CHAPTER - VIII

CONCLUSION

It is observed that among all the Vedic texts the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa stands unique because the work records all the great sacrifices of Vedic age. All the minute details of the performance of these sacrifices are held here. The features of the Brāhmaṇa works are also displayed here through the revelations. But the landmark for which this Brāhmaṇa stands unrivalled are the myths and legends narrated here in detail.

This work is proved as an invaluable document for the Vedic mythology for all time to come. In this context, it is here worth mentioning that Sāyana the great Vedic commentator has commented on this Brāhmaṇa in an extensive way. So without going through his commentary it is impossible for anybody to trace the mythology described in the text. Generally, while offering prayers to gods the seers of the Rgveda narrated these entertaining stories. Here mainly the powers of Indra, the generosity of Agni, the adventures of Asvins etc. are beautifully stated. But the Sat. Br. mainly emphasizes upon the important of sacrifice. With that end in view myths are described in connection with Vedic rituals. The Rgveda is said to be the source of Vedic myths. In Vedas gods are mostly taken as an animated beings. Besides; myths are closely connected with the worship of phenomena of nature both animate and inanimate. Thus the myths in the Sat. Br. are found only with some variations to that of the Rgveda.

A bird's eye view on the contexts of the Sat. Br. unfolds several characteristics of this Brāhmaṇa. It is realised here that this Brāhmaṇa is an important source book of religion and culture of ancient Indian people. It appears that the Sat. Br. abounds in myths mostly related to sacrifices. Because, at that time the atmosphere was pervaded by the
smoke of sacrifice. As for example, *Indra*-Vṛtra myth (1-1-3-4). Manu and Bull, (1-1-4-14), the Dwarf incarnation of Viṣṇu (1-2-5-5) so on so forth. The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa marks the beginning of dramas in general, of all allegorical dramas and morality plays in sanskrit literature in particular. As for example two world famous drama of Kalidāsa's creation are based on the stories found in the *Śat. Br. Purūravas* and *Urvasī* and *Abhijñānasākuntalam* of Kalidasa's creation was in the *Rgveda*. The dialogue between king Purūravas and the celestial nymph Urvasī clearly assumes a dramatic turn in the *Śat. Br.* This Brāhmaṇa represent the intellectual activity of sacerdotal caste which had succeeded in transforming a primitive worship of the power of nature in to a highly artificial system of sacrificial ceremonies. There are some passages full of genuine thought and feeling and there are revealed most valuable picture of life and records of early struggles of the Vedic Aryans. Besides, there is a folklore of a local or personal lives of all sages, practices melodies, more or less certain reflective historical realities.

Hinduism may be divided into three periods, viz., the Vedic, Epic and Purānic periods. Our knowledge of the first period is derived from Vedas, of the second from epic poem and the chief source of our information relating to the last period is that of class of mythological works. Now we are in a position to say that the myths plays an important role not only in the religion during Vedic age, but also in that of the later periods. Because myths cannot be separated from religion or religion cannot be separated from myths. The separation of the two is almost impossible. Myths have significant influences on Indian religion, culture and literature. For example if we take the epic duo, the *Rāmāyanā* and the *Mahābhārata* to be two trees and the myths to be their branches, then we will know that religion in the form of a creeper has climbed these trees till it
reached the height of present era. The only reason behind the novelty and maturity acquired by the myths in later Indian religion is that they have their sources in the Vedic literature. The heroistic ideas revealed in the descriptions of Vedic divinities are reflected in the characters of the heroes of the later days stories. The images of those characters attracted the attention of the heroes for all time to come. From the very beginning the conflict between Aryan and non-Aryan may be said to took place here in this land. " Indra-Vṛtra myth may be better said as one of such conflict. Because everything here in this tale is suggestive of a war against the Dasa, the non-Aryans. Indra was the leader of the invading Aryans. The myths have immense political, social, historical values. We come to know it from the story of Mathava Videgha (1-4-1-10). The river Sadānīra mentioned in the Sāt. Br. still exists in between Kosāla and Videha. It flashes on the geographical boundary of the country of Videha (Videgha) which is said as the kingdom of Janaka. It may be said as Aryan culture spreaded to the north of India. The mythical history of Indian literature reaches its highest point in Hitopadesa and Pancatantra. The oldest Indian fables are found in Hitopadesa and Pancatantra and these fables draw their materials from the Brāhmaṇas. While the Brahmatical myths and legends serve the special interest of the priests and teach of priestly moral, the ascatic poetry later on teachees a general moral love for humanity and these fables serve to stress the importance of both practical wisdom as well as moral. The study of myths and legends of Sāt. Br. makes it clear that their contribution to Indian religious literature is great and the Indian people is always inspired by those myths to lead an honest and disciplined life for which Indian religion stands unrivalled in the domain of world religion.