wins both the season and the year and that of the realm.

- In the *Abhiṣeka* of the *Rājasūya* we notice that the priests take up a stick and silently strike the king on his back with those sticks. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* gives the reason behind this striking is as follows-“By striking him with sticks they take him beyond the pale of judicial punishment; hence the king is exempt from or beyond the reach of punishment”¹⁷. Elsewhere, the beating is also well known in fertility rite to stimulate the productive power or in driving out maleficent demons”¹⁸.

Hence, it can be resumed that the rituals of the *Rājasūya* sacrifice bears a double standard. Through the series of performances of the rituals of this sacrifice a strong blending for monarchial strata is also incorporated therein which works for a firm foundation for kingship and kingdom.

VĀJAPEYA :

The *Vājapeya* sacrifice is said to be designed on the procedure of another sacrifice known as *Śoḍāṣin* and it is a form of the *Jyotiṣtoma* sacrifice. The *Vājapeya* is one of the principal ceremonies of royal inauguration which bestows upon the sacrificer a superior kind of monarchy known as *Sāmrājya*.

¹⁶ Chakraborty, Haripada, Vedic India-Political and Legal Institutions in Vedic Literature, Kolkata, Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, 1981, Page-196.

¹⁷ *Śat.Brā* – V/4/4/7-“*Taṃ daṇḍairghanto daṇḍavadhamatinayanti tasmād rājā adaṇḍyo yadenam daṇḍavadhamatinayanti* | ”

¹⁸ Heesterman , J.C, The Ancient Indian Royal Consecration, Mouton and Co, 1957, Page-156.

Unlike other *soma*-sacrifice, it has some striking features indicating political character. The *Rājasūya* confers upon the sacrificer *Rājya* and that of *Vājapeya* confers the *Sāmrājya*. It is the ceremony which partakes of both religious and royal character. Some important features of the *Vājapeya* sacrifice are as follows :

- According to the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*¹⁹, he who offers the *Vājapeya* wins food, since ‘*Vājapeya*’ is the same as ‘*anna-peya*’ (food and drink). In fact the numerous lines of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* clearly suggest that the *Vājapeya* ceremony is a simple magical performance to obtain food and drink. Some references from the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* are quoted below which show the relation of the *Vājapeya* with foods are as follows :

“In the *Vājapeya* he, (the sacrificer) seizes a spotted sterile cow for the victorious *Maruts*; for the spotted sterile cow is this earth: whatever food, rooted or rooted or rootless is here established on her, thereby she is a spotted cow. Now he who offers the *Vājapeya* wins food, for *Vājapeya* doubtless means the same as *annapeya* (food and drink); and the *Maruts* are the peasants, and the peasants are food (for the nobles)”²⁰.

“He takes out material for wild rice of seventeen plates for *Brhaspati*; for he who offers the *Vājapeya* wins food,-*Vājapeya* being doubtless the same

¹⁹ *Śat.Brā* – V/1/3/3 and V/1/5/25-“*Annapeyaṃ ha vai nāmaid yad vājapeyaṃ; annaṃ vā eṣa ujjayati yo vājapeyena yajate* | ”

²⁰ *Ibid* –V/1/3/3-“*Atha marudbhya ujjeṣebhya | Vaśāṃ pṛsnimālabhata iyaṃ vai vsā pṛśniryadidama syāṃ muliṃ cā ’mulam cā ’nnādyam pratiṣṭitam teneyaṃ.....ca vaśāsyat* | | ”

as *anna-peya*: thus whatever food he has thereby won, that he now prepares for him”²¹.

“He touches the wheat: wheat is food, and he who offers the *Vājapeya*, wins food, for *Vājapeya* is the same as *annapeya*: thus whatever food he has thereby won, therewith now that he has gone to that supreme goal, he puts himself in contact and possesses himself of it,-therefore he touches the wheat”²²

But in the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*²³ it is mentioned that *Vājapeya* is the ceremony through which the Gods wish to obtain strength (*Vājam*) and by drinking the ‘drink of strength’ one becomes strong (*Vājin*). The *Vājapeya* is performed by both the *Brāhmiṇs* and by the *Kṣatriyas*. It stands for the temporal power or lordship of the *Kṣatriyas* and the spiritual lordship of the *Brāhmaṇas*.

- In the *Vājapeya* ceremony we have come across the most popular rites known as *Aji dhāvana* or Chariot race. The interesting feature of this race is that by performing this rite, the sacrificer is made victorious. In this race a post is fixed at the farthest limit with the measurement of seventeen arrows. Among the other competitors, the sacrificer has to

²¹ Śat.Brā -V/1/4/12-“*Atha bārhaspatyaṃ caruṃ naivāra saptasaśaśarāvaṃ nirvapati | Annaṃ vā eṣa ujjayati yo vājapeyena yajate ’nnapeya ha vai nāmaitad vājapeyaṃ tadyadevaitadnnamudjaiṣṭtadevā ’smā ’etat karoti | |*”

²² Ibid-V/2/1/13-“*Annaṃ vai godhumā annaṃ vā eṣaujjayati yo vājapeyena yajae ’nnapeyaṃ ha vai nāmaitadvājapeyaṃ tadyadevaitadnnamudjaiṣṭtenaivaitadetām gatim gatvā saṃspr̥sate tadātmanakurute tasmātgodhūmānupaspr̥ṣati | |*”

²³ Taitt.Brā – I/3/2/3-“*Sa evaṃ vidvān vājapeyena yajate | Gacchati svārājyaṃ.....yovai somaṃ vājapeyaṃ veda |*”

reach first to the post. As a matter of fact, this race has some linkage with the ancient system of distribution is evident from the *Vājapeya* legend of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* which runs thus-“The Gods went on making offering unto one another. *Prajāpati* gave himself up to them: thus the sacrifice became theirs; and indeed the sacrifice is the food of the Gods. They then spake, “To which of us shall this belong?” They did not agree together saying, ‘To me! To me!’ Not being agreed, they said, ‘Let us run a race for it: whichever of us shall win, to him it shall belong!- ‘So be it!’. So, they ran a race for it”²⁴. Thus in the Vedic period the chariot race was done for the selection of their kings, but in the later Vedic period this race is used just as a matter of formality, as we find that the king is deliberately made to win the race. According to Oldenberg, the purpose of the chariot race is to win the sacrificer by magic the swiftness of the victorious steeds as strength²⁵.

Besides this, the chariot race may be considered as a means of wealth. As in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* it is recorded that the *Adhvaryu* takes down the chariot and utters the mantras saying –“Thou art *Indra*’s thunderbolt, a winner of wealth, for chariot is indeed a winner of wealth;-may this one win wealth by thee! Wealth means food, may this one gain food by thee”²⁶. In this sacrifice,

²⁴ *Śat.Brā* – V/1/1/2-3 –“*Atha devā | Anyo ’nyasminneva juhvataśccherustebhya prajāpatirātmānām pradadau yajño haiṣāmāsa yajño hi devānāmnam | |*”
“*Te hocu | Kasya na idaṃ bhaviṣyati te mama mametyeva na sampādayān ca kruste hā ’sampādyocurājimevā ’sminnajāmahai sa yo na ujyeshyati tasya na idaṃ bhaviṣyatīti tatheti tasminnā ’jīmājanta | |*”

²⁵ Oldenberg, Hermann, Religion of the Veda, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 2004, Page-250.

²⁶ *Śat.Brā* – V/1/4/3-“*Indrasya vajro ’sīti vajjā vai ratha indro vai yajamānastasmādāhendrasya vajro ’sīti vāja sā ’iti vājasā hi ratha.....vaitadāha |*”

the number seventeen (17) is marked at various levels such as- 17 days, 17 lauds, 17 cups of *Soma*, 17 pieces of cloth to envelope the sacrificial pole, use of 17 chariots and so on. In the Chariot race we have also noticed that at the time of the race 17 drums are beaten to make auspicious sound. As *Prajāpati* is seventeen fold and by beating those drums the sacrificer wins *Prajāpati*²⁷. The sound of the drum is regarded as the highest kind of sounds and the sacrificer wins the highest of speech by beating those drums. So, it can be said that the Chariot race of the *Vājapeya* sacrifice has both political as well as ritualistic significance.

- In the *Vājapeya* sacrifice the sacrificer with his wife climbs on a chariot wheel, which is the symbol of the sun and it is installed on the top of a long pole. This act is a magic device to secure the preferment of the sacrificer. While ascending to the pole the sacrificer addresses his wife –‘come wife ascend we the sky’²⁸. While ascending the post, the sacrificer says –“we have become *Prajāpati*’s children, for he who offers the *Vājapeya* indeed becomes *Prajāpati*’s child”²⁹. According to *Sannyāsī Gyānshruti*, this is the couple’s symbolic walk to heaven³⁰. Before descending from the post the priest of the people (four chief priests) and the *Vaiśyas* touch the sacrificer with bags of salt earth in *Aśvattha* leaves or in *Aśvattha* boxes, clearly as a means of securing

²⁷ *Śat.Brā* – V/1/5/6-“*Saptadasa vai prajāpatistad prajāpatimujjayati* | ”

²⁸ *Ibid*- V/2/1/10-“*Jāyā ehi svo rohāveti* | ”

²⁹ *Ibid*- V/2/1/11-“*Sa rohāti | Prajāpate prajā abhumeti prajāpaterhyeṣa prajā bhavati yo vājapeyena yajate* | | ”

³⁰ Sannyasi, Gyanshruti, Yajña a comprehensive survey, Yog Publications trust, Bihar, 2006, Page-171.

fertility³¹. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* it is recorded that-“they throw up to him bags of salt, for salt means cattle and cattle is food; and he who offers the *Vājapeya* wins food, for *Vājapeya* is the same as *anna-peya*: thus whatever food he thereby has gained, there with now that he has gone to the supreme goal, he puts himself in contact, and makes it his own-therefore they throw bags of salt up to him”³².

Moreover, the same *Brāhmaṇa* also mentions that after descending from the post the sacrificer makes first steps upon a piece of Gold. As Gold is immortal life, he thus takes his stand on the immortal life³³. Then the *Adhvaryu* brings a throne seat for him made of *udumbara* wood and spreads the goat-skin upon it and says-“This is thy kingship! Whereby, he (*Adhvaryu*) endows him (sacrificer) with royal power. He then makes him sit down, saying, thou art the ruler, the ruling lord! Whereby he makes him the ruler, ruling over those subjects of his- Thou art firm and stead fast! Whereby he makes him firm and stead fast in this world,- Thee for tilling- Thee for peaceful dwelling! -Thee for wealth- Thee for thrift! Whereby he means to say, (here I sit) thee for the welfare of the people.”³⁴

The *Vājapeya* is more explicit than the *Rājasūya* as it has direct references and relation with the king. The rituals are also in total conformity

³¹ Chakraborty, Haripada, Vedic India- Political and Legal Institutions in Vedic Literature, Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, Kolkata, 1981, Page-209.

³² *Śat.Brā* – V/2/1/16-“*Athainamuṣaputairnudasyanti | Paśavo vā uṣā annaṃ vai paśaso ’nnaṃ.....putairnudasyanti | |*”

³³ *Ibid* – V/2/1/20-“*Atha hiraṇyambhyavarohati | Amṛtamāyurhiraṇyaṃ tadamṛt āyuṣī pratitiṣṭati | |*

³⁴ *Ibid*-V/2/1/25-“*Sa āstrīṇāti | Iyaṃ te rādi ’ti rājyamevā ’sminnetad dadhāthyathainamāsādayati | Yantā ’si yamana.....sādhave tvetye vaitadāha | |*”

with its royal character. The denomination ‘*Vājapeya*’ itself records the aspiration for strength of the king. Peaceful dwelling, wealth and thrift connotes for ideal kingship.

AŚVAMEDHA :

The *Aśvamedha* itself is identified with the kingdom³⁵. It is the king of sacrifice as stated in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*³⁶. The thirteen *kāṇḍa* of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* is exclusively devoted for this sacrifice. In the 14th *parvan* of the *Mahābhārata*, we also find references of the *Aśvamedha yajña* which is performed by *Yudhisthira*. Likewise, the *Rāmāyaṇa* also gives the glimpses of this ritual in just a few verses. The *Aśvamedha* sacrifice has numerous rites and rituals along with it. It is symbolic of the conquest of time by the king in whose name the rite is performed. It is also a celebration of social harmony achieved by the transcendence of the fundamental conflicts between various sources of power. The consecration of the king is done in the *Rājasūya* sacrifice and it is further rejuvenated by the *Vājapeya* and by the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice. The statement of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* –“*Rāstraṃ vā aśvamedha*”³⁷ indicates the national or royal sway sums up the various aspects of the sacrifice very well. As *Indra* with his steed defeats the *Aśuras*, so the earthly king by the horse sacrifice uniting himself mysteriously with the sacrificial horse and its magical power which defeats the *Aśuras*. *Indra*’s horse is the thunderbolt which slays *Vṛtra* and so the human horse aids the king to

³⁵ *Taitt.Brā-* III/8/9

³⁶ *Śat.Brā* – XIII/2/2/1-“*Rājā vā eṣa yajñānām yadśvamedha* | ”

³⁷ *Ibid* – XIII/1/6/3

defeat his enemies³⁸. It is an old famous rite. In the chapter-iv we have come across the names of various great kings who perform the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice and attain the royal administration. The 7th *Brāhmaṇa* of the 13th *kāṇḍa* of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* is fully devoted for the explanation of the *Aśvamedha mahimā*³⁹ or greatness of the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice which runs thus :

“Verily, this is the sacrifice called Strengthful: wherever they worship with this sacrifice, everything indeed becomes strong.”

“Verily, this is the sacrifice called Plenteous: whatever they worship with this sacrifice, everything indeed becomes plentiful.”

“Verily this is the sacrifice called Obtainment: wherever they worship with this sacrifice, everything indeed becomes obtained.”

“Verily, this is the sacrifice called Distinction: wherever they worship with this sacrifice, everything indeed becomes distinct.”

“Verily, this is the sacrifice called Severance: wherever they worship with this sacrifice, everything indeed becomes severed.”

“Verily, this is the sacrifice called Food-abounding: whatever they worship with this sacrifice, everything indeed becomes abounding in food.”

“Verily, this is the sacrifice called Sapful wherever they worship with this sacrifice; everything indeed becomes rich in sap (or drink).”

³⁸ Keith, A.B, RPVU, Vol-32, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1989, Page-346.

³⁹ *Śat.Brā-* XIII/3/7

“Verily, this is the sacrifice called Abounding in holiness: wherever they worship with this sacrifice, the *Brāhmaṇa* is born as one rich in holiness.”

“Verily, this is the sacrifice called Excelling in hitting: wherever they worship with this sacrifice, the *Rājanya* is born as one excelling in hitting (the mark).”

“Verily, this is the sacrifice called the Long (wide) one: wherever they worship with this sacrifice, a wide tract of forest-land will be provided.”

“Verily, this is the sacrifice called Fitness: wherever they worship with this sacrifice, everything indeed becomes fit and proper.”

“Verily, this is the sacrifice called Support (foundation): wherever they worship with this sacrifice, everything indeed becomes supported (firmly established).”

Some distinguished features of the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice are discussed below :

- In the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice we have noticed that the sacrificial horse is let loose for one year. After the return of the horse all the wives of the king performed numerous rites. When the sacrificial horse (victim) is slain, all the wives of the king have to go round it and make ceremonial mournings. After that the chief queen *Mahisī* lies besides the dead horse and unite with it and says-“May the vigour male, the layer of seed, lay seed’! She says for the sake of completeness of union⁴⁰. This union with

⁴⁰ Śat.Brā –XIII/5/2/2-“Vṛsā vājī retodhā reto dadhātṛviti mithunasyaiva sarvatvaya | ”

the horse is believed as a means of fertilization⁴¹. At the time of union with the horse, there is an obscene dialogue between the priests and the wife of the sacrificer⁴². The indecent languages used in this rite are useful for fertilization and thus add to the fertility power of the *Aśvamedha*.

Besides this, we also notice that in this ritual all the queen of the king take active parts with their attendants. The *Mahisī* (chief queen) has a “hundred daughters of kings” attending upon her, the *Vāvatā* (favourite queen) has “a hundred *rājanya*” (noble women) attending upon her. The *Parivrktā* (discarded wife) is attended by daughters of heralds (*Sūta*) and head man of villages (*Grāmanī*) comprising hundred in all. *Pālāgalī*, the fourth wife, the lowest queen in social rank is attended by a hundred daughters of Chamberlains and Charioteers⁴³. This classification clearly indicates that all the classes of subjects are equal participants in it and from this description we can also learn the constitutional status and dignity of the queens in the Vedic age.

- Of the five sacrificial animals next to the man, horse is regarded as the highest of all animals and by means of this the sacrificer is caused to reach the highest position⁴⁴. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* quotes that the horse is a worth of thousand Cows⁴⁵. It is believed that the sacrificial

⁴¹ Oldenberg , Hermann, The Religion of the Veda, , Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 2004, Page-250.

⁴² *Śat.Brā* – XIII/2/9, XIII/ 5/2
Taitt.Brā –III/9/7

⁴³ *Śat.Brā* – XIII/5/2/5-8

⁴⁴ Ibid-XIII/3/3/1-“*Paramośva paśunām paramaśccatuṣṭoma ṣṭomānām paramenai vainaṃ paramatām gamayati* | ”

⁴⁵ Ibid - XIII/4/2/1-“*Aśvannikto dānayanti yasmin sarvāṇi rūpāṇi bhavanti yo va jabasaṃṛddha sahasrārhampurvaṃ yo dakṣiṇāyāndhuryapratidhura* | ”

horse is originated from the *Prajāpati*'s eye⁴⁶. In the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice, when the sacrificial horse is set free, it wanders in to the north-eastern direction, the quarter of 'invincibility' (i.e. victory) where is the door of heaven and where victory is gained⁴⁷. Moreover, the horse is regarded as representative of royal power and dominion and it has its connection with *Varuṇa*. Hence, by roaming about freely it is on the one hand spreads its divine power over the whole country and on the other hand it extends the rule and power of its king.

- The *Aśvamedha* sacrifice is a royal ritual to assure the prosperity and good fortune of the king and his kingdom. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* says that *Prajāpati* assigned all the sacrifices to the Gods, but keep *Aśvamedha* for himself. The same *Brāhmaṇa* also mention that *Aśvamedha* is *Prajāpati*⁴⁸, and its holistic, universal and cosmic importance is also expressed by the phrase-'*Aśvamedha* is everything'. Hence, this sacrifice not only maintains the social order and wellbeing of the state but also the cosmic order. The cosmological and universal element of this sacrifice is clear from the above reference which shows the linkage of the *Aśvamedha* with the *Prajāpati*, the lord of creation.

Moreover, the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice, as described in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* is a very complex ritual full of symbolism. It is a sacrifice which is

⁴⁶ *Śat.Brā* -VII/5/2/6- "Sa prānebhya evādhi paśunniramimita manasa puruṣaṃ chakṣuso 'śvaṃ | "

⁴⁷ *Ait.Brā* -I/14

⁴⁸ *Śat.Brā* - XIII/2/2/12-"*Prajāpatirśvamedho* | "

performed for the celebration and manifestation of the royal power of successful and victorious ruler. Various peculiar rites are included in this sacrifice; among them one such rite is killing of a four-eyed dog and plunging it under the feet of the horse. This rite is very popular in nature. As in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* it is said that this rite is useful for removing the enemy of the sacrificer⁴⁹. Hence, by performing this rite the *Kṣatriya yajamāna* removes his entire enemy and became a powerful ruler. Therefore, this sacrifice is both politically and ritualistically very significant.

- Among the various performances of the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice, some rituals have the nature of fertility and it is performed for the sake of common welfare of all people. One of the prayers of the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice shows how popular interests are also expected to be fulfilled by means of this sacrifice. The prayer runs thus:-“In the priestly office (*Brahman*) may the *Brāhmaṇa* be born endowed with the *Brahman* lusture.....In the royal order may the *Rājanya* be born, heroic skilled in archery, sure of his mark, and a mighty car fighter.....the milch cow.....the drought ox.....the swift racer.....the well favoured women.....the victorious warrior.....the blitheful youth.....May a hero be born unto this sacrifice.....May *parjanya* rain for us whensoever’s we list.....May our fruit bearing plants ripen.....May security of possession be assured for us”⁵⁰. In this

⁴⁹ *Śat.Brā -XIII/1/2/9-“Paro marta para śveti śvānan caturakṣa hatvādhaspadamsvasyopaplāvayati vajre nainvainamvagrāmā nainampāpmā bhāṭrbhya āpnoti | ”*

⁵⁰ *Ibid -XIII/1/9/1-10*

prayer we notice that a desire is expressed for rains, plants are expected to be ripened and so on. Hence, from this prayer a common welfare is prayed for.

Thus, it can be said that this victory celebration rite (*Aśvamedha*) is performed both for the attainment of paramount sovereignty as well as for the welfare of people.

- Another peculiar rite included in the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice is playing the lute. It is said that one who performs the horse sacrifice royal sway departs from him. Thus, the lute is played with the intention for the preservation of prosperity and royal sway⁵¹.
- At the end of the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice there is a final or concluding rite known as *Avabhṛtha* bath. This bath has a peculiar rite along with it known as *Jumbaka* offering. In this an offering is made on the white spotted bald headed man with protruding teeth and reddish brown eyes. Making this offering the sacrificer redeems himself from *Varuṇa*'s nooses⁵². *Varuṇa* is regarded as the god of vegetation and death⁵³ and removing *Varuṇa* means removing difficulties in the fertilization. Thus, this rite is useful for fertilization.

⁵¹ *Śat.Brā* – XIII/1/5/1-“*Śrī rāṣṭraṃ krāmati yo 'śvamedhena yajate yada vai puruṣa sriyaṃgaccati vīṇāsmāi vādyate brāhmaṇau vīṇāgāthināu saṃvatsaraṃ gāyata sriyai vā etadupaṃ yadvīṇā sriyamevāsmistaddhatta |*”

⁵² *Ibid-* XIII/3/6/5- “*Varuṇa vai Jumbaka sākshādeva varuṇamvajayate śuklasya khaletirvi klidhasya piṅgākṣasya.....varuṇamvajate |*

⁵³ Thite, G.U, Sacrifice in the Brāhmaṇa texts, University of Poona, 1975, Page-94.

Besides this, in the *Jumbaka* offering the offering is made symbolically which indicates that human slaughtering was avoided in the Brahmnical period.

Thus, the various acts performed in the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice reflect the political as well as ritualistic importance of this sacrifice.

MINOR SACRIFICES :

PURUṢAMEDHA :

The *Puruṣamedha* sacrifice is a form of soma sacrifice, which is totally designed on the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice of royal sway. It has been mentioned in the earlier chapter that the *Puruṣamedha* sacrifice is performed either by a *Brāhmaṇa* or by a *Kṣatriya Yajamāna* and the performer of this sacrifice attains all beings and secure everything.

The *Puruṣamedha* sacrifice is attached with numerous rites and rituals. We notice that in the *Puruṣamedha* sacrifice the victim *Puruṣa* is not really killed, it is symbolical in real performance. From this, we also get the idea that in the age of the *Brāhmaṇas* a changed mentality was working among the people.

The sacrificial fee as prescribed for the *Puruṣamedha* sacrifice is very novel. According to Keith⁵⁴ a king may on this occasion give up his all goods and enter in to the life of the wandering mendicant. Dr. *Jogirāj Bāsu* makes the statement that the main object of this sacrifice is to stir up the spirit of

⁵⁴ Keith, A.B, RPVU (Vol-32), Motolal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1989, Page-347.

renunciation in man by proving the ephemeral nature of the world show⁵⁵. We can also make our own opinion that by giving up all his property as *dakṣinā* for his subjects a general welfare is wished by the king for his people.

So, from the above discussion it can be said that the *Puruṣamedha* sacrifice has also some dichotomic significance. The philosophical idea in the *Puruṣamedha* sacrifice like avoiding of human slaughtering, self resignation or entering in to the life of wandering mendicant are the tree steps of an ideal kingship. Besides this, the ‘giving up of all property’ by the king for the welfare of his subjects highlights the idealistic monarchial strata of the then society.

SARVAMEDHA :

The *Sarvamedha* or All sacrifice is a universal sacrifice. The performer of this sacrifice attains universal sovereignty. This sacrifice is performed in ten days. The model of this sacrifice is made by the *Brāhmaṇa Svayambhu* himself who performed this sacrifice first time by offering himself in the creatures. We have already come across the reference that the sacrificer while performing this sacrifice, offers all the sacrificial essences in the fire and compass all beings attains supremacy sovereignty and lordship. In the earlier chapter we have mentioned that *Viśvakarman Bhauvana* by performing the *Sarvamedha* sacrifice surpass all beings, became everything and attains supremacy and sovereignty. The sage *kaśyapa* officiated this sacrifice for the *Viśvakarman*

⁵⁵ Basu Jogiraj, India of the age of the age of the Brāhmaṇas, Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, Kolkata, 1969, Page- 169.

*Bhauvana*⁵⁶. Hence, the above discussion gives us idea that the *Sarvamedha* sacrifice is inter related to monarchy or kingship.

Moreover, the *Sarvamedha* sacrifice is performed with a view to gain every kind of food. As we know that the *Sarvamedha* sacrifice consists of ten days and it is performed for the sake of gaining and winning every kind of food. Because *Virāj* consists of ten syllables and the *Virāj* is all⁵⁷. Hence, it can be said that the *Sarvamedha* sacrifice has some dichotomic interpretation as by performing this sacrifice one attains all kinds of food and that of universal sovereignty.

AGNICAYANA :

The *Agnicayana* or the piling of the fire altar or the construction of the vedi is the most technical and complicated sacrifice. According to Prof. Eggeling it is originally an independent rite and later come under the system of soma sacrifice⁵⁸. The *kāṇḍas* from VI-X of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* is attributed to *Agnicayana*. It is one of the oldest sacrifice so far found and described in the ancient Vedic *saṃhitās*. In the chapter-V we have tried to give a brief description of the *Agnicayana* ceremony. So, in this chapter an attempt is made to highlight some important features of the *Agnicayana* ceremony which are here under :

⁵⁶ *Śat.Brā* – XIII/7/1/15- “*Ta ha kaśyapo yājayāncakāra* | ”

⁵⁷ *Ibid-* XIII/7/1/2- “*Daśākṣarā virādvirādu kṛtsnamnam* | ”

⁵⁸ Eggeling, J, The Sacred Book of the East, Vol-XLII, Introduction Page- XIII

- The *Agnicayana* ceremony represents the cosmogonic speculations of the time. The making of the bricks and the process of piling them up symbolize *Prajāpati*'s cosmic creation. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* has identified the fire altar with *Prajāpati*, the lord of creation⁵⁹.
- The making of the fire pan has been stated as the making of the worlds⁶⁰.
- The making of the bricks is identified with the production of offspring⁶¹.
- The construction of the fire altar has been conceived as reconstructing *Prajāpati*.⁶²

From the above references it is clear that various ritualistic performances of the *Agnicayana* ceremony give us enough scope for philosophical thinking of life. Along with philosophical discussions the *Agnicayana* ceremony also has some rituals with political significance, such as – the *Pārtha* oblations of the *Rājasūya* sacrifice, *Abhiṣeka* of the *Yajamāna*, Six *Vājaprasaviya* offerings, twelve *Rāṣṭrabhṛt* offerings and so on. As already discussed in the earlier chapter that by offering *Pārtha* oblations, the sacrificer is consecrated by the *Rājasūya* and by the *Vājaprasaviya* oblations he (the sacrificer) is consecrated by the *Vājapeya*. After those oblations the sacrificer

⁵⁹ *Śat.Brā* - X/1/1/3-“*Sa ya sa saṃvatsara prajāpatir vyastrasata | Ayameva sa yo'yamgniscīyate'tha |*”

⁶⁰ Ibid- VI/5/3/3-“*Athokhāṃ karoti | Imāstallokāṅkarotyatha viśvajyotiṣa karotyeta devatā agniṃ vāyumā dityameta.....devā'ityadhivataṃ |*”

⁶¹ Ibid- VI/5/3/5-“*Athakhāṃ karoti | Ātmānaṃ tatkarotyatha viśvajyotiṣa karoti prajā vai viśvajyoti prajā hyeva viśvaṃ jyoti..... ulvaṃ jarāyu |*”

⁶² Ibid- X/1/3/5-“*Sa ya sa prajāpati | Ayameva sa yo'yamgniscīyate'tha asya tā pañca martyāstanva āsannetāstā puriṣacīyato'tha yā amṛtā etāstā iṣṭakācitayah |*”

offers *Agni* consecration, because he who is consecrated by the *Agni* consecration rite becomes everything, king and emperor⁶³.

In the ritual procedure of the *Agnicayana* ceremony there are a certain rites in which the sacrificer is given a sacred bath. This sacred bath or *Abhiṣeka* in the *Agnicayana* ceremony has some similarities with the royal consecration. After having piled up the fire, the sacrificer should consecrate with sacred bath. As who has piled the fire altar and the sacrificer of the *Rājasūya* conquers both the worlds⁶⁴. After that the sacrificer also performs the *Rāṣṭrabhṛt* (realm-sustaining) oblations⁶⁵. Hence, from the above discussion, it can be said that along with various ritualistic performances, the *Agnicayana* ceremony also have some philosophical as well as political character in it.

CĀTURMĀSYA :

The *Cāturmāsya*s are popular rites of fertilization⁶⁶. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* mentions that he who performs the seasonal sacrifices obtains the highest place, the supreme goal⁶⁷. The four *parvans* of the *Cāturmāsya* sacrifice are –

- (i) *Vaiśvadeva*
- (ii) *Varuṇapraghāsa*
- (iii) *Sākamedha*

⁶³ *Śat.Brā* -IX/3/4/9-“*Sarve haite sa vā yadagnisava sarvaṃ haitadgnisavena suto bhavati rājā ca samrāt ca tasmādgneruttamāni juhōti |*”

⁶⁴ *Taitt.Saṃ*- V/ 6/3/4

⁶⁵ *Śat.Brā* – IX/4/1/1-“*Athāto rāṣṭrabhṛto juhōti | Rājāno vai rāṣṭrabhṛtaste hi rāṣṭrāṇi bibhryatyetā ha devatā sutā etena savena yenaitatsoṣyamāno bhavati | |*”

⁶⁶ Heesterman, J.C, *Ancient Indian Royal Consecration*, Mouton & Co, 1957, Page- 28.

⁶⁷ *Śat.Brā* –II/6/4/9-“*Sa paramameva sthānaṃ paramāṃ gatim gacchati cāturmāsyaṃyājī |*”

(iv) *Sunāsiriya*

The *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* says that- “by means of the *Vaiśvadeva* (the priest) gives him (the sacrificer) a firm stand in this (terrestrial) world; by means of the *Varuṇapraghāsa* in the atmosphere; by means of the *Sākamedha* in the yonder world, adding that he who performs the *Cāturmāsya* , becomes all this (i.e. the universe)”⁶⁸. Some important features of the *Cāturmāsya* sacrifice are as follows :

- Among the various ritualistic performances of the *Cāturmāsya* sacrifice, there is a very peculiar rite in the *Varuṇapraghāsa parvan* in which the sacrificer’s wife is asked about her carnal purification before offering oblations. And the wife has to admit whether she has any illicit relation with anyone or not⁶⁹. Such confession is made on the basis to get rid of the fault of the sacrificer and make the performance pure and perfect.
- In the *Sākamedha parvan* of the *Cāturmāsya* sacrifice there is *Tryambaka* offering⁷⁰. In this offering cakes are offered to *Rudra* as there are members in the family and extra one is for that person who is yet to born. The offerings are made to

⁶⁸ *Taitt.Brā* – I/4/9/5-“*Para ’sya bhātr̥vyo bhavati | Virājo vā eṣa vikrāntiḥ |*
Yatecāturmāsyaṇi.....catvāri ca | ”

⁶⁹ *Śat.Brā* –II/5/2/20-“*Sa patnimudāneṣyannapṛcchati kena carasīti varuṇyaṃ vā etadstrī karoti*
yadannasya satyannyena.....tadhitam syāt | ”

⁷⁰ *Ibid* -II/6/2/1-“*Mahāhaivaṣā ha vai devā bṛtraṃ jagnu | Tena eva vyaja yanta*
yeyameṣāṃ.....tranyambakairyajanta | ”

Rudra on the cross way and after the offering the sacrificer and the priests come back without looking back and touch the water. These offerings are made as *Rudra* has the power of healing or curing⁷¹. The *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* gives the significance of the *Tryambaka yāga* as to delight *Rudra*⁷². Thus, by making offering to *Rudra* it is expected that all the family members (who are yet to born) becomes free from disease.

Though the *Cāturmāsya*s are generally considered as fertility rite, but from the above mentioned fact it can be stated that *Cāturmāsya* sacrifice has some healing or curing capacity also. Besides this, the *Cāturmāsya* sacrifice also has some royal character in it. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*⁷³, we have come across the reference that the sacrificer of the *Rājasūya* “offers the *Vaiśvadeva*; for by means of the *Vaiśvadeva Prajāpati* created abundance of food and creatures.....and in like manner the sacrificer by the *Vaiśvadeva* create abundance and creatures”, then he “offers the *Varuṇapraghāsa*, for by means of the *Varuṇapraghāsa Prajāpati* delivered the creatures from *Varuṇa*’s noose.....and in like manner does this sacrificer by the *Varuṇapraghāsa* deliver the creates from *Varuṇa*’s noose” after that the sacrificer “performs the

⁷¹ Oldenberg, Hermann, The Religion of the Veda, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 2004, Page-237.

⁷² *Gop.Brā* – II/1/25-“*Yat trayambakaiścaranti rudraṃ eva tat svāyaṃ diśi prīṇayanti* | ”

⁷³ *Śat.Brā* –V/2/4/1-3

“*Vaiśvādevena yajate* | *Vaiśvādevena vai prajāpatirbhumānaṃ prajā*.....*sūya iti* | ”

“*Atha varuṇapraghāsairyajate* | *Varuṇapraghāsair vai prajāpati**abhi sūya iti* | ”

“*Atha sākamehairyajate* | *Sākamedhairvai deva vai deva vṛtramghanastairveva*

vyajayanta.....*vijite ’bhaye ’nāṣṭatre sūyā iti* | | ”

Sākamedha; for by the *Sākamedha* the Gods slew *Vṛtra* and gained the universal conquest.....and in like manner the sacrificer slays his wicked, hateful enemy and obtains victory”.

Hence, the inclusion of the *Cāturmāsya* in the *Rājasūya* is pointer to its political character.

SAUTRĀMAṆĪ:

The *Sautrāmaṇī* is an expiatory sacrifice, performed by one who is excessively purged by *Soma*. It has two distinct forms, the *Kaukilī* (which is an independent rite) and the *Caraka* (forming a part of the *Rājasūya* sacrifice). In the earlier chapter we have come across the references of *Tvaṣṭṛ* and *Indra*, that how *Indra* was affected by improper drinking of the *Soma* juice. The Gods then performed the *Sautrāmaṇī* for *Indra* and cured him. This is the saving nature of the *Sautrāmaṇī* sacrifice. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* we get the reference that in the *Sautrāmaṇī* sacrifice there is a victim for *Aśvins*, *Sarasvati* and *Rudra*. As to why these victims are offered to those gods, the reason is quoted here under :

“It is the *Aśvins* who cured him; and in like manner does he (the priest) now cure him through those same *Aśvins*: that is why there is a victim for the *Aśvins*”⁷⁴

⁷⁴ *Śat. Brā -V/5/4/15*“*Aśvinau vā enambhiṣajjayatām tatho evainameṣa etadśvibhyāmeva bhiṣajjayati tasmādāśvino bhavati |*”

“*Sarasvati* assuredly is speech, and it was by speech that the *Aśvins* cured him; and in like manner does he now cure him by speech: that is why there is one for *Sarasvati*”⁷⁵

“*Indra* assuredly is the deity of the sacrifice, and it is by this (offering) that he now heals him: this is why there is one for *Indra*”⁷⁶.

The above references show the healing or curing nature of the *Sautrāmaṇī* sacrifice. Besides this, we also notice that as a redressing rite the *Caraka Sautrāmaṇī* is performed at the end of the *Rājasūya* sacrifice. The *Rājasūya* sacrifice is regarded as one of the major sacrifices in ancient India with political import. However, in the earlier chapter we have come across such references that one who performs the *Rājasūya* should subsequently perform the *Sautrāmaṇī* as a redressing rite. As by performing the *Rājasūya* sacrifice, one becomes deprived of certain things viz. sensual powers (*indriya*), vitality (*vira*), speech (*vāk*), Milk (*pāyas*) and so on. In order to regain the strength and vigour which have gone away from the sacrificer, the performer of the *Rājasūya* sacrifice should perform the *Caraka Sautrāmaṇī* to reinstate these valour and strength in him. Hence, the *Kṣatriya* sacrificer gets back his valour and strength by performing the *Caraka Sautrāmaṇī*. Moreover, in the *Āpastambha Śrauta Sutra* it is mentioned that a king who is devoid of his kingdom should perform the *Sautrāmaṇī* sacrifice and thereby gets back his

⁷⁵ *Śat.Brā* - V/5/4/16-“*Vāgvaisarasvati vācā vā enamśvināvabhiṣajjayatām tatho evainameṣa etadvācaiva bhiṣajjayati tasmāt sārasvato bhavati* | ”

⁷⁶ *Ibid* – V/5/4/17-“*Indra vai yajñasya devatā sā yaiva yajñasya devatā tayāivainametadbhiṣajjayati tasmā dendro bhavati* | ”

kingdom. And so being a follow up of the *Rājasūya* sacrifice, the *Sautrāmaṇī* sacrifice also has political significance in it.