CHAPTER III

CONTENTS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SATAPATHA BRAHMANA

Part I

The Satapatha Brahmana belongs to the White Yajurveda. Scholars are of opinion that this Brāhmaṇa is so called because it consists of hundred chapters. The etymology of this word runs as follows: satam panthāno mārgā nāmādhyāyā yasya tacchatapatam. While explaining the sutra viz. satapatha vannīdayabhāllavīnām brāhmaṇasvarāh, occurring in the Bhāṣikāsūtra the commentator remarked that Satapatha here means Sāta adhyāyāḥ i.e. hundred chapters. Katyāyana the great authority on the Śrautasūtra speaks of patha in the sense of chapters. It is clear from the use of words such as sātipatho sūtipatho navadyaḥ sammitaḥ pāṇcadasapathaḥ etc. Even a reader of the Satapatha is known as Satapathika, reader of hundred chapters. Pāṇini formulated one aphorism kratukthīdīśutrāntatthāk. According to this sūtra, the affix thāk is added in the sense of one who studies or one who understands, after the name of a sacrifice, after uktāḥ and after a stem ending with the word sūtra. Under this sūtra there is a vārttika, which states that the affix sikan comes diversely in the same sense after the compound words Satapatha and Sātipātha. Thus in the sense of one who studies or understand there are twofold uses such as, satapathikaḥ, sātipathikaḥ and satapathaḥ or sātipathaḥ. The White Yajurveda is said to have atleast fifteen recensions. As this

2. Sharma Śrīdhara, loc-cit.
3. Pāṇini, IV-2-60.
Brāhmaṇa belongs to the White Yajurveda, therefore this Brāhmaṇa text is originally found in fifteen recensions. Out of these only few recensions are available now a days i.e. the Kāṇva and Mādhyandina. Both these recensions possess the chapter division into Kāṇḍa, Adhyāya, Brāhmaṇa, Kandikā in common. The Madhyandina recension contains one extra division and that is Prapāṭhaka. While the Sat. Br. in the Madhyandina recension starts with the Haviryaṇa, the Sat. Br. in the Kāṇva starts with the Ādharma ceremony only. The Kāṇva Sat. Br. contains 104 chapters while the Sat. Br. in the Madhyandina recension contains 100 chapters only. Some scholars view that although the Kāṇva recension possesses more than 100 chapters yet by following the maxim 'chatrīnayānti' the excess chapters of the Sat. Br. in the Kāṇva recension, cannot be taken as useless and hence the name Sat. Br. belonging to the Kāṇva recension seems to be valid.

For the study of the myths, the Sat. Br. of the Madhyandina recension is used mainly.

The Sat. Br. consists of fourteen Kāṇḍas or great chapters followed by Prapāṭhakas and again these Prapāṭhakas have their own Brāhmaṇas. These Brāhmaṇas have their unique passages known as Kandikās. Under this special division of the text of this Brāhmaṇa, the contents of this Brāhmaṇa is given below:

Kāṇḍa—I

The Satapatha Brāhmaṇa starts with the description of the great Newmoon and Fullmoon sacrifices (Darsāpūrṇamāsayāga). The entire first Kāṇḍa which is known as the Haviryaṇa kāṇḍa consists of chapters in which this great sacrifice is very elaborately dealt with. Here it is described that before the performance of this sacrifice the sacrificer shall perform the act of vow, he shall bring water to cleanse the sacrificial vessels to install the kṛṣṇājina, shall arrange the kapālas to be used for offering oblations to the
presiding deities, to grind the grains, to collect the sacrificial waters and so on so forth. The description of the utterance of different verses quoted from the White Yajurveda are found accordingly. The praise of this sacrifice also found in detail in this Kāṇḍa. The determination of the rules regarding the Šaṃnājya sacrifice is found in the VII chapter of this Kāṇḍa. Here in this chapter the description of the Svistakṛtyāga is also met with 1-7-3. The description of Iḍā ceremony is found in the VIII chapter of this Brāhmaṇa. It is followed by Anuyāgas or after offering. The IX chapter gives in detail the formulas to be recited by the Hotṛ during the ceremonies narrated in the preceding Brāhmaṇa. Besides the treatment of Suktavāka and the Samyavāka and the description of the Patnīsanyājas are also found in this chapter. Here the Kāṇḍa I comes to an end.

Kāṇḍa-II

The second Kāṇḍa begins with Agnyādhāna or establishment of fire. This is also known as Ekapādika kāṇḍa that consists of six chapters, five Prapāṭhakas and twenty-four Brāhmaṇas. The normal performance of Agnyādhāna requires two days. Here a round circle for Gṛhapatya fire, a semicircle for Daksīṇa fire and a square hearth for Āhavanīya fire and their performances take place. The second Kāṇḍa centres round the ceremony of Punarādhāna. Punarādhāna means the establishment of new fire and the performance involves similar rites and rituals as that of Agnyādhāna. It is followed by the description of Agnihotra. Agnihotra literally means the morning and evening milk offerings. The subsequent chapters deal with the ceremony of Piṇḍapitṛyajña. It refers to the oblation of cakes to the deceased ancestors mainly. It is followed by the ritual of Āgrāyaṇesti. It is a ritual in which consecration of first fruit is performed. The Caturmāṣya or seasonal sacrifice is dealt with in chapter V. The second Kāṇḍa concludes
with the oblation known as *Tryamvakahoma*. It is a sacrifice in which chief deity is *Rudra*. This chapter holds a description of the rituals of the *Sākamedha* and *Śuṇāśtriya* in which offerings are made to *Śuṇāsira* and with this the *Kānda* II comes to an end.

**Kānda—III**

The third *Kānda* of the *Sat. Br.* deals with the great *Soma* sacrifice. The contents of the third and the fourth *Kānda* of *Sat. Br.* form an important part in the great sacrificial paraphernalia of Vedas. The *Soma* ritual also includes an account of the animal offering. The entire third *Kānda* is known as *Adhvara* that consists of nine chapters, seven *Prapāṭhakas* and thirty seven *Brāhmanas* in which this great sacrifice is very elaborately described. *Agnistoma* sacrifice is the model of all *Soma* sacrifices. It is the simplest of all the *Soma* sacrifice and occupies one *sutyā* day in which *Soma* is pressed and offered thrice. The preparation of the *Soma* juice to be offered here takes several days. The same *Kānda* deals with the initiation ceremony called *Diksā* or consecration. The *Prayāṇīyesti* (opening sacrifice) is described in the chapter II. The chapter IV gives the description of the *Atithyesti*. The preparation for *Soma*-altar and details of the pressing place are found in the chapter V here. The animal sacrifice to *Agni* and *Soma*, setting up of sacrificial stake, slaying of victim are described in the chapter VII. The chapter VIII deals with the oblations of cake and omentum. The chapter IX mainly holds a discussion on the day of *Soma* feast. With this the third *Kānda* of the *Sat. Br.* comes to an end.

**Kānda—IV**

The fourth *Kānda* is nothing but a continuation of the *Soma* sacrifice. This *Kānda* consists of six chapters, five *Prapāṭhakas* and thirty nine *Brāhmanas*. The first chapter
gives the description of Grahayāgah such as Antaryāma-grahah, Maitrāvaruṇa-grahah, Āśvinagrahah, Aindrāvāya-grahah, etc. The chapter II deals with Sukramanthigraha, Agrayana-grahah, Ukthyagraha, and Dhruvagraha etc. This is followed by Ritugrahah, Vaisvadevagraha, Mahendra-grahah, Daksinādānam, Ādityagraha, Dadhigraha or libation to the seasons. The chapter IV deals with the description of the Śāvitragraha, Vaisvadevagraha, Saunyascaru, Paṭinīvatagraha, Hariyojanagragraha, Samīṣṭa yajuḥ, and Avabhṛthasnānam. The chapter V deals with the Udayāniyesti, Anubandhyāga, Udavasaniyesti, Șodasigrasha, Jyotiṣṭoumika etc. The last chapter of the fourth Kāṇḍa mainly deals with Aṁśugraha, Gavāmayana and ends with the description of the Dikṣā or consecration for sacrificial session.

The third and the fourth Kāṇḍas are chiefly dealt with a detailed discussion of the simplest form of complete Soma sacrifice. The Agnistoma serves as a model for all other kinds of Ekāha Soma sacrifices. The Ekāha sacrifices are those which have a single pressing day, consisting of three libations

Kāṇḍa—V

The entire fifth Kāṇḍa of the Śat. Br. known as Sava, consists of five chapters, four Prapāṭhakas and twenty five Brāhmaṇas. The fifth Kāṇḍa deals with two important sacrifices viz. Vājapeya and Rajasūya. The Vājapeya is open to Brāhmaṇa, the Rajanya and to the Vaisya. Rajasūya is purely a Kṣatriya ceremony.

The fifth Kāṇḍa starts with the description of the Vājapeya sacrifice. It is followed by consecration, animal victims, the mounting of sacrificial post and victory formulas etc. The Vājapeya is recognised as one of the different forms of Soma sacrifice. The chapter II deals with the Rajasūya or "Inauguration" of a king. In this chapter the
description of preliminary offerings are found. The offerings called Ratnahavimsi are offered to the houses of the jewels of the king, his wives etc. Then comes Kesavapaniya rites. The preparation of Dasapeya offerings for which the Diksā consists of ten is described in the last chapter of the Kāṇḍa V. There are also number of minor offerings to propitiate the quarter to win the season for Aditi, Māruts and All Gods etc.

Kāṇḍa–VI

This Kāṇḍa starts with the description of Agnicayana or building of the fire altar. The main object of this ceremony is the super exaltation of Agni, the Fire, who is identified with Prajāpati, the lord of creation and source of life in this world. The name of this Kāṇḍa is Ukhasambharanam. This Kāṇḍa consists of eight chapters five Prapāthakas and thirty nine Brāhmaṇas. The creation of this universe is described in the chapter I. The chapter II contains the description of animal sacrifices, layers and bricks of the altar. This is followed by Savitra libation. The chapter IV gives the description of the making of the Fire-pan and digging which is followed by Diksā or initiation in the chapter V. The VII chapter describes the Viṣṇustrides and the last chapter describes the Ukthya Agni and here the Kāṇḍa VI comes to an end.

Kāṇḍa–VII

The seventh Kāṇḍa is a continuation of the chapter VI where the building of the fire altar is narrated. This Kāṇḍa is known as Hastighatanama Kāṇḍa. It consist of five chapters, four Prapāthakas and twenty five Brāhmaṇas. In the chapter I the description of the Gārhapatya Agni is found. That is the householder's fire, which represent the sacrificer's domestic hearth. The third chapter contains the preparation of the Ahavaniya
fire altar, ploughing, watering and sowing of grounds. Bricks of the first layer of the fire altar is described in the chapter IV. The four sets of bricks are placed in the middle of the four sides of the square body of the fire altar. The altar is built in the shape of a bird flying eastwards. This Kaṇḍa is concluded with the description of the building of the fire altar by the sacrificer with a view to securing for himself a place in heaven.

Kaṇḍa–VIII

The eighth Kaṇḍa, known as Citih Kaṇḍa consists of seven chapters, four Prapāthakas and twenty seven Brāhmaṇas. This Kaṇḍa is also a continuation of the previous Kaṇḍa. We here get the description of the fire altar. The process of building the fire altar is found here in this Kaṇḍa very extensively. In the chapter I we get the description of the construction of bricks meant for the altar. It is followed by the enumeration of different names for the bricks used in the fire altar. Some of these are named as Asvini, Ritavya Vaisvadevi etc. The names of the bricks used in the third layers also Diśya, Visvājyothi, Lokamprna etc. Chapter VI deals with the uses of gold. Here we found the scattering of hundred chips of gold on altar. In the same way, here we get the symbolical meaning of layers used in the altar and the eighth Kaṇḍa comes to an end.

Kaṇḍa–IX

The ninth Kaṇḍa is known as Samcitih. This Kaṇḍa consists of five chapters, four Prapāthakas and fifteen Brāhmaṇas. The first chapter deals with Satarudriya karma. It is followed by the preparation for Soma sacrifice. Then it follows the description of consecration. The chapter IV deals with preparatory rites of Soma sacrifice. The
description of rules for a repeated *Agnicayana* is found and the ninth *Kāṇḍa* comes to an end with the propitiatory hymns to *Indra* and *Agni*.

**Kāṇḍa—X**

The tenth *Kāṇḍa* is known as *Agni-Rahasya*. It consists of six chapters, four *Prapāṭhakas* and thirty one *Brāhmaṇas*. In this chapters we get the description of layers of the altar bird. It is here laid down the fixation of time for building the fire altar. The layers of the altar are arranged to represent the earth, air and heaven, so the fire-pan is a copy of the three worlds. The description of *Prajāpati* (the year), the king *Soma* (the moon) are also found in the chapter IV. There are also description of gold plate i.e. a gold man (i.e. Sun) in this chapter. The chapter V mainly deals with the narration of mind in the context of building the fire altar. It is followed by the description of self and here this *Kāṇḍa* comes to and end.

**Kāṇḍa—XI**

The eleventh *Kāṇḍa* deals with sacrifices treated in the previous *Kāṇḍa* of the *Sat. Br.* This *Kāṇḍa* is known as *Astadhyāyī*. It consists of eight chapters, four *Prapāṭhakas* and forty two *Brāhmaṇas*. The first chapter deals with the New and Full Moon sacrifices, the seasonal offerings, the *Agnihotra* and the Animal sacrifices. It is followed by the description of the duties of the *Brāhmaṇical* students. It is here we find the famous myth of *Purūravas* and *Urvasī* in the chapter V. The chapter VI contains important cosmogonic legend of the golden egg from which *Prajāpati* was born at the beginning of the evolution of this universe. The last chapter gives the description of the animal sacrifice and here the *Kāṇḍa* XI comes to an end.
Kāṇḍa–XII

The twelfth Kāṇḍa i.e. Madhyama Kāṇḍa consists of nine chapters, four Prapāṭhakas and twenty nine Brāhmaṇas. This Kāṇḍa treats of the Gavāmâyana or most common sacrificial sessions lasting for a year. It is followed by expiatory ceremonies of the Agnihotra and also the death of Agnihotrin, the burial of the dead body of the performer of the Agnihotra. Then the description of Saurāmaiṇyāga, consecration of the sacrifices and the Avabhirtha or purificatory rites are found here.

Kāṇḍa–XIII

The thirteenth Kāṇḍa begins with the description of the Āsvamedha sacrifice. This Kāṇḍa is known as Āsvamedha Kāṇḍa. It consists of eight chapters, four Prapāṭhakas and forty three Brāhmaṇas. The chapters I to V mainly deal with the sacrifices like Āsvamedha, Prāyaścitta etc. These are followed by Puruṣamedha. The Puruṣamedha or the human sacrifice is also a variation of Soma sacrifice and is based on "Horse-sacrifice". Instead of animals human beings are offered as oblations but the offering is only symbolical. The chapter VII deals with another sacrifice known as Sarvamedha or "All sacrifice". It is also a variety of Soma sacrifice covering ten days only. This sacrifice was performed with a different end in view. Here this Kāṇḍa comes to an end.

Kāṇḍa–XIV

The last Kāṇḍa of the Sat. Br. i.e. the fourteenth Kāṇḍa consists of nine chapters, seven Prapāṭhakas and fifty Brāhmaṇas. The first three chapters mainly deal with the important ceremony known as Pravargya which is performed on the Upaśad days of Soma sacrifices. It is followed by the description of Mahāvīra, Gharma, Brahnavidyā etc.
The last six chapters are purely speculative and of legendary character. These six chapters are known as the famous *Brahdaranyakopanisat*. This *Upaniṣad* is deliberated under three heads viz. Madhu Kāṇḍa, Yājñavalkya Kāṇḍa and lastly the Khila Kāṇḍa. Each of these three Kāṇḍas contain two chapters i.e. adhyāyas.

The chapter IV here in this Kāṇḍa deals with Prāṇa as a symbol of soul and then with the creation of the world out of the Ātman or Brahman and existence of the supreme soul which appears in every individual as his self. The next chapter deals with nature of Ātman and its manifestations as Purusa and Prāṇa. Brahman pervades the universe. Ātman according to this *Upaniṣat*, is manifested in man. Then the praise of Eternal is held here beautifully.

The second part consists of four philosophical discussions in which Yājñavalkya is the chief speaker. Brahman is theoretically unknowable but can be comprehended practically. The second deliberation is found in the form of a dialogue between king Janaka and Yājñavalkya on the nature of Brahman. That the Ātman is indestructible independent, immovable is described here in this chapter. The third discourse too is a famous dialogue between Janaka and Yājñavalkya. It presents a picture of soul in dreaming, waking, deep sleep, transmigration and salvation etc. The fourth discourse here in this chapter is another well known dialogue between Yājñavalkya and his wife Maitreyī. This dialogue occurred when the sage was ready to renounce the earthly life and enter into *Sanyāsa Dharma*. Replying to a question of his wife Maitreyī, he delivered that the knowledge of the self is the only way to get immortality and nothing else.

The last part deals with a long deliberation on the doctrine of transmigration of self. Here the Sāt. Br. ends.
Part- II

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ŚATAPATHA BRĀHMAṈA

The Ṣatapatha. Brāhmaṇa is next to the Ṛg.veda the most important production in the whole range of vedic literature. This Brāhmaṇa is a running commentary on the Vajasaneyi Saṁhitā. According to Winternitz, "this is the best known, the most extensive and on account of its contents the most important of all the Brāhmaṇas." The Sā. Br. is the source book of important data, noteworthy event and narratives. The main topic of this Brāhmaṇa is the sacrifice. Almost all the vedic sacrifices are here dealt with such as the Darsāpūrṇamāseṭi, Āgrāyaneṣṭi, Pasūyāga, Somayāga, Jyotiṣṭoma, Vajapeya, Rājasīya, Asvamedha, Purusamedha, Sarvamedha sacrifices and so on so forth. According to Winternitz, "the Brāhmaṇas are as invaluable authorities to the student of religion for the history of sacrifice and priesthood, as the Saṁhitā of the Yajurveda are for the history of prayer." According to Pt. Yogiraj Basu "the sacrifice is described as the safe boat, the strong vessel which takes the sacrificer across the troubled waters to the peaceful shore. The sacrifice is the vessel where one can easily cross." In many places sacrifice is identified with Viṣṇu and creator Prajāpati. The ritual explanation of the white Yajurveda is found in complete form in the Sā. Br.

This Brāhmaṇa also throws light on the earliest speculations on metaphysics and linguistics. Here is a passage from this Brāhmaṇa which points out the metaphysics. i.e.

`sūryo ha; vā agnihotram/ tadyadetasāya agre ahuterudait, tasmātsūryo`

5. Winternitz, M., History of Indian Literature, pg. 164.
agnihotram /.........sa yathāhistvaco nirmucyeta evaṁ rātreḥ pāpmano nirmucyate /
yathā ha va ahistvaco nirmucyeta evaṁ sarvasmāt pāpmano nirmucyate - ya evaṁ
vidvānagnihotram juhoti / tadatsyaivānau prajāpatimimāḥ sarvāḥ prajā-anuprajāyante /
vi hi srjyante yathārtham, i.e. While describing the Agnihotra sacrifice the seer
compares this sacrifice with the shining sun. He says, Agnihotra doubtless is the sun. It
is because he rose in front of that offering, that the Agnihotra is the sun. Even as a
snake frees itself from its skin, so does it (the sunchild) free itself from the night, from
evil and verily whosoever knowing this, offers the Agnihotra he frees himself from all
evil, and after his birth all these creatures are born; for they are set free according to they
are inclination.

Linguistics

The seers of the Sat. Br. are very much concerned about the correct pronunciation
of word. Thus the Vedic orthography was found fast developing during this age. An example
may be cited here showing the correct pronunciation of words in the ritual e.g. in the
Haviryaṇākāṇḍa, on one occasion, the Agnidhra is narrated as having a dialogue with
the Adhvaryu relating to correct pronunciation such as — athāha- saṁvādasva iti /
saṁvādayainam devairityevaitadāha / aganagri, iti agan khālvityevaitadāha /
aganītitarah / pratyāha srāvaya iti, taṁ vai devaiḥ srāvaya,
tamanubodhayeyevaitadāha / sṛauṣad iti — vidurvā enam, anu-vā enamabhutsat-
ityevaitadāha / evamdhvaryuscāgniṣcād evaṁ dharmam yajāmanamapinayataḥ / 9 i.e. "He (the
Agnidhra) then says (to the Adhvaryu) 'Discourse together' — he thereby says, make him

(the sacrificer) discourse with the gods (he Adhvaryu asks) 'Has he gone (to the gods) Agnidh? Whereby he says, Has he really gone? He has gone' replies the other 'Bid (the gods) hear.' By these words he (the Adhvaryu) means to say, "Make him (the sacrificer) be heard, make him be noticed by the gods." May (one or they) hear (sraushat) thereby he (the Agnidhra) means to say, 'They know him, they have recognised him. Thus the Adhvaryu and the Agnidhra lead the sacrificer to the world of the gods."

To these are added symbolical interpretation and speculative discourses on the prominent ceremonies. The sacrifice is called a power which overwhelms all indeed a creative force of nature.

Myths and Legends

The beginning of epic poetry reaches back to the period of the Sat. Br. The two legends, in the Sat. Br. for example appear to furnish the great classical poet Kālidāsa with the plots of two of his most famous dramas i.e. Vikramorvāsiyam and Abhijñāna-Sākuntalā. Vikramorvāsiyam is based on the story of the love and separation of Purūravas and Urvāśī (Sat. Br. XI. 5.1) and the other that of Duṣyanta and Sākuntalā (Sat. Br. XIII-5-15). Here we also find the most interesting legend that of the Deluge or the flood (1.8.1-6). The Deluge story narrated in this Brāhmaṇa may be said as the first of its type in Indian literature. It appears to be derived from a semitic source. This legend shows how the human race was renewed through Manu the Primeval Being. The numerous narratives such as that of Vāk lioness (III. 5.1), the story of Indra and Vītra (I. 1. 3), the story of sacrifice assuming the form of black antelope (I. 1. 4.1), the story of Manu's bull (I. 1. 4), Dwarf incarnation of Viṣṇu (I. 1. 5), the story of Prajāpati (I. 7. 4.1), the story of bird that fetched Soma from the Heaven (III. 2. 4. 1), the story of the boar and
the earth (XIV 1.2), the story of Prajāpati taking the form of a horse (VII 3.2) etc. are found in the Sat Br. These stories show how metaphysical thought gets united with the explanation of sacrificial direction and these narratives are of great importance since they are the oldest source of many classical Sanskrit literature. Indian prose literature owes its origin to this Brāhmaṇa literature in particular. Bāna’s prose appears to have a close similarity with that of the Sat. Br. Here citations of prose style of both these literatures are given below viz. Sat. Br.– sa yadi purā maṇiṣim vācaṁ vyāharet tatrovaśnāvīṁrcāṁ vā yajurvā japet / yajho vai viśūḥ / tadyajñāṁ punāraṇabhate / tasyo haiṣā praścītīthī.¹⁰

tataḥ prabhṛti sutarāṁ devalārdhanesu brāhmaṇapujaśu gurujanasaparaśu cādaravatī babhūva / yadyacca kincītmutaściechuschāva garbhaṁśaya tat tat sarvaṁcakāra¹¹.

**Historical**

Many historical data are traced to this Brāhmaṇa. It is found that although the Sāṁhitā literature does not mention the countries like Kośala and Videha, yet we come across the names of these two states in the Sat. Br. (I. 4. 1). Here it is laid down as –

Videgha Māhava, the king of the Videha along with his priest Gotama Rāhuṇgaṇa is described as carrying the sacred fire eastward from the banks of the Sarasvati over Kośala across the river Sadānīrā and finally settling at Videha.¹² Besides, we find king Ajatasatru and king Janaka reigning over Kāśi and Videha who were leaders of Aryan thought and great patron of learning such as etaya vai bhadravaiṣvānara mukhe babhāra tasya gotama rāhuṇgaṇa purohita āṣa /

¹². Sat Br., 1.4.1.1. vidēgho ha māthavaiṣvānara mukhe babhāra tasya gotama rāhuṇgaṇa purohita āṣa /
rabhicaicāra\textsuperscript{13} etc. Kurus and Srinjayas were also referred to in this Brāhmaṇa.\textsuperscript{14} This Brāhmaṇa is unique in showing the development of criticism in India. The Sat. Br. clearly states that "there are four castes viz. Brāhmaṇa, Rājanya, Vaiṣya and Sudra."\textsuperscript{15} It is stated here that only the higher three castes Brāhmaṇa, Rājanya and Vaiṣya are eligible to perform sacrifices.\textsuperscript{16} Sudras were not allowed to sit in the line of Brāhmaṇas.

The conception of Brahman as the imperishable and absolute appears in the Sat Br. The Brhadāraṇyakopaniṣat is the greatest of all Upanisads. It is said that this Upanisat is not only one of the greatest Upanisat but also laden with deep structure which proves its magnitude in form and meaning. It is highly an informative Upanisat introducing the different philosophical ideas. For instance ideas on morality, creativity etc. may be mentioned. The fundamental doctrine of this Upanisat is that, universe is Brahman and Brahman is Atman.\textsuperscript{17}

Etymologies are abounds in the Sat Br. As for instance the name of Indra is derived from Indh, 'to kindle' and therefore he is called Indra.\textsuperscript{18} The word Ulukhala is derived from Uru karat\textsuperscript{19} i.e. it shall make wide.

\textsuperscript{13} Sat. Br. V-5-5-14.
\textsuperscript{14} Sat. Br. II-4-4-5. tene ha tata ite devabhāgo srautarṣah / sa ubhayesām kurupāṁ ca sṛnjayānām ca purohita āsa.
\textsuperscript{15} Sat. Br. V-5-4-9 catvaro vai varṇāḥ brāhmaṇāḥ rājanya vaisāḥ sudrāsca.
\textsuperscript{16} Sat. Br. III-1-1-9brahmaṇo vā rājāṇyo vā vaisēyo vā te hi yajñiyah.
\textsuperscript{17} Sat Br. XIV-2-5-1, yah ayamātmā idam amṛtanidam brahmedah sarvām.
\textsuperscript{18} Sat Br. VI-1-2, esa evendrāh/ tanesa prāṇāṁ madhyātah indriyenaindhā / yadainde tasmādindhā / indho ha vai tanindra ityācaksate parokṣaṁ/ parokṣaṁ kāma hi devāh/ to'sapta nānā puruṣūnasqijata.
\textsuperscript{19} Sat. Br. VII-5-1-22 yadabhravidudharṣinmetitasmādudumbharah / udumbahah / ha vai tamudumbara ityācaksate parokṣam / parokṣakāma hi devāh / urumekaradiitī tasmādurukaram / urukaram havai tadulukhalamityācaksate /
It is in this *Brahmana* that we find the beginning of science of mathematics.\(^{20}\)

The geometrical \(^{21}\) ideas are evident from the fire altar. As for example - *tam vā angulibhirminite puruṣo vai yajñaḥ / tenedāṁ sarvamitam / tasyaiṣāvamaṁ mātrā yadāṅgulagnayāḥ / tadāyāśāvamaṁ mātrā tāmasyā tadāpnotī / tayāināṁ tanminīte* i.e., he measures it (the fire altar) by finger breaths for the sacrifice being a man it is by means of him that everything is measured here. Now these, to wit, the fingers are the lowest measure, he thus secures for him (the sacrificial man) that lowest measure of his and therewith he thus measures. Another citation belonging to this *Brahmana* (X-2-1-3) runs as follows : *caturvimsatāṅgulibhirminite caturvimsatāksaraṁ vai gāyatrī / gāyatrognīḥ yāvānagnyāvatyaṁśya mātrā tāvataivaināṁ tanminīte* i.e., he measures by twenty four fingers breaths the *Gāyatri* verse consists of twenty four syllables and *Agni* is of *Gāyatri* nature, as great as *Agni* is, as great as is his measure, by so much he thus measures him.

The geometrical ideas are too evident from the direction of *Brahmana* as given to construct the various types of *Vedīs* i.e. *Āhavanīya, Garhapatya and Daksināgni*. Symbolism\(^{22}\) plays an important role in the speculations on the sacrifice in this *Brahmana*. The sacrificial altar has been symbolised as a beautiful woman. It gives us information upon the ancient ideas of feminine beauty.

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Pt. Yogiraj Vasu holds, "the mystic interpretation of the fire altar recorded in the Sat. Br. discussed under the 'Theory of sacrifice' merits great importance as it is symbolic of creation and effects complete identification of the Prajāpati, sacrificer, sacrifice, fire, altar, the sun-god, year and the performing priests with one another. The structure of the fire altar with ten thousand eight hundred bricks is a standing testimony to the architecture of the later Vedic age." 23

The Satapatha Brahmaṇa is the best among all the Brahmaṇa literatures available in our tradition. All the six principal features of this type of literature such as Vidhi, Arthavāda, Ninda, Praśāmsa, Purākalpa and Parakṛti are beautifully held here among the complex sacrificial paraphernalia. Citations of these features from the Sat. Br. are made here for better assessment.

Vidhi or Injunction

Relating to the speculations on the sacrifices in the Brahmaṇa literatures, the term Vidhi stands for rules or injunctions on the performance of Vedic rites. To this category all these sentences in this Brahmaṇa as are referred which contain an order expressed in the potential mood, such as yajeta, he ought to sacrifice, samśyeta, he ought to repeat, kuryat, he ought to proceed etc. This is the principal part of the Brahmaṇa and it is simply authoritative. To quote a passage from the Sat. Br., where the rules to be followed by consecrated persons are put forwarded such as – aparāhne dikṣeta / purā keśasmaśror vapanād - yat kāmayeta - tadāśniyād / yadā sampadyeta / vrataṃ hyevasyatośānaṃ bhavati / ydya' nāsīsīd - api kāmāṃ nāśniyāt / i.e., "let him perform the rite of consecration (dikṣā) in the afternoon. Previously to the shaving of his hair and beard he

23. Basu Yogiraj, ibid., pg. 246.
may eat of what he likes or whatever comes to hand for hereafter his food consists of fast-milk (*vrata*) only. But if he does not care to eat, he need not eat anything."\(^{24}\)

**Arthavāda**

A Vidhi is always followed by an *Arthavāda*. *Arthavāda* is nothing but the explanatory remarks on the meaning of mantras and particular rites. This speculative part of the *Brāhmaṇa* literature contains the germs of almost all the Indian philosophy and is therefore of great importance. As for example—

\[
\text{sa vai śrūcaḥ sammārṣṭi / tadyatsrūcaḥ sammārṣṭi yathā vai devānāṁ caraṇām} \quad \text{tadvā anu manuṣyānāṁ / tasmodyadyānāṁ parivesanamupaklptam bhavati/} \quad \text{Śat. Br. 1.3.1.} \text{ I e. "he (the Agnidhra) now brushes the spoons (with the grass ends). The reason why he brushes the spoons is that the course pursued among the gods is in accordance with that pursued among men."}
\]

**Ninda**

*Ninda* or censure refers to the controversial remarks contained in the *Brāhmaṇa* texts. There was difference of opinion almost the divines and priest of antiquity as to the performance of certain rite or the choice of a particular mantra or their meaning. One criticised the practice of the other and condemned it in the strongest terms. As for example—

\[
\text{atato'śananāṁ đrussyaiva / tadu haśadāḥ sāvajjasnasanameva vrataṁ mene / mano hai vai devā manuṣyasyajāhānti, ta enametad vratamupayantāṁ viduh-} \\
\text{pratarnohyaksate iti. / te'sya visvėdevā grhyānagacchānti, te'sya grhyesūpavasānti sa} \\
\text{upavasathāḥ (Śat. Br. I-1-1-7,9) i.e. Now then of the eating or fasting and on this point} \\
\text{Ashādha Sāvayasa on the one hand, was of opinion that the vow consisted in fasting.} \quad \text{For}
\]

\(^{24}\) Sat. Br. III-1-2-1.
assuredly, (he argued) the gods see through the mind of man: they know that, when he enters on this vow, he means to sacrifice to them the next morning. Therefore all the gods betake themselves to his house, and abide by (him or the fires, upavas) in his house, when this (day) is called upavasatha.

Prasamsa

Prasamsa means praise or recommendation such as "yajno vai visnun" means Visnu is the sacrifice. The sacrifice is Visnu for the reason that Visnu by striding he obtained for the gods this all pervading power which belongs to them. This is the reason why the sacrifice is Visnu.

Purakalpa

Under the heads of Purakalpa comes numerous stories of Itihasa, Akhyana and Upakhyaṇa etc. As for instance the Indra Vrtra Myth. This interesting part forms the historical background of the sacrificial art. According to this part, the gods are the originators of all rites.

Parakrti

Parakrti comprises the stories of particular performance of renowned srotiyas or sacrificial priests of gift presented by the yajamāna or sacrificer to the Brāhmaṇa. As for Example— athaitaṁ sa hiranyapātraṁ eva madhugraham brahmaṁ dadaṁ i.e. the cup of honey he presents to the Brahman together with the golden vessel.

25. Sat. Br. 1.1. 2.13, yajno vai visnun / sa devebhyaṁ imāṁ vikrāntim vicakrame/
 yaśasvam vikrāntāṁ idameva prathamena padena paspaṇa, athedamantarikṣam
dvitiyena, divamuttamena /

26. Sat Br. 1.1.3.4
27. Sat Br. V-I-5-28
The Satapatha Brahmaṇa is the invaluable document on Indian astronomy too. The seers of this Brahmaṇa seem to be inspired passages of the Regveda and they thus carry out and inscribed in detail the idea of the intercalary month in this work. There are numerous passages in the Sat Br. where astronomy has been discussed and intercalary month mentioned.²⁸ Agriculture seems to have been developed fully at the time of Sat Br. In the Kanda VII there are discussions on the minutes of agriculture in India. As for example – 

\[ \text{pratyeyā prāyoniṣṭena pracarati / prāyoniṣṭena pracarya sīram yunakti / etadh evam devaḥ samaskārisyantah purastādeva samardhyan / tathaivaśānayam etatsamaskārisyant purastād annena samardhayati / sīram bhavati / sīram haitd-yat sīram/ iramevasminnetaddhati.²⁹ \]

i.e. having returned he proceeds with the opening sacrifice. Having performed the opening sacrifice he yokes plough. For the gods at the time being about to heal him first supplied him with food, and in like manner does this, he is about to heal him first supply him with food it is the plough (sīra) for sīra the same as sēra he does puts food into him.

In this way an overview on the varied contents and characteristics of the Sat Br. proves that this Brahmaṇa is really and important source book for ancient Indian religion culture language and community in general.

²⁸. Sat. Br. 1-6-4-12,13.

\[ \text{vārtraghnam vai paurnamāsam / indro hyetena vṛtramahan / athaitadeva vṛtramahyam, yadāmāvasyaṁ / vṛtramhyasmā etajjadhusa āpyāyānamakurvan/ tadv etadeva vārtraghaṁ yat paurna māsam/ athaisa eva vṛṣa yaccandraṁah sa yatraisā etam rātrim na purostānna pasvāddadbṛśe tad enametena sarvam hanti, nāsyā kintcana parisinoṣṭi.} \]