CHAPTER III

VICISSITUDES OF THE SACRIFICE

Introduction:

The sacrifice was a well-established institution at the time of the Brahmana. But still it was not static. There were many ups and downs, various vicissitudes in the history of the sacrifices. Though the Brahmana-texts do not give us a consistent and succinct history of the sacrifice, they in their own way refer to some of the vicissitudes of the sacrifice or its details. They tell us how the sacrifice is said to have gone away; they tell us how some difficulties arose and were removed in the case of the sacrifice; they refer to the old practices, and the new practices, etc. and thus supply us with various vicissitudes of the sacrifice. A study of such vicissitudes will surely enable us to understand the dynamic nature of the sacrifice and its history.¹

Expansion of the sacrifice:

The sacrifice was expanding and growing. The expansion of the sacrifice can be known from the story given by ŚB I.4.1.10ff. Māthava, the king of Videgha carried Agni

¹ For the vicissitudes of sacrifice cf. Devasthali Religion and Mythology of the Brahmana, p.110f; 116f; 119f.
Vaiśvānara in his mouth. The seer named Gotama Rāhūgaṇa was his family priest. When addressed by Gotama Rāhūgaṇa, the king made no answer lest the fire might fall from his mouth. The seer began to invoke Agni with the verse of the Ṛgveda. But still the king did not give any answer. The seer went on addressing. When he uttered the expression—"butter-sprinkled one", Agni Vaiśvānara flashed forth from the king's mouth. The king was unable to hold him back. The fire issued from his mouth and fell down on this earth. Māthava, the king was at that time on the river Sarasvatī. Agni went there burning along this earth towards the east and Gotama Rāhūgaṇa and Videgha Māthava followed after him as he was burning along. Agni burnt over (dried up) all these rāvers. Agni, however, could not burn over the river called Sadānīrā. In the former times the Brāhmaṇas did not cross that river because it was not burnt over by Agni Vaiśvānara. At that time the land to the east of the river Sadānīrā was very much uncultivated, very marshy, because it was not tasted by Agni Vaiśvānara. Now-a-days, however, the Brāhmaṇas have caused (Agni) to taste it through sacrifices.

In the above story three successive stages in the eastward migration of the Aryans along with their fire-cult are mentioned. At the time of Videgha Māthava the Aryans were extended up to the river Sarasvatī. Then under the
leadership of Videgha Māthava they went as far as the river Sadānirā. For some time the Aryans could not go beyond the river Sadānirā. But after some time they went beyond the river and established the sacrifice there also. Agni Vaiśvānara can represent the sacrifice in general and the progress of Agni Vaiśvānara can be supposed to be the progress and expansion of the sacrifice.  

The expansion of sacrifice can be known indirectly from the story of Viṣṇu who is identical with the sacrifice. The Asuras wanted to possess the world. The Gods, placing Viṣṇu, the sacrifice at their head, went to the Asuras. The Asuras offered the earth as much as Viṣṇu - who was very dwarf at that time - would lie upon. The Gods having enclosed him (Viṣṇu = sacrifice) on all three sides, having placed Agni on the east side, went on toiling and worshiping with the sacrifice and then obtained all the earth (ŚB I.2.5.1ff).

Here we know how Gods pervaded all the earth by means of sacrifice and this indicates that they spread the sacrifice all over the earth. Thus we can understand that the sacrifice was expanded at the time of the Brāhmaṇa-texts in a very great measure.

Growth of the sacrifice:

Though the ritualism in general was already established at the time of the Brāhmaṇas, the sacrifice was always developing. New requirements and demands made it always necessary to develop the ritual further. The Brāhmaṇa-texts represent this development. GB I.5.25 implies that the new sacrifices were being created by Ṛṣis (seers). While dealing with the origin and growth of the sacrifice we have given the examples of sacrifices being 'seen' or 'created'. Thus in the Brāhmaṇa-period the number of sacrifices was growing and these new sacrifices were admitted in the ritual sphere of the Brāhmaṇas. Again while dealing with the elevation of the sacrifice, we shall also see how some popular rites were admitted into the ritual of the 'classes' represented by the Brāhmaṇa-texts. Such rites were given when possible, the appearance of the ritual of the classes and were elevated from ritual of the "masses "to the ritual of the classes". Their importance was also stated in very glowing terms. Thus it is clear that the sacrifice grew considerably during the period of the Brāhmaṇa-texts.

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3 cf. Gonda, "Bandhu in the Brāhmaṇas" Brahma-vidya. The Adyar Library Bulletin, XXIX, p.5. According to Keith, RFV, 261f the additions and alterations were simply for the purpose of introducing elements of magic potency.
The sacrifice running away:

But this growth was not always going on without any hindrance. There were some occasions when the sacrifice ran away.⁴ Thus the sacrifice is said to have gone away from the Gods and it is added that it roamed about in the form of a black antelope. The Gods found it, stripped it of its skin and brought the skin away with them. Its black, white and brown hair represent the three vedas, threefold science, which is the same as the sacrifice. The skin of the black antelope is to be used, therefore, for the completeness of the sacrifice (ŚB I.1.4.1f; cp. TB III.2.5.6; 6.1f). The sacrifice is said to have gone away from the Gods a second time, when it took the form of the well-winged falcon (suparṣa) and wandered. The Gods caught hold of the sacrifice by means of the Sauparṣa ṣamān (TMB XIV.3.10). The sacrifice was once lost and it was found out by means of the libations (āhutis)(AB I.2) and at another time by means of directions (praiga)(AB III.9; cp. I.2). The sacrifice once said to the Gods, "I shall not be your food", and went away from the Gods. The Gods crushed it. It being taken apart was not sufficient for them. The Gods said, "It will not be sufficient for us,

⁴ For sacrifice running away, see Levi, La doctrine du sacrifice, p. 142ff.
being taken away. Let us gather together the sacrifice". Then they gathered together the sacrifice and requested Aśvins to heal it (AB I.18; GB II.2.6). Elsewhere sacrifice is said to have gone away from the Gods and wandered in the form of a horse. The Gods rushing after it took hold of its tail (vāla) and tore it out and having torn it out, they threw it down in a lump. The hair of the horse’s tail grew up as those of plants (aśavāla grass) (ŚB III.4.1.17; cp.TMB VI. 7.18). Therefore, the prastara-bunch is to be made of aśava-vāla-grass. AB VII.19 gives us another story of sacrifice going away. Prajāpati created the sacrifice. After the creation of the sacrifice the holy power and the lordly power were created. Both the kinds of offsprings were created, viz., those who eat the oblations and those who do not eat them.

The Brāhmaṇas are the offsprings eating the oblations; and the Rajanya, Vaiśya and Śudra classes are the offsprings not eating the oblations. From them the sacrifice departed. The holy power and the lordly power pursued it. The weapons with which the holy power pursued were the utensils of the sacrifice. The weapons with which the lordly power pursued were the horse-chariot, the corslet, the bow and arrow. The lordly power returned without attaining the sacrifice; from its weapons the sacrifice turned away trembling. The holy power followed the sacrifice and obtained it (AB VII.19). Here the importance of the use of the sacrificial utensils is suggested.
In many of the stories mentioning the sacrifice as running away, we find that ultimately importance of the use of something, e.g., the black antelope skin, the sauparṇa sāman, aśvavāla-grass, sacrificial utensils, etc., is meant to be suggested. It seems that though the sacrifice was gone away at certain occasions, by using something it was re-obtained and thus the use of those things becomes introduced in the ritual. Though the sacrifice ran away many times, its running away itself has marked some progress in the development of the ritual.

Individual rites such as the consecration (dīkṣā) are also said to have gone away. Thus when the Dīkṣā went away, from the Gods, they sought to grasp it with the two months of spring. But it was not obtained. Then they sought to grasp with the two months of the summer; then of the rainy season; then of the autumn; and then of the winter. But they were not successful. Then they sought with the two months of the cool season and they were, then successful. Therefore, the dīkṣā of the sacrificial session is to be taken in the two months of the cool season (AB IV.26). Here also we find that the Brāhmaṇa-text wants to prescribe the particular period for the Dīkṣā. But it refers to the trial and error method adopted by the Gods for obtaining the Dīkṣā when it had gone away. Thus through these vicissitudes the sacrifice
was developing and becoming definite according to the 
Bṛhmanas.

No performance of the sacrifice:

We saw above some examples where the sacrifice went 
away and was re-obtained by using something. In the Bṛhmana-
texts also we get reference to the incidents of no performance 
of the sacrifices by those who are expected to perform the 
sacrifice. ŚB I.2.5.24ff can be mentioned in this context. 
The performers of the ancient time used to touch the altar 
and oblations. They became poorer (pāpiyāmsah) and those 
who washed the hands after the preparation of Vedi they 
became prosperous. Then unbelief took hold of men. "Those 
who sacrifice, become poor; and those who do not sacrifice, 
they become prosperous", they said. Then no sacrificial 
food came to the Gods from this world. The Gods subsist on 
what is offered up from this world. Then the Gods requested 
Bṛhaspati Āngirasa to ordain the sacrifice to men. Bṛhaspati 
approached them and after listening to what they said, he 
explained to them, "What we have heard of as produced for the 
Gods that is this sacrifice that is to say the cooked obla-
tions - therewith you have performed while touching. That is 
why you have become poorer. Sacrifice, therefore, without 
touching. For thus you will become prosperous". "How long ?" 
they asked. "Till the spreading of the sacrificial grass
on the altar" he said. By sacrificial grass, the altar becomes appeased ... He who knows this sacrifice without touching and becomes prosperous.

Here we know how unbelief spread when the performer of the sacrifices became poorer. As the Gods depend upon the sacrifice they had to make efforts to remove the unbelief and encourage men to recontinue the sacrificial performances. Bṛhaspati has made here a significant service in the resurrection of the sacrifice. Bṛhaspati has elsewhere helped Indra in removing away the Asuras who were creating hindrance in the performance of sacrifice. At the time when the Gods were about to come up to perform this sacrifice, the Asuras, the mischievous friends, tried to smite them from the south, saying, "you shall not sacrifice! You shall not perform the sacrifice". The Gods said to Indra, "Thou art the highest and strongest of us. Do thou hold these fiends in check". "Let the Brahman(\(\wedge\)) be my ally!", he said. "So be it". They made Bṛhaspati his ally; for Bṛhaspati is the Brahman and having had the Asuras, the mischievous fiends, chased away in the south by Bṛhaspati and Indra they spread this sacrifice in a place free from danger and delivery. (ŚB IX. 2.3.2-3). Thus the performance of sacrifice even though interrupted sometimes remained continuous and Bṛhaspati along with Indra has made some efforts for its continuity.
JB III.216 gives another story in which also the performance of sacrifice was stopped when the Gods had gone to heaven taking the sacrifice along with them. Men could not know the sacrifice then. Then the performance of the sacrifice was stopped. Both the Gods and the men remained hungry. For no libations went from this world upwards and no rains came from that world downwards. Then the Gods told Ayäsyä to give the sacrifice to the men. Thus even though the performance of the sacrifice was stopped for some time, it was recontinued after some period with the help of Bṛhaspati or Indra or Ayäsyä.

**Difficulties in the performance:**

Occasionally some difficulties arose and they were removed by some means. Thus cattle would not serve the Gods for serving as food. Then the Gods saw the sacrificial post as a thunderbolt. They raised it up against the cattle and fearing it the cattle came back (AB II.8). Thus the difficulty was removed by means of the sacrificial post. The pressings of the Gods were not firm. The Gods then saw the cakes and offered them at each pressing to support them and then the pressings became firm (AB II.23). Here the difficulty is removed by means of the cakes. Whatever weapon the Gods used against the Asuras, that the Asuras perceived and countered. Then the Gods saw the silent praise (Tusnimsamsa)
and hurled it against the Asuras. Then the Gods prospered and the Asuras were defeated (AB II.31). Here the discovery of Tūśnīṁśanśa proves to be useful for removing away the Asuras. The Angirases were performing a sacrificial session in order to obtain the world of heaven. They were falling into confusion whenever they reached the sixth day. Nābhānediṣṭha's father told Nābhānediṣṭha to recite two hymns in the performance of those Angirases. He recited them (ṚV X.61 and 62) and the performance was then done well (AB V.14). Here the recital of the two hymns removes the confusion.

Thus we see that in the performance of the sacrifice some difficulties arose, but they were removed by certain means, and thus the sacrifice was being developed.

Sacrifice is said sometimes to have been exhausted. The Gods were very much anxious to replenish the sacrifice, to render it more efficient and practise with it when it was exhausted. What was left in the juhu, of that butter with which they had established the sacrifice, with that they sprinkled the havishdishes and thereby replenished them again and rendered them efficient (ŚB I.5.3.24).

Allusions to the old practices:

The sacrifice was developing inspite of the hindrances as we have seen. But not only it was developing, it was
adopting some new practices also. Lévi has rightly remarked - "Ainsi de l'aveu même des Brähmanas le cours du temps modifie et transforme les rites du sacrifice". We find that sometimes the Brähmana-texts mention the old practices along with the new practices which they want to prescribe. Such references to the ritual of the ancient time will be very useful for understanding the vicissitudes and the history of the sacrifice.

TMB (VIII.6.5f) says that previously all the sacrifice was with the Asuras (asuresu hi sarvo yajña āṣit). The Gods saw the yajñayajñiya sāman and by using it they obtained Agnihotra, Darśa and Pūrṇamāsa, Cāturmāyas, the Soma sacrifice and in this way all the sacrifice. ŚB XII.9.3.7 mentions that the Sautrāmaṇi sacrifice was in the beginning (agree) among the Asuras. This point is very significant.

6 Rönnow, Trīta Ṭrīṭva, p. 12 tries to maintain that the Soma sacrifice was originated among the Asuras.
7 For agree which means "in the beginning" "previously" and "which refers to the mythical example existing 'before' chronological time, but making its influence felt in time". See Gonda, Vīśnuism, p.51, 74; the same, Inleiding tot het Indische denken, p.40.
It probably indicates that many rites were adopted by the Gods from the Asuras. The ritual of the Vedic Aryans was being developed and it is possible that some rites must have been taken in ancient period from the rites of the popular nature or sometimes from the non-aryan rites and for obvious reasons they were ascribed to the Asuras in the mythological manner.

Some of the details of the sacrificial performance were done differently in the old times. Thus previously all the stotras were sung with the yajñāyajñāyā only (JB I.173). In the beginning the Brahman priest was sharer of half of the Dakṣiṇās with the other priests (AB V.34; JUB III.4.3.5; GB I.3.4). Formerly the Brahmana priest-hood belonged to Vasiṣṭha family. But now any one who knows the vyāhṛtis can be the Brahman priest at the sacrifice (ŚB XII.6.1.41). Previously the Yūpa was entirely thrown into the fire. The later persons saw the chip of the Yūpa as a fragment of the sacrifice and threw that chip into the fire (AB II.3). To the call for preparing the oblation material the wife of the sacrificer used to rise to act in the ancient times. But now either she or some one else rises in answer to this call (ŚB I.1.4.11-13). Previously, five animals, viz., the man, the horse, the bull, the ram and the he-goat were killed and their heads were used in the course of fire-building (Agnicayana). Thus, for example, they were used in the
fire-building of Āśāṅga Sāurūmāteya; but he quickly died after that (ŚB VI.2.1.37). ŚB VI.2.1.39 mentions that it was Prajāpati who first slaughtered the five animals and Śyāmya Śayakāyana the last. In the interval people used to slaughter them. But now-a-days only these two are slaughtered - the one for Prajāpati and the one for Vāyu. Here the change of the practice seems to be because of the tendency to avoid the slaughter of the man in the ritual - the tendency which marks the later period and which is reflected in the Brāhmaṇa-texts.

Among the references to the old practices we sometimes find that there is some growth in the ritual in the later period. Thus there was only one pressing, viz., the morning pressing, in the old days (GB II.4.23). Previously there was no priest namely the Grāvästut. Arbuda Kāvaśeya introduced this priest in the ritual according to KB XXIX.1. Now there are three pressings and also the priest named Grāvästut in the ritual. So this seems to be growth in the ritual which is noted by the Brāhmaṇa-texts. The sacrifice must be ever developing and growing but the Brāhmaṇa-texts have made reference to a very few practices as the occasions allowed them. But on the basis of those we may say that there were many modifications, alterations and additions in the ritual at the time of the Brāhmaṇa-texts as compared to the ritual of the previous day.
Vicissitudes of the animal-sacrifice:

The animal sacrifice is included in the Soma sacrifice and there is also a separate form of it named Paśubandha. Both kinds of the animal sacrifice were performed at the time of the Brāhmaṇas. But there must have been various changes as far as the kind of the victim is concerned. Thus we get a story in which successive stages of the change in the victim are shown. At first the Gods slew the man as the sacrificial victim. When he had been slain his sap went out. It entered into the horse. Therefore, the horse became fit for the sacrifice and him whose sap had been departed they dismissed; he became Kimpuruṣa. They slew the horse and the sap went away from him and entered into the ox. The horse became a Gomṛga. When the ox was slain, the sap went away and entered a sheep. Then the sheep became worthy of sacrifice and the ox became a Gayal. The sheep was slain but the sap went away from the sheep and entered into a goat. Therefore, the goat became worthy of sacrifice. The sheep became a camel. The sap remained in the goat for a very long time. Therefore,

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8 Kimpuruṣa means 'monkey' according to Weber, Indische Studien, IX, p.246; Keith, RBT, 140. Haug translates the word as 'deformed' or 'dwarf' (his translation p.90 and note there).
the goat is employed very often. They slew the goat and the sap went to the earth. The goat became a Śarabha. The animals from whom the sap was departed are not worthy of sacrifice. The sap in the earth became rice and in that they offer also a cake (which is made of the rice) they do it because they think, "Let our sacrifice be with a victim with sap; let our sacrifice be with a victim whole" (AB II.8; cp. ŚB I.2.3.6f). Various vicissitudes of the animal sacrifice are seen here. The story suggests that the man was in the ancient period supposed to be a victim worthy for sacrifice. The horse was also a regular sacrificial animal for some time. Remnants of these two practices can be seen in the Puruṣamedha and in the Aśvamedha. The he-goat was definitely used for the longer time and in more proportion and, therefore, at the time of the Brāhmaṇas as well as in the later periods the he-goat continued to be a victim for the sacrificial use. The cake which represents the animal has a wide use and particularly in the sacrifices classified under the name īṣṭi. The īṣṭi in which no animal was used and only cake (puroḍāsa) was used seem to be the most sophisticated form of the sacrifice. Though the vicissitudes of the animals may not be taken in the necessarily chronological connotations, we can at least presume that there were different ideas about the sacrificial victim at different times and places. The origin of thoughts of Ahimsā also can
be seen in such references (for details see the section on animal-sacrifice).

The Puruṣamedha:

In the vicissitudes of the sacrifice the Puruṣamedha deserves a more detailed study. There is a difference of opinion about whether the killing of a human creature was done in the ancient ritualism of the Aryans. Therefore, let us see what light the Brāhmaṇa-texts throw upon the Puruṣamedha.

Origin of the Puruṣamedha:

ŚB XIII.6.1.1ff gives the origin of the Puruṣamedha as follows: "Puruṣa Nārāyaṇa desired, "Would that I overpassed all the beings! Would that I alone were everything here (this universe)!" He beheld this sacrificial performance of five days, the Puruṣamedha, and took it, and performed offering therewith and having performed offering therewith, he overpassed all beings and became everything here". Thus the origin of the Puruṣamedha is ascribed to Puruṣa Nārāyaṇa and some divine sanctity has been in this way attached to it.

Performance of the Puruṣamedha:

There are twenty-three dīkṣās, twelve upasads and five sutyās (somadays) in the Puruṣamedha (ŚB XIII.6.1.2). On the Upavastha (day) there are eleven victims sacred to Agni and
Soma (ŚB XIII.6.1.4). On the sutyā days there are the savānya victims (ŚB XIII.6.1.5). The first (of the sutyā days) is an Agniṣṭoma; then follows an Ukthya; then an Atirātra; then an Ukthya and then an Agniṣṭoma (ŚB XIII.6.1.7).

On the central day, the Puruṣas (men) are seized (ŚB XIII.6.2.2). The ŚB does not enumerate the details of the Puruṣas and deities to whom they are to be offered. At TB III.4.1.1ff various persons of various castes and particula-
rities are mentioned along with the deities to whom each of the persons is to be offered. ŚB merely mentions some of them. "To the priesthood a brāhmaṇa .. to the nobility, a kṣatriya .. to the Maruts, a vaisya .. to the Penance, a śūdra ..." (ŚB XIII.6.2.10). At the time of the bringing up of the victims three oblations to Savitṛ are offered (ŚB XIII.6.2.11), the Brahman priest seated to the right (south) of them, praises with this sixteen-versed hymn (ṚV X.90; VS XXXI.1-16) 'The thousand-headed puruṣa ...' the men bound to the sacrificial posts (ŚB XIII.6.2.12). The men are set free after the fire has been carried round them (cf. ŚB XIII.6.2.13). After the Udayaniyā offering eleven barren cows are offered to Mitra-Varuṇa, the Vīśve-devaḥ and Bṛhaspati (ŚB XIII.6.2.16). The Traidhātavi is the final offering (udavasāniniyā) (ŚB XIII.6.2.17).
Dakṣiṇās:

ŚB XIII.6.2.18 describes the dakṣiṇās of the Puruṣamedha as follows: "What there is towards the middle of the kingdom, other than the land and property of the brahmaṇas but including the men, of that the eastern quarter belongs to the Hotr, the southern to the Brahman, the western to Adhvaryu, the northern to the Udgātr and the Hotrakas share this along with them². If the performer of the Puruṣamedha is a Brahmaṇa, then he should bestow all his property as dakṣiṇā (ŚB XIII.6.2.19).

Etymology of the word Puruṣamedha:

The ŚB XIII.6.2.1. gives the etymology of the word Puruṣamedha. "As to why it is called Puruṣamedha? The stronghold (pur) doubtless is these worlds and the Puruṣa is he that blows here (the wind), he bides (śete) in this stronghold (pur) hence he is the Puruṣa. And whatever food there is in these worlds that is its 'medha'; its food; and inasmuch as this is its 'medha', its food, therefore, (it is called) Puruṣamedha. And inasmuch as at this sacrifice the Puruṣas worthy of sacrifice are killed, therefore, it is called Puruṣamedha".

Here two etymologies are given out of which the second is important. This etymology suggests that the essential
feature of the Puruṣāmedha sacrifice is the seizing of the Puruṣas worthy for sacrifice (medhyān puruṣān ālabhate). It is seen that the tendency to not actually to kill the puruṣas, but to treat them as animals in the sacrifice symbolically and then to release them is reflected in the Brahmaṇas. But still the etymology shows that the essence of Puruṣāmedha was in the sacrificing of the Puruṣas.

References to the human sacrifices in the Brahmaṇa-texts:

In the Agnicayana (fire building ceremony) the heads of animals are to be put (ŚB VII.5.2.1). Among these animals Puruṣa is killed first for the Puruṣa is the first of all the animals. (ŚB VI.2.1.18). Āśvameṣṭi tells us that Prajāpati saw the five animals, the Puruṣa, the Horse, the Bull, the Ram, and the He-goat, as the forms of the Agni.

There seems a lot of hesitation about the use of animal heads and this is particularly due to the inclusion of Puruṣa in the list. Thus ŚB VI.2.1.37 we read that some put (in the ancient period) (all) the animal heads. But they then became mortal creatures. For Aśvameṣṭi Sauṣramateya these animal-heads were put but he then died quickly. Some make the golden heads saying that they are immortal bricks. But they are false bricks according to the ŚB. Again some make earthen heads. ŚB rejects this practice also and prescribes that the same five animals are to be used as far as possible. Prajāpati
was the first to offer them. Śyāparṇa Sayakāyana was the last. In the interval the people used to slaughter them but now only two are slaughtered - one for Prajāpati and one for Vāyu.

Here it will be seen how ŚB is hesitating. It wants to prescribe all the animals but it has also to mention that this practice is not prevailing now and has stopped with Śyāparṇa Sayakāyana. It will also be seen how some performers substitute the animal-heads by golden heads and some others by earthen heads, and how they are opposed. The third practice more prevailing is to slaughter only two animals. Now killing the human beings in the course of building is found in Roman, German and Slavish customs and its function is to strengthen the buildings. It is possible that once this practice was actually followed in the course of fire-building also but the Brāhmaṇa texts are trying to make it symbolical.

A mythological reference to human-sacrifice is found in the following story (ŚB I.1.4.14ff). Manu had a bull. A voice which could kill the Asuras entered in it and its

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roaring then killed the Asuras. Kilāta and Ākuli, the priests of the Asuras, they went to Manu and made him sacrifice with that bull. When the bull was killed, the voice went from him and entered Manāvi, the wife of Manu. When the Asuras and Rākṣasas heard her speak, they became crushed. Kilāta and Ākuli made Manu sacrifice with Manāvi. When she was killed, the voice went from her and entered into the sacrifice itself, into the sacrificial vessels and the Asura priests were unable to remove it from there. In this story Manāvi, wife of Manu, is said to have been sacrificed with and this also perhaps shows the ancient practice of human sacrifice.

In the Āśvamedha sacrifice there is an offering to Jumbaka at the time of the Avabhṛtha-bath. This offering is offered on the head of a white-spotted bald-headed man with protruding teeth and reddish brown eyes (ŚB XIII.3.6.5). In this connection Weber has rightly remarked that the offering has significance only if the man is drowned.10 This man represents Varuṇa and the offering is meant for redeeming oneself from Varuṇa. Although the texts available to us do not describe this offering as a killing of man, this Jumbaka

offering seems to indirectly represent itself as a remnant of an ancient Puruṣamedha. The Brāhmaṇa-texts seem to have tried to remove the element of killing of man in it.

At AB VII.13ff we read the story of Śunaḥsepa who was to be sacrificed to Varuṇa, but was released due to the favour of the deity Uṣas. This story also shows the view of the Brāhmaṇa-texts towards human sacrifice. Human sacrifice was not altogether unknown to the Brāhmaṇa-texts. But the Brāhmaṇa-texts also refer to the Puruṣas being set free and thereby appear to support the symbolical nature of human sacrifice.

The Sarvamedha includes Puruṣamedha and it is performed on the sixth day (ŚB XIII.7.1.8). This Puruṣamedha (part of the Sarvamedha) is to be done like the Puruṣamedha discussed above and, therefore, is symbolical in nature.

**Tendency to avoid killing of the man**:

While describing the vicissitudes of the animal-sacrifice we have already noted that once Puruṣa was the first victim but a tendency came there to avoid Puruṣa being offered in the sacrifice. The tendency of avoiding slaughter of man is also seen in ŚB XIII.6.2.12-13. "When Nārāyaṇa was sacrificing, at the time of the slaugthering 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 Puruṣa set free the human victims". This passage is very important; for, it clearly reflects the tendency to avoid the slaughter of man and also gives the reason for it. Due to this tendency possibly the human sacrifice must have become symbolical as the Brāhmaṇa-texts seem to indicate.

Views of modern scholars:

Modern scholars do not agree upon the problem of the Puruṣamedha, viz., whether the man was ever actually killed or not and whether Puruṣamedha is ancient or is introduced in the ritualism only at a later period and artificially. According to Wilson¹¹ Puruṣamedha was factual. He has taken support of the Śunaḥsepa story. Max Müller¹² is also of the same opinion. Colbrook,¹³ however, says that Puruṣamedha was not a real performance. It was only allegorical. Oldenberg¹⁴

¹¹ Wilson, JRAS, 13, 1852, "On human sacrifice in the ancient religions life of India" p. 96ff.
¹² Max Müller, KASL, p. 361.
¹³ Colbrook, Miscellaneous Essays, I. p.61f.
says that the Puruṣamedha is a product of fantasy and is based upon the Asvamedha. Keith follows Oldenberg and says that the Puruṣamedha is a mere priestly imagination, "unless as is possible the conceptions of the priest were occasionally made real by a king". He further supports himself by pointing out the fact that the Brāhmaṇas do not give the description of actual slaying of man. Elsewhere he has said that the ritual of the Puruṣamedha is a mere priestly invention to fill up the apparent gap in the sacrificial system which provides no place for man. As regards the use of the human head in the fire-building (Agnicayana) he agrees that there we have the record of a very widely spread usage of slaying a human being to act as the guardian of the foundations of a building, a custom which is world-wide and has often been exemplified in India. Winternitz also agrees with Oldenberg and maintains that the Puruṣamedha probably existed only as part of sacrificial mysticism and theory and occurred very hardly in reality. Weber saw various traces of killing of

15 Keith, RFV, p. 347.
17 Keith, VBYT, p. CXXXIX. For this point cf. e.g. Frazer Golden Bough, p. 192.
a man in the vedic ritual and studied the story of Śunaḥśepa the Jumbaka-offering offered on the head of a Varuṇa-representing man in the water etc. and tried to show that the killing of man was once done. But when the practice became generally recognised that the sacrificer and the priests should eat a portion of the offered victim, it must have tended to make human sacrifice impracticable. Eggeling agrees with this explanation. According to Hillebrandt the Puruṣamedha is a remnant of the barbaric old times.

**Conclusion of the Puruṣamedha studies:**

As far as the Brāhmaṇa-texts are concerned we think that the views of Weber can be accepted. The Brāhmaṇa-texts know the rites in which man was (or was to be) killed; but the Brāhmaṇa-texts themselves do not prescribed the actual killing of human victims. They want to avoid it. Therefore,

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they have described the human sacrifice to be performed symbolically. The Brāhmaṇa-texts are not indulged with giving place to man newly or filling the gap in the list of animals for the sacrifice as some scholars say; on the contrary they are interested in avoiding human killing or in making it symbolical. This is a sign of changing mentality. The Brāhmaṇa-texts represent sometimes some sophisticated mentality which will not appreciate human slaughter. The origin of Ahimsā is thus seen here remotely and a stem from ritualism to spiritualism is also observed.

Conclusions of the studies on the vicissitudes of the sacrifice:

The sacrifice was being developed and was growing at the time of the Brāhmaṇa-texts. The Brāhmaṇa-texts know certain vicissitudes of the sacrifice. The sacrifice expanded to a very large extent. But sometimes it “ran away” and at those times some ritual details were added. Sometimes unbelief came or some difficulties arose; but through some device the continuity of the sacrifice was re-obtained. The animal sacrifice has undergone special vicissitudes. Some time in the past the Puruṣa also was offered. But the Brāhmaṇa-texts have tried to stop the practice of killing man and made the Puruṣamedha almost symbolical. In the vicissitudes of
animal sacrifice the cake-offering which mystically symbolizes the animal-offering is an important stage. It shows the origin of the principle of Ahimsa and the beginning of spiritualism in the ritualism.

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23 For the vegetable sacrifices substituting the animal-sacrifices see Hubert, MANN, "Sacri", p. 41, n.1.