THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE
A REVIEW
OF THE MATERIAL FROM VEDIC PERIOD TO DHARMASAstras
SECTION I: VEDIC AGE

1. The Data from the RV.
2. The Data from the AV.
3. The Data from the YV.
4. The Data from Brā. and the Uṣp.
1. **THE DATA FROM THE RV**

While presenting the data from the र्ग्वेद, I would like to divide it into two parts, (A) The विवाह शुक्तक i.e. RV X.85 and (B) The other data scattered all over the sacred book.

(A) **The विवाह शुक्तक**

RV X.85 or the विवाह शुक्तक is regarded as the foundation of the Hindu Marriage Sacrament. The ceremonial of marriage shows a remarkable continuity right from the र्ग्वेदic times. र्ग्वेद X.85 is very important for our topic of discussion as it contains Mantras common to the different marriage rites performed in various parts of India. "This र्ग्वेदic hymn that is still in vogue provides the ancient metaphysical support to marriage."¹

The author of the hymn is सूर्या² सावित्रिः i.e. the daughter of the sun³. The goddess सूर्या is perhaps the light of the sun lent to the moon. The subject of the hymn is the ceremony of marriage in

2. "सूर्या सूर्यक्षेत्र दुहिता" - सायणचार्य.
3. आ वा तथ दुहिता सूर्यक्षेत्र कामेवाचास्मिकतेः ज्ञानिता।

   - RV I.116.17ab
general and the wedding of Śūryā in particular. Śūryā is conceived as a bride and Soma¹, the moon, is depicted as her husband. The two stand for the typical bride and the groom. All the human marriages are to follow this celestial marriage ceremony. Later on in the hymn Āśvins are regarded as the first men of Soma. To the Ārya mind Āśvins represent the morning and evening twilight. Hence their depiction as bestmen is in perfect harmony with the marriage of Śūryā, the light of the sun lent to the Moon and Soma the moon.

It must be noted that Kaegi in his book "The Rgveda"² interpretes Śūryā and Soma as the sun and the moon. He further comments that the husband and wife should run their household with a spirit of cooperation and in perfect coordination as the Sun and the Moon run the show of the world. But Śūryā is not the Sun but the daughter of the Sun. Śūryā describes her own marriage with the Moon.

The nature of this hymn is composite. It belongs to the later phase of the Rgveda. One comes across various metres as Tristubh, Jagati and Anuvastubh.

1. It must be noted here the RV I.116.17 regards Āśvins as the husbands of Śūryā.
2. "The Rgveda" by Kaegi, pp. 74-75.
The stanzas 1–5 are devoted to the praise of Soma. Sāyaṇa remarks that Sūryā was praising her own husband.¹ This praise indicates that Soma was being churned with the stones as preparation of the marriage ceremony. Sūryā says,² "It is because of the Soma that the Ādityas are strong; and it is because of him that the earth is great". The pressing stones are making noise as the Soma flows from them. This praise of Soma and his depiction as Sūryā's husband has given a special place in Hindu marriage ritual as the first husband of every bride. Stanzas 6–16 are the description of the marriage ceremony itself.

Stanza 6 mentions Nārāśāmśī, Raibhī and Gathā as the three maidens accompanying and attending Sūryā as she proceeds to the house of her husband. The three words viz. Nārāśāmśī,³ Raibhī and Gathā, originally signify particular types of verse composition and are

1. "विष्ठि स्वपर्ति क्षोभ सूर्या स्तोति"। सायण
2. "कोषेदद्वित्य बृहिनि: कोषेण पुष्यति युक्ते"।
   - आ.१०५२
3. "अन्य-प्रकार तेष कस्मिवद्वित्यङ्गायः। गायना शंकति नाराश्मी:। शंकति। विष्ठि। वर्णाचार्य on
   - निष्कपत, 4.6
   केष्ठिवु तेन नरां: प्रत्यक्ष्यः स्तोत्रः। शंकति। पश्यन्तो भुवने भुवने शिल्येक यथा निष्कपत, 7.4
symbolically imagined to be maidens.\(^1\) They are sent along with the bride so that her time should not hang on her as she was not used to the new home. The word Anudeyā means a friend. Raibhi was to be her friend and Narasamsī a servant. Even in modern times, in western part of India this practice is followed as younger sister accompanies the bride to her new home. Amongst the Marwaris a maid servant accompanies the bride. Stanzas 7-8 and 10-12 describe the car in which Sūryā is to ride. Stanza 20 says that it was made of the best Salmali tree. Its wheels were beautiful. It was golden hue and was nicely covered with silken cloth. Pillows made it comfortable to ride. Stanza 9\(^2\) says that the sun mentally gave Sūryā to Soma. The words 'Manasa adadat' suggest the beginning of the 'Engagement Ceremony'. The father agreed to marry his daughter to Soma but the actual ceremony is yet to take place. Sayana\(^3\) explains 'Fatye samsanti' as a maiden who is desirous of having a husband. This indicates that the bride was a fully grown up, mature girl and she was not a child or a kid.

\(^{1}\) Tāmāhīdunāyā narāśā tī vēya

Sūryāra bhoṣānī sāyayati parībhaktam ।

\(\text{RV. x.85.6}\)

\(^{2}\) Sūrya antarāyē samsanti māna vāhikāvādāl ।

\(\text{RV. x.85.9 cd}\)

\(^{3}\) 'Phāye samsanti pratī kāyādānā'

\(\text{RV. x.85.9 cd}\)
Stanza 13\(^1\) is interpreted in two different ways. According to Sayana it describes the cows that were being driven to the house of Surya's husband\(^2\). Savita has given a gift of cows to his daughter. This gift was placed at the forefront of the bridal procession. According to W. D. Whitney,\(^3\) Keith, Griffith and others 'Aghasu hanyante gavo' refers to the killing of the oxen when the moon was in the lunar mansion. The oxen were being killed to celebrate the marriage ceremony. The people gathered were to be given a feast of beef.

The time of marriage was the month of 'Magha'.\(^4\)

In stanzas 17-19 Somarkau and Chandrama are praised. These two gods are sun-gods and hence they are praised in the marriage of Surya.

Stanzas 20-23 are formulae repeated when the bride mounts the car. In stanzas\(^5\) 21-22 the groom requests

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1. शुनयेन अन्नुः प्राणात् सविष्ठा गम्यासुखः।
   
   अधारं हन्यन्ते गावे सयत्रंये: परिप्रेये।

2. Prof. Wilson follows Sayana.

   
   Also "The Hymns of the Aogveda" by Griffith Vol. II p. 502.

4. 'अघासु महापु' - सायन.

5. युद्धस्यात् परिपरं हुसे न च जिन्दाकुंदु नक्ता मीरिन्थते।
   
   अन्यमिच्छं पितु-वधुं धारकं स है मृगे जुनां तत्स्य
   
   स्विन्धितं।
the Gandharva Visvavasu to leave the grown up bride as she has found her husband. This stanza later on was recited during the Visvavasu rite and caturthī karma. During this rite a iron rod was used to separate the bride and the bridegroom at night for three consecutive nights following the marriage ceremony. On the fourth night the bride and the bridegroom were allowed to unite with each other. Visvavasu is a Gandharva and is mentioned as the second divine husband of the bride in stanza No. 40.

Stanza 23 says that the path to her husband’s home should be without thorns and without enemies. Let the two unite with each other fully and happily.

Stanzas 24-26 are recited just before the bride’s departure from her father’s house.

Stanza 24 mentions the Noose of Varuṇa. The groom says that he had released her from the noose of Varuṇa which was tied by the Sun. According to Max Müller ‘Varunasya Paśa’ is a girdle with which the bride was girdled after being properly dressed. It may mean the tie of love with which the girl is bound to her father.


2.  प्र त्या कुच्छामिति वरुणसाय पाशाद्
    वै त्या कटिनातु सिस्या पुष्पेषु ।

3.  Max Müller’s ‘Rgveda Samhita’ Vol. VI,
till she is married. Varuṇa stands for cosmic law and order. Herein because of this Paśa of Varuṇa the maiden had remained chaste and inviolable. It was believed that the unmarried young girls were tied to the parent's household with the noose of Varuṇa. It was Varuṇa who had the hold of unmarried girls.

Stanza 25 says that her hand was being released from here and not from there. This means that the girl was being freed from attachment to her parents. But now onwards she must concentrate all her energies and love on her new house.

In stanza 26 Puṣan is invoked "Speak to thy people as a lady" the bride is told. This indicates that the bride was a mature lady and not an adolescent girl. This also is an instruction as to how she should behave in the house of her inlaws. She is not to be subservient but she should behave as the lady of the house. Later on in the 'Abhijñana Śakuntala' of Kālidāsa, Kanva advises Śakuntala ², "serve the elders and act the part of a loving friend towards the cowives, though wronged do not act in a

1. "वस्त्रमें तबं विद्यमा बदावि "
2. Śakuntalam, IV. 18
retaliatory way towards your husband". The difference between the two advices shows two different stages of civilization.

Stanza 27 again expresses more or less the same type of best wishes.

Stanzas 28-30 and 34 refer to the dirty garment of the bride.

Stanza 28 says that as her robe was stained with blue and red patches\(^1\) the possibility arises that \textit{Kṛtya} the evil deity may take hold of the bride. So it should be given away to a priest who knows this hymn\(^2\). Later on in the AV this idea about \textit{Kṛtya} has been described in detailed fashion. At first the bride was wearing a woolen garment - \textit{Samulyam} - but later on she changed it and wore a silken one. The groom is also advised not to touch the changed garment as \textit{Kṛtya} may catch hold of him.

Stanza 29 says that\(^3\) along with \textit{Samulyam} she also

\begin{verbatim}
1. नील खोलित कशति कृत्यायुक्तः देहन्ते ।
    अलैंने श्रस्य भावः पतिबन्धेणेके बचयते ॥ ॥281॥

2. गुण्ठफेतुः कल्पके दमास्ता स्विकुलस्माते ।
    पुण्यसि ते ब्रह्म विभाव स विभाबुद्वाहिति ॥

RV.X.85.34

3. पर्यं देहि श्रावकः ब्रह्मयो त्वि भेजा कः ।

RV.X.85.29
\end{verbatim}
distributed riches and ornaments amongst the brahmans.

This reference to Aśvina, the fiend or an evil spirit reflects some belief or custom prevailing in the Vedic times.

Stanza 31 — The priests fear that some of the assembled people may pass on infection of some disease or illness to the bride. They utter this verse and pray to the Gods to drive away those diseases from her.

Stanzas 32-33, as stated earlier, are recited before the bride's departure.

Stanza 33 is addressed to the people to witness the ceremonial. They are asked to bless the bride and to go to their respective homes.

Stanza 35 is rather obscure and has been differently interpreted. Some scholars like Prof. Weber and St. Petersburg Lexicon interpret it as referring to cow slaughter while Prof. Wilson says that it refers to the dress of the bride — particularly her skirt and upper-garment.

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1. ये कुँवास्वम् कृतु महर्षा विन्नस्व कट्टादः।
   पुनस्तान गृहि देवता कृतु महर्षा यह अरेषता। 113111

2. जालेन विश्वस्यो अधिवर्तेनिमुः।
   शूरीयम् पश्च शुपाणि तालि ब्रह्मा नु।
   1/4 विष्णुर्वति । 11
Stanza 36 refers\(^1\) to Hastagrābha. This stanza is still recited at the time of Panigrābha ceremony and hence it is one of the many threads which go into the making of the continuity of the marriage rite, right from the times of the Rgveda. The groom holds the right hand of the bride with his right hand and prays Bhaga, Aryama, Savita and Purandhi for long and happy married life.

Stanza 37 describes the consummation of marriage\(^2\). It must be noted that the poetess has described the act of intercourse quite freely. The natural frankness of the expression cannot be missed. Dr S. C. Sarkar interprets the plural - Manusayā yāpanti as indicating polyandry\(^3\). But this is difficult to accept. The plural only shows enthusiastic and overjoyed mind of the poet.

In stanzas 38-39 Agni is invoked.

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1. ग्रृहस्थानि हे सोमसितवाय हस्तं मुषा
   पत्य Mundābhugyamsa
   मगे भर्ष्मा लोपित परिद्रामणि
   त्वादुपगः पत्याय त्वेऽः

2. ती ग्रृहमाप्तानेयत्स गलो बोधने मनुष्यः
   ग्या सन सुधुष्को विद्वाने मन्वान्यः
   प्रहर्तम
   स्त्रेमूः

3. cf. Dr Sarkar's 'Some Aspects of the Earliest Social History of India', p. 80.
Stanza 40 says that Soma was her first husband, Gandharva the second, and Agni was her third husband. The human male was her fourth husband. This simply means that before marriage these three gods were holding control over her body. Soma infused her with Rasa i.e. the natural flow of sexual secretion and Agni animated her for the act of procreation. Gandharva gave her accomplishments. These three Gods together helped her out of adolescence and immaturity. Dr S. C. Sarkar observes that this custom of regarding three gods as three husbands is a relic of earlier polyandry.

Stanzas 40-47 are repeated when the bride groom returns home along with his bride in a bridal procession. In these he invokes god to give him good progeny and cattle. He desires to have ten male children while the famous blessings in the later ages

1. सोमः प्रथमं विविधं गद्घर्षश्च विविधं गुरूरः।
   वृत्तिः दिनाद्विमुलकतो नाम नुव्य-ना।
   — RV. X.85.40

4. दशशीयो भुजना विविधेन परिवेक्षाद्वितीय-नृत्यिः।
   — RV. X.85.45cd
bless the bride only with eight sons. He also prays for the mental coordination between the two.

In stanza 46 she is advised to be the Samrajini, i.e. the queen of the father, mother, sisters and brothers of her husband. Probably the bride herein is the wife of the eldest brother in the family. From this stanza also it is very clear that the bride was a grown up, mature and capable young lady. A young adolescent girl would not be able to handle the charge of the big household.

Before going to the next part i.e. examination of the data scattered all over the book I would mention a remark of Mr. A. B. Keith that the legend in \textit{Rgveda} X.85 is recondite in character and it is legitimate to deduce from this fact that the religious ceremonial was not the essential or primitive part even of the highest form of marriage. It is very difficult to agree with this statement of the revered scholar after we examine the data from the hymn itself.

\begin{enumerate}
\item 'अष्टपुष्पा सोपामायतो मभ ' \\
\item श्राद्धी स्वपुरे मभ श्राद्धी स्वपुस्तो मभ \\
\quad \\
\end{enumerate}
Stanza 36 describes Hastagrābha. Holding the hand of the bride, the bride-groom invokes Bhaga, Arya, Savita and Purandhī for long life. Moreover the people gathered to witness the simple but essential religious ceremony were given a feast of beef. Another important part of the ceremony was vahana which is frequently described in the hymn. Thus although the religious ceremony was very simple and comprised only of two items it was certainly essential to gain the acceptance of the society for the newly wed and to announce the new relationship. Moreover the legend of Surya provided an ancient metaphysical support to marriage.

Dr S. C. Sarkar remarks that the Vedic marriage hymn does not represent any single standard type of marriage but is a collection of mantras of different origins referring to many types of marriages amongst which polyandric is apparently included. This view is not acceptable. This hymn is a kind of a ballad. It does not reflect any polyandric marriage

1. RV X.85.13.
2. cf. RV. X.85.7-9, 20-23, 31-32.
4. "History of Sanskrit Literature" by Prof. Winternitz., p. 140.
but on the other hand it describes a simple marriage rite, praises the bride groom, and gives a picturesque description of the marriage procession.

Dr S. V. Karandikar has rightly remarked "after reading RV. X. 85 in general and verses 26, 32, 33 and 46 one cannot but conclude that the wife was from outside the family".

(B) The other data scattered all over the Sacred Book

Apart from this Vivaha Sukta which supplies very important data for our investigation of the Rigveda, we find many other references scattered all over the sacred book which need to be thoroughly examined. This data I shall like to examine under different groups as follows:

1) Indications about the age of the bride.
2) How the marriages were settled.
3) The dowry and bride price.
4) Intercaste marriages.
5) Polygamy.
6) Widow Remarriage.
7) Exogamy and
8) Contractual Marriage.

1) Indications about the age of the bride

a) RV. V.3.2 and V.28.3 say that the husband

1. "Hindu Exogamy", p. 18
2. यद देहिणि तममक्षे क्षणोऽथि i V.3.2
and wife should live their married life which cooperation and understanding. As we have seen earlier, the bridegroom in X.85 also prays for mental coordination. (Sumanah)

b) RV I.123.11 says that young daughters who wanted to participate in and enjoy the Samana were helped in dressing up by their mothers, their appearance was meant to attract the youth. I.115.2 also says that the young people eligible for marriage used to follow the young maidens.

X.27.12 says that the marriageable girl finds her own partner from amongst the men.

The description of the Samana and the girl's participation in the festivity is also quite important.

The word 'Samana' in the sense of "union, meeting; collection; or going together" occurs in RV. I.48.6; I.124.3; IV.58.8; VII.2.5 and X.168.2. "Like two mother cows who lick their younglings; like maidens for the gathering, they adorn them" or "along the traces of the wind they hurry, they came to him"
as dames to the assembly. The mothers are said to anoint and dress up their daughters when they wanted to enjoy themselves at Samana. The grown up girls properly bedecked stayed all through night. Sometimes a maiden called her lover to her chamber.

The word 'Samana' has been interpreted differently. Both renders it either as 'battle' or as 'festivity'. Fischel thinks that it was a general, popular festivity to which women went to enjoy themselves, poets to win fame, bowmen to gain prizes at archery and this festival lasted until morning. On the basis of the evidence from the Rigveda one may safely conclude that Samana was a festivity where young but mature maidens tried to find their husbands.

So one can easily conclude that women enjoyed the freedom to find their marriage partners, although as will be discussed later on, at times they were guided by their parents.

The fact that she was expected to command

1. RV X.168.2
2. RV X.69.11
3. पुरुष लाल नाथ ने कहा वह तीर्थयात्रा | I.134.3c
4. Later on Yajurveda 6.24 mentions a lady teacher taking her pupils to such a festivity.
the household booming with activity and also the fact that social atmosphere existed in which young people could meet with a view to matrimony make it necessary that she was a mature and efficient person trained in domestic duties.

c) The words used for an unmarried girl viz. Kanya¹, Dahita, Yosa and Yuvati all indicate a young mature girl. Dahita means a girl who milks the cows i.e. the one who is entrusted with the household work. Kanya is the one whose limbs are adorned with youthful grace. According to Sayana Yosa is just another word for 'a lady'. Later on in the RV we shall see that even the word nari¹ is used to denote a maiden of marriageable age. Yuvati is developed enough to unite with her husband.

  d) The bride in RV X.85 is also a grown up, mature and young maiden.

2) How the Marriages were settled

a) The references to Samana and RV I.115.2 and X.27.12 quoted above tell us that the young people played an important part in the selection of their own partner.

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1. "कन्या कण्मोच्छन्न भवति। स्वान्तकाभिमये
   वल्मात्कनेविबोद्धो भविनो।"

2. "योगो नीताचिति।" - सायणः
b) The stories of Śavaśva, Kakṣīvat and Vimada need to be examined as in all these stories the parents of the bride, particularly the mother had an important part to play. The story of Śavaśva is narrated in the Brhad-devatā (V. 50) in connection with RV X.27.12 Śavaśva's mother-in-law did not want her daughter to marry a person who did not have either wealth or wisdom. So he had to qualify himself by becoming a messenger of the princess named Śasyāsi. Here in this case we see that the mother of a bride played an important role while arranging the marriage. Similarly in the story of Kakṣīvat, his marriage was arranged by his father-in-law who found him sleeping on the ground. When father was absent the girl was guided by her elder brother in finding a partner for herself. In the case of Vimada he had to slope with the girl of his choice because her mother was objecting to their marriage.

c) Along with wealth and wisdom one more consideration in the choice of the bride was that she

1. RV I.126

2. अज्ञातारो न अपेनो व्यक्तः
   पति रितो न जनयो दुरेऽः

पति रो अत्वा कैल्या

विक्षिद पुद्मलक्ष्मा गमोऽस्मि ।

- RV IV.5.5
should be free from diseases. If a person had any serious disease he or she found it difficult to find a match. One Ghosa remained a spinster till she became old. She had to grow old in her father's house because of her skin disease till the Nasatyau helped her to find a husband in Kāśīvāt. However X.27.11 tells us how a Vedic Aryan was sympathetic towards a blind maiden. The one who gave birth to her and the one who married her both took proper care of the unfortunate young lady.

d) ṚV X.10 which is a dialogue between Yama and his twin sister Yamī clearly indicates that the marriage between a brother and sister was totally banned. This dialogue suggests that perhaps in the pre-Ayvedic period such marriages were allowed but later on the pernicious results of incest were clear. Hence all along Yama is

1. ṚV I.117.7, II.17.7, X.39.3; X.40.5 all describe the fate of Ghosa and how she was helped by the twin gods.

2. संबाण्न्या हुष्टिता जायसाध कल्लो चिद्वता श्रिव मेघाते शन्धाम।
   कतरो दैन प्रति तं दुःखाते य जी सहाते जी हो वा बरेयात्।
X.27.11
warding off and discouraging forcefully the request from his sister\(^1\).

Along with \textit{X.10} one would like to examine other data which points out to the possibility of promiscuity or incest. \textit{RV} \textit{I.55.4} describes Puṣan\(^2\) as lover of his sister. \textit{RV} \textit{X.3.3} also describes Agni as lover of his own sister. Moreover Asvins are sons of Savitar and Uṣas who are themselves brother and sister. Further Āśvins married Śūryā Śāvitrī who is their sister\(^3\). \textit{RV} \textit{III.31.1} and 2 speak about the incest of Prajapati\(^4\) on his own daughter. \textit{RV} \textit{I.91.7} describes Agni as a son of father and his sister.

\textbf{\textit{RV} X.10.12}

\begin{align*}
\text{न आ बुध से तुन्च्य तुन्च्य से} & \vphantom{\text{न आ बुध से तुन्च्य तुन्च्य से}} \\
\text{पुषपथ्य पायमन्त्रयैः स्वस्तैः विनमस्त्या} & \vphantom{\text{न आ बुध से तुन्च्य तुन्च्य से}} \\
\text{अन्येऽः कृपणुः कार्यवाच्य ने दे प्राप्ते सुमने वस्यन्ते} & \vphantom{\text{न आ बुध से तुन्च्य तुन्च्य से}} \\
\end{align*}

\textbf{\textit{VI.55.4}}

\begin{align*}
\text{चुँबन स्त्रिः जन्मकुप्रत्यायाम वार्तयमुः} & \vphantom{\text{चुँबन स्त्रिः जन्मकुप्रत्यायाम वार्तयमुः}} \\
\text{स्त्रियेन जार बुधते} & \vphantom{\text{चुँबन स्त्रिः जन्मकुप्रत्यायाम वार्तयमुः}} \\
\end{align*}

\textbf{\textit{VI.55.4}}

\begin{align*}
\text{cf. \textit{RV} I.116.19} \\
\text{\textit{III.31.1}}
\end{align*}

This again occurs in \textit{Sat. Br.} \textit{1.7.4.1}.
One special aspect about all these incest references is that all of them are pertaining to gods and not to human beings. So they should mainly be viewed as stories or myths. As E. V. Hopkins observes⁴ these legends are no proof of such custom existing amongst men. Moreover these have not been viewed in a light vein by people of the Vedic Age² themselves. W. H. R. Rivers⁵ observes "prohibition of marriage within first and second degrees is almost universal". The Vedic Āryans are also not an exception to it. Particularly after reading RV X.10 one comes to the conclusion that the Vedic Āryan after realizing that inmarrying causes social and physical degeneration wanted to avoid marriage with his nearest relations⁶.


2. "अब्राहम वै प्रनापति: ककेरात्


4. A passage from Mirukta.(14.x.31) suggests that a marriage with maternal uncle's daughter or paternal aunt's daughter was common.
e) One more consideration in selection of the bride was whether she had a brother or not. A brotherless \(^1\) maiden could not get a husband as her father treated her as a \textit{Putrika}. As \textit{Yaska} \(^2\) explains in his \textit{Nirukta} that the father treated his daughter's son as his own and \textit{Pindādāna} and other rites to be performed by a son were performed by this '\textit{Daughitra}'. Later on \textit{Viṣṇudharmasūtra} 15.5 \(^3\) and \textit{Vas. Dh. S.} 17.15-17 say that such a grandson was treated as heir to the property of the maternal grand father. So no young man wanted to marry a maiden without a brother as his son would belong to his father-in-law.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{l}
\textbf{1.} अझातेविपुष भेदिते प्रतिजी
\text{कस्मातथिक सन्ये धनानाम्} \\
\text{- क्व \textit{I.124.7}}
\
अझातारो न शेषायो ब्यवसः
\text{परिक्षेपे ने जनगे दुरेवा:} \\
\text{पुषापाः सत्ते अत्या काल्या}
\text{विर्द्ध पदलक्ता श्वीरम्} ।
\text{- क्व \textit{IV.5.6}}

\textbf{2.} अझात विव योपास्पिक्षित्सि
\text{सन्तानकणी विषलाससह इत्यादिन:} \\
\text{- \textit{Nirukta} III.3.4}

\textbf{3.} अझातका प्रदास्यामि तुम्मे कन्यामाक्षूरकलम्
\text{कल्या ते नायसे युक्तः स मे युक्तः भवेदिति}।
\text{- नासिकस्वति 17.8}
\end{tabular}
\end{center}
3) **Dowry and Bride-price**

   a) RV I.85 says that the cows and gifts given by the father to his daughter accompanied the bride's procession.

   b) RV I.27.12 says that the suitors would gladly marry a pleasing maiden who had riches. Hereby it means that they got something in kind by marrying a rich maiden.

   c) RV I.109.2 refers to a son-in-law who was not qualified to marry a young maiden. Such people paid abundantly to the father by way of price and married the young girl. This looks like the beginning of Agura form of marriage. Later on, in the age of Dharmasutracarās this form of marriage was criticised as unadvisable and harmful to the society. But as Westernmark remarks the marriage by purchase was of

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1. किती कोषा मृती कथा
   परिप्रेक्ष्या पर्या वाचै
   - I.27.12$^{ab}$

2. भ्रात्रि भुषिदान्वतां वा
   विज्ञानावुक्त वा ता स्यातात
   - I.109.2$^{ab}$

निश्चयः "भ्रात्रि भुषिदान्वतां वा
विज्ञानावुक्त वा ता स्यातात
क्रोटां पतिमान्वलेक सुप्रभावत रिति वरो$^{5}$ विनिमयः।"
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universal character in ancient times.\textsuperscript{1}

d) Kaksīvata in I.126\textsuperscript{2} says that he became rich because his father-in-law gave him ten chariots along with maids, and a thousand and sixty cows along with his daughter during marriage ceremony.

This goes to prove that rich fathers gave generous gifts to their son-in-laws at the time of the marriage ceremony. But there were a few cases wherein fathers accepted bride-price from the sons-in-law who were not fit to marry.\textsuperscript{3}

4) The Intercaste Marriages

About the intercaste marriages also we get ample evidence which goes to prove that there was no ban on them. Savāśva, Kaksīvata and Vimada all

\begin{enumerate}
\item "A short History of Marriage" by Westermark, pp. 166-71.
\item Saptaṃśa: क्लन्धेन दतः
कृपमन्दे दुः रात्रिसो अछु: ।
भिं्छिः सुखसंस्कार\textsuperscript{4} कर्यानात्
सत्कारिविवाहो अविविश्चे भृताम् ।।
\textsuperscript{- I.126.3}
\item Sayana explains विज्ञामना as:
विज्ञायोलिपादिविम: विहतो जामाता ।
\end{enumerate}
belonged to brahmin families but they married
daughters of the kings i.e. Kṣatriya girls. Even
Cyavana married a Kṣatriya girl. On the other hand
Saśvatī i.e. daughter of the sage Angirasa, was
married to king Anśaṅga. The king Svaneya Bhavaya-vya
i.e. brother-in-law of Kakaśivat was married to
Brahmani wife of Angirasa. 2. Even marriage of
Yayati and Devayeti 3 is of the same type i.e. Kṣatriya
male marrying a Brahmani.

5) Polygamy

We find a few references to polygamy or
plurality of wives. RV X.145 is a charm for winning
husband’s love from the cowives. In RV X.159 Śacī
i.e. Indra’s wife claims to have vanquished all
cowives. In RV I.105.8 Triṣṭa compares the sides of the
well to cowives. But all these verses are about
gods or lords or kings. On the other hand the word
dampati which occurs very frequently in Rāṣṭeda conveys
the idea of a monogamous marriage. Hence we may
conclude that polygamy was common among very rich
people and not amongst the masses.

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1. I.116.10 and X.39.4 tell us about the marriage
   of Cyavana.
2. cf. VIII.1.34.
3. X.63.4
6) **Widow-remarriage**

Ry X.18.8 gives some idea about the remarriage of a widow. The widow of the deceased is lying with him on the funeral pyre as her husband was dead, he says that he would look after her. This suggests that he takes her as wife. At least one thing is clear that he did not want to be burnt alive with the body of her husband.

7) **Exogamy**

Whether the Ṛgvedic people were aware of clan-exogamy cannot be said. The word Gotra occurs in the Ṛgveda. But the meaning of Gotra primarily is 'cow shelter'. Later on it has attained the meaning of 'assemblage'.

8) **Contractual Marriage**

The story of Pururavā and Urvasī from Ṛy X.95 depicts a case of marriage based on contract or condition. But this form of marriage did not develop like Brahma, Ṛṣiṇi and others as years passed by.

**Conclusion**

(A) During the Ṛgvedic period the principal items in

1. स्वामर्गे नारीमित्र जीवोकणे फलपुलकायमुः केवल भेदिः ।
   हृतप्रामर्गे दिनिधियोऽस्यले परर्जिनिनित्यमति सं ब्रह्म ॥

2. तव तियये यमंनीपतियोः
   परस्माः शोभुदीर्मो यदश्चरः ॥ Ṛy II.23.18
the marriage ceremony were Hastagrābha and Vahana. After reaching home with the bride the bridegroom enkindled the fire and prayed for the progeny, long life and the well-being of the animals and human beings. Thus the marriage ceremony was very simple. But it must be mentioned that this religious Samskāra had all the sanctity and approval of the society. It was fully accepted by the people living in those times. In the Rgveda there is no indication of the evolution of the marriage through human agency. In the marriage hymn we get the picture of the highest ideal of marriage and conjugal felicity. The Rgvedic period reflects a considerably advanced stage of human civilization.

(8) The Gods invoked:

RV X.85 invokes many a god to bestow happiness, prosperity and progeny on the married couple. Agni, Indra, Aryama, Bhaga, Purandhī, Soma, Varuṇa and Visvedevas are invoked. Amongst these Agni is invoked since he was the main deity worshipped by the Aryan householder. He was also supposed to purify the bride and animate her with the activity of procreation. Bhaga and Purandhī were the deities of wealth and riches; hence they would bestow wealth on the married couple if properly invoked at the time
of marriage. Varuṇa was the lord of cosmic law and order and hence he was invoked to grant loyalty and honesty to the married couple. Varuṇa would make the two of them loyal to each other. To the Aryan mind Indra stood for victory. This victory was very important to the Aryan as he had to conquer the native people, hence he is also invoked during marriage ceremonial. Thus these particular gods were invoked to bless the couple with purity, male-offspring, loyalty, prosperity and victory.

(C) There is no reference to any oath to be taken either by the bride or the bridegroom. They only pray for progeny, prosperity, long married life and happiness.

(D) We can trace a few social customs reflected in the above data.

1) A couple of maids accompanied the bride to her husband’s house.

2) The bride received many gifts including cows, chariots and horses from her father at the time of marriage.

3) Those, who were not eligible for marriage paid bride-price to get a wife in their houses.

4) A feast of beef was to be given to all who attended the marriage.

5) The reference to 'malina vastra' suggests
that consummation followed the marriage ceremony immediately. The robe of the bride was given away to a Brahmin who knew the marriage hymn.

6) RV X.85.20-23, X.85.34 and 42, X.85.36 and X.24.26 are repeated in later ages as mantras during marriage ceremony.

7) The references to (i) courtship of the youth or young girl finding her own friend from amongst the men, (ii) spinsters growing old in the house of their parents, clearly show that the bride was certainly not a child-wife in the age of the RV. On the other hand she was conscious of the love she was making and she perfectly understood the ritual she was a witness to. Moreover she was supposed to command her husband's house immediately after her marriage. Hence she had to be mature and efficient person. As Charlotte Bühler observes in her book "From birth to maturity" a girl who has just attained puberty will not be able to fulfill these expectations. Sexuality in puberty is still more or less a personal matter. The girl of 12 or 13 although she has attained puberty, does not yet want to meet a male. On the other hand she is shy and tries to avoid him. She, so to say, passes through a period of negativism.

before she finds the way to her partner. Even though she is physically fit and qualified to meet her mate and make love, gradually she develops readiness and maturity which make the sharing of life problems possible. If we assume that the first menstruation appeared when the girl was around twelve years of age she will have to be at least fifteen or sixteen to play successfully the role of the bride of the Rgvedic age. Hence the age of the bride in that period should be about sixteen.

8) A person with infectious disease found it difficult to get married.

9) The marriage of a brother and sister was banned.

10) The brotherless maiden found it difficult to get married because when she begot a son he would be treated as if he were a son of his grandfather and would even inherit his property.

11) Brahma, Asura, Gandharva and Svayamvara these forms of marriages, to use the later terms are found in their initial stages in the RV. Story of Pururava is a case of contractual marriage.

12) Intercaste marriages were not banned. We find both, Anuloma and Pratiloma forms of marriages in the Rgveda.
13) Polygamy was not the order of the day. The common man preferred to have only one wife. Only the kings and the lords had more than one wife.
2. **THE DATA FROM THE AV**

Book fourteen of the AV is termed as
\textit{Vivaha prakarana}. It is divided into two parts which are fully devoted to the topic of marriage. I shall examine the data in three parts:

I) The AV XIV.1

II) The AV XIV.2 and,

III) The other data scattered all over the AV.

Before thoroughly examining the book XIV it is necessary to mention that both these parts borrow freely from the RV X.85. This of course supports the theory that there is a remarkable continuity right from the times of the RV regarding the sacrament of marriage. The AV borrows freely while dealing with different subjects like Somastuti description of Raibhi, Narasamsi and Gatha, description of the bridal car, the information about the wooers, the time of marriage, the idea about releasing the bride from her parent’s house, invoking gods for progeny, wealth

\[ 1. \text{ eg. } RV \text{ X.85.6} = AV \text{ XIV.1.7} \]
\[ RV \text{ X.85.34} = AV \text{ XIV.1.29} \]
\[ RV \text{ X.85.36} = AV \text{ XIV.1.50} \]
and long life, giving away the dirty garment to a brahmin, Hastagrābha, carrying off the bride in a car, and in the end advising her to be a controlling lady of the giant household noisy with activity. To avoid repetition they are being excluded in the following presentation of the data.

Dr S. C. Sarkar however opines that the domestic ceremonial hymn i.e. RV x.85 must have been selected and abridged from an older and better recension of the AV. But one is inclined to follow Dr Winternitz who maintains that it is the AV XIV that borrows from the RV x.85. The latter is the older composition of the two.

1. The AV XIV.1 has twenty nine verses that are directly taken from the RV x.85 with slight variation or no variation at all. Ten more verses of AV XIV.1 are also taken from RV x.85 with a variation of a Pāda or two. In AV XIV.2 nine verses are repeated from the same source with a slight variation. Ten others are repeated with a difference of Pāda or two.


I) The AV XIV.1

Part I of the book XIV of the AV contains sixty three verses. Metrically the nature of book is composite. The composition uses ten different metres including Anuṣṭubh, Triṣṭubh and Jagati. The hymn is authored by Śūrya Śāvitrī. Devata of this hymn is Soma, Svāvīvāha Somakau and Candrama.

AV XIV.1.6 refers to a Kosa sent along with the bride to her husband's home. Kosa was something like a coffer or a settee with cushions. AV XIV.1.29-30 say that the garment of the bride was to be given to the priest. By making this gift no harm comes to the bride. Otherwise the evil viz. Kṛtya would catch hold of her. Later on in the second part of the same book verses 41-42 and 48-49 again refer to giving away of the garment. The bride is rising up from her nuptial bed. After getting up she changes her garment stained with red and blue patches. Now this garment crumpled, creased, and stained is to be given away to a priest, to nullify the power of Kṛtya, the evil. The priest hangs this garment

1. स भिकस्त्रोऽन् इरविति ब्रह्म बाचः समुद्यः केन्।

2. प्राप्तीणां गैर भक्षयेतु केन आशा न प्रक्षयेत॥

3. याज्ञको: कृत्या भुधाकर्दो गाविको राजसा वत्सलय पाः।

4. क्षमूद्देवा अवस्मूद्देवा या अवस्मू तः स्थापनेद्भि॥

लाद्यादि \ II XIV.1.30

लाद्यादि \ II XIV.2.49.
on a pillar and says that he has caused to sit upon the pillar (i.e. fixed or nailed), many witch crafts, many fetters of Varuna and many failures.

\textit{AV XIV.1.31} says to the bride and the bride-groom that the two, by speaking right in the right-speakings, should attain success. It requests the priest to make the wooer agreeable for the bride.

\textit{AV XIV.1.32-33}. The commentator says that these mantras should accompany payment of the price demanded for the bride in the form of cattle. The father of the bride was given cattle. "May ye just be here, may ye not go away, may ye, O kiné! increase this man with progeny, going in beauty, ruddy with Soma splendour, may all the gods turn your minds hither"\textsuperscript{1}. This again suggests the later Asura form of marriage.

\textit{AV XIV.1.35 and 43}, according to \textit{Kausika}, are used when the water is being poured on the bride. Now the bride is being bathed with hot water as she is to be dressed up and decorated for the marriage ritual. Asvins are requested to favour the bride.

\begin{quote}
\begin{verse}
\textit{AV. XIV.1.32}
\end{verse}
\end{quote}

\begin{verse}
1. बिर्विद्वास म पुरो तैमारूमें
\textsuperscript{1} गाव: प्रमाण वर्णाणि

\textsuperscript{1} शून्य कल्लुकीम: के अनन्तस्
\textsuperscript{1} विन्दन्त देवाः: कार्तिकः वै मन्त्रिः \textsuperscript{1}
\end{verse}
with the splendour of the dice, strong drink and of the buttocks\(^\text{1}\) of the courtesan. Apānasūta is invoked to make the waters full of honey. Kausīka says that with first pada of XIV.1.36 a pierced piece of wood is removed from the water. Then the water for bathing is drawn up and presented. The father-in-law and the brother-in-law are watching this ceremony of bathing\(^\text{2}\) the bride.

Stanzas 40-41, according to Kausīka\(^\text{3}\) are recited while the bride is being tied to the right and the left pole of a yoke. A piece of gold was tied to her forehead. The gold and waters were supposed to bring wealth to the bride. This is the

\begin{quote}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \text{केति महानक्ष्य नुक्षणमभवना केति वा शुद्धा।}
\text{ अनुशासनमभवन्ति लेखेवा वक्षाक्तम् ॥}
- XIV.1.36

\item}\text{अथैः ब्रह्मणः। भृगोहरस्व-}
\text{वीरवतीनलिङ्कस्वपम्।}
\text{अयस्मान आरद्धो यमकु विन-}
\text{प्रतौतवंतो वहुरो देवरावच ॥}
- XIV.1.39

\item}\text{स के रितेनौकालिकः}
\text{से मेघिनक्षु से गुप्ता तद्भव ॥}
- XIV.1.40
\end{enumerate}
\end{quote}
origin of ornament called Bindi worn by brides during marriage ceremony. It is tied to the hair by a string of pearls which passes through the parting line of hair. Even in modern times maidens are fond of this ornament. This ceremony and the bathing of the bride are the rites added by the AV to the marriage ritual.

AV XIV.1.42-43 are benedictions bestowed upon the wife. "Hoping for the well-willing, offspring, good fortune and wealth; becoming obedient to thy husband, gird thyself for immortality. As the mighty river won the supremacy of the streams, so thou be supreme having gone away to thy husband’s house". In these benedictions it is hoped that the wife would be supreme over the household but that she would also be *Patyaranuvrata* ² i.e. behaving according to the wishes of her husband.

Stanza 45 refers to clothing the bride. The garment was woven and spun by the old people. "Let those who are old in age put this garment around you".

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1. 

2. 

- AV XIV.1.43

- AV XIV.1.42
The belief was that if the bride was clothed by old ones she would live a long life.

XIV.1.47 refers to one more addition to the marriage rite. The bride is made to stand on a stone. The stone symbolizes firmness in the married life of the two. Kausîkâ says that the same mantra should be used when this ceremony is repeated in the groom's house.

"I maintain for thee, for the sake of progeny a pleasant, firm stone on the lap of the divine earth; stand thou on that, one to be exulted after, of excellent glory; let Savîta make for thee a long life-time".

AV XIV.1.48 is a Mantra to be recited at the time of Hastagrabha. The bridegroom says "Let you not attain suffering with me and with progeny".

AV XIV.1.49. Savita, Soma and Agni are invoked for progeny and long life.

AV XIV.1.50-54. Different gods are invoked.

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1. स्मेन छवि प्रणायेऽधारयादिं
   ले सरसोऽनै देव्यां लहस्तिक्या खुप्जये ॥
   तन्मा स्तिल्यानुमागि खुंबि
   दूरै त भाये: सागिता कृपकोशु ।
   - AV XIV.1.47

2. वेणादिनिर्माणं घुम्भय्य हृतं नाङ्ग्रहु दत्तिः ॥
   लेवेन पुष्पामि नेल हस्तं मा
   शविष्ठाता मां तद्य प्रज्ञा च अष्टमच ॥
   - AV XIV.1.48
Tvāṣṭā is invoked to give the bride clothing, Bhaga to give progeny. As Brhadāpati first gave hair to Sūrya; in the same way the Āsvins are requested to give her beautiful hair. In short the gods are requested to bestow on her the same wealth, progeny and beauty bestowed upon Sūrya the divine bride.

**AV** XIV.1.55-56 are used while parting the hair of the bride with a blade of grass. The wife is being adorned for the sake of her husband\(^1\). Stanza 56 says that the comrades broke the fetters and that the groom is brooding about his well dressed wife. This means that the groom is very eager to meet well-dressed bride.

**AV** XIV.1.57 expresses the thoughts of the bride. She wants him to know her by entering the nest of her mind\(^2\).

**AV** XIV.59-60. With these Bhaga, Tvāṣṭā and Dhata are invoked to protect the lady, ‘nāri’, on her way to her husband’s home. The word nāri is used as the bride is a grown-up woman.

**AV** XIV.1.60-64 are about the bride’s home-going. Bhaga had fashioned the four feet and the

1. तेनेमामोक्षिणा नारीं पत्ये सं प्रेमवामसि ।

2. अहुं चि च्यापिन्य मन्यि सतपरिप्या
केदंदिक्षुपश्चमक: कुलाेक्ष्म् ॥

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\(^1\) Sūrya the divine bride.

\(^2\) The bride's thoughts.
frame work of the beautiful car. Varuna is requested to see that no harm comes to her on the road. The bride has a brahmin in front of her; following her; and on her both sides. Here is she going to rule in her husband's world.

II) **The AV XIV.2**

Book XIV.2 consists of seventy three verses. This is also authored by Surya Savitri. The metrical nature of this Sukta is also composite like the one preceding. The gods of the Sukta are Atma, Yakshamāsīni, Dāmpati Paripanthināsāni, and Devāh.

The AV XIV.2 is a continuation of the previous Sukta i.e. XIV.1. The XIV.1 closes with the prayers to different gods for safe home going of the bride. XIV.2 takes up the same thread and later on describes the arrival of the bride and the rites to be performed in the husband's home.

The AV XIV.2.7-8 say that the road to the bridegroom's house should be comfortable for the couple. Let the forest, trees, fields and stream defend the wife from the demons.

The AV XIV.2.9 says that the Gandharvas residing on the trees should be favourable to the bride; they should not harm the procession. The description of the bridal journey in the Grhya Sutras is based on AV XIV.2.7-10.

Th 4401
AV XIV.2.12 invokes Savita to make everything favourable for the husband. It must be noted here that the plural - Patibbyah - is used as a sign of honour and does not indicate plurality of husbands.

AV XIV.2.13. Bride arrives in her husband's house. "This beautiful lady (nāri) has arrived in this house. Let Aryama, Bhaga, Asvins and Prajapati bestow her with progeny.

AV XIV.2.14 directly speaks of the consummation of marriage. The author frankly asks the husband to plant his seed in the bride.

AV XIV.2.15. Sarasvati, Sinivali, Vignu and Bhaga are invoked to give her progeny. The inclusion of Sinivali is very significant because Sinivali is a lunar goddess aiding the birth of children. AV VII. 46 is sūkta invoking Sinivali.

1. भात्साैन्तिक्षूऽसः नागिरागाण्तल्ल्यो
   नोऽ कव्जः बोसस्मयाम् ।
   ता । कः प्रेयो ब्राह्मण्डः सायो,
   बिधि । हुस्व्भास्मयाम्य रेति ।
   - AV XIV.2.14

2. "आ पूष्पिकाः साहास्या सा सिनीवासी"
   - Nirukta, 22.

"Vedic Index" by Keith and Macdonel states:
"Its presiding spirit which in accordance with the wide-spread ideas concerning the moon and vegetation is one of the fertility and growth."
for progeny.

**AV XIV.2.16** refers to unyoking of the oxen at the end of the bridal journey.

**AV XIV.2.20-21.** The bride is asked to pay her homage to Sarasvatī and the fathers after worshiping the householder's fire. Sarasvatī originally is a river-goddess. She is supposed to purify the bride. To the Aryan mind she is like mother with abundant milk. Hence she was also invoked during the marriage rite.

**AV XIV.22-26** describe the seat made of the hide of the red bull, by the side of fire. The bride is seated on this seat. While the bride sat on the hide, the priest prayed for progeny, safety from demons and for wealth in the form of cattle\(^1\). Later on Grhya Sutras also describe this rite in the same fashion.

**AV XIV.2.26-28** say that the bride should be pleasant to all the household, the father-in-law and his whole clan.

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1. वि सिंचनो मातृस्वा
   
   श्रुत्स्या मनानास्ति: पुलशो नाथमाना: ।

   - **AV XIV.2.25**
AV XIV.2.30-32 again refer to consummation of marriage in unmistakable words. "The gods also formerly embraced their wives. Like the great Sūryā; O lady, you also sleep with your husband to be the mother of many children." This suggests that the intercourse was primarily regarded as a holy act to beget children.

**AV XIV.2.33-36** again refer to Visvāvasu. Now this Gandharva is asked to find out another maiden, since this one is married. This is the beginning of the Visvāvasu rite prescribed by the Śutrakāras. Dr S. C. Sarkar on the basis of AV XIV.2.33 regards union with a Jāmi (sister) sitting amongst the fathers as Visvāvasu's birthright. He further contents that the marriage being celebrated was also between Jāmi and her brother. But this inference is farfetched.

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1. श्रेरूत साध्य शुक्लवास्मानेव
प्रजा जनय पत्तेऽप्पो छ।
बिन्द्राणीव भुक्ताना वक्ष्यमाना
क्षोभिर्दश सुकुम: प्रति नागराति॥२॥

2. **RV X.85.21-22** also request Visvāvasu to live as the bride.

On the other hand Jāmī came to mean exogamous or non-marriageable group in the later Vedic period. AV XIV.37-39 again refer to the consummation of marriage. This frequent reference to the consummation of marriage very clearly indicates that the bride was a grown up and mature girl.

AV XIV.2.40. Prajāpati is invoked to give the couple progeny.

AV XIV.2.41-44. The bride rises from the nuptial bed. Her garment is to be given to the priest. According to Kausīka this and following six verses are uttered when the water is being heated for bathing the bride.

AV XIV.2.66 is uttered when the bride is bathed again.

AV XIV.2.51 refers to wearing a new garment.

AV XIV.2.59-61. Agni and Savitā are invoked to guard from harm caused by the wailings of the bride or other people in the groom's house.

Bloomfield and Whitney opine that this and the following three verses have no connection with marriage.


2. यदोमे कै त्रिषः जना कुले ते
   वम्भिश्रुतः वर्देः न कुष्णन्तो ते घन्म
   गविन्दश्या तस्यादेव: सत्विताः व प्रभुक्षताम । । ।
ceremonies, but rather with wailing for the dead which are regarded as ill-omened and require expiation. These perhaps refer to the wailings of the bride's kinsmen while she was forcefully being carried away by a person wanting to marry her against her wishes. Later on this came to be regarded as Ḍakṣṇasa form of marriage.

AV XIV.2.63\(^1\) is uttered by the bride while she scatters 'Pūlya' grains\(^2\). "Let my husband live for hundred years". Perhaps this is the beginning of the Ḍājāhoma of later times.

AV XIV.2.64. Indra is requested to unite the couple like a pair of cakravāka birds.

AV XIV.2.65-67. This is an incantation to do away with any witchcraft that might have been done during the marriage ceremony. The word 'vivāha' occurs here for the first time.

AV XIV.2.66. After the bride is given bath and dressed up her hair is combed to take out defilement.

AV XIV.2.69 is for driving away 'Yakṣa' i.e. disease from the bride's limbs.


\(^2\) Shrivalled grains.
AV xiv.2.70 is about giving a new girdle to the bride as part of her dress. It is said that she is being girdled with milk, herb, riches and progeny.

AV xiv.2.71 is uttered by the bride-groom.

"He I am, she thou; I am a\~ma, thou art a\~ma; heaven I, earth thou; let us come together here; let us generate progeny." All these three similies indicate complete unity between the married couple.

AV xiv.2.72-75. All these verses are prayers for long life, happy married life, companionship of the two, general well-being and progeny.

III) The other Data scattered all over the AV

Apart from the above, there are a few other references which are important for our topic of discussion. These will be examined under different groups as those connected with

1) The Age of the Bride.

2) Polygamy.

3) Social Customs.

1) The Age of the Bride

In Atharvana\~veda there are spells and incantations to compel love of man and woman.

1. अमेवमानीः का त्वम् सामाहिष्मृक्तत्वं
   भोगीन पुष्पितो त्वम् ।
   ताकिं वं नवाच युजनामा जनमावे ॥
AV VI.89.2 says¹ 'Let the mind and heart both be full of love'.

AV VI.13. is a spell to call the lover to think about the lady and to come back to her. All these suggest that when a maiden was married she was grown up and that she knew the implication of love-making.

AV XX.126.10 refers to a lady who went to Samana. This again refers to Samana where young folk gathered to choose marriage partners.

2) Polygamy
   a) The word 'Mahisī' which means chief of the queens² suggests that king had more than one wives.
   
   b) AV II.18.2 says³ that the lady should be favoured amongst the co-wives. It is desired that the cowives should be destructed.

   c) AV VII.113.2 uses the word 'Parivṛkta'⁴ which means the neglected wife⁵.

   d) These few references to plurality of wives do not go to prove that it was a practice followed

1. AV III.18, VI.89, 102, 130; 131; VII 36, 37, 38 all these are spells to compel love.

2. AV II.36.3.

3. समस्तकामकोशि सपन्तुबिष्टन में द्रा: स्वाहि । ।

4. परितक्षणता श्वास्तक्षणक वजने । ।

5. cf. KEITH and MACDONELL, 'Vedic Index' pp 496-7.
by the masses, but that it was followed mainly by the
kings or rich people.

3) **Other Social Customs**

1) *AV VI.112.3* uses the word *Parivitta*. It means an elder brother whose younger brother is married before him. This indicates that at times younger brothers got married before the elder brother.

2) *AV III.30* gives us the poetical ideal of the family. It says that the wife speaks sweet words with her husband. It emphasizes upon the unity of thought and cooperation of all the members of the family.

*AV V.21.3* uses the word *Visvagotrya* meaning belonging to all families. The word *Gotra* is used here to denote blood relationship or family name. In the *AV* it was used to mean 'cow-shelter', 'cloud' or 'assemblage'.

**Conclusion**

After examining all these references we arrive at the following conclusion:

(A) In addition to *Mastagrābha* and *Vahana* there are many small rites described in the *AV XIV*, i.e. *Vivāha Prakaraṇa*.

1) The bathing of the bride before the

1. For the meaning of *Parivitta* and *parivrktta* cf. *Keith* and *Macdonell 'Vedic Index'*, p. 496-7.
Hastagrabba is described in detail. First a pierced piece of wood is removed from the water. Then the water is heated, afterwards the bride is bathed with the accompaniment of the mantras. The father and the brother of the groom are watching this rite.

2) After this she is adorned with a piece of gold on her forehead and then tied to right and left pole of the yoke. AV XIV.1.40 and 41 were recited when this rite took place. This was supposed to bring wealth to the couple.

3) After this the bride was girded with a girdle, the priests gave her blessings. They said that she should beget many children for her husband and should give him long life. She should obey her husband and rule his household including the father-in-law.

4) The groom brings a smooth stone from the lap of the earth and asks the bride to step on it. He invokes Savita to give her long life.

Then the rite 'Hastagrabba' is performed. After this ceremony the bride’s hair is parted with a blade of grass. Bhaga, Asvins and Tvasta and Dhata are invoked to protect the bride on her way to her husband’s home.

5) First she pays her homage to the householder’s fire, Sarasvati and to the Fathers on reaching the house of the in-laws.
6) Then she is seated on a seat made of the hide of a red bull. While she sits the priest prays for the safety from demons, for long life and progeny.

7) Then follows the consummation of marriage. The husband is asked to embrace his wife as the gods embraced their wives for the sake of progeny. This and the preceding rite together, are the beginnings of the 'Chaturthī Karma' or the rite performed on the fourth day of marriage.

8) As the bride got up from the nuptial bed she was bathed again. As she wore the new clothes she gave the old garment to the priest to nullify the effect of kṛtyā, diseases and witchcraft. After this the two prayed for progeny, long life.

(B) **The Gods invoked**

Just like the _RV_, the _AV_ also invokes many a god to bestow happiness, prosperity and progeny on the married couple. It follows the _RV_ in praying and invoking Agni, Indra, Bhaga, Purandhī, Soma, Varuṇa and Vīśvadevaś. But here also it makes its own additions. Sīrṇivalī the lunar goddess aiding the birth of children Sarasvatī the river goddess purifying the bride, Āpūmnapat sweetening the water of the bridal bath, Tvaṣṭar to give her clothing, Brhaspati

1. cf. _San. Gr. S._ I. 19
2. _AV_ XIV.2.15.
who gives her good hair, Yakṣmanāsīni who keeps away diseases and Paripanthankīnāsīni who wards off danger on the road, are the new additions.

(C) Just like the Ṛgveda there is no reference to oath to be taken by the bride or the bridegroom. The bride, while scattering Pūlya grains prays that her husband should live for hundred years. The two together pray for happy, long, married life, children and wealth.

(D) **Social Customs**

1) The people of the Atharvaveda age believed profoundly in the witchcraft. During the marriage ceremony incantations were muttered to keep away Kṛtya, diseases and witchcraft. Similarly the bride was bathed before marriage to protect her from evil influences.

As it has been mentioned earlier the men and women in this age used spells to compel love of the person whom they loved. The spell affected the eyes, the brain and the heart of the person concerned and made him or her pine for the person who sent the charm. Afterwards the two became partners and shared sorrow and happiness of each other as married couple. This

1. *AV* XIV.2.57 and 65.

usage of spells and charms to secure a bride or the bridegroom is really a special aspect of the Atharvanic Age.

2) As in the Rgvedic times in the Atharvanic age also only the grown up and mature girls were married. As we have noted earlier the word 'nari' is used for the bride frequently. The maiden is conscious and fully aware of her responsibilities as a married woman. She also knows the proper implication of the marriage rites which she is going to witness. So in the Atharvanic Age also the child-marriages were a rarity.

3) There was a practice of giving bride price perhaps in the form of cattle. It cannot be stated with authority that every bridegroom gave this price. But we can say that some people paid bride price.

4) Regarding polygamy one can say that it was not a common practice amongst the masses. Since spells and charms are found in order to win love of the husband from co-wives; it appears that there were a few cases where men, particularly kings, married more than one woman.

5) The use of the word 'Parivitta' tells us that in some cases the younger brother got married before the elder brother.
6) It must be noted that over and above the earlier mentioned points the following beliefs still persisted in the society - the beliefs about a) Viśvāvasu b) Varuṇasya Pāśa c) giving away the malinavastra and d) the bride first being married to three gods before marrying a human being.

7) It was a practice to give the bride a 'Kosa' or a settee which she took to her husband's house along with other gifts.
3. **THE DATA FROM THE XV**

In this chapter it is proposed to examine the data from the *Yajurveda* and its three *Samhitās* as follows:

A) *Vāj. Samā.*

B) *Kān. Samā.*

C) *Tait. Samā.*

D) The XV

A) *Vājagnēyī Samhitā* (*Vāj. Samā.*):

There is no separate section dealing with the sacrament of marriage in the *Vāj. Samā.* So I have tried to gather the scattered references.

1) *Vāj. Samā.* 3.60.3. Rudra is requested to release the bride from the bond of love which ties the maiden to the parents' household. She should not be released from the bond which binds her with her husband's household. In the RV and the AV we read about *Varunasya pāśa* from which the bride is freed. But here this concept of *pāśa* finds clearer expression as the bond of love between the daughter and her parental household.

2) *Vāj. Samā.* 15.50.1 refers to plurality of wives. "We shall follow Agni along with our wives."

1. *Kān. Samhitā* 3.69 repeats the same.

2. "पुप्पुविन गराम्भे अणुविन्य ते ठिकैनारः अर्थशकविक्ष्ट अन्धनालिम्षो फुलो मागुः।"
   - *Vāj. Samā.* 3.60.3

3. "त पल्लवित्वितम्यं केश्वः।"
   - *Vāj. Samā.* 15.50.1
Similarly Vāj.Sam 23.36.1 refers to plurality of wives while describing the Asvamedha sacrifice. Vāj.Sam. 29.41.1\(^1\) compares the two ends of a bow to two wives. As the two wives whose mind is attached to one and the same husband look after him, in the same way the two ends of a bow bear the arrow. Here the text refers to two wives of a common man.

This clear reference to plurality of wives indicates that by the time of the RV the Polygamy had become a common thing as the text refers to many wives of an ordinary man. In the times of the RV it was more or less practised only by kings and very rich people. But as the days passed on it started infiltrating the masses.

3) Vāj.Sam 17.97 compares somadhara to a newly married young lady exposing or making show of, her youthful limbs. As this young lady is full of lustre, in the same way the somadhara is also full of lustre. This goes to support the fact that the bride in the Vedic age was mature young lady and not a small girl.

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1. ते आचरणित्व समेत गोष्टा
   मातेले पुत्रं क्षिप्ताशुदपि
   अपि नृत्यित्त्रः सयित्ताने अति
   खिमे विभुर्णस्य जलितानुः

2. कुण्या सक्षिप्त बहुवैक्षिण्यस्य सबसे
   सन्नवल्लानां सन्नियुक्तस्य भि
4) Vaj.Sam. 23.30.1 and 23.31.1 throw a light on some customs common in the then society. "If a deer eats Yava grain (from the field) and grows fat a farmer does not like it in the same way if a woman of low caste has an Ārya lover her husband does not like it. On the other hand a low-caste lover of an Āryā is not regarded with honour". It indicates that some women had extramarital affairs but it was not liked by society.

5) While discussing Purusamedha in Vaj.Sam.30, quite a few words interesting from the point of view of our discussion occur

1. avasya² — the commentator Mahīdhara explains the word as an Ārya³ woman married to a śūdra. This indicates the practice of inter-caste marriage.

1. यदृचिन्ने क्षमति न छुट्ट पुष्प चलते ।
   ज्ञाना यदद्वारा न पोषय धनायति ॥ - Vaj.Sam.23.30.1
   ज्ञाना यदद्वाराय न ज्ञानाय न पोषयति ॥ - Vaj.Sam.23.31.1

2. किषोर - "क्षोरो गन्तार्थम्। पुंसकोऽपि - व्यवचारिषोष, अतिश्वेतरोपि -
   कल्यंति कृष्टिपाद्य परिवित्तम्। इति किषोरो ज्ञनोः। परिविद्यामपि अनुकी
   ल्येन्ते क्षणिन्सम्। सेरिधिष्ठा परितिः। ज्ञेष्ठाया गुणामुक्तिमात्रा सेरिधिष्ठा। क्ष
   —quoted from the commentary of Mahīdhara on Vaj.Sam
   30 published by Panduranga Jiwaji Mirnaya Sagar
   Press, Bombay.

3. The Kāṇya Samhītā 34.5 repeats all the words quoted from chapter 30 above.
2. pumaścalī - the commentator says that this means a lady having unlawful or extra-marital love-affair.

3. sūta - a son born of a brahmīn mother and a kṣatriya father.

4. kumarīputra - a son born of an unmarried woman.

5. atiśkadvari - a woman who is highly immoral.

6. jāra and upapati - both the words have one and the same meaning i.e. lover of a married woman.

7. parivitta - the person whose younger brother is married while he is unmarried.

8. parivividana - the one who is married before his elder brother.

9. edidhisuh pati - the husband of a daughter whose elder sister is not married.

Now the case with which the words ayogy and sūta are mentioned suggest that both anuloma and pratiloma marriages were in practice. The words jāra, pumaścalī, atiśkadvari, kumarīputra and upapati would suggest a highly demoralized society to a person of later ages who believed in sanctity of marriage. It is an accepted fact that in every society there are persons - men and women both - who have extra-marital relations. The ease with which these are mentioned suggests that the society at the time of the YV accepted such people and their affairs as facts of life and did not raise a hue and cry about them
and did not condemn them severely; they were regarded as people not approved of by the society. The notions about immorality and culture developed later on. And in course of time the dharmasāstrakāras issued strict injunctions about sanctity, holiness and morality of the marital relations condemning extra-marital relations.

6) At the beginning of the Adhyāya 23, the mantras to be recited to accompany Āśvāsanākāra are given. This āsambhara forms part of the Āśvamedha yajña. The first wife of the sacrificer is asked to sleep next to the sacrificial horse. "O, horse I attract the fluid from thee which causes conception. And you emit that fluid. On this sacrificial ground let us (you and me) spread our four legs. Let the horse emit his seed" (23.19-20). After this follows frolicsome talk in which the priest vividly describes the act of intercourse and teases the lady.

1. Kānya Samhitā 23.34 also deals with the same theme repeating from Vājasaney Samhitā 23.

2. 'दधिकारणं बम्बस्य बंस्कारार्थम्' - कौष्ठाचारीं.

3. आह्मेता गर्भवन्त व्यवहारिः परम्परा गर्भवन्त 119.11. ता गुणो चुरंय यदि संस्कारमार्गा: स्वैं लेके प्राप्तवायो गुण। वाना स्त्रोधः तेंदु दधारु। 120.11.

4. मदल्या ब्यू बेठा: कुश्म चुंधुपासर । मुक्कविद्या बेड़िसी बेला को बियु ईटुकनाथिम । 128.11. This also occurs as AV.xx. 136.1. but the context is different.

5. उक्ता स्थपतिके कक्षिकताः समसृतिति वर्णिति । आह्नित्व पुनेः प्रसों नियत्करिन्ति धारका । 122.11.
She in her own turn says that the reference to the noise made by the semen in the female organ and also to the movement of the male organ in the female organ was not liked by her. In the end the priest prays that he should be excused from the evil caused by his irresponsible talk and that his Vāk should be purified.

All this discussion reflects some primitive condition of society from which the vedic people had already emerged out. It's perhaps the memory of some custom followed in the past. The society in the Vedic age had already accepted the sanctity of the male and female relations. The vedic man and woman enjoyed sex mainly to increase progeny and to follow the same path which was practised by the gods. The marriage rite and ceremonial gave religious and social recognition to the sexual behaviour of male and female. So this description of the Āsvamālakāra is incogruous. But one thing is clear that the people of these times spoke very freely, without any reservations about sex and marital relations.

B) Kārya Samhitā (Kān. Sam):

The Kārya Samhitā (Kān. Sam) also belongs to the Sukla Yajurveda. As shown in detail by Pandit Satavalekar in his edition of the Kārya Samhitā as many as 1700 verses

1. दुःशिकाच्या अक्षारिंश्च किंतरमध्या शालिनः ।
   नुविन नेवेल कर्मण गारूण्यामेव लालितः ॥ ॥

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are common to both the treatises. It is needless to add that they reflect the picture of one and the same society in their contents. Earlier in the foot-notes I have shown the mantras that are common to both the treatises. However a few more need to be quoted as they are useful for our topic.

1) Ōṅ.Śam. 3.49 gives us a picture of a man happily going home¹. His family members are mentally and intellectually very good.

2) Ōṅ.Śam. 13.36 uses the word Supatnīḥ which indicates plurality of wives.

3) Ōṅ.Śam. 15.16 uses² the word 'Adhipatnī' which signifies a wife who is chief among many others. This also goes to support the view that polygamy was practised in those days.

4) Ōṅ.Śam. 16.72 again mentions plurality of wives³.

5) Ōṅ.Śam. 22.25 uses the word 'Supatnī'⁴ which again goes to prove the plurality of wives. All these words refer to ordinary mortals and not to gods or kings.

1. कृत्रिम पितृर: जुन्नता: सुवन्धः: पुरुषम्। शुभेष्ठा:
िङ्गात्मीकम् कर्मान् नोदेवान: = Ōṅ.Śam. 3.49.

2. 'दिनांकिताः कृत्रिम कृत्रिमः' दिक्षु:

3. 'त पत्नींभिरंसु मकेम देवम:

4. वृत्तां वन्नु नेरण: सुपत्नीः:
6) *Kān.Śām.* 21.74 is a candid description of intercourse.

C) *Taittirīya Sāṁhitā* (*Tait.Śām.*)

1) *Tait.Śām.* 1.1.10 refers to plurality of wives. The commentator explains the word *Sapatiḥ* as the wives who had a good husband.

2) *Tait.Śām.* 1.1.10 also refers to *Varunasya pāsa* which binds the unmarried daughter to her father’s home.

3) *Tait.Śām.* 1.1.14 refers to *Vijamātā* i.e. an undeserving son-in-law. The commentator says that such a person had to pay price for the bride. *Tait.Śām.* 1.1.14 is same as *RV.* I.109.2.

4) *Tait.Śām.* 2.5 deals with the *Pravāra Mantras.* In these mantras, *Agni* is invoked to carry the oblations to the gods. Along with *Agni* the ancestors of the *Hotṛ* and *Yajamāna* are also invoked. It was then believed that the bride and the bridegroom should not have the same *Pravāra,* meaning the list of ancestors. This is perhaps the beginning.

1. शेतो हर्ष विकारी गोविन्द प्रबुधविद्विन्दुः \\
    सुरो नवानाट्यकुडः जःहा जन्मना ||

2. 'ङ्गुलोऽङ्गुलः स्थानः स्वामः पवित्रा ताः ||

3. सन्तनः प्रार्थितर्वतः यो विज्ञानक्तत वतः घा स्वालः ||

4. विज्ञानाता-चिन्तनेवो जागरिता विक्षो जागरिता देशीत्वादित्या प्राणा कहोहैदाति || सामः.


of the prescriptions later on laid down by Dharmaśāstras.

5) Tait. Sam. 1.7.5 is titled as 'Prathama patni samyajā mantrāh'. It says that Tvaśṭā himself gave the form of 'couple' to animal beings. Agni himself is the lord.

Tait. Sam. VII.5.9 describes a part of the Mahāvrata sacrifice. To the south of the Maṛjetiya shed another screened shed is raised. In this sacred place, it was required; that sexual intercourse between man and woman took place. This probably is a symbol for indicating the creation by Prajapati to whom Mahāvrata sacrifice is specially a pertained. Dr S. C. Sarkar believes that it was the brahmanical counterpart of some popular spring festival wherein there was much of song and dance, swinging and intermingling of men and women, running into the extremes of promiscuity. One can say that his inference cannot be properly justified when one goes through the text. Perhaps some folk festival from the hoary past has found a place on the sacred ground of vedic sacrifice. It does not certainly permit promiscuous behaviour and intermingling of either sexes. At the most what one can

1. शा अधे निक्षुनायेः सेतस्तर्यस्यस्यंस्यं स नि
कस्तीनेष मित्रायन्य यथा।

2. Dr P. V. Kane, "History of Dharmaśāstra, Vol. II.
   pp. 1244-1245.

3. OP Cit. Dr Sarkar, p.94.
say is this that this particular part of the sacrifice reflects a primitive mind that speaks freely and candidly about sex-life.

Tait. Sam. III.5.6. This passage of the Tait. Sam. gives us a few mantras that accompany the marriage ritual - First the preceptor ties a girdle round the chosen bride with the words, "I tie you with milk and ghee, I bind thee with the medicinal herbs, I bind thee with progeny, to-day she is inunciated for this sacrifice". Then the bride announces her acceptance to enter her own world. The two go round the fire, preceptor recites a few mantras to her and offers oblations to Vasu, Rudra, Aditya and Vīgvedevāḥ. There are wives of the house and there are wives of the gods also. Following the goddesses only, I procreate and increase my clan. From this couple only Prajāpati increased the progeny. So the sacrificer also increases his progeny. This mantra gives a religious background to the act of procreation. The man increases his progeny following the lord Prajāpati.

1.

This resembles RV X.85.24.
6) **Tait. Sam.** VII.2-8. The word Vivaha\(^1\) occurs here again as it occurs in the AV\(^2\).

D) **Yajurveda (XV)**

The data from the XV shall be presented as follows:

a) The choice of a Partner  
   1) **XV. 6.1**\(^3\) speaks about the choice of the educated girls and boys for their marriage partners. It says that the well-educated and well-brought up young people should marry only the people educated and brought up in the same way.

   2) **XV. 6.24** says that the lady teachers who are training girls should enable them to find out a well-

1. च्युनाव तबिद वाहति प्र वस्मा विवाहस्माप्ने लिः जेवं वेद 

2. Cf. AV. XIV.2.65.

3. देवाराप्र:  जुन्दा वैवं सुपरिक्षिता देवेषु 

4. ब्राह्मण नेिस्तमानुष्ठान सदरिक सादमान्न्द्रार्योत्सेः फेकरि सः च्युतान्तरण्यायो। फेकरि सः च्युतान्तरण्यायो सः च्युतान्तरण्यायो सः च्युतान्तरण्यायो सः च्युतान्तरण्यायो सः च्युतान्तरण्यायो 

- **XV. 6.13.**

- **XV. 6.24.**
educated husband from all others. The girls were taken to a gathering where people of marriageable age had assembled. It must be noted here that in the education of the young girls such topics as looking after household, behaviour with the husband and other in-laws, dealing with the servants were also included.

3) **XV. 8.1** also says that a young maiden should select an unmarried young person for her husband. All these go to prove that in the times of the Yajurveda marriage partners were selected by the young people who were helped and trained by their teachers. A grown up girl was fully equipped to choose her own partner and she was also well-trained to take up the responsibilities of the household.

The mention about the lady teacher taking the young girls to an assembly supports our contention that 'samanas' were held during Vedic times. In these 'samanas' many a maiden found her marriage partner.

b) **Cooperation of the Husband and Wife**

1) **XV. 6.34** says that the husband and wife should cooperate with each other while performing householders' duties.

2) **XV. 11.41, 42; 11.50-55; 13.19 and 14.2** harp on the concept that for happy and successful married life cooperation of the husband and wife is of absolute importance. This emphasis on cooperation suggests that both the bride and the bridegroom were of mature age.
3) **XV. 8.10** clearly refers\(^1\) to a request from a newly married wife for consummation of marriage. It also implies that a man should have marital relations only with the woman to whom he is married. This shows that the people believed in the sanctity of marital relationship.

4) **XV. 8.26** describes the duties of husband and wife. It says that the wife should give birth to the children as desired by her husband and he should protect his family.

5) **XV. 8.42-43** says that a wife must look after her husband properly.

6) **XV. 8.46\(^2\)** is spoken by the wife of a dishonest person. She wants to bring him away from the wives of other people. This reminds one of the charm used by Arharvanic maiden to win the love of her beloved.

7) **XV. 11.49\(^3\)** is addressed by bride to her proposed bridegroom. She wants to marry him if he is brave and could guard her from enemies and protect her from

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1. यज्ञातिं क्रुष्णिं रेतोधा रेतो परिपूर्णेषां।
   पुष्पकम्भौऽहूऽसेषसेषेः रेतो धार्मिकेऽः।

2. नवठर्मान्नत्वा पञ्ञुन्ना द्वैदेशिनि।
   मुल्लूर्मान्ना स्थ्वा पञ्ञुन्ना द्वैदेशिनि।

3. तिलास्तिं सुपुर्णा शोभावाणी।
   आर्ययुक्तं द्रिष्टं पशो अमेवा।।

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\(^1\) \(^2\) \(^3\)
diseases and if he could make available for her a shining
and well-decorated house.

8) *XV. 11.50* says that the married couple should
not separate from each other even during war time.

9) *XV. 12.35* says that every person should get
married.

c) **Oath to be taken at Marriage Ceremony**

1) *XV. 12.65* is an oath to be taken by the
bride at the time of marriage. She says, "O lord, I, like
earth, tie this religious bond round your neck, the tie
which is not to be broken; for your sake I enter that
bond. After this none of us two will behave unlawfully
(or dishonestly).

d) **Qualities of a Bride**

1) *XV. 14.22* speaks of the qualities, a wife
should possess. She should be lustrous, she should be
attractive; she should be firm like sky. She should help
achievement of desired object, bravery and richess.

e) **Description of the Marriage Rite**

1) *XV. 15.53* describes the actual marriage

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1. यद ते देवी निःस्करितायुक्त पार्षद प्रीताधिकाल्यम्।
   तेज देवी मेधाविनायुक्त न पार्षद प्रीताधिकाल्यम्।

2. यद ते राज युन्नवाचश अस्ती घृताधिकारिण।
   तथे त्सीवेष्ट त्सा तुषाष्ट्र त्सा पोषाय त्सा।

3. सुभ्रंशुप्रसादपुरे सुभ्राभिनवात्मनुष्ठित देवमनाने कृप्याधिकम्।
   पुनः कृप्याविनायुक्त देवमनाल्यायाक्षेत्रे त्सा नान्तुकेशम्।

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rite. The sacrificial fire is lit. The bride and the
bridegroom are requested to go round the fire, while
doing so they are asked to stoop as to avoid fire. And
Agni is requested not to harm them while they are going
round the fire. Fire is requested to make path for them
as he made paths for god and fathers. Herein for the
first time we come across the words expressing actual
going round the fire. The couple is asked to bend down
to fire to show respect. Herein we find the beginning
Saptapadi, rite which later on became one of the very
important rites of the marriage ceremonial.

Conclusion

From all these references one arrives at the
following conclusions:

The Yajurveda adds two more rites to marriage
ceremonial:

a) The oath-taking ceremony. It is the bride who
takes oath. She refers to a bond that she ties round the
groom and herself enters into it. None of the two will
behave dishonestly once the bond is tied. This is the
beginning of the oath of the later times viz.

'Dharme ca arthe ca Kame ca natcarami'

b) 15.53 clearly indicates the bride and the
groom going round the fire. The couple is asked to stoop
to the fire in order to show respect and the Fire is
requested to make their path comfortable. This is the
beginning of the *Saptapadi* rite.

We can trace a few social customs from the above data:

(a) A lady teacher escorting her students to a place where prospective bridegrooms have gathered, to choose their marriage partner, supports the view regarding the custom of *Samana* i.e. the assembly where young people gathered to find their marriage partners. It must be noted that the elderly teacher was also present to guide her students.

(b) The above mentioned point, the description of the education of girls to make them eligible for marriage, the constant harping on cooperation in married life, the bride’s reference to consummation of marriage; the oath taken by the bride; the choice of the bride in selecting the bridegroom – all these amply prove that only the grown up, mature girls were married.

(c) The data from the *Yajurveda* very emphatically harps on cooperation and honesty of the couple leading to happiness in the married life. Perhaps the importance of this was revealed as the society had witnessed unhappy homes where either of the partners was not loyal and cooperative.

(d) The occurrence of the words a *śayagū*, *pūṃscali*, *kumariputra*, *śuta* and reference to a brahmin lady having a *śudra jāra* or a vice versa, reflect the society to which the strictures laid down by the later Dharma-śastrakaras
were not known. It was rather a free society which had started realizing the bad effects of extra-marital activities. It represents a stage previous to the Society guided by strict injunctions regarding marital relations.

(e) The duty of the housewife was to look after the household, children and her husband’s property. On the other hand the husband was expected to provide comfortable and well-decorated house and protection from enemies and diseases.

(f) The couple was advised to stay together even during the war time.

(g) The words like Supatnīh and Adhipatnī go to prove the plurality of wives.

(h) The Pravara Mantras suggest that the Pravara of the groom and the bride should not be one and the same. This is the beginning of the Pravara and Gotra code which came into effect in later times.

(i) The word 'Vivāha' occurs in the Tait.Śām. as in AV.

(j) We can see that both the 'Anuloma' and the 'Pratiloma' marriages were in practice (cf. the word 'ayogu' and 'suta'). In fact they must have been quite common.

(k) Sometimes a younger brother or sister got married before his elder brother or before her elder sister.

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1. Cf. परिवर्त, परिविदान and शेषिनिग्री: पति.
4. The Data from Brāhmanas and Upanisads.

In this chapter I shall examine the data from the Brāhmanas and the Upanisads. The term Brāhmanas signifies that which relates to prayer. With respect to age they all date from Vedic civilization and culture to the Brahmanic mode of thought and order. As it is well-known the Upanisads are philosophical treatises and are not likely to furnish any direct reference to our subject of discussion. The great seers revealing the truth about Ātman are not expected to discuss anything about such a worldly topic as marriage. So one has to collect data reflected in the various myths, stories and legends which are narrated in these treatises.

I) The Brāhmanas

The data from the Brāhmanas shall be presented in the following groups:

A) References to Polygamy
B) References to Inter-caste Marriage
C) References to Incest
D) References to Exogamy
E) Status of the Wife

A) References to Polygamy

(a) Ait. Br. 12.11 is the first authoritative

2. "तत्त्रादेव व नि-विद्यमानः। तत्त्रादेवकालः क्योः ।
   जानः भविष्यं नैकस्यं कहोः कर्मकायः।"

reference to polygamy. It says that one man may have
many wives but one woman cannot have many husbands. Thus
it negativate the existance of polyandry also. This
passage has been later on quoted many a times by Sārtiśa
in favour of polygamy.

b) Ait. Br. 33 contains the story of Hariscandra.
It says the king had hundred wives but was unlucky enough
not to get a son from any of them.

c) Sat. Br. XIII. 4.1.8–9 1 say that the king had
four wives viz. 1. Mahîśî 2. Vâvâtâ 3. Parivrktâ and
4. Fålûgâlî. Mahîśî was the first wife, Vâvâtâ was the
favoured one, Parivrktâ was the unfavoured one and
Fålûgâlî was the daughter of one of the officials.

d) Sat. Br. XIII. 2.6.7 2 also refers to the plurality
of wives.

From these references it appears that the
practice of polygamy had become quite common. A person
who had no male off-spring married many-a-wife in order
to get one.

B) References to Inter-caste Marriage

(a) Mahîśâsa Aitareya was the seer of the
Aitareya Brâhmaṇa. He was the son of Itara i.e. a mother
who was other than a Brâhmani. The word can be interpreted

1. 'अतः जाय जुष्प-क्षणता भविष्य । महिषी भावाता
विश्रवस्ना प्राप्तादाने ।'
2. फलन्योऽस्मिस्त्रायुज्यत्ति ।
also as 'son of Itara'. In this case he would be a child born of extra-marital connexions.

b) *Ait. Br. 3.1* gives us the story of Kavasa Ailusα as he was born of a Sudra mother. He was not even allowed to drink water from the river Sarasvati and was driven out in the desert. But the goddess Sarasvati knowing about his misery rushed to him and he became a seer. Apām Napāt was the Devāta of his hymn. The Brāhmaṇas performing the sacrifice acknowledged and accepted his greatness.

This story of Kavasa Ailusα is important for our topic of discussion because it does show that society had started expressing strongly the dislike for children born of inter-caste marriages. However, if these children were gifted with high qualities of intelligence and learning, their superiority was accepted.

c) *Sat. Br. IV.1.5* gives the story of Cyavana Bhārgava. The story says that the king Saryātā gave him his daughter Sukanyā although Cyavana Bhārgava was old and decrepit. This also is an instance of inter-caste marriage, a Rajanya girl being married to a Brāhmaṇa. Here again a girl of lower class is married to a groom.

2. ते कववर्ष केशर्ष सोनादनमन्दास्या: पुत्रः बिजलो Sब्राह्मणः
कर्त्ते नेच सिंहे दृष्टिकृति: ।
3. मकर्ते Sस्त्रु रंधे ना ना रंधेलोऽ ।
तस्मथ स्योऽ वै: केशरो Sसिः । - *Kau. Br. XII. 3*. 
of higher class i.e. Anuloma marriage. It is maintained by scholars that in most of the cases Anuloma type of marriages took place. W.H.R. Rivers names this peculiar form of marriage regulation as HYPERGAMY, i.e. a woman must marry a man of her caste or sub-caste or one belonging to the caste higher than hers. It is difficult to say this was a strict rule but an example of Pratiloma marriage is difficult to be found. This story also indicates that Sukumāya had no choice about selecting her marriage partner. She was given to the old sage to calm his wrath aroused by stone-throwing of her brothers.

d) Sat.B. XIII.2.9.8\ again says that the son of a Vaisya mother and a Brāhmaṇa father is not to be honoured by sprinkling water on his forehead. This again supports my view that the society had disliking inter-caste marriages.

e) Ait.Br. II.19 shows that the son of a brāhmaṇa father and a śūdra mother was regarded as a brāhmaṇa\ and that a brāhmaṇa could marry a daughter of a warrier.

f) Agastya a brāhin was married to Lopāmadra. The son of sage Atri was married to a princess i.e. a kṣatriya. These examples show that there was no restriction about the inter-caste marriage of Anuloma type.

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2. 'तत्सन्ताणेपुत्रं नामिकिन्निति'

3. Later on the Śastrakāraś call this varnasamkāra.
C) References to Incest

"Incest is sexual commerce of near kindred". The myth of Prajapati is an example of a father who being allured by the beauty of his own daughter was swept away by his passion. This myth is very important for our topic of discussion as some scholars like Dr. G. Sarkar, on the basis of this have concluded that promiscuous conditions prevailed in the Vedic times. However, I shall deal with his arguments in detail in the following chapter.

a) Sat. Br. 1.7 gives us the myth of Prajapati who conceived passion for his own daughter. The myth further tells us that Rudra pierced him by way of punishment and cut out a part from his body.

b) Sat. Br. 1.7.4.1 tries to explain the above myth by identifying Yajna with Prajapati and his daughter with sky or dawn.

c) Ait. Br. 13.9 also relates the same story. But the seer is undoubtedly sure that Prajapati has done something which should not have been done.

d) Sat. Br. 1.8.3.2 says "in the third or fourth generation we unite". This certainly prohibits marriage of father with his own daughter. Further it points out

1. प्रजापति हुं मै स्वा कुर्वलस्त्रस्तिहे । दिव लोकस्वा निन्युनमेवा स्वानन्ति तो वस्मुख ।

2. यह सेव प्रजापति ।

3. "अनुरूप वै प्रजापतिः करोतीसि।"
to some sort of exogamous restrictions.

e) Ait. Br. 33 tells the story of Hariscandra who had hundred wives but no son. The seer after emphasising importance of the son says "therefore amongst the animal beings a son sleeps with his mother and sister in order to get a son". It is very clear that the seer does not want human beings to follow the example of the animals. This utterance should be understood only as an attempt towards the glorification of the son. It does not indicate any incestuous or promiscuous behaviour in the society.

From the above presented data I find it difficult to agree with Dr S. C. Sarkar as regards the existence of promiscuous conditions. Incest of Prajapati and his daughter was totally disliked by the Vedic priests. Moreover these myths about super-human beings should not be taken as a proof of customs among human beings. The attempt to give symbolic meaning to myth also indicates that it should not be taken literally.

D) References to Exogamy

Exogamy is a device to regulate working of sexual cravings or to regulate the strength of sexual instinct.

1. "तस्मात् पुजाते मातरं इस्कारं चाविराहिति"

2. The arguments presented by S. C. Sarkar will be dealt with in the next chapter while reviewing the Vedic period.

The Hindu exogamy has two aspects, viz., (a) Sāpindya and (b) Čotra or clan exogamy. The data presented above shows that the people in the times of the Brāhmaṇas did not approve in marrying up to third or fourth generation.

About Čotra or clan exogamy one can not find any passage directly or indirectly referring to it.

Dr A. C. Banerjee in his work 'Studies in the Brāhmaṇas' interprets the word 'Jāna as marriageable, exogamous group and Jāmi is similarly interpreted as non-approachable or non-marriageable group. The words sajāta and samābandha signify the fellow clansmen. Dr P. V. Kaner understands the word 'gotra' to indicate blood relationship or surname in the period of the Brāhmaṇas. Čotra was not yet associated with Pravara. Dr S. V. Karandikar also opines that sept exogamy was in its infancy in the days of the Brāhmaṇas and that there were no strict regulations about it. As we shall see later on although the rules of sept exogamy have been introduced in the Grhya Sūtras it must have been in vogue, from times much prior to Grhya Sūtras. Hence although any direct reference to sept exogamy is absent in the Brāhmaṇas some notion about it, I may state, had already started taking shape in the Brahmanic period.

3. 'Hindu Exogamy', p.18.
E) **Status of the Wife**

a) *Ait. Br.* 33 says that a wife is a friend. This suggests that she was given equal status as her husband.

b) *Ait. Br.* 33.1 further says that the wife is called a *jaya* because the husband is born again in her. The wife was very important because she gave birth to sons.

c) *Sat. Br.* V.1.6.10 says that the wife is the half of one's own self. This again ranks wife on equal footing with her husband.

d) *Sat. Br.* I.9.2.12. This passage for the first time regards woman as inferior to her husband as it requires of her to eat after her husband and not with him.

e) *Ait. Br.* VII.15 gives us a contrast between a son and a daughter and expressly regards daughter as inferior to son.

f) *Ait. Br.* XII compares the troop running away from the offending army to a shy daughter-in-law hiding away from her father-in-law. This clearly indicates the brahmanic author wants the daughter-in-law not to take the charge of the household as in the times of the *RV* but now

1. 'तनानो जागा महति यद्यपि जाप्ते पुनः।'

2. 'तत्क्षणामाथानस्यपि न ह वा केवल आत्मनस्य 
   यज्ञाय।'

3. 'सदा मैथवः चन्द्रा भवेद्वास्तुर्जनानां निषोनानां 
   केति केवलया वा केएना जन्माना निषोनानात।'

4. *RV.* X.85.
she is expected to be modest and shy in front of the elders. This is the beginning of the feminine modesty which has marked the Hindu society for ages to come.

g) *Ait. Br. XIII.13* gives us interesting picture of the sister-in-law (sister of the husband), probably widowed, and that of the wife of the brother. The wife of a brother is placed higher in position and the sister is dependant upon her brother’s wife who is born of another mother. Even in the modern times one observes that the same practise prevails to some extent.

**Conclusion**

From the data presented so far we conclude as follows:

1) As there is no mention of ‘marriage rites’ it can be inferred that the society was still following the same ritual as in the times of the *RV*.

2) It was customary for a man to have more than one wife particularly when he had no male issue.

3) Inter-caste marriages mainly of Anuloma type took place. But the society had started expressing dislike for the children born of such marriages.

4) The story of Prajapati involving incest should not be treated as a proof of such custom existing among human society. Marriages of near kings did not take place in

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1. तत्तद्विते समानोदयं स्तवं अन्योदयायम् जायते अनुमानिनः चीमति

the settled society of man.

5) The beginnings of group or clan exogamy can be traced in the Brahmanas.

6) The wife was treated on par with husband. A man who was unmarried was not qualified to perform sacrifice. But the idea that wife is inferior and subordinate to her husband has found its beginning in the Brahmanic period.

7) A wife was expected to be shy and modest. She was not supposed to talk with a feeling of equality with her father-in-law.

8) The widowed sister had to accept the superiority of her brother's wife.

II. The Upaniṣads

Before starting the discussion about the Upa I may mention that I have restricted myself to the data from the eleven Upa viz., Ṛg, Kena, Katha, Mundaka, Māndukya, Aitareya, Taittirīya, Praśna, Chāndogya, Brhadāraṇyaka and Śvetāsvatara. The main reason for restricting our investigation to these is that they form the earliest and oldest strata of the Upa. According to Muktikôpamihad¹ there are hundred and eight Upa. But we are not considering other Upa which belong to the later times.

1) The Chap. Upa. VI.2.3² is an important passage

1. The Nuktika Upa. I.30.39 gives the list.

2. सैस्कामकक अद्हुन्या प्रमाणे --- जिद्य सम्बन्धुक !
   Cf. also Tait. Up. II.6.
explaining the creation of the world. "He desired I shall manifest (myself) in various forms. He thought and he created all this. (universe)". This passage has been relied upon for limiting sepul exogamy by the later writers. There is at least a small part of the creator in every body. Thus everybody is a Sāpinda of everyone else. So the word 'Sāpindya', to use the later terminology, has only a restricted sense. The Sāṅtikārās belonging to the later times given it a restricted meaning specifying some particular number of generations on father's and mother's side.

2) Chan. Up. I.10² contains the story of Uṣasti Cākṛayāṇa a sage who lived in the country of Kuruṣ with his wife Ātikī. Āṅkara explains the word as 'a mere undeveloped girl'. This is one of the rare references from the Vedic period which speak of an immature girl as wife of somebody.

3) Chan. Up. IV. 1 and 2 contain the story of Raikva, is described as sitting under the cart. The king Jánaśruti came to know that Raikva, who was so poor as to take shelter under the cart, was a sage who really possessed

1. Par. M. I.2. p.59
2. जस्ते हेतु कुष्ठ्रयांविष-या कह जायोक्ष्यिंहि चाक्षायण: विनम्रायमे प्रशािक सुवास।
3. 'अनित्व-या अनुभवसितोधरानिर्देशविधियतनया? संकर।
4. 'सप्तवानक्षि रैव-विमान्येति'
the knowledge of the Highest Deity. Raikva was not only poor but had the habit of scratching his body all the time as he was suffering from eczema. Now a rich and wise king like Janaśruti offered Raikva a thousand cows, ornaments, a chariot driven by mules and his daughter. Now the king who belongs to the Kṣatriya class is giving away his daughter in marriage to a pauper suffering from eczema. It is not certain if Raikva belonged to a lower class than his wife for he himself addresses the king as a śudra in this story. But probably this is an example of an inter-caste marriage. The story clearly shows that it was the father who decided about the choice of the son-in-law and the bride had no say in the matter.

4) Chan. Up. IV.4 contains the famous story of Satyakāma Jābala. As his mother says in clear words in her youth she was moving with many men and hence she did not know who his father was or to which Gotra he belonged. Later on we are told that Gautama, the son of Haridrumata, impressed by the straight forwardness of the child took him as his pupil. This story clearly indicates that in those days pure qualities carried more weight than the

1. 'तद्धुः पुनः ज्ञानः ज्ञानानुति: पौर्णिम: सहर्षः फलो 
   निकक्षकम्येतरस्य दुहितरः बदोद्रो यस्तदा य भविष्यते॥
   = Chan. IV.2.3.

2. 'नाहेवेष्टेद तात गद्यर्मस्ववसं कह्वा च चर्मी। 
   परिवारिनो शौकन्यो स्वामयेष्वः वियम्: क्षत्वकाम तेव 
   ज्ञानालो ब्रूवीय कित्' - Chan. Up. IV.4.2.
name of Gotra. Moreover even illegitimate children like Satyakama got a fair chance in the society as regards education and other facilities.

5) We have one famous example of polygamy in Upanishadic period viz. that of Yajnavalkya. The learned sage had two wives one was Gargi and the other was Maitreyi.

6) Brh. Up. gives a list of the Vamsas. This and the Pravara Adhyayas of this treatise form a part of the Srauta Sutra. But they are not related in connexion with sept exogamy.

Conclusion

It must be mentioned that our conclusion on the data gathered from the Upanishads is entirely based on stories told in these treatises. As there is no direct reference to marriage sacrament it is not possible to follow the usual order in which conclusion is presented in the preceding chapters. I shall mention a few social customs that are reflected in the stories narrated in these treatises.

1) From the story of Ugrasthi Cakrayan it is clear that some people married girls who were just kids and had

1. Here the word Gotra is used in the sense of a family name and not as cow-shed or assemblage as in the RV.
not attained puberty. However these must be very rare cases.

2) The story of Raikva tells us that sometimes daughters were married to a person entirely of the choice of the father¹. The bride sometimes had no say in the matter.

3) The story of Satyakama Jabala tells us that the illegitimate children if well qualified got the same chance of education like other children. The manner and simplicity in which Jabala tells her son about his birth also indicates that society accepted such children without hue and cry.

4) The word gotra has attained a new meaning viz. that of family name in the days of the Upas. It must be noted that it was not yet connected with the selection of the marriage partner.

5) The example of Yajnavalkya shows that polygamy was still practised in the times of the Upas.

¹ The story of Sukanya narrated in the Sat. Br. IV.1.5 also contains example of a daughter given away in marriage by her father solely at her own sweet will.
5. A REVIEW OF THE MATERIAL IN THE VEDIC PERIOD

In the preceding pages I have presented the data from the RV, the AV, the YV and the Brahmanas and the Upanisads. This brings us to the end of the Vedic Period. Before proceeding to the Age of the Dharmaśastrakāras it is desirable to take a bird's eye-view of the data gathered and examined. In the first place I shall try to give a detailed description of the Sacrament of Marriage as is reflected in the preceding pages. In the second place an attempt will be made to give a detailed account of the Social Customs pertaining to marriage ritual in this period with the help of the data gathered. Thirdly I shall endeavour to find out the continuity or some kind of link between the two periods.

(1) How the marriages were arranged:

Right from the beginning of the RV the 'marriage sacrament' had attained the status of a social and religious institution. So it is very important to see how the marriages were arranged during the Vedic period. Generally the young people chose their own partners during the festivals like Samana. In this choice the daughters were helped by their mothers or they were

guided by brother and father\textsuperscript{1}. Sometimes a worldly wise lady took objection to her daughter marrying a pauper\textsuperscript{2}. There were a few cases when the girl was treated as an object of presentation and the father did not care for her choice\textsuperscript{3}. Once in a while a father accepted bride-price and gave away the daughter to an unworthy son-in-law\textsuperscript{4}. Even a lady-teacher helped arranging marriages of the mature girls whom she taught. The girls were well-trained\textsuperscript{5} in house-keeping, cooking, dealing with the servants, behaviour with the husband and the in-laws. The teacher took them to a place where marriageable youth had gathered\textsuperscript{6}.

If the young girl or the boy had a serious disease one found it difficult to get married. But the blind woman had all the sympathies of her father and the man who took her hand\textsuperscript{8}. A poor man or a man who did not achieve success as an intelligent and wise person found it difficult to get a wife\textsuperscript{9}; on the other hand a fair

\begin{enumerate}
\item cf. RV I.123.11 and RV IV.5.5 and RV I.124.7.
\item e.g. mother-in-law of Śāvasva.
\item e.g. Sukanya and the wife of Raikva.
\item RV I.109.2, Tait. Sam. 1.1.14. Also vide AV.XIV.1.32-33.
\item Cf. XV. 6.24
\item XV. 6.24
\item The case of Chosa.
\item The RV x.27.11.
\item Cf. the stories of Śavaśva and Raikva.
\end{enumerate}
women with abundant wealth found it easy to choose her partner. Usually a brother-sister marriage was not encouraged. The maiden belonged to other household and she was taken to her new house in a bridal procession. It was also a practice to marry beautiful women captured during war.

(2) **The Marriage Ceremony:**

Before the actual marriage ceremonies started, the wooers who were friends of the groom went to the bride's father and asked for the hand of the maiden for their friend. The father first conveyed his acceptance of the proposition and then the bride groom accompanied by his relatives arrived to participate in the marriage ritual.

After the bride's father agreed to the proposition of the wooers, the young maiden was bathed with hot water while the father-in-law and the brother-in-law watched the ceremony. She was properly dressed and adorned for the ensuing ceremony. A piece of gold was

1. *The RV X.27.12.*
3. *AV XIV. 2.59-61*
4. *RV X.85.9*
5. *AV XIV.1.35 and XIV.1.43-*
6. *AV XIV.1.45.*
tied on her forehead as a symbol of wealth. The gods were invoked to give her bewitching beauty and splendour. After the ceremonial bath she was tied to the right and left pole of a yoke. Then she was girdled with a girdle while the priests blessed her with progeny and long life.

While she was waiting in the ladies' apartment the priest made the holy fire and the groom offered āhutis in the fire. Then she made her appearance on the marriage scene and declared that she was desirous of marrying the appointed bridegroom. Then the bridegroom again offered āhutis to Ādityas, Vasu and Visvedevas and he wished that all the miseries of life should go away from her. He placed a smooth stone on the ground and helped the bride to climb on that. Savitā was invoked to give her long life. Then the two went round the fire and the priest invoked the fire to grant them progeny and riches. The bride and the bridegroom took oath that they would be loyal and honest to each other. After this a feast was given and the two left for their abode in a

1. AV XIV. 1.36
2. AV XIV. 1.40-41
3. Tait. Sam. III.5.6
4. Tait. Sam. III.5.6
5. AV XIV. 1.47
6. ṬV 15.53
7. ṬV 12.65
bridal procession. Mantras\footnote{1} were uttered to drive away diseases, and witch-craft. It was prayed that their path should be without robbers and thorns\footnote{2}.

After reaching the abode of the groom the bride was seated on a seat of the hide beside the fire. There she paid her homage to Sarasvati, householder's fire and fathers. The priests blessed her\footnote{3}. Then the consummation of marriage followed. Next morning the two took bath and the bride gave away her old garment. Hence onwards she stayed in the new house and gave birth to many children as desired by her husband. "The most general social object of celebrating the marriage rite is to give publicity to the union"\footnote{4}. This declaration or publicity of marriage achieves two objects viz. 1) it makes the sexual relations legal and 2) it also stops others from bringing new propositions for either of them. In the above described Vedic marriage rite the union of the two is declared to the society by celebrating it with a feast. The reference to Varunasya Pasa\footnote{5} symbolically announces that thence onwards the bride stands separated from her parental household. The couple is required to go round the fire

\begin{enumerate}
  \item \textit{RV} X.85.23, \textit{AV} XIV. 1.59-60 and 60-64.
  \item \textit{AV} XIV. 2. 7-8
  \item \textit{AV} XIV. 2.22-26
  \item Cf. Westermarck, "A Short History of Marriage", p.185
  \item \textit{RV} X.85.24
\end{enumerate}
while the priest utters mantras. This going round the
fire symbolically expresses that they have to perform
religious duties together. The giving away of malina
vastra to a brāhmin publically announces consummation of
marriage. Further, a number of prayers for progeny and
long life declare that the marriage was for begetting
especially male issues. It also declares that this tie
of marriage was a life-long bondage and could not be
dissolved easily.

This marriage rite also declares that the family
is to be an economic unit. The man must provide a
comfortable and well decorated house for his wife and
children. And the woman would look after the household and
be nourisher of the children.

(3) The Gods invoked:

Various gods were invoked during marriage ritual
to bless the couple with progeny, riches, immunity from
diseases and safety from enemies. The list of gods would
consist of Asvina, Ādityas, Visvdevas, Varuṇa, Sarasvati,
Bhaga, Puṣan, Aryama, Agni, Tvaśṭa, Ápam Nāpāt, Yaks-
manasini, Paripantri Nasinī and Purandhī. The idea in
invoking these particular gods and the significance of
the invocation has been already explained.

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1. Cf. YV 11.49

2. Cf. "The Ṛgveda" - Conclusion B and
    "The AV" - Conclusion B.
(4) **Social Customs pertaining to the Marriage Ritual**:

In the following discussion I shall restrict myself to deal with the following ten points:

i) The Age of the bride and the bride-groom.

ii) the bride-price and the dowry

iii) The status of a married woman

iv) Promiscuity

v) Polyandry

vi) Polygamy

vii) Brother-sister marriage

viii) Father-daughter incest

ix) Sept and clan exogamy

x) Inter-caste marriage.

1) **The Age of the Bride and the Bride-groom**

It has already been discussed in detail that the Vedic bride was a grown up, mature, young maiden who was well prepared to handle the affairs of a big household. Sexually also she had attained maturity and was capable of bearing children for her husband. The groom also had attained maturity and was eager to meet his wife. He was to shoulder the responsibility of a household and was supposed to protect his wife from diseases and enemies; he was also required to give her a decent


2. Cf. "VY", 11.49
household and comfortable living. To fulfil all these expectations required of him, it appears that the groom's age was about twentytwo years. The young boy spent about twelve years with his teachers and then he married a maiden of his choice. This also goes to support the above statement that the groom was about twenty years in age.

ii) The Bride-price and the Dowry:

The money paid for getting a wife is bride-price. There is no verse stating that the payment of bride-price was a must. The reference to Vijamata does indicate that some men, although not properly qualified to marry a young maiden, did marry one by paying handsomely her father. Westermarck regards marriage by purchase as of universal character in ancient times. In later ages the Asura form of marriage required that a price had to be paid to the bride's father. Herein we find the beginning of this custom.

There are many references to gifts being given to the groom along with the young maiden. Sometimes the girl herself was treated as a gift. But there is no verse

1. Cf. XV. 11,49
2. Cf. Foot note No. 4. p. 86 of this Chapter.
3. Cf. Nirukta 6,9
4. Cf. The story of kaksīvān, also Cf. RV X,85,13 and AV XIV. 1,6.
5. Sukanyā and Raikva's wife.
saying that the grooms tried to make fortune by demanding large amount of valuable gifts. The father willingly offered many a gift to his son-in-law because of his love for the daughter. Thus one cannot say that either the bride-price or dowry were absolutely essential in every marriage in the period under review.

iii) The Status of a Married Woman:

In the earlier Vedic period immediately after her marriage the wife became a very important person in the big household. She was probably trained by her mother to enable her to rule over her in-laws including the father-in-law. She had also to shoulder the responsibility of managing household chores by controlling the servants. On the other hand she had to obey her husband. Her spouse treated her as a friend. She was supposed to give birth to ten sons and increase the good name of the family. In the earlier period she was not a shy daughter-in-law dominated by the in-laws. But in the later Vedic period she was required to be shy and modest. This was the

1. RV X.85.13
2. RV X.85.26; RV X.85.46.
3. AV XIV.1.42-43
4. Ait.Br. 33.1, Sat.Br. V.1.6.10
5. RV X.85.40
6. Ait.Br. XII.
beginning of the shy, modest and dominated Indian housewife.

iv) Promiscuity:

Promiscuity is a state where there is no particular restriction on the sexual relations. Anybody can enjoy intercourse with any body else. There is no taboo on moral or sexual behaviour of people in general. Dr S.C. Sarkar¹ observes, "While in the Brāhmaṇa society the sex relations seem to have been too lax to admit of the practice of widow-burning". Elsewhere he remarks² "in the popular spring festival swinging and intermingling of men and women took place running into extremes of promiscuity". He also maintains that father-daughter-incest³ seems to have been once frequent and almost a permitted practice. "Father-daughter-incest either in the earliest Vedic or later Vedic period would only suggest promiscuity. A passage from Mahābhārata⁴ points out to freedom of intercourse. It says 'such state of affair still existed in the land of Uttarkuru'.

1. Dr Sarkar, "Some Aspects of Earlier Social History of India". p.82.
2. Dr Sarkar, Op.Cit. p. 94
3. Dr Sarkar, Op.Cit. p.75. This will be discussed in detail in the following pages.
4. महाभारत, आदिपर्व १९२ - अनाक्ष: विल युग्म ग्रीवा आसन्न
   बालान्ते। कामत्वदिवक्षिण्य: स्त्रीतथा: वायुर्धानिनी ---
   शुक्लायु क रम्यस्त अथायर्ब वषाठी।
However it is not possible to agree with Dr Sarkar's view that promiscuity existed even in the earliest Vedic period. His arguments can be refuted as follows:

(a) The statement of Dr Sarkar about burning of the widows is not acceptable. He states that because of too lax morality in the Brahmana society the practice of widow burning was not admitted. Here he is referring to a verse ¹ "Rise, come unto the world of life, O woman, come he is lifeless by whose side thou liest. Wifehood with this thy husband was thy portion, who took thy hand and wooed thee as a lover". This verse is to be recited by the brother of the deceased to make the wife of the deceased spring up from the dead man's bed, and to help her to resettle in life. The situation is like this - the wife of the deceased is not willing to leave him. So if her brother-in-law consoles her, he requests her to realize the truth that her husband was no more alive. By giving her a helping hand he accepts her responsibility. The son of a kṣatriya who was dead accepted the responsibility to protect the family by accepting the dead man's bow.² If the brother-in-law married her it was not because of too lax sexual behaviour but it was with a sense of duty

1. गुद्वर्यः नार्यिनः चौकोक्षेष फलाशक्तिनुप श्रेव शोषे ।
इस्तश्रामस्य दिवः स्वास्तिकार्यः धन्यां धन्यास्त्यस्मि श्रेयो यासः ।

2. RV X.18.9

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¹ RV X.18.8
² RV X.18.9
to accept her responsibility. This appears to be the beginning of the later Niyoga system.

(b) Further Dr Sarkar believes that the ritual of Mahavrata described in the Tait.Sam. shows that it was a brahmanical counterpart of some spring festival wherein there was intermingling of men and women running into the extremes of promiscuity. Actually this intercourse takes place in a screened shed to the south of Maratiya fire. This probably is a symbol for indicating creation of the world by Prajapati to whom the Mahavrata specially appertains. It indicates some folk festival of the hoary past attached to solemn Vedic sacrifice. It provided a sort of a recreation and relaxation after the tiring sacrifice. Hence it cannot be justifiable maintained that the intermingling of men and women ran into the extremes of promiscuity during this sacrifice.

(c) About the passage from Mahabharata I should like to say this. Mahabharata is not a history and hence cannot be relied upon as a true story. It is not a statement of facts and realities but fiction. Particularly in this case the country of Uttar Kuru is itself more or less mythical. This passage gives expression to poetical

1. महाभारतस्य अन्तिम या तदेक निलमायेक वेक्सर्ण- मुनयात्मरस्यदिनिः निंगीते स कुशलोदेव निलमानं यन्ति !
   Tait.Sam. VII.5.9

2. vide History of Dharmasastra, by Mm Dr P. V. Kane, Vol. II. pp. 1244-45.

3. History of Dharmasastra, by Dr P.V.Kane, Vol. II. p. 428.
imagination about the remotest ages and not to the facts of history. As Keith remarks, "The references to lax morality of previous times are made for the purpose of proving that the recognition of illegitimate children then accorded was antiquated at the time of the texts". Thus these references are made in a way to get a social sanction for the lax morality by quoting precedence. They are not statements of facts in history.

Thus the argument of Dr Sarkar do not hold water. Further our contention that promiscuity was not a regular practice in the Vedic times can be supported and proved as follows:

1. As I have shown earlier the marriage hymn binds the husband and wife together till they grow old and till the time the grand children are playing around them. It is also a social event that declares to the people around that the young boy and the girl are bound in a wed-lock so that no one should be sexually interested in them. The priest announces to the gathering 'Signs of good fortune mark the bride, come all of you and look at her, wish her prosperity, and then return unto your houses again'.

2. Westermarck observes, "Travellers unanimously agree that in the human race, the relations of sexes are as a rule more or less of a durable character. The

2. RV X.85.36
3. RV X.85.33
family consisting of father, mother and offspring is a universal institution. Even there is no doubt that the Gorilla lives in a family, same is the case with a chimpanzee\(^1\). It is well-known that the bird families are particularly seasonal. But the animals like Gorilla and chimpanzee, representing the advanced state of animal evolution are observed to have a sense of family i.e. parents and children. Even the great scientist Darwin\(^1\) does not agree with the contention that promiscuous conditions prevailed in the earliest stages of human civilization. On the other hand he considers that promiscuous intercourse belonged to a later stage of civilization when a man had retrogressed in his instinct and advanced in his intellectual powers. After knowing this trend of thought, it will not be fair to maintain that promiscuous conditions prevailed in the earliest Vedic period.

v) Polyandry:

Polyandry is multiplicity of husbands i.e. one woman marrying more than one man. As Dr. P. V. Kane\(^2\) remarks not a single Vedic passage clearly refers to the practice of polyandry, on the other hand it is expressly stated that a woman could not have more than one husband although a man could have many wives\(^3\). However Dr. S. C. Sarkar maintains\(^4\)

3. Tait. Sam. VI.62; Ait. Br. 12.11; Sat. Br. XIII.4.1.8-9
that certain polyandrous traits of Vedic and post-Vedic customs show evidently that the practice must have existed side by side or at not a very remote age. His arguments can be presented and examined as follows:

"The practice of polyandry is generally supposed un-Vedic, but though absolutely clear instances are not found in the Vedic texts, yet certain other customs of Vedic and post-Vedic society show evidently polyandric traits". To support this contention he has argued as follows:

a) "The later Niyoga is clearly a legal fiction, not a new device, but a modification of a wider traditional or popular practice - the custom that formed the basis of this reform and theory, must have been a survival of polyandry and connected devgar marriage'.

Thus according to him Niyoga is a reform of polyandry and connected devgar-marriage i.e. marriage of one bride with more than one grooms who are brothers. Herein firstly he assumes that in the earliest Vedic period the practice of polyandry existed. But this assumption itself can be questioned since he himself admits that absolutely clear instances of polyandry are not found in the Vedic texts. Later practice of niyoga was not just a legal fiction to provide a face-saver for some immoral sexual behaviour. On the other hand it was possibly a solution

to help a sonless widow to get a son for the family. Perhaps it was a best solution particularly when the people of those days yearned to have sons. Even the connected *Devar-marriage* which he presupposes cannot be proved. As I shall show in the following pages his readings *Devar-kama* and *Virasah-Devar-kama* are not accepted either by the texts of the Vaidic Samhodhana Mandala or by Griffith.

b) "The *didhiyu* brother-in-law's immediate and acknowledged claim on the widowed sister-in-law", according to Dr. Sarkar, points to the likelihood of his having been looked upon as a possible (or even secondary) husband before widowhood. Instances of such view are frequent and clear in the epic and puranic tradition referring to Vedic Age".

His argument about the *didhiyu* brother-in-law can be refuted as follows. Firstly if he was looked upon as secondary husband during the life of the main husband, one would come across quite a few clear references in the Vedic texts, to multiplicity of husbands. Secondly the wife of many husbands would not be lying beside the dead body of husband as other husbands would be existing to protect her and to give her comforts and pleasures of family life. Thirdly if one takes into consideration the tempo and mood of the *RV x.18* one would feel that she is being helped by the brother-in-law to come out of her

1. *RV x.16.8*
remorse. It is absolutely necessary to take immediate action because unless the leaves his body no fire can be put to it unless the wife also is to share the funeral pyre with him. The urgency is not because the devr and the widow are eager to live as husband and wife but because of the peculiar circumstances. Lastly the word didhisoh has been construed with 'tava patyuh' by Sayana and not with the word devr. Griffith also follows Sayana in his translation. Thus Dr Sarkar’s contention based on didhisu brother-in-law’s immediate and acknowledged claim to the widowed sister-in-law’s hand does not hold water.

c) Dr Sarkar further argues, 'so also in several passages of the marriage hymn the bride is described as 'devr-kama', desiring union with the brother-in-law —— Ṛśvalayana’s school preserves apparently a much earlier Vedic tradition. According to which these rights (of claiming the widow) belonged not only to brothers, but to any other representative of the family e.g. a pupil or a familiar slave'.

1. "दृष्टिकोण: फर्मिन्य निवालु: तत्र अस्त्र पत्रुः सम्बन्धादातमकुः" p. 331, RV. Samhitas edited by Vaidic Samādhanamandala.
3. Ṛṣv. Gr. IV.2.18 quoted from Dr Sarkar, p.79 footnote 7. Actually the passage that he is referring to is IV.2.15.
The argument of Dr Sarkar based on the reading accepted by him viz. devṛ-kaṇa does not stand because the reading accepted by the Vedic Sāṃśodhana Mandala is deva-kaṇa; Griffith translates it as 'loving the gods, delightful, bearing heroes, bring blessing to our quadrupeds and bipeds'. In the preceding line of the same verse she is described as "not-evil-eyed, no slayer of thy husband, radiant and gentle hearted". Hence it perfectly suits the mood of the stanza to describe her as god-loving and not as desirous of brothers-in-law with a view to matrimony. Hence the basis of the assumption about the connected - devṛ - marriage itself cannot be accepted.

He also refers to a passage from the Āśv. Gr. wherein the same topic as in RV x.18.8 is being discussed. "Her brother-in-law, who is a representative of her husband, or a pupil (of her husband), or an aged servant should cause her to rise (from that place) with the verse, 'arise, O wife, to the world of life'. Here again the wife is lying beside her deceased husband and the main object is to cause the wife to rise up from the funeral pyre. Possibly the words devaraḥ and patithiṣṭāḥ refer to

1. कीर्षुद्वेक्काम मनोयोगः श्रवणश व च वन विलये सं च क्षुद्रये ॥
   RV x.85.44

2. तामुत्थायनेऽद देयतः पतिभोगो स्तवार्थः नन्दाचेतो वोदोऽभि
   नार्म्यमि जीविकोक्तमिति ।
   - Āśv. Gr. IV.2.15

3. पतिभोगः पतिभान्याः ।
two different persons. Any one who is representative of her husband should do the job. This is a duty of a responsible representative of the husband, connected with the family and does not warrant a right to marry the widow. In the latter case the mention of an old servant - _jaradasa_ would appear ridiculous. Hence this passage does not support practice of polyandry.

d) Dr. Sarkar further argues "Thus in some of the marriage Mantras there is scarcely any sense in the bride's being held as 'vīrasuḥ devṛ-kāma' unless the marriage referred to in these passages is taken to be polyandric. So also, in some of the consummation mantras 'we' and 'men' and husbands may very well refer to these devṛs as desired by bride along with the chief husband. To substantiate his argument he gives example of Maruts enjoying their common bride and Sūrya mounting the car of the two Asvins.

This again takes support from the wrong reading 'vīrasuḥdevṛkāma' while the correct reading is 'vīrasuḥ devṛkāma'. About the use of plural in the consummation mantras I have earlier stated that the plural has been used only because of the poet's exuberance and enthusiasm. Hence it does not indicate polyandry. **Geldner** in his

1. Vide foot note no. 1 on p. 102.
2. Vide Data from RV, comment on RV X.85.37
3. Cf. **Geldner**'s Translation note 6 on X.85.37
German translation understands the words "Yasyām bījam manusyaḥ vapanti" in a metaphorical manner where the wife stands for kṣetra, the field. Thus Geldner does not take the plural to indicate polyandry. Similarly neither Sayana nor Griffith interprets it as indicating polyandry. Further the Hir. Gr. I.20.2 requires that the bridegroom should recite this ṛk at the time of Hastagrama when only one husband is performing the rite.

e) Dr Sarkar has given examples of Maruts and Sūrya - Asvinau to substantiate his argument. Unfortunately none of the two examples quoted is about a human being but about super-human beings. These cannot be taken as examples of polyandry since they are from the super human world and belong to the poet's imagination.

The next argument of Dr Sarkar is as follows:

"There is however less uncertainty where at a sacrifice the wife is described as having noble husbands, her evident importance and the fertility ritual which includes her denuding and wetting in the presence and with the help of the conductors of sacrifice¹ are probably indications that the rite was originally performed by the joint husbands of a common wife.

In this he takes evidence from the fertility rite but he has not quoted the passage on which he has based his argument.

The Tait. Śaṁ. III.5.6 gives us a few mantras that accompany the marriage rite. It uses the word supatnīh which if taken out of context may suggest polyandrous state. The plural is used because it qualifies vayam. Vayam stands for the priests and the bridegroom. The word can be best understood as suggesting polygamy rather than polyandry.

g) He further quotes Tait. Śaṁ. VI. 1.5-6 as suggesting polyandry. But actually these mantras are explanation of the Somakraya mantras and have no direct reference to polyandry.

h) The mention of three previous husbands viz. Soma, Varuṇa and Agni according to Dr Sarkar is a relic of gradually disused custom of polyandry, that was transformed into an allegory.

This statement about the three previous husbands of the bride is a poetical expression. It does not at all suggest three previous marriages of the same girl with three different husbands. On the other hand it suggests that the girl was helped to attain maturity by these three gods.

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1. सुप्रकटत्वा कर्य सुपत्तनीन्द्र नैश्चितिम ।
2. लेखनम: पति: गाया ता: ।
3. RV 1.85.40. This has been discussed in detail while presenting the data from the RV.
1) Lastly Dr Sarkar states that the custom of using matronymics also supports his contention that the polyandry was practised in the early Vedic period. To quote his words, "The striking custom of using matronymics in early as well as later Vedic literature may have originated as much (or even more) in a practice of polyandry and laxity among Brāhmaṇa women with resultant uncertainty of paternity, as in that of polygamy". He quotes the Vedic cases of Māmateya and Jabāla to support his argument.

His argument about the use of matronymics can be answered as follows: The two matronymics quoted by him are 1) Jabāla i.e. son of Jabāla and ii) Māmateya i.e. son of Māmatā. The first one is an example of a child of a slave girl. This is one of the exceptional cases of a son not knowing the name of his father. In every society this type of irregularity is found and hence it is not justifiable to deduce any conclusion regarding the whole society from such exceptions. The same is the case with Dirghatamas Māmateya. The RV¹, Sān. Ara. and Ait. Br.² use this more or less as a proper noun. Thus both these are exceptional cases and cannot be used as proof of polyandry.

Further in the Vamsā list of the Brh. Up. one

1. RV I.147.3; RV I.152.6; RV I.158.5
comes across a number of patronymics. Their number is much more than that of matronymics. Hence the use of matronymics is more due to polygamous society and not polyandrous one.

Thus it is not possible to prove that the earliest or the later Vedic society was polyandric specially because there is no clear indication of the same in the Vedic texts. The premises on which Dr Sarkar has based his arguments viz. certain Vedic and post-Vedic customs, cannot be derived from the extant Vedic texts.

VI) Polygamy:

It has been already explained that the Vedic society was polygamous so far as the rich people like kings and priests were concerned. But the tendency amongst the masses was monogamistic. However in the later Vedic period it has started infiltrating amongst the common people also. For the sake of male children people married more than one wives.

VII) Brother-Sister-Marriage:

The brother-sister-marriage was not unknown to the Vedic society. But the Yama-Yami dialogue does indicate that the society had already known about the bad effects of such inter-marrying. In the age of the later Samhitās it is clearly stated that "people should

1. Vide Data from the RV. B.5.
2. Vide Data from the Brā. and Upa. I.A.
unite in the third or fourth generation. By the end of
the Vedic period the brother-sister-marriage had fallen
in disuse.

VIII) Father-Daughter-Incest:

Father-daughter-incest is the case of the father
having sexual intercourse with his own daughter for bearing
children or otherwise. Such a state of affairs could be
found only if promiscuous conditions prevailed. As I have
already shown promiscuous conditions did not prevail in
the Vedic age.

The myth of Prajāpati having sex-relation with
his own daughter has given rise to controversial question
whether father-daughter-incest was permitted in the Vedic
or earlier Vedic age. Dr S. C. Sarkar remarks: "The case
of fathers and daughters is not equally clear; but seems
to have been once frequent, almost a permitted practice.
These forms are explained mythologically in the Brāhmaṇas.
Still the fact remains that such a relationship serves as
a simile or allegory and is described in a manner that
shows approval". His argument in support of the above
conclusion can be presented and examined as follows:

(a). Mythological features very often have a basis

1. Sat. Br. 1.8.3.2.
2. Vide No. IV of this chapter.
in primitive conditions which the believers in those days may have outgrown or grown out of actual and traditional events to justify which legends are interwoven in course of time.

Here again Dr Sarkar is relying upon mythological data which is not desirable. Dr Winternitz rightly observes that one cannot infer that the Greeks in ancient times used to devour their children because in the Greek myths Kronos devoured his children. The gods are superhuman beings. Mythology is a work of the poet's imagination and so cannot be used to draw inferences about social facts of human life.

(b) Dr Sarkar further argues, "The ascription of such connexions to Prajapati and his daughter or Puṣan and his mother shows that the Vedic priest could still conceive of such relationships as not at all damaging to the practice of his gods.

His contention that the priest did not think it damaging to the personality of the gods is also not acceptable. Since the seer opines that Prajapati has done something wrong that should not have been done. The story continues to tell us that, that part of Prajapati was pierced by Agni as a punishment.

1. Cf. comment on polyandry in this chapter.
2. Introduction to Dr Sarkar, Op.Cit. p.VIII.
3. 'अकर्तवं वे प्रजापतिः जकरोत्तु।'  
(c) Further Dr Sarkar relies upon the Gatha in the Ait. Br. According to Dr Sarkar this particular Gatha says "for the sake of sons men are said to unite with their mother and sister as with a wife".

As I have explained earlier this Gatha is about animals and not human beings. The topic under consideration in this famous gatha is how even the animals realized the importance of giving birth to a male child. In order to emphasize the importance of the male issue this Gatha has been included and it is really speaking an Arthavada.

(d) Such facts, according to Dr Sarkar, point out the practice of appointing a daughter to bear a son for her father, while remaining with him, such a son being regarded as father's own son.

As the facts relied upon by Dr Sarkar are not dependable his conclusion based on them vis. that a daughter was appointed to bear a son for her father is not acceptable.

(e) Further Dr Sarkar gives an interpretation of the word 'duhitri' to support his conclusion about father-daughter incest. "duhitri' primarily implies no connexion with father

1. नापुर्णश्च लेकिन स्त्रीलिङ्ग ततः येव पशुः बिठ ।
   तत्समतु। पशुः मातृः स्वकारः चान्तिरोहिलो ॥

2. शेषम तद्विध्यायः क्त्स्कीम मुर्गिक्यास्य चिस्तोकायां ।
   तत पश्चिन्तः पशुः कवित्रिः च तत्समते पावंकपिं विच्छल्लोऽविच्छवित ।

   — Ait. Br. 33.

2. Cf. 'Data from the Bra. and the Upan. foot note No. 1 on p. 76.
as such but simply denotes a woman as 'nourisher of a child' or 'potential mother'. With the passing of primitive conditions the daughter's position would change and she would come to be appointed to bear a son for her father's family in an indirect way.

If one accepts his interpretation of the word 'duhitrą' as having no connexion with father but only to denote a woman as potential mother, it would not be justifiable to understand the same word as 'nourisher of child' (with no reference to father) and also as one being appointed to bear sons for her own father, duhita either denotes one being appointed to bear sons for somebody except her father or 'a daughter'. The mixture of these two meanings does lead us to undesirable conclusions. If Gorilla and Chimpanzee could have a sense of family unit why not the primitive man? Moreover the son of a brotherless daughter was treated as a son by her own father. But this son was born because of the marital relations of the daughter and her husband and not her own father.

(f) Dr Sarkar further argues 'The father-daughter connexion as more or less a recognized practice or permissible

1. Yaska's interpretation: प्रशासित वै रात्रि सत्तान्नकमेः
   दुहित सुभाषणः। दुहिता दुहिता। हुरे हिता।
   देशेती । नवाससुवर्णका । देहिता प्रेतिनिता।
   - Nirukta 3.31.3.

2. Cf. foot note No. 4, p. 97 and foot note no. 1 on p. 98.

3. Cf. the Data from the RV foot notes Nos. 2 and 3 p. 22
licensure, could possibly have originated in a primitive strongly patriarchal society which being still unsettled would have a limited supply of women, in such case the essential sons not ordinarily obtained would come through the daughter”.

From the above examination of Dr Sarkar’s argument, it is clear that father-daughter incest was neither more or less permissible licence nor a recognized practice. Dr Sarkar presumes that there was limited supply of women in the primitive society during Vedic times. But if this was the case one would come across quite a few references to non-availability of wives and/or to undue importance given to daughters being wooed by many males with a view to matrimony. Moreover the custom of paying heavy bride-price and bargaining position of a father of marriageable daughters would have become prominent in the Early Vedic Age.

After critically studying the arguments of Dr Sarkar one notices that over reliance on myths and legends has led him to wrong conclusions. Secondly quite a few times he refers¹ to 'moral laxity of brahmāṇa women'. But to a student of the literature of Vedic Age it is clear that the brahmanism as a caste had not emmerged in the age of the Vedas. On the other hand quite some marriages²

1. Vide Dr Sarkar, pp. 81,82.
2. Vide No. X. Inter-caste Marriage below
took place among different classes. So it is difficult to understand why he has branded brahmana women with lax morality. Thirdly some of his arguments are based on wrong readings of the Vedic text and hence do not hold water.

IX) Sept or Clan Exogamy:

Except for a reference in Sat. Br there is no clear statement in the Vedic tradition about sept or clan exogamy.

In the later age the Dharmasastras come out with a number of recommendations and restrictions about Pinda and Gotra exogamy. Although one cannot find any direct statement relating Gotra and Pravara with the selection of the bride in the Srutis, the fact that the word 'gotra' had come to attain the meaning of 'family name' does indicate that some such exogamous restrictions were being followed in the later Vedic period.

X. Inter-caste-Marriage:

The concept of caste was not fully developed in the Earlier Vedic Age. Classes were formed according to the nature of occupation. As I have shown earlier, inter-caste marriages were quite common. But usually a woman of lower caste married a man of higher caste.

1. Sat. Br. 1.8.3.2.

2. Cf. Data from the Brrg and the Uga. I. D.

3. The Data from the RV conclusion 13.

4. e.g. Sukanya married Gyauna Bhargava, Rodasi married Kaksiyat, Lopamudra was married to Agasty.

1
2
3
4
But example of a maiden of higher class marrying a man of lower one is rarely to be found. This particular type is known as hypergamy 1.

To the end of the Vedic Age the children born of such intercaste marriages have come to be regarded as non-brāhmanic 2. But even then those who were really talented like Kavaśa, Ailusā, Satyakāma Jábāla and Mahīdāsa Aitarāya got due recognition as seers.

Thus we have come to the end of the Vedic Period. In the next part I shall examine the data from the Sūtras.