

CHAPTER – V

**MINOR SACRIFICES LIKE *PURUṢAMEDHA*,
SARVAMEDHA, *AGNICAYANA*, *CĀTURMĀSYA* AND
SAUTRĀMAṆI AND THEIR POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE**

MINOR SACRIFICES LIKE *PURUṢAMEDHA*, *SARVAMEDHA*, *AGNICAYANA*, *CĀTURMĀSYA* AND *SAUTRĀMAṆI* AND THEIR POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* has dealt with various sacrifices. Among them some are considered as major sacrifices having dichotomic significance, such as – *Rājasūya*, *Vājapeya*, *Aśvamedha* and so on. Some other sacrifices which are generally considered as minor sacrifices having dichotomic traits- *Puruṣamedha*, *Sarvamedha*, *Agnicayana*, *Cāturmāsyā* and *Sautrāmaṇī* are worth mention in the line. These sacrifices are deliberately categorized as ‘minor sacrifices’ under the context of this dissertation. These sacrifices although do not have much alliance with the royal or political concurrence but they are also not detached from that. Directly or indirectly they are related to the dichotomic process in the performance of the respective sacrifices either to human welfare or to the universal sovereignty of the king, the performer of the sacrifices. Now a discussion on each of them:-

***PURUṢAMEDHA* :**

The *Puruṣamedha* sacrifice is a slightly different form of *soma* sacrifice like *Aśvamedha* sacrifice. It is performed by a *Brāhmaṇa* or a *Rājanya yajamāna*, desirous of surpassing all the beings. It is neither *Ekāha* nor *Satra* type of sacrifice. It consists of five days; therefore, it comes under the pattern of *Ahina* type of sacrifice. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* gives the etymology of the word *Puruṣamedha* –“as to why it is called *Puruṣamedha* – The stronghold

(*pur*) doubtless is these worlds, and the *Puruṣa* (spirit) is he that blows here (the wind), he bides (*śi*) in this strong hold (*pur*): hence he is the *Puruṣa*. And whatever food there is in these worlds that is it's '*medha*' its food; and inasmuch as this is it's '*medha*', it's food, therefore (it is called) *Puruṣamedha*. And in as much as at this (sacrifice) he seizes men (*puruṣa*) meet for sacrifice (*medhya*), therefore also it is called *Puruṣamedha*'¹. There are twenty three (23) *dikṣās*, twelve (12) *upaśads* and five (5) *sutyās* (*soma* days) in the *Puruṣamedha* sacrifice². On the *Upavasatha* (day) eleven (11) victims are to *Agni* and *Soma*³. On the *Sutyā* days there are *savaniya* victims set of eleven⁴. The first of the *Sutyā* days is an *Agniṣṭoma*, then follows an *Ukathya*; then and *Atirātra*; then an *Ukathya* and then again an *Agniṣṭoma*⁵.

The term '*Puruṣamedha*' connotes the meaning as – in this sacrifice instead of animals human beings (*puruṣa*) are offered as oblations. Therefore, it is known as *Puruṣamedha*. But these offerings are regarded as only symbolical and not real. In the *Puruṣa Sūkta* of the *Ṛgveda* we find that this *Puruṣa* had thousand heads and thousand eyes and he is surrounded in the whole earth⁶. According to *Sāyanācārya* the term '*Sahasra*' is symbolical. It signifies

¹ *Śat.Brā- XIII/6/2/1*-“*Atha yasmāt puruṣamedha nāma | Ime vai lokā pūrayameva puruṣo yo 'yampavate so 'syāmpuri śete tasmāt puruṣastasya yadeṣu.....tasmādeva puruṣamedha | |*”

² *Ibid-XIII/6/1/2*-“*Tasya trayoviṃśatirdikṣā | Dvādasoupasada pañca sūtyā sa eṣa catvāriṃsadrātra sadikṣopasatktas ccatvāriṃsadkṣarā virāt tadvirājambhi sampadyate tato virādajāyata virājo 'dhi puruṣa 'ityeṣā vai sā virādetasyā evaitadvirājo yajñampuruṣanjanayati | |*”

³ *Ibid- XIII /6/1/4*-“*Ekādasāgnīṣomīyā paśava upavasathe |*”

⁴ *Ibid- XIII /6/1/5*-“*Ekādasīnā sutyāsu paśavo bhavanti |*”

⁵ *Ibid- XIII /6/1/8*-“*Tasyāgniṣṭoma prathamamhavharvati | Athokathyo 'thātirātro 'thokathyo 'thāgniṣṭoma | |*”

⁶ *R.V-X/90/1*-“*Sahasra sīrṣā puruṣaḥ sahasrākṣaḥ sahasrapāt | Sa bhumim viśvato bṛhātyātiṣṭadaśāṅgulaḥ | |*”

innumerable heads. That means the ‘*Puruṣa*’ is endowed with countless heads; so also the ‘*Puruṣa*’ is endowed with endless number of eyes, feet and so on. Compare : ‘*Sahasra sabdasyopalakṣhaṇatvāt anantaiḥ sirobhirukta ityarthah*!’⁷

On the central day, the victim *Puruṣas* (men) are seized⁸ and bound to the sacrificial posts, but they are not actually slaughtered. After the *Paryagnikaraṇa* performance (i.e. after the fire has been carried round them) all of them are set free⁹. Then after the *Udayaniya* offering (concluding oblation) eleven barren cows are offered to *Mitra-Varuṇa*, the *Viśve-devāh* and *Bṛhaspati*¹⁰. After that the *Traidhātavi*, the final offering is offered¹¹.

Origin of the *Puruṣamedha* :

The origin of the *Puruṣamedha* is attributed to *Puruṣa Nārāyaṇa* himself who surpassed all beings by performing this rite. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* gives the origin of the *Puruṣamedha* as follows : “*Puruṣa Nārāyaṇa* desired, would that I over passed all beings! Would that I alone were everything here (this universe)! He hold this five days sacrificial performance of the *Puruṣamedha*, and took it, and performed offering there with, and having performed offering therewith, he over passed all beings, and became everything

⁷ *R.V- X/90/1 (Sāyaṇa Bhāṣya)*

⁸ *Śat.Brā - XIII /6/2/2-“Tānvai madhyame ’hannālabhate | ”*

⁹ *Ibid- XIII /6/2/13-“Puruṣa mā santhiṣṭipo yadi samsthāpayiṣyasikāmai | ”*

¹⁰ *Ibid- XIII /6/2/16-“Udayanīyāyāṃ samsthītāyāṃ | Ekādasā vasā anubandhyā ālabhate maitrāvarunīrvaiśvadevī bārhaspatyā | | ”*

¹¹ *Ibid- XIII /6/2/17-“ Traidhātavyudavasānīyāsāveva vandhu | ”*

here. And verily, he who knowing this performs the *Puruṣamedha*, or who even knows this, overpasses all beings and becomes everything here”¹².

Ritual procedure of the *Puruṣamedha* sacrifice :

In the *Puruṣamedha* sacrifice a *Brāhmiṇ* or a *Kṣatriya* is bought at the price of a thousand cows and a hundred horses. Like the horse in the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice, he (the *puruṣa*) is allowed to roam for a year. In that year of roaming (he) the *Puruṣa* can do anything as he wishes, but he has to remain chaste. After returning back he (the *Puruṣa*) is killed and the chief queen called *Mahisī* lies beside him as in the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice. But this performance is only symbolical and not actual. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, there is a clear statement that the slaughtering of human being should be avoided – “When *Nārāyaṇa* was sacrificing, at that time of the slaughtering of the *Puruṣas* a voice said to him, ‘*Puruṣa*’, do not consummate these victims. If thou wert to consummate them, man would eat man. Then the fire had been carried round them and the human victims are set free”¹³. This passage is very important as it clearly indicates the tendency to avoid human slaughtering and also gives the reason for it. Hence, it can be said that due to this tendency, the human sacrifice has become symbolical in the *Brāhmaṇa* texts.

The human victims are always set free after some purificatory rite. It is also evident from the *Śuṅahśepa* story of the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*¹⁴, where we

¹² *Śat.Brā* – XIII /6/1/1-“*Puruṣo ha nārāyaṇo ’kāmayata | Atitiṣṭtheyam sarvāṇi bhutānya hamevedaṃ sarvaṃ syāmiti sa.....yajate yo vaitadevaṃ veda | |*”

¹³ Ibid - XIII /6/2/12-13

¹⁴ *Ait.Brā* -VII/13

noticed that *Śunasepa* was to be sacrificed to *Varuṇa*, but was released due to the favour of various deities. For clear idea, the story of *Śunahśepa* is discussed here under :

King *Hariśchandra*, the son of *Vedhas*, of the *Ikshāvaku* race had no son. The king had hundred wives, but they did not give birth to a son¹⁵. In *Hariśchandra*'s house there lived the two *Ṛṣis* – *Parvata* and *Nārada* by name. Once *Nārada* told the king-“go and beg of *Varuṇa* the king, that he might favour you with the birth of a son (promising him at the same time) to sacrifice to him this son when born”¹⁶. So, the king went to *Varuṇa* and makes his prayer. Then by the grace of *Varuṇa* a son by name ‘*Rohita*’ was born to the king *Hariśchandra*. After the birth of the child, the *Varuṇa* repeatedly insists the king to sacrifice his son to him. But the king in under different circumstances always contempt his promise. And finally when the king agreed to sacrifice his son to *Varuṇa*, he called him (*Rohita*) and said-“Well, my dear I will gave thee to him, who gave thee unto me, I will sacrifice thee now”¹⁷. But the son (*Rohita*) was not agreed to that and absconded to the wilderness roaming for a six year.

As *Hariśchandra* was not able to keep his promise, he was seized by *Varuṇa* and his belly swelled i.e. he was attacked by dropsy. *Rohita*, while wondering in the forest met with the *Ṛṣi* *Ajīgarta*, the son of *Suyavasa*. The

¹⁵ *Ait.Brā* –VII/13-“*Hariśchandro ha vaidhasa aikshāvāko rājā'putra āsa | Tasya ha satam jāyā babhuvuḥ : tāsū putram na leve |*”

¹⁶ *Ibid*-VII/14-“*Athainamuvāca varuṇam rājānamupadhāva putra me jāyatām tena tvā yajā iti tatheti |*”

¹⁷ *Ibid*-VII/14-“*Sa hamsannāham prāpattam hovāca sannāhannu prāpnodyajasa māne neti sa tathetyuktivā.....yajā |*”

sage *Ajṅgarta* had three sons- the elder son is *Śuṅaḥpuccha*, the middle son is *Śuṅaḥśepa* and the younger son is *Sunolangūla* by name. *Rohita* told *Ajṅgarta* to give him one son in exchange of hundred cows, as he want to ransom himself (from being sacrificed) with one of his son. The sage *Ajṅgarta* agreed with *Rohita* and gave his middle son ‘*Śuṅaḥśepa*’ to *Rohita* with the exchange of hundred cows.

After that *Rohita* left the forest and approach to his father with *Śuṅaḥśepa* and says – “O my dear father! By this boy I will ransom myself from being sacrificed”¹⁸. Then the king approached to *Varuṅa* and said to him that he will sacrifice ‘*Śuṅaḥśepa*’ to him in lieu of his son. And *Varuṅa* also agreed to that. When the preliminary offerings were started for sacrifice, *Śuṅaḥśepa* got aware that he will be butcher like that of an animal. So, he (*Śuṅaḥśepa*) makes prayer to the Gods to release him from the fearful death. He utter one after another verse to various deities and pleased them. Finally, the Gods release *Śuṅaḥśepa* and *Hariśchandra* also restored to his health again.

Thus, this story corroborates the view of the *Brāhmaṅa* text that the human slaughtering was avoided. The human victims are set free and the Performance is only symbolical.

According to the erudite Vedic scholar *Cinna Swāmi Sāstrī* -“actual slaughtering of human being in the *Puruṣamedha* is never heard in any

¹⁸ *Ait.Brā* – VII/15-“*Sapitarametyovāca tata hatānha manenātmānaṅ niṣkrīṅā iti* | ”

recension of the Veda or *Śrauta Sūtra*”¹⁹. Instead of human beings goats are offered as victims according to the rites of *Paśu Yāga*. The reason behind is that if human beings are actually slaughtered, the Priests and the *Yajamānas* have to eat human flesh. Thus the human slaughtering is avoided and it is performed only in symbolical.

The *dakṣinās* of the *Puruṣamedha* sacrifice as described in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* are very novel. It runs thus : “What there is towards the middle of the kingdom other than the land and the property of the *Brāhmaṇa*, but including the men of that the eastern quarter belongs to *Hotṛ*, the southern to the *Brāhmaṇ*, the western to the *Adhvaryu*, and the northern to the *Udgātṛ*, and the *Hotṛkas* share this along with them”²⁰. This is in the case of a *Kṣatriya Yajamāna*, but if the *Yajamāna* is a *Brāhmaṇa* then he should bestow all his property as *dakṣinā* in order to obtain and secure everything, for *Brāhmaṇa* is everything and all one’s property is everything, and the *Puruṣamedha* is everything²¹.

In The *Aśvamedha* sacrifice, we also find reference of the *Jumbaka* offering at the end of the *Avabhṛtha* bath. This offering is offered on the head of a white spotted, bald-headed man with protruding teeth and reddish brown

¹⁹ Shastri, Cinnaswami and Shastri, P.P.N.Bhattabhiram *Yajña tattva prakāsa*, , Motilal Banarsidass, 1992, Page-122.

²⁰ *Śat.Brā - XIII /6/2/18-“Madhyamprati rāstrasya yadannyadbhumesścca brāhmaṇasya va vittā tsapurūṣamprāci.....hotṛkā anvābhaktā | ”*

²¹ *Ibid- XIII /6/2/19-“Atha yadi Brāmaṇo yayet | Sarvavedasandadyāt sarvaṃ vai brāhmaṇa sarvaṃ sarvavedasaṃ sarvapuruṣamedha sarvasyāptayai sarvasyāvaruddhyai | ”*

eyes²². This offering is made for one self to free from *Varuṇa*'s noose. The texts available to us do not describe this offering as a killing of man. Actually the *Brāhmaṇ* texts tried to remove the killing of man and make it only symbolical.

In the *Agnicayana* ceremony also we notice that the heads of Animals are to be put²³. Among these animals *Puruṣa* is killed first, for the *Puruṣa* is the first of all animals²⁴. The *Yajamāna*, who desirous to perform this sacrifice, offers five animals – a man, a horse, a bull, a ram and a he goat. Instead of killing these animals golden or clay heads of these may be used²⁵.

Therefore, from the above discussion it is clear that though in the *Brāhmaṇa* text we find the reference of killing of human victims, but as a matter of fact, they wanted to avoid it. Hence, they have described the human sacrifice to be performed symbolically. This is a sign of changing mentality. The *Brāhmaṇa* texts represent some sophisticated mentality which does not allow human slaughtering. Thus the origin of *Ahiṃsā* is thus seen here and a step from ritualism to spiritualism is also observed.

Hence, from the above discussion it is clear that most of the ritual procedure of the *Puruṣamedha* sacrifice is alike as that of *Aśvamedha* sacrifice.

²² *Śat.Brā-XIII/3/6/5*-“*Śuklasya khaletirvi klidhasya piṅgākṣasya mūrdhani juhotyetaadvai varuṇasya rupa rupenaiva varuṇaṃ vayahate* | ”

²³ *Ibid-VII/5/2/1*-“*Paśuśirṣānyupadadhāti | Pasava vai paśuśirṣāṇī* | | ”

²⁴ *Ibid- VI/2/1/18*- “*Puruṣaṃ prathamamālabhate | Puruṣa hi prathamam paśunām* | | ”

²⁵ Mehra , B.S, Śrauta sacrifice in the Atharvaveda, Sanjay Prakashan, Delhi,1994, Page-186.

Some political or monarchial character of the Puruṣamedha sacrifice :

The *Puruṣamedha* sacrifice is generally performed by a King or by a *Kṣatriya Yajamāna* or by a *Brāhmaṇa*. We have already discussed that by performing this sacrifice, the sacrificers surpass all being and attain supremacy. It is also performed for the attainment of over powering strength. According to Keith the offering is to be performed by a *Brāhmaṇa* or by a *Kṣatriya Yajamāna* who is not successful²⁶. The *dakṣinās* of the *Puruṣamedha* sacrifice has great significance. Its significance can be interpreted in two ways :

A king by performing the *Puruṣamedha* sacrifice, surpass all being and become everything as he bestows all his property (other than the land and property of the *Brāhmaṇa*) as *dakṣinā* in order to obtain and securing everything. As one's property is everything and by bestowing everything in the *Puruṣamedha* sacrifice, the sacrificer attains everything and surpass all being.

On the other hand, we can make our own statement that by performing the *Puruṣamedha* sacrifice, a general welfare is expected by a king for his subjects. As on this occasion a king gives his all property as *dakṣinā* and enters in to a life of mendicant. The sacrificer gives up his all wealth to the priests and retires to the forest with the intension to spread the spirit of self resignation in man. Moreover, by giving up his all 'property' or 'wealth' a general welfare is also expected by the king for his subjects.

²⁶ Keith. A.B, Religion and philosophy of the Veda and Upanisads, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1989. Page-347.

SARVAMEDHA :

The *Sarvamedha* sacrifice or All sacrifice is one of the *Ahina* types of *Soma* sacrifice, executed by one who wants to fulfill his all desires or all types of achievements. This sacrifice is also performed for the sake of gaining and winning every kind of food²⁷. The *Brāhmaṇa Svayambhu* performed this sacrifice for the first time. He offers his own self in the creatures, and the creatures his own self in to him (*Brāhmaṇa Svayambhu*). And thus, by offering up his own self in the creatures, and the creatures in his own self; he compassed the supremacy, sovereignty and attains the lordship over all creatures. Hence, the sacrificer by offering all sacrificial essences in the *Sarvamedha* sacrifice, surpass all being and attains supremacy, sovereignty and lordship²⁸

Ritual procedure of the *Sarvamedha* sacrifice as prescribed in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* :

The *Sarvamedha* sacrifice consists of ten days. In the first day *Agniṣtut Agniṣtoma* is performed for the sake of gaining and winning all the Gods, because the *Agniṣtut Agniṣtoma* is *Agni* and all the Gods have *Agni* (the sacrificial fire) for their mouth²⁹.

²⁷ *Śat.Brā- XIII/7/1/2-*“*Dasākṣarā virād virādu kṛtsnamnnaṃ kṛttsnasayai vānnādyasyā varuddhyai* | ”

²⁸ *Ibid-XIII/7/1/1-*“*Brahma vai svayambhu tapo'tapyat | Tadaikṣat na vai tapasyānantyomasti hantāhambhuteṣvātmānanjuhavāni bhutāni cātmānīti tatsarveṣu bhuteṣvātmāna hutvā bhutāni cātmāni sarveṣāṃ bhutānāṃ śreṣṭyaṃ svārājyamādhipatyam paryet tathaivaitdyajamāna sarvamedhe sarvānna medhān hutvā sarveṣāṃ bhutānāṃ śraīṣṭyaṃ svārājyamādhipatyam paryeti* | | ”

²⁹ *Ibid-XIII/7/1/3-*“*Tasyāgniṣṭatudagniṣṭoma prathmaṃ harva bhavati | Agnirvā agniṣṭudagniṣṭomo 'gni mukhā* | | ”

In the second day there is *Indrastut Ukthya*, for the sake of gaining and winning all the Gods, for Indra is all the Gods³⁰.

The third day is a *Sūryastut Ukthya*, for the sake of gaining and winning all the Gods, for *Sūrya* is all the Gods³¹.

In the fourth day, there is *Vaiśvadeva*, for the sake of gaining and winning all the Gods, for *Viśve Devāḥ* are all the Gods³².

In the fifth and in the sixth day there is central *Aśvamedhika* and central *Puruṣamedhika*. At this sacrifice the sacrificer seizes man and horse for the sake of gaining the sacrificial essence of the horse and man³³.

A *Āptoryāma* is performed in the seventh day for the sake of gaining all kinds of soma sacrifices. At this sacrifice, the sacrificer seizes all kinds of victims both animate and inanimate. The sacrificer also offers every kind of food both the dry and the fresh in order to gain every kind of food³⁴.

In the eighth day a *Triṇava ṣṭoma* is performed, for *Triṇava* is thunderbolt and by means of the thunderbolt, the sacrificer gains lordship³⁵.

In the ninth day there is a *Trayastrīṃśa* one for the sake of gaining a foot hold for the *Trayastrīṃśa (ṣṭoma)* is a foot hold. And the tenth day is a

³⁰ Śat.Brā -XIII/7/1/4- “Indrastudukathyo ditīyaṃharbha bhavati | Indra vai sarve devā | | ”

³¹ Ibid-XIII/7/1/5-“Sūryastudukthyastrīyaṃ harva bhavati | Sūryo vai sarve devā | | ”

³² Ibid- XIII/7/1/6-“Vaiśvadevaśccaturthaṃ harva bhavati | Viśve vai sarve devā | | ”

³³ Ibid-XIII/7/1/7-8-“Aśvamedhikamaddhyampañcamaṃ harva bhavati | Puruṣamedhimaddhyaṃ ṣaṣṭhaṃ harva bhavati | |

³⁴ Ibid-XIII/7/1/9-“Āptoryāma saptaṃ harva bhavati | Sarveṣāṃ yajñakratunāmāptayai tasmin sarvān medhyānālabhate.....trīyasavane huteṣu haviṣu | | ”

³⁵ Ibid- XIII/7/1/10-“Triṇavamṣṭhaṃ harva bhavati | Vajro vai triṇavo vajrena khalu vai khatraṃ spr̥tantadvajreṇaiva kṣatraṃ spr̥ṇoti | | ”

Viśvajit Atirātra with all the *Prṣthas* for the sake of gaining and winning everything, for the *Viśvajit Atirātra* with all the *Prṣthas* is everything and the *Sarvamedha* is everything³⁶.

Sacrificial fees :

The sacrificial fees as prescribed for the *Sarvamedha* sacrifice is alike that of the *Puruṣamedha* sacrifice, which are as follows- whatever there is towards the middle of the kingdom other than the property of the *Brāhmaṇa*, but including land and man of that of the eastern quarter belongs to the *Hotṛ*, the southern to the *Brāhmaṇ*, the western to the *Adhvaryu* and the northern to the *Udgātr*, and the *Hotṛkas* share this along with them.

The *Sarvamedha* sacrifice and its relation to Monarchy or kingship :

We have already discussed that in the *Sarvamedha* sacrifice the sacrificer offers all sacrificial essences and compass all being and attains supremacy sovereignty and lordship. This sacrifice is regarded as the supreme of all sacrifices, as by performing this sacrifice the sacrificer attain supremacy. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* it is mentioned that the *Viśvakarman Bhauvana* once performed this sacrifice, and having performed this sacrifice he overpass all beings and became everything³⁷. As a matter of fact, the *Sarvamedha* sacrifice is an exceptional sacrifice executed by emperors who are already to

³⁶ *Śat.Brā* –XIII/7/1/11-12-“*Prathiṣṭhā vai trayastrimsa pratiṣathityai* | ”
“*Viśvajitsarvaprṣthatho ’tirātro daśmanharvavati* | *Sarva vai Viśvajit sarva prṣthatho ’tirātra sarvaṃ sarvamedha sarvasyāptyai sarvasya varudhyai* | | ”

³⁷ *Ibid*-XIII/7/1/14-“*Tena haitena viśvakarmā bhauvana ije* | *Teneṣṭvātyatiṣṭhat sarvāni bhutanīdam sarvaṃ bhavatiṣṭhat sarvāni bhūtānīd sarvambhavati ya evaṃ vidvānta sarvamedhena yajate yo vaitadevaṃ veda* | | ”

ruler ship. This ceremony proves the existence of the territorial ideal of a one state.

The *Sarvamedha* sacrifice is a universal sacrifice and is performed for the attainment of universal sovereignty. We have already come across the reference that in the eighth day *Triṇava śtoma* is performed for the attainment of lordship or *kṣatra*. Hence, by performing this sacrifice one attains universal sovereignty, as ‘*sarva*’ means ‘all’ and by performing this sacrifice one attains all or wins all.

AGNICAYANA :

In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, the *Agnicayana* (fire-building ceremony) is dealt with in the *kāṇḍas* from VI to X. Thus it can be said that the one third of the *kāṇḍas* are attributed to *Agnicayana* in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. The *Agnicayana* means the building of the fire-altar which is an optional ancillary rite of a *soma* sacrifice. Thus, it is very interesting that an ancillary rite has been occupying a big part of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* for its description and explanation. The reason behind this may be explained thus- that this ceremony contains a large number of activities and also deals with the philosophical speculations of life. Along with philosophical discussion, the *Agnicayana* ceremony also has some political character in it which will be discussed further.

The ritual procedure of the *Agnicayana* :

In the beginning of the *Agnicayana*, an animal sacrifice is performed in which a man, a horse, a bull, a ram and a he goat are offered³⁸. *Kātyāyana* suggests an option that instead of killing these animals, golden or clay heads of these animals may be used³⁹. This animal sacrifice takes place on the full moon day of *phālguna*⁴⁰. On the eighth day, after the full moon, the materials for *Ukhā* (fire-pan) are to be collected⁴¹. Then an *abhri* (spade) made of bamboo is to be taken. On the same day a horse, an ass and a he goat are taken in procession by the *Adhvaryu* towards the east. To the east of the fire a square pit is dug and a ball of clay is put there in. The priests and the sacrificer go to the ball of clay and made the horse to put its foot on the clay in the pit. The *Adhvaryu* makes an offering upon the clay and on the horse's foot print⁴². Then the *Adhvaryu* digs and deposits the clay on the lotus leaf which is spread on the black antelope skin⁴³. After that the *Adhvaryu* takes the black antelope skin and the lotus leaf and ties the lump of the clay⁴⁴. Then the *Adhvaryu* calls the animals, holds the clay over the animals one by one and returns along with all the priests and the sacrificer. After that the clay has been taken down, water is

³⁸ *Śat.Brā* -VI/2/1/15- “*Puruṣo 'śvogauravirajo bhavanti* | ”

³⁹ *Kāty.Śr.Sū*- XVI/1/32- “*Anyāni vā hiraṇmayāni vā mṛṇmayāni vānālavayaitān* | ”

⁴⁰ *Śat.Brā* – VI/2/2/17- “*Tadvai purṇamāsyāmeva* | *Asau vai chandra paśustam devā paurṇamāsyāmālabhate* | | ”

⁴¹ *Ibid*- VI/2/2/23- “*Aṣṭakāyāmukhāṃ sambharati*”

⁴² *Ibid* – VI/3/3/22- “*Aśvasya pade juhati* | ”

⁴³ *Ibid*- VI/4/1/6- “*Athainaṃ kṛṣṇājne sambharati* | *Yajño vai kṛṣṇājinaṃ* | ”

⁴⁴ *Ibid*- VI/4/4/6- “*Atha kṛṇājinaṃ ca puṣkara parṇaṃ ca samudgrhṇāti* | *Yonirvai puṣkara parṇaṃ Yonnyā tadet sikta* | ”

poured in it and the goats hair and gravel, stone iron rust are mixed in it⁴⁵. Thus from that mixed clay the wife of the sacrificer makes the first brick called *Āṣāḍha*⁴⁶. With the same clay the sacrificer prepares an *Ukhā* (fire-pan) and also the bricks called the *Viśvajyoti* bricks. The *Adhvaryu* first fumigates the fire pan with smoke and then put on the fire till it is baked. After that goat's milk is sprinkled on it and other bricks are made and baked till they are red.

Then there are the oblations connected with the *dikṣā* ceremony, which takes place on the *amāvasya* of the *phālguna*. The *Adhvaryu* puts the fire pan on the fire and when the flame mounts up to it, he puts a kindling stick of *krimuka* wood on the pan⁴⁷, then a kindling stick of *Vikankata* wood⁴⁸, then one of *Udumbara* wood⁴⁹, one which is not cut by an axe⁵⁰, one that has lain on the ground⁵¹ and then the remaining sticks of *Palāsa* wood⁵² are used. After that the sacrificer adores the fire with the *Vatsaprā* hymns and takes the *Viṣṇu* strides. He also removes the ashes and puts fuel sticks on the fire in the *Ukhā*.

Then begin the building of the fire altar. Both the *Gārhapatya* and *Āhavaniya* altars are prepared. First the place which is to be used as *Vedi* is measured with rope. The length of that place is equal to the length twice the height of the sacrificer. The land for the *Uttaravedi* on which the altar is to be

⁴⁵ *Śat.Brā* -VI/5/1/6-“*Athi tat trayaṃ piṣṭaṃ bhavati | Śarkarā'smāyorsaṣṭena sa sṛjati.....tāvatīmevainaṃmetakorat | | i*”

⁴⁶ *Ibid*-VI/5/3/1-“*Tasyā etasyā āṣāḍaṃ pūrvāṃ karoti |*”

⁴⁷ *Ibid*-VI/6/2/14

⁴⁸ *Ibid*-VI/6/3/1-“*Atha vaikaṃtīmādadadhāti |*”

⁴⁹ *Ibid*-VI/6/3/2-“*Athaudumvaīmādadadhāti |*”

⁵⁰ *Ibid*-VI/6/3/5-“*Athā'paraśubrknāmādadadhāti |*”

⁵¹ *Ibid*- VI/6/3/6-“*Athā'dha śayamādadadhāti |*”

⁵² *Ibid*- VI/6/3/7-“*Atahita uttarā pālāssyo bhavahti |*”

constructed is ploughed with an *udumbara* plough and the rope is used which is made of *munja* grass. The Vedi has five layers or five courses of bricks making 10800 bricks in all⁵³. The first and the fifth layers are arranged in the same pattern and the second and fourth in the same. The altar may have various shapes for the attainment of different rewards, such as – the *svargakāmi yajamāna* constructs the vedi in a shape of hawk (*śyena*), one who desirous of supremacy, constructs the Vedi in a shape of heron (*kanka*) and so on. The bricks of various shapes like triangular, square, rectangle and others shape are also used. A sound knowledge of geometry and mason craft is required for constructing the Vedi. Each brick is placed after repeating a mantra.

Five layers of the Vedi :

In the first layer bricks are in the form of lotus leaf, a gold plate and a golden man. The sacrificer stands near by the golden man and warships it with the *Sarpanāma* formulas⁵⁴ and offers on the gold man with ghee⁵⁵. Then, the two offering spoons are laid down, by one of *kārṣmarya* wood and the other of *Udumbara* wood⁵⁶. This is followed by lying down of the *Svayam-ātrṇṇā* (naturally perforated brick), *Dūrvā*-brick, *Dviyajus*-brick, two *Retahsic* (seed-shedding) bricks, *Viśvajyoti* brick, two *Ṛtavyā* bricks, *Aṣādhā* brick, a tortoise as a brick, mortar and pestle and the *Ukha* brick. After that the heads of the five victims (man, horse, ram, bull and he-goat) are laid down upon them and an

⁵³ Keith, A.B, RPVU (Vol-32), Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1989, Page- 354.

⁵⁴ *Śat.Brā* – VII/4/1/25-“*Atha sarpanāmairupatiṣṭhate* | ”

⁵⁵ Ibid- VII/4/1/32-“*Athainamupavisyābhijuhoti ājyena pañca gr̥hītena tasyoktopr̥nāti* | ”

⁵⁶ Ibid-VII/4/1/37-38-“*kārṣmaryamayī dakṣinata upadadhāti* | ”
“*Athaudam̐barīm uttarata upadadhāti* | ”

offering is also made. Then the *Apasyā-brick*, the *Chandasya* bricks, fifty *Prāṇabhṛt* bricks and the *Lokaṃprṇā*-bricks are laid down and thus the first layer becomes complete.

In the second layer, the *Aśvini* bricks, *Ṛtavya*-bricks, *Vaiśvādeva* bricks, *Prāṇabhṛt*-bricks, *Apasyā*-bricks, *Chandasyā*-bricks and the *Lokaṃprṇā*-bricks are laid down and thus this layer becomes complete.

The third layer consists of several bricks, such as the *Svayamātrṇṇa*-bricks, *Diśyā*-bricks, *Viśvajyoti*-brick, *Ṛtavyā*-bricks, *Prāṇabhṛt*-bricks, *Chandasyā*-bricks, *Vālakhilya*-bricks and the *Lokaṃprṇā*-bricks.

In the fourth layer, the sacrificer lays down the *Stoma*-bricks, *Sprt*-bricks and the *Lokaṃprṇā*-bricks and thus this layer becomes complete.

The fifth layer becomes complete by means of the *Asapatane-iṣṭakās*, *Chandasyā*-bricks, *Stoma-bhāga*-bricks, *Nākasad*-bricks, *Pañcacūḍā*-bricks, *Chandasyā*-bricks, *Gārhapatya*-bricks, *Punaściti*-bricks, *Ṛtavyā*-bricks, *Viśvajyoti*-bricks, *Lokaṃprṇā*-bricks, *Vikarṇī*-bricks and the *Svayamātrṇṇā*-bricks. On the *Lokaṃprṇā*-bricks, *sāmans* are sung by the sacrificer and he bestrews the fire-altar with chips of gold⁵⁷.

When all the layers have become complete, the *Āhavaniya* fire is established and an offering is made on that fire by the milk of a dark cow whose calf is white and the *Śatarudriya* homa is offered to *Rudra*⁵⁸. Then the

⁵⁷ *Śat.Brā* -VIII/7/4/7-“*Athaina hiranyaśakalai prokṣati* | ”

⁵⁸ *Ibid* -IX/1/1/1-“*Athāta śatarūdriyaṃ juhōti* | *Atraīṣa sarvo'gni samkṛtaṃ sa**syāditi* | ”

Adhvaryu sings *sāmans* round the altar and makes it complete. After that the sacrificer mounts upon the altar and makes several libations:-

At first the sacrificer makes libations on the *Svayamātr̥ṇṇa*-bricks⁵⁹ and sprinkles the altar. After having descended from the altar, the sacrificer proceeds with the *Pravargya* and *Upaśads* and oblations are made on the *Gārhapatya* fire. Then the sacrificer takes a burning piece of stick and kept it on the *Āgnidhra* range and an offering is also made upon it. After that oblations a full oblations is made. Then there are the *Vaiśvāṇara-homa*⁶⁰, *Maruta-homa*⁶¹, *Vasorddhārā-homa*⁶², *Ardhendra* libations⁶³, libations connected with *Grahas*⁶⁴, *Yajña-Kratu*⁶⁵, *Uneven stomas*⁶⁶, *Even stomas*⁶⁷, *Vayas*⁶⁸, libations with uttering the names⁶⁹, the *Kalpa*-libations⁷⁰, *Vājaprasaviya*-libations⁷¹ and *Pārtha*-libations⁷². After the consecration of the sacrificer there follows the *Rāṣṭrabhṛddhoma*⁷³, an offering to the *Gandharvas* and *Apsarās*⁷⁴, an offering on the head of the chariot, the *Vāta-homa*⁷⁵,

⁵⁹ *Śat.Brā* -IX/2/1/3-“*Āruhyāgni svyamātr̥ṇṇam vyāghārayati* | ”

⁶⁰ *Ibid*- IX/3/1/1-“*Athāto vaiśvāṇaram juhōti* | ”

⁶¹ *Ibid* - IX/3/1/7- “*Atha mārutānjuhōti* | ”

⁶² *Ibid* - IX/3/2/1-“*Athāto vasorddhārām juhōti* | ”

⁶³ *Ibid* - IX/3/2/9-“*Athārdhendrāni juhōti* | ”

⁶⁴ *Ibid* - IX/3/2/10-“*Atha grahānjuhōti* | ”

⁶⁵ *Ibid* - IX/3/3/1-“*Athaitān yajñakratūn juhōti* | ”

⁶⁶ *Ibid* - IX/3/3/2-“*Athāyujā stomānjuhōti* | ”

⁶⁷ *Ibid* - IX/3/3/4-“*Atha yugmato juhōti* | ”

⁶⁸ *Ibid* - IX/3/3/7-“*Atha vayāsi juhōti* | ”

⁶⁹ *Ibid* - IX/3/3/8-“*Atha nāmagrāhaṃ juhōti* | ”

⁷⁰ *Ibid* - IX/3/3/12-“*Atha kalpān juhōti* | ”

⁷¹ *Ibid* - IX/3/4/1-“*Athāto vājaprasaviyam juhōti* | ”

⁷² *Ibid* - IX/3/4/6-“*Atha vā etad pārthānyapi juhōti* | ”

⁷³ *Ibid* - IX/4/1/1-“*Athāto rāṣṭrabhṛto juhōti* | ”

⁷⁴ *Ibid* - IX/4/1/4-“*Gandhvarvāpsarobhyo juhōti* | ”

⁷⁵ *Ibid*- IX/4/2/1-“*Atha vātohomān juhōti* | ”

*Runmati-homa*⁷⁶, *Varuni-homa*⁷⁷, *Santati-homa*⁷⁸ and any additional offering for obtaining any desire⁷⁹.

The various types of bricks⁸⁰ are listed below in the alphabetical order with the layers in which they are used. In this list, the non-clay ‘bricks’ (*vānaspatyā hiranyayā and others*) are not included –

- *Apasyā* bricks :Used in the 1st layer and 2nd layer, stands for waters and rain and laid alongside with the *Chandasyā* bricks.
- *Aṣāḍha* bricks : Used in the 1st layer, which represents earth, speech and vital airs. It is made by the chief queen *Mahiṣī*.
- *Asapatnā* bricks : Used in the 5th layer, symbolizes enemy-avoiders.
- *Aśvini* bricks : Used in the 2nd layer, represents the part of the body of *Prajāpati* above the feet and below the waist.
- *Chandasyā* bricks : Stands for cattle and food and used in the 1st, 2nd and in the 3rd and 5th layers.
- *Diśyā* bricks : Used in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd layers and stands for the quarters.

⁷⁶ Śat.Brā – IX/4/2/12-“*Atha runmatīr juhoti* | ”

⁷⁷ Ibid – IX/4/2/15-“*Atha vārunīm juhoti* | ”

⁷⁸ Ibid – IX/4/2/18-“*Athārkaśvamedhayo santatīr juhoti* | ”

⁷⁹ Ibid – IX/4/2/27-“*Athā`ta āhutināmevāvapanasya | Yāṃ kāñca brāhmaṇavatīmāhutiṃ.....juhotyāptām tā satīnjuhoti* | ”

⁸⁰ Dange, A. Sadashiv , Vedic sacrifices early nature, Aryan Book International, New Delhi, 2000, Page- 439-441.

- *Dvi-yajus* bricks : Used in the 1st layer and stands for the sacrificer's body.
- *Logeṣṭakā* bricks : These are unbaked bricks and used in the 1st layer.
- *Lokampṛṇā* bricks : It is used in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and in the 5th layer. It represents commoners, nobility, cows and various things. It is also used in the *Gārhapatya* altar.
- *Nairṛtī* bricks : Used in the first layer for avoiding evil power.
- *Nākasad* bricks : It represents the gods and priests in the heaven and also the sacrificer. It is used in the 5th layer.
- *Prāṇabhṛt* bricks : Used in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd layers.
- *Retahsic* bricks : Used in the 1st layer and it is two in number.
- *Ṛtavyā* bricks : It stands for seasons and months and used in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and in the 5th layer.
- *Spṛtā* bricks : Used in the 4th layer and it symbolizes freedom.
- *Stomabhāgā* bricks : Used in the 5th layer which symbolizes food, quarters, three worlds, the sun and the heaven.
- *Stomeṣṭakā* bricks : Used in the 4th layer which stands for vital air and foods.
- *Śṛṣṭi* bricks : It indicates creation and used in the 4th layer.

- *Svayam-ā-trṇṇā* bricks : It stands for vital airs, earth and food and used in the 1st, 3rd and 5th layer.
- *Vaiśvadevī* bricks : Used in the 2nd layer and it stands for creatures.
- *Vālakhilyā* bricks : Used in the 3rd layer.
- *Vayasyā* bricks : Used in the 2nd layer.
- *Yajusmatī* bricks : It represents food, the noble warrior class (kṣatra) and used in the 1st layer.

Observances in the *Agnicayana* Ceremony :

The performer of the *Agnicayana* ceremony has to maintain some observances (*vrata*) for a period of one year. In that period the sacrificer is not allowed to bow to any one, not to walk in the rain, not to eat the flesh of birds and not to live with a woman except of his own wife belonging to his own caste. After the second *Agnicayana* sacrifice, the sacrificer should not live with a woman except his own wife and when the sacrificer performs the *Agnicayana* ceremony for the third time, he should not even approach his own wife. If the sacrificer fails to attain the fruits of the sacrifice by performing it first time, he may perform the *Agnicayana* ceremony for the second time. The *Agnicayana* ceremony being a most complicated sacrifice has many *prāyaścittas*, for committed mistakes.

The *Agnicayana* or the fire-altar ceremony is identified with the worlds :

The fire building ceremony or the *Agnicayana* represents all the worlds. It is said in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* that the fire-altar is this world⁸¹. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* identifies the building of the fire-altar with that of the world and this as follows : “Verily, this built fire-altar is this (terrestrial) world:-the waters are its enclosing stones; the men its *Yajusmati* bricks, the cattle its *Sūdadohas*, the plants and trees its earth fillings (between the layers of bricks), its oblations and fire-logs, *Agni* (the terrestrial fire) its *Lokamprṇā* (space filling brick).....But indeed fire altar is also identified with the air:-the junction of heaven and earth (the horizon) is its circle of enclosing stones, for it is beyond the air that heaven and earth meet, and that junction is the (circle of) enclosing stones, the birds are its *Yajusmati* bricks, the rain its *Sūdadahas*, the rays of light its earth fillings, oblations and fire log, the *Vāyu* (the wind) is its space-filler; thus this comes to make up the whole *Agni*.....But indeed, that fire-altar is also the sky : the heavenly waters are its enclosing stones, for even as a case here is closed up so are these worlds (enclosed) with in the waters, and the waters beyond these worlds are the enclosing stones- the gods are the *Yajuṣmati* bricks, what food there is in that world is its *sudadohas*, the *Nakṣatras* (lunar mansions) are the earth-fillings, the oblations and the fire-logs; and *Āditya* (the sun) is the space-filler;- thus this comes to make up the whole *Agni*; and the whole *Agni* comes to be the space-filler; and, verily,

⁸¹ *Śat.Brā-* VII/3/1/13- “*ime vai lokā eṣo’gñih* | ”

whosoever knows this, thus comes to be that whole (*Agni*) who is the space-filler.”⁸²

Construction of the fire-altar is identified with the reconstruction of *Prajāpati* :

The fire altar is often marked out as *Prajāpati*⁸³. It is also mentioned that one who builds the fire altar, reconstructs *Prajāpati*. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*⁸⁴ it is mentioned that *Prajāpati* after creating the beings have become relaxed, the vital air went out from him, then his vigour went out and then he fell down. The Gods then restored *Prajāpati* and made *Agni* as the foundation to restore *Prajāpati*. The Gods heated *Prajāpati* in the fire, and fire rose over him when heated. Thus, being heated, the same vital air, food, vigour which had gone out from him, came back to him and the Gods put it in to him (*Prajāpati*). Thus the *Prajāpati* who became relaxed is the same as *Agni* who is now built up. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* we also read that-“*Prajāpati* is no other than the fire-altar which is now built up, and what five mortal parts there were of him, they are these layers of earth, and those which were immortal they

⁸² *Śat.Brā* -X/5/4/1-3

“*Ayaṃ vāva loka eṣo 'gniśicita | Tasyāpa eva pariśīsrato manuṣyā yajuṣmatya iṣṭakā Paśaba sudadohā ośadhayas cca vanaspatayascca puriṣamāhutaya samidho 'gnirlokamprṇā tadvā etadsarvamgnimevābhisampadyate.....abhisampadyate | |*”
“*Antarikṣa hattvevaiṣogñisiccata | Tasya davyā pṛthivyoreva sandhi pariśīsrata parena hāntarikṣan dyāvā pṛthivī sandhatstā abhisampadyate | |*”
“*Daurha tvevaiṣo 'gniriccata | Tasyāpa eva pariśīsrato yathā ha vā idamkosā samujta evamime lokā āpsvantastdyā imāllokannaparenāpastā pariśīśirato devā..... abhisampadyate | |*”

⁸³ Ibid – VI/5/3/7, VII/2/4/30, VIII/2/1/18, X/4/1/12- “*Prajāpatireṣo 'gni*”

⁸⁴ Ibid-VII/1/2/1-10

are these layers of bricks”⁸⁵. Thus from the above reference it is clear that *Agni* (fire-altar) is often identified as *Prajāpati*.

Thus *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* has also identified the fire-altar with the year. There are five layers in the fire altar; these are five seasons of the year. Hence, the fire-altar is identified with the year⁸⁶.

Thus, from the above discussion it can be said that the *Agnicayana* (fire-building) ceremony gives us enough scope for Philosophical speculations of life. The *Brāhmaṇa* texts develop their views in connection with the *Agnicayana* ceremony.

Some noted features of the *Agnicayana* ceremony with political or royal significance :

Along with the Philosophical character, the *Agnicayana* ceremony deals with some oblation conveying political significance. As already discussed that in the *Agnicayana* ceremony the sacrificer after completing the five layers of the Vedi mounts upon the altar and makes several libations. Among them some libations convey monarchial strata- such as, the *Vājaprasaviya*-oblation, *Pārtha*-oblations, *Rāṣṭrīyadhoma* and so on.

This *Pārtha* oblation is first introduced by the mythical king *Prithi Vainya* at his royal consecration. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* states that the *Pārtha* oblations are the *Vājaprasaviya* of the *Rājasūya*; and by performing

⁸⁵ *Śat.Brā* -X/1/3/5-“*Sa yah sa prjāpatiḥ | Ayameva sa yo 'yamaḡiściyate 'tha yā asya tāḥ pañca martyāstanva āsannetāstāḥ puriṣacitayo 'tha yā amṛta etāstā iṣṭakācitayah*”

⁸⁶ *Ibid*-VI/3/1/25-“*Te pañca sampadā bhavanti pañca citiko 'gni pañcartava saṃvatsaram saṃvatsaro 'gniryāvāgnir yāvagnir yāvatasya mātrā tāvat tad bhavati* |”

these oblations the sacrificer is consecrated by the *Rājasūya*, and the first seven of the succeeding fourteen (*Vājaprasaviya* oblations) are the *Vājaprasaviya* ceremony of the *Vājapeya*. By performing these oblations, the sacrificer is consecrated by the *Vājapeya* sacrifice. And what other seven there are, they belong to *Agni* or the *Agnicayana*, by offering these the sacrificer is consecrated by the *Agni*-consecration⁸⁷.

The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* also mentions that, he (the sacrificer) offers those of the *Rājasūya* first and then those of the *Vājapeya*. For by performing the *Rājasūya* one becomes king (*rājā*) and by the *Vājapeya* emperor; hence after performing the *Vājapeya*, one could not perform the *Rājasūya*, - it would be a descent, just as if one who is a emperor were to become a king⁸⁸. And those (seven *Vājaprasaviya* oblations) of the fire altar the (sacrificer) offers last, for the *Agni* consecration is equal to all those rites of consecration. And who is consecrated by the *Agni*-consecration rite becomes everything, king and emperor. Thus, the sacrificer offers these oblations to the fire-altar last of all⁸⁹. After that the sacrificer offers the *Rāṣṭabhṛt* (realm-sustaining) oblations. The

⁸⁷ *Śat.Brā* – IX/3/4/7- “*Tadyāni Pārthāni | Tāni rājasūyasya vājaprasaviyaṃ tadyattāni juhōti tadrājasū yena suyate 'tha yāni caturdasottarāni tato yāni sapta pūrvāni tāni vājapeyasya vājaprasaviyaṃ tadyattāni juhōti tadvājapeyena suyate 'tha yāni sapto 'ttarāni tānnyagnestadyattāni juhōti tadagnisavena stūyate | |*”

⁸⁸ *Ibid*-IX/3/4/8- “*Sa vai rājasūyasya pūrvāni juhōti | Atha vājapeyasya rājā vai rājasūyeneṣṭvā bhavati samrād vājapeyena rājyamu vā agne 'tha sāmrajyaṃ tasmād vājapeyeneṣṭvā na rājasūyena yajet pratyavaraha sa yathā samrāt sanrājā syāttādṛkīat | |*”

⁸⁹ *Ibid* -IX/3/4/9- “*Agneruttamāni juhōti | Sarve hai te sa vā yadagnisava sarva haitadagnisvena suto bhavati rājā ca samrāt ca tasmādgneruttamāni juhōti | |*”

realm-sustainers doubtless are the kings; for it is that sustains realms⁹⁰. The sacrificer by offering these oblations sustains realm.

Thus, from the above discussion it can be said that these oblations of the *Agnicayana* ceremony have some political significance. As by performing these oblations (*Pārtha* oblations and the *Vājaprasaviya* oblations), the sacrificer is consecrated by the *Rājasūya* and the *Vājapeya* sacrifice of high monarchical strata. These oblations are performed in the same way as that in the *Rājasūya* and the *Vājapeya*. It is regarded as *Agni's Abhiṣeka*⁹¹. And by the *Rāṣṭabhṛt* (realm-sustaining) oblations, the sacrificer sustains realms. As mentioned above that *Agni* consecration rite is considered as everything, hence by offering these oblations the sacrificer may become everything, the king, the emperor as he wants. From this, we can say that along with philosophical discussions, the *Agnicayana* (fire-building) ceremony also attached with some political character in it.

CĀTURMĀSYA :

The *Cāturmāsyā* sacrifice is a combination of four seasonal sacrifices. Each of the four seasonal sacrifices takes place after four month, so it is known as *Cāturmāsyā* sacrifice. Among the sacrifices listed in the seven *Haviryajñas*⁹², the *Cāturmāsyā* sacrifices are the most complicated and containing a remarkable number of popular rites. The *Cāturmāsyā* sacrifices

⁹⁰ *Śat.Brā* -IX/4/1/1-“*Athāto rāstrabhṛta juhōti | Rājano vai rāstrabhṛtaste hi rāstrāni.....rāstrabhṛt | |*.”

⁹¹ *Ibid* -IX/3/4/3-“*Abhiṣeka evāsyiṣa etad vā enaṃ devā etenānena.....evābhiṣiñcati | |*”

⁹² *Gau.Dh.Sū*-“*Agnyādheyamgnihoṭraṃ darśapūrṇamāsāvāgrayanṃ cāturmāsyāni nirudapaśubandha sautrāmaniyati sapta haviryajña samsthā |*”

are performed throughout life or for one year. The main reward attained by the *Cāturmāsya* sacrifice is heaven⁹³. According to the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*,⁹⁴ separate rewards may be secured by the four *parvan* separately. The names of the four *parvans* are-

- *Vaiśvadeva*.
- *Varuṇapraghāsa*.
- *Sākamedha* and
- *Sunāsīrīya*.

Each of the *parvan* is performed at the interval of four months. Thus, according to the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*⁹⁵, by performing the *Cāturmāsya* sacrifice one may win the whole year. The first *parvan* i.e. the *Vaiśvadeva parvan* is performed on the full moon day of the month of *Phālguna* (or *Caitra*), second, the *Varuṇapraghāsa parvan* is performed on the full moon day of *Āṣādhā* and *Kārtika* (or *Mārgaśīrṣa*); the third *parvan* *Sākamedha* is performed on the full moon day of the *Kārtika*. There is no fixed period for the 4th *parvan* *Sunāsīrīya*. It may be performed during the four months in between the conclusion of the *Sākamedha* and the start of the *Vaiśvadeva parvan*, which makes a fresh cycle. It may be performed just immediately after the conclusion of the *Sākamedha* offerings. Three *parvans* corresponding to the three seasons

⁹³ *Taitt.Brā*, *Sāyan Bhāṣya* XI/2/12- “*Cāturmāsya* Svargakāme yajet | ”

⁹⁴ *Ibid* -XI/2/12-“*Yadvaimadeve yajate prajā evatadyamānaḥ sṛjate | Jā Varuṇapraghāsair Varuṇa pāsānmucati | Sākamedhai praṭhiṣṭhāpayati ‘trayambakai rudraṃ’ niravadayate pitryajñena suvarga lokam gamayati | | ”*

⁹⁵ *Śat.Brā*- II/6/3/1-“*Cāturmāsya yājino saṃvatsaram hi jayati | ”*

are – *Vasanta* (spring), *Varsā* (rainy season) and *Sarat* (autumn). If the sacrificer wants to perform a soma sacrifice (*Agniṣṭoma*), he has to discontinue the *Cāturmāsya* parvan for the next cycle.

Vaiśvadeva parvan :

In the *Vaiśvadeva parvan* a sacrificial cake on eight potsherds to *Agni*, pap to *Soma*, a cake on eight or twelve potsherds to *Savitṛ*, pap to *Sarasvati*, pap to *Maruts* or *Maruts Svatavat*s, *payasyā* to *Viśvedevas* and a cake on one potsherd to *Dvāvyāprthivya*u are offered⁹⁶. In the *Āhavanīya agni kuṇḍa*, the fire established by the rite of *Agni manthana*. After establishing the fire *Yajamāna* puts *samidhās* in to that fire and puts *ghṛta* on the *samidhās* in the *Āhavanīya* fire. When the fire enkindled fully, nine-*prayāja*, nine-*anuyāja* and three *samisthā Yajus* are offered in this parvan.

In the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*⁹⁷ it is mentioned that offering to *Maruts* is for safety note for killing. For the explanation of this the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*⁹⁸ has given a story which runs thus-“when offspring’s were created by *Prajāpati* *Maruts* killed them. Thus *Maruts* are themselves like disease, death and so on and an offering to them is obviously for the purpose of killing.

⁹⁶ *Kāty.Śr.Sū-V/1/1-4, 11-14-“Āgneyaḥ saumyaścaruṇ sāvītro dvādaśakapālo ’ṣṭākapālo vā sārasvataś caruḥ pauṣṇaścaru praṭhiṣṭhānām | Marudbhyaḥ svatvadbhyaḥ sapta kapālah | Vaiśvādevi payasyā dyāvya prathivīya ekakapālah | ”*

⁹⁷ *Taitt.Brā -I/6/2/3-“Sa etaṃ prajāpatir mārutam saptakapālaṃpasyat tamnirvapata | Tato vai prajābhyo ’kalpat | Yanmāruto nirupayate.....sa prajāpatirśocat | | ”*

⁹⁸ *Ibid-I/6/2/2-“ Soma reto ’dadhāti Savitā prajānanayati |Taḥ prajā jata maruto ’ghnan | | ”*

Varuṇapraghāsa parvan :

In the *Varuṇapraghāsa* parvan the first five offerings are alike as the *Vaiśvadeva parvan*. Along with these offerings, a cake on twelve potsherds to *Indra* and *Agni*, *āmikṣā* to *Varuṇa*, *āmikṣā* to *Maruts* and a cake on one potsherd to *Kā* are offered. In addition to these, there are the offerings of the *karambhas* and a ewe made of barley. Before these offerings, there is the confession of the sacrificer's wife about how many admirer she has. Then she mentions the name or names of the paramours. If she has none then she tells that she has none. If she feels shy to mention the names of admirer, then she holds up as many stalks of grass as many admirers she has. Then the paramour became caught by the *Varuṇa*. Thus when the wife confessed, the sin becomes less. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*⁹⁹, it is mentioned that whatever she has not confesses that will turn out injuries to her relatives. According to the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*¹⁰⁰, the priest makes the wife purified (*medhya*) by putting this question.

This confession rite cures the sacrificer's wife. For the curing of other members of the family following rite is observed. After the confession, the wife offers the *Karambhapātras* which are as many as there are family members and added an extra one. This additional one is for the sake of those who are not yet born. When these offerings are made, all the persons born as well as unborn

⁹⁹ *Śat.Brā -II/5/2/20-*“*Atha pratiprasthātā pratiparaiti | Sa patnīmudāneṣyan pṛccati kena carasīti varuṇyaṃ vā.....tadhitaṃ syāt |*”

¹⁰⁰ *Taitt.Brā -I/6/5/2-*“*Tatpratiprasthanā karoti | Tasmādya ccheyānkaroti | Tat Pāpiyān karoti | Patniṃ vācayati | Medhyāmevainaṃ karoti | |*”

become free from *Varuṇa*'s nooses i.e. from diseases¹⁰¹. Along with these offerings, there are the ram and the ewe made of the remaining flour of the *karambhapātras*. The ram and ewe are placed in the *payasyā* and then are offered. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*¹⁰² mentions that the ram is an animal of *Varuṇa* and by using it the offspring are freed from *Varuṇa*'s nooses i.e. they are cured. The offering of ram and ewe is also made for curing the animals. In the end there is an *Avabhṛtha* bath in the same way as there is an *avabhṛtha* bath at the end of the *Rājasūya* sacrifice.

Varuṇa is not only connected with the disease, he is also connected with the curing. It is said that *Varuṇa* has a hundred physicians. *Indra* when desires to be strong and firm offered a cake to *Varuṇa*, who is with hundred physicians (*śatabhisaj*) and with thousand medicines (*bheṣaja*). Then *Indra* becomes strong and firm¹⁰³. In the *Avabhṛtha* bath at the end, we noticed that the following words are uttered by the sacrificer:—"O king *Varuṇa*, a hundred are your physicians, a thousand medicines"¹⁰⁴. Thus, it can be said that the *Avabhṛtha* bath has some healing capacities and it is attached to the *Varuṇapraghāsa* for the purpose of healing or curing.

¹⁰¹ *Śat.Brā -II/5/2/22-*"Tāni vai prati paruṣaṃ | Yāvanto gr̥hyā syustāvantyekenātirikṭāni bhavati tatpratipuruṣamevaitadekaikena yā asya prajā jātāstā.....bhavanti | "

¹⁰² *Ibid -II/5/2/16-*"Tadyanmeṣasca meṣī ca bhavata | Eṣa vai pratyakṣaṃ varuṇasya paśu | "

¹⁰³ *Taitt.Brā-III/1/5/9-*"Indra vā akāmayati | Ido 'śithilah syāmiti | Sa etaṃ varuṇāya śatabhiṣaje bheṣajebhyaḥ purodāsaṃ daśakapālaṃ niravapatkṛṣṇanāṃ br̥hīṇāṃ | Tato vai sa ido 'śithilo 'bhavat | | "

¹⁰⁴ *Ṛ.V-I/24/9-* "Śataṃ te rājan bhisajah sahasraṃurvī gabhirā sumatiṣte astu | "

Sākamedha Parvan :

On the first day of the third parvan i.e. on the *Sākamedha Parvan* a cake on eight potsherds to *Agni Anikavat* is offered in the morning, pap to *Maruts Saṃtapanas* in the noon, and pap cooked in milk to *Maruts Gṛhamedhins* are offered in the evening. Next day in the morning there is the *Darvi-homa*. Then a cake on seven potsherds to *Maruts Kridins* and pap to Aditi are offered. Then the first five offerings of the *Vaiśvadeva parvan* are offered and added the offerings of a cake on twelve potsherds, pap to *Mahendra* and a cake on one potsherd to *Vaiśvakarman* are made. In the afternoon there is the *Pitṛyajña* in which *Pirars Somavats* or *Soma Pitṛmat*, *Pitars Barhisads* and *Pitars Agniṣvatta* are the deities. Then there is *Trayambakaeṣṭi* in which the offerings are made to *Rudra Trayambaka*.

The *Trayambaka havir yāga*, which follows the *Pitṛyajña* is very important in which as many cakes are offered as there are members in the family and added one for those who are yet to be born. The offerings are made to *Rudra* on the cross way. The additional cake is dug in a mole-hill. After returning from the mole hill, all the members walk thrice round the altar beating their thighs. The sacrificer than takes the remaining cakes in to his joined plams and throws them upward higher than a cow can reach. Having placed them in to two net-work baskets and tied them to the ends of either a bamboo staff or a beam of balance, the sacrificer goes to the north and tied them to a tree on a stake or a bamboo. The sacrificer and the priests then come back without looking backward and touch the water.

In this rite we get some traces of curing. According to the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*¹⁰⁵, the Gods removed ‘*Rudra*’ by means of this *Trayambaka* and the sacrificer also removes *Rudra* by means of it. *Rudra* is well known for bringing disease. The *autumn* season (*sarad ṛtu*) in which the *Sākamedha* and the *Trayambaka yāga* are performed, is a period very notorious for disease. *Rudra* is the same as disease. The *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*¹⁰⁶ gives the significance of *Trayambaka yāga* as, to delight *Rudra* it is performed. Thus by removing *Rudra*’s anger and by pleasing him healing is made by the sacrificer.

Sunāsīrīya Parvan :

In the *Sunāsīrīya parvan* the first five offerings of the *Vaiśvadeva parvan* are made with the addition of the offering of *Sunāsīrīya* cake on twelve potsherds and an ablation of milk and *yavāgu* is offered to *Vāyu* and a cake on one potsherd to *Surya*. According to the *Jaiminīo Brāhmaṇa*¹⁰⁷, the word ‘*Sunāsīra*’ means to obtain the valour of *Indra*, the killer of *Vṛtra* and the milk of the conquered year. The *Sunāsīrīya parvan* is for curing and healing. One who is devoid of strength and valour and one who is diseased for a long time can be cured by performing the *Sunāsīrīya* rite.

¹⁰⁵ *Taitt.Brā* -I/6/8/1-“*Vaiśvadevena vai prajāpatiḥ prajā asṛjat | Tā varuṇapraghāsair varuṇa pāsād muñcat | Sākamedhai pratyasthāpayat.....trayamvakair rudraṃ niravadayate | |*”

¹⁰⁶ *Gop.Brā*- XI/1/25-“*yat trayambakaiścaranti rudraṃ eva tat svāyāṃ diśi prīnayanti*”

¹⁰⁷ *Jai.Brā*- II/234-“*Sunāsīrīyo yadvā indrasya vṛtraṃ jaghnuṣa indriyaṃ vīryamāsītacchunaṃ |*”

Significance of the *Cāturmāsya yajña* and its relation to monarchy :

The *Cāturmāsya* sacrifice is called *bhaiṣajya yajña*. It is performed in the joining of seasons (*ṛtusandhi*). For in the joining of the seasons disease is born¹⁰⁸. It is a well known fact that when there is some changes in the climate diseases are spread. Thus, the *Cāturmāsya yajña* which is performed in the joining of the seasons should therefore said to be connected with healing. The diseases are often supposed to be connected with evil beings like *Aśuras* and *Rākṣasas*. According to the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*¹⁰⁹, the Gods defeated the *Aśuras* by means of *Cāturmāsya*.

Regarding the significance of the *Cāturmāsya*, the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* says that one, who performs the *Cāturmāsya*, wins the year¹¹⁰. It is already mentioned that, the *Cāturmāsya*s are performed for a whole year. By performing the *Cāturmāsya*s throughout the year, one wins the year. The *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*¹¹¹ identifies the *Cāturmāsya* with *Prajāpati* which are as follows : “*Vaiśvadeva* is his mouth, *Varuṇapraghāsa* are his arms, the three *iṣṭis* (in the *Sākamedha*) are his *prāṇa*, *apāna* and *vyāna*; *Mahāhaviryajña* is his body (*ātmā*), *Sunāsīrīya* is his foundation (*pratisthā*)”.

This winning of the year has another shade i.e. that of fertility. In connection with the *Cāturmāsya*s in the *Rājasūya*, it is said that one who is

¹⁰⁸ *Gop.Brā* -II/1/19-“ *Bhaiṣajya yajña vā ete yac cāturmāsyaṇi | Tasmād ṛtusandhiṣu prayujyante | Ṛtusandhiṣu hi vyādhir jayate | |* ”

¹⁰⁹ *Taitt.Brā*-I/4/9/3-“*Ta etāni cāturmāsyaṇyapaśyan | Tāni niravapan | Tairvaivaiṣāṃ tāmurjambṛñjat | Tato devā abhavan | Parā'surāḥ |* ”

¹¹⁰ *Śat.Brā*- II/6/3/1-“*Cāturmāsya yājino saṁvatsara hi jayanti |* ”

¹¹¹ *Gop.Brā* – II/1/26

desirous of food and nourishment should sacrifice with the *Cāturmāsya*s. After the *Cāturmāsya*, one has to perform the *soma yajña*. Actually the *Cāturmāsya*s are connected with the *Soma* sacrifice. Thus, we may notice that at the end of the *Varuṇapraghāsa*, there is the *Avabhṛtha* bath like that of the *Soma* sacrifice or *Rājasūya yajña* of monarchical *strata*. In the *Rājasūya* sacrifice, the *Cāturmāsya*s begins on the first *phālguna* with the *Sunāsiriya* rite. Then in *Chaitra*, begins the *abhiṣecaniya* and in the *Jaiṣṭha* (next year) follows the ceremony of cutting the hair (*Keśavapānīya*). The sacrificer of the *Rājasūya* performs the *Vaiśvadeva*, *Varuṇapraghāsa* like that of *Prajāpati*. As by means of this offering, the *Prajāpati* create abundance of food and makes the creatures free from *Varuṇa*'s noose. Thus, the sacrificer by making this offering obtains the same result like that of *Prajāpati*. The performer of the *Rājasūya* also performs the *Sākamedha* offering, as the Gods slew *Vṛtra* and attains the universal conquest by means of this offering¹¹². Thus, by making *Sākamedha* offering the *Rājasūya* sacrificer also gains victory and removed his all venomous enemies. Hence, the inclusion of the *Cāturmāsya*s in the *Rājasūya* sacrifice highlights its *Saumika* character.

As already mentioned that by performing the *Cāturmāsya* sacrifice one becomes imperishable and attains honesty. Hence, it can be said that in the *Cāturmāsya*s are included in the *Rājasūya* sacrifice for obtaining such results. In the chapter IV, it is already discussed that the *Rājasūya* sacrifice is performed for the attainment of royal power or kingship. The *Rājasūya*

¹¹² *Śat.Brā-* V/2/4/1-3

sacrifice is attached with high political significance. Thus, the inclusion of the *Cāturmāsya*s in the *Rājasūya* sacrifice or the *Avabhṛtha* bath at the end of the *Varuṇapraghāsa* (which is actually performed at the end of the *Soma* sacrifice or the *Rājasūya yajña*) indicates some political character of the *Rājasūya* sacrifice.

SAUTRĀMAṆĪ :

The *Sautrāmaṇī* is an expiatory rite performed for any excess committed by the drink of *Soma*. It is not a *Soma* sacrifice but optionally come under the seven *haviryajñas*. It is mainly related to the animal sacrifice. The word ‘*Sautrāmaṇī*’ is derived from the root ‘*Sutrāmaṇ*’ which means a good protector¹¹³. It is an epithet of *Indra*. The rite which is performed for *Sutrāmaṇ* *Indra* is called the *Sautrāmaṇī*. The *Sautrāmaṇī* sacrifice has its special significance as curing. *Indra* was cured by the deities like *Aśvins*, *Sarasvati* by performing the *Sautrāmaṇī* sacrifice and thus this aspect of curing has been mentioned very often. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*¹¹⁴ a myth is recorded as follows –

Indra hated *Viśvarūpa*, the son of *Tvaṣṭṛ* and cut down his heads. Then *Tvaṣṭṛ* became very angry and brought *soma* to perform sacrifice. He did not invite *Indra* to that sacrifice. Being uncalled, *Indra* by force went there and drunk the *soma* juice. But, that *soma* juice hurt him (*Indra*), as it was drunk in an improper way, and it came out from his all organs except from his mouth.

¹¹³ *Śat.Brā* –V/5/4/1 (Translation), Ed.by Deshpande Maitryee, Vol-II, New Bharatiya Book Corporation, Delhi, 2008, Page-861.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid* – V/5/4/1-12

At that time the *Aśvins* cured him with the help of this *Sautrāmaṇī* and restored to him his sensual strength and power. Then the God said, -“Aha! These two have saved him, the well saved (*sutrāta*). Hence the name becomes *Sautrāmaṇī*¹¹⁵.

Again in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*¹¹⁶, we have story of *Indra* and *Tvaṣṭṛ*'s son in another way. *Indra* killed *Viśvarūpa*, the son of *Tvaṣṭṛ*. Then *Tvaṣṭṛ* arranged an incantation rite. He performed a soma rite without *Indra*. *Indra* then by force drank the *soma* juice and desecrated the sacrifice. Then his energy or vital power flowed away from his every limb. From his eyes his fiery spirit flowed, from his nostrils his vital power flowed, from mouth his strength, from ear his glory, from breasts his bright (vital) sap, from navel his life-breath flowed, from urine his vigour and from his hair his thought flowed. Then he (*Indra*) was seen by *Namuci*. *Namuci* seized the valour of *Indra* by means of the *surā*. Gods then asked *Aśvins* and *Sarasvati* to restore *Indra* and they did accordingly. They took the valour from *Namuci* and restored it to *Indra*. Thus, here we see that *Indra* is cured by the deities (*Aśvins* and *Sarasvati*) who are given offerings in the *Sautrāmaṇī* for curing *Indra*. It saves the self from death and repels evil. Hence from its saving nature it is known as *Sautrāmaṇī*. As the ‘saving’ or ‘curing’ is connected with the expiations, hence; the *Sautrāmaṇī* is performed as an expiatory rite.

¹¹⁵ *Śat.Brā* -V/5/4/12-“*Sutrā taṃ batainamatrā'satāmiti tasmāt Sautrāmaṇī nāma |*”

¹¹⁶ *Ibid* -XII/7/1/1-14

In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*¹¹⁷, we get an important statement that in the beginning *Sautrāmaṇī* was among the *Aśuras*. But once the *Sautrāmaṇī* being afraid of the *Aśuras* went to the waters. The waters moved this sacrifice forward. When the fore-offerings had been offered, fire had not been carried round the oblation; the *Aśuras* came after the *Sautrāmaṇī*. The Gods then shut the way of the *Aśuras* by means of circumambient fire. From this statement we know that *Sautrāmaṇī* was first with the *Aśuras* and then it came to the Gods.

The performer of *Sautrāmaṇī* sacrifice gets offspring, cattle and the heavenly abode. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* we get reference that after performing a *soma* sacrifice, one should perform the *Sautrāmaṇī*¹¹⁸. For one who performs the *soma* sacrifice becomes empty as it were, his prosperity has been taken away then. The sacrificer then performed the *Sautrāmaṇī* and becomes filled with offspring and cattle and establishes himself firmly in the heavenly world¹¹⁹. According to the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, the performer of the *Sautrāmaṇī* sacrifice gets food in all directions¹²⁰. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* mentions that one who has enemy may sacrifice with the *Sautrāmaṇī*¹²¹. As by performing this sacrifice, the sacrificer kills that evil and hateful enemy and obtains his energy and valour. The sacrificer consecrated by the *Sautrāmaṇī* becomes the highest (*śreṣṭha*) among his own people¹²². The performer of the

¹¹⁷ *Śat.Brā* – XII/9/3/7-“*Asureṣu vā eṣo’gre yajña āsit Sautrāmaṇī*” ”

¹¹⁸ *Ibid* - XII/8/2/2-“*Someneṣṭvā Śautrāmanyā yajet*” ”

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*- XII/8/2/2-“*Sautrāmanyā yajate yo vaitadevaṃ veda* | | ”

¹²⁰ *Ibid*-XII/8/3/17-“*Sarbhāvya evāsmīnetadigbhyo ’nnādyandadhāti tasmāt śautrāmanye jānasya sarvāṣu dikṣvannādyā.....evametaded* | ”

¹²¹ *Ibid*-XII/7/3/4-“*Sa yo śhrātrvyavān syāt sa śautrāmanyā yajet pāpmānmeva taddīṣantambhrātṛbhya hatvendriyaṃ viryamaṣya vṛnkte* | ”

¹²² *Ibid*- XII/8/3/2-“*Śreṣṭho ’bhavaccheṣṭha svānāmbhavati ya enayābhīccyate* | ”

Ibid-XII/8/2/28-“*Tasmāt Śautrāmanyejān ekadhā svānām śreṣṭho bhavatyatho ya evametat* | ”

Sautrāmaṇī sacrifice becomes famous. He obtains the seasons¹²³, the year¹²⁴, the long life¹²⁵, immortality¹²⁶ and obtains all¹²⁷.

The *Sautrāmaṇī* sacrifice is divided in to two parts :

- i) The *Caraka Sautrāmaṇī*.
- ii) The *Kaukili Sautrāmaṇī*.

The *Caraka Sautrāmaṇī* is performed at the end of the *Rājasūya* sacrifice and also after the *Agnicayana* ceremony. It is also performed for one who has vomitted *soma* (*somavāmin*) or for one who is excessively purged by *soma* (*somātipūta*).

The *Kaukili Sautrāmaṇī* is an independent rite. It is performed for the fulfilment of certain desires. The oblations offered in it are those of rice, milk, clarified butter and so on. Besides the offering, *surā* is also offered in this sacrifice. Milk is also used a substitute.

A brief description of the ritual procedure of the *Caraka Sautrāmaṇī* :

The time required for the *Sautrāmaṇī* sacrifice is of four days. Before the actual performance of the *Caraka Sautrāmaṇī*, the ingredients of *surā*, such as – various kinds of herbs, hairs of a lion, tiger and wolf are mixed together and they are kept for fermentation. On the fourth day, three animal victims are offered to the deities viz. the *Aśvins*, *Sarasvati* and *Indra Sutrāman*. Three cups

¹²³ *Śat.Brā* - XII/8/2/33-“*Traya vā ṛtava ṛtuneva tair varunoddhe.....ca runddhe* | ”

¹²⁴ *Ibid*- XII/8/2/31-“*Sa vā eṣa saṃvatsara eva Sautrāmaṇī* | ”

¹²⁵ *Ibid*- XII/9/1/11-“*Tasmāt śautrāmanyē jāno vāya upa gacchati* | ”

¹²⁶ *Ibid*-XII/9/1/7-8

¹²⁷ *Ibid*-XII/8/2/31,36-“ *Tasmāt sautrāmanyē jāno sarvaṃ jayati sarvaṃ varuṇddhe* | ”

of *surā* are also offered to them. Then a pitcher with hundred holes¹²⁸ is kept on hanging to the southern fire and the residual *surā* is poured on that pitcher. Then the poured *surā* is trickles down in to the fire and that is considered to be an offering to the fathers. The remaining *surā* is eaten by priests, sacrificer and others also. Three rice pap are also offered to *Indra*, *Sāvitr̥* and *Varuṇa* respectively¹²⁹. The accessory rites known as *Prayāja*, *Anuyāja* and *Samyāja* are performed according to usage. Then the sacrificer and the priests go for the *Avabhṛtha* bath which marks its end.

A brief description of the ritual procedure of the *Kaukilī Sautrāmaṇī* :

The ritual of the *Kaukilī Sautrāmaṇī* is not much differ from that of the *Caraka Sautrāmaṇī*. There are some additions to it. Thus together with the cups of *surā*, three cups of milk are also offered to the *Aśvins*, *Sarasvati* and *Indra Sutrāman*. The number of animals also differs from that of *Caraka Sautrāmaṇī*. Instead of three animals, there are five animals offered to *Indra*, *Aśvins*, *Sarasvati*, *Indra* and *Indra-Vāyu*. On the fourth day of this rite, the aforesaid animals are offered according to the fourth day of the *Soma* sacrifice. The oblations of *surā*, milk and of omenta are also offered along with these animal offerings. Then the sacrificer takes his seat on a chair made of *muñja* grass, and silver is put under his left foot and gold under his right foot. After that the thirty two offerings of fat of these animals are made. The remaining fat is sprinkled on the sacrificer till its flows out of his mouth. Then, the *Adhvaryu*

¹²⁸ *Śat.Brā* -V/5/4/27-“*Atha kumbha śata bitṛṇo bā bhavati* | ”

¹²⁹ *Āśv.Śr.Sū*- III/9/2-“*Aindrasāvitravāruṇāḥ paśupuroḍāśāḥ* | ”

touches the sacrificer and his servants slowly lift him up. First, he (the sacrificer) is raised up to the knee-high, then up to navel-high and then up to the mouth level. After that the sacrificer steps on a tiger skin, which is the symbol of lordship and dominion. Finally, milk is offered to *Mitra* and *Varuṇa* and a bull for *Indra* is offered which marks its end.

Some important features of the Sautrāmaṇī sacrifice with political significance :

After describing the nature of the *Sautrāmaṇī* sacrifice we notice some important features of the *Sautrāmaṇī* sacrifice which are as follows:

- The *Sautrāmaṇī* sacrifice is an expiatory rite. It also forms a part of the *Rājasūya* sacrifice. As, while describing the nature of the *Caraka Sautrāmaṇī* we notice that, it is performed at the end of the *Rājasūya* sacrifice. Thus, the relation of the *Sautrāmaṇī* sacrifice with *Rājasūya* sacrifice highlights its political significance.
- In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* it is mentioned that the performer of the *Rājasūya* sacrifice should subsequently perform the *Sautrāmaṇī* sacrifice. The reason is given in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* –“as to why the performer of the *Rājasūya* performs this offering. He who performs the *Rājasūya* assuredly gains for himself all sacrificial rites, all offerings, even the spoonful oblations; and instituted by the gods indeed is this offering, the *Sautrāmaṇī*: ‘May offering be made by me with this

one also! May I be consecrated by this one also! Thus (he thinks, and) therefore the performer of the *Rājasūya* performs this offering¹³⁰.

- The *Caraka Sautrāmaṇī* is performed after the *Rājasūya* as a curing and a redressing rite. The reason is given in the *Maitrāyani Saṃhitā*¹³¹ as; one who is consecrated by the *Rājasūya* is deprived of strength and vigour. Since much strength and vigour have gone away from the sacrificer, the *Adhvaryu* restores to him (sacrificer) the same, by performing the *Caraka Sautrāmaṇī*. Thus, it is clear that the *Caraka Sautrāmaṇī* is performed after the *Rājasūya* sacrifice as a curing and a redressing rite.
- At the end of the *Caraka Sautrāmaṇī* the *Avabhṛtha* bath is performed, which is generally performed at the end of the *Soma* sacrifice or the *Rājasūya* sacrifice. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* mentions that the *Sautrāmaṇī* is the *soma*¹³². Thus, the *Brāhmaṇa* text tries to connect the *Sautrāmaṇī* with *Soma*. And by connecting the *Sautrāmaṇī* with *soma*, the *Brāhmaṇa* text elevates this sacrifice.

Besides these, the *Caraka Sautrāmaṇī* is performed for the fulfilment of certain desires also. It is prescribed for one who is desirous of prosperity ‘*bhūtīkāma*’¹³³, also for one who is desirous of food and cattle ‘*Paśūkāma*’¹³⁴

¹³⁰ *Śat.Brā* -V/5/4/14-“*Tadyadetayā rājasūyayājī yajate | Sarvān vā eṣa yajñakratunvaruṇdhe sarvā iṣṭirāpi darvihomānyo rājasūyena yajate devasṛṣṭo vā eṣeṣṭiryat śautrāmaṇya nā me’pīṣṭamsadanayā’pi sūyā iti tasmādvā etayā rājasūya yājī yajate |*”

¹³¹ *Mait.Saṃ*-II/4/1

¹³² *Śat.Brā* – XII/9/2/1-“*Soma eṣa yatśautrāmaṇī |*”

¹³³ *VaiKh.Śr.Sū*-XI/1

¹³⁴ *Āpa.Śr.Sū*-XIX/4/12-“*Abhicarjamāno yajet | Abhicarannannādyakāmaḥ ha prajākāmāḥ paśūkāmo va | |*”

and who is desirous of progeny ‘*prajākāma*’¹³⁵. A king who is deprived of his kingdom should perform this rite. As we get reference from the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*¹³⁶, that *Duṣṭaritu Pauṃsāyana* had been expelled from his kingdom, which had come down to him through ten generations by the *Sriñjayas*. The priest (*Cākra Sthapati*) performing the *Sautrāmaṇī* for the *Duṣṭaritu Pauṃsāyana* and returned back to the dominion captured by the *Sriñjayas*.

Thus, as a part of the *Rājasūya* sacrifice, the *Sautrāmaṇī* sacrifice also possesses some political character in it.

¹³⁵ *Āpa.Śr.Sū -XIX/4/12--“Abhicarjamāno yajet | Abhicarannādyakāmaḥ ha prajākāmaḥ paśukāmo va | | ”*

¹³⁶ *Śat.Brā -XII/9/3/1-4*