CHAPTER IV
DISCUSSIONS IN THE BRĀHMAṆA-TEXTS

Introduction:

In the Brāhmaṇa-texts we find that the sacrifice is being developed. It is growing in various ways; but as the sphere of the ritual is a very extensive one, it is possible that some differences of opinions about some points in the ritual may arise. In the Brāhmaṇa-texts we do not find ritual which is fixed hard and fast; on the contrary the differences of opinion noticed in them show the freedom of thinking. The Brāhmaṇa-texts try to take into consideration these differences of opinion. They not only mention the right view which is to be followed, but they also note the argumentations and reasoning for the views which are not to be followed showing ultimately why they are not to be followed. There are certain discussions which are of the nature of questions and answers and these discussions are merely informative. As the Brāhmaṇa-texts are rightly called "Prescientific Science" we do not get here "scientific" discussions in our sense. But still they pose to be scientific; the "science", however, is peculiar to the Brāhmaṇa-texts. A study of these discussions will be useful for understanding the "sacrifice in the Brāhmaṇa-texts".
Differences of opinions

Scope of the differences of opinions:

Differences of opinions give rise to discussions. These differences have a very wide scope. They pertain matters ranging from minor details to the complete form of a sacrifice. Thus, for example, there is a difference of opinion about the material of the spade. Some make it of bamboo-wood and some suggest that it should be made of gold (ŚB VI 3.1.41-42). As an example of other extreme we may mention the various ways of performance of the Aśvamedha sacrifice mentioned by ŚB XIII. 5.4.1ff. Thus the scope of differences is very wide and it is very essential to classify these differences under different headings so that we can get a general idea about them.

a) recitation of the Mantras etc.:

There are some differences of opinions which are connected with the recitation of the Mantras. Thus in the eighth sāmidhenī verse some utter hotā yo visvavedasah instead of hotaram visvavedasam (ŚB I.4.1.35). Sometimes the difference is about the metre of the verses to be used. Thus there is a difference of opinion about the metres of the vajyā and puronuvākyā of the Darśapūrṇamāsa sacrifices. Some have prescribed Triṣṭibh and some others Anuṣṭubh. Bhāllaveya made
the anuvākya of Anuṣṭubh metre and vājya of Triṣṭubh metre. The Brāhmaṇa-text prescribes either of the two metres for both the vājya and puronuvākya (ŚB I.7.3.17-19). There is a difference of opinion about the "seer" whose verses are to be used. Thus the Āprī-versed for the animal-sacrifice in the Āsvamedha are according to some of the seeer named Vāmadeva; but according to the Brāhmaṇa-texts they must be of the seeer named Jamadagni (ŚB XIII.2.2.14). In a sacrifice of three days there is a difference of opinion whether the Retasya verse is to be sung with or without the Himkāra. According to some it is to be sung without Himkāra. But according to Śātyayani (whose opinion is acceptable to the JB) it is to be sung without the Himkāra only on the first day; and on the other two days it is to be sung with Himkāra (JB I.315). Some were of the opinion that the Prāтарānuvāka should be recited according to the metre. Others held that it is to be recited by feet. Still others opined that it is to be recited by half-verses. AB II.18 accepts the third view. In the Dvādasāṣha about the making of Nyūṅkha, there was a difference of opinions. According to some it was to be made with the first four syllables, according to Lāṅgalāyana Maudgala with one syllable and according to AB with two syllables (AB V.3).
b) interpretation of the Mantras:

The difference of opinion sometimes pertained to the interpretation of the Mantras. Thus the mystic significance of the Mantras which are to be used in placing the Pañcacañḍēstakā as understood by Māhīthī is different from what is understood by the author of the ŚB. For instance in the verse Ayām daksīṇa visvakarma etc. (Ś 15.18) the words Menakā Sahajanyā occur. Māhīthī understands here, the quarter and subquarter to be meant by these words as Apsarasas. The author of the ŚB, however, understands here, Heaven and Earth to be the Apsarasas meant by them (ŚB VIII 6.1.17). Such differences of interpretation are seen in the following verses also (ŚB VIII. 6.1.18-20).

c) number, measure, etc.:

Sometimes the differences are connected with the number, measure, etc. Thus the number of lotuses out of which a garland is prepared after the Avabhṛtha in the Rājasūya, varies between twelve and three according to different authorities. Jī, however, after mentioning the opinions of others prescribes twelve as its approved number (JĪ II200). The number of fire-pans is according to some three, so that if one or two fire-pans are broken another can be used. But the author of the ŚB prescribes only one fire-pan (ŚB VI.5.2.22). Similarly the number of nipples (stanas)
made to the fire-pan is according to some eight and according to others two; but the ŚB is of the opinion that it should be four (ŚB VI.5.2.18-19). The number of verses to be recited in Prātaranuvāka is either hundred, or three-hundred and sixty, or seven-hundred and twenty, or eight-hundred, or one thousand, according to the different desired objects. But the AB says down here the number 'unlimited'(AB II.17). There are differences of opinion about the measure also. Thus there are various opinions about the length of the sacrificial post (yūpa) to be cut. According to different authorities it is five, six, nine, or even eleven cubits etc.; but the measure acceptable to the ŚB is 'unlimited' (ŚB III.6.4.17-20).

d) timings:

Differences are found in the Brāhmaṇa-texts about the timings of the rites. There is a lot of discussion about the timings of the establishment of fires. Thus Kṛttikā, Fūrve Phalgunyau, Citrā and similar nakṣatras are prescribed for various purposes and for various sacrificers. Again, various seasons are prescribed for sacrificers of various castes; but in the end, it is stated that one may establish fires at any time when one intends to sacrifice (TB I.1.2.1-8; cp.ŚB II.1.2.1-3.9). The Atigrāhya-cups are drawn from Pūtabhṛt at the midday pressing after drawing the Āgrayaṇa,
but some say that these cups are to be drawn after the Ukthya-cups are drawn. This view of others is, however, to be rejected (ŚB IV.5.4.6-7). About the animal-sacrifice in the Agnicayana also there is a difference of opinion. According to some, this animal-sacrifice takes place on the new-moon-day but the ŚB lays it down to be performed on the full-moon-day. (ŚB VI 2.2.16-17). According to some, the Mahāvrata-ceremony is to be performed in the middle of the year. But according to TMB and JB this view is not to be followed and the ceremony is to be performed at the end of the year (TMB IV.10.3f; JB II.410). According to some the consecration-ceremony for the Gavāmayana-session is to be done on the Ekāṣṭakā (i.e. the eighth day after the full-moon-day of the month of Māgha). According to some others this consecration-ceremony is to be done in the month of Phālguna. But both these views are rejected by TMB according to which it is to be performed on the fourth-day before the full-moon-day of the month of Caitra (TMB V. 9.1ff).

e) how many times:

Some differences of opinions concern the problem of how many times a particular action is to be done. The Āhyagrāhaṇa in the Darśapūrṇamaṣa sacrifice is such a case. Some prescribe that one should put butter (ājya) with the
srũva into the juhu three times; thrice into the Upabhṛt and thrice into the Dhruva. But the Brāhmaṇa-text prescribes that the butter (aīva) should be put in all these three laddles only once each (ŚB I.3.2.18). Priyamedha Bharadvājas were learned in the field of ritual; but there was a difference of opinion among them about the Agnihotra. One of them offered the Agnihotra once a day, the second twice a day, and the third thrice a day. The GB, however, prescribes after mentioning this, that one should offer the Agnihotra twice a day (GB. I.3.15).

f) Order:

Sometimes the order of actions to be done has given rise to a difference of opinion. "Some say," Him, Soma, for whom that strengthening (āpyāyana)(meal), the guest-offering (ātithya) is prepared, they ought first to strengthen, and then (ought to perform the Avāntaradīkṣa) and thereupon the Tānūnaptra." But let him not do this. For such indeed was the course of the sacrificial performance; discord arose among them (the Gods), thereat they attained to their former tranquillity; then the Avāntaradīkṣa and finally the strengthening" (ŚB III.4.3.12). Thus the order of Tānūnaptra, Avāntaradīkṣa and Āpyāyana is told. There was a difference of opinions regarding the order in which the sounding holes (uparava) were to be dug. Some say,
"Let him dig first the left one of the two behind, then the right one of the two behind; then the right one of the two in the front; and finally the left one of the two in the front". But the SB does not accept this order. According to it the order to be accepted is as follows: (a) right one in the front (b) left one behind (c) right one behind and (d) left one in the front. Thus the left one in the front should be dug last (SB III.5.4.6-7).

g) Fires in which offerings are made etc. :

Opinions also differ about the fires in which the offerings are to be made or the place of performance of any action. About the Agnihotra some say that it is to be offered in the Āhvanīya fire; but this view is rejected and it is said that the Agnihotra is to be offered in all the fires and thus four offerings are to be made in the Gārhapatya, four in the Anvāhārya and two in the Āhavanīya (KB II.3).

According to some, Prakrama-offerings are to be made (in the Āsvamedha-sacrifice) either in the southern fire or on the foot-print of the horse. But the SB prefers them to be offered in the Āhvanīya fire (SB XIII.4.3.4; cf. the commentary of Harisvāmin on this).¹ According to some the sour-milk

¹ cf. also Eggeling, SEE, Vol. XLIV, p.363 n.3
(in connection with the Dadhigraha) is to be put in the centre of the Aditya-cup. But the prescribed way is to put it in the back part of the Aditya-cup (SB IV.3.5.13).

h) Origin of the sacrifice:

There is difference of opinions about even the origin of the sacrifices. Thus the origin of the sacrifices named Satrajit and Pratnajit is according to some from Gods. Gods desiring to get victory saw these sacrifices according to them. But according to some it was Prajapati who saw these sacrifices (JB II.91).

i) Sacrificer:

Variety of opinions was held about the sacrificer also. The JB discusses the various opinions about who should sacrifice with the sacrifices named Udhhid and Balabhid. Some say that one who is desirous of getting the brahman-lust should perform them, while according to others one who is desirous of life should perform them. According to some these sacrifices are for one who is desirous of heaven and according to others they are for one who is desirous of cattle. The JB, however, is of the opinion that they are for one who is desirous of offspring (JB II.89). About the sacrifice named Viratsvarajau also there is a difference of opinion. Some say that this sacrifice is only for one
who is already rich and not for one who is aspiring to get richness; but some others say that this sacrifice is for both i.e. for him who is already rich and for him who is aspiring to be rich (JB II.94). The KB indulges itself in the discussion about who is the Lord of the sacrifice in general. According to some it is the sacrificer who is the Lord of the sacrifice. But the KB denies it and says that the Lord of the sacrifice is the deity and not any human being (KB X.4).

j) Prāvascittis:

There are some differences of opinions about the prāyasćittis. Thus, for example, if the Agnihotra-cow lies down when she is being milked some make her get up with the words "udasthad devyaditih" etc. and perform an offering; but on this point Yājñavalkya says, "Let him make her get up by pushing her with a staff". According to these two viewpoints it is inauspicious if a cow lies down. But Āruṇi interprets this occasion differently. According to him the cow lies down because she cannot bear the glory and greatness of the sacrificer. The sacrificer should know thereby that he is going to be more glorious. Thus Āruṇi understands this occasion as a good omen and prescribes no prāyasćitti (expiation) (ŚB XII.4.1.9-12). If the Cārhapatya-fire goes out when the Āhavanīya-fire has not gone out, some take
new fire from that same Āhavanīya-hearth and carry it forwards. According to others another Gārhapatya fire is to be churned out; while some others extinguish the Āhavanīya and churn out another. But according to the ŚB these practices are not to be followed. ŚB, on the other hand declares: One should lift the two fires on the two churning sticks and betaking oneself northwards and having churned out the fire one should remain there offering. In the morning, having taken out the ashes and smeared (the fire-places) with cowdung, one should lift the two fires on the churning sticks and return to the offering-ground. Having then churned out the Gārhapatya, taken out the Āhavanīya and brought the Anvāhāryapacana (to the southern hearth) one should prepare a cake on eight potsherds to Agni Pathikṛt and offer it (ŚB XII.4.3.6ff).

k) The whole mode of performance:

We saw above differences of opinions about some details of the sacrifices; but sometimes we find that the whole mode of performance is different according to different authorities. Thus the Pancaśardīya-sacrifice is according to some, of the Pāncarātra nature. Others say that it is of Atirātra-nature. There were others who believed it to be of Agniṣṭoma-nature. The prescribed or current view is that it is of Uktha-saptadaśa nature (JB II,177). The Āgrayāṇa
offering made after the rice harvest or the barley harvest is different according to different practices. According to one practice a cake on twelve potsherds for Indra and Agni, a pap for Viśvedevas and a cake on eight potsherds for Sky and Earth are to be offered. But according to another way one can offer the oblation of Dārsapūrṇamāsa sacrifices with the new plants or one may offer in the morning and in the evening the Agnihotra with the barley gruel of the new plants. Or, having made the Agnihotracow to eat the new plants one should offer in the morning and in the evening the Agnihotra with the milk of that cow. Having mentioned these possibilities the KB says that though these ways are there, one should follow the established practice of three oblations (KB IV.14). The Rājasūya is according to some of the Ukthya type. But AB gives its decision that it should be a Jyotiṣṭoma of the Agniṣṭoma form (AB VIII.4). The normal form of the Aśvamedha is Catuṣṭoma-Agniṣṭoma as the first-day, Ekaṃśa-Ukthya as the second and Sarvastoma-Atirātra as the third (TMB XXI.4.1). But ŚB mentions some other forms of the Aśvamedha which were accepted by some ancient persons. Thus in the Aśvamedha performed for Ugrasena, the first two days were the same but the third was Jyotis Atirātra (ŚB XIII.4.1.3). In the Aśvamedha performed for Para Āṭhāra, the Kausalya King, there were the same first two days, but the third was an Abhijit-Atirātra (ŚB XIII.4.1.4) and so on.
1) **Performance itself:**

Still more important cases of the discussions are those where the way performance of a rite itself is challenged or it is said that a rite should not to be performed at all. Thus there are various opinions about the equipments (sambhāras) of the sacrifice. ŚB II.1.1.1-12 we find five equipments described. TB I.1.3.1-12 mentions seven earthen equipments and seven equipments from trees. But there were some according to whom one should equip with a single equipment. For all the equipments are on the earth and when one establishes the fire on this earth the earth, of itself obtains all these equipments and thus there is no necessity of equipments. But this view is, of course, rejected (ŚB II.1.1.14). There is a long discussion in the ŚB about whether to approach the fires (in the evening; in connection with the Agnihotra) or not. First the reason why one should approach the fires is given. In Agni the Gods deposited their all beasts, wild and domestic, thinking that Agni should protect them. Agni coveted them, and seizing them entered the night with them. Gods came there and when night returned in the evening they approached him and demanded the beasts. Agni gave them the beasts. For this reason in imitation of the Gods one should approach the fires. But there are others who challenge this and put forth their opinion, viz., one should not approach the fires.
This view is, however, rejected (ŚB II.3.4.1-8). There were some persons who challenged the performance of Vājapeya. "One must not offer Vājapeya; for one who offers the Vājapeya wins everything here — for he wins Prajāpāti and Prajāpāti is everything. He leaves nothing remaining here and then his children would be worse. The answer to this view, of course, is that one should perform the Vājapeya. The priests for the Vājapeya must be very proficient and then the sacrifice will be successful (ŚB V.1.1.9-10). Similarly some persons challenged the performance of the Sautrāmaṇi but the view is not accepted (ŚB XII.8.1.17).

Questions and Answers

We saw above how there were differences of opinions and discussions because of them. There are some other discussions which are of question and answer type. Instead of always putting forward a different opinion, there are some persons who ask questions and answers are given to them in those discussions.

a) Information about some details of the sacrifice:

Sometimes information about some details of the sacrifice is asked and answers are given. Thus it is asked whether Hotṛ should eat first the subdivided sacrificial food or should he partake of the Hotṛ's goblet first. The answer is,
he should first eat the subdivided sacrificial food and then he should partake of the Hotṛ’s goblet (AB II.30).
It is asked, "It is by the rc that the Hotṛ becomes Hotṛ; by the yajus that the Adhvaryu becomes Adhvaryu, by the saman that the Udgātṛ becomes Udgātṛ; by what does the Brahman becomes Brahman?" The answer to this question is that by means of the sap of brilliance which he developed from the three-fold vedic lore the Brahman becomes Brahman (KB VI.11). They ask, "Seeing that a Brāhmana, a Rajanya or a Vaiśya when about to consecrate himself ask a Kṣatriya for a place of sacrifice; whom is the Kṣatriya to ask?" The answer is that he should ask the divine lordly power. The divine lordly power is the Sun, who is the overlord of beings (AB VII.20). They ask "To what deity the butter portions belong?" The answer is, "To Prajāpati" (ŚB I.6.1.20).

The prāyaścittis (expiations) are generally introduced by means of questions and answers. Some ask, "What is the rite and what is the expiation if such and such thing happens?" And then by way of reply the expiation is mentioned. Thus, for example, they ask, "If a man’s Śāmnāyya milked in the evening becomes spoiled or some one carried it away, what is the expiation?" Then the answer given is that the morning milking is to be divided into two; and one half of it is to be
curdled and that is to be offered (AB VII.4). Thus the expiations mentioned in the AB, ŚB, JB etc. are detailed through question and answer method (AB VII.3ff; ŚB XII.4.1. 2ff; JB I.51ff).

b) (apparent) inconsistency:

There are some questions about the (apparent) inconsistency and answers are given to them which show the consistency. They ask why do they call the Subrahmaṇya priest a female though he is a male? The answer is that the Subrahmaṇya priest is identical with the speech (vāk) which is female (AB VI.3). They ask, "Seeing that the performers of a year's session become consecrated for a year, how does their Agnihotra come to be uninterrupted?" The answer is, "By the fast-milk". Thus goes on the discussion about the Dārsapūrṇamāṣa, about the offerings to the Fathers, about the offerings of the first fruits, about the animal-sacrifice, etc. and the answers are given to show how all such sacrifices are uninterrupted during the period of the consecration for the one year's session (ŚB XII.3.5.3-11).

c) mystic significance:

Some questions and answers are related with the mystic significance of some ritual details. They ask, "How does that sand (in connection with the fire-altar building) put on by
the days and nights become complete for him neither deficient
nor superabundant?" The answer given is - The days and
nights are endless and the sand is also endless. It is
thus that, put on by the days and nights, it becomes complete
for him, neither deficient nor superabundant (ŚB VII.3.1.39).
They ask, "If the Dvīyajus brick is that same sacrificer who
is that gold man, which is then the real form of him?"
The answer is that the gold man is his divine body and the
Dvīyajus brick is his human body. That gold man is his
immortal divine form because gold is immortal. The brick
is made of clay, therefore, it is his human form (ŚB VII.
4.2.17). They ask, "What is done here in the building of
the altar whereby the sacrificer conquers the recurring
death?" The answer is - He who builds an altar becomes
the deity Agni; and Agni is the immortal element (ŚB X.1.4.14).
In the following question and answer we get the mystical
significance of Ṣatarudriya by means of numerical specula-
tions. It is asked how the Ṣatarudrya attains to conformity
with the year and Agni. The answer is that the Ṣatarudrya
includes three hundred and sixty formulas and other thirty
and thirty-five. There are three hundred and sixty days
in a year. Thereby it obtains the days of a year. There
are thirty other formulas and there are thirty nights of
the month. As to the thirty-five formulas, they are the
thirteenth month. Agni's self - the body consists of thirty
limbs (viz., twenty fingers and toes, the upper and lower arms, the thighs and shanks and the hands), the feet of two, the breath of two (inbreathing and outbreathing) and the head is the thirty-fifth. So much is the year. In this way the Sataradriya attains to conformity with the year, Agni and corresponds with the year, Agni (ŚB IX.1.1.43).

Learning and teaching:

There are some discussions in the Brāhmaṇa-texts which are of learning and teaching nature. On the fire-altar after having laid down the Vikarṇī and Swayamāṭṛṇā bricks one scatters the golden bricks. Then the Anvāhārya is placed. As regards the golden chips, there was disputation between the teacher and student, viz., Śaṇḍilya and Saptarathavāhini. Saptarathavāhini said that these chips were the hair of Prajāpati and sacrificer. But Śaṇḍilya told him that it was his form; for, the form can be either with hair or without hair (ŚB I.1.4.10-11). Similarly Svādāyana taught and explained the significance of Darsāpūrṇāmāsa sacrifices to Uḍḍālaka Āruṇī. He explained to him how the growth of the creatures is in mystic connection with the Darsāpūrṇāmāsa-sacrifices (ŚB I.I.4.1.1-16). Thus he explains - " Inasmuch as the fore-offerings are without invitatory formulas, therefore, the creatures are born without teeth; and inasmuch as the chief oblations have invitatory formulas, therefore, they (the teeth) grow in
them and inasmuch as the after-offerings are without invitatory formulas, therefore, they (the teeth) decay in them; and inasmuch as the Patnīsāmyājas have invitatory formulas, therefore they (the teeth) come to remain permanently with them; and inasmuch as the Samiṣṭayajus is without invitatory formula, therefore, they all decay again in the last stage of life. And inasmuch as after uttering the invitatory formula he offers with the offering-formula, therefore, the lower (teeth) grow first, then the upper ones; and inasmuch as, after uttering a Gāyatrī verse as invitatory formula, he offers with a Trīṣṭubh verse therefore, the lower (teeth) are smaller, and the upper ones are broader; and inasmuch as he pours out the two libations of ghee in a forward direction, therefore, the incisors are longer; and inasmuch as the two sāmyājayas are in the same metre, therefore, the molars are of equal size. And inasmuch as he spreads a cover of sacrificial grass (on the vedī), therefore, creatures here are born with hair; and inasmuch as he for the second time, as it were, spreads the prastara-bunch, therefore, for the second time, as it were, the hair of the beard and the arm-pits, and other parts of the body grow; and inasmuch as at the first he only throws the prastara-bunch after (the oblations into the fire), therefore, it is on the head that one first becomes grey; and inasmuch as he then throws after it all
the sacrificial grass of the altar-ground therefore, in
the last stage of life, one again becomes grey all over.
And inasmuch as the fore-offerings have ghee for their
offering material, a boy's seed is not productive, but like
water; for ghee is like water; and inasmuch as, in the
middle of the sacrifice, they sacrifice with the sour curds,
and with the cake, therefore, it is productive, in his
middle stage of life; for thick-flowing, as it were, is
(that havis) and thick-flowing as it were is seed; and
inasmuch as the after-offerings have ghee for their offering-
material, it again is not productive in his last stage of
life, and is like water; for ghee, indeed, is like water"
(SB XI.4.1.12ff). Similarly, Varuṇa taught his son the
mystery of Agnihotra and explained the various scenes the
son had seen in the following way, "As to those men whom
thou sawest in the eastern region being dismembered by men
hewing off their limbs one by one and saying, 'this to thee,
this to me!' they were the trees; when one puts fire-wood
from trees on (the fire) one subdues the trees and conquers
the world of trees. And as to those men whom thou sawest
in the southern region being dismembered by men currying up
their limbs one by one and saying, 'this to thee, this to me',
they were the cattle; when one makes offering with milk one
subdues the cattle ... And as to those men whom thou sawest
in the western region who, whilst sitting still, were being
eaten by men sitting still, they were the *herbs; when one illumines (the Agnihotra milk) with a straw, one subdues the herbs ... And as to those men whom thou sawest in the northern region who whilst crying aloud, were being eaten by men crying aloud, they were the waters; when one pours water to (the Agnihotra milk) one subdues the water ... And as to those two women whom thou sawest one beautiful and one over-beautiful - the beautiful one is Śraddhā; when one offers the first libation (of the Agnihotra) one subdues Śraddhā and conquers Śraddha and the overbeautiful one is Āśraddhā; when one offers the second libation, one subdues Āśraddhā ... And as to the black man with yellow eyes who was standing between them with a staff in his hand, he was Krodha; when having poured water into the spoon, one pours (the libation into the fire) one subdues Krodha ... And verily whosoever, knowing this offers the Agnihotra, thereby conquers everything, subdues everything" (*SB XI 6.1.1ff; cp. *JB I.42ff).

Discussions leading to philosophical thought:

There are some discussions leading to philosophical thought also. Dhīra Ṣatapurṇeya went to Mahāśāla Jābāla. Jābāla asked him the nature of Agni he understood. Dhīra Ṣatapurṇeya described Agni as the speech, then the eye, then mind, then ear and then everything here. Finally Jābāla
explains to him Agni as the breath (prāna) (ŚB 1.3.3.1-5). Some ask, "Is the Death one or many?" The answer to this question is that he is both one and many. For, inasmuch as he is that (man in the Sun) in yonder world, he is and and inasmuch as he is numerous distributed among the living beings, there are also many of them (deaths). Similarly they ask, "Is the death near or far away?" The answer is "Both - near and far away". For, inasmuch as he is here on earth in the body, he is near, and inasmuch as he is that one in yonder world, he is also far away (ŚB 1.5.2.16-17). Janaka Videha performed a sacrifice and gave many dakṣiṇas to the priests. Setting apart one thousand cows, he said that only the one who is learned in sacred writ should take them. Yājñavalkya took them. Others raised objections against him and Śakalya as one of those opponents began to ask Yājñavalkya some questions about the number of Gods. Yājñavalkya in reply to successive questions gave the number of Gods three hundred and three, and three thousand and three, thirty-three; the two, one and half, and finally one. When he was asked to narrate in details, he explained that there were thirty-three Gods, and three hundred and three and three thousand were there powers. The thirty three gods are the eight Vasus, eleven Rudras and twelve Ādityas along with Indra and
Prajāpati. Vasus are Agni, the earth, Vāyu, the Air, the Sun, Heaven, the moon and the stars. The Rudras are the ten vital airs and the self. The Ādityas are the twelve months. Indra is thunder and Prajāpati the sacrifice. Thus these are the thirty-three Gods. As regards the three Gods, they are the three worlds for therein the Gods are contained. The two Gods are food and breath. The one and a half God mean Vāyu. The one God is the breath. At this stage Yajñavalkya told Śakalya that he (Śakalya) had gone asking beyond the deity, he would die soon and even his bones would not reach his home; and this came true in the case of Śakalya (ŚB XI.6.3.1-11).

**Reasonings and counterreasonings in the discussions:**

It may be interesting to take note of the reasonings and the counterreasonings that are said to have taken place in the discussions in the course of discussions.

\(\text{a)}\) **Reasonings** - likely danger pointed out:

The advocates of a particular view some times point out the likely danger if a particular action in the sacrifice is done according to the view of others; or they show that something which is not wanted may be done if the action is done according to the view of others. Thus, for example, the reason why one should not eat flesh of the sacrificial
victim is that as the sacrificer is identical with the victim itself, if the sacrificer eats the flesh of the victim he would eat his own flesh (KB X.3). In the Āgrayaṇa-offering the pap for Visvedevas is to be prepared according to some from old grain. For, Indra and Agni (to whom a cake on twelve potsherds is prepared in the Āgrayaṇa) are the ksatra. The Visvedevas are the visāh. He should use, therefore, old grain for the Visvedevas, lest the sacrificer should exalt the visāh to the level of the Kṣatra and this is not desirable (ŚB II.4.3.7).

b) some result will be achieved:

Some reasonings show that if a particular way of performance is accepted, some good result may be obtained. Those who give their opinions about the recitation of the Prātaranuvāka by feet, argue that cattle have four feet and when one recites the Prātaranuvāka by feet, one gets cattle (AB II.18). Some argue that the sacrifice named Rājasūya performed by a Kṣatriya should be Ukthya which has fifteen stotras and śastras. The Pañcadasa stotra is might, lordly power, etc. and the Rājanya is also might, lordly power, etc. Thus the Rājanya is made to prosper. Again, it has thirty stotras and śastras and Virāj has thirty syllables. Virāj is food and food is obtained thereby. Therefore, the Rājasūya should be a fifteenfold Ukthya (AB VIII.4)
c) "year-gaining" ideology:

Sometimes the argument is based on the "year-gaining" ideology. Thus if a particular action is done in a particular manner the performer gains the 'year' which is very much desired. Thus the number of verses in the Prātaranuvāka varies because of the year-gaining ideologies. Everybody prescribes a particular number which is shown by him to be connected with the year. Thus according to some the number of verses should be three hundred and sixty. For the number of the days of a year is three-hundred and sixty. According to some others the number should be seven hundred and twenty. For there are seven hundred and twenty, days and nights together (AB II.18).

d) imitation of Gods:

The theologins sometimes support their view by saying that their view is based upon the imitation of Gods. They say that the sacrificial dishes are to be cooked on the Āhavanīya fire, for Gods did the same and ascended to the heaven (ŚB I.7.3.26) and in order to imitate the way of Gods one should cook the sacrificial dishes on the Āhavanīya.

Counter-reasonings:

The opinions which are acceptable to the Brāhmaṇa-texts are also accompanied by reasonings. Those who hold
some particular views, refute the opinions of others and try to support their views by giving counter-reasonings.

a) **likely danger pointed out**:

The counter-reasonings point out the likely danger if the views of others are accepted. Thus the words to be uttered at the time of touching the calves when they meet their mothers are वयायाह स्था (VS I.1). Some add here उपयायाह स्था. The ŚB says that this is not to be done. For, thereby another (an enemy) approaches the sacrificer (ŚB I.7.1.3).

b) **danger said to be likely can be removed etc.**:

Some counter reasonings have occasionally been advanced to prove how the danger or something unwanted said to be likely by the other theologians can be averted. Thus some argue that there should not be षोदशि-stotra in the Ukthya-sacrifice. For Ukthas are identical with the cattle and षोदशि is identical with the thunderbolt; and the thunderbolt would fall on the cattle if षोदशि-stotra is used. But the JB says that this danger can be averted by using water which is of pacificatory nature (JB I.202). The opponents say in connection with the animal-sacrifice that occurs in the Agnicayana that there should be neither the samiṣṭayajus nor the avabhṛtha-bath. For, this is the
commencement of Agni. The samiṣṭayajus are a gracious dismissal of the deities and the avabhrṛtha-bath is the completion (of the sacrifice). If the samiṣṭayajus and avabhrṛtha are performed, there will be completion at the very commencement. The danger of untimely completion put forward by the opponents is accepted by ŚB but still it says that one should nevertheless complete the sacrifice thereby. A story is given then. Prajāpati, having offered that animal, saw that he had not reached the end of him, Agni. Therefore, the sacrifice is to be completed. Again, that animal-sacrifice is his vital air and if anything were to cut him off from that, it would cut him off from the vital air; and if anything were to cut him off from the vital air, he would die. Therefore, in order to avoid this one should rather complete the sacrifice by performing samiṣṭayajus and avabhrṛtha (ŚB VI.2.2.38).

c) possibility of good result:

The counter reasonings sometimes mention the possibility of gaining good result if the way supported by them is accepted. The opponents say that the Devikā-havīṃśi in connection with the Agnicayana should not be offered. For if they are offered, then something excessive (which is not required) would be done. The answer to this is that these offerings are to be made for fulfilment of special wishes and,
therefore, they are to be offered and then those wishes will be fulfilled (ŚB IX.5.1.40).

d) possibility of 'year-gaining':

The year-gaining ideology is useful also in the counter-reasonings. Some say that the Rājasūya should be of Ukthya type. Rejecting this the AB puts forth the view that the Rājasūya should be of Jyotiṣṭoma-Agniṣṭoma nature. The reasoning to prove this is based upon the year-ideology. The Jyotiṣṭoma-Agniṣṭoma has twenty-four stotras and śastras; the year has twenty-four half months. In the year is all proper food. Therefore, it should be Jyotiṣṭoma-Agniṣṭoma nature. (AB VIII.4). The savānīya victims in connection with the Āśvamedha are according to some, twentyone in number and for Agni alone. But the view is not to be accepted. According to the ŚB there are twentyfour victims for twelve deities. The reason for the number twelve months is that there are twelve months in a year and the year is everything. The Āśvamedha is also everything. Then everything is obtained. (ŚB XIII.5.3.11).

e) imitation of Gods:

In the counter-reasonings also, the force of imitation of Gods is used. The offering of a he-goat to Prajāpati is a part of the animal-sacrifices in connection with the Agnicayana.
Some say that it is to be slaughtered on new-moon-day. For Prajāpati is yonder moon, during that night of the new-moon, he dwells upon here (on the earth) and it would be just as if he slaughtered him while staying near. To this argument answer is given that this offering should nevertheless, take place on full-moon. The reasoning for this is that the victim is the yonder moon and him the Gods made slaughtering at full-moon. In imitation of that the victim is to be killed on full-moon day (ŚB VI.2.16-17).

f) practical consideration:

Sometimes a view of the opponents is rejected and another is established on the basis of mere practical consideration. The sacrificer who has been consecrated, breaks silence, according to some, after seeing the first star in the evening. That is a sign by means of which one becomes sure that the Sun has set. But this view is not to be followed. For, what can be done when the sky is cloudy? Therefore, he should break silence as soon as he thinks that the Sun has set (ŚB III.2.2.5). The Prayujām havīṃsi, twelve in number, are to be performed, according to some, month by month. The objection is, "Who knows about the (life of) man?" i.e. there cannot be certainty about the life of a man, that he will live so long. Therefore, these offerings are to be made together (ŚB V.5.2.2). There is a difference of opinion about
the mounting of the altar. Some mount it from the front (east) towards back or from the back towards the east. But this is not to be done. For that Agni (the fire-altar) is an animal and if he mounts an animal from the front towards the back, it strikes him with its horns; and if he mounts it from the back towards the front it strikes with its feet. Let him mount it only by the middle body. For the animal which people mount by the middle body, carries them forwards and does not hurt them (ŚB VII.3.2.17).

g) quoting authority:

In order to maintain a particular view the Brāhmaṇa-text sometimes quotes authority for which it has some regard. Some persons raise objection on the Ājya Śastra. They say, "As is the stotra, so is the śastra. The śamasingers sing two verses for Soma, the purifying. The Hotṛ recites the Ājya to Agni; how, then does he follow in recitation the verses to Soma, the purifying?" The answer to this objection is that Soma, the purifier is Agni, as it is declared by a Seer of RV "Agniḥ ṛṣiḥ pavamānah ...(Agni, the Seer, the purifying)" (RV IX.66.20) (AB II.37). Thus here an ancient authority from the Ṛgveda is quoted in order to prove the opinion.

h) verses quoted:

Sometimes verses are quoted in support of what one wants
to say. In order to support the view that the Agnihotra should be offered after the sunrise verses are quoted. Thus the discussion goes on as follows - "Day and night are the wheels of the year; verily thus with them he goes through the year. If he offers before sunrise, that is as if one were to go with (a chariot with) a single wheel. But if he offers after sunrise, that is as if one were swiftly to perform a journey with (a chariot with) wheels on both sides. As to this the sacrificial verse (vajñagatha) is recited - -

'This goeth yoked with Bṛhad and Rathantara,  
All that hath been and is to be;  
With them should be go who is wise taking the fires  
By day should he offer one, by night another'.

The night is connected with the Rathantara, the day with the Bṛhat; Agni is the Rathantara, Āditya the Bṛhat. Those deities make him attain the vault of the tawny one, the world of heaven, who knowing thus offers after sunrise. Therefore, should one offer after sunrise. As to this, the sacrificial verse is recited -

'As one may go with a single horse,  
Having nothing else for harnessing,  
So many men go,  
Who offer the Agnihotra before sunrise' (AB V.30).
1) stories told:

Stories are told sometimes, in order to prove one's point. In order to maintain that one should establish fires on such and such asterisms stories are told. Thus, for example, it is said that one should establish fires on Rohini. For it was on Rohini that Prajapati, desirous of progeny, set up fires and obtained progeny. Similarly one who establishes fires on Rohini would get progeny (SB II.1.2.6). For, establishing fires on Citra asterism also a story has been told. Gods and Asuras both were desiring to rise to the heaven. The Asuras constructed the fire-altar called Rauhina. Indra, under the disguise of a Brahma came there with a brick, pretending to help them put his brick there. When the fire-altar was almost completed, Indra pulled out his brick with the result that the whole construction toppled down and the Asuras were ruined. The Gods expressed their wonder on this by the word "Citram". This is the wonderful nature of Citra brick. One who establishes fires on this constellation kills his enemy (SB II.1.2.13-17).

j) calling others' opinion "mimamsa":

In some discussions we find that the opponents have an opinion about a rite; but that view is mere speculation (mimamsa)^2

^2 On Mimamsa see Oldenberg, Weltanschauung, p.224 and n.2 on that page; Keith, RV, p.483.
The rite is not performed according to it at all. So the Brāhmaṇa-texts point out that the opponent's view is not followed by anybody. It is merely something like a view for view's sake. There were some thinkers according to whom one should press five times at each turn for one who is desirous of cattle. For the cattle consists of five parts. The fact however, is that this is a mere speculation (mīmāṃsa). The manner in which the performance is done has been mentioned earlier i.e. eight times, then eleven times and then twelve times (ŚB IV.1.1.16). ŚB IV.5.3.8 allows first that one may draw the Śoḍasīn-cup at the midday pressing after drawing the Āgrayāṇa-cup. But then it says that this is a mere speculation. Let one draw it at the morning pressing (ŚB IV.5.3.8).

Conclusions of the discussions:

a) other practices rejected totally:

Sometimes we find that the practices mentioned by the others and which are not acceptable to the Brāhmaṇa-text which mention them are rejected totally. The ways of rejecting\(^3\) are simple. The AB uses the phrase "tat tan nādṛtyam" (e.g. AB II.3; II.26 etc.) i.e. "that is not to be regarded". The same text also uses another phrase "tat

\(^3\) cf. Lévi, La doctrine du sacrifice, p.140.
tathā na kuryāt" (e.g. AB VI.21; VIII.26 etc.) i.e. "One should not do it in that manner". AB rejects the view that in the pot in which one throws the introductory offering (prāvanīya) into that one should throw the concluding offering (udayaniya) so that they prosper in the yonder world. This view is rejected with the words "avidyayaiva tadāhuh" i.e. "they say this through ignorance" (AB I.11). The usual phrase of the ŚB for rejecting the views of others is "tad u tathā na kuryāt" (e.g. ŚB I.1.1.7-10; 9.2.2 etc.) i.e. "that should not, indeed, be done in that manner".

b) option prescribed:

Sometimes in the cases of difference of opinion, option is prescribed as the conclusion of the discussion. It is said that the sacrificer or performer should do as he may like to do. As regards the measure of the sacrificial cake (puroṣadāśa) some say that it should not be too broad. Some say that it should be as broad as a hoof of horse. The conclusion of this discussion is that the size may be decided by the performer himself (ŚB I.2.2.9-10). In the building of the sepulchral mound, in the case of one who has not built a fire-altar, there is a difference of opinion. Some say that pebbles should be used instead of bricks. Some do not accept this. In such a position there is option given by the Brāhmaṇa-text; and one may do as he thinks (ŚB XIII.8. 4.11). Some say that the altar for the Darśa-pūrṇamāsa
sacrifices should measure three cubits long on the eastern line. But the ŚB says that there is no fixed measure. Let him take it as long as he thinks fit in his own mind (ŚB I. 2.5.14).

c) views of others accepted:

Sometimes a Brāhmaṇa-text agrees with the opinions of others and accepts them. Concerning the Stotriya oblations, the ŚB first states that there should be one thousand of them. But it mentions the opinion of others according to whom if one offers a limited, specific number of offerings, one will get a limited result. In order to obtain something unlimited, one should offer unspecified oblations. This view of others is accepted (ŚB XIII.8.4.11). Some say that one should offer to both Agni and Sūrya in the morning and in the evening. When there are two guests in the house one has to honour both. Therefore, the formulas of offering are- "Agnir jyotirjyotih sūryah svāhā" - in the evening and "Sūryo jyotirjyotir agnih svāhā" in the morning. Thus both the Gods are honoured (TB II.1.2.9-10).

d) compromise:

Sometimes the discussions end in compromise. In connection with the Dārśapūrṇamāsā sacrifices Āsādha Sāvayasa proposed that while observing the rules of the sacrifice one should not eat anything. For the Gods are residing in his
house and it would be unbecoming if he were to take food before them. So he should observe a complete fast. To this rigid view Yājñavalkya suggests compromise. Yājñavalkya argues that if nothing is eaten then the sacrificer becomes a sacrificer to the manes; and if anything is eaten it would be eaten before the Gods which is not proper. So there should be some golden mean. He should eat what will be counted as non-eaten. That is of which no offering is made, even though it is eaten, it is considered as not eaten (ŚB I.1.1.7-10). About the lute playing and singing in the Aśvamedha sacrifice there are some ritualists according to whom both the singers should be Bṛāhmaṇas. In this case there is a likely danger, viz., the political power would go away from him. If both are Rājanyas, then the spiritual power would go away. Therefore, there is a compromise. One of them should be a Bṛāhmaṇa and the other should be a Rājanya (ŚB XIII.1.5.1 ff).

Who are the opponents:

There can be a curiosity as to whom the views quoted in the Bṛāhmaṇa-texts, belong. They are not always specifically mentioned. The reference to the opponents is many times totally indirect and the views of them are introduced with the words "tad ānuḥ (so (they) say)". It is for us to suppose that these are some thinkers on ritual who belong to some other school
or they are students who are either disputing with or inquiring to their teachers (SB I.1.4.10-11). Sometimes the other views are ascribed to Brahmacādinaḥ (theologians)⁴. Sometimes the opponents are ridiculously called 'kusāla manyamanāh' (e.g. SB XI.4.2.1; 4; 13 etc.) "supposing themselves to be clever".

Some views are ascribed to some individual ritual thinkers. There were many such ritual thinkers e.g. Rājñavalkya (e.g. SB III.1.2.21), Kauṣītaki (e.g. KB II.9; VII.4 etc.)⁵ Śatyaśyani (e.g. JB I.291) etc.

Some views are ascribed to the groups of persons e.g. Kurupāncālas or Carakādhyāvyus. The offerings according to the SB have fourfold cutting; but according to the Kurupāncālas they are of fivefold cutting (SB I.7.2.8). The Carakādhyāvyus lay down different and additional bricks as the holders of the downward air of the circulating air, of the outward air, of the pervading air, as eyeholders, etc.

⁴ For the word Brahmacādin which means "expounder of the Veda" and "theologien" see Macdonell, Keith, Vedic Index, p.79.
⁵ For Kauṣītaki see Keith, RBT, p.24.
But the ŚB does not accept this practice. According to it this is in excess, and the bricks that hold the upward air themselves will do the work of holding other airs etc. (ŚB VIII.1.3.6.7).

Generalities about the discussions:

In general we can say that the Brāhmaṇa-texts represent the development of the sacrifice. There were various customs, practices, views, etc. and the Brāhmaṇa-texts having taken into consideration all of them tried to give a particular way of performance. In doing this they sometimes made compromises. The discussions in the Brāhmaṇa-texts are as Max Müller has said, "Not bona fide". He further says, "Never was dogmatism more successfully veiled under the mask of free discussion than in the Mīmāṃsā or discussion of the Brāhmaṇa". But when we see the "conclusions" of the discussions in the Brāhmaṇa-texts (see above) we can hardly feel that there is any dogmatism in the real sense. There is no doubt, effort for achieving some system, definiteness etc. But this aim is not completely obtained. The Brāhmaṇa-texts are trying to collect all the practices as far as possible.

6 Max Müller, H. ASL, p. 389
7 Max Müller, H. ASL, p. 389
The Brāhmaṇa-texts are the beginnings of the sacrificial science;⁸ they are the 'prescientific science'.⁹ Of course, it is not the 'science' in the real sense. There are no hard and fast rules observed in argumentation, reasonings, etc. The reasonings are mainly of the mystical nature. The year-ideology, the numerical speculations,¹⁰ identifications etc. were very loose weapons which could be used by any party and as conveniently as one requires. ṢB I.3.3.10 prescribes that the grass should be spread threefold. The reasoning is that the sacrifice is threefold. Now this reasoning is elsewhere used by the opponents also. Those opponents say (in another connection) that thrice one should take the butter with sruva into juhū; for sacrifice is threefold. But this reasoning and the opinion of the others are rejected. We have already seen in describing the reasonings and counter-reasonings how the year-ideology and numerical speculations are used by both the opponents and the Brāhmaṇa-texts. Those who hold that the whole sacrificial post (vana) is to be thrown into the fire they tell us that this is for the sake of imitation of Gods. Gods had done the same and, therefore, one should do it in that manner.

⁸ Winteritz, GIL, p.170.
⁹ Oldenberg, Weltanschauung, includes the words "Vorwissenschaft-liche Wissenschaft" in the title of the Book.
¹⁰ On the numerical speculations see Heesterbeek, Consecration, p.34f.
But further story of the Gods and Asuras is told by the other party to prove that one should throw only a chip of that sacrificial post into the fire. Thus when the Gods threw the whole sacrificial post into the fire, the Rakṣas sipped the sacrifice (= Soma). Therefore, the Gods said said to their Adhvaryu to throw only one chip of the post into the fire. Then the Rakṣas did not sip that sacrifice. Therefore, the conclusion is that one should not throw the whole post, but only a chip into the fire. Then also it is an imitation of the Gods (ŚB III.7.1.29-32). Thus both the parties use the same reasonings and the discussions in the Brāhmaṇa-texts are not rigid, dogmatic but rather loose. Again, many times in the conclusions of the discussions, the Brāhmaṇa-texts allow the sacrificer’s good will to take decisions. We have already given some examples of this point. We may add a following example very interesting in this connection. Thus after prescribing various asterisms, seasons, days, etc. for the sake of establishment of the fires it is said that one may establish fires at any time when one feels called upon to sacrifice and should not put it off from one day to the morrow. For "Who knows the morrow of the man?" (ŚB II.1.3.9ff; cp. TB I.1.2.8). This will show how there is not as much rigidity, dogmatism etc. as it would appear at first sight.
The reasonings are of supreme importance. Thus the Arkasvamedhasammtati oblations (in the fire-building ceremony) are said to be five. But there, we find that freedom is given for inserting any other oblation. The condition for this is only that there must be some reasoning, an explanation - a Brāhmaṇa \(^{11}\) for supporting it (ŚB Ṭa 4.2.27). Some raise objection to it saying that those additional oblations would be in excess. But the answer to such objection is that there is nothing excessive in desires and these oblations are to be offered according to the desires (ŚB Ṭa 4.2.28). We can see thus how freedom of performance is given. In the Brāhmaṇa-texts though they are in the main connected with the ritual, we thus find there is no strict rigidity no rigid emphasis on mere "letter"; but the Brāhmaṇa-texts are interested in the "spirit" of the ritual action also. This is how the Brāhmaṇa-texts show us how the ritualism and the spiritualism both had their own scope. The discussions leading to the philosophical thought may be mentioned here for the spiritualism (though rudimentary) in the Brāhmaṇa-texts.

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\(^{11}\) For the word Brāhmaṇa see Winternitz, GIL, p.104; Silburn, Instant et cause, p.64.