CHAPTER XII

RECAPITULATION

We have mentioned in the Introduction that the sacrifice was already developed to a considerable extent in the Rgveda. But the sacrifice had not as yet become a static phenomenon. It was a growing institution; and the Samhitās of the Yajurveda and of the Śāmaveda, which are more directly and purposefully meant for the sacrifice, show a further progress of the ritual. The samhitās of the black yajus school contain some portions which are not in any way different from the Brāhmaṇas. We, however, for the sake of convenience have limited ourselves to the Brāhmaṇa-texts and only occasionally have used the samhitā-texts and other texts which show some aspects of the ritual.

In the Brāhmaṇa-texts we find that ritualism is growing in two ways. In the already established ritual some details are newly coming, some are being changed, etc. Secondly many popular rites are being elevated and are being sanctioned and established in the higher ritual. The origin of the sacrifice has already gone beyond the sight and some mysterious stories which are likely to contain some grains of truth are being told in the Brāhmaṇas. From them we know that sacrifice was either seen or created by Prajāpati and was obtained as a heritage by the Gods who either collectively or individually
also contributed to its development one way or the other. They tried to keep it secret but the seers found it out themselves, developed it and then it was obtained by men among whom it continued from father to son. The sacrifice was never a static phenomenon and it has passed through many vicissitudes which are naturally reflected in the Brāhmaṇas. Sacrifice as an institution was not only growing but advancing even geographically. Many practices were removed, changed, modified, introduced, etc. Particularly in the animal-sacrifice we see that once man was the victim then horse etc. and ultimately a he-goat and Purodāsa became prominent as the material of the sacrifice, the last (=purodāsa) was an animal only symbolically. There were many thinkers, many ritualists holding their own views about the ritual details. They often discussed, put forth reasonings in their favour, and refuted the opinions of others. Sometimes the opinions of others were rejected, sometimes a compromise took place, and sometimes their opinions were accepted. This shows how free thinking was not absent in the so called dogmatic ritualism of the Brāhmaṇas.

While there were vicissitudes at different periods and differences of practices in different regions, there was simultaneously a tendency to adopt the popular ritual and elevate and establish it in the ritual of the "classes".
Such rites were highly praised, the objections against them raised by the "conservatives" were removed, and ultimately they were firmly established in the śrauta-ritualistic system. The Brāhmaṇa-texts, however, give some glimpses of the adoption and "elevation" (if we may be permitted the use of this term) of various rites e.g. the Cāturmāsyas, Vajapeya etc. Thus the sacrifice was a growing institution in the Brāhmaṇa-period and it was also getting intellectual standpoint.

The Brāhmaṇa-texts do not merely describe the sacrifice; they mean to explain every detail of it, of course, in their own ways. Their ways may not be from our point of view logical or consistent; but it is quite evident that they want to be logical, constituent, etc. in their own way. In order to see how the Brāhmaṇa-texts describe and explain the sacrifice, we instead of studying all the sacrifices, took into consideration the ancillary rites which are generally connected with all the sacrifices — with the soma-sacrifice in particular, which is of more importance and extent as far as the space it has filled in the Brāhmaṇa-texts is concerned. Even though we have not studied all the sacrifices in their details, we have seen how the Brāhmaṇa-texts classify the sacrifices in several ways (each classifications does not necessarily cover all the sacrifices) and how they generally explain the names of the sacrifices. In the study of the ancillary rites we came to the conclusion that the various significances of
various ancillary rites are connected with the general doctrine of the sacrifice — and the Agnicayana-rite is concerned with the philosophical speculations also.

The performers of the sacrifice are the sacrificer, his wife and the priests. They are expected to do various duties, and observe some vratas. The relations between the sacrificer and the priests are just like those between the body and the limbs. Full co-operation is, therefore, expected between the sacrificer and the priests. The priests are especially expected to be wise, of pure conduct, etc.

The sacrificer sacrifices obviously to get some result. The results of the desires are numerous, e.g., getting children, prosperity, heaven and immortality and further "to get all". The Brāhmaṇa-texts explain how a particular result can be obtained from a particular action. There is, however, no strict, fixed cause and effect relation; the Brāhmaṇa-texts obviously maintain "plurality of results", and "plurality of causes". The sacrifice has magical powers and works apparently like a machine; if you perform a sacrifice correctly and carefully the result is bound to follow. But this is not all. One has to possess śraddhā, faith in the working of the sacrifice. The Gods are not as may be supposed at first sight subsidiary to the sacrifice. They are not mere slaves of the sacrifice. It is theirs to give the result or to
withhold it. Moreover, the sacrifice is not, as it also may appear at first sight, an end in itself; it is a means to obtain the result; the means par excellence. But one may obtain the result by mere "knowledge" also. The attitude of the Brāhmaṇa-texts in general may be described as being activistic, optimistic, and positive. And yet thoughts of renunciation are not totally wanting in the Brāhmaṇas.

Now, how does the sacrifice work? What is the doctrine of the sacrifice? The sacrificial performance is described in various ways. Its principal nature consists of offering (ahuti) but it is metaphorically described as "collection", "homage", "journey", "killing and generating", "generation", etc. The sacrifice is described as a co-operative institute of Gods and men. Thus there is mutual giving and taking. There are many guiding principles for the performance of sacrifice and one has to be very careful in following them. The sacrifice is the "norm" par excellence and this "norm" is not to be disturbed in any way. One has to keep the "continuity (santati)" of the sacrifice, maintain its measurement and make it complete. The sacrifice is identified with many things. Some of these identifications show how in the sacrificial performance accuracy and vigilance are absolutely necessary. Thus the sacrifice is identical with the water-jar and one has to take care that there is no hole to the water-jar (i.e. there are no mistakes in the performance of the sacrifice).
Other identifications also throw similar light upon the working of the sacrifice ensuring ultimately how the sacrifice leads to the expected results. Thus the sacrifice is identified with a cart or a chariot or a ship that leads to the goal. The most important theory involved in the sacrifice is that it is a microcosm. The microcosm and macrocosm are interrelated. The actions done in the microcosm (on the sacrificial plane) are many times based on or imitations of the actions done in the macrocosm and the actions in the macrocosm are also, on the other hand supposed to be an effect of the actions in the microcosm. Thus both these microcosm and macrocosm are interdependent. "... en faisant exister le rta dans leur sacrifice, les prêtres le produisent en même temps qu'il renforcent dans le monde". ¹ This explains how the sacrifice can give good results to the performer.

In the explanations of the "ritualism" the germs of "spiritualism" are found in the Brāhmaṇa-texts. In order to maintain this point strongly we have in each chapter shown how side by side with the ritualism, spiritualism is present. Speaking of the ritualism and spiritualism in general separately, we have pointed out that even though the ritualism requires correct, careful performance, the Brāhmaṇa-texts are not

¹ P. Mus, BEFEQ, 33, 1934, p. 385 ("Cultes indiens et indigènes au champa" p. 367 ff.)
too rigid in their prescriptions and rules. The Brāhmaṇa-
texts have never ignored the "spirit" of their rules etc.
in preference of the "letter" of the rules. If anything
required for the sacrifice is not available the Brāhmaṇa-texts
prescribe substitutes. As in the theory of result of the
sacrifice there is plurality of results and plurality of causes
and in the ultimate analysis anything can produce anything,
similarly according to the substitute theory, ultimately
anything can substitute anything. According to the Brāhmaṇas
the bandhuta doctrine is underlying all the world and this
is the basis of the "spiritualism" and philosophy prominently
found in the Upaniṣads. Passingly we have also mentioned
some philosophical speculations in the Brāhmaṇas which can
be said to be the predecessors of the Upaniṣadic philosophy.

The study of the sacrifice in the Brāhmaṇas would make
it clear how the Brāhmaṇa-texts even though they appear "twaddle"-
like, are, if carefully and minutely studied can give many
glimpses of the religious and philosophical history of India.
This study reveals to us how several sacrifices or sacrificial
rites have been "elevated" by the Brāhmaṇa-texts with their
powerful arthavādas and how they have thus made an important
contribution to the ritual by developing the same. They
have also tried, to give a firm position to the "elevated"
rites and a firmer one to those already established. The
Brāhmaṇa-texts have tried to supply side by side an "intellectual" background to the ritual in their own way. The description (rather prescription vidhi) and explanation (arthavāda) portions of the Brāhmaṇa-texts have two results - (1) growth of ritualism and (2) growth of spiritualism, thinking, philosophy, etc. The first is mainly reflected in later Kalpa-sūtra literature and the second in the Upanisadic literature.