CHAPTER IV

FAMILY LIFE

The Family is the most important social institution. It is the starting point of interactions for an individual at the micro level. A family typically consists of the parents and their children. It is a cohesive and well-knit set-up wherein close and intimate relationships like husband, wife, brothers and sisters live together. The family lineage owes a lot to its forefathers for the uninterrupted growth of the family tree.

4.1 Parents

Both father and mother play the most important role in bringing up their children by protecting, nourishing, guiding and counselling them. The children look upon their parents as their primary role models.

4.1.1 Mother

A mother is the most confidant and friendly person to the children.

4.1.1a Mother as consoler

A daughter gets solace by telling her difficulties to her mother.

Ākalpepi śramadhihikatairangarāgepi khinnaib!
Aksamyadbhibh smṛtimapi muhuḥ saukumāryātyreketān! 168

A mother rushes to the rescue of her child.

Niśamyapasyaḥ paruṣam ninādam rūkṣam yāsodā ruditaṃ ca sūnob

Samsambhramāvegamupetya bhīta tamagrahid durgrahamāgamānām. 169

4.1.1b Compassionate mother

There is intimate emotional tie between the daughter and her mother.

A mother weeps at the separation of her daughter from her beloved husband.

Shailavyaktraprativilapitāṃ sāndratāpānuviddhām

Tavānānāṃ nayanasarilairātmātaram te sabāspām

Paśyantīnāṃ prabalamadananmādadaparyākulum mām
Prāyo jātam kimapiruditaṃ vyomni kādambinīnām. 170

4.2 Marriage

Marriage is the major social institution which is responsible for social order and unity. Family gets its origin and gains respectability through marriage. The family lineage enjoys decorum and legitimacy through the same. The couple, comprising the husband and wife, are emotionally bound to each other. The family welfare takes precedence over individual well-being.

168 Hamsa Sandesam ii-15
169 Yadavabhudayam iv-5
170 Hamsa Sandesam ii-39
Marriage is an institution in the sense that it is a relation between two individuals which fulfils a social necessity.\textsuperscript{171}

This recognition of marriage as a social need renders it an institution in the sense that it functions as the means of development of the parties to the marriage relation.\textsuperscript{172}

According to Westermarck, “marriage is rooted in the family rather than the family in the marriage”\textsuperscript{173}

Psychologically, marriage involves an emotion between husband and wife.\textsuperscript{174}

Ethically, marriage involves “a free surrender of the private self” of the one party to the other and implies a kind of common life between them, in which their respective narrow and selfish interests are curbed and they sacrifice their petty preferences in order to adjust themselves to each other.\textsuperscript{175}

The performance of the marriage ceremony produces or is calculated to produce in the new couple the sense that marriage is a sacrament and not a contract, and that they have to take their new life seriously.\textsuperscript{176}

*Vedānta Deśika* sanctifies the marriage as the pillar of the family institution and underlines the significance of unity and well-being of the couple.

The couple shall remain united.

*Muhravadhīritopī bhajatiha yuvā ganayan*

*Hitamatibhūri-tāna-vasudhe vanitām tarasā*

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\textsuperscript{171} A.C. Das, “An introduction to the study of society” Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi: 1972 P.118

\textsuperscript{172} ibid P.119

\textsuperscript{173} Westermarck, History of Human marriage Vol.I Macmillan and Co.Ltd. London, 1921 P.72


\textsuperscript{175} ibid P.117

\textsuperscript{176} ibid P.155
Sapadi vihāya mānamiyamrechati tam prathisam-
Hīta-mati-bhūritā nava-sudheva nītānta-rasā. 177

4.2.1 Husband as comforter

*Vedānta Deśika* portrays husband as one who offers comfort and protection to his wife. The wife feels fully secure and safe when her husband is alive. A husband speaks sweet words comforting his wife.

*Itham hrudyairjanakatanayāṃ jīvayītvā vacobhiḥ*

*Sakhyam pusyan dinakarakule dīpyamānairnarendraiḥ*

*Svairam lokāṃ vicara nikhilāṃ soumya laksmyevavīṣnuḥ*

*Sarvakāraistvadanugunayā sevito rājahamsyā.* 178

The wife feels fearless when her husband is alive.

*Sakala surāsurasmahita māhātmyeṣu yu śmasu jīvatsu nityam nirbhayāsmī.* 179

4.2.2 Joy of Union

*Vedānta Deśika* portrays human mentality which rejoices fast in union but suffers long during separation. He celebrates the joy of union. In his view, a good wife shall stand by her husband even in times of crisis.

177 Yadavabhudayam vi-42
178 Hamsa Sandesam ii-48
179 Sankalpa Suryodayam iv P.257

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Time is spent fast in union and time seems endless in separation.

Velātitapraṇayavivaśam bhāvamāseduṣornou
Bhogārambhe ksanamiva gata pūrvamāliṅganādyaiḥ
Sampratyeṣa sutanu śataśab kalpanāsaṅgamaiste
Cintādirghaib api śakalitā śarvarī nāpayatī.\(^{180}\)

The beauty of the wife holding her husband’s hand is pictorially described.

Sandhyoparāgasamayam pratilabhya
punyam snātum niśā gaganasoudhatalavatirnā
draktarupamavalambayatā karagram patyā
saha praviśatvā param samudram.\(^{181}\)

The wife follows her husband and stays with him even when he is in sufferings.

Tātādesāt sapadi bharate nyastarājyābhisekam
Yā mām ekā vanamanugataḥ rājadhānim vihāya
Tameva tvāmucitaśayanām bāhumadye madhye
Dūre krutvā guṇavati! muhūrdāyate jīvitaṁ me.\(^{182}\)

\(^{180}\) Hamsa Sandesam ii-33  
\(^{181}\) Yadavabhudayam xix-37  
\(^{182}\) Hamsa Sandesam ii-42
4.2.3 Separation

_Vedānta Deśika_ portrays a bitter picture of a woman separated from her husband.

Even _Indrāṇī_ suffered the separation from _Indra._

śacyāḥ kleśam kvacana samaye tādāruśam cintayitvā
Smṛtvā devimacalatanayāṁ viprayuktām śivena

_Raksātmanam kathamapi śubhe! Jivitālambanam me_

_Patyuśchandat vyasanamapi hi ślāghaniyam vadhūnāṁ._

A wife separated from her husband has to fear about many dangers.

Matprastāvapranamathā sā maithili mānayet tvāṁ
_Mlānam śokāt vadanaṃkalam kinjīdunnamya bhīrub_
Antastosādamṝtalaharilabhāhasabrahmacaryaiḥ
_Ambhojānāmuṣasi miṣatāmantaraṅgairapāṅgaiḥ._

A wife separated from her husband discards all jewels.

_Tasyāmanyairviyati vihagaiḥ sārdhamānandānighnaiḥ_
_Sthāne sthāne nihitanayano vartayan mandalāṇi_
_Drakṣasyekāṃ janakaduhitub soumya durjātabandhum_

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183 ibid ii-46
184 ibid ii-29

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Nyastākalpāṁ kvaṇaṁ vītāpe sīṁśupāṁ sāndrasākham.\textsuperscript{185}

4.2.4 Chastity

Chastity of both the husband and wife is a great moral and ethical value, worth following from a societal perspective. The policy “one person, one spouse” is a healthy safeguard in these days of millions being afflicted by dreaded AIDS. This calls for proper understanding between the couple besides effective sense control for strictly upholding the code of conduct.

Values are a culture’s general orientations toward life—its notions of what is good and bad, what is desirable and undesirable. Values themselves are abstractions. They can best be found by looking for the recurring patterns of behavior that express them.\textsuperscript{186}

\textit{Vedānta Deśika} stresses the importance of upkeeping chastity and moral values.

Chaste women are flawless and they maintain the social order.

\begin{quote}
\textit{Nava yauvana durmadāṇḍha nārī}
\textit{Duritopapla va dūṣitāpi jātiḥ !}
\textit{Anapāya pativrata pravāhaḥ}
\textit{Adhunāpi pralayāṇna yāti satsu !!} \textsuperscript{187}
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{185} Hamsa Sandesam ii-8
\item \textsuperscript{186} Henry L. Tischler, “Introduction to Sociology,” Harcourt Brace College Publishers, New York: 1996 P.77
\item \textsuperscript{187} Sankalpa Suryodayam vi-25
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
4.2.5 Mensuration

Mensuration is a social taboo which expects women to stay aloof during that period. Their physical body, food and clothing are perceived to be polluted.

_Vedānta Deśika_ makes mention about the custom of women staying aloof from other members during their mensuration period.

Women during mensuration period lived aloof from others.

_Rajonubandhādabhisamavṛtāṅgī bhāsvatkarasparśamanaśnuvānā_
_Nivvātāśāvitistadāsit nabhassthali nākibhirapyadṛśyā._ 188

4.2.6 Polygamy

Polygamy is a practice observed in certain segments of society wherein one man has many wives.

Polygamy is a form of marriage in which a man has many wives, while bigamy is a form in which a man has only two wives. These two forms prevailed at different stages of social evolution. They are found even in some present day societies. 189

There is mention about polygamy in the works of _Vedānta Deśika._

He sported in water with his wives. 190

_Rucirakanaśa ṣyagā vaktravāntāḥ pratitanukumukma vāribhiḥ prasiṇcayan!_  
Ajanayadanurāgayogamantarbahirapi toyavīhārato vadhūnāṁ!!  191

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188 Yadavabhudayam xx-25  
190 Yadavabhudayam xxiv-27
4.3 Son
Son holds the key to the future of any family, as he is looked upon by the parents for fulfilling the dreams and desires of the family as a whole. The duties and responsibilities of a son are onerous. The society expects a son to properly and sincerely discharge the same.

According to *Vedānta Deśika*, a son shall obey the instructions of his father. He is also duty-bound to repay the debt of his father.

4.3.1 Obedient son
A son obeys the order of his father.

*tātādeśāt sapadi bharate nyastarājyābhiṣekam*

*Yā mām ekā vanamanugata rājadhānim vihāya.*\(^{191}\)

4.3.2 Redemption of debt
A son shall redeem the debt of his father.

*Diviṣadhipati raṇa sahacaraṇa catura daśaratha caramaṇa vimocana*\(^{192}\)

4.4 Brotherhood
Brotherhood represents strong and intimate relationship which lasts long since birth in a family.

*Vedānta Deśika* explains about brotherly affection in his works.

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\(^{191}\) Hamsa Sandesam ii-42
\(^{192}\) Raghuvira Gadyam
Svāduni vanyāni phalāni snigdhārṇāya nidarśitāni!
Ramāya purvam pratipādyā śesaiḥ Sa pipriye sādara bhujyamānaiḥ !

4.5 Vaidhavyam
Widowhood is a stage where the wife lives, surviving her husband.

There is reference about vaidhavyam in the works of Vedānta Deśika.

Kamsadhvamsaika v iro danuja bhatahatakṣonidurjātabandhur
Gopīnām prāṇamītram gurusutapunarujjivanodārakārtiḥ!
Nāthovrṣṇyandhakāder naraka puravadhūpatrabhangapakāri
Pāncālī vallabhānām prathana mukha suhṛt panacamāmnāya sāraḥ !!

4.6 Summary
This Chapter has dealt with the significant aspects of family life which gets institutionalized through marriage.

Occupational life is the crucial and major area of social interaction, which is being dealt with in the next chapter.

193 Yadavabhudayam iv-75
194 Sankalpa Suryodayam vii- 44