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भारतीय शिक्षा

## Stands for

1. Bharatiya Shiksha must ensure that no promising young Indian of character having faith in Bharata and her culture Bharatiya Vidya should be left without modern educational equipment by reason merely of want of funds.

2. Bharatiya Shiksha must be formative more than informative, and cannot have for its end mere acquisition of knowledge. Its legitimate sphere is not only to develop natural talents but so to shape them as to enable them to absorb and express the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya.

3. Bharatiya Shiksha must take into account not only the full growth of a student's personality but the totality of his relations and lead him to the highest self-fulfilment of which he is capable.

4. Bharatiya Shiksha must involve at some stage or other an intensive study of Sanskrit or Sanskritic languages and their literature, without excluding, if so desired, the study of other languages and literature, ancient and modern.

5. The re-integration of Bharatiya Vidya, which is the primary object of Bharatiya Shiksha, can only be attained through a study of forces, movements, motives, ideas, forms and art of creative life-energy through which it has expressed itself in different ages as a single continuous process.

6. Bharatiya Shiksha must stimulate the student's power of expression, both written and oral, at every stage in accordance with the highest ideals attained by the great literary masters in the intellectual and moral spheres.

7. The technique of Bharatiya Shiksha must involve—

- (a) the adoption by the teacher of the *Guru* attitude which consists in taking a personal interest in the student; inspiring and encouraging him to achieve distinction in his studies; entering into his life with a view to form ideals and remove psychological obstacles; and creating in him a spirit of consecration; and
- (b) the adoption by the student of the *Shishya* attitude by the development of—
  - (i) respect for the teacher,
  - (ii) a spirit of inquiry,
  - (iii) a spirit of service towards the teacher, the institution, Bharata and Bharatiya Vidya.

8. The ultimate aim of Bharatiya Shiksha is to teach the younger generation to appreciate and live up to the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya which flowing from the supreme art of creative life-energy as represented by Shri Ramachandra, Shri Krishna, Vyasa, Buddha, and Mahavira have expressed themselves in modern times in the life of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, and Swami Vivekananda, Shri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi.

9. Bharatiya Shiksha while equipping the student with every kind of scientific and technical training must teach the student, not to sacrifice an ancient form or attitude to an unreasoning passion for change; not to retain a form or attitude which in the light of modern times can be replaced by another form or attitude which is a truer and more effective expression of the spirit of Bharatiya Vidya; and to capture the spirit afresh for each generation to present it to the world.



धृा नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः।

*Let noble thoughts come to us from every side*

—*Rigveda*, I-89-i

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## **BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY**

*General Editors*

**K. M. MUNSHI**

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**WOMEN IN THE VEDIC AGE**

**SHAKUNTALA RAO SHASTRI**

## **BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY**

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**BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY**

# **WOMEN IN THE VEDIC AGE**

**BY**

**SHAKUNTALA RAO SHASTRI**



**1954**

**BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN**

**CHAUPATTY ; BOMBAY**

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## GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

THE Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan—that Institute of Indian Culture in Bombay—needed a Book University, a series of books which, if read, would serve the purpose of providing higher education. Particular emphasis, however, was to be put on such literature as revealed the deeper impulsions of India. As a first step, it was decided to bring out in English 100 books, 50 of which were to be taken in hand almost at once. Each book was to contain from 200 to 250 pages and was to be priced at Rs. 1-12-0.

It is our intention to publish the books we select, not only in English, but also in the following Indian languages: Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu; Kannada and Malayalam.

This scheme, involving the publication of 900 volumes, requires ample funds and an all-India organisation. The Bhavan is exerting its utmost to supply them.

The objectives for which the Bhavan stands are the reintegration of the Indian culture in the light of modern knowledge and to suit our present-day needs and the resuscitation of its fundamental values in their pristine vigour.

Let me make our goal more explicit:

We seek the dignity of man, which necessarily implies the creation of social conditions which would allow him freedom to evolve along the lines of his own temperament and capacities; we seek the harmony of individual efforts and social relations, not in any makeshift way, but within the frame-work of the Moral Order; we seek the creative art of life, by the alchemy of which human limitations are progressively transmuted, so that man may become the instrument of God, and is able to see Him in all and all in Him.

The world, we feel, is too much with us. Nothing would uplift or inspire us so much as the beauty and aspiration which such books can teach.

In this series, therefore, the literature of India, ancient and modern, will be published in a form easily accessible to all. Books in other literatures of the world, if they illustrate the principles we stand for, will also be included.

This common pool of literature, it is hoped, will enable the reader, eastern or western, to understand and appreciate currents of world thought, as also the movements of the mind in India, which, though they flow through different linguistic channels, have a common urge and aspiration.

Fittingly, the Book University's first venture is the *Mahabharata*, summarised by one of the greatest living Indians, C. Rajagopalachari; the second work is on a section of it; the *Gita* by H. V. Divatia, an eminent jurist and a student of philosophy. Centuries ago, it was proclaimed of the *Mahabharata*: "What is not in it, is nowhere". After twenty-five centuries, we can use the same words about it. He who knows it not, knows not the heights and depths of the soul; he misses the trials and tragedy and the beauty and grandeur of life.

The *Mahabharata* is not a mere epic; it is a romance, telling the tale of heroic men and women and of some who were divine; it is a whole literature in itself, containing a code of life, a philosophy of social and ethical relations, and speculative thought on human problems that is hard to rival; but, above all, it has for its core the *Gita*, which is, as the world is beginning to find out, the noblest of scriptures and the grandest of sagas in which the climax is reached in the wondrous Apocalypse in the Eleventh Canto.

## GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

vii

Through such books alone the harmonies underlying true culture I am convinced, will one day reconcile the disorders of modern life.

I thank all those who have helped to make this new branch of the Bhavan's activity successful.

1, QUEEN VICTORIA ROAD,

NEW DELHI:

*3rd October 1951.*

K. M. MUNSHI

## FOREWORD

HAVING witnessed in Oxford the progress of Miss Shakuntala Rao Shastri's thorough study of womanhood in historical India and having appreciated her qualities of enterprise, discernment and tireless diligence in mastering a vast topic, I welcomed the announcement that her work had not been submerged by the War and post-War distractions and is to be published. A reperusal assures me of its value and interest for a considerable public. The scholarly merits of textual authentication and fidelity, discrimination of periods and areas, tracing of influences, internal and extraneous, and so forth, are seconded by abundant quotations of instructive and impressive passages from the literature: and the authoress' natural sympathy with the life of Indian women is also an aid to realization without impairing the noticeably calm fairness of her views. Major originalities are broached in the supposition of Iranian sources of Atharva-veda practices and of influence of Buddhist asceticism upon the general estimation of women. The comparatively free participation of women in the religious and public life of the Vedic period may be taken as admitted. As was the case of all important social institutions in ancient India, marriage was a matter of very precise regulation and of elaborate, often symbolic, ceremonial, the latter particularly, of course, important.

This volume carries the subject down to the period of the Grihya-sutras.

August, 1952.

F. W. THOMAS

# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE .. ..	v
FOREWORD .. ..	ix
I. THE RIG-VEDA .. ..	1
II. THE ATHARVA VEDA .. ..	38
III. AVESTAN SCRIPTURES .. ..	64
IV. THE BRAHMANAS .. ..	70
V. THE UPANISHADS .. ..	81
VI. THE MANTRA-BRAHMANA .. ..	98
VII. THE SHRAUTA-SUTRAS .. ..	109
VIII. THE GRIHYA SUTRAS .. ..	115

## CHAPTER I

### THE RIG-VEDA

THE history of ancient India may be said to begin with the period during which the Rig-Veda was composed. This work is looked upon even to-day, by the priesthood of India with such reverence, that it is regarded as infallible, and every word of it is believed to be divine revelation. The hymns are mostly devoted to the adoration of the phenomena of nature personified as gods and goddesses, and in course of time they came to be used by the priests for sacerdotal purposes. But a student of Sanskrit literature will discover in the Rig-Veda a great literary monument of hoary antiquity in which the thoughts, aspirations, and ethical standard of the people are reflected. In fact, the pulse of the national life can be felt in the verses.

The materials for a study of the life and position of women in the Rig-Vedic age are very scanty; hence any observation is, in most cases, bound to be based more on indirect evidence like literary allusions, than on direct and systematic data. The procedure, therefore, that can be followed with best advantage is to survey the subject from the various points of view, from which conclusions may profitably be drawn. Such an inquiry would obviously be limited in scope. But considering the dearth of materials, such a limitation cannot be avoided.

In hymn VIII, 31, where a couple are described as washing and pressing the *soma* juice, and plucking the sacred grass for sacrifices we get a glimpse of the home life of the Rig-Vedic times. Here the couple lived in harmony, helping each other in their daily routine work. 'Gods, may the husband and wife, who with one mind offer oblations and purify them (the *soma*) and (propitiate you)

with the *soma* ever mixed with milk constantly associated, may they acquire appropriate (sacrificial) viands, may they be able to offer sacrifices.<sup>1</sup> The hymn embodying the nuptial ceremony, as well as the references to the wifehood of a woman, indicate a home where the wife shares the burdens of her husband, not only in domestic life, but in religious ceremonies. The tenth *Mandala*, however, contains hymns embodying the incantations used by the co-wives which show a discordant home, but it is not certain whether these hymns really belonged to the Rig-Vedic times. If, on the other hand, they did belong to it, they present an element to which no reference is to be found in any other *Mandala* of the Rig-Veda. From this it may be presumed that polygamy was not in vogue in the early Vedic days, at least in that social strata, the culture of which is depicted in the Rig-Veda.

The position of a woman in society can be judged by the way in which the birth of a girl is received. Was she considered inauspicious? The hymns of the Rig-Veda say nothing to that effect, but we find prayers for the birth of a son, though we do not come across any reference deprecating the birth of a daughter as in A. V. VI, 11. So it can be presumed that the position of a girl was not very low, though it cannot be said that she was regarded as equal to a boy.

We find in the Rig-Veda a number of names to denote a girl in her different stages of life and in her different positions in the family. It is important to know the exact meaning of these words, as it may give a clearer idea of the various circumstances of a daughter in home and society. Of these, some have come down to us with the denotation and connotation slightly changed. One or two of these, which were in vogue in the earliest stages of Aryan life but

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1. R.V. VIII. 31. 5 & 6.

were losing ground before the Aryans settled in India, are to be found in the Rig-Veda, but they became obsolete in later literature. The different shades of meaning can be found by referring to the context. Of these various names, the words *Kanya* and *Duhita* have survived to the present day: they are to be found in the vernacular literature of the post-Vedic age. *Kanya* came to acquire such a wide meaning as to cover the sense of *Duhita*. The Smritis have fixed the age of a *Kanya* to be ten. *Duhita* is a 'daughter' in a house, but this word is not so popularly used as *Kanya* irrespective of age. In the Rig-Veda its meaning is clear in one of the hymns written in adoration of Usha, where the glory of aurora, the gradual development of the play of light and shade in the eastern horizon is compared to a *Kanya*.<sup>1</sup>

'Like a maid (*Kanya*) developing in body, O Goddess, thou goest to the god who wishes to give what thou longest for.'

From the glossary of Sayanacharya we find that *Kanya* not only means a girl of growing age, but also a lovely girl. He supports his view by quoting from *Nirukta*.<sup>2</sup>

The word *Kaninaka* is rather intriguing: the difference in the interpretation of the word shows the various stages through which it has passed. It is one of those rare words of the Rig-Veda which became obsolete in later literature, and its obscurity in meaning gave rise to various interpretations. Yaska, the earliest authority, defines it as 'a lovely girl,' whereas Sayana explains it as 'a lovely doll';<sup>3</sup> Wilson renders it as 'two puppets,' and Roth thinks it to

1. R.V. I. 123. 10.

2. *Nirukta* IV. 15; and VI. 16.

3. R.V. IV. 32. 23; X. 40. 9; *Nirukta* IV. Yaska explains thus: *Kaninake*, *Kanyake*. *Kanya Kamaniya bhavati*.

mean 'a maiden'.<sup>1</sup> In later literature, however, the word came to designate the pupil of the eye, and it is perhaps from the affection felt for a girl that it acquired this meaning.

Another word that was going out of usage, even in the Rig-Veda, and which became obsolete in later literature is *Kanyana*.<sup>2</sup> It means a maiden, and the word appears in a slightly altered form in the Atharva-Veda and the Mantra-Brahmanas (*Kanyala*).<sup>3</sup>

Of all these epithets for girls, the word *Duhita*<sup>4</sup> seems to have been more in use in the R. V., as it is used frequently to refer to a daughter.

There are two passages in the Rig-Veda<sup>5</sup> which refer to the case where a daughter is the only child of the family. In later literature we find such a daughter designated as *Putrika*.<sup>6</sup> Yaska quotes one of these to explain the legal position of the only daughter. According to his interpretation,<sup>7</sup> it means that a brotherless maiden (even after she has been given away in marriage), can perform the funeral rites of her father. Not only does this give her the right to inherit the property, but it shows that she is legally recognised as equal to a son. This view must have been current at the time of Yaska, since the author included it in his book. The commentator Durgacharya further eluci-

1. St. Petersburg Dictionary.

2. R.V. VIII. 35. 5.

3. A.V. 5, 3; XIV, 2, 52. M.B. 1, 2, 5, Ap. M.B., 1 4, 4a.

4. R.V. VIII, 101, 15; X, 17, 40, 5; 61, 5, 7; A.V. II, 14, 2; VI, 100, 3; VII, 12, 1; X, 1, 25; Shatapatha Brahmana 1, 7, 4, 1; 8, 1, 8 etc.

5. R.V. I. 124. 7; R.V. III. 31. 1.

6. Vedic Index I, 528, 537; II 496 Weber, Indische Studien 5, 343; Geldner, Vedische Studien, 3-34; Oldenberg, Rg-Veda Noten 1, 239-241; Roth, Nirukta Erläuterungen, 27; Jolly, Recht and Sitte, 72, 73; Brhaddevata, IV, 110, 111; Keith, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1910, 924, 925; Jolly, Die Adoption in Indien, 32.

7. Nirukta II. 5.

dates it that, even after her marriage, she can retain this right. It is perhaps because of this that an only daughter was not eligible for marriage. The later law-givers strictly prohibited such a union. The fourteenth century attitude is reflected in Sayana's interpretation of the passage. He says that 'a maiden who has no brother seeks for clothes and ornaments from relatives belonging to her father's family. If she has a brother, he looks to her needs. It is only in his absence that she seeks the help of her uncles etc.' He goes further and proposes another interpretation. If her own brother is living, he performs the funeral rites of their father, but in his absence, she goes to the place of her paternal relatives to perform the funeral rites herself.

The interpretation which the western scholars give is quite different. The authors of the Vedic Index, as well as some other western scholars, have drawn the inference, probably based on the ordinary sense of the term '*Pumsah*' meaning men, that brotherless maidens in Vedic times were forced to lead an immoral life. Professor Geldner, however, upholds the interpretation of Yaska and understands the *Abhratar* in the special sense of *Putrika*.<sup>1</sup>

The position of a girl in society and the measure of freedom she enjoyed are evident from the description of Samana<sup>2</sup> contained in the various hymns of the Rig-Veda. What was this Samana? The word is often to be met with in the Rig-Veda, but different scholars have rendered it variously. Sayanacharya explains the word according to the context, and in some cases gives a meaning to fit in with the sacrificial ceremony; hence his meaning of the word is

1. Rg-Veda, Kommentar, 2, 48, 49, on R.V. III. 31, 1.

2. Vedic Index I, 481; II, 429; Roth in St. Petersburg Dictionary renders it as a battle or festival; R.V. VI, 75, 3-5; IX, 96, 9; X, 143, 4; R.V. II, 16, 7; VI, 60, 2; VII, 2, 5; VIII, 12, 9; IX, 97, 47; X, 55, 5; 86, 10; A.V. VI, 92, 2; II, 36, 1; Vajasaneya Samhita IX, 9.

not definite. Among western scholars, Pischel<sup>1</sup> thinks it to be a popular festival or social gathering in which men and women took part.<sup>2</sup> Poets thronged there to acquire fame, bowmen to exhibit their skill in archery, horses to run races, women, young or grown-up, to seek their partners in life; and courtesans to profit by the occasion. The festivities lasted until the next morning or as long as the conflagration of the ceremonial fires lasted. Roth, however, takes it to be either 'a battle' or 'a festival'. Griffith has rendered the word as 'a gathering'. Setting aside all these interpretations, if we read the passages where the word appears, however difficult the language may be, the first-hand impression suggests a festival rather than anything else.

Nowhere in the Rig-Veda is to be found a detailed description of this Samana, but similes drawn from it, and used in the religious ceremonies serve as vignettes from which we can gather a fuller picture. From such pieces scattered here and there we infer that Samana was a festival of the Rig-Vedic people, specially meant for recreation and not for any religious purpose. People in every station of life looked forward eagerly to this function, which gave them an opportunity of meeting old friends, and knowing people of all sorts and conditions. Women, young and grown-up, are described as decorating themselves to participate in it. Young women, especially unmarried girls, are described as utilising this opportunity for meeting and conversing with strangers; this is reminiscent of the Greek festivals.

1. *Vedische Studien* 2, 314.

2. R.V. I, 124, 8; IV, 58, 8; VI, 75, 4; VII, 25; X, 86, 10, 168, 2; R.V. II, 16, 7; IX, 97, 47; cf. Geldner, *Vedische Studien*, 2, 38; R.V. VI, 75, 3, 5; IX, 96, 9; A.V. VI, 92, 2; R.V. I, 48, 6; X, 69, 11; VII, 2, 5; R.V. IV, 58, 8; A.V. II, 36, 1. cf. Geldner, *Rig-Veda*, Glossary 190.

‘With holy thoughts, the pious have thrown open doors  
fain for chariots in the gods’ assembly’.

‘Like two full mother-cows, who lick their younglings,  
like maidens for the gathering they adorn them.’<sup>1</sup> In this  
verse the word ‘agru’ is used which means a virgin.

‘Along the traces of the wind they hurry, they come to  
him as dames to a Samana.’<sup>2</sup> In the above the word  
‘Yoshah,’ which stands for a woman, also means a girl, a  
maiden, a young woman and a wife, according to Monier  
Williams. It is therefore evident that the festival was  
attended by women, young and old. Pischel thinks that  
the following refer to the poets who attended the assembly  
to win fame by the display of their poetical talents.

‘I approach thee, in thy sacred rites, bold with  
prayer, thee like a saving ship, thee shouting in the war,  
may Indra listen to our words attentively.’

‘Purified with ancient vital vigour, enveloping all his  
daughter’s forms and figures, finding his three-fold refuge  
in the waters, he goes to the assemblies calling aloud like  
a priest.’<sup>3</sup>

In the latter, the word Samana has been explained by  
Sayana, as a meeting. But Pischel’s interpretation cannot  
be drawn directly from it. With what purpose does the  
Hota or priest go to the assembly? This is not a meeting  
held for a purely religious purpose; so his services as a  
priest are not required there. We may, therefore, infer  
that his going there is to display poetical skill and win  
fame.

From the references to the various kinds of activities  
at a Samana, the meeting seems generally to have been held  
in a large open space. In a corner set apart for feats of  
archery bowmen displayed their skill and won prizes.

1. R.V. VII. 2, 5.

2. R.V. X. 168, 2.

3. R.V. II. 16, 7; IX, 97, 47.

Pischel sees such a meaning in Rig-Veda VI, 175, 3. Yaska here takes the word to mean *Sangrama*; Sayana follows him. This change in the meaning must have been evolved in the post-Rig-Vedic period, probably from the feats of archery exhibited in the festival assembly.

Another corner of this great gathering was reserved for horse-races, while the courtesans took their place in a different part of the extensive area.

"The thousand-streamed and hundred-powered Indu goes to the assembly like a strong car-horse."<sup>1</sup>

In such and other places 'Samana' gives us the picture of a battle-array. Sayana too ascribes the same sense to it.

Some verses<sup>2</sup> give the picture of maidenhood which seems to be similar to that of Greece where young girls could freely meet and talk to strangers. But it is wrong to assume that these verses reflect the life of courtesans as some scholars seem to think.

At the centre of this area was reserved a place where a fire was burnt, around which all people met. This indicates the time of the festival. It was held in the winter season, so that a fire was necessary as in all cold climates to warm the people. Pischel thinks that the meeting was generally held at night, as he thinks that the fire is described as being alight until morning, when the gathering dispersed. But verse I, 48, 6, where the goddess Usha is described as the creator of Samana, seems to imply that the festival began early in the morning, just at day-break.<sup>3</sup>

1. R.V. IX, 96, 9.

2. R.V. VII. 2, 5; VI. 75, 4. & IV, 58, 8.

3. Sayanacharya explains this passage by giving a far-fetched meaning to 'Samana'; he explains it as a good and industrious man. The author must have given this meaning to bring out a consistent sense of the verse; but it cannot consistently be

This seems to have been prevalent in the earliest days of the Rig-Vedic period, and must have continued for some time after their settlement in India, for a passage in the tenth Mandala of the Rig-Veda describes it as an ancient one, and although the festival continued to be celebrated, its scope was restricted, and women were not later allowed to join it freely.

‘From olden times, the matron goes to feast and general sacrifice.’<sup>1</sup>

The explanation of Sayana is a far-fetched one: the verse, as it stands, is clear and simple, and indicates that women went to Samana in olden days. By the time this verse was composed, the ceremony was dying out, and only echoes of it remained in the minds of the people.

The hymn in which this verse appears describes the deeds of Indra and Indrani. Indra of the Rig-Veda is a phenomenon of nature personified, and as such he had no wife. In the oldest Mandalas the name ‘Indrani’ does not appear. She is the creation of a much later age than the Rig-Vedic one, when the hierarchy of gods was formed, in which Indra became the King of Heaven, and had a partner in life, the Queen of Heaven. So this hymn certainly belongs to a later period.

A faint picture of a maiden’s life is reflected in the characterisation of Usha, the goddess of dawn, who has been described in many places as a maiden. In the earliest Mandalas, Usha is described as a pure and simple phenomenon of nature, sweeping away the darkness of the night. In course of time, however, human feelings were introduced into the picture of Usha, and Dawn came to be personified

applied here. The western scholars have all followed Sayana in translating the verse. But it can more correctly be taken to mean ‘one who creates or sends forth Samana’.

1. R.V. X. 86, 10.

as a maiden. Hence in many places the touches given to the picture of Usha are directly drawn from the life of a young maiden of Vedic society. She is described as marching in the Heavens, not with the hesitation of a shy girl, but radiant in the pride of her beauty.<sup>1</sup> She is often described as inspiring admiration in the minds of all who looked at her. Surya is mentioned as her lover, and he is described as pursuing her, a scene which reminds us of the story of Apollo and Daphne of Greek mythology.

In the description and eulogies of this goddess, certain other phases of a maiden's life and of society are revealed, some of the verses refer to the love of young people. The word for a lover here is *Jara*, which has not acquired the sinister sense with which it came to be invested in later times.<sup>2</sup> It reflects a society, where there was freedom to both sexes prior to marriage.<sup>3</sup> Marriage was a union of two persons of full development. No reference regarding age or its limitations, such as are found in later works, can be traced in the Rig-Veda. Neither can it be said that child marriage existed then, as a reference to it is to be found only in the Sutra period. The existence of the word *Amajur* which meant a girl who grew old at her father's house, and the references to the attendance of maidens and young women at the Samana festival, as well as the unmarried female Rishis as Apala-Atreyi suggest that matrimony was not compulsory for a woman and that no limitation had been placed on the age of marriage. Ghosha can be cited as an example of this condition, and in the two

1. R.V. VI. 65. 1.

2. "Jara 'lover' has no sinister sense in the early texts, generally, where the word applies to any lover. But it seems probable that the 'Jara' at the Purushamedha or human sacrifices must be regarded as an illegitimate lover; this also appears in the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad, and Indra is styled the lover of Ahalya, wife of Gautama-Vedic Index" Vol. i. 286-87.

3. R.V. X. 85. 7; I. 11, 17, 18.

hymns attributed to her, she is depicted as being unmarried and living in her father's house. Thus there is sufficient evidence in support of the view that there were at least a few cases in which girls remained unmarried in their father's houses to an advanced age.<sup>1</sup>

Widely different are the views regarding the origin of the institution of marriage. Some hold that monogamy was the original state, and that other forms of marriage have evolved out of it. Others take monogamy as the result of a higher civilization. In the Rig-Veda we find monogamy prevailing.

Of the various kinds of marriages that came to be developed and classified by the law-givers, the rudiments of three kinds can be traced to the Rig-Vedic age. One is the 'Kshatra' or 'Rakshasa'<sup>2</sup> type of marriage, the other 'Svayamvara' the third 'Prajapatya'. The evidence is so slight and so infrequent, that it cannot be said with certainty whether they were largely prevalent in society or not. The only instance of the first is the stealing of Purumitra's daughter by Vimada, an account of whose story can be gathered from I, 116, 1; I, 117, 20; and X, 39, 7. Sayana in his commentary mentions Purumitra as a king. Kamadyu was a princess, the daughter of King Purumitra. Vimada, who wanted to marry the Princess, was unwilling to fight, according to Sayana. He prayed to the Ashvins, who brought his bride to him. Mention of the fact that he was unwilling to fight shows that, had he

1. 'Amajur' is an epithet that denotes maidens 'who grew old at home,' without finding husbands or as they are elsewhere called, 'who sit with their father,' (Pitr-Sad). A well-known example of such was Ghosha.-Also Vedic Index, Vol. I. 30.

2. According to Dionysus of Halicarnas, this type of marriage was prevalent among ancient Greeks; it existed also among the Romans and the Arabs. The ancient Semetes considered such marriages as legal. So the practice of kidnapping women for purposes of matrimony prevailed in all parts of the world.

wished to take the girl openly from her father's house, a fight would have ensued, which would not have been necessary had the King been in favour of it; so, unobserved by her father, the girl was carried away stealthily from the palace, evidently with her consent.

The second type can be traced from the hymn embodying the marriage ritual. 'Soma was he who desired her hand, but Ashvins were selected as the bridegrooms. Surya was given away by Savita to the lord whom she chose.' This verse by itself does not clearly describe the position. In I, 16, 7, we find a reference to this incident where Surya is said to have ascended the car of the Ashvins after gaining the approval of all the gods. But why she chose the chariot of the Ashvins is explained by Sayana in his note, which supplies the connecting link between these detached events. As there were many suitors for Surya, it was agreed that there would be a race in which the competitors had to run up to the sun, and that Surya should be given away to the victor as his bride. In this contest, the Ashvins came out successful, and Surya got into their chariot.

'O Nasatyas, the daughter of the sun ascended your car, like a runner to a goal, when you won the race with your swift horses. All the gods agreed to it with their whole heart. O Ashvins, you thus were united with glory.'<sup>1</sup>

A reference to this event is found in the 'wedding hymn'. The Ashvins here are described as having a son.<sup>2</sup>

Some scholars see a sense of *Didhishu* in it, but the word *Avavrinita* merely means the act of welcoming and as *Pitaram* indicates both the parents, it is doubtful if they took the part of a *Didhishu*.

1. R.V. I, 116, 17.

2. 'When Ashvins, you came in your three-wheeled car soliciting the marriage of Surya, then all the gods assented and Pushan (your) son chose (you as) his parents.'

The Ashvins are said to have played the part of Didhishu who acted as go-between for the parties.<sup>1</sup> But this cannot be said to have been the usual course in the case of the Kshatra and Svayamvara types of marriage, though the ritual described in the wedding hymn reveals that it was a friend or friends of the bridegroom who went to woo the maiden. The actual word *Didhishu*<sup>2</sup> does not appear here.<sup>3</sup>

In the above two kinds of marriages, we do not find any ritual accompanying it. Nor do they seem to be the usual methods of marriage. In the wedding hymn, we get definite proof of its development into a social institution, where it was concluded in accordance with the rules laid down by society. We find here the growth of a ritual.

It is not certain up to what extent marriage among relations was allowed. The references are meagre on this important point. The two stray instances that throw light on the subject are the dialogues of Yama and Yami in X,

1. R.V. IV. 58. 9.

2. The word *Didhishu* appears in two places, R.V. X, 18, 8, and VI, 55, 5. In both *Didhishu* means a husband. In the former it points more to the brother-in-law who was to be the husband of the widow. So the word does not mean in R.V. a mediator; moreover we cannot trace the exact word used for a mediator then. The sense of a 'mediator' must have been transferred to '*Didhishu*' in later times. Hilderbrandt (*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesellschaft* 40, 708) and Lanman (*Sanskrit reader*, 385) consider that the word originally meant only 'wooer' and applied to the king, who, after the queen had lain beside the dead victim in the *Purushamedha* or human sacrifice, claimed her again. But other scholars do not think it plausible. Whitney-Translation of the *Atharva-Veda*, 848, 849; Keith, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1907, 946.

Ashvalayana *Shrauta Sutra*, IV, 2, 18; Pischel, *Vedische Studien* 1, 21, Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, 7, 35.

3. X, 85, 23. 'May the paths by which our friends go to woo a maiden be straight and smooth. May Aryaman and Bhaga lead us aright. O Gods, may the union of husband and wife be easily accomplished.'

10, and the myth of Prajapati in X, 61, 5-7. In the former the marriage between a brother and a sister is censured. The latter is represented as a pure allegory, and these two cases can be taken as only echoes of savage customs that were dying out. There is some doubt as to the latter hymn: it does not belong to the Rig-Vedic times, for the conception of the god Brahman as Prajapati is a later one.

Hymn X, 85, represents the wedding ritual, and it is here that we first come across anything like a ceremony. It consists of 47 stanzas; if some of the verses are transposed, we get a consistent picture of the whole ritual.

From a close study of the rituals, we find that marriage took place in the house of the bride. Before the ceremony, a prayer to God Vishvavasu, who is supposed to protect virgins, is uttered, and he is begged to leave the bride and transfer his guardianship to her husband.<sup>1</sup> 'Rise up from hence, for this (damsel) has a husband; I worship Vishvavasu with reverence and with hymns; seek for another maiden still dwelling in her father's house, decorated with ornaments; this is thy portion; know this (to be thy portion, take it) from thy birth.' 'Rise up from hence, Vishvavasu; we worship thee with reverence; seek another maiden, one with large thighs; leave the bride with her husband.'

The decorated bride was then presented at the place of ceremony with her friends and attendants. The bridal dress was rich and consisted of three cloths—a covering for the head, the divided skirt, and a border cloth which had to be given away to the priest Brahman at the end of the ceremony. 'At the time of the marriage of Surya, Raibhi was her companion; Nara-Shamsi her attendant.'<sup>2</sup>

'Behold the forms of Surya, the Ashasana (border cloth), the Vishasana (head-cloth), the adhivikartana (divi-

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1. R.V. X. 85. 21, 22.

2. R.V. X. 85. 6.

ded Skirt); of these the Brahman relieves her.'<sup>1</sup> 'This garment is inflaming; it is pungent; it is like stale soma; it is like poison; is not fit to eat; the Brahman, who knows Surya, verily desires the bridal (garment).'<sup>2</sup>

Then follows the ceremony. The bridegroom, taking hold of her right hand, utters the following verse, which was in the nature of an oath. It is from this that the husband came to be called a *hastagrabha*, one who seizes the hand.<sup>3</sup>

'I take thy hand for good fortune, that thou mayst attain old age with me, thy husband; the gods Bhaga, Aryaman, Savitar, Purandhi have given thee to me, that I may be the master of a household.'<sup>4</sup>

There is nothing to indicate from the above that the ceremony was performed before the fire; nor can we suppose that the bride has been led round the fire by the husband. That part of the ceremony, found in the Grihya rituals or the Atharva-Veda, is not mentioned here. If at all, the existence of a fire can only be inferred from the 38th verse, and the four following written in adoration of Agni:

'(The Gandharvas) gave Surya to thee, Agni, with her bridal ornaments; do thou, Agni, give (us) husbands our wives back again with male offspring.'<sup>5</sup>

The ceremony ended with a common prayer to the gods for the prosperity and fruition of their married life.

'May Prajapati grant us progeny; may Aryaman unite us together until old age.'<sup>6</sup>

'May the Universal gods unite both our hearts. May the waters unite them; may Matarishvan; Dhatri and the bountiful unite both our hearts.'<sup>7</sup>

1. R.V. X. 85. 6.

2. R.V. X. 85. 36.

3. R.V. X. 18. 8.

4. R.V. X. 85. 36.

5. R.V. X. 85. 38.

6. R.V. X. 85. 43.

7. R.V. X. 85. 47.

The bride is then transferred formally from the family of her father to that of her husband.

'I set thee free from the noose of Varuna, wherewith the *adorable* (most blessed?) Savitar had bound thee; I give thee up uninjured with thy husband to the world of virtuous action which is based on *rita*.<sup>1</sup>

'I set thee from hence; not from thence; I place thee there firmly bound; grant, Indra, showerer, that this (damsel) may have excellent children and be very fortunate.'<sup>2</sup>

After this the pair are asked to mount the chariot and start on their journey towards the bridegroom's house.<sup>3</sup> The guests who have come to witness the marriage ceremony are requested to shower their blessings on the new couple<sup>4</sup>.

'May Pushan lead thee hence, taking thee by the hand; may the Ashvins convey thee away in their car; go to the dwelling (of thy husband) as thou art the mistress of the house; thou submissive (to thy husband) givest orders to his household.'

'O Surya, mount this well-shaped, gold-hued, strong-built, light-rolling car which is made of *kinshuka* and *shalmali* tree, the world of immortality make for thy lord a (happy) comfortable bridal journey.'<sup>5</sup>

The gifts presented at the time of marriage are sent first.

With a prayer to the gods for their protection from robbers and highway thieves, with whom their path was beset, the pair now depart.

'Let not the robbers, the robbers who approach the husband and wife reach them; may they by easy roads pass the difficulty; may enemies keep aloof.'<sup>6</sup>

1. X. 85. 24.

2. X. 85. 25.

3. X. 85, 24, 20.

4. X. 85. 44, 45, 46.

5. X. 85, 20.

6. R.V. X. 85, 32.

A most hearty welcome awaited the bride at her new home. The assembled guests, friends and relatives shower blessings and benedictions on the couple. The bride is specially welcomed to reign supreme over the whole household and all the members of the family, the relatives and dependents of the bridegroom.

‘Fortunate is this bride, approach, behold her; having given her your congratulations, depart to your several homes.’

‘Abide here together; may you never be separated; live together all your lives, sporting with sons and daughters, happy in your own home.’

‘(Look upon thy husband) with no angry eye;  
Be not hostile to thy lord; be tender to animals;  
Be amiable; be very glorious; be the mother of males;  
Be devoted to the gods; be the bestower of happiness;  
Be the bringer of prosperity to our bipeds and quadrupeds.’

‘Be a queen to thy father-in-law;  
Be a queen to thy mother-in-law;  
Be a queen to thy husband’s sister;  
Be a queen to thy husband’s brothers.’<sup>1</sup>

Thus ends the marriage ceremony. The hymn comprises 47 stanzas. It appears in the Atharva-Veda in the same form, but much enlarged. The ritual is more complex being full of incantations. Here, in the earlier part of the hymn, we find the legend of Surya in transformed conditions. Soma takes the place of the Ashvins; the contest between the gods is thrust to the background, and the Ashvins appear as the attendants of the bridegroom Soma, whereas in R. V. I, 117, they were the victors who carried

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1. R.V. X. 85, 33, 42, 44, 48.

away Surya after the contest. In the later part we find the nucleus of the wedding ceremony that has been evolved elaborately in the Grihya Sutras.

The hymn, as it stands, seems to have passed through many hands, especially of the priests, who have added to the subject-matter according to the needs of the ceremonial. Verses 38-41 are clear examples of such additions. In the later part of the hymn the language is more akin to modern Sanskrit than to the Vedic, showing thereby that they are, in all probability, later interpolations.

Woman as a wife is denoted by the words *Jaya*,<sup>1</sup> *Jani* and *Patni*, each indicating special aspects of wifehood. *Jaya* has the special sense of a sharer of the husband's affections; *Jani*, the mother of children; and *Patni*, the partner in the performance of sacrifices. These three words are to be found in the Rig-Veda, and exist side by side; it cannot be said with certainty whether their simultaneous existence indicates the existence of wives in a family whose duties were specified. In later times we know that, especially in a king's household, the eldest of the queens had the right to take part in the sacrifices, whereas the other queens could not. We cannot prove this conclusively, as the evidence is meagre. A *Patni* and decidedly the right to perform sacrifices and offer oblations to the fire.

'The married couples, anxious to satisfy thee and presenting oblations together, celebrate (thy worship), for the sake of (obtaining) herds of cattle.'<sup>2</sup>

'He, whom the two, a pair of equal age, dwelling in

1. R.V. I, 105, 2; 124, 7; III, 53, 4; IV, 3, 2; 18, 3; IX, 82, 4; X, 10, 7; 17, 1; 71, 4; A.V. III, 30, 2; VI, 60, 1 etc. Delbruck, *Die Indogermanischen Verwandtschaftsnamen*, 411-412. It is used of the wife of a gambler and of the wife of the Brahmana, R.V. X, 34, 2; 3, 13; and X, 109.

2. R.V. I, 131, 3.

the same place, and engaged in the same ceremony, worship night and day.’<sup>1</sup>

Sayana takes *Mithuna* as *Dampati* in the second verse. In explaining the former, he quotes the Mimamsa texts, which allow women to join in the sacrifices and to utter the Vedic texts, and compromises between the two extremes by asserting that the prohibition is not meant to exclude a wife from taking part in the sacrifices with her husband, or from joining in prayers which have been taught by him, but to prohibit her independent study of the Vedas and her performing the sacrifices independently. The fourteenth century attitude is reflected in the view of the commentator.

Besides the above, there are several references which show that the household fire was tended by the husband and wife.<sup>2</sup> In II, 39, 2, the word *Dampativa Kratuvida* specifically refers to this aspect of womanhood.

So, on marriage, a woman was not only given a very honourable position in the household, but could offer oblations to the fire in performing sacrifices. She was looked upon as a guardian of all the young and old, where her husband was the eldest son of his father. The charge of the whole household was transferred to her hands, and she was charged to look not only to the physical needs of the members of the family but also to the happiness and wealth of the house. It is hard to determine the then ideal of home life, but the wife seems to be an object of reverence and compassion. In the following we find that even a gambler repents at the sad condition of his wife brought about through his negligence.

‘The gamester, having observed the happy wife and well-ordered home of others, suffers regret.’<sup>3</sup>

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1. R.V. I, 144, 4.

2. R.V. VIII, 31, 6.

3. R.V. X. 34. 11.

That the husband and wife are regarded as a unit of society is evident from the use of the word *Dampati* to denote a pair.

'They anoint thee, like a welcome friend, with milk and butter, when thou makest husband and wife of one mind.'<sup>1</sup>

In the above references, the word *Dampati* is used in the dual sense, and means a couple, as it came to be designated in later literature. But there are some instances where the word *Dampati* signifies the 'Lord of the house.'

'Handsome-jawed, lord of the dwelling.' 'Handsome-jawed (Indra) lord of the house, mount thy golden chariot.' 'Whose many offerings dost thou gladden Agni—thou, who are the lord of the house.'<sup>2</sup>

In the above references the god Agni is addressed as 'dampati' the 'lord of the house,' and this meaning of the word became obsolete later on. We find it current in the oldest Rig-Vedic literature.

How this variation in the meaning of the word came about, it is hard to determine. This was perhaps the original meaning of the word when man held a supreme position in society and, later, with the recognition of the importance of God Agni as supervising the existence of home, the word came to denote exclusively 'Agni' who was addressed as 'Lord of the House.'

As to the legal position of the wife, nothing has been clearly said anywhere. In the wedding hymn, we find that the gifts received by the bride at the time of her marriage were taken to her husband's house, and the husband as the legal guardian appropriated these gifts.

From the oath taken by both the bride and bridegroom at the time of the marriage ceremony and from the various

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1. R.V. V. 3, 2; I. 127, 8; X. 68. 2; X. 10. 5; X. 95. 2

2. R.V. IV. 1. 14; VI. 5. 7; VIII. 84. 7; VIII. 86. 7.

references to home life, it is evident that monogamy generally prevailed. But there are a few references in the R. V., which clearly refer to the existence of more than one wife. The Vedic Index refers to some passages in support of this view.<sup>1</sup> 'As yearning wives cleave to their yearning husbands.' 'As wives their husbands.' 'To him our songs shall yield themselves, like spouses.'

In these the word for a wife occurs in the plural, and hence they can be interpreted as referring to polygamy. Besides the above, there are others which refer not only to polygamy but to the household of kings.

'As one common husband doth his spouses,' 'Like a king among his wives.' 'Like rival wives on every side.' 'Kuvaya's [two] wives have been bathed in milk.'<sup>2</sup>

X, 145, refers to a jealous wife practising a spell over her rival with the help of a plant.

'I dig up this most potent medicinal creeper, by which (a wife) destroys a rival wife, by which she secures to herself her husband.'

'O (plant) with upturned leaves, auspicious, sent by the gods, powerful, remove my rival and make my husband mine alone.'

Thus the poem goes on ending with the prayer of the lady for the help of the plant to vanquish her rival.

These are the few references to polygamy. It is for scholars to judge if these passages are genuine productions of the Rig-Vedic Rishis or insertions of later writers. For the language of these references is more akin to later Sanskrit than to the Vedic. Another significant point to be noted is the change of 'na' into 'iva' to denote comparison. Hymn X, 145, which embodies, not a Vedic ritual, but rather an incantation, is clearly a later interpolation. It is

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1. R.V. I. 118, 12; I. 136, 7; VI. 53, 4; VII. 26, 3; X. 43, 1; 101, 1.  
2. R.V. I. 104, 3.

more allied in spirit to the hymns of the Atharva-Veda than to the Rig-Veda. Be that as it may, it is clear that polygamy was practised not only by kings, but also ordinary people though it cannot be said to have been in general vogue.<sup>1</sup>

Zimmer<sup>2</sup> holds that monogamy is the more civilized condition of society and that polygamy was disappearing in the Rig-Vedic period, yielding place to monogamy. Weber<sup>3</sup> however, supports the view of the more recent anthropology, and thinks that polygamy is a secondary stage of civilization. In the Rig-Veda we find references to both, and in later literature we find polygamy far from disappearing, but gradually developing and firmly establishing itself in society.<sup>4</sup>

References to the life of a widow are very few. We get only glimpses of some aspects of the life of a widow. It was not characterised by so many restrictions and austerities as in later days. X, 18, 8 and X, 40, 2, convey that a widow was taken charge of by the brother of the deceased, who could marry her with the permission of the elders. This custom must have been in vogue for a long time, at least in Rig-Vedic India, as it has been recorded in the course of the funeral rituals.

Hillebrandt and Delbruck are of opinion that X, 18, 8 has a reference to Purushamedha ritual; but this is not accepted by others like Roth and Zimmer. The Ashvala-

1. Schrader, *Prehistoric Antiquities* 387; Jolly, *Recht und Sitte*, 64; Von Schroeder, *Indiens Literatur und cultur*, 430, 431; Delbruck, *Die indogermanischen Verwandtschaftsnamen*, 537, 540; Hopkins, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 13, 353; Bloomfield, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesellschaft*, 48, 561.

2. *Altindisches Leben* 323.

3. *Indische Studien*, 5, 222.

4. Westermarck, *Origin and development of marriage*.

yana Grihya Sutra,<sup>1</sup> is against the view of Hillebrandt and Delbruck.<sup>2</sup> This contentious passage runs thus:—

‘Rise woman (and go) to the world of living beings. Come, this man near whom thou sleepest is lifeless: thou hast enjoyed this state of being the wife of thy husband, the suitor who took thee by the hand.’<sup>3</sup>

Macdonell’s rendering runs thus:—

‘Come, thou hast now entered upon the wifeness of this thy lord, who takes thy hand and woos thee.’

According to Sayana, the verse is spoken by the brother of the dead man to the widow. From Macdonell’s rendering, it is quite explicit that the widow was to be married to the brother of the deceased; whereas from the other interpretation it seems more probable that the widow, who was at the side of the dead husband, was taken away by his brother and near kinsmen. She was brought home to live with and to take care of her kinsmen and grandsons.

Sayana says: “The brother-in-law and others, addressing the wife of the deceased, raise her up from (the side of her husband) with the verse—

‘O woman, get up from here with a view to enter the place of your sons and grandsons, which is now your house. Get up from this place.’

Here there is no question of the younger brother marrying the widow. But X, 40, 2, clearly refers to it. It forms the basis of the system of *Niyoga* of later times.<sup>4</sup>

1. Ashv. Gr. S.—IV, 2, 18.

2. Hillebrandt—*Zeitschrift der Deutschen, Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 40, 708; Delbruck—*Die indogermanischen Verwandtschaftsnamen*, 553; Whitney, *Translation of the Atharva-Veda*, 848; Roth, *Seibenzig Lieder*, 151, n.; Zimmer, *Altindischen Leben*, 329.

3. R.V. X. 18. 8.

4. Yaska, *Nirukta* III, 15; Geldner, *Rig-Veda, Kommentar*, 160. Weber, *Indische Studien*, V, 343, n. Hopkins, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 13, 355; 367; Jolly, *Recht und Sitte*,

‘Where are you Ashvins, by night? Where are you by day? Where do you sojourn? Where do you dwell?’

‘Who brings you homeward to the place (of sacrifice) as on her couch a widow (brings) her husband’s brother, as a woman (brings) her husband (to her).’

From the above it can be inferred that the marriage of the widow<sup>1</sup> with the brother of the deceased was not insistent. On the other hand, there was also no restriction placed on the widow to such a union. The burning of a widow does not appear here at all, though Professor Kaegi refers to one of the verses as giving the highest authority for it, with a slight change in the verse. The verse referred to by him is:

‘Let these women, who are not widows, who have good husbands, enter (anointed) with unguent and butter. Let women without tears, without sorrow and decorated with jewels, first proceed to the house.’<sup>2</sup>

In the above, the alteration that has been suggested by Kaegi to have been made by the priesthood of later times, to derive the highest authority for burning of the widows along with the dead husband, is *agneh* in place of *Agre*. But from what precedes and follows the verse, this view cannot be maintained. The dead person was, in the first

71; Muir, Sanskrit Texts, 5, 459; Von Schroeder, *Indiens Literatur und Cultur*, 429.

1. Schrader, *Prehistoric Antiquities*, 391; Von Schroeder, *Indiens Literatur und Cultur*, 141; Jolly, *Recht und Sitte*, 67-69; Weber, *Proceedings of the Berlin Academy*, 1896, 254; Roth, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesellschaft*, 8, 468; Wilson, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 16, 202; Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben*, 329; Geldner, *Rig-Veda, Kommentar*, 154. The *Atharva-Veda* XVIII, 3, 1, mentions the burning of widows as an ancient custom. Such a practice seems to have been usual among the warrior class as is evident from the Indo-Germanic records. Herodotus, V, 5 (of the Thracians); IV, 71 (of the Scythians); Procopius, *De Bello Gothico*, II, 14 (of the Heruli).

2. R.V. X. 18. 7.

instance, not burnt, but buried. So there is no scope for the use of *Agni*. The ceremony is thus described:

‘Go to this thy mother-earth, the widespread, delightful earth; this virgin (earth is) as soft as wool, to the liberal (worshipper); may she protect thee from the proximity of Nirriti.’

‘Earth, rise up above him; press him not; yield to him (and) afford him comfort; cover him up, Earth, as a mother covers her child with the skirt of her garment.’ ‘May the earth heaped over him lie lightly; may thousands of particles (of dust) envelop him; may these mansions distill Ghee (for him); may they every day be an asylum to him in this world.’ ‘I heap up the earth around thee, placing (upon thee) this clod of earth; may I not be injured: may the Pitris sustain this thy monument: may Yama make thee a dwelling here.’<sup>1</sup>

So the verse referred to by Kaegi, even with the alteration, cannot be taken to authorise the burning of widows. It can be so interpreted only when the verse is torn from its context. Moreover, we find that in the verse that follows, the widow is called away from the side of the dead, before the burial takes place, and hence she cannot be buried with her husband. The Rig-Veda does not mention anywhere the practice of the burning or burial of widows with their dead husbands, but on the contrary considers the widow to be married to the brother of the dead husband.

In the intellectual field,<sup>2</sup> the only evidence of culture among women is to be inferred from the fact that some of the hymns are attributed to female Rishis. These may be classified as follows:—

- (1) Hymns that are entirely attributed to female Rishis.

1. R.V. X. 18, 10, 11, 12, 13.  
2. Vedic Index-i, 486; ii, 485.

- (2) Hymns that are partly attributed to female Rishis.
- (3) Hymns that are attributed to female Rishis, but are of dubious authorship.

The first group includes the poems of Vishvavara and Apala, composers respectively of V, 28 and VII, 91. Both of them are said to belong to the Atri family.

Vishvavara's hymn is in praise of Agni, Apala's that of Indra. Of these two, it is difficult to decide which is the earlier. The linguistic as well as the internal evidence throws some light on the scene of the hymn. It belongs to a region where the Soma plant grew in abundance. Western scholars agree that Soma grew on the mountains. But from the account of Sushruta,<sup>1</sup> we find that certain

1. Vedic Index, Vol. II, p. 475:

The plant grew on the mountains, that of Munjavat being specially renowned .... It has been held to be the *Sarcostemma Viminale* or the *Aselepias Acida*. Both held that the *Sarcostemma acidum* more nearly met the requirements of the case. Watt suggested Afghan grape as the real Soma, and Rice thought a sugar-cane might be meant, while Max Muller and Rajendralal Mitra suggested that the juice was used as an ingredient in a kind of beer—i.e. that the Soma plant was a species of hop. Hillebrandt considers that neither hops nor the grape can explain the reference to Soma.... In the Yajur Veda the plant is purchased ere it is pressed.... It grew on a mountain and could not be obtained by ordinary people: perhaps some special tribe or prince owned it, like the Kikatas (R.V. III, 43, 14). Besides this the Sushruta Samhita in chapter 29 of Chikitsita Sthana gives a detailed account of Soma. The author gives 24 varieties of this Soma plant; 1. Amshuman; 2. Munjavan; 3. Chandramah; 4. Rajata-prabha; 5. Durva-Soma; 6. Kaniyan; 7. Shvetaksha; 8. Kanaka-prabha; 9. Pratapavan; 10. Talavrinta; 11. Karavira; 12. Amshavan; 13. Svayam-prabha; 14. Maha-Soma; 15. Garudahrita; 16. Gayatrya; 17. Traishtubha; 18. Pamkata; Jagata; 19. Samkara; 20. Agni-shtoma; 21. Raivata; 22. Tripada; 23. Gayatriyukta; and 24. Udupati. The author gives a description of the plant from which one can distinguish it from the rest. It is a plant containing fifteen leaves. In form it is like a plantain tree. All the leaves do not come out at the same time. One leaf comes out each day beginning from the new-moon day, so that by the full-moon day the tree is full with 15 leaves. From that day to the new moon

species grew on the banks of the Indus, too. The maiden Apala gathers Soma to use its juice at the time of sacrifice. She picks it up from the bank of a river, so this Soma was of a variety which grew near water. Sushruta Samhita, too, mentions that variety of Soma as being found in Kashmir. So the scene of our hymn is either Kashmir or near about that region. The word 'Kanya' used in this connection, indicates that the author was a maiden. She comes to the bank of a stream where she finds the Soma plant, which she picks up and takes home to squeeze out the juice and use at the sacrifice.

one leaf falls off on each day, so that by the new-moon day the tree is bare. Further details for distinguishing one species from the other are also given. The root of the Amshuman Soma has the smell of clarified butter. The root of the Munjavan Soma is like that of the plantain tree and its leaves are like those of a garlic plant. The Chandrama Soma is golden in colour and it is to be found mostly near water. The Garudahrita and Shvetaksha Soma is pale in colour and is like the skin of a serpent; it is to be found entwined with the branch of a tree.

The author gives the names of the places where the Soma is to be found. They are the Himalayas, Arvuda, Sahya, Mahendra, Malaya, Sree Parvata, Devagiri, Devasahagiri Paripatra, Vindhya Parvata and Devasunda Lake. At the foot and among the five mountains that are to the north of the Beas and in the Sindhu river the Soma named Chandrama is to be seen afloat like moss. The Soma called Munjavat Amshuman also grows near the Indus. The Soma called Gayatra Traishtubha and Pamataka and Jagata Samkara grew in Kashmir near the lake called the Small Manasarovara.

The author at the end of his valuable description says that none but the virtuous could see the plant, from which it seems that the plant had already become very rare. The description is a genuine one. None but eye-witness can give such a detailed description of the plant and its varieties, and there cannot be any doubt that it was used as a medicine.

Difference of opinion exists as to the date of the Sushruta-Samhita. Some of the Western scholars have ascribed to it a date contemporary with that of Shakya Sinha Buddha (Bael's Buddhist Records of the Western World, Vol. II, p. 212). In the introduction to Sushruta-Samhita, Vol. I, Intro. P. V. edited by Kaviraj Kunjalal Bhishagratna, the following occurs:—

'Down to the stream a maiden came and found the Soma by the way; bearing it to her home, she said, "For Indra will I press thee out; for Shakra will I press thee out."'¹

Sayana's interpretation indicates that Apala was going to bathe. It does not give us the sense of a stream but that of water. It may mean a lake or a stream. His meaning fits in more appropriately with the account of the Sushruta Samhita, which mentions certain varieties of Soma growing in Kashmir, near Manasasarovara. The last verse describes her to be a maiden of exceptionally fair complexion. Her name comes at the end of her hymn.

Vishvavara's hymn occurs in the fifth Mandala, which consists of the oldest stock of the Vedic hymns. The word 'Vishvavara' appears at the beginning of the hymn. It is doubtful if the word stands for a proper name or means something else. The Vedic Index (Vol. II, p. 310) describes Vishvavara as a sacrificer. Prof. Geldner does not think that the word indicates a person. He takes the

'It is contended that the age immediately preceding Shakya Muni was a period of decadence in Hindu thought; and the Sushruta-Samhita must have been the fruit of a revived intellectual activity which usually follows the advent of a new creed. ....The age which immediately preceded the age of Buddha was by no means an age of decadence properly speaking; the age which followed the downfall of Buddhism shows, on the contrary, signs of true decadence..... Sushruta is mentioned in the Vartikas of (1) Katyayana (4th cent. B.C.), and we have no hesitation in saying that the original Samhita was written at least two centuries before the birth of Buddha! We have, on the other hand, a different opinion of the western scholars in the view of Dr. F. Hessler, who, in the preface to his Latin translation of the book, says: 'non post millesimum annum ante Christum natum constituere?' The same author refers again to the date of Sushruta in his 'Commentariet Annotationes in Sushruta Ayurvedam': 'annum circiter millesimum ante Christum natum procedit' (p. 1).

[According to late Sir A. Stein the Soma is the wild rhubarb.]

1. R.V. VIII. 80.1 (or 91, 1).

word as an adjective qualifying 'Ghrítachi' and thus differs from the traditional view of regarding Vishvavara as the authoress of the hymn. So far as the internal evidence is concerned, there is reference which may be taken to throw some light as to who the author of the hymn was. In verse 3, the seer prays for the preservation of the household happiness and the word 'Jampatyam' indicative of matrimonial relations is used in this connection. From this we can imagine the Rishi to be a woman. But this can in no way be taken as a conclusive evidence for ascribing the authorship of the hymn to Vishvavara.

'The ladle, containing all good things, goes eastward, praising the gods with homage and oblations.'

'Make easy to preserve our household lordship, and overcome the might of our enemies.'<sup>1</sup>

Vishvavara herself offers the oblation into the fire as is indicated by the *ghrítachi*.

The second group in which parts of the hymns are traditionally attributed to female Rishis consists of Lopamudra, Shashiyasi, the wife of Taranta. They seem to be the composers respectively of I, 179, 1 and 2; V, 162, 5-8. The names appear in the course of dialogues and parts of the hymns are attributed to them, but no internal evidence is available in support of their authorship.

The third group consists of the hymns attributed to Ghosha Kakhivati, Surya-Savitri, Indrani, Shraddha-Kamayani, Shachi Paulomi, Sarparajni, Urvashi.<sup>2</sup> With the exception of Ghosha all these hymns are attributed to mythological beings and personification of abstract qualities, who obviously cannot be the authors. Whether the real authors were men or women is not known. No inter-

1. R.V. V. 28, 1, 3.

2. R.V. X. 39, 40; X. 85; X. 95, 1, 3, 6, 8-10, 12, 14, 17; X. 145; X. 151, 154; X. 159, & X. 189.

nal evidence is available. Further, though these hymns are to be found in the Rig-Veda, the available evidence shows that they belonged to different periods. A detailed discussion of these hymns, though it may not be germane to our survey, will show how far they are separated from the Rig-Vedic age. Moreover, some of these hymns have exercised enormous influence on Hindu literature of later times. The hymn attributed to Surya comprising the marriage ritual, forms the kernel of the Wedding Ceremony of the later Grihya Sutras and the legend of Urvashi appears not only in the Mahabharata but has been immortalised by Kalidasa.

The doubt about Ghosh's poems consists not only in the matter of authorship, but also as to whether they really belonged to the Rig-Vedic times. The story of Ghosha cannot be traced in the Rig-Veda. The Brihaddevata (VII, 41-48) describes her to be the daughter of King Kakshivan; the Atharva-Veda too mentions her name. The Rishi prays to the Ashvins to relieve her of her curse. But she does not mention what the curse is. The Brihaddevata would have the curse to be leprosy, because of which she was not eligible for marriage.<sup>1</sup> The divine physicians took pity on her and cured her, after which she got married to some prince, at the age of sixty. In the hymns, she is mentioned under her maiden name, and she worships Ashvins as divine physicians.

1. Sayana in his gloss refers to a skin disease, which, according to a later tradition is considered to be the cause of her remaining unwed. He also refers to her son Suhastya in an obscure verse of the Rig-Veda (I, 120, 5), a theory disapproved by other scholars. Oldenberg takes it as referring to Ghosha herself and Pischel (*Vedische Studien*, 1, 4; 2, 92) thinks that the form Ghosha is not a noun at all but a verb. Cf. Ludwig, *Translation of the Rig-Veda*, 3, 143; *Über Methode, bei Interpretation des Rig-Veda*, 43; Muir, *Sanskrit Texts*, 5, 247; Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 52.

‘O Nasatyas, you have been looked upon as the refuge of the mean.....You have been called the physicians of the weak, the blind and those who are suffering from the torments of diseases.’

The mention of the twin gods as Nasatyas is significant, as it throws some light upon the date of composition of the poem. In the Rig-Veda the Ashvins neither held an important position nor were regarded as popular deities. In some of the oldest Mandalas they are seldom mentioned. Even where they appear, they have been praised differently in different places. From the various references to them in the R.V., the gods may be traced to their human origin.<sup>1</sup>

Yaska says:

‘Who are the Ashvins? Some say they are the earth and the sky; others say they are the day and the night; others again the sun and the moon. The historians (relaters of legends) say they were two pious kings.’<sup>2</sup>

This statement does not mention them as divine physicians. Tradition has not handed down to posterity either the name of the historian or the annals referred to by Yaska; but some kind of account certainly existed. It could not have been possible for Yaska to ignore the idea of the Ashvins being divine physicians, if it were prevalent at that time, especially when he has enumerated so many different views. Hence the divine physicianship of the Ashvins must have been developed later than the time of Yaska, though it occurs in several places in the Rig-Veda as well as in this hymn. The internal evidence of the poem indicates an atmosphere of plains and of

1. R.V. II, 39; III, 58; IV, 43 and 44; V, 74, 75; 76, 77, 78; VII, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73 and 74; VIII, 5, 8, 9, 10, 26, 36. 35. 62. 74, 75, 76 and 9 of Valakhilya.

2. Nirukta Ch. XII. p. 949 of pt. II of Anandamayee series.

warmer climates. There is a description of floods and elephants, which bespeaks the plains rather than the mountains. It evidently shows that the Aryan colonisation had spread far.

‘Like persons hunting two wild elephants, we entice you, Ashvins, with oblations night and day.’<sup>1</sup>

The second of the doubtful group is X, 85, ascribed to Surya-Savitri, which embodies a detailed account of her marriage. Her name appears with her paternal designation.

It is absurd to suppose that Surya has composed a hymn on her own marriage before it took place. The wedding, however, is described in the hymn neither by the bride Surya nor by the bridegroom, but by a third person. Nowhere do the verses appear as direct utterances of Surya and it could not be so as Surya was a goddess and hence an imaginary figure. These facts show that Surya was not the real author of the hymn. The name of the real author is not known. It might possibly be some priest who, on compiling the existing rites of marriage in the form of a Vedic hymn, ascribed it to Surya, as she had come to be considered a deity. In Hymn X, 145, ascribed to Indrani, an Atharva-Vedic atmosphere pervades—that of spells and incantations. Indrani is the wife of Indra, the god of heaven, who is different from the Indra of the Rig-Veda—a personified phenomenon of nature. So Indrani is the Queen of Heaven of the Puranic times. Shachi Paulomi is Indrani only under a different designation and belongs perhaps to a different period of Indian mythology. The hymn ascribed to her (X, 159) deals with the exaltation of Shachi over her co-wives. Professor Wilson thinks that Shachi is neither a goddess nor a woman, but is a metaphorical representation of an action,

and that the poem is meant to express the exaltation of the acts of Indra. But it is doubtful how far this can be consistent with the ideas expressed in the poems.

“Triumphant, I conquered these my rivals, so that I might rule this hero and his people.”<sup>1</sup>

The hundred and fifty-fourth hymn of the tenth manadala deals with death, praying the spirit of the departed to go to the realms of the blessed. It is ascribed to Yami. In the tenth hymn of the same Mandala Yami appears; in the former she is represented as the sister of Yama, and they both represent metaphorically the succession of day and night; whereas in the latter Yami is the supreme deity of the nether world. It is only in the tenth Mandala that death is first mentioned. This reality, with all its attendant gloom, is avoided by the Aryan seers as far as possible. The vast difference in the characterisation of Yami, as well as the variation in thought in the hymns of the same Mandala can only be due to the time lag between the composition of these hymns. They represent different stages of the development of Indian thought. The hundred and eighty-ninth hymn of the same is ascribed to Sarparajni or the queen of serpents. In Indian mythology she is also known as Kadru. She was a lover of Krishna. The mention of the thirty realms of the sun points to a later stage in the evolution of Indian thought, when astronomy had developed and spread among the people. The hundred and fiftyfirst hymn is ascribed to Shraddha—an abstract quality.

Lastly we come to Urvashi in the ninety-fifth hymn in the course of a dialogue, where she relates her story to Pururavas. Urvashi is not a human but a heavenly being who came down to earth and married King Pururavas. The dialogue begins at the point where Urvashi is

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1. R.V. X. 159, 6.

leaving the King, the King entreating her to stay, and the nymph insisting on her going away, leaving her son behind to console Pururavas.<sup>1</sup> Max Muller, in his selected essays, analyses the etymology of the words Urvashi and Pururavas, and is inclined to think that they represented Usha or the Dawn and the Sun, and the whole dialogue is an allegory on sunlight and darkness.<sup>2</sup>

In the above, the authors are goddesses and one is an abstract quality. It is not possible that the goddesses could have composed the hymns. The poems are in all probability later productions, and the real authors have suppressed their names and ascribed their origin to the supernatural. As the Rig-Veda is considered as a book of revelation not composed by any human being, the composers have possibly ascribed them to the supernatural beings.

The position of woman in society can be known from some of the hymns of the second Mandala of the Rig-Veda ascribed to Paruchchapa, the son of Devadasi. Children were generally named after the title and name of the father. But this exception to the rule indicates the existence of Devadasi system—women dedicated to the service of gods, a system which can be traced to the Indo-European

1. The story appears in Shatapatha Brahmana and Mahabharata. Pururavas has been dramatised by Kalidasa in his well-known drama, "Vikramorvashi". The antecedent to the narrative is as follows: The nymph agrees to live with Pururavas on two conditions:

(i) that he should take care of her two rams;

(ii) that he should never appear to her without clothes. After four years the gods plan to bring her back to heaven and steal at night one of her rams. The King springs from his bed and runs after them in haste. The Gandharvas send on them a flash of magic lightning, and the nymph sees him naked; and as one of the promises is broken, she leaves him.

2. Selected Essays, Max Muller, Vol. I. pp. 407, edition of 1881.

period. For, we find the same custom prevalent in other branches of the Indo-European stock.

The instances in which women out-stepped the code of moral law, as we understand it today, are frequent in the Rig-Veda. The way in which they are introduced in the hymns shows that they were not looked askance at by society.<sup>1</sup>

The Goddess of Dawn, for instance, is often described as a woman dressed in variegated colours, like a dancing maid, appearing on the stage to exhibit her beauty. References to the existence of illegitimate love and the abandonment of off-spring are also to be found in the Rig-Veda.<sup>2</sup> That there were women who were professional dancers is evident from the description of the dawn.<sup>3</sup>

The womanhood in the Vedic period had its heights and depths, its brighter and darker spots. Woman was regarded with due respect in every sphere of life, and she was not subject to any of the merciless laws of an unsympathetic society. Even when she overstepped moral laws, she was judged with sympathy. There was no discrimination between the male and the female in the anger of the gods.

The question naturally arises as to how far this picture of womanhood painted in the Rig-Veda can be claimed as the heritage of India. The hymns, as we know, were not all composed in India, nor are they of the same period. Some of them were composed at a period about which history is silent. Others reflect the dawn of Indian history, when Aryans entered India through its north-western gates for the first time, and settled in the Punjab. In some of the hymns addressed to the Ashvins, we find

1. R.V. I. 134, 3; IV. 5. 5; VIII. 17. 7.

2. R.V. II. 29. 1.

3. R.V. I. 92, 4.

a vivid description of the sea<sup>1</sup> and *Samudra*<sup>2</sup> is the word used for it, as distinguished from the river which is called *Nadi*.<sup>3</sup>

“There where the mountains downward slope,  
There by the meeting of the streams, (nadinam)  
The sage was manifest with song;  
Thence marking from his lofty place,  
Downward he looks upon the sea, (samudra)  
And thence with rapid stir he moves.”<sup>4</sup>

The above appears in hymns considered to be the oldest among the Rig-Vedic compositions.

Thus we find in the Rig-Vedic age things common to earlier stages of civilization, rituals round the two primary phases of life—marriage and death—being developed

1. R.V. VII. 68, 7; VII. 69, 7; 70, 2; VIII. 5, 22; VIII. 10, 1.

2. Vivien de Saint Martin (*Etude sur la geographic du Veda*, 62) does not think that the ocean was known to the Vedic Indians; Max Muller (SBE, 32, 61, quoting R.V. I, 71, 190, 7; V, 78, 8; VII, 49, 2; 95, 2; X, 58) and Lassen (*Indische Alterthumskunde*, 12, 883) thinks that the sea was known to them; Zimmer (*Altindisches Leben*, 22 et seq) too admits it in elucidating R.V. VII, 95, 2 as well as in later literature (A.V. IV, 10, 4 (pearl shell); VI, 105, 3—the outflow of the ocean—; XIX, 38, 2; *Taittiriya Samhita* VII, 4, 13, 1). According to him neither the ebb and flow of the sea nor the mouths of the Indus are known to the people and the use of the word *Samudra* is metaphorical, signifying two oceans—the upper and the lower, in the following passages:—R.V. X 136 5; cf. A.V. XI 5, 6; R.V. VII. 6, 7; X. 98, 5. Elsewhere the word refers only to the Indus with its tributaries (R.V. I, 71, 7; III, 36, 7; 46, 4; V, 85, 6; VI, 36, 3; VII, 95, 2; VIII, 16, 2; 44, 25; IX, 88, 6; 107, 9; 108, 16; where reference is made to streams, or R.V. I, 163, 1; IV, 21, 3; V, 55, 5; VIII, 6, 29, where a contrast between land and sea is made). But references to the treasures of the ocean are to be found (cf. R.V. I, 47, 6; VII, 6, 7; IX, 97, 44) pearls or the gains of trade are alluded to in the following: cf. R.V. I, 48, 3; 56, 2; IV, 55, 6; and the general parallelism of the Dioscuri and the Ashvins. It is not known if trade was carried on by sea with Babylonia. Weber (*Indian Literature* 3), bases his argument on the occurrence of Gof and Tukhum in the Hebrew book of Kings (I Kings, X, 22).

3. R.V. VII. 68, 7; VII. 69, 7; VIII. 5, 22.

4. R.V. VIII, 6, 28, 29.

into social institutions. The eighteenth and the eighty-fifth hymns of the tenth Mandala record them. We cannot ascribe these to any legislator of the time.

The picture of Samana shows some aspects of this early civilization, where we get the glimpse of a society free from conventions. From the description of Ushas and other references to courtesans, it seems as though they were not censured; though it cannot be said with certainty whether they stood high in the estimation of the public, as in the times of Vatsyayana.

Capturing women for purposes of matrimony, which is common to primitive society, is not uncommon here. It is to be seen in other races, too. 'Capture of women for wives prevailed among ancient Semites. In Arabia it was common before Muhammad. Among Hebrews, members of the military class were allowed to marry foreign women, taken in war, contrary to the law which forbade intermarriage with the Gentiles.' 'According to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, marriage by capture at one time existed throughout Greece.'<sup>1</sup>

Traces of primitiveness are not altogether absent here, and we find a crude society existing side by side with the more developed, civilized customs. The winning of a maiden by feats of chivalry, the existence of mutual affection and self-choice before marriage are, as we know from the literature of the Greeks and other nationalities, common to the Indo-European family.

Throughout the Rig-Veda, specially in the earliest books, monogamy was the established order of society. It is only in the very late collections that we come across references to polygamy.

In brief, it can be said, the picture of womanhood given in the hymns of the Rig-Veda is far different from what

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1. History of Human Marriage—Westermarck.

we find in later literature. The existence of festivals like Samana where men and women joined, the unconventional life of a young girl, the pursuit of the Sun-god after the goddess Usha, very much like the scene of Apollo and Daphne, the custom of dedicating women to the service of gods, the winning of a maiden by feats of chivalry, the burial of the dead and various other customs are common to European branches of the Aryan family. They are to be found among the Greeks and the forefathers of the Latin-speaking people. Hence, the status of women of this period cannot be said to be the growth of Indian soil but an Indo-European one transplanted by the Aryans.

## CHAPTER II

### THE ATHARVA VEDA

IN the range of Sanskrit literature, the Sama and the Yajur Vedas follow the Rig-Veda. They are considered by some to be more important than the other two Vedas, as they are more useful for sacerdotal purposes. Some orthodox theologians give the highest place to the Yajur Veda and are inclined to attach less importance to the other Vedas—even the Rig-Veda. Be that as it may, the Yajur and the Sama Vedas, based as they are on the Rig-Veda, are mainly concerned with the ritualistic side of the sacrifices, and do not furnish us with evidence that can throw new light on the social conditions of the period. The Atharva-Veda, therefore, comes next in importance to the Rig-Veda in the present survey.

The Atharva-Veda is named after Atharvan, and not from the nature of its contents. The name of Atharvan is

to be seen in the Rig-Veda,<sup>1</sup> where he is spoken of as the first priest who produced Agni by attrition, brought fire from heaven, gave it to Soma and offered a prayer, and thus by the inauguration of sacrifice, established communion between gods and men. Tradition has, however, connected the name of Atharvangirasah, the name of the descendants of Atharvan and Angiras with the hymns of the fourth Veda, and the term in later literature<sup>2</sup> is used exclusively to denote the Atharva-Veda. The word occurs once in the book itself.<sup>3</sup> The name 'Atharva-Veda' is not found before the Sutra period.<sup>4</sup> For Atharvan according to mythology, is the name of Brahma's eldest son, to whom Brahma-Vidya was revealed and the compound term according to Bloomfield<sup>5</sup> represents the two elements of the book: Atharvan refers to the auspicious practices<sup>6</sup> of

1. R.V. IX, 11. 2; VIII. 9. 7; R.V. VI. 16. 3; I. 80, 16; X. 92. 10; I. 83. 15.

"The name *Atharvan* in the singular denotes the head of a semi-divine family of mythical priests (Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, 141). In the Vamsha of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad II, 6, 3, the Atharvan Daiva is the pupil of Mrtyu about whom nothing historical can be said. In the plural the family as a whole is meant. In a few places an actual family seems to be referred to. Thus, for instance, they are mentioned as recipients of gifts in the *Danastuti* (RV. VI, 47, 24) of Ashvatha's generosity, their use of milk mingled with honey in the ritual is referred to (R.V. IX, 11, 2) and a cow that miscarries from accident is dedicated to the Atharvans according to Taittiriya Brahmana (III, 4, 11, 1) Vedic Index, Vol. I. pp. 17-18.

2. Brahmanas:

Taittiriya Brahmana III, 12, 8, 2.

Taittiriya Aranyaka II, 9; 10.

Shatapatha Brahmana XI, 5, 6, 7.

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad II, 4, 10; IV 1, 2, 5, 11.

Chhandogya Upanishad III, 4, 1, 2.

Taittiriya Upanishad II, 3, 1.

3. X. 7, 20.

4. Vedic Index, Vol. I, 18.

5. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 11, 387; Hymns of the Atharva-Veda XVIII, et seq.

6. AV. XI, 6, 14.

the Veda recognised as holy and conferring prosperity, and Angiras refers to witchcrafts.<sup>1</sup> This Veda is also known under another designation—the Brahma-Veda.

The importance of the Atharva-Veda is two-fold: religious and historical. In its former aspect, its importance has been exaggerated by some, and depreciated by others.

Madame Ragozine, who is inclined to give a non-Aryan origin to this Veda, describes it in her "Vedic India"<sup>2</sup> as a treatise of goblin worship, 'the next counterpart of that with which we became familiar in Turanian Chaldea'. The atmosphere differs from that of the Rig-Veda in that it is dominated by charms and incantation; yet there is much that is common between both. We get here a picture of Aryan life from the cradle to the grave and thence to the life after death.

Prof. Griffith gives a graphic description of a home, as it can be gathered from the Atharva-Veda:

'We hear the benedictine charm pronounced over the expectant mother before her child is born, and in due time in the darling's first two teeth. We attend the solemn ceremony in which the youth is invested with his *tonga virilis*, the new garment whose assumption signifies his recognition as an adult member of the family with new responsibilities and new duties to perform. As his fancy turns to thoughts of love, we hear him murmuring the charm which shall win him the maiden of his choice, and the lullaby which shall seal every eye but hers in his beloved's house and enable him to visit her without detection or suspicion. We follow him in his formal and somewhat unromantic wooing of the bride, through a friend who acts as match-maker; we see the nuptial procession

1. Satapatha Brahmana X, 5, 2, 20. Kausika Sutra 3, 19.  
2. p. 117-119.

and the bride's introduction to her new home; we hear her benediction on the bridegroom, and the epithalamium pronounced over the wedded pair. The young husband is an agriculturist, and we see him in his field superintending the ploughman, and praying to Indra and Pushan and the Genii of agriculture, to bless their labours.....His wealth and family increase in answer to his repeated prayer for children and riches, and a new house must be built on a large scale. The building is erected under the careful eye of the master, and blessed and consecrated with prayers to the gods and to the Queen of the Home. The mistress of the house brings forth the well-filled pitcher, all present are regaled with the stream of molten butter blended with nectar.....and the house-holder enters and takes formal possession of his new dwelling, with fire and water, the two most important necessities of life.

'Such and something like this was the ordinary life of the average middle-class agriculturist. A devout believer in the gods, he did not spend his substance on the performance of costly sacrifices, but was content with simple ceremonies and such humble offerings as he could well afford. His chief care was for the health and well-being of himself, his wife, children and dependents, for plentiful harvests, and for thriving and multiplying cattle.'<sup>1</sup>

The above describes the general atmosphere of a home. Entire hymns are here devoted to describe the conditions of a woman's life, showing their position in society. The birth of a daughter is distinctly deprecated and prayers and ceremonies to prevent it have come into vogue.

'Prajapati, Anumati, Sinivali, hath shaped; may he put elsewhere womanbirth, but may he put here a male'.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Translation of the Atharva-Veda by Prof. Griffith; Intro. p. IX-XI.

2. A.V. VI, 11, 3.

‘Pinga, defend thou (the child) in process of birth; let them not make the male female.’<sup>1</sup>

The twenty-third hymn of the third Book, describes a charm against sterility and for assuring the birth of male children; the eleventh hymn of the sixth book again gives a prayer for the birth of a son and deprecates the birth of a daughter, and the sixth hymn of the eighth book is an incantation for the protection of a pregnant woman from evil spirits, so that they might not turn a male child into a female one. Even as a casual reference, a son is always associated with a mother. But it cannot be said that female children were exposed: we find it first mentioned in the Brahmanas. The Atharva-Veda does not furnish us with any such incident.

‘As a thoughtful mother in her lap a son, let Mitra protect him from distress that comes from a friend.’<sup>2</sup>

Marriage was desirable and even imperative for a girl. Prayers in the form of incantations were in vogue for securing a good husband.

‘Unto our favour, O Agni, may a wooer come to this girl, along with our fortune. Enjoyable (is she) to suitors (vara) agreeable at festivals; be there quickly good fortune for her with a husband.’<sup>3</sup>

‘May this woman, O Agni, find a husband, for King Soma maketh her of good fortune, giving birth to sons, she shall become Chief Consort; having gone to a husband, let her, having good fortune, bear rule.’<sup>4</sup>

The lot of unmarried girls was rather hard. They were supposed to be formally married to Yama, the King of the nether world.

‘Let this girl O King, be shaken down to thee (as)

1. R.V. VIII. 6, 25.

2. R.V. II. 28, 1.

3. R.V. II. 36, 1.

4. R.V. II. 36, 3.

bride, O Yama; be she bound in her mother's house, in her brother's, as well as in her father's.'<sup>1</sup>

'She is thy housekeeper, O King; we commit her to thee. She shall sit along with the Fathers, until the covering in of her head.'<sup>2</sup>

The above hymn is one of the few in the Atharva-Veda that has been subjected to the scrutiny of scholars. Ludwig<sup>3</sup> renders the word *kulapa* in the above verse as 'guardian of thy house', Griffiths as 'Queen of thy race', and Bloomfield as 'thy housekeeper.' According to the interpretations of Weber, Ludwig and Zimmer<sup>4</sup> the pronoun that is not expressed in the text would be 'thy'. Zimmer, on the strength of an interpretation suggested by the St. Petersburg Lexicon renders the last part of the verse as 'until her hair be white with age.'

Weber, Ludwig and Zimmer have interpreted it as a marriage song, but Bloomfield,<sup>5</sup> while asserting, on the strength of quotations from Kaushika-Sutra, that the hymn was originally meant as the incantation of a woman against her rival and not a marriage song, as Weber, Ludwig and Zimmer have supposed it to be, admits that traces of a more original application are not wanting. He is inclined to take the second verse in the above as one uttered at the funeral of a maiden.

No restriction as to the age of marriage prevailed as a rule. References to the existence of natural love between young people before marriage goes against our assumption of the existence of child marriage. The rudiments of two kinds of marriages that came into existence later on—the Brahma and the Gandharva—can be found here. The fifth hymn of the fourth book records an in-

1. R.V. I, 14, 2

2. Whitney's translation I, 14, 3.

3. Der Rg-Veda, III, p. 459.

4. Altindisches Leben, p. 314.

5. American Journal of Philology, Vol. VII, pp. 473-476.

cantation to put to sleep the whole household when the lover visited his beloved. Elsewhere we find several references to the love of a youth for a maiden, and his attempts to win her by charms and incantations<sup>1</sup> (V, 8; 82).

The fourteenth book embodies the rituals of a wedding, and here can be seen the rudiments of the Brahma type of marriage. We find that the bride has no freedom in the choice of her husband. The parents settle the marriage with the help of friends. The bridegroom comes to the house of the bride, and after the formal ceremony takes her along with him to his house, where she is welcomed by his relatives.

In spite of the many differences, the kernel of the ritual of marriage in both the Rig-Veda and the Atharva-Veda is the same.

The idea that brotherless maidens led a frivolous and hence immoral life has been concluded from the seventeenth hymn of the first book.<sup>2</sup>

This is referred to in the Vedic Index<sup>3</sup> in support of the above view. But the verse is ambiguous, as the word 'vasa' might either designate an apparel or an abode as indicated by the dictum 'Vasa—achchhadane, Vasa nivase.' The translations are based on the earlier meaning of the word, but the sense of the verse will be more relevant if the second meaning is adopted as the hymn is supposed to be a charm when venesection is performed.<sup>4</sup>

'The veins, the *abode* of blood of those maidens that

1. R.V. VI, 8, 82.

2. Bloomfield, Hymns of the Atharva-Veda, 259. Zimmer, Altindisches Leben, 328.

3. Vedic Index I, 30; II, 496.

4. Though the word 'vasas' in the sense of 'abode' is rarely used specially in later literature, it may not be improbable that the word was in use in this sense in ancient time under special circumstances.

go, must now stand quiet, like brotherless sisters reft of power.’<sup>1</sup>

The above indicates merely the helpless position of brotherless girls; the sense of frivolity attributed to them through the interpretation of this verse can be inferred only from an adaptation of the first meaning of ‘*vasa*’.

Such a conclusion as put forward by the Vedic Index cannot justly be drawn from this single ambiguous reference.

Samana is referred to here also as a favourite festival. To be agreeable at Samana is one of the qualifications of a maiden for getting married. The system of giving dowry was prevalent; the value of a wife was enhanced by the amount of dowry that she brought to her husband.<sup>2</sup> In the rituals of marriage the dowry of Surya is sent to her husband’s place.<sup>3</sup> Besides the Wedding Hymn, description of marriage ritual is to be found in two more places.<sup>4</sup>

‘By this actual oblation let this man be filled up again; the wife that they have brought to him, let him grow superior to her by essence.’

This hymn is used in the Kaushika Sutra<sup>5</sup> twice in reference to marriage ceremonies along with the other passages.

1. R.V. I, 17, 1    2. R.V. V, 17, 12.    3. R.V. XIV, 1, 13.

4. A.V. VI, 78; VII. 36 & 37; Weber, Indische Studien V, 238; Ludwig, p. 371; Grill, 57, 166; Griffith, 1, 287; Bloomfield, 96, 498; Winternitz, Hochzeitsrituell, p. 73. ‘Let him grow superior to (her) by fatness, let him grow superior to (her) by royalty; by wealth of thousand-fold splendour let these two be unexhausted. Tvashtar generated the wife, Tvashtar (generated) these as husband for her; let Tvashtar make for you two a thousand lifetimes, a long lifetime.’ VI, 78, 3.

5. R.V. 78, 10, 14.

The rest of the hymn is a benediction for matrimonial happiness.

The thirty-sixth hymn of the seventh book is a charm to be pronounced by the bride and bridegroom. Kaushika<sup>1</sup> enjoins its use on the fourth day of the marriage ceremony.<sup>2</sup>

‘The eyes of us two (be) of honey-aspect; our faces are as smooth as balm; put thou me within thy heart; may our mind verily be together.’

In the thirty-seventh hymn of the same book we find the wife addressing the husband; it is in the form of a charm:

‘I bridle thee with my Manu-born garment; that thou mayst be wholly mine, mayst not make mention of other woman.’

Though these two hymns have been adopted in the marriage rituals of later times, here they are not accompanied by any ritual. They appear merely as oaths to be taken by husband and wife.

In the fourteenth book the entire marriage ritual<sup>3</sup> of the Rig-Veda appears with many variations and transpositions. It consists of two parts: one of sixty-four stanzas and the other of seventy-four. The ceremony is described in the Rig-Veda in a much simpler form. The main subject is the wedding of Surya, the daughter of the sun, who is regarded as the typical bride. The Ashvins appear here as the matchmakers; the first 16 verses of R.V. X, 85 appear here with slight variations in language and order of arrangement. Verse 17 is not to be found in R.V. It forms in the Atharva-Veda the beginning of a series of

1. R.V. 79, 2.

2. Weber, *Indische Studien*. V, 248; Grill, 55, 179; Henry, 13, 67; Griffith, I, 343; Bloomfield, 96, 546.

3. R.V. X, 85.

formulae for general use at wedding ceremonies which also occur in the Rig-Veda with slight changes. The god Pushan mentioned in the twenty-sixth verse of the Rig-Vedic hymn is changed into god Bhaga in the twentieth verse of the Atharva-Vedic hymn; the forty-second verse of the Rig-Vedic hymn is dissociated from its context and appears in the Atharva-Veda as the twenty-second verse.<sup>1</sup> In the Rig-Veda the verse is meant to be uttered when the bridegroom returns home with his bride and forms the concluding part of the ceremony, whereas in the Atharva-Veda it comes at the beginning. The twenty-ninth verse of the Rig-Vedic hymn appears in the Atharva-Vedic hymn as the twenty-fifth verse which is here associated with a female fiend who lies in wait for the bride. The twenty-eighth verse of the Rig-Vedic ceremony is taken here verbatim. It refers to the blue and red colour of the garment of the bride. The fiend is driven away perhaps by the expiation ceremonies.<sup>2</sup>

Now we come to the portion that is peculiar to the Atharva-Veda. From verse thirty to the end of the hymn, the ceremonial as well as the verses, with the exception of five, are purely Atharva-Vedic. Here we find some stanzas uttered in the form of incantations<sup>3</sup> and verses thirty-seven to forty consist of the formulae that were recited when water was brought for the bride's bath. Verse forty-one does not refer to the theme of the poem at all. It refers to Apala Atreyi, one of the few women who attained the status of a *Rishi* in the Rig-Vedic times. The stanza occurs

1. Weber, Indische Studien, V. pp. 178-217; Ludwig, Der Rg-Veda, III, pp. 470-476.

2. Weber Indische Studien (p. 190). Prof. Weber and the St. Petersburg Lexicon take it to imply the carcass of an animal that has been slaughtered for the purpose, whereas Prof. Wilson and Sayana are inclined to think that the words refer to the garments of Surya.

3. A.V. I, 34, R.V. X, 85, 23.

in Rig-Veda,<sup>1</sup> and has been incorporated into this hymn, for what purpose it is not clear. Verse forty-two to forty-six are the formulae to be recited after the bride's bath, while she is dressing. 'Hoping for well-willing offspring, good fortune, wealth, becoming obedient to thy husband, gird thyself in order to immortality.' Of these, the forty-fourth verse is the forty-sixth of the Rig-Vedic hymn; which enjoins the bride to be supreme over all the members of her new home. The forty-sixth verse is taken from the Rig-Veda.<sup>2</sup> Verses forty-seven to fifty-two describe the central part of the ceremony. Verse forty-seven where the bride is asked to stand upon a stone placed for the purpose is considered to be auspicious and supposed to ensure the sanctity of marital relations.

'I maintain for thee, in order to propagate, a pleasant firm stone in the lap of the divine earth; stand thou on that, the one to be exulted after, of excellent glory; let Savitar make for thee a long life-time.'

This part of the ritual is absent in the Rig-Veda. Then follow the rest of the verses addressed by the bridegroom to the bride as in the Rig-Veda. Of these, verse fifty<sup>3</sup> is uttered by the bridegroom as an oath before the fire grasping the hand of the bride. The next two verses,<sup>4</sup> contain benedictions on the bride. The next two verses describe<sup>5</sup> how the bridegroom expresses his rapture at the sight of his bride, who is well dressed and ready to go with him.

'This is that form in which the young woman dressed herself; I desire to know with (my) mind the wife moving

1. R.V. VIII. 80.

2. R.V. X, 40, 10. "They bewail the living, cry aloud at sacrifice; the men have set their thoughts upon a distant cast. What is lovely to fathers who came here; joy to the husband.

3. R.V. X, 85, 36.

4. A.V. XIV, 1, 53, 54.

5. A.V. XIV; 1, 56, 57.

about; I will go after her with nine-fold (navagva) comrades: who, knowing, unloosened these fetters.'

It appears from the above verse that the bride was not seen by the bridegroom until after the marriage ceremony was over. She was perhaps brought to the place of the ritual covered with a veil, and it was only after the ceremony, when she had legally become the wife, that the bridegroom was allowed to look at her. This part of the ceremony is not to be found in the Rig-Vedic ritual, nor in the earliest Smritis. Another interesting feature of this verse is that the bridegroom mentions his nine companions, which suggests to us the picture of the Roman Confarreatio with the ten witnesses.<sup>1</sup>

This is followed by a formal transfer of the newly-married girl from the father's home to her husband's. The first line of verse fifty-eight which says: 'I loose thee from Varuna's fetters'<sup>2</sup> occurs twice. Then a prayer for the safety of the journey is offered<sup>3</sup> after which the bride gets into the chariot.<sup>4</sup> "The well-flowered, all-formed bridal car, golden coloured, well-rolling, well-wheeled, do thou mount, O Surya." It occurs in the Rig-Vedic hymn also. In the rest of the verses, we see the friends and relatives of the bride-groom anxiously waiting for the arrival of the pair, praying for their safety as well as the welfare of the family.

The second part of book fourteen is a continuation of the first and begins with verses taken from the Rig-Vedic hymn.<sup>5</sup> These are supposed to be uttered before the sacred fire of the bride's father's house. It is not clear from the verses whether the bridegroom led the bride round the fire as the verses are being uttered. The fifth and sixth verses

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1. Rossbach, pp. 117-119.

2. A.V. XIV, 1, 58, 19.

3. A.V. XIV, 1, 59, 60.

4. A.V. XIV, 1, 61.

5. R.V. X, 85, 38-41

are prayers to the Ashvins: "O Ye Ashvins, ye have been twin keepers.....do ye smite away the pillar standing in the road (namely) disfavour." These appear in Rig-Veda as well,<sup>1</sup> with slight alterations. In this hymn, as well as in the former one, in the portions that are purely Atharva-Vedic, we find some parts of the ceremony to be similar to that of the ancient Roman ritual. In the former hymn a similarity is to be seen in connection with the nine followers of the bridegroom. In verses thirty-one to forty,<sup>2</sup> which contain the epithalamium, we see a rite that is somewhat similar to the one prevalent among the Romans, as described in Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities, under Matrimonium. Among the Romans the bride was accompanied by matrons who had not had more than one husband. The place was magnificently adorned and strewn with flowers. Another likeness to the Roman ritual can be observed in the following:

'Her let go by Brihaspati..what splendour is entered into the kine with that do we unite this woman.' The same is repeated, only replacing splendour with brilliancy, fortune, glory, milk and sap.

'He am I, she thou; chant am I, verse thou; heaven I, earth thou; let us (two) dwell together here; and be parents of children.'<sup>3</sup>

Among the ancient Romans a similar custom existed, and the bride saluted her husband with the words: "Ubi tu caius, ego caia."

Another feature of this hymn is that many verses are

1. R.V. X, 40, 12, 13.

2. A.V. XIV, 2, 31-40. 'Mount the coach with favouring mind, here give birth to progeny, like Indrani, walking with good awakening, mayst thou watch to meet dawns tripped with light'. The God in the beginning lay with their spouses; they embraced; O Woman, all-formed unite here with thy husband. So goes the description and ends with a prayer to Prajapati.

3. A.V. XIV, 2, 71.

uttered in the form of charms and incantations. This is to be seen from verse fifty-four onwards.<sup>1</sup> Coming to the general survey of the hymn, verses twelve to eighteen are formulae to be recited when the couple arrive at the bridegroom's house. These are probably uttered by the head of the family. Of these, verse sixteen is irrelevant. It occurs in R.V. III, 33, 13 and is uttered by the sage Vishvamisra while crossing the rivers Vipasa and Shutudri. This verse is not applicable here as the couple have already reached their destination. It is probably a later interpolation. Verses 19-27 contain the benediction on the new household of the couple. Here in verse 20 we find a rite similar in nature to that of the Romans.

“When this bride hath worshipped the householder's the former (Purva) fire, then, O Woman, do thou pay homage to Sarasvati and to the Fathers.”<sup>2</sup>

Among the Romans, the bride was given away to the husband with fire and water, which she had to touch as a mark of her entering the new life. Verse thirty-three is a combination of verses twenty-one and twenty-two of the Rig-Vedic hymn.<sup>3</sup> Verse thirty-one and the following contain the epithalamium which is followed by the ceremonial that takes place after the wedding night. The expiatory formulae to avert the evil consequences of riotous or inauspicious doings committed in the house of the bride's father while the bridal procession is on its way to the bridegroom's house are described in some verses.<sup>4</sup>

Thus ends the nuptial ceremony of the Atharva-Veda. It contains the whole ritual of the Rig-Veda and much more. In some places stanzas recur and the same parts of the ritual seem to be repeated over again. In the portion that is not Rig-Vedic, we find many touches common to the

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1. A.V. XIV, 2, 54.

2. A.V. XIV, 2, 20.

3. A.V. XIV, 2, 59-62.

4. R.V. X, 85, 21 & 22.

Roman ritual. These are not to be found in the Rig-Vedic form. From a survey of these, it appears probable that there existed a hymn describing in detail the nuptial ceremony, as described in the Atharva-Veda, to which the Rig-Vedic one has been added in order to give it greater authority; for the Atharva-Veda was not regarded as an authoritative scripture.

The nuptial ceremony peculiar to the Atharva-Veda represents a developed ceremonial stage.

The words used for a wife are the same as those of the Rig-Veda. The words *Jaya* and *Patni* designate the same as in the Rig-Veda. In the Rig-Veda the word *Stri*<sup>1</sup> is used to denote a 'woman' in general as opposed to a 'man'; but here the word means a 'wife'. The word *Dampati* has not here the sense of 'lord of the house' but *a husband and wife* (and is used in the dual sense).

'Let not the *Dampati* (husband-and-wife) fall into evil proceeding from sons.'<sup>2</sup>

From the above it is evident that a husband and wife constituted one unit in society, and the duties of each towards the other can be inferred from the nuptial hymn. On marriage a wife was given the supreme place in the household of her husband. She was at the helm of affairs, and participator in the sacrifice performed by her husband. She was his helper in the path of virtue.

'Be thou supreme among fathers-in-law, supreme also among brothers-in-law, be thou supreme over sister-in-law, supreme also over mother-in-law.'<sup>3</sup>

Information about the legal position between husband and wife is meagre. From the nuptial hymns it appears that the husband was the absolute master of the wife, and appropriated the dowry as well as the earnings of his wife.

1. R.V. I, 164, 16; V, 61, 8 etc.

2. A.V. XII, 3, 14.

3. A.V. XIV, 1, 44.

The ideal for wifehood was to be good and affectionate to her husband.

‘Let the wife to the husband speak words full of honey, wealful.’

In the earlier stages of the society discord must have been largely prevalent, for we find in the earlier books prayers and incantations for restoring concord between a man and his wife.

‘Having superiors, intentful, be ye not divided, accomplishing together, moving on with joint labour; come higher speaking what is agreeable one to another; I make you united, like-minded.’<sup>1</sup>

Polygamy was widely prevalent. We find entire hymns devoted to the subject. We find hymns devoted to witchcraft in which a wife tries to get rid of her rival by uttering verses holding a plant. She addresses the plant, chanting verses in which she asserts her superiority over her rival, as though by mere ceremony she could get rid of her obstacle.

‘I dig this herb, of plants the strongest, with which one drives off her rival; with which one wins completely her husband.’<sup>2</sup>

A reference to widowhood is to be found in only one of the later books dealing with funeral ceremonies. Here two verses occur which refer to a woman on the death of her husband; one of these<sup>3</sup> is in the Rig-Veda, but does not describe definitely any custom that made a woman lie down by the side of her dead husband. The other, which is purely Atharva-Vedic in origin, not only distinctly refers to the custom by which the wife was made to lie down by the side of her dead husband on the funeral pyre, but

1. A.V. III, 30, 5.

2. A.V. III, 18, 1.

3. A.V. XVIII, 3, 9.

the verse that follows,<sup>1</sup> too, describes a maiden being led forth for the dead. In the Atharva-Veda cremation and not burial was the general way of disposal of the dead.

‘Go up, O woman, to the world of the living; thou liest by this one who is deceased: Come! to him who grasps thy hand, thy second spouse thou hast now entered into the relation of wife to husband.’

‘I saw the young woman being led, being led about, alive for the dead; as she was enclosed with blind darkness, then I led her offward from in front.’<sup>2</sup>

The second hymn of the funeral rites describes the burning of the dead, showing thereby that cremation was the general practice.

‘Do not, O Agni, burn him up; do not be hot upon him; do not wrap his skin, nor his body; when thou shalt make him done, O Jatavedas, then send him forward unto the Fathers.’<sup>3</sup>

‘They who burned with fire, (and) who, not burned with fire revel in Svadha in the midst of heaven, then thou knowest, if thine, O Jatavedas; let them enjoy with Svadha the sacrifice, the Svadhiti.’<sup>4</sup>

In the above passages it is clear that burning of wives along with their dead husbands was a practice of the Atharva-Vedic cult, and it became almost extinct, and was observed only as a show. This is based on the belief in the continuity of existence of the soul of a man after death, where, it was thought, he needed the things which he enjoyed in his earthly life. This practice is found amongst all

1. A.V. XVIII, 3, 3.

2. A. V. XVIII, 3, 2, 3.

3. A.V. XVIII, 3, 4.

4. A.V. XVIII, 2, 35. Prof. Griffith renders *Svadha* as ‘oblations’ and translates the verse thus:—“Those, whether flames have burnt or not consumed them, who in the midst of heaven enjoy oblations—‘Let them, when thou dost know them; Jatavedas, accept with sacred food the axe and worship.’

primitive tribes, who either put into the grave or burned with the body all the things dear to the dead.

Elsewhere we find distinct reference to the re-marriage of women.

‘Whoever having gained a former husband, then gains another later one, if they shall give a goat with five rice-dishes, they shall not be separated.’

‘Her later husband comes to have the same world with his re-married spouse, who gives a goat with five rice-dishes, with the light of sacrificial gifts’.<sup>1</sup>

But society was tolerant in spirit. The acceptance of even the sons of a maiden in society reflects the recognition of the marriage ritual as a social institution.<sup>2</sup> Courtesans were given quite a respectable position in society.

‘*Silaci* by name—thy father, O goat—brown one, is a maid’s son.’ (Kanina).

‘With what splendour, the back-sides of the courtesans, O Ashvins, or with what strong drink, with what the dice were flooded, with that splendour favour ye this woman.’<sup>3</sup>

Hymn VI, 8, 9, 102, and 129, 130, 131 and 132 reflect the freedom existing in society.

The extent of freedom allowed in society can be surmised from some of the hymns<sup>4</sup> meant ‘to win a woman’.

‘As a creeper has completely embraced the tree so do thou embrace me, want thou the body of me, the feet, want the eyes. . . . let the eyes lusting for me dry up with love.’

‘I make thee cling to my arm, cling to my heart, that thou mayst be in my power.’

The above gives us a unique picture. It has something in common with the Rig-Veda, but set in a different background. As it has come down to us, it consists of two

1. A.V. IX, 5, 27, 28.

2. A.V. V, 5, 8.

3. A.V. V, 5, 8.

4. A.V. VI, 8, 9, 102, 129, 130, 131, 132.

parts: the old and the new. The old represents the primitive atmosphere of charms and incantations, while the new is mixed with the Rig-Vedic hymns. The funeral rites, the wedding hymns and the funeral ceremonies are mixed up with the Rig-Vedic elements. In the former part we see a charm used for the birth of a child, another to scare away the evil spirits from endangering the life of a child, witchcraft for winning the affection of a husband, and to do away with the rivals. Even in the books that are considered to be later the purely Atharva-Vedic part breathes an atmosphere of charms and incantations. The older represents a less rigid society, whereas in the later books we find the more developed rituals, which reflect a more conservative society. We find two references to the marriage ritual in the older part, which consists in the simple utterance of an oath, whereas in the later a more developed form exists in which the Rig-Vedic ritual is incorporated. These incantations and charms, the legacies of a primitive civilization are absent in the earlier Mandalas of the Rig-Veda.

It is only in the tenth Mandala of the Rig-Veda that we meet with a hymn or two written of the spirit of the Atharva-Veda. This part of the book is a later one, and these hymns, are much later compositions and probably interpolations. But the Atharva-Vedic atmosphere is more primitive than that of the Rig-Veda. On the other hand, we find entire hymns of the Rig-Veda incorporated in the Atharva-Veda, whereas none of the latter are to be found in the former.

In the purely Atharva-Vedic portion of the Wedding Hymn we have noticed that parts of the ceremony are similar to those of the Roman customs. These are absent in the Rig-Vedic part. In the Funeral Hymn<sup>1</sup> we find the whole hymn of the Rig-Veda,<sup>2</sup> in which the discussion between

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1. A.V. XVIII, 1, 16.

2. R.V. X. 10.

Yama and Yami takes place. In the Rig-Veda Yama and Yami are described as twins, brother and sister. Yama declines the proposal of marriage to Yami on the ground that it is a sin to marry a sister; on which Yami says, 'Even in the womb the Creator made us for husband and wife.' Professor Von Roth,<sup>1</sup> on the strength of this remark of Yami, is inclined to take them as the first human couple—the Indian Adam and Eve,—though there is not a single word, besides the above in the hymn to indicate them as such.<sup>2</sup> The marriage of brother and sister is sanctioned by the earlier Avestan scriptures. It perhaps originated from the Royal families, who formed a caste of their own and when men were not available in their own caste, they resorted to this method of solving the problem.

In the purely Atharva-Vedic part of the funeral hymn however, we find Yama and Yami clearly mentioned as the first human couple on earth, reflecting thereby the Hebrew conception of the originators of mankind. If this idea was current in Rig-Vedic times, it would certainly have found a place in it.

'Him who died first of mortals,, who went forth first to that world, Vivasvant's son, assembler of people, King Yama, honour ye with oblation.'<sup>3</sup>

We have seen that in the Rig-Veda burial was the usual method of disposal of the dead. It is doubtful if a reference to cremation can be found there, nor can we trace in the Rig-Veda the custom of leaving the carcass to be devoured by wild beasts, or birds of prey—a practice pre-

1. R.V. X, 10.

2. Translation of the Rig-Veda by Prof. Griffith—notes to hymn X. 10.

Prof. Miller remarks thus: (Lectures on the Science of Language, second series, p. 521). 'If Yama had been the first created of men, surely the Vedic poets, in speaking of him, could not have passed this over in silence.'

3. A.V. XVIII, 3, 13.

valent among the people of the Avesta. We know from *Strabo* that such a custom prevailed among the Iranians, Bactrians and Massagetae, and it is also sanctioned by the old German Law. In the Funeral Hymn of the Atharva-Veda we find a reference to it, and these practices are mentioned when oblations to the fire are made for the salvation of the souls of the dead.<sup>1</sup>

'They that are buried, and they that are scattered away, they that are burned and they that are set up—all these fathers, O Agni, bring thou to eat the oblation.'<sup>2</sup>

In this verse the word *Paroptah* and *Udhitah* occur. The former means a person abandoned at death to be devoured by carnivorous beasts and birds, and the latter signifies a person cast out in extreme old age to die of hunger.<sup>3</sup> The latter of these practices is described in the Rig-Veda Valakhilya,<sup>4</sup> and the former is common among the Iranians.<sup>5</sup>

From the above it appears probable that the Atharva-Veda represents the life of another branch of the Aryans, who came to India later. Both from the more primitive nature of the social life and the prevalence of customs common to the Rig-Veda, they seem to belong to the older stock of the Aryans. Their reference to the Iranian customs and their similarity of marriage rituals to some of those of the Romans, reflected as they are in the two most important

1. 'It is interesting to note that the term *Vrksha*, an ordinary term for 'tree' in the Rig-Veda denotes a Coffin made from a tree in the Atharva-Veda. It is no doubt made by hollowing it out of a tree'. Vedic Index, Vol. II, 319.

2. A.V. XVIII, 2, 34.

3. Translation of the Atharva-Veda by Prof. Griffith—Note to Hymn XVIII, 2, 34. Prof. Whitney describes it thus; 'it evidently refers to exposure on something elevated, such as is practiced by many peoples.' (Harvard Oriental Series, Vol. 8, p. 841).

4. Valakhilya, 3, 2.

5. Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben*, p. 328.

phases of life—marriage and death—show the influence of Iranian culture on this particular branch of the Aryan family.

When they came to India, their Indian brethren do not seem to have accepted them with kindness. Their hostilities are reflected in the history of the *Vratyas*, to which a whole book of the Atharva-Veda is devoted. The word originally meant *Vrata*—troop; it is in idealisation of the pious vagrant or wandering religious mendicant. The *Vratyas* are supposed to be people free from the fetters of Brahmanism. They are glorified because they are permitted to share the duties and privileges of Brahmanical Aryans after being invested with the sacred thread. The *Tandya-Brahmana* of the Sama Veda describes *Vratya Stomas*, which were prescribed for gaining admission into the Brahmanical community.<sup>1</sup> We know from references in the R.V. that the *Vratyas* were despised in society, but they seem to have gained friends soon, for we find certain schools upholding the Atharva-Veda, and giving it the highest place among the Vedas. They even maintained it to be the most ancient and the most authoritative of all.

In the *Nyayamanjari* of Jayanta Bhatta we have a long discourse to prove the authoritativeness and priority of the Atharva-Veda. The author first puts forth several quotations in support of its authoritativeness in the course of which he says that it is mentioned as such in the *Shatapatha-Brahmana* and *Chhandogyopanishad*. It has been objected that as the Atharva-Veda is mentioned as the fourth Veda and the *Itihasapuranas* as the fifth, it necessarily falls outside the *trayi*, or the three authoritative Vedas, and so has to be classed with *Itihasapurana*. In reply to this it is averred that the same objection can be applied with equal force to the other three Vedas. The

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1. Parts 1-4; eighth Prapathaka.

Shatadhyayana describes the Richas as the Pranah of Brahma, and Atharvan as the Samana of Brahma. This is also mentioned in the Chhandogyopanishad,<sup>1</sup> in the Taittiriya Brahmapanishad in the context beginning with *Tasmāt va etasmat pranamayāt anyontaratma manomayah*; it is said that the Yajus constitute the head, Richas the right wing, Samas the mouth and the Atharvangirasah constitute the soul and is placed in the tail.<sup>2</sup>

We also find elsewhere in the same book,<sup>3</sup> 'Rig is said to constitute the East, Yajus the south, Sama the north and Atharvangirasah the west.'

In the chapter relating to Brahmajajna it is stated, 'Oblation of milk should be offered in connection with the Rig-Veda, fat by the followers of the Atharva-Veda and one who, knowing this text, studies the Atharva-Veda daily will satisfy the gods with his oblation of fat.' The author then quotes from several books on sacred law, in which the Atharva-Veda is counted as one of the four Vedas and is given importance as a Vedic Canon, the chief being from Manu, Yajnavalkya, Likhita and Prachetas.

1. Chan. Up. III, iii.

2. Nyaya-manjari of Jayanta Bhatta—p. 254.

Hist. of Indian logic—Satischandra Vidyabhushan.

The date of Jayanta is disputable: We have the following in the above book:—

'He could not have lived earlier than the 9th and later than the 11th Cent. A.D. as he quotes Vachaspati Mitra (841 A.D.) and Magha (about 905 A.D.) in the Nyayamanjari and is himself quoted in the Ratna Tarika by Ratnaprabha (1181 A.D.).' Dr. S. N. Das Gupta assigns him to 880 A.D. (Hist. of Indian Philosophy, Vol. I. p. 307). Prof Keith speaking of the date of Mahimnastava says 'The work seems to be known to the Nyaya-Manjari of Jayanta Bhatta and therefore must not be later than the 9th Cent. and hence according to him Jayanta lived before the 9th Cent. (Hist. of Sanskrit Literature. p. 21).

Though the book itself is of later origin, the quotations put forward by Jayanta in favour of the antiquity of the A.V. are of older origin as they are from the Brahmanas and the Aranyakas.

3. Nyaya-manjari of Jayanta Bhatta—p. 255.

He then states<sup>1</sup> that in Mahabhashya, Patanjali has mentioned the Atharva-Veda at the beginning of the work. Shabaraswami, while speaking of the Vedas, exemplifies in that connection the existence of the Kathaka, Kalapaka, Maudgalaya and Paippaladaka Schools in the Atharva-Veda as in the Yajur veda. He then replies to the objection raised as to the inclusion of the Atharva-Veda in the category of *Trayi*. It is generally supposed to be outside the category of *Trayi* because nothing of the other three Vedas belonging to the *Trayi* appears in it.

In reply to this objection, he states that the sutras regulating the performance of the Ishtiyajna, Pasuyajna, Ekahayaga and Ahinayaga are to be found only in the Atharva-Veda. But, says the opponent, in the performance of Soma sacrifice, the Rig-Veda plays the part of a Hota, the Yajur that of the Adhvaryu, the Sama that of the Udgata, but nothing is prescribed for the Atharva-Veda. This objection is met by the argument that the part of the Brahma has to be performed according to the rule prescribed in the Atharva-Veda. In the Gopatha Brahmana it is said that Prajapati, while performing the Soma Yaga, enjoins that one who knows the Rig-Veda as the Hota, one who knows the Yajus as the Adhvaryu, one who knows the Sama as the Udgitha, and who knows the Atharva as the Brahma, shall be selected. It is further asserted that whatever shortcomings there are in the performance of a sacrifice are overcome by the superior merit of the Atharva-Veda. Against this it is contended that these Shrutis are held to be authoritative only by those who give an authoritative position to the Atharva-Veda. Others, however, aver that the part of Brahma should be played by means of *Trayi*, though some say that it should be performed by the Atharva-Veda which constitutes the essence of all.

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1. Nyaya-manjari of Jayanta Bhatta—p. 256.

The author, after a discussion in which he tries to establish the authoritativeness of the Atharva-Veda, goes on to prove the priority of the Atharva-Veda to the other Vedas. His arguments are as follows:—

1. The Atharva-Veda comes first, for the word “Om” which forms an essential part of a *Mantra* in the adoration of Brahman comes from the Atharva-Veda.<sup>1</sup>

2. It is also said that one who has been initiated according to the Atharva-Vedic rites can read the other Vedas, but one who has been initiated according to the other Vedas, but has not been initiated according to the Atharvana, cannot study the Atharva-Veda.

3. In a sacrifice, when any mistake occurs, the sacrificers are protected from the evil consequences of such an action by performing the penances enjoined by the Atharva-Veda: hence the superiority of the Atharva-Veda to the other Vedas.

Again in the *Shraddha Prakarana*<sup>2</sup> it is enjoined that one who has studied a part of the Rig-Veda has not the right to take part in the above *Shraddha* function, whereas one who has studied a part of the Atharva-Veda can join it. Hence the Atharva-Veda is superior to the other Vedas.

The above argument is based on internal evidence specially drawn from the ritualistic aspect. The priority of the Atharva-Veda is based more or less on its superiority to the other Vedas in the rituals. It may be presumed that the Atharva-Veda represents the literature of a different stock of the Aryan family, who were influenced by the Iranian culture and who entered India later than the Rig-Vedic group.

In support of this we find certain distinct similarities,

1. *Nyaya-manjari* of Jayanta Bhatta—p. 259.

2. P. 260 of *Nyaya-manjari*. The author does not mention the particular book from which he is quoting.

especially in medicine and witchcraft, between the Atharva-Veda and the Zoroastrian scriptures. The Atharva-Veda has been regarded as specially authoritative on medicine; spells and incantations are used for curing the sick. In the Zoroastrian scriptures, the Vendidad has three chapters devoted to medicine.<sup>1</sup>

On the death of a person certain ceremonies are performed in the form of a spell. Death is supposed to be the triumph of a demon, and as soon as the soul departs, the demon, Drug Nasu, falls upon the dead, which causes the corpse to become unclean. The demon Drug is expelled from the dead by means of the look of a dog, and it is expelled from the living by a process of washing with ox's urine and with water.

A spell accompanies these ceremonies. 'Perish, O fiendish Drug! Perish, O brood of the field! Perish, O world of the field! Perish away O Drug! Rush away, O Drug! Perish away, O Drug! Perish away to the regions of the north, never more to give unto death the living world of the holy spirit.'<sup>2</sup>

The general Iranian belief was that everything that goes out of a man is dead matter; hence it is the property of a demon; and any such actions as the paring of nails and shaving of hair or breathing out are protected against demons and evil spirits by certain rites and spells.<sup>3</sup> A demon's influence is seen in anything that changed its normal nature. One of these is the uncleanness of women at certain periods, as at childbirth, caused by the influence of demons.<sup>4</sup>

Fire is lighted to keep away the fiends, who are sup-

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1. Vendidad—Frag. VII, 36-44.

2. Ibid. Frag. VIII, 35-72; IX, 12-36.

3. Vendidad—Frag. XVII. (S. B. E. Series).

4. Ibid. Frag. I, 18-19; Frag. XVI, 15; (S.B.E.) Frag. V, 45; Frag. VII, 70, (S.B.E.)

posed to try their best to kill the child and the mother. "When there is a pregnant woman in a house one must take care that there be fire continually in the house, when the child is brought forth, one must burn a candle."

"When the child is being born one brandishes a sword on the four sides, lest fairy Aal kill it."<sup>1</sup> In Rome, three gods—Intercidona, Pilumnus and Deverra—keep her threshold, lest Sylvanus come in and harm her.

Sickness was cured by washings and spells. Spells were regarded as efficacious to cure diseases.<sup>2</sup> Incantations and washing by Barashnum were regarded as methods of cure for many diseases.

It can be asserted that a certain amount of witchcraft and sorcery can be traced in Zoroastrianism which is similar to that of the Atharva-Veda.

It can, therefore, be concluded that the Atharva-Veda represents the literature of an older stock of the Aryan family, a stock which was influenced by the Iranian culture. Hence the womanhood of the Atharva-Vedic age is essentially Indo-Iranian.

### CHAPTER III

### AVESTIAN SCRIPTURES

We have already seen that a woman's position had deteriorated in the time of the Atharva-Veda. Side by side with this, we find rituals, especially those concerning marriage and death, had developed to a remarkable degree. In

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1. Polak Persian I, 223.

2. Vendidad—Frag. VII, 44, (S.B.E.)

the Rig-Veda we have seen that burial was the usual way of disposal of the dead. Though the belief in the existence of the soul is clearly discernible, it is only in the Atharva-Veda we come across a ceremonial in which food for the soul of the dead is offered through the medium of fire. As cremation and not burial was the general practice at the time, the prayers and offerings for the soul of the dead in the next world were offered through Agni.

“Do not, O Agni, burn him up, do not be hot upon him: do not warp his skin, nor his body; when thou shalt make him done, O Jatavedas, then send him forward unto the Fathers.”<sup>1</sup>

“Release again, O Agni, to the Fathers him who goes offered to thee with Svadha; clothing himself in life, let him go unto (his) prosperity; let him be united with a body, very splendid.”<sup>2</sup>

The food was offered in the belief that the souls of the dead came to eat it and thus sustained their lives in the next world. In some of the later rituals, meat, rice and cakes were offered for the satisfaction of the dead.

“They that are buried, they that are scattered away, they that are burned, and they that are set up—all these Fathers, O Agni, bring them to eat oblation.”<sup>3</sup>

“What barbarians, having entered among the Fathers, having faces of acquaintances, go about, eating what is not sacrificed, those who wear gross and those who wear subtle bodies, Agni shall blast them forth from this sacrifice.”<sup>4</sup>

This growth in the system of funeral rites necessitated an oblation; and a son, being the nearest to the dead, came

1. A.V. XVIII, 2-4.

2. A.V. XVIII, 2, 10.

3. A.V. XVIII, 2, 34.

4. A.V. XVIII, 2, 28. Prof. Whitney does not translate *Parapur* and *Nipur*, but comments on the traditional meaning of words thus: “The comm. to VS. explains *Parapuras* as *Stuladehan* and *Nipuras* as *Sukshmadehan*, which is, of course, the purest nonsense; that to MB divides *Para puro ni puro ye*

to be chosen for the purpose. The importance of a son was thus enhanced, since he had the prerogative of offering food to the spirits of the dead fathers, without which they would have to suffer in the next world. In that part of the ceremonial which is purely Atharva-Vedic, we find the description of the offering of rice, butter and honey for the benefit of the souls in the next world, and Agni is prayed to carry them to the Fathers.

If there was failure to offer oblations, the spirits had to suffer in hell, a faint description of which is given in the nineteenth book of the Atharva-Veda. A son was looked upon as a property bequeathed to ensure the welfare in the next world.

In the Avestan Scriptures the same idea is stressed in the ceremonies for the welfare of departed souls. Funeral oblations were thought to be necessary because they were "just as the protection with nourishment of those newly born, in their infancy."

The spirit of the dead is supposed to hover on the face of the earth for a few days, during which time funeral offerings in the form of cakes and clothes have to be offered for the formation of their new ethereal body; after which they depart for their destination. In the Zoroastrian scriptures the time is limited to three days principally extended up to ten days and in the Hindu scriptures it is limited to ten days. On failure to make these offerings, the dead soul is believed to go to hell. Hence, to ensure his benefit in

*bharanti*, and connects the preposition with the verb rendering the first puras by "our enemies' houses" and the second by "our Kindred's houses" quite as bad. Our comm. finally, explains *parapuras* (through *para prnanti*) as *pindadatarah putrah* and *nipurah* (through *niprnaniti*) as *Pantrah*—if possible, worse than either of the others. All we can see clearly is that the native exegetes are quite as much in the dark as we with regard to the value of these obscure words.' (Harvard Oriental Series, Vol. 8, p. 839).

the next world, a man had to make some investment before his death, and this was done by begetting a son, whom he provided with the necessary wherewithal for the funeral oblations. The fourteenth and fifteenth chapters of Dadistani-Dinik clearly describe the existence of the soul on the earth after death. The ceremonial of three days is insisted on, as there is the risk of the diminution of souls in the next world<sup>1</sup> in the event of their children not observing the three days' ceremonial. It was thought necessary for the newly-passed souls to be protected and nourished, just as newly born children require in their infancy. 'The angels are pleased with him who has bequeathed this three days' ceremonial to his children.' 'As to the men with great and powerful children, to whom the ceremonial of the three days for himself at the final day and also the progress of many good works have seemed certain.....*he has bequeathed* the conduct of the three days' ceremonial and also other good works, unto his children, in order that the ceremony for the living soul may be conducted at the final day; with him the angels are in triumph....'<sup>2</sup>

During these days cakes and clothes are offered for the dead. The ceremonial is thus described.....and a fire is lighted in the ceremonial and a clean ligature of the limbs is to be tied. As a rule it is so considered that in the three days there are fifteen ceremonies in honour of Srosh and three sacred cakes (dron) which are consecrated in each dawn with various dedications; and the fourth day they solemnise the *viparad*, the portion of the righteous guardian spirits.<sup>3</sup>

This notion of offering food through fire for the benefit of the dead is explicit in the funeral rites of the Atharva-

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1. Dadistani—Dinik—Ch. 81, 8. (S.B.E.)

2. Ibid. Ch. 81, 12, 13 (S.B.E.).

3. Ibid.

Veda<sup>1</sup> and is further developed in the Brahmanas. The Shatapatha Brahmana<sup>2</sup> enjoins that by sacrifice the sacrificer receives a new body after death. 'When he dies, and they place him on the fire, and when he thereupon comes into existence again, he is born a third time.'<sup>3</sup> And the sacrifice, indeed, becomes his body. . . . And verily whatever offerings he there performs, that offering becomes his body in yonder world; and when he who knows this departs this world then that offering being behind him, calls out to him "Come hither! Here I am, the body."<sup>4</sup>

In the rituals of Shraddha, described in later books, the pivotal part of the ceremony is the giving of Pindas for ten successive days,<sup>5</sup> one on each day. This is offered to enable the soul to form a new ethereal body to continue its existence in the next world. It is supposed that without this the soul will have to go to hell. A description of hell, in which the dead pass through two fires which burn the wicked but let the good pass by unhurt, is to be found in Shatapatha Brahmana. It is also referred to in the Atharva-Veda. The person who sets fire to the funeral pyre and thus destroys the earthly body has to give these *Pindas* for the formation of the ethereal body of the dead. In the earliest lawbooks<sup>6</sup> it is clearly stated that the Pitris or the souls of the dead being satisfied with the funeral oblations, appear before their progeny. 'The manes are satisfied for a month by gift of sesamum, Masha-beans, rice, barley, and water; for three years by fish and the flesh of common deer, spotted deer, hares, turtles, boars and sheep; for 12 years by cow's milk and messes made of milk; for a very long time by the flesh of Vadhrinasa, by Ocynum

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1. A.V. XVIII.

2. S.B. XI-2-I, I-6.

3. S.B. XI-2-I, I.

4. S.B. XI, 2, 2, 5 and 6.

5. Purohita-Darpana.

6. Gautama XV, 15; Baudhayana II, 8, 14; 15; Apastamba II, 8, 18.

sanctum, and by the flesh of goats and of the rhinoceros mixed with honey.' "For (by appearing on the altar) the manes signify that they are satisfied by the funeral offering."<sup>1</sup>

With the development of this eschatological idea, the anxiety about the next world necessitated the development of an elaborate system of rituals for the salvation of the soul. The imperative necessity of a son who could offer the oblations dominated the whole sphere of thought and diverted the minds of men mainly to the welfare in the next world. The angle of vision changed. The aim and purpose of offerings at the great sacrifices came to be concentrated for the birth of a son. Woman, who hitherto had a share in the intellectual and religious field, came to be considered as having no purpose in life except that of being the mother of sons. Daughters came to be looked upon as a misfortune, and as the aim of a woman's life was mainly to give birth to children, child marriage came into vogue. Sons legitimate or illegitimate were received into the bosom of society. Even virtue was sacrificed in the anxiety and apprehension about the future life. Though re-marriage was denied to a widow, she could have children legally through the system of *Niyoga*. Polygamy came into existence, so that, if a man could not get a son by one wife, he could marry as many as he liked. As the *raison d'être* of a woman came to be only to bring forth a son, she was thrown out of the intellectual field, and was forced by law to confine herself to the duties that could help her in that direction only.

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1. Apastamba II, 8, 18, 18.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE BRAHMANAS

IN the history of religious literature, the Brahmanas are placed next to the Vedas, though chronologically some of them are regarded as being prior to the Atharva-Veda. The probable dates of these books can be conjectured only from internal evidence. Though scholars are divided in their opinion as to the relative dates of the Brahmanas, it has been agreed by all that roughly speaking they came down to 600 B.C.

As the Brahmanas are mainly concerned with the ritualistic side of the sacrifice, they throw little light on the subject of our survey. As the period was marked by the growth of rituals, the position assigned to women in the great sacrifices deserves examination. During this period, religion and social life were so intermingled that one could not be distinguished from the other. Life expressed itself to a great extent through religious ceremonies.

It is here that the need of women for religious and social welfare first begins to take a definite shape. The eschatological belief that the spirits of the dead would wander as restless ghosts on earth or sink down to Hell in default of the offerings due to them had gained firm root in the land and all religious ceremonies centered round this essential provision for bliss in the next world. In all the great sacrifices a certain part of their ritual was performed for the birth of a son, who could continue the cult of worshipping the spirits of ancestors. Hence it was thought that one could secure good in the other world only through the oblations offered by a son.

In the Aitareya Brahmana<sup>1</sup> this is explicitly expressed in the legend of Shunahshepa. Harishchandra, the son of

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1. Ait Bra. VII, 13-16. or (XXXIII.) Harvard Oriental Series, Vol. 25. p. 299.

Vedhas, of the Ikshvaku race, was a king who had no son, though he had a hundred wives. In his house there lived the Rishis, Parvata and Narada. Once the King addressed Narada thus: "Since all beings, those endowed with reason (men) as well as those without it, wish for a son, what is the fruit to be obtained by having a son?"

"The father pays a debt to his son and gains immortality when he beholds the face of a son living who was born to him. . . . The son is a boat to salvation."

As the thoughts turned to getting a son to provide for the future, daughters came to be looked upon as enebromances and, however inconsistent it may seem, ceremonies were performed with the special object of avoiding the birth of a daughter. The eagerness for a son kept away all thought that without a woman the race might become extinct. In the New and Full Moon sacrifices of the Taittiriya Samhita, a ritual is specially instituted for avoiding the birth of a daughter. The Mantra portion of this book has been considered by scholars to be prior to the Atharva-Veda, while others do not think that such distinction could be made, and that the Brahmana could be separated from the Mantra. This ritual, as it appears, is more in the form of an Atharva-Vedic incantation. A piece of *kusa* is thrown upwards after offering due prayers with the following verse. "If he were to spread in all directions, a daughter would be born to him. He threw it upwards, for upwards is, as it were, connected with a man."

In the narrative of Narada and Harishchandra referred to above, Narada, after explaining the utility of a son, concludes his remarks thus:—

"A wife is a comrade, a daughter is a misery.

And a son a light in the highest heaven."<sup>1</sup>

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. 1. Ait Br. VII. 13; Die Frau in den Indischen Religionen by Dr. Winternitz p. 21.

The above ritual of the Taittiriya Samhita is almost on a par with that of the Atharva-Veda, where certain incantations are used for the same purpose. Sinivali, the goddess of the New Moon, is invoked to replace a daughter with a son.

The exposure of female children was one of the means by which daughters could be avoided. In course of the Soma sacrifice there are certain rituals in which the female child is left behind and the male is taken up.

“They go to the final bath; they deposit the pots, but lift up (the vessels) for Vayu; therefore they deposit a daughter on birth, a son they lift up.”

This is referred to in the Maitrayani Samhita<sup>1</sup> and the Kathaka Samhita.<sup>2</sup> Zimmer and Delbruck support the existence of the exposure of female children, whereas Bothlingk dissents on the ground that the custom meant only the disposal of a daughter in marriage.

A daughter's place in a family is inferior to that of a married woman, a sister's place is next to the wife of her brother. The Agnimaruta Shastra thus explains:

“He celebrates the wives of the gods after Agni, the lord of the house; therefore the wife sits behind the Garhapatya. They say, ‘Let him celebrate Raka first; a sister has the first drink.’ Therefore a sister, though of the same womb, lives as inferior to a wife, though of a different womb.”<sup>3</sup>

The description of the marriage of Surya in the Rig-Veda appears here in a new light. The race run by the Ashvins is described, but here all the assembled deities join them. Ashvins exist only in name; they are neither the groomsmen nor the winners of Surya, but the names of the thousand verses by Prajapati, who is here described as the

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1. Mait. Sam.—IV, 6, 4; 7, 9. 2. Kathaka Sam.—XXVII. 9.  
3. Ait. Bra. Agnimaruta-Shastra III, 37, XIII, 13.

father of Surya, as in the Rig-Veda; but the name is used sometimes for Prajapati and sometimes for Savitar, showing the transitional stage of its evolution. In the same context Ashvins are mentioned as the winners of Surya. As the verses of the Vedas were preserved through memory, it seems as though the seers were not quite acquainted with the original version and blended the old with the new ideas.

"Prajapati gave his daughter to Soma, the king, even Surya Savitri; for her all the gods came as groomsmen; for her wedding ceremony he made his thousand (verses) which they call the Ashvina (shastra)." "Now when Savitar gave Surya to Soma, the King, he made over to his daughter whether she was Prajapati's (or his own), on marriage these thousand verses, that were in the possession of the deities; they said: 'Let us run a race for this thousand' they ran the race; then the Ashvins were victorious by means of the ass."<sup>1</sup>

As in the Rig-Veda, so in the great rituals of the Brahmanical texts, the role of an indispensable helpmate of man at the sacrifice was given to the wife. During the greater part of the rituals she was a silent partner, but whenever ceremonies occur for bringing about the birth of a son or for conferring blessings on the progeny, she had to play an active part. Though this was generally observed at the sacrifices, we come across discussions in which the necessity of a wife participating at a ritual is doubted.<sup>2</sup> 'Should a man without a wife offer the Agnihotra? or should he not offer it?' "He should offer," they say: "if he were not to offer, he would be the mockery of a man." "What is a mock man?" they ask. "One who offers neither to gods, nor to the fathers, nor to men. Therefore, even if one has no wife, he should offer the Agnihotra." A verse is quoted in

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1. Ait. Bra. Adhyaya II, The Asvina Sastra IV, 7, (XVII-I).  
2. Aitareya Brahmana VII, 9 and 10.

support of it: "Even one who has no wife, and drinks no Soma, should sacrifice in the Sautramani Sacrifice to free thyself from debt to father and mother. In accord with this command is this rule of scripture."

We next come to the discussion of the question whether Agnihotra can be performed by a widower.

"They say, 'Why does a man without a wife offer at command the Agnihotra?'. 'If one has commenced (the sacrifice) and his wife dies or disappears, how does he offer the Agnihotra?' 'The wife is faith, the sacrificer the truth; faith and truth are the highest pair; by faith and truth as a pair he conquers the world of heaven'."

The idea that a woman is impure when with child, and anything, especially food, associated with her is contaminated and hence has to be purified is mentioned here. This idea that women are impure at certain stages is to be seen in the Zoroastrian scriptures as also in the Hebrew and the notion of purification is to be met with in the Atharva-Veda, where entire hymns are devoted to the subject. "If one who has established the fires should eat the food of a woman with child, what is the penance here?" In reply to this a ritual is prescribed for purification.

Women are forbidden to go to the assembly. This is mentioned both in the Aitareya Brahmana and Maitrayani Samhita.<sup>1</sup> The same idea is referred to in the Atharva-Veda.<sup>2</sup> The Maitrayani Samhita<sup>3</sup> places a woman on a par with dice and drink, and describes her as one of the major evils in human society. She is declared to be untruth in human society and is connected with Nirriti.

Nirriti is the presiding deity of the Atharva-Veda and spells are often pronounced to get rid of her influence.

1 Mait. Sam. IV, 76.

3. Mait. Sam. III, 63.

2. A.V. VII. 38, 4.

Taittiriya Samhita<sup>1</sup> and Shatapatha Brahmana<sup>2</sup> rank her as inferior even to a bad man. Polygamy was quite common and we come across four names used for the wives of a king in some of the Brahmanas. Of these, Mahishi<sup>3</sup> is distinctly referred to as the chief wife, the partner in the sacrifices. The use of the word Patni in the singular shows that only one wife, the Mahishi, could take part in the religious ceremonies. Parivirkti is the name of a wife who had no children,<sup>4</sup> Vivita<sup>5</sup> is considered to be the favourite wife and Palagali<sup>6</sup> is the daughter of the Court official.

In the families of kings, the chief queen played an important part in the great sacrificial feasts when performed with great pomp and under the supervision of numerous priests. She had to be present from the beginning to the end of the sacrifice, and to take part in all the preparations.

Two of the most important of these great sacrificial feasts are the Ashvamedha or Horse Sacrifice and Rajasuya. They were ceremonies performed by kings for establishing their supremacy over other kings. One who performed such a ceremony successfully was recognised as an emperor. In the Ashvamedha sacrifice, a horse is let loose with a challenge to other kings. Whoever caught the horse had to fight with the owner to prove his superiority. The victor was proclaimed as emperor. In the Ashvamedha, as described in later times, we do not come across the slaying

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1. Tait. Sam. VI, 5, 8, 2.

2. S.B. I, 3, 1, 9.

3. Tait. Bra. III, 9, 4, 4; Sat. Bra. V, 3, 1, 4; VI, 5, 3, 1; VII, 5, 1, 1; XIII 2, 6, 4; Panchavimsa Bra. XIX, 1, 4; Tait. Sam. I, 8, 9, 1.

4. Sat. Bra. XIII, 2, 6, 6; XIII, 4, 1, 8; XIII, 5, 2, 7; Tait. Sam. I, 8, 9, 1; Tait. Bra. I, 7, 3, 4; III, 9, 4, 4, Kathaka Sam. X, 10; XV, 4; Sat. Bra. V, 3, 1, 13.

5. Ait. Bra. III, 22; Tait. Bra. I, 7, 3, 3; Tait. Bra. III, 9, 4, 4; Sat. Bra. XIV, 2, 6, 5.

6. Tait. Bra. I, 7, 3, 3; III, 9, 4, 5; Sat. Bra. XIII, 4, 1, 8.

of the horse and other ceremonies connected with the birth of sons, found in the Brahmanas. Here, as well as in the *Rajasuya*, the wife was considered as indispensable for the performance. In the Brahmanas it is different; the horse is anointed and then killed; all the partakers in the sacrifice then walk round its body nine times, saying prayers. All the consorts of the king and their train of attendants take part in it. A part of the ceremony is specially meant for the chief queen, who is made to lie down beside the dead animal.<sup>1</sup> The rest of the ceremony, meant for the birth of a heroic son<sup>2</sup> is symbolical and more in the form of an incantation than a sacrifice. The covering of the queen and the dead animal with a cloth and the uttering of verses by priests in ambiguous language is associated with the practice of charms of the *Atharva-Veda*.

Another sacrifice in which a wife had to play an important part is the *Varunaprghasa*. Here there is a ceremony in which the fidelity of the wife to her husband is questioned. In course of her confession, she has to place pieces of straw on the ground denoting the number of her lovers. She is allowed to participate in the ceremony only after the confession.<sup>3</sup> The presence of the wife is considered essential at the *Vajapeya*<sup>4</sup> sacrifice. The sacrificer has to come with his wife to the place of the ritual. One of the rituals of this sacrifice was that the sacrificer, with his wife, had to mount the chariot wheel, which is placed on the top of a long pole.<sup>5</sup> The chariot symbolised the sun. The sacrificer, after dressing his wife with a garment of

1. Die Frau in den Indischen Religionen by Dr. Winternitz, pp. 11-12.

2. Vaj. Sam. XXII, 22.

3. Die Frau in den Indischen Religionen—Winternitz, p. 11.

4. Tait. Sam. Vaj. Sam. IX, X; Sat. Bra. V.

[Dr. Winternitz: Die Frau in den Indischen Religionen p. 12].

5. Keith—Introduction, Taittiriya Samhita, CX.

holy grass, comes to the ladder placed at the post. 'Come wife, let us go up to the sky.' As the wife is considered to be half of the husband and a man is imperfect without a wife, the sacrificer leads his wife along with him to the highest heavenly bliss, symbolised by the chariot.

In these two ceremonies the placing of grass to denote lovers and the avoidance of evil and the realisation of the bliss of heaven through the climbing of the chariot-wheel are typical of the atmosphere of the Atharva-Veda.

The fact that woman played the role of a teacher is referred to by the Vedic Index as occurring in the Aitareya Brahmana<sup>1</sup> and the Kaushitaki Brahmana.<sup>2</sup> In both these places a maiden is explained to be possessed by a Gandharva.

"Thus also said a maiden possessed by a Gandharva, 'We shall declare this to the fathers: the Agnihotra which used to be performed on both days is now performed on alternate days only.'<sup>3</sup> 'In the night verily they offer both offerings. For it is at night (they offer)' she declared."<sup>4</sup>

As Gandharva here represents a spirit and anyone possessed by a spirit is credited with superhuman power, the words coming from such a person are taken as authoritative. But it is doubtful if this can be claimed as a general custom.

We find in the Brahmanas that the son of a slave woman was denied the privileges of a Brahmana, whereas in the Upanishads such a boy was admitted to the status of a Brahmana.

"The seers performed a sacrificial season on the Sarasvati; they drove away Kavasto Ailusa from the Soma. The child of a slave woman, a cheat, no Brahmana, how has he been consecrated in our mist?" They sent him out to the

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1. Ait. Bra. V. 29.

2. Kau. Bra. II. 9.

3. Ait. Bra. V. 29.

4. Kau. Bra. II. 9.

desert (saying) 'There let thirst slay him; let him drink not the water of Sarasvati.'

The Shatapatha Brahmana describes a ceremony where a wife alone could perform a sacrifice.

'Now in former times, it was no other than the wife (of the sacrificer) who rose at this (call to act) as Havishkrit; therefore now also (she or) some other (priest) rises in answer to this call.<sup>1</sup>

It is evident from Shatapatha Brahmana<sup>2</sup> that women had the right of reading holy texts or of performing sacrifices. The same Brahmana<sup>3</sup> describes the initiation of a wife before the sacrifice. The rite mentioned here has been further elucidated in Taittiriya Brahmanas.<sup>4</sup>

'He (the Agnidhra) then girds the wife (of the sacrificer). She, the wife, truly is the hinder part of the sacrifice.' 'May the sacrifice go on increasing before me:'. Thus (she thinks) while he girds her, thinking, 'May she sit thus girt by my sacrifice.' 'He girds her with a cord (yoktra) for with a cord (yoktra) they yoke the draught-animal (yohya). Impure indeed is that part of a woman which is below the naval.....'

'He girds over her the garment.'<sup>5</sup>

The ceremony as may be understood from the above is one in which the mistress of the house is seated south-west of the Garhapatya fire: the Agnidhra then girds round her waist, outside the garment, a triple cord of reed grass (munja), which the Taittiriya Brahmana<sup>6</sup> explains as *Vratopanayana* symbolically presented, in which the girding of the wife was considered to be similar to the ordinary

1. S. B. I, 1, 4, 13.

2. S. B. I, 2, 14, 13.

3. S. B. I, 3, 1, 12, & 13.

4. Tait. Brah. III, 3, 3, 2-3.

5. S. B. I, 3, 1, 12, 13.

6. Tait. Brah. III, 3, 3, 2-3.

Upanayana or initiation of a woman into the sacred rite.

Hence the significance of this girding was to initiate a woman, which qualified her to utter the sacred texts and to take part in the performance of the sacrifice.

Strange though it may seem, contradictory opinions exist side by side. In one place,<sup>1</sup> the Shatapatha Brahmana describes the wife as half her husband, and in another,<sup>2</sup> lowers her position. Here we come across the rule that required the wife to take her food after her husband had finished his<sup>3</sup> and a wife who does not answer back is considered to be praiseworthy.<sup>4</sup>

Two verses<sup>5</sup> of Taittiriya Samhita and Maitrayani Samhita refer to women, but they cannot be taken to describe marriage rituals as the authors of Vedic Index have supposed.<sup>6</sup>

‘The gods desired that the wives should go to the world of heaven; they could not discern the world of heaven, they saw this (cup) for the wives, they drew it; then indeed did they discern the world of heaven; in that (the cup) for the wives is drawn, (it serves) to reveal the world of heaven. Soma could not bear being drawn for women; making the ghee a bolt, they beat it, they drew it when it had lost its power; therefore women are powerless, have no inheritance, and speak more humbly than even a bad man.’

1. S. B. V, 2, 1, 10.

Being about to ascend, he (the sacrificer) addresses his wife, ‘Come, wife, ascend we the sky!’ ‘Ascend we!’ says the wife: now as to why he addresses his wife: she, the wife, in sooth is one half of his own self....’

‘Complete I want to go to that supreme goal.’ Thus he thinks, and therefore he addresses his wife.’

2. S.B. I, 3, 1, 9, 12, 13.

3. S.B. I, 9, 2, 12; X, 5, 2, 9.

4. Ait. Bra. III, 24, 7, and Gopatha Bra. II, 3, 22.

5. Tait. Sam. VI, 3, 8, 2. Mait. Sam. IV. 6, 4.

6. Vedic Index I, 485.

The Maitrayani Samhita and the Taitt. Brahmana<sup>1</sup> refer to the sale of a daughter, and the Jaiminiya Brahmana<sup>2</sup> describes a maiden who was given away as a gift. (Story of Syavana).

Courtesans are referred to in some places.<sup>3</sup> The word *Kumariputra* appears in Vajasaneyi Samhita and Taittiriya Brahmana<sup>4</sup> but it cannot be inferred from the context that they represented children of unmarried girls and that they were exposed to death to escape shame as described by Vedic Index, for such children were regarded as a source of pleasure. Union of a Shudra and an Arya is forbidden, and it is considered as illicit<sup>5</sup> but is allowed in the third or fourth generation.

This must be the view of writers later than Gautama and Baudhayana for the legislators sanctioned such union as legal. It is not clear what status the courtesans held in society; but they were not looked down and that they held a good status can be concluded from the status of children of unmarried girls in the above.

Taken all in all, the Brahmanas reflect a transitional stage in the position of a woman; owing to the growth of rituals and the development of social institutions, the scope of a woman's life was gradually becoming limited. She is the partner in the religious sacrifices of a man and, though the object of a woman's life is fast getting circumscribed by the unusual importance attached to a son, still woman was not merely an object of pleasure but the colleague in the religious life of a man.

1. Mait. Sam.—I, 10, 11; Tait. Bra. I, 1, 2, 4.

2. Jaim. Bra. III, 122

3. Ait. Bra. I, 27; XV, 2; Vaj. Sam. XXX, 22; Tait. Bra. III, 4, 15, 1.

4. Vaj. Sam. XXX, 6.

5. Vaj. Sam. XXIII, 30, 31; Tait. Sam. VII, 6, 19, 20.

## CHAPTER V

### THE UPANISHADS

The Upanishads, as is indicated by the etymology of the word, are treatises of philosophical discussions delivered by teachers to their pupils, and hence any historical reference to the life of the people can hardly be based on them.

The Upanishads are many, the entire number being nearly 150. Of these, some belong to the most ancient period, while others have been added at different periods of history. The oldest Upanishads have been assigned by scholars to a period earlier than 600 B.C., and hence they can be regarded as contemporary with some of the Brahmanas. It is with these that we are concerned here. In most of them we do not find any reference to women at all. It is only in the Chhandogya and Brihadaranyaka Upanishads that we find some stray references to women. These references are important, as they reveal the intermediate stage between the rituals of the Atharva-Veda and the elaborate ceremonies of the law-books. The Brihadaranyaka records one of the best periods of Indian history, when women were admitted into these philosophical groups and were allowed to discuss the highest spiritual truths of life. The Brihadaranyaka belongs to the Yajur-Vedic school.

The Chhandogya-Upanishad belongs to the Sama-Veda. It has been considered by scholars to be contemporary with the Brihadaranyaka owing to the identity of some of its names with those of the latter. It has also been considered as occidental in origin, whereas the latter is more Oriental. The occurrence of the penalty of death for theft, the Myth of Creation and a knowledge of the doctrine of metempsychosis are common to Manu; but it is hard to determine whether they are later interpolations or have come down

from a common source. The methods described for detecting theft are signs of a primitive society, the admittance of Satyakama Jabala into the order of Brahmanism on the strength of his character reveals a society in which Brahmanism as a social institution and as a hereditary caste has not become rigid.

The first two chapters of the Chhandogya Upanishad record an elaborate marriage ritual. The first chapter is of eight Suktas on the ceremony of marriage as well as the rites to be observed when a child is born. The first Sukta is to be recited at the marriage ceremony while offering an oblation to the fire. The second is a prayer for long life, and for progeny. The third is a marriage pledge which is binding on the couple. The spirit of unanimity is expressed when they say 'that heart of thine shall be mine and this heart of mine shall be thine.' Prayers to various gods as Agni, Vayu, Chandramas, and Surya to bless the couple are uttered in the fourth and fifth suktas. The sixth is a mantra to be uttered while offering an oblation on the birth of a child. The seventh and eighth are prayers for the health and prosperity of the child.

In the Chhandogya Upanishad, we first come across child wives. The tenth Khanda of the first Prapathaka begins :—

'When the gurus had been destroyed by (hail) stones; Ushasti Chakrayana lived as a beggar with his virgin wife at Ibhyagrama.' They were either killed by stone weapons or by a shower of stones which produced a famine in the land.

Another interesting parable is the story of Janashruti. Janashruti, being desirous of having instruction in the knowledge of Brahman came to Raikva and presented him with a thousand cows, a necklace, and a pair of mules yoked to a chariot. But as Janashruti was a Shudra, Raikva

refused, on which Janashruti offered his own daughter in marriage. Raikva consented, as he felt that the instruction could be imparted through the damsel, since she would be his wife.<sup>1</sup>

Here the Brahmana married the Shudra girl.

Another interesting story which throws light on the social conditions, is that of Satyakama Jabala. Satyakama being desirous of attaining spiritual knowledge asked his mother, "O Venerable one! I am anxious to be a Brahmacharin for the study of the Vedas: of what Gotra am I?" She replied: "I do not know, my child, of what family thou art. In my youth when I had to move about much as a servant, I conceived thee. I do not know of what family thou art. I am Jabala by name; thou art Satyakama. Say that thou art Satyakama Jabala.'

Satyakama went to Gautama Haridrumata and said to him "I wish to become a Brahmacharin and study under you. May I come to you, sir?" The preceptor asked "of what family are you?" He replied, "I do not know, sir, I asked my mother and she replied 'in my youth when I had to work as a servant, I conceived thee, I do not know of what family thou art. I am Jabala and thou art Satyakama'. I am therefore Satyakama Jabala, Sir". The preceptor on hearing his words admitted him into his order as a pupil, saying, 'No one but a true Brahmana would thus speak out. Go and fetch fuel, friend; I shall initiate you. You have not swerved from the truth.'<sup>2</sup>

A child wife may however be taken as exceptional during this period, for in the marriage ceremonial of the time described in the Brahmanas, the rituals were exclusively meant for grown-up people.

The idea that husband and wife constituted a unit in

1. Chhand. Up. Ch. II, IV, 2.      2. Chhand. Up. Ch. IV, IV.

society and that a man without his wife was only a half, is expressed in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.<sup>1</sup>

The whole of the fourth Brahmana of the sixth Chapter of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is devoted to the ceremonies for a son. It is described as a religious duty.<sup>2</sup> Woman is conjectured as the *Vedi* of a sacrifice and son the fruit of the offering obtained for benefit in the next world. A wife who is reluctant to follow the injunctions of her husband is not only censured,<sup>3</sup> but the husband is ordained to compel her by physical force.<sup>4</sup> A ritual in the form of an incantation or spell is mentioned, in which a wife endeavours to destroy her lover. The underlying idea is to prevent the relation of a *shrotriya* with another man's wife. The wife who so desires has to place fire in a moist earthen pot and spread the *Kushas* in the opposite direction, and to offer the kusha grass besmeared with clarified butter in that fire from the opposite direction, and perform the sacrifice. This is supposed to destroy the person for whom it was meant.

This is followed by different rituals for having sons, in which the role of having an educated daughter is not lost sight of.<sup>5</sup>

'One who wishes an educated daughter will have to eat rice and tila cooked together with clarified butter.' Shankaracharya however elucidates the passage by saying that: 'The learning of a daughter consists only in her (ability to manage) household affairs, as the right (for the study of) the Vedas is denied (to her).' But this limitation on the education of women to the rites of the house, with no right to study the Vedas, cannot be inferred from the original passage, and hence it might be concluded that women

1. Brihad. Upa. 1, 4, 17.

2. Ibid IV, 4, 2.

3. Ibid VI, 4, 3.

4. Ibid VI, 4, 7.

5. Ibid, VI, 4, 17.

were even then not deprived of the right of studying the Vedas.

The rest of the book describes at length several rituals in connection with the birth of children, and the ceremonies to be performed after. Here we get a nucleus of the Grihya rituals that were later developed in the law-books with distinct names, as Jatakarma etc.

It has to be noted in this connection that marriage, conjugal love, birth of children and their rearing became a part of the religion of man. No part of it was considered a pleasure; every movement had to be accompanied by a verse with the seriousness of performing a sacrifice. Hence woman was viewed not as a thing of pleasure, but as a partner in the religious duties of a man.

We next come to the famous discussion of Gargi and Yajnavalkya. The sixth Brahmana<sup>1</sup> of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad opens with the queries of Gargi. The importance of the discussion lies in the fact that women capable of carrying on religious discussions were admitted into these assemblies. Gargi is described as the daughter of Vachaknu. It is not known if she was married. When Yajnavalkya was in the court of Janaka, Gargi came to him and questioned him about the nature of Brahman. She came there merely to know from Yajnavalkya about the Supreme Reality and not to vanquish him or to examine his knowledge, as is indicated by some lines of the eighth Brahmana.<sup>2</sup> Gargi Vachaknavi asks Yajnavalkya:—

“O Yajnavalkya, the whole earth is said to be pervaded by (a layer) of water; where is that layer?”

Yajnavalkya replied: “It is in the (layer) of air.”

“Well, where is this (layer) of air?”

“Gargi, it is in ether.”

1. Brihad. Upa. III, 6, 1.

2. Brihad. Upa. III, 8, 2.

“Where is this ether pervading?”

“Gargi, it is in the region of the Gandharvas.”

“Where is that region located?”

“It is in the realm of the sun.”

“Where again is that (situated)?”

“Gargi, it is in the region of the moon.”

“Where is that again?”

“It is in the region of the stars.”

“Where is that region located?”

“Gargi, it is in the region of the gods.”

“Where is that region of the gods?”

“It is in the world of Indra.”

“Where is that world of Indra situated?”

“It is in the world of Prajapati.”

“Where is that region of Prajapati situated?”

“It is in the world of Brahman, O Gargi.”

“Where is that world of Brahman?”

“O Gargi, ask me not any more; thou art asking that which is not to be asked. Cease thy queries, lest thy head drop down dead on the floor!”

Vachaknavi Gargi stopped at this threat of Yajnavalkya.

The eighth Brahmana opens again with the dialogue of Gargi. She prays before the assembled Brahmanas to give her permission for asking Yajnavalkya two questions. The Brahmanas granted her the permission, and she addressed Yajnavalkya thus: “O Yajnavalkya, as a hero from Kashi and Videha with his bow and fatal arrows, I have come with two questions before you. Answer me my two questions.”

Yajnavalkya consented, on which Gargi asked:

“The layer that is above the sky and below the earth which is described as being situated between the earth and the sky and which is indicated as the symbol of the past,

present and future, where is that situated?"

"It is the layer of air situated in the ether."

Gargi replied: "Salutations unto thee, O Yajnavalkya. Thou hast answered well my question. Now prepare for the other. Where is that ether pervading?"

Yajnavalkya: "O Gargi, what you are asking, the Brahmanas designate it as Akshara. It is neither big nor small; neither short nor long; nor red, nor wet, nor shaded, nor covered with darkness; neither air nor sky; neither attached (to anything), nor (does it) consist of juices, smell, eyes, ears, speech, mind, prowess, life and mouth; nor can it be measured, nor has it the inner (cavity) nor the outer; neither can it be eaten nor does anybody eat it. The sun and the moon are regulated by the order of that Akshara Brahman; the earth and the sky are transfixed by him; the minutes and seconds, days and nights, half months and months, seasons and years are regulated by the layer of this Akshara; rivers from the white mountains flowing to the east and those flowing to the west are following their courses by the order of this Akshara; it is in accordance with the Law of this Akshara that men praise the bounteous, gods follow the sacrificer and the *Pitris* the *Darvi* offering. O Gargi, in this world one who offers oblations without knowing this Akshara, or sacrifices, or meditates for several years, destructive are the fruits of his deeds. He who departs from the world without knowing this Akshara is to be pitied; on the other hand, one who departs from this world knowing this Akshara is a Brahmana.

'O Gargi, this Akshara is imperceptible, but perceives all; hears himself though not heard by others; thinks of all though himself is beyond the realisation of others; himself knows all but is unknowable to others as he is beyond the intellect of any person. Besides this Akshara, there is none that sees, none that hears, none that thinks, none that knows.

It is this imperishable Brahman who is pervading this sky.'

Gargi, satisfied with the answer, returns after duly saluting Yajnavalkya and the assembly.

The persistent and obstinate enquiry of a woman brought forth the finest definition of the Supreme Reality: The motive of her enquiry was not to test Yajnavalkya but to learn from him about the nature of Brahman. Yajnavalkya, reluctant to impart the knowledge of Brahman to her, threatens her with death, and tries to stop her.

But the obstinate Gargi is not to be vanquished; she proceeds again, and the sage had to give way before her resolution. He imparts the knowledge of the Supreme Reality to her, in spite of himself.

The second important dialogue is that of Maitreyi and Yajnavalkya. It appears in two places:<sup>1</sup> in the earlier account the entire chapter is devoted to this dialogue and the latter is named after Maitreyi. The purport of both is the same, though there are slight alterations in the latter. It is difficult to say why two accounts of the same event should occur in one book. From a detailed comparison of the two, it seems probable that the first one is the original account and the other (IV, v) a later addition. There must have been a lapse of time for the original version to be known under the name of Maitreyi. In the first, though the names of Maitreyi and Katyayani are mentioned, they are not distinctly described as his wives, whereas the second begins in a narrative form with the following.<sup>2</sup>

"Yajnavalkya had two wives, Maitreyi and Katyayani, of these Maitreyi was a Brahnavadini, (i.e., desirous of the knowledge of Brahman) and Katyayani was of worldly temperament. Yajnavalkya, thinking of pursuing the next stage of life, said the following." This part is absent

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1. Brihad. Upa. II. IV and IV, V.

2. Ibid IV. V. 1.

in the first narrative. The first version begins: "Yajnavalkya said, 'O Maitreyi, I am anxious to rise above this stage of life so, if you agree, I should like to divide between you and Katyayani (what I have).'" Then again speaking of Sannyasa, he says in the former "Udyasyam" whereas in the latter "Pravrajishyam" which implies the system of Parivrajakas, an institution developed later.

The first dialogue occurs in Chapter II, which begins with an account of Ajatashatru, King of Kashi.

"Driptabalaki was a learned Gargya; he came to Ajatashatru, King of Kashi and said, 'I will tell you about Brahman.' On which he presented him with a hundred cows."<sup>1</sup>

If this king be the historical figure then the second account must be a later addition and is contemporary to the post-Buddhistic literature.

In these two dialogues of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad we come across one of the noblest expressions ever made by a woman. Maitreyi, on hearing of the resolution of Yajnavalkya to divide his property, said:

"Lord, if this whole earth with its treasure were mine, then can I attain immortality through them?"

Yajnavalkya replied: "No; your life will be happy like that of the rich who are possessed of things of enjoyment, but there is no hope of attaining immortality by riches or by deeds that are done by riches." On hearing which Maitreyi said: "What should I do with that which cannot raise me above death? Tell me what thou knowest as beyond death."

Yajnavalkya replied: "Maitreyi, thou hast been ever dear to me and so art thou speaking now. Come and sit beside me and I will tell what thou desirest." Then he goes on with his discourse regarding the way to immortality.

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1. Bhihad. Upa. II, I, 1.

“A husband is dear not for the love of a husband, a wife is dear not for the love of a wife, sons are dear not for the love of the sons, wealth is dear not for the sake of wealth and so all the things of the Universe are dear not for the love of all, but for the love of the Self. Verily it is this Self that should be realized. As a lump of salt when thrown into water, becomes dissolved and wherever we taste the water it is salt, so does this great soul, endless, unlimited, consisting of nothing but knowledge rise from out of these elements and vanish again in them. When he has departed there is no more knowledge.” Maitreyi replied ‘Sir, here thou hast bewildered me.’ Yajnavalkya replied “There is nothing to bewilder: for when there is duality, one sees the other, one smells the other, one hears the other, one perceives the other, one knows the other, but when the self only is all this, how should he smell another, how should he see, hear or salute another?”

“That Self is to be described by ‘Not not.’ He is incomprehensible, imperishable, unattached, unfettered, so how should he know the Knower? Thus far goes immortality.” Having said this Yajnavalkya went away into the forest.

Almost contemporaneous with these remarkable women are the Buddhist nuns, called Theris, who were admitted into the order of nuns and were the first of their sex to join in Gautama's time. Their utterances have survived and have come to be known as Theri-gatha.

The word ‘Theri’ means ‘one who has grown old with knowledge’ and Gatha means a ‘song.’ Hence it is a collection of songs by the Buddhist nuns. Theri-Gatha is included in the Buddhist Canon. It is in the second of the Tripitakas—the Sutta-Pitaka. The songs were preserved first orally and it was during the reign of the Maurya Kings that they were classified and written down.

It is interesting to note how this 'Sangha' came into existence. One of the Theris was Mahapajapati-Gautami; Mahapajapati is the designation of the king's chief queen. After the death of Lord Buddha's mother Maya Devi, Gautami Devi became the chief queen of King Shuddhodana and brought up the motherless child as if he were her own son. When all the members of Buddha's family embraced the new religion, she too joined. It was at her request that Buddha established an independent Ashram for the Theris. So Mahapajapati Gautami can be said to be the mother of the Sangha.

Out of the hundreds of women who joined the Sangha, only the composition of 73 Theris have come down to us.<sup>1</sup> These are not of equal length, some are limited to one verse, some two, some three and some are long. These songs give us an insight into the lives of the Theris. It is remarkable that these Theris come from all classes of society—from the palaces of kings to the quarters of the prostitutes and the untouchables. Anyone who was genuinely earnest about religious life was accepted by Buddha into the Sangha. They were not of equal age: some joined the Sangha as virgins; some were widows and others were advanced in age. Of these Gathas, the longest one was composed by Sumedha. She was the daughter of the chief queen of the King of Kroncha and was born in the city of Mantavati. Anikarta, the King of Varanavati wanted to marry her. He himself came to woo her but she refused and according to her wishes, her parents initiated her into Buddhism.

In the course of her long poem of 75 verses, she describes her birth, parentage and renunciation. She was brought up tenderly and well-educated; a good orator and devoted to religion. She said to her parents: "There is no happiness in this transient life—I wish to renounce the

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1. Theri-gatha by late Vijaya Chandra Mazumdar.

world and lead the life of a Brahmacharin." Her parents wept and said: "We want to bestow you on King Anikarta; the King of Varanavati will be pleased to make you his chief queen. My child, it is difficult to lead the life of celibacy, young as you are; one is the path of wealth and power, the other is the hard life of a mendicant; think well before you choose." Sumedha replied: "The body is of flesh and blood, subject to death: I would rather choose death than a worldly life." King Antikarta hearing her resolve came to the palace richly dressed in gold and diamonds and entreated with folded hands. "Be queen of my all and rule over my people and land; bestow gifts with your hands and do not be so averse to worldly life—your parents are grieved." Sumedha said: "I have no attraction for worldly life: one born must die; kings surrounded by wealth have died; wealth and happiness are transitory; it brings sorrow and suffering, it is like a heated iron. Return to your home, O King. What can you do when fire is burning in my head?" She then saw her parents deeply grieved but she consoled them reminding them of the transitoriness of earthly life. Anikarta then said: "Bid farewell to Sumedha, for she wants to follow the path of Truth." So with the permission of her parents the princess joined the Sangha and attained Nirvana.

Next comes Ishidasi or Rishidasi. In her Gatha of 46 verses, she gives an account of her life. In Pataliputra, called Kusumapura, there were two pious Bhikshunis called Ishidasi and Bodhi. Once they were engaged in a conversation. "Beloved Ishidasi, tell me what made you give up your home and embrace this hard life of celibacy in your youth, beautiful and gifted as you are!"

Ishidasi replied: "I was born in the house of a Sreshti of Ujjain: I was the only child of my parents brought up with tender care. A merchant of a high-family from

Saketa wanted to make me his daughter-in-law. My father gave me in marriage and I went to my husband's home. I worked with great devotion: morning and evening I used to bow to my father-in-law and mother-in-law, I welcomed warmly my husband's sisters and brothers; gave food and clothing to all the members of the household; everyone got what he wanted. I used to wake up early, finish my household duties and then go to my husband to greet him. With my own hands, I used to dress his hair and decorate him. I used to caress him as a mother her only child. I cooked with my own hands, washed the utensils and cleaned the kitchen. In fact, I used to work from morning till night like a maid-servant without any rest. Still my Lord did not love me! One day he told his parents 'I shall not live with Ishidasi.' His parents said, 'Ishidasi is cultured, very active; why don't you like her?' My husband replied, 'She did not do any harm; I do not like to live with her. Let me go away—I shall never return!'

"My father-in-law and mother-in-law asked me 'My daughter, tell us the truth, hide not anything—by what fault of yours has this happened?'

"I replied 'I did not commit any fault, nor did I speak to him harshly—still I don't know why he is averse to me.'

"So at the wish of my husband, I returned to my father's house.

"My father gave me in marriage a second time to the son of a rich man. After a month, he too, without any fault on my part and in spite of my hard work, sent me away.

"One day a poor young Bhikshu came for alms in my father's house, my parents asked him to give up his ascetic life and become their son-in-law. He married me and stayed for a fortnight and then said that he wanted to go back to his old life. So he, too, left me.

"I then begged my parents either to permit me to end my life or to renounce the world and go away.

"Soon after this Bhikshu Jinadatta came to my father's house. I expressed my desire for renunciation. Father and mother remonstrated, but I was firm. With their permission I entered the Sangha and obtained peace of mind."

Next is Subha Jivakambavanika. She was so named as she fell into the snares of a cunning man called Jivaka.

Once Bhikshuni Subha was roaming all alone in a mango grove of Jivaka. Jivaka came and stood before her obstructing her path. Subha said "What have I done that you are obstructing my path? Should anyone behave thus with a recluse? Your mind is stained, but mine is pure: so behave not thus."

Jivaka replied, "You are a stainless maid, why have you renounced the world? Give up your saffron robe and let us enjoy in this picturesque garden. It is spring: trees are in full bloom; fragrant is the air. If you listen to me, I shall make you the queen of my all. You are like a full-blown flower. Why should it wither by this vow of asceticism?" Subha replied with disgust: "Why all this talk? This body is the abode of death. Why do you long for it?"

Jivaka goes on describing her physical beauty: the charm of her eyes and his desire for her. Subha protests and describes the transitoriness of physical beauty and at the end plucking out her eyes from their sockets presents them to him saying "Here are the eyes that you admired so much."

The amorous villain being ashamed of himself begs her pardon. She returns to Buddha and it is said that by his grace she got back her eyesight.

Of the several other Theris, the life-stories of some are very touching. One such is that of Bhadda Kundalakesha.

She was so named because of her long curly hair. She was born at Rajagriha in the family of a rich merchant. She fell in love with the son of their family priest named Sarthaka. Sarthaka was a bad-character. One day because of a theft he had committed, he was caged like a wild beast and was being led to the execution-ground. Kundalakesha saw him when he was thus being led and told her father about her love for him. The rich merchant liberated him by offering a big ransom and gave his daughter in marriage to him.

Sarthaka could not be reformed. He wanted to steal the ornaments of his wife. So one day he told her "When my life was in danger I made a vow to the god on the top of this mountain that I shall give an offering if I am saved. So come with me well-dressed with your ornaments so that we can both fulfil the vow."

Bhadda went accordingly and on climbing the mountain, she found out that her husband wanted to kill her and take away her ornaments. So she said "My lord, this life of mine is yours, these ornaments are yours, then why do you want to kill me and run away with my ornaments?"

The villain was not moved by these words. So in sheer self-defence she resorted to deceit and said "Well, my lord, let me have a last embrace before I die." With these words she led him to the edge of a slippery peak and in the guise of an embrace, she kicked him down the precipice and saved herself by running away leaving the ornaments behind. She then joined the Jaina Sangha and later the Buddhist Sangha.

Another touching account is that of Theri Utpalavarna. She was so named because of her great beauty. She was the daughter of a merchant at Shravasti. After the birth of a daughter her husband left her.

Many years later, the man who married her daughter was attracted by her beauty and married her as well.

Utpalavarna and her daughter lived apart from the very beginning, so mother and daughter did not know each other. After this marriage, hearing the life-history, she recognised her co-wife as her daughter.

She shuddered at the revelation and renounced the world and became a Theri.

Among the Theris some came of the prostitute class. One of these was Ambapali. Ambapali was a prostitute of Vesali. She was renowned for her beauty. She was also rich and had a palace with a mango-grove attached to it. Lord Buddha, four or five months prior to his Mahanirvana, came to this grove with his disciples. Ambapali, hearing of his arrival came. The young and beautiful prostitute was so captivated by the teachings of the Buddha that a change came over her. She invited the Buddha and his disciples next day to her house. Lord Buddha accepted it to the surprise of all.

The Lichchhavi King of Vesali, came to Lord Buddha with his large retinue to invite him. The Lord said 'I have already accepted the invitation of Ambapali.' The Lichchhavi King was surprised and requested Ambapali to cancel her invitation. Ambapali refused. The King offered her a thousand gold coins, Ambapali was rich but she was only one of the women of the King's household. She told her King firmly that she would not go back on her word even if the whole wealth of the treasury was given to her. The King went away.

Next day Lord Buddha went to Ambapali's house with his disciples. After dinner, Ambapali placed her palace and her entire wealth at the disposal of Lord Buddha to be used for the Sangha.

She thus renounced the world and became a Theri.

Among the other prostitutes who were accepted into the Sangha are three more:

- (1) Ardhakesi, a rich prostitute of Kasi.
- (2) Padmavati, a prostitute of Ujjayini who was the beloved of King Bimbisar, and
- (3) Vimala, described as a Ganika.

Nothing remarkable is known about them.

Besides Mahapajapati Gautami, we get the names of two more members of Buddha's family who became Theris: (a) Nanda, daughter of Mahapajapati Gautami, step-sister of Buddha and (b) another Nanda who became a widow and joined the Sangha.

Sela, the daughter of King of Alvi became a Theri.

Two members of Lichchhavi family joined the Sangha.

- (a) Sinha the niece of Commander of Vesali, she joined the Sangha as a virgin. It is said that unable to control her passions, she attempted to end her life by hanging herself but just at that moment she acquired self-control.

- (b) Jayanti, born of the Lichchhavi family of Vesali.

Nothing remarkable is known about her.

Theri Ubbiri was the daughter of a merchant at Shravasti. She was so famed for her beauty that the King of Kosala, a Kshatriya by caste, was charmed by her loveliness and married her. A daughter, named Jiva was born to her. The King wanted to make her his chief queen. But the death of her child grieved her so much that she used to go daily to the cremation ground to mourn over her dead child. She gained peace of mind by joining the Sangha.

Two girls Chitra and Uttama renounced the world in their youth and joined the Sangha. Shyama, the companion of the Queen of Kausambi also became a Theri. There were others who renounced the world and joined the Sangha; Punna, Tissa, Dhira, Mitra, Bhadra, Upasama, Mukta,

Dhammadinna, Sumana, Dhamma Sukta, Soma and others. Some of them were widows, some Brahmin ladies. No detailed account of their life is available.

From the above it is evident that the Buddhist Sangha admitted women, not only those who were pure and virtuous in character, but sinners such as were not acceptable under any circumstances into any religious order.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE MANTRA-BRAHMANA

AMONG the Brahmanas the Mantra-Brahmana is important, as it gives the marriage ceremonial in its more developed form. Tradition assigns it to the cult of the Sama-Veda, and it is considered as a collection of verses uttered at the time of the marriage ceremony and other domestic ceremonies; though the actual verses are earlier, the book in the form of a Brahmana may have come into existence even later. Others, however, think that it forms the basis of the Gobhila Grihya Sutra. Be that as it may, a close study reveals that the book is not a collection of detached verses, put together, but a consistent ritual of marriage. The marriage ceremony is based on the ritual of the Rig-Veda and the Atharva-Veda, though much more elaborate in form than either of the two.

The first Brahmana consists of eight Suktas: the first Sukta describes a sacrificial ritual in which oblations to the fire have to be given on the occasion of marriage. Each verse ends with 'Svaha', a characteristic of Vedic rituals. After an invocation of the god Savitar the god of love is

invoked to take possession of the bride. New clothes are then presented to the bride, with which the elders of the family have to dress her<sup>1</sup> with blessings for a long life of hundred years.

To signify the giving away of the bride it is said, 'Soma gave to Gandharva, Gandharva gave to Agni, Agni has given to me this maiden, with sons and riches.'<sup>2</sup>

Agni and Varuna are next invoked for protecting the maiden from death<sup>3</sup> and the Garhapatya is invoked for the protection and prosperity of the bride.

'May the Garhapatya fire protect this (maiden). May he make her progeny long-lived.'<sup>4</sup>

Two verses are uttered (in the form of a spell) by which the influence of sin and other evils are averted from the maiden. One of these relating to death is to be found in the Rig-Veda and the Atharva-Veda.

"I take away from thee, O maid, as shell from the head, unfertility, sorrow of a son, and snares of death and other sins that are imbedded in thee, and revert them towards the enemies."<sup>5</sup>

The second chapter begins with the ceremonial itself. The ritual begins with the scene in which the maiden is asked to step upon a stone which symbolically represents fidelity, stability and strength to defeat enemies. Later it came to be known as the '*Asmarohana* ceremony'.

'Mount on this stone and be firm like a stone. Smite thy enemies, and be not degraded before them.'

The setting up of the stone and the bride stepping on

1. (Verses 5 and 6; cf. A. V. XIV, 45). "They who spun, wove, and who stretched (the web); what divine ones have knotted the ends; let them wrap thee in order to reach old age (as) one long-lived put about thee this garment."

2. M. B. I. 1, 7.

3. M.B. I. 1, 9.

4. M.B. I. 1, 10. This verse is an exact replica of the Atharva-Veda XIV, 2, 4 and the Rig-Veda X, 85, 41.

5. M.B. I. 1. 13 cf. A.V. XIV, 2, 61, 62, 63.

it is to be found in the Atharva-Vedic ritual, but is absent in the Rig-Veda.

'I maintain for thee, in order to propagate, a pleasant firm stone in the lap of the divine earth; stand thou on that, one to be exulted upon, of excellent glory; let Savitar make for thee a long life-time.'<sup>1</sup>

This is followed by a ceremony called Lajahoma, in which the bride approaches, scattering fried corn with an appropriate prayer for the long life of her husband and his people.

"This woman, scattering the fried grains, comes towards us with the words, 'Let my husband live long, for a hundred years, let my relatives prosper'."<sup>2</sup>

The next verse describes the formal separation of the maiden from her father's family.<sup>3</sup>

The next verses found here are absent in the Atharva-Veda and the Rig-Veda. They describe the separation of the bride from her parental home. They can, however, be compared to the Atharva-Vedic ritual where the special form for a girl, *Kanyala*, appears.<sup>4</sup>

This is followed by another ritual, called the *Saptapadi*, which later in the Grihya Sutras came to constitute a very important part of the ceremony; marriage was not considered to be legal and valid until this ceremony is completed. The ceremony found in the Grihya rituals differs slightly from what we find here.<sup>5</sup>

1. A.V. XIV, 1, 47.

2. M.B. I. 2, 2.

3. It is a combination of the sense of two verses of A.V. XIV, 1, 17 and 18. Of these two the former, i.e., XIV, 1, 17, does not appear in the Rig-Veda in connection with the marriage ceremony, but in Rig-Veda VII, 59, 12, and it is mentioned by Whitney as 'a late and not genuine appendage to that hymn'; and XIV, 1, 18 is R.V. X, 85, 25.

4. A.V. XII, 2, 52.

5. It might be probable that this ceremony of *Saptapadi* or seven steps in which each step indicated the achievement of a

In this ritual the bridegroom leads the bride through seven steps which symbolically represented seven different stages of life. It is thus described:—

‘May Vishnu lead thy first step for food; may Vishnu lead thy second step for strength; may Vishnu lead thy third for Vratas; may Vishnu lead thy fourth (step) for friendship; may Vishnu lead thy fifth step for (the welfare of the domestic) animals; may Vishnu lead thy sixth step for the increase of wealth; may Vishnu lead thy seventh (step) for the (benefit of) seven priests. So mayest thou, who hast passed through the seven steps, be my companion.’

The benedictions of the audience come next: ‘Auspicious is this bride; assemble, behold her; having given unto her your blessings, depart to your homes.’<sup>1</sup>

The marriage vow and prayer to the gods for connubial cordiality is expressed by invoking the deities of the Universe and other gods. “May Matarishvan, may Dhatar purify us! May the goddess Deshtri unite us! I grasp thy hand for good fortune that with me as husband thou mayst be long-lived.”<sup>2</sup>

‘Be of no evil eye, not bringing death to husband;<sup>3</sup> bring luck to cattle; give birth to men.’

‘May Prajapati grant us progeny. May Aryaman

certain quality has developed from the incantations described in the Atharva-Veda (XIV. 2, 53-58). They are analogous to this ceremony. The verses of the Atharva-Veda are as follows:— (XIV, 2, 53) Her let go Brihaspati, all the gods maintained; what splendour is entered into the Kine with that do we unite this woman. (XIV, 2, 54):—Her let go etc; What brilliancy (Tejas) is entered etc. XIV. 2, 55:—Her let go etc. what fortune is entered etc. XIV, 2, 56:—Her let go etc., what glory is entered etc. XIV, 2, 57:—Her let go etc. what milk is entered etc. XIV 2, 58:—Her let go etc. what sap is entered etc.

1. M.B. I, 2, 8. (Cf. A.V. XIV, 2, 28; it is an exact replica of R. V. X, 85, 33).

2. Exact replica of R.V. X, 85, 36; cf. A.V. XIV, 1, 50, where there is ‘Grihnamī’ for ‘Grihbhnamī’.

3. M.B. I, 2, 11; cf. A.V. XIV, 2, 17 and R.V. X, 85, 4.

unite us together until old age; be the bringer of prosperity to our birds and beasts.'<sup>1</sup>

Then follows the verse which assigns to the wife a supreme position over father-in-law, mother-in-law, sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law.<sup>2</sup>

The ceremony concludes with a beautiful verse not to be found either in the Rig-Veda or in the Atharva-Veda.

'May thy heart respond to my *Vratas* (religious duties). May thy mind follow mine; do thou serve my commands with all thy heart. May Brihaspati imbue thee with compliance.'<sup>3</sup>

Thus ends the second Khanda of the first part; nowhere in the history of the marriage rituals of the Vedic school can be found a pledge so sublime as found here. In marrying, the husband sought the co-operation of his wife in the serious duties of life and the pursuit of his ideals. He sought her whole self to be identified with his in the duties, struggles and ideals of life; hence the main aim of marriage was to acquire the co-operation of the wife in the religious field; a wife was to be a companion in the religious duties of a man.

The third chapter begins with a ritual by which the short-comings of the various parts of the body, sins relating to conduct, words, smile and hair and other physical defects are supposed to be removed.<sup>4</sup>

'Whatever (evil) there is in the joint-lines, the eyelids,

1. (Lit.: bipeds and quadrupeds). This is an exact replica of R.V. X, 85, 43 and A.V. XIV, 2, 40.

2. M.B. I, 2, 14; cf. M.P. 1, 6. 6; R.V. X, 85, 46; A.V. XIV 1, 44.

3. M.B. I, 2, 15.

4. This part of the ceremony has a striking resemblance to the one referred to in the A.V. XIV, 2, 59—69, where the sins affected through various actions are averted through the ceremony. The ceremony here is like the incantation of the A.V.

and in inundations (as the navel etc.) of the body, I avert it with this last oblation.'

'The evil that is in thy hair, the sin that is in thy seeing and speaking, I appease them all by this full oblation.'

'The sin that is in thy character, in thy speech, and in thy smiles, I avert it with this full oblation.'

'That which is in thy gums and (thy) teeth, in thy hands and feet, I avert it all with this full oblation.'

'Those that are in the lap, and thy secret parts, and other joints, I subdue them all with this full oblation.'<sup>1</sup>

'Whatever deadly sins there are in all thy members, I have appeased them all by this full oblation.'<sup>2</sup>

Next comes the ceremony of showing the pole star. 'Steady is the sky, steady is this entire Universe; steady are these mountains, steady is this bride in her husband's family.'<sup>3</sup>

This ceremony, too, concludes with an exquisite verse which reflects the oneness of the couple in their marital life. It is absent both in the Rig-Veda and the Atharva-Veda.

'Whatsoever is in thy heart, let the same be in my heart, whatsoever is in my heart, let that be in thine.'<sup>4</sup>

The next verse describes the departure of the bride to her husband's home. 'Food is the shackle of life; I herewith bind thee with it.'<sup>5</sup>

'O Surya, mount upon this well-made, golden-coloured and good-wheeled chariot; may it lead you to the navel of

1. M.B. I, 3, 1-3.

2. Ibid I, 3, 6.

3. M.B. I, 3, 7. This verse is found in the Rig-Veda X. 85, 20 and in the Atharva-Veda XIV, I, 61. The latter differs from the former in substitution of Vahatum for Salmalikam and Pati-bhyas for patye; krnutvam for krnusva. This verse agrees more with the version of the Rig-Veda than of the Atharva Veda, but it differs from both in the substitution of Sulmakimsukam for Sukimsukam and Suvarnavarnam for Hiranyavarnam, Sukrtam for Suvartam and Nabhim for Lokam. M.B. I, 3-11.

4. M.B. I, 3, 9.

5. Ibid I, 3, 10.

immortality; mayst thou make thy husband happy.’<sup>1</sup>

The next verse is a prayer for the protection of the couple from dangers on the way.

‘Let not the waylayers who lie in wait for them find the two spouses; may what is difficult be passed by an easy (road); may the enemies run away.’<sup>2</sup>

The next two verses are absent in the Rig-Veda and the Atharva-Veda.

‘Here be prolific O cows, here O horses and O men. Here may Pusha, the thousand-gifted also make his dwelling.’

‘Mayst thou stay here, mayst thou remain happy, mayst thou here enjoy, mayst thou remain here in joy.’<sup>3</sup>

‘May thy stability be in me, may thou find thy relatives in me, may thou find thy joy in me.’

The above two verses are uttered when the bride has reached her husband’s home.

The fourth chapter introduces a ritual performed by the newly-married couple, in the house of the bridegroom (probably on the fourth day of marriage). It is an invocation to Agni, Vayu, the moon and other gods for purifying the bride from all sins and for making her fit to be the mother of children. The prayer is specially meant for the birth of a boy.

The fifth chapter begins with the description of the ritual which is known as Simantakarana or parting of the hair. It is followed by an invocation to the goddess of the new moon, after which the ceremony of *Sthalipaka* is performed by the householder.<sup>4</sup>

1. M.B. I, 3, 11.

2. It is found in R.V. X. 85. 32. and A.V. XIV. 2. II. M.B. I, 1. 3. 12.

3. M.B. I. 3. 13. 14.

4. M.B. I, 5, 5. In the course of that ceremony the bridegroom addresses the bride as *Rake*, a term which is definitely used for a girl of full maturity.

The next three verses describe the invocation to the gods for removing circumstances unfavourable for the birth of a son.

This is followed by a verse in which the ritual called *Medhajanana* is described. The Grihya Sutras describe in detail the actual procedure of the ritual. Here it is an invocation to the gods Agni, Moon, Sun, Day and Night for providing the child with intelligence.

‘May Mitra and Varuna give thee intelligence. May the lotus-wreathed Ashvins bestow upon thee intelligence.’<sup>1</sup>

The next four verses are prayers to the various gods for the protection of parents from sorrow caused by the death of a child, and is followed by an invocation of blessings on the child.

Next follows the ceremony of Namakarana or giving a name to the new-born babe.

‘Who art thou? To whom dost thou belong? Thou shalt be of this name; thou shalt be above earth; so mayest thou enter the solar month.’<sup>2</sup>

The next is a prayer to the god of the day to transfer the child to night and the night again to transfer him to a fortnight, who is invoked further to transfer him to a month, and the month to the seasons, the seasons to the year, the first year to the second, the second to the third, and so on, until the child in due course has reached old age. This is done with a view to ensure his long life. This is followed by the benediction of the father upon his son: the first is for his long life,<sup>3</sup> the second for attaining proficiency in the Vedas<sup>4</sup> and the third for being strong like a stone, deadly to enemies, and cherishable like gold. The last verse describes the father kissing the head of the child.<sup>5</sup>

1. M.B. I, 5, 9.

2. Ibid I, 5, 14.

3. Ibid I, 5, 16.

4. Ibid, I, 5, 17.

5. Ibid, I, 5, 18, 19.

The sixth chapter opens with the ceremony for the tonsure of the child's head or Chudakarana, in which the first cutting of the hair of the child by the barber takes place. In that connection all the gods are invoked for protection.<sup>1</sup> It ends with a prayer for the longevity of the boy. It is followed by the ceremony of Initiation.<sup>2</sup>

It commences with the prayers of the boy to gods to help him in observing the Vrata of Upanayana or the vows of Initiation. The teacher joins the pupil in his prayer to the gods to enable him to do his duty and to ensure his future happiness. After this the teacher takes hold of the hands of his pupil and gives him the necessary instructions.<sup>3</sup>

It is evident that these rituals are absent in the Vedas; nor can they be traced in the Brahmanas or the Upanishads. They are here exclusively meant for a man and not for a woman. The Kaushika Sutra, however, uses verses from the Atharva-Veda<sup>4</sup> in connection with the offering of a libation in the ceremony of initiation of women into Vedic studies.

'What splendour is placed in dice, and what in strong drink—what splendour, O Ashvins, is in kine, with that splendour favour ye this woman.'

'With what (splendour) the backsides of the courtesan, O Ashvins, or with what the strong drink, with what the dice were flooded, with that splendour favour ye this woman.'

These verses exclusively refer to the initiation of a woman. In the Shatapatha Brahmana we have seen that a ritual representing *Vratopanayana* or initiation of women for the performance of sacred rites is described.

The Gobhila Grihya Sutra, which is based on the

1. M.B. I, 6, 1-7.

2. Ibid I, 6, 9-12.

3. Ibid I, 6, 14, 15.

4. A.V. XIV, 1, 35, 36.

Mantra-Brahmana, while giving the details of the initiation ceremony, describes the form in which a woman could be initiated into Vedic studies and actually uses the word *Yajnopavitini*.<sup>1</sup>

This custom of initiating women into Vedic studies has further been supported by such law-givers as Yama and Harita.

'In olden days it was prescribed for maidens the wearing of the sacrificial thread, the teaching of the Vedas and the utterance of the Savitri (Mantra).'<sup>2</sup>

'Women are of two kinds, Brahma-Vadinis and Straight-way married. The Brahmavadinis can be initiated in the lighting of the (sacred) fire, reading of the Vedas and begging in their own houses; the brides have to be married after a sort of initiation, so says Madhavacharya.'<sup>3</sup>

The Mantra-Brahmana is silent about any such ceremony for women.

The second chapter of the Mantra-Brahmana includes sacrifice to the King of the Serpents, invocations to the earth, Agni, and Indra to give wealth, health and prosperity and the Shraddha ceremony. The last and concluding part of the ceremony is a general blessing on the couple.

Thus ends the Mantra-Brahmana. The book, as it has come to us, is a forerunner of the Grihya Sutras. It contains most of the rituals of the Grihya Sutras in a miniature form. The marriage ceremony of the Rig and the Atharva-Vedas has gained a more elaborate shape, and we find new additions made to the rituals. Thus the Saptapadi, Lajahoma, the dressing of the bride with new clothes, the Simantonnayana, the Pumsavana, are new additions to the Vedic ritual. The Initiation ceremony, which is not found in the Rig-Veda but is referred to only in the Athar-

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1. Gobhila G. S. III, 7, 13; II, 1.

2. Yama Samhita.

3. Harita Samhita.

va-Veda, has found a definite shape here. The Medhajanana, the Namakarana, are new social institutions, which have gained popularity and recognition in society. For even the Atharva-Veda, which refers to so many details about the birth of a child, is silent about any such rite. Many of the ceremonies described in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad are absent here. The prescription of a special kind of cooked food to be eaten in different ways by women desiring different kinds of sons or daughters is absent here. Even the Grihya and the Dharma Sutras have not recorded these rituals. The large influence of the Atharva-Veda can be traced in the expiation ceremonies and the Ashmarohana ceremony of the marriage ritual. We thus see that the Mantra-Brahmana was a Grihya Sutra in a miniature form, forming the nucleus of most of the domestic ceremonials developed elaborately by the later lawgivers.

Judged from a linguistic point of view, the book is a very early composition. Its affinity with the Vedic language shows the antiquity of the book. The language bears the stamp of a transitional period; the admixture of Vedic and mediaeval forms of expressions shows that it is a composition of the later part of the Vedic age. But its dissimilarity from the language of the law-books shows that it is separated from them by as many centuries as it is from the Vedas. It is undoubtedly earlier than the Mantra-Patha, as is evident from its difference from the latter in various ways.

The Mantra-Brahmana institutes a marriage-ritual definitely meant for grown-up people. This is indicated by several of the terms used and the verses addressed to the bride in course of the ceremony. The aim of marriage is not merely to ensure the lineage by having sons but achievement of complete oneness and co-operation between husband and wife in the religious sphere. This is clear from the vows taken by both at the time of marriage ceremony.

## THE SHRAUTA-SUTRAS

THE Shrauta-Sutras are mainly devoted to the technique and scope of Vedic rituals and so they do not give us any picture of social conditions. Nevertheless they are important as they indicate more than any other book, the place assigned to woman in Vedic rituals. We have already seen, that in all the great sacrifices mentioned in the Brahmanas, woman occupied a place inferior to man. Prior to that we have, no doubt, an instance in Rig-Veda, where a woman was pouring oblations into the fire. This was with reference to Vishvavara. The Shrauta-Sutras support this Vedic custom. The Purva-Mimamsa Sutras composed by Jaimini and commented upon by Shabaraswamin speak in support of it. *Mimamsa-Darshana* VI, i, 3, 6-16, clearly shows that women were entitled to perform any Shrauta sacrifice. There was of course great opposition. These divergent views are given in the commentary. Aitisayana, probably a Smritikara, voices the opinion of the opponents. The text which forms the centre of discussion runs thus: 'Darsha-Purna-Masabhyam Svarga-Kamo Yajeta.' Aitisayana, leading the opposition, says that in the above Vedic text, the word *Svarga-Kamo* is in the masculine, and so only a man is implied by it and a woman cannot come under the scope of that word. Jaimini answers him by saying that the word *Svarga-Kamo* is used in a collective sense, so it implies all persons who have the desire to attain heaven through sacrifice; no distinction can be made between the individuals constituting that class. Hence women also, are included therein.

The opponents brought forth arguments to prove the unworthiness of woman to perform sacrifice. One of the points emphasised was that as wealth is essential for a sacri-

fice and as women cannot own any wealth, they are not entitled to perform a sacrifice. They averred that women are like chattels sold by fathers and bought by husbands, hence their property belongs either to their husbands or to their fathers. In support of it was quoted a Vedic text which says 'to the guardian of the bride shall be given a hundred chariots, and one ox and one cow in the Arsha form of marriage.' This cannot be considered a religious act, evidently as it is the price paid to the bride's father to induce him to give away his daughter.

The supporters argued that as wealth is the thing required for a sacrifice, a woman can acquire it herself by cooking food for others or by saving from what is given to her. The opponents objected to this on the ground that as a woman is her husband's property, all her earnings must automatically belong to him, and they quote the Smriti text in support of it, which says:

"A wife, a slave, and a son have no property of their own. Whatever they earn is the wealth of the man to whom they belong." Jaimini meets the opponents by saying that as long as the earnestness to obtain the fruit of a sacrifice is common to both men and women, it presupposes the quality of a woman to own wealth. If the woman is considered to be devoid of wealth, slavishly following the Smriti text then we are not doing justice to the Shruti text which is more authoritative. In a conflict, the Shruti text must be given a higher place setting aside the Smriti text. So if a woman has the desire to attain heaven through sacrifice, she must be the possessor of wealth. In support of it, he quotes from the ritual, where the bridegroom says, '*dharme-charthe cha kame cha naticharitavya*' i.e. she shall not be thwarted in the performance of religious acts, the acquisition of wealth and the fulfilment of legitimate desires. So the Shruti text that declares a woman incap-

able of possessing wealth is opposed to the Smriti text and so is untenable. Again what is referred as the purchase of a girl is not really a purchase but a religious act. Variation of price exists in purchasing a thing; but here it is a gift and constant in quantity irrespective of the qualities of the bride. Shabaraswamin, the commentator remarks at this stage that this might be a sale according to the Smritis, but is opposed to the Shrutis. The Shrauta School must follow the Shruti Text and so girls are not sold. He also quotes two Texts from the Vedas supporting the above and declares that women have the capacity of owning and possessing wealth, for she is the owner of *Parinayya* i.e. the property received at the time of marriage. The commentator goes a step further and says even that which is acquired by the husband is admitted as hers.

The above reflects a society where different groups, some adhering to the time-honoured Vedic injunction which authorised a woman to perform a sacrifice in her individual capacity and others trying to disqualify her on the strength of Shruti Texts were contesting. The adherents of the former view still held a superior position and said that woman can be the lawful owner of property and can perform a sacrifice only if she has the desire to attain heaven. If any Smriti text lays down injunctions to the contrary, it can be ignored and set aside. This must have been the position up to the time of compilation of *Manu-Samhita* for *Manu* admits it though under a ban of censure. He says 'A Brahmin must never eat at a sacrifice that is offered by one who is not a Shrotriya, or a village priest, or by a woman.'<sup>1</sup> So he places woman on a par with a non-Shrotriya i.e. a man who is a Brahmin but is not conversant with Vedic literature. So at this period both a woman and non-

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1. *Manu*. IV, 205.

Shrotriya must have been allowed to perform these sacrifices, otherwise the text cannot have any significance.

If the Manu-Samhita was compiled at the beginning of the Christian Era, the custom of allowing women to perform sacrifices was in vogue up to that time though it was disappearing rapidly. It is not quite certain when it disappeared completely. It was prevalent even in the Satavahana period. The Nanaghat Inscription of Naganika is a striking example in support of the above contention. The Inscription shows that Naganika, the wife of Shatakarni, performed Shrauta-sacrifices and made a number of donations in money, elephants, kine etc. Buhler explained this saying that as the queen was acting as a regent to her minor son Vedishri, the disabilities of her sex enjoined by the Smriti Shastras according to which no woman can perform a sacrifice, were set aside. Rapson admits that it was Queen Naganika in her individual capacity who performed the sacrifices. But no reason is given by him in support of it. But the above discussions of Mimamsa-Darshana qualifies a woman for the performance of Shrauta-ritual. If that was the old order, Queen Naganika must have performed the sacrifice following the injunctions of the Shruti Texts.

In the course of discussion, Shabaraswamin mentions two Vedic Texts: One of it is "Pati-iva gatam-anumatam kriyate." "Even that which is acquired by the husband is admitted as hers." To corroborate this injunction, some instances may be cited. Nasik Cave Inscription No. 5 contains an order of Gautamiputra Shatakarni, a descendant of Queen Naganika to Shamaka (Shyamaka), an officer of Govardhana. It is grant of a new plot of land to the Buddhist Monks staying in his cave in lieu of the old one, which had become uncultivable.<sup>1</sup>

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1. E.I. Vol. VIII. p. 73.

This order was issued not by Gautamiputra Shatakarni alone but jointly with his wife. She had been styled *Jivasuta* (one whose son is living) and *Rajamata* (the king's mother) as her son Vasishthiputra Pulamavi was then ruling. This inscription shows that Gautamiputra and his wife were *co-partners* in Satavahana sovereignty.

We have another inscription belonging to the middle of the 7th century, where two grants were issued by Vijaya-Mahadevi, wife of Chandraditya, the elder brother of the Chalukya overlord Vikramaditya of Badami. These grants were made independently by her without the ratification of her husband or their suzerain Vikramaditya.

After mentioning her name as Vijayabhattacharika, the favourite crown queen of Chandraditya, the date of the charter is thus given. *Sva-rajya-panchama-samvatsara-asvaryuja purnamasya dvitiam vishnave*.<sup>1</sup>

The first part of the quotation has been rendered by Fleet 'in the fifth year of her reign.' Hence it may mean that she was ruling herself or jointly with her husband. The date as calculated by Kielhorn, of the regnal year of Vijayabhattacharika and Chandraditya is equivalent to 23rd September 659 A.D.<sup>2</sup>

An inscription from another part of India—the Bankapura Inscription of Saka 977—where the Kadamba Chieftain Harikesarideva ruled along with his wife Lachchhaladevi, proves our contention.

The Rashtrakuta dynasty of the eighth century supplies an instance where the queen issued a grant in her individual capacity. The Jethawai plates of Shila Mahadevi<sup>3</sup> mention the issue of a grant of a village by her as a crowned queen. She is described as Parameshvari Paramabhattacha-

1. I.A. Vol. VII, p. 164, ll. 13-15.

2. Ibid Vol. VIII, p. 46, ll. 15-18.

3. E.I. Vol. XXII, p. 98. List of Inscriptions of South India No. 23.

rika Shri Shilamahadevi,<sup>1</sup> queen of Paramabhattaraka Maharajadhiraja Parmeshvara Dharavarsha or Dhruvarajadeva who was a Rashtrakuta sovereign. She was the daughter of the East Chalukya King Vishnuvardhana IV of Vengi. The prose portion of the record which gives the details of the grant, mentions that she by herself issued orders, and the officer who drew up the grant is represented as carrying out the orders of the queen and not of King Dhruvaraja. There is no mention anywhere in the record to show that she sought or obtained the permission of the King.

These instances corroborate the Vedic injunction mentioned by Shabaraswamin. Things, however, changed and the inscriptions of the 12th century record a different procedure. In an inscription belonging to Gahadavala family, one of the kings named Govindachandra had two Patta-Mahadevis or chief queens—Nayanakelidevi and Gosaladevi—who issued grants at different periods, not independently on their own but with the express approval of King Govindachandra. Hence by this time, the Smriti texts which deprived woman of property rights had gained complete domination.

We cannot, however, trace the texts referred to by Shabaraswamin, either in the Rig Veda or the Atharva-Veda. But as Vedas were preserved from mouth to mouth these texts might have been lost in the efflux of time.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE GRIHYA SUTRAS

THE Grihya-Sutras, as indicated by the etymology of the word, are treatises dealing with rituals beneficial to a house (grihaya hitah grihyah). As such, they describe and give directions for the performance of all *Samskaras*, i.e. the rituals regulating the life of man and woman from the cradle to the grave. In the range of Vedic rituals, the domestic rituals come only after the Shrauta rituals, or those belonging to the sacrifices; hence they have been placed only next to the Shrauta Sutras and the author proceeds to these only after describing the former; and hence most of these begin with a Sutra or aphorism indicative of something preceding it. The Gobhila Grihya-Sutra begins with *athato Grihyakarmanyupadekshyamah* and the Paraskara with *athato Grihyasthalipakanam karma* in both of which the word *atha* is significant, as it indicates the place of the Grihya rituals in Vedic ceremonies.

‘After describing the rituals *Vaitanikani*, that require the spreading of the three sacred fires, we shall speak of the Grihyas.’ The commentator Gargya Narayana explains the above thus:—

Vitana is the extension of fires: those rituals that take place there are Vaitanikas—the rituals that require many fires; the fire required for a house is Grihya; the rituals that take place before that fire are technically designated as Grihya. The word Griha is used in reference to a wife and a house.<sup>1</sup>

These rituals and these treatises, insignificant as they are as literature, throw a flood of light on the daily life of men and women. The wife was indispensable in these cere-

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1. Gargya Narayana's Commentary on the Grihya Sutra of Asvalayana p. 1.

monies and hence perhaps by transference of an epithet, the word 'Griha' came to indicate in later literature both a 'wife' and a 'home'.

Each Vedic school had its own Grihya Sutra; hence the Grihyasutras which have come down to posterity are claimed each by a particular school. Thus the Ashvalayana Grihya Sutra and the Shankhayana belong to the Rig-Vedic school, the Paraskara Grihya Sutra belongs to the White Yajur-Veda and the Gobhila and Khadira to the Sama-Vedic school. Baudhayana and Apastamba to the school of the Black Yajur-Veda.<sup>1</sup> The schools of Bharadvaja, Satyashadha and Hiranyakeshin are related to Apastamba and hence belong to the Yajur-Vedic school. To the Atharva-Vedic school belongs the Vaitana-Shrauta Sutra,<sup>2</sup> which is considered to be later than the other Grihya Sutras, but older than the Kaushika Sutra. The Grihya Sutra of the Manava School<sup>3</sup> and the Kathaka Grihya Sutra, which is related to the Manava, belong to the Maitrayani Samhita. Of these Baudhayana is considered to be the earliest law-giver and Bharadvaja, Apastamba and Hiranyakeshin are his successors chronologically.<sup>4</sup> Bharadvaja, who was not widely known and whose influence waned at a very early period, and who belonged to the group of the South, refers to Gautama as the source of his rituals.<sup>5</sup>

These Grihya Sutras, different as they are, were prevalent in different parts of the country, and hence, though preserved with accuracy, are tinged to some extent by the peculiarities of their own group. In the Commentary of the Charana-Vyuhā we have an account of the different places where each group prevailed. The author of this book Kashidasa, refers to Mahārṇava, probably the Smṛiti-

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1. Hist. of Indian Literature—Winternitz p. 277.

2. Ibid—p. 280.

3. Ibid—p. 278.

4. Ibid—p. 278.

5. Gautama Dharma Shastra VIII, 14-21.

Maharnava, in quoting the following verse about the locality of each group.

The Charana Vyuha Parishishta Sutra of Shaunaka with the commentary of Mahidasa<sup>1</sup> gives the locality of these schools.

From the account given there it is clear that Apastamba and Ashvalayana were prevalent south of Narmada and north of Narmada the Madhyandini, Shankhayani, Kauthumi and Shaunaki rituals prevailed. The limit of the Rig-Vedic school of Ashvalayana extended to Tunga, Krishna and Godavari and, the mountain of Sahya, to the country of the Andhras. In the north, in the country of Gurjara (which is probably the vicinity of the present Gujarat) was the seat of the Kaushitaki Brahmana and of the school of Shankhayana. In the southern countries such as the Andhras and in places extending from Godavari to the southern sea, Apastamba and the school of Taittiriya, belonging to the Yajur Veda, were prevalent. Beginning from the Sahyadri to the south-western sea, the school of Hiranyakeshin held sway. In Anga, Vanga and Kalinga, in Kanina and Gujarat, the school of the Vajasaneyins and Madhyandinas reigned supreme. And Yajnavalkya was prevalent in all countries.

Though some of the places and names cannot easily be identified, we get an idea of the principal seats of the different schools. Thus, of the two principal Grihya Sutras of the Rig-Vedic school, Shankhayana and Ashvalayana, the former was in force in countries north of the Narmada, especially in Gujarat and the latter in the south, in the country of the Andhras. The Dharma Sutra of Vasishtha belongs to this school. The Gobhila Grihya Sutra which belongs to the Kauthumi school of the Sama Veda, was pre-

valent north of the Narmada; its main centre being Anga, Vanga and Kalinga. To this school belongs the Dharma-Sutra of Gautama. The Grihya and Dharma-Sutras of Baudhayana, Grihya Sutras of Bharadvaja, Apastamba and Hiranyakeshin, who belonged to the Black Yajur Veda were prevalent south of the Narmada. Apastamba was later than Baudhayana by two centuries and both schools prevailed in the south-eastern part of the Deccan peninsula, whereas Hiranyakeshin had more influence in the south-western part of the Deccan peninsula, and Bharadvaja's school had its centre further down south. It is not exactly known where the Paraskara school prevailed, but, as he belongs to the White Yajur Vedic school, it can be presumed that its centre was in northern India, possibly near Anga, Vanga and Kalinga, where the Kauthumi school of the Sama-Veda and the Madhyandinas mostly prevailed. It was perhaps due to the ravages of invasion in the north and to the influence of Buddhism, which had its sway mainly in the Indo-Gangetic plain that the Vedic schools migrated to the south, and, took refuge in the more peaceful regions south of the Narmada.

A graphic picture of the north can, however, be obtained from the writers contemporaneous with Baudhayana and his successors. The Arthashastra of Kautilya bears witness to the state of society in the northern countries. Kautilya was the minister of Chandragupta, and he has been assigned to the 4th century B.C.<sup>1</sup> Vatsyayana in his Kama-Sutra, gives at some places a picture of the society of his time. He enumerates, as Apastamba also does, the different kinds of girls to be avoided as undesirable while choosing a bride. He further describes the movements of

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1. Difference of opinion exists as to the time of Kautilya but he is generally supposed to belong to the Maurya period.

women in society and the position that courtesans held at that time and the respect they commanded.

Be that as it may, of all the Grihya Sutras, that of Ashvalayana has come down to posterity as the most authoritative of the group. Ashvalayana's Grihya rituals command as much influence on the structure of society as Manu does in the legal field.

All these Grihya Sutras begin with the description of the Pakayajnas and with the installation of the sacrificial fire in the house. Paraskara calls them Grihasthalipakas. Ashvalayana describes them as being of three kinds—Hutah, Prahutah, Brahmanihutah. Paraskara divides them into four kinds,—Hutah, Ahutah, Prahutah, Prashitah. Others divide them into seven.

What are these Pakayajnas and how are they related to the house? Gargya Narayana, commentator on Ashvalayana describes them thus:—

'The Pakayajnas are the smaller sacrifices, or the best sacrifices. Why best? Because they contain the constituents of the Samskaras. By these Brahmanhood is attained; what are those Samskaras? Garbhadhana etc. Thence when it is said that all are Pakayajnas that is correct.'<sup>1</sup>

Of the Rig-Vedic school, Ashvalayana, and Shankharyana begin with a description of marriage. Ashvalayana starts off with fixing the right time for marriage, and alludes to his predecessors, though he differs from them.

'During the northern course of the sun in the time of the increasing moon,' marriage should be performed<sup>2</sup> and 'According to some (teachers) marriage (may be celebrated) at any time.'<sup>3</sup> At the commencement, the person has to offer four Ajya oblations<sup>4</sup> three with three verses from

1. Gargya Narayana's Commentary on Asvalayana.

2. Ashva. G.S. I, 4. 1.

4. Ibid I. 4. 3.

3. Ibid I. 4, 2.

the Rig-Veda<sup>1</sup> and a fourth one with another verse from the Rig-Veda.<sup>2</sup> This is compulsory.<sup>3</sup>

Before the selection of the bridegroom the family has to be taken into consideration<sup>4</sup> and the girl should be given to an intelligent man.<sup>5</sup> The girl must possess besides other qualities, intelligence. She should be beautiful, free from disease and possess good character.<sup>6</sup> Stress is laid on 'intelligence'. It is to be noted in this connection that Bharadvaja<sup>7</sup> lays emphasis on 'Prajna' or intellect; for he says 'How would it be possible to live with a person without intellect?'

As these proper qualities of a girl are difficult to determine, a test is arranged in which the bride has to pick up a lump of earth out of the eight lumps taken from different places, each signifying a different quality or attribute of the bride. Thus the earth taken from a field yielding two crops signified richness in food, that of a cow-shed signified richness in cattle, that of a Veda, richness in holy lustre, that of a pool (that never dries up) richness in everything, that of a gambling place, a gambling nature, that of the junction of four roads, a restless nature (that wanders in different directions), that of a barren spot, poverty, and that of a burial ground, death of her husband. After the girl has passed this test, the marriage is settled.<sup>8</sup>

Ashvalayana enumerates eight kinds of marriages: the Brahma, Daiva, Prajapatya, Arsha, Gandharva, Asura, Paishacha and Rakshasa. The Brahma is the one in which the father gives away the girl 'decked with ornaments' and 'pouring out a libation of water.'<sup>9</sup> The Daiva is the one in which the girl is given likewise to a priest 'whilst a sacri-

1. Ashva. G.S. I. 4. 3.

2. R.V. III. 2.

3. Ashva. G.S. I. 4. 8.

4. Ibid I. 5. 1.

5. Ibid I. 5. 2.

6. Ibid I. 5. 3.

7. Bhard. G.S. I. 16.

8. Ashva. G.S. I. 5. 4 and 5

9. Ibid I. 6. 1.

fice with the three (Shrauta) fires is being performed.'<sup>1</sup> In the Prajapatya, the girl is not given by her father, but is intended for 'fulfilling the law together.'<sup>2</sup> In the Arsha marriage, the girl is bought from her father in exchange for a cow and a bull. These four types of marriages have been placed by the author on a higher plane, as the son of such a union is destined to purify his ancestors and his descendants, twelve such in the case of a Brahma marriage, ten in the case of a Daiva, eight in the case of a Prajapatya, seven in the case of an Arsha<sup>3</sup> marriage.

The remaining four types of marriages, though lawful, are not considered to be respectable, as they do not bring any good to the families. Of these the Gandharva marriage is one in which the bride and the bridegroom marry after making 'a mutual agreement',<sup>4</sup> the Asura is one in which the girl is taken after gladdening (her father) by money,<sup>5</sup> in the Paishacha the bride is stolen away while (her relations) sleep or pay no attention<sup>6</sup> and in the Rakshasa, the girl is carried off by force, after killing (her relatives) and cleaving (their) heads, while she weeps and they weep.<sup>7</sup>

At this point, before describing the marriage ceremonial, Ashvalayana admits that the customs of different countries vary and that the custom of a country varies from that of a village; and so, he describes only those commonly accepted by all.<sup>8</sup>

It has to be observed here that Shankhayana who belongs to the same school, adopts a different kind of ritual. His account does not contain the ordeal of earth-lumps through which the bride has to pass, and he does not

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1. Ashva. G.S. I. 6. 2.

2. Ibid I. 6. 3.

3. Ibid I. 6. 1-4.

4. Ibid I. 6. 5.

5. Ibid I. 6. 6.

6. Ibid I. 6. 7.

7. Ibid I. 6. 7.

8. Ibid I. 7. 1. 2.

mention the eight forms of marriages accepted by the law-givers. Gobhila refers to the Mantra Brahmana in his Grihya Sutra; and Apastamba refers to the Mantra-Patha in his. But Shankhayana, more than Ashvalāyana, refers directly to the Mantras or verses of the Rig-Veda. As to the auspicious time of marriage, both Ashvalayana and Shankhayana agree completely, and Shankhayana enjoins that the bridegroom shall 'seize the hand of a girl who should possess (the good) characteristics (required), whose limbs should be proportionate, whose hair should be smooth, who should also have at her neck two curls turned to the right. (Of such a girl) he shall know that she will give birth to six men.'<sup>1</sup> So Shankhayana stresses the physical beauty of the girl rather than her intellectual attainments.<sup>2</sup> The bridegroom's party has to send a mediator, the Dishishu of the Rig-Veda to settle the marriage.

'If he will acquire a wife, let him recite over the wooers (whom he sends to the girl's father), when they go away, an appropriate verse from the Rig-Veda ensuring their safety on the way.<sup>3</sup> The wooers arrive at the destined place with flowers, fruits, and a pot of water, and greet the father of the girl: then they ask for the girl's hand in marriage, after reciting the clan names.<sup>4</sup> When the proposal is accepted they touch 'a full vessel into which have been put flowers, fried grain, fruits, barley, and gold,' and recite a verse from the Rig-Veda; this vessel is placed by the Acharya or preceptor of the girl's family on the head of the girl, reciting verses from the Veda.<sup>5</sup> Thus is the match settled. The selection of the bride through a test of clay lumps is completely absent here.

The marriage ceremony as described by Ashvalayana

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1. Shank. G.S. I. 5, 6-10.  
2. Ibid I. 5. 6-10.  
3. R.V. X. 85. 23.

4. Shank. G.S. I. 6, 1-4.  
5. R.V. X. 85. 43.

takes place before the sacrificial fire, to the west of which is placed a millstone, and to the north-east a water-pot: the ceremony begins with an appropriate verse from the Rig-Veda.<sup>1</sup> The bride and bridegroom have to stand face to face, the former facing the west and the latter the east, while the verse is uttered and the bridegroom has to take hold of the bride's thumb, if he desires only male children. So here the thumb is supposed to have a mysterious connection with the birth of a male child and the other fingers that of a female child.<sup>2</sup> This is followed by circumambulation of the fire and the water-pot; as the husband leads his wife he utters a verse from the Atharva-Veda, slightly altered.

'He am I, she art thou, she art thou, he am I; the heaven I, the earth thou; the Saman I, the Rik thou. Come let us here marry; let us beget offspring.'<sup>3</sup>

In the Atharva-Veda it runs thus: 'He am I, she thou, chant am I, verse thou, heaven I, earth thou, let us (two) come together here, let us generate progeny.'<sup>4</sup>

It is to be noted here that this ritual is absent in the Rig-Veda. The circumambulation takes place thrice, and at the end of each the bride has to get upon the millstone, while the bridegroom utters the words, 'Tread on this stone, like a stone be firm.' This verse is quite in harmony with the verse of the Atharva-Veda<sup>5</sup> which runs thus: 'I maintain for thee, in order to propagate, a pleasant, firm stone in the lap of the divine earth; stand thou on that.'<sup>6</sup>

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1. R.V. X. 85, 36 also A.V. XIV. 1, 50.

2. Shank. G.S. I. 7, 3 and 4.

3. In the S.B.E. 'Sa' and 'Amu' have been translated as 'this' and 'that'; but as there is no difference between this and the original, I am inclined to render them as 'he' and 'she'. M.P. I. 5, 7; Ashya. G.S. P. 28 Bib. Ind.

4. A.V. XIV. 2. 71.

5. A.V. XIV. 1. 47.

6. The Mantra-Brahmana has a verse to the same effect. 'Mount on this stone and be firm like a stone.' But it is absent in the Mantra-Patha of Apastambins.

*This is followed by the Lajahoma, in which the brother, or somebody acting in his place, has to pour into the joined palms of the bride first Ajya or clarified butter and over it fried grain.*<sup>1</sup> This has to be repeated three times for the descendants of Jamadagni. Three verses are chanted: of these two can be found in Mantra-Brahmana.<sup>2</sup> They cannot be traced either in the Rig-Vedic or the Atharva-Vedic rituals. The fourth oblation is made without circumambulation. (I, 7, 13-14).

The hair of the bride, which is bound with two tufts of wool, is then loosened, as a symbol of her separation from her father's family, as a verse from the Rig-Veda, 'I release thee from the band of Varuna,' is recited.<sup>3</sup>

This is followed by *Saptapadi*, when the bride is made to walk seven steps in a north-easterly direction; each step signifies a quality, and the bridegroom has to chant the verse that mentions the significance of each step.

'For sap with one step, for juice with two steps, for thriving of wealth with three steps, for comfort with four steps, for offspring with five steps, for the seasons with six steps. Be friend with seven steps. So be thou devoted to me'.<sup>4</sup> It has to be noted in this connection that the significance of the seven steps is different from what it was in the Mantra Brahmana and the Mantra-Patha:—

The ritual of the Mantra-Brahmana and the Mantra-Patha are the same with the exception of the significance of the sixth step, which the Mantra-Brahmana states as being 'Rayasposhaya' and the Mantra-Patha assigns to the seasons.<sup>5</sup>

From a comparison of the above, we can see how the significance of the steps varied with different schools. The

1. Ashva. G.S. I, 7, 8.

3. R.V. X. 85. 24.

2. M.B. I. 5. 7.

4. Shank. G.S. I, 7, 19.

5. Vide Mantra-Brahmana (I. 2. 6).

*Saptapadi* in Shankhayana is the same as in Ashvalayana, the only difference being that in the former the Acharya or the preceptor leads both the bride and bridegroom through the seven steps, whereas in Ashvalayana it is the bridegroom who leads the bride through the seven steps. It is the latter system that is in vogue in Bengal.<sup>1</sup>

In Shankhayana, after the match has been settled, the bridegroom has to perform some sacrifices chanting verses from the Rig-Veda. Here we find frequent references to the verses of the Rig-Veda.

Prior to the departure of the girl<sup>2</sup> a ceremony takes place before which she has to be bathed<sup>3</sup> up to her head with water scented by various herbs and the choicest fruits together with unguents, and then clothed with a newly dyed garment: after that the Acharya takes her to the fire and, as she sits down behind the fire, the priest offers oblations with prayers to all the gods.<sup>4</sup> The bridegroom, after taking a bath performs auspicious ceremonials.<sup>5</sup> This custom of bathing the bride is not to be found in the Rig-Veda, but is found in the Atharva-Veda.<sup>6</sup> On the arrival of the bridegroom at the bride's house, he has to give her a garment, reciting a verse from the Rig-Veda.<sup>7</sup> He then takes up a salve box, and after anointing it<sup>8</sup> gives it to the bride.

This ceremony is described in Paraskara<sup>9</sup> and Gobhila<sup>10</sup> though it is omitted in Ashvalayana. Then comes another verse from the Rig-Veda.<sup>11</sup> 'Mind was her cushion; heaven also was its canopy; the two draft-oxen were white, when

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1. This ritual of *Saptapadi* is not to be found in either the R.V. or the A.V., but is a later development. It is first described in the M.B.

2. Shank. G.S. I. 11. 1.

7. R.V. X. 85, 6.

3. Ibid I. 11. 2.

8. Shank. G.S. I. 12. 5.

4. Ibid I. 11. 4.

9. Parask. G.S. I. 4. 14.

5. Ibid I. 12. 1.

10. Gobhila G.S. II. 2.

6. Ibid I. 12. 1.

11. R.V. X. 85. 10; A.V. XIV. I. 10.

Surya went to her husband.' The bridegroom places the quill of a procupine and a string of three twisted threads in her right hand and a mirror in her left hand chanting a verse from the Rig-Veda.<sup>1</sup> The relatives then tie a red, black, woollen or linen cord with<sup>2</sup> three (amulet) gems, with an appropriate verse from the Rig-Veda. The bridegroom then decorates her body with Madhuka flowers<sup>3</sup> while chanting a verse from the Rig-Veda. This ceremony is named *Madhuparka*, after which they both offer four oblations to the fire, three with each of the three Mahavyahritis and a fourth with the three together.<sup>4</sup> The Madhuparka ceremony is omitted in Ashvalayana. Shankhayana does not, like the other law-givers, clearly state the point at which the bride passes over from the parental care into that of her husband. Paraskara<sup>5</sup> and Ashvalayana<sup>6</sup> deal with this point in all its details.

These are the ceremonials preparatory to the essential one in Shankhayana. In the ceremony that follows, the girl is supposed to be received from her father.

In the next ceremony, which is presumably the central one, the bride has to sit down while her father or brother stands by her<sup>7</sup> and holds the point of a sword at her head: the father and the daughter have to stand face to face, and oblations have to be offered to the fire with the verses from the Rig-Veda giving her supreme right in her husband's house.<sup>8</sup> The bridegroom then steps in and takes hold of her hand with the thumb, as described in Ashvalayana, and chants the Riks significant of the occasion.<sup>9</sup> Here the bridegroom remains standing while the bride sits down.<sup>10</sup>

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1. R.V. VI. 47. 18.

2. Shank. G.S. I. 12. 8.

3. Ibid I. 12. 9.

4. Ibid I. 12, 11, 12.

8. R.V. X. 85. 46; A.V. XIV. 1. 44.

9. R.V. X. 85, 36; A.V. XIV. 1. 50.

10. Shank. G.S. I. 13. 2.

5. Parask G.S. I. 4. 15.

6. Ashva G.S. I. 22.

7. Shank. G.S. I. 13. 1

The ceremony is not accompanied by circumambulation as in Ashvalayana.<sup>1</sup> Instead, a pot is filled with water accompanied by the words 'Bhuh, Bhuvah, Svahah' and the leaves and branches of a tree that has a masculine name,—or gold, according to some,—are thrown into the pot and it is handed over to a student, who observes silence.<sup>2</sup> The bride and bridegroom have to go round this water, called 'Steya water.'<sup>3</sup> A stone is then placed to the north, and the bridegroom has to make the bride stand on it, uttering the words: 'Come, tread on this stone; like a stone be firm. Tread the foes down and overcome the enemies.'<sup>4</sup> This verse is the same as in Ashvalayana, and is to be found in the Atharva-Veda. He then leads her round the fire<sup>5</sup> and a second garment is given<sup>6</sup> after which the Lajahoma ceremony takes place.

Fried grain mixed with Shami leaves is poured into her hands by her father or brother<sup>7</sup> and, as she pours them out into the fire, she utters the following verse: This woman, strewing grains, prays thus: 'May I bring bliss to my relations; may my husband live long, Svaha!'<sup>8</sup> The stepping on to the stone and the pouring out of Lajas are repeated four times.<sup>9</sup> This is followed by the *Saptapadi*. The ritual here is more complicated than in Ashvalayana, for, as the couple take a step forward, the Acharya or preceptor appeases their footsteps with water and he wipes them with the Steya water.<sup>10</sup> He also sprinkles water on their heads after which the bridegroom presents him a cow.

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1. Ashva. G.S. I. 14, 5.

4. Shank. G.S. I. 13-10-13.

2. Shank. G.S. I. 13. 5-8.

5. Ibid I. 13. 13.

3. Ibid I. 13. 9.

6. Ibid I. 13-14.

7. Ibid. I. 13. 15.

8. Ibid I. 14.1. This verse is found in M.B. I, 2, 2, and with slight alteration in M.P. I, 5, 2.

9. Shank. G.S. I. 14, 1-4. 10. Ibid I. 14, 7-8.

Some gifts have to be given to the Brahmana, too.<sup>1</sup> The author then enumerates the different presents to be given by different castes. Thus a Brahmana has to give a cow; a Kshatriya a village; a Vaishya a horse.<sup>2</sup>

Ashvalayana and Shankhayana both describe the departure of the couple to their new home. Both quote verses from the Rig-Veda in connection with different parts of the ceremony; but there are differences in both. Ashvalayana begins with the rituals to be performed when getting into a chariot or a ship and when descending from either.

In the first case 'May Pushan lead thee from here, holding thy hand,'<sup>3</sup> and in the second,<sup>4</sup> 'Carrying stones (the river) streams hold fast each other,' has to be chanted. The nuptial fire has to be always carried in front<sup>5</sup> and, if the bride weeps, the evil is averted by chanting a verse from the Rig-Veda.<sup>6</sup>

In Shankhayana the bride is first transferred formally from her father's protection to that of her husband, chanting the appropriate verses from the Rig-Veda.<sup>7</sup> If the bride weeps at that time, the evil is averted, by chanting Riks. Clarified butter is then poured by the bride on the axle<sup>8</sup> and wheels of the chariot<sup>9</sup> uttering suitable verses from the Rig-Veda.<sup>10</sup> The chariot is well decorated. The bulls, too, are anointed, and the bride has to put twigs of fruit-bearing trees in the holes designed for pins, chanting Riks.<sup>11</sup> The bulls are then harnessed.<sup>12</sup> Now if, any mischance happens on the way, provision is made for the safety

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1. Shank. G.S. I. 14. 9. 10. 11.

2. Shank. G.S. I. 14. 13-15. 3. R.V. 85. 26.

4. R.V. X. 53-8. Asva G.S. I. 8. 1-3.

5. Shank. G.S. I. 8. 5.

7. Shank. G.S. I. 15. 1.

6. R.V. X. 40. 10.

8. Ibid I. 15. 3.

9. Ibid I. 15. 4.

10. R.V. I. 82. 2 and X. 85. 12. 16.

11. Shank. G.S. I. 15, 5, 6; R. V. VII. 80. 7.

12. Shank. G.S. I. 15. 8; R. V. I. 82. 5, 6 and X. 85. 10.

of the bride. She has to be taken to the house of one who keeps the sacred fires.<sup>1</sup> Finally, the bride mounts the chariot as Riks are chanted.<sup>2</sup>

If the bride is at the cross-roads or near a cemetery or near a big tree she chants a verse to avert evil.<sup>3</sup> If the couple have to go by a ship, then, when boarding the ship, while crossing a river and at deep places in the river verses are chanted to avert evil.<sup>4</sup> On reaching the house the bride is welcomed chanting a Rik<sup>5</sup> indicative of a warm welcome.

There is no mention here of carrying the nuptial fire. In the ritual of Ashvalayana verses from the Rig-Veda have to be recited, while passing lonely places, trees and junctions, and the couple have to look at the spectators as they pass and say, 'Good luck brings this woman.'<sup>6</sup> On reaching the new home an auspicious verse from the Rig-Veda is first chanted,<sup>7</sup> and attention is given to the nuptial fire. After placing the fire in its right place<sup>8</sup> a bull's hide has to be spread to the west of it, on which the newly married couple have to sit and offer oblations. Verses from the Rig-Veda are chanted.<sup>9</sup> For three consecutive nights they have to abstain from saline food, sleep on the ground and observe an austere life; at the end of this period they are allowed to live together. As to the limit of the period, three different opinions existed in Ashvalayana's time. He quotes them in his book. It is not known whether these were the opinions of earlier legislators or of his contemporaries. Thus he says: 'It is either three nights, or twelve nights, or a year according to some teachers.'<sup>10</sup> The domestic fire

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1. Shank. G.S. I. 15. 9.

2. Ibid I. 15. 13; R.V. X. 85. 20.

3. Ibid G.S. I. 15. 14-16.

7. R.V. X. 85. 27.

4. Ibid G.S. I. 15. 17-20.

8. Sankh. G.S. I. 8. 9.

5. Ashva G.S. I. 8. 8.

9. R.V. X. 85. 43, 47.

6. Asva G.S. I. 8. 8.

10. Shank. G.S. I. 8. 10. 11.

kindled at the marriage time has, however, to be lighted and kept up carefully by both of them or their descendants and it should be kept burning constantly in the house. If by chance it is extinguished, the wife has to fast 'according to some teachers,' says Ashvalayana, before it can be rekindled.<sup>1</sup>

Thus ends the ceremony prescribed by Ashvalayana. There is great difference between the rituals of the Mantra-Brahmana and this law-giver: the ritual has become very elaborate. The institution of the Mantra-Brahmana, which was primarily meant for grown-up people, is fast changing its scope and giving way to child-marriages. But Ashvalayana adheres to the ritual of the Mantra-Brahmana and institutes his ritual for grown-up people by allowing consummation 'of the marriage immediately after the ceremony'. The demand for co-operation in the duties and religious life of a man, prominent in the ritual of the Mantra-Brahmana is here omitted; marriage was mainly for children and the material comforts of home life. So in Ashvalayana's time woman's position in the religious field had been lowered.

In the ritual of Shankhayana the same process is indicated, and oblations are offered to the fire by the bride and bridegroom, sitting on a bull's hide as in Ashvalayana.<sup>2</sup> To avert any evil from her, the eyes of the maiden are besmeared with *ajya*. Clarified butter (*ajya*) is poured on her head, probably with a view to sanctifying her whole body.<sup>3</sup> In anticipation of male children a boy is placed on her lap and presents are given to the priests by the hands of this child.<sup>4</sup> They then enter the house and have to sit in silence until the stars appear on the horizon. The silence is then broken by the bridegroom, who recites verses, point-

1. Shank. G.S. I. 9. 1. 3.

2. Ibid I. 16, 1, 2.

3. Ibid I. 16. 5-7.

4. Ibid I. 16, 8, 10.

ing to the pole-star. These verses are in the form of injunctions advising her to be steady and firm in life. 'Firm be thou, thriving with me.'<sup>1</sup>

For a period of three nights they have to observe Brahmacharya, (i.e. sleep on the ground and eat only boiled rice with milk) before they are allowed to consummate the marriage. Shankhayana does not enjoin abstinence from salt.<sup>2</sup> On the fourth day of the marriage a sacrifice is performed in which the bridegroom offers cooked food to the fire with the following verses.<sup>3</sup>

'Agni! Thou art expiation, thou art the expiation of the gods. What substance dwells in her to bring death to her husband, that drive away from her.'

'Agni! Thou art expiation, thou art the expiation of the gods. What substance dwells in her that brings sonlessness, drive that away from her.'

'Surya! Thou art expiation, thou art the expiation of the gods. Whatever substance dwells in her to bring destruction to the cattle, drive that away from her.'

Though Shankhayana belongs to the Rig-Vedic school and refers to the verses of the Rig-Veda at every part of the ritual, the above three are directly taken from the Mantra-Brahmana. The first two occur with slight alteration in the Mantra-Patha of the Apastambins. Of the rest of the three verses recited on the ceremony of the fourth day two are to be found in the Mantra-Brahmana and one in the Mantra-Patha; but, though these three versions occurring in different contexts are the same in essence, they vary slightly in language, owing probably to their having been preserved orally.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Shank. G.S. I. 17. 3.

2. Ibid I. 17, 5-7.

3. Ibid I. 18. 3.

4. Trans.: "To god Aryaman the girls have made sacrifice to Agni; may he, god Aryaman, loosen her from this not from that place. To the god Varuna the girls have made sacrifice, to

The version of Shankhayana is more akin to the Mantra-Brahmana than the Mantra-Patha, and it is likely that he has taken it from the Mantra-Brahmana; or all three might have been drawn from a common source, now lost. But it has to be noted that all these verses of the fourth day's ceremony are omitted in Ashvalayana, though both authorities belong to the same school.

This is the marriage ceremonial prescribed by Shankhayana. It is followed by the special ceremonials for the birth of a male child, *Garbhadhana* and *Simantonnayana*; and various ceremonials after the birth of the child. Curiously enough, during the initiation ceremony, a verse signifying the oneness and fellowship of a wife, recited at the marriage ritual of the Mantra-Brahmana is repeated here.

'May thy heart respond to all the religious duties (of my life). My mind shall thy mind follow; in my word thou shalt rejoice with all thy heart. May Brihaspati join thee to me.'<sup>1</sup>

Ashvalayana too refers to the ceremonies of *Garbhalambhana*, *Pumsavana* and *Anvalobhana* but says, 'The Upanishad (treats of) the *Garbhalambhana*, the *Pumsavana*, the *Anvalobhana* ceremonies,<sup>2</sup> but if one does not study (that Upanishad), he should perform certain ceremonies instead,' and prescribes, as an alternative, the rituals of the Upanishad. Gargya Narayana, the commentator, did not know the particular Upanishad referred to by the author and says:—

'These have been enjoined by some Upanishad.' Hara-dattacharya (*Triv-Sevak-Series*) too refers to Upanishads

Agni may the god Varuna etc. To the God Pushan the girls have made sacrifice, to Agni, may he God Varuna". etc. (S.B.E. Vol. 29).

1. Shank. II. 4. 1. Cf. M.B. I. 2. 15.

2. Ashva. G.S. I. 13. 1.

vaguely. Evidently this particular Upanishad is lost, or reference might be to the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, which devotes an entire chapter to similar ceremonies.<sup>1</sup>

Neither Ashvalayana nor Shankhayana prescribes Initiation for women, but Shankhayana gives a higher place to woman as a mother; after Initiation a student has to beg to his mother first.<sup>2</sup>

'Let him beg of a woman who will not refuse,' whereas Ashvalayana states only 'beg of a woman who will not refuse'<sup>3</sup> after begging 'of a man who will not refuse.' Woman has little or nothing to do with other domestic ceremonies.

Coming next to the Yajur-Vedic school, quite a number of authors have compiled Grihya rituals. Of these Baudhayana is the earliest law-giver, and he has been assigned to the 5th century B.C. He belongs to the Black Yajur-Vedic school, and Apastamba is his successor; Bharadvaja, Satyashadha and Hiranyakeshin are related to Apastamba and are of a later date. The Paraskara Grihya Sutra belongs to the White Yajur-Veda. The centre of the Baudhayanins, was Southern India and in all probability the country of the Andhras.

Baudhayana begins with the enumeration of seven Pakayajnas:—

The seven Pakayajnas are as follows: Huta, Prahuta, Ahuta, Shlagava, Baliharana, Pratyavarohana and Ashtakahoma.

After explaining these seven kinds of Pakayajnas, he proceeds to describe the marriage ceremonial.

During the northern course of the sun, at the time of the waxing moon, two Brahmin wooers should be sent chanting a Rik:

'Free from thorns, straight, let the roads be by which

1. A.G.S. I. 13. 1.

2. Sank. G.S. II. 6. 5.

3. Ibid I. 22. 7.

(our) comrades go a-wooing for us. Let Aryaman and Bhaga lead us, and may the gods make the union of husband and wife perfect.<sup>1</sup>

But, if the girl is engaged to a Southerner, the wooers should not be sent out.<sup>2</sup>

Baudhayana allows marriage taking place in all the months of the year, but limits its range to certain auspicious constellations, these being the Rohini, Mrgashirsha, Uttara Phalguni and Khati.<sup>3</sup>

At the commencement of the ceremonial, the bridegroom sits down with his right leg touching the ground, before a place covered with food mixed with curd, flowers, fruits, paddy and sesamum. He offers oblations to the fire for propitiating gods and feeds the Brahmanas to elicit blessings from them and to avert evil on the marriage day. He has then to bathe, clothe himself with (uncut) clothes, besmear himself with scents and, after decorating himself with garlands, go to the relatives of the bride and, after being entertained by them as a guest, look at the bride and recite the following verse:

'Varuna, to this one who is no killer of her brother, Brihaspati, to this (one) who is not a killer of her husband, O Indra, to this one who is not a killer of her sons, may Savitar grant good luck.'<sup>4</sup>

'Not fierce of eye, no slayer of thy husband, bring weal to cattle, radiant, gentle-hearted; loving the gods, delightful, bearing heroes, bring blessings to our birds and beasts (lit. quadrupeds and bipeds).'<sup>5</sup>

With the words 'Thou art my friend,' he then leads her through the seven steps of the Saptapadi ceremony.<sup>6</sup>

1. R.V. X. 85, 23; M.P. I, 1, 2. Baudh G.S. I. 1, 14, 15.

2. B.G.S. I. 1. 16. 3. B.G.S. I. 17, 20.

4. Baudh. I, 1, 24. cf. M.P. I. 1. 3.

5. Baudh. I, 1, 25; R.V. X. 85, 44; M.P. I. 1. 4. M.B. I. 2. 11.

6. B.G.S.—I. 1. 28.

The significance of the seven steps coincides with the view of the Mantra-Brahmana<sup>1</sup> and the Mantra-Patha,<sup>2</sup> and hence differs, from that given by the Rig-Vedic school, i.e. of Ashvalayana.

May Vishnu lead thy first step for food;

May Vishnu lead thy second step for strength;

May Vishnu lead thy third step for Vratas;

May Vishnu lead thy fourth step for friendship;

May Vishnu lead thy fifth step for animals;

May Vishnu lead thy sixth step for wealth;

May Vishnu lead thy seventh step for the seven priests.

After traversing these seven steps, he says: 'May thou, who hast passed through the seven steps, be my friend. May I enjoy thy friendship.'<sup>3</sup>

Thus ends the first part of the marriage ceremonial. It is followed by Arghya or the Madhuparka ceremony,<sup>4</sup> and the Agnimukha, in which the domestic fire is lit. This sacred fire has to be produced by attrition by the priests, or it can be brought from the house of a Shrotriya and placed there with due ceremony.<sup>5</sup> This is the fire round which the couple circumambulate. The space around it has to be covered with sacred grass. To the south of the sacred grass, the Brahmanas sit, and to the north a jar of water is placed<sup>6</sup> and oblations are offered to the fire. This is followed by the ceremony of Panigrahana, in which the bridegroom, touching the heart of the maiden with his right hand, recites the following:

'May thy heart be my heart; may thy mind be my mind; may thou listen to my words with all thy heart; may thou follow me and be my companion.'<sup>7</sup> (Baudh. I, 4, 1).

This is one of the most beautiful verses ever recited as

1. MB. I. 2. 5-7.

2. M.P. I. 3. 5-13.

3. B.G.S. I. 1-28.

4. Ibid I. 2. 1-67.

5. Ibid I. 3. 2.

6. Ibid I. 3. 10.

7. Ibid I. 4. 1.

a vow at the marriage ceremony as described in the Mantra-Brahmana (I, 2-15). This verse, however, is omitted in the Mantra-Patha and in Apastamba. The adoption of this verse by Baudhayana, though he belongs to the same school, is noteworthy and reflects the great change in the outlook of life and specially in the relation of husband and wife. The marriage ritual of the Mantra-Brahmana is based on the co-operation of the wife in all the *Vratas* (i.e. duties) of her husband, and as such she is his companion in religious life as well as in the domestic life: this higher and more intimate relationship is lost sight of in later times, when the wife came to be regarded as only the mother of children.

This is clearly reflected in Shankhayana, but Ashvalayana ignores this verse altogether. Ashvalayana declares the aim of marriage to be the happiness and prosperity of home, and the wife has no place in the religious sphere. In Baudhayana we find the transition in the status of a wife. The word Hridaya is substituted for Vrata.

Reverting to the rituals prescribed by Baudhayana, the bridegroom after uttering some verses (I, 5, 2-9) in the ear of the bride,<sup>1</sup> takes her right hand as described before<sup>2</sup> and says:

I grasp thy hand for *good children*, that with me thy husband, thou may be long-lived; Bhaga, Aryaman, Savitar, Purandhi—the gods have given thee to me in order to achieve “housewifeship”. The above verse is a replica of the Mantra-Brahmana and the same as that of the Rig-Veda with only the substitution of *Suprajatvaya* and *Saubhagatvaya*, and so it reflects the change in the position of woman as wife in society: here her main and only object is to be the mother of children.<sup>3</sup>

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1. B.G.S. I. 4, 2-9.

2. B.G.S. I. 4. 10.

3. M.B. I. 2. 10; M.P. I. 3. 3. R.V. X. 85. 36; A.V. XIV. 11.

The couple go round the fire once and later, sitting down, offer oblations chanting verses.<sup>1</sup>

Then comes the Ashmarohana ceremony when the bride is made to place her right foot on a stone that is placed to the north of the fire where appropriate Riks are chanted. This is followed by Lajahoma, in which the brother of the bride pours fried grain into her joined palms, and she offers two oblations.

Circumambulation follows chanting Riks suitable for the purpose.<sup>2</sup>

She is then formally separated from her father's family.<sup>3</sup>

Now commences the ceremony for the departure of the new couple to their home. The maiden is assisted into a chariot by her husband and a verse of the Rig-Veda, appropriate for the occasion<sup>4</sup> is recited, for protecting the couple from any evil on the way. The roads are invoked with a suitable Mantra: 'Praying that they may be easy to travel.'<sup>5</sup> The big trees, the rivers and the forests on the way are prayed for giving protection to the couple.<sup>6</sup> 'May the herbs, big trees and rivers which have enriched this forest make this bride capable of progeny.'

On reaching the new home, the husband leads his wife into the house (Baudh) and after she sits down on a bull's hide, he says: 'Here be prolific, O cows, here O horses and O men.'<sup>7</sup>

Strict silence has to be observed until dusk, when after

1. B.G.S. I. 4. 12. These are found in the Mantra-Brahmana and also in the verses 13-23; Mantra-Patha (M.P. I, 4; 1-9, 11).

2. Baudh. I, 4, 29. 31.

3. Ibid I, 5, 3. cf. M.P. I. 16. 9.

4. Ibid I, 5, 4. cf. M.P. I. 2. 8.

5. Ibid I, 5, 5. cf. M.P. I, 6. 11.

6. Ibid I, 5, 6.

7. B.G.S. I. 5. 7; cf. M.B. I. 3. 13; M.P. I. 9. 1.

bringing the bride out of the room into the open air the husband breaks the silence by addressing her, after pointing to Arundhati, an emblem of steadiness and fidelity. The verse that he chants here is the same as in the other ceremonies and is based on the Mantra-Brahmana.<sup>1</sup> It is a request from the husband to his wife to retain firmness in life and steadiness in character, like the stars in heaven. At the end, a vow is taken, saying 'Agni! Lord of Vratas, I am taking the vow of abstinence.'<sup>2</sup>

The couple have to spend the first three nights sleeping on the ground, observing abstinence.<sup>3</sup>

On the fourth night, after duly performing the ceremonies and offering oblations to the fire, they are allowed to consummate the marriage. The bride is thus addressed:

'May signs of good fortune mark this bride: come all of you and look at her; wish her prosperity and then return to your homes again.'<sup>4</sup>

1. M.B. I. 9. 7.

2. These verses are absent in the Mantra-Patha; but they occur in the Mantra-Brahmana and are recited by the pupil at the initiation ceremony. Verses 9, 10, 11 and 13 of I. 6 of M.B. are compressed into one verse here. In essence they are the same, and it seems as though the author is quoting them from memory. The alteration in the verses and the vastly different occasion on which they are used indicates the wide lapse of time that caused such a change, while the verses are preserved orally from mouth to mouth.

'Oh Agni, lord of the Vratas, I shall carry out the vow of abstinence; mayest thou enable me to go through it. O Vayu, lord of the Vratas, Oh Sun, lord of the Vratas, O Lord of all the Vratas, I shall carry out the vow of abstinence. Mayest thou enable me to abide by it.'

In the Mantra-Brahmana the refrain is the same, only each verse is devoted to the offering of oblations to one deity. Baudhayana has included all the deities in one verse.

3. B.G.S. I, 5, 17.

4. B.G.S. I, 5, 30. (M.P. I, 9, 5; M.B. I, 2, 8; R.V. X, 85, 33 and A.V. XVI, 2, 28).

A Sthalipaka is prepared and oblations<sup>1</sup> are given to the fire with the following verses:

‘O Agni, thou art expiation; thou art the expiation of the gods; I a Brahman desirous of being a master, give offerings to thee, that thou may drive away from her the substance that brings death to her husband, that kills her children, that destroys the cattle, that annihilates wealth, and that destroys love.’<sup>2</sup>

The three next verses are the same, but they are addressed to other deities, Vayu, Aditya and Prajapati.<sup>3</sup>

After a few more oblations, the god Vishvavasus is invoked to give up the protection of the bride and transfer the responsibility to her husband. These prayers are from the Rig-Veda.<sup>4</sup>

This is followed by the ceremony of Garbhadhana, in which oblations are given to the fire with appropriate verses.<sup>5</sup>

The husband then embraces the wife with the verse ‘I am he, thou she; I heaven, thou earth.’ This verse is found first in the Atharva-Veda.<sup>6</sup> It has been used by the lawgivers of other schools, such as Ashvalayana and Shankhayana, though with slight alterations.

So ends the marriage ritual; which is obviously not intended for children. The bride is taken away immediately after the marriage ceremony to her husband’s home and the marriage is consummated.

1. B.G.S. I, 6, 11.

2. Ibid I, 6, 12; M.B. I. 4. 1.

3. Ibid. I. 6. 13, 14, 15. These verses are found in M.P. I, 10, 3-6. They are also to be found with slight alterations in the Mantra-Brahmana (M.B. I, 4. 1-4), and we have seen that Shankhayana has closely followed the version of the Mantra-Brahmana.

4. R.V. X. 85. 21, 22.

5. Baudh. G.S. I. 7. 38. These verses are from the Rig-Veda (X, 184) and the Atharva-Veda (V, 25, 3, 5) and are also found in the Mantra Patha (I. 12. 1-3).

6. A.V. XIV. 2. 71.

Baudhayana, prescribes the Pumsavana ceremony in the third month of pregnancy to secure a male child and a Simantonnayana ceremony in the fourth month.<sup>1</sup>

After the initiation the boy has to beg of his mother first (II, 5, 48) and so, like Shankhayana, Baudhayana gives a higher place to woman as a mother.<sup>2</sup>

From the above it is clear that the ritual of Baudhayana is different from that of Ashvalayana in many respects. He does not enumerate here, though he does so in his Dharma Sutra,—the various kinds of marriages considered by him to be valid, nor does he state the tests through which the girl has to pass before she is selected. He lays down no elaborate procedure for settling the match. His ritual is based largely on the Mantra-Brahmana, though the verses are to be found in the Mantra-Patha also. It is difficult to determine whether the Mantra-Patha took the verses from Baudhayana or *vice-versa*.

The next important law-giver is Apastamba, who lays down the rules for the Grihya ceremony without the Mantras or verses. The Mantras he refers to are those of the Mantra-Patha: so that his ritual is entirely based on that book.

The next authority in the Black Yajur-Vedic school, Apastamba, does not begin his treatise with the marriage ceremony, but comes to it later. He does not consider all the seasons of the year suitable for marriage; two months of the *Shishira* season and the last summer month are not fit for marriage<sup>3</sup> but all auspicious Nakshatras (or constellations) are suitable for marriage.<sup>4</sup> He lays more stress on custom than on law, and says, 'one should learn from women what ceremonies (are required by custom).'<sup>5</sup>

1. B.G.S. I. 9. 1; I. 10. 1.

2. Ibid II. 5. 48.

3. Apas. G S. I. 2. 12.

4. Ibid I. 2. 13.

5. Ibid I. 2. 15.

Wooers are sent out to choose the bride, and in choosing the girl Apastamba lays down certain rules by which they have to decide. In framing the rules he not only resorts to the methods adopted by Ashvalayana, but lays down some more rigorous rules and hence the choice of the girl and the tests she has to undergo before selection, are rendered more difficult than before. His method is as follows:<sup>1</sup>

'Let (the wooer) avoid a girl that sleeps or cries, or has left home, one who has been given (to another), and who is guarded (by her relations), who looks wicked, or who is crafty, or who is like Sharabha, a hunch-back, a girl of monstrous appearance, a bald-headed girl, a girl whose skin is like a frog's, a girl who has gone over to another family, a girl given to sensual pleasures, or a herdless, or one who has too many friends, or who has a fine younger sister, one whose age is too near to that of the bridegroom, who has the names of a Nakshatra (or constellation), or a river, or of a tree, or whose names end in 'r' 'l'.<sup>2</sup> After selecting the bride obeying the above injunctions he has to place hidden before the girl<sup>3</sup> the following things, viz., different kinds of seeds mixed together, loose earth from the Vedi, an earth-clod from a field, cow-dung, and an earth-clod from a cemetery,<sup>4</sup> and ask her to touch one of them; her quality is determined according to the nature of the clod that she touched.<sup>5</sup>

We find here that the objects enumerated by Apastamba are different from those of Ashvalayana, in number as well as in quality. Cow-dung and seeds are omitted in Ashvalayana.

Curiously enough, after prescribing all these injunc-

1. Apas. G.S. I. 3. 10.

2. Ibid I. 3. 11-13.

3. Ibid. I. 3. 14.

4. Apas. G.S. I. 3-15.

5. Ibid I. 3. 16.

tions for the selection of the bride, he ends his discourse by saying, 'A wife who is pleasing to his mind and his eyes will bring happiness to him; let him pay no attention to the other things; such is the opinion of some.'<sup>1</sup> Hence it can be inferred that opinions differed among people in his time, and, though more and more rigid rules were being framed for the stability and welfare of society, there was a strong group which resented and defied these new fetters.

In the marriage ritual of Apastamba the wooers are sent out after the first two verses of the Mantra-Patha have been recited and on seeing the bride, the bridegroom has to look her full in the face reciting auspicious verses.<sup>2</sup> He then has to wipe the interstices between her eyebrows with blades of Darbha or sacrificial grass, holding them with his thumb and fourth finger and chanting the verse associated with it.<sup>3</sup>

To avert evil due to any ill omen, he has to utter a verse.<sup>4</sup>

An even number of persons versed in Mantras are sent to fetch water. A round piece of Darbha net-work is placed on the bride's head: and on that a right yoke hole, in which he lays a piece of gold; and then washes her chanting verses so that the water runs over the gold and through the yoke-hole; he gets her dressed in a fresh garment and girds her with a rope.<sup>5</sup>

Then he takes hold of her by her right hand, leads her to the fire and spreads a mat on which they both sit down. Some preliminary ceremonials are now performed after which he takes with his right hand, palm down, her right hand which she holds palm up. If he desires only daughters to be born to him he should seize the fingers, and if he

1. Apas. G.S. I. 3. 20.

2. M.P. I. 1. 3, 4.

3. Ibid I. 1. 5.

4. Ibid I. x. 6.

5. A.G.S. II. 4. 7, 8.

desires only sons, the thumb. Then the four verses beginning with 'I take thy hand' are repeated.

The Saptapadi ceremony commences. He makes her step forward with her right foot to the north of the fire in an easterly or northerly direction with the formula beginning with one step for sap and at the seventh step he murmurs 'Be a friend.'<sup>1</sup>

The next is the Ashmarohana ceremony. To the north of the fire, he causes her to step with her right foot on a stone. This is followed by Lajahoma when roasted grain is twice poured into her joined palms over which *ajya* is sprinkled. He offers this grain as an oblation chanting the verse beginning 'This wife'. The grain elsewhere could be poured by the father and brother of the girl but here any relative could do it. The commentator Haradatta explains that the action of the sacrifice belongs to the bridegroom; the hands of the wife represent only the sacrificial vessel.<sup>2</sup>

Several circumambulations take place chanting verses from Mantra-Patha during which the bride has to step over the stone twice again.

Having performed all the rites and sprinkled water round the fire, the rope is untied and he should take her from her father's house in a vehicle.<sup>3</sup>

Here, as in Ashvalayana, the fire with which the marriage rites have been performed should be put into a vessel and carried along with them. It should be kept constantly burning. If by chance it is extinguished a new fire has to be kindled by attrition or it should be fetched from the house of a Shrotriya;<sup>4</sup> but prior to that, either the wife or the husband should fast.<sup>5</sup>

1. A.G.S. II. 4; 9-17.

2. Ibid II. 5. 5, 6.

3. Ibid II, 5, 7-11.

4. Ibid II, 5, 13-16.

5. Ibid II, 5, 17.

With the recitation of a verse<sup>1</sup> the chariot is brought<sup>2</sup> and the animals are yoked<sup>3</sup> and the bride mounts the chariot chanting a verse of Mantra-Patha.<sup>4</sup> The bride first gets into the chariot after spreading two threads on the wheel-tracks, a red one on the left and a blue one on right, and the bridegroom has to walk on these threads.<sup>5</sup> As they pass bathing-places, posts or cross-roads, they have to recite Mantras.<sup>6</sup>

If they have to cross a river they get into a boat chanting a Rik<sup>7</sup> and, strangely enough, the bride is enjoined not to see the crew.<sup>8</sup> On disembarking from the boat if they have to pass by or through a cemetery, or if their chariot is damaged, a sacrifice has to be performed and oblations given with the seven verses from the Mantra-Patha. While passing by trees<sup>9</sup> with milky sap or other trees that serve as marks, by rivers or by deserts, verses according to the characteristics in them should be chanted. As they near the house, the husband shows her the new home on reaching which the bulls are unyoked<sup>10</sup> and a red bull's hide is spread in the centre of the house with the neck to the east and the hair up and the bride steps into the house<sup>11</sup> with her right foot, reciting verses of the Mantra-Patha. Oblations are next offered to the fire chanting a verse of Mantra-Patha in the north-eastern part of the house and they sit down on the skin, chanting verses. A boy is then placed in the bride's lap<sup>12</sup> and the bride gives the child fruits, afterwards she has to observe silence until the stars appear<sup>13</sup> on the horizon when the husband leads her out of the house, shows her the pole star and Arundhati, which are regarded

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1. M.P. I. 6. 1.

2. A.G.S. II. 5. 19.

3. Ibid II. 5. 20.

4. M.P. I. 6. 4-7.

5. A.G.S. II. 5. 24.

6. M.P. I. 6. 12.

7. Ibid I. 6. 13.

8. A.G.S. II. 6. 2.

9. Ibid II. 6. 5.

10. Ibid II, 6, 7.

11. Ibid II, 6, 8.

12. Ibid II, 6, 10.

13. Ibid II, 6, 11.

as emblems of steadiness, and he chants appropriate verses.

This is followed by the sacrifice of Sthalipaka sacred to Agni. While describing the marriage rituals, Apastamba abruptly brings in topics that are not connected with the ceremony. Thus the eighth chapter of Patala III begins thus:—‘At the opening and concluding ceremonies of the Vedic study the Rishi who is indicated (as the Rishi of the Kanda which they study), is the deity to whom the ceremony belongs.’ (III, 8, 1). After this he deals with the topic of denying to women the right of performing the sacrifice and says ‘They reject a sacrifice performed by a wife or by one who has not received the Upanayana initiation.’ He reverts to the marriage ceremonial from stanza 7.

‘Let him notice the day on which he brings his wife home.’<sup>1</sup>

It is not known whether the above were written by Apastamba or later additions by his followers. The latter seems more probable.

As in the rituals of other schools, the newly-married couple are enjoined to spend three nights sleeping on the ground and to avoid salt and pungent food; and, as in Baudhayana, a staff anointed with perfumes and covered with a garment or a thread is placed between their beds. On the fourth night, he puts away the staff, ceremonies ranging from the putting of wood on the fire down to the Ajyabhaga are performed and oblations are given to the fire chanting suitable verses. Some *ajya* is poured on the head of the bride and they look at each other, chanting Riks and after their hearts have been smeared with *ajya* they are permitted to consummate the marriage. This is the marriage ritual of Apastamba.<sup>2</sup>

The next chapter describes ceremonials connected with

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1. A.G.S. III, 8, 7.

2. A.G.S. III. 8. 8-10.

marriage: one such is that by which a wife is supposed to hold her husband in subjection. Of all the law-givers Apastamba is the only one who gives the details of such a ritual. It is thus described:—

‘When the moon, on the following day, will be in conjunction with Tishya, she strews three times seven barley-grains around (the plant) *Clypea Hernandifolia* with (the formula), ‘If thou belong to Varuna, I redeem thee from Varuna. If thou belong to Soma, I redeem thee from Soma.’<sup>1</sup>

‘On the following day she should set upright (the plant) reciting a verse; reciting next three verses of M.P. tie (its root) to her hands, so that (her husband) does not see it, and should, when they have gone to bed, embrace her husband with her arms, while reciting the verse alluding to the word Upadhana. Thus he will be subject to her.<sup>2</sup> By this (rite) also (a wife) overcomes her co-wives.’<sup>3</sup>

Some of the oldest hymns of the Atharva-Veda describe a ceremony meant for the same purpose, and effected by means of a plant. The thirty-eighth hymn of the seventh book of the Atharva-Veda is meant for winning and retaining a man’s love by means of a plant. The Kashika Sutra<sup>4</sup> uses it in a rite for women, in which the plant is fastened to the head of the woman.<sup>5</sup> There are two other hymns which are directed against a rival wife and the charms effected through the medium of a plant. The 18th hymn of the third book of the Atharva-Veda records such a spell, and it is also used in the Kashika Sutra,<sup>6</sup> as a charm for superseding a rival. The hundred and thirteenth hymn of Book seven of the Atharva-Veda describes a ceremony ‘against a woman rival to be effected with a plant.’ This is also referred to in the Kashika Sutra in the rites of women.<sup>7</sup>

1. A.G.S. III, 9. 5.

2. Ibid III. 9-7.

3. Ibid III. 9-8.

4. Kashika Sutra 36. 12.

5. Whitney—A.V. P. 412.

6. Kashika Sutra 36, 19-21.

7. Ibid 36-38.

It is evident that these magical practices of the Atharva-Veda are found in the Grihya rituals of Apastamba in a more developed form.

Apastamba does not stipulate that a student should beg from a mother or a father immediately after initiation. The ceremonials meant for a boy or girl immediately after birth are the same; but Apastamba definitely institutes rites for giving preference to a boy, to be performed by the father. He thus prescribes a rite by which a father returning from a journey has to kiss the boy on his forehead, while uttering Mantras or sacred texts<sup>1</sup> but he has to greet his daughter only with a verse. No sign of endearment is allowed in her case. Still it is gratifying to note that Apastamba does not prohibit a woman from hearing the scriptures, as is done by later law-givers.

So from the above survey it is clear that the Grihya-Sutra of Apastamba is based on the text of Mantra-Patha and describes in detail the ceremonial to be performed at the recitation of each verse of the Mantra-Patha. The rituals of Apastamba are much more complicated than those of his predecessor Baudhayana. Among his contemporaries we find Vatsyayana enumerating in detail the kinds of girls to be avoided for marriage. His account agrees with that of Apastamba.

\* Among the followers of Apastamba, Hiranyakeshin is of considerable importance.

Unlike Apastamba, Hiranyakeshin adheres to the more common practice followed by the other law-givers: his descriptions of ceremonials are inter-woven with the texts to be used for the purpose. His Grihya Sutra begins with the Initiation ceremony, in the course of which the student has to step on a stone which has been used before for a

marriage. This indicates steadiness of character. He then recites the verses from the Mantra-Brahmana.<sup>1</sup>

‘Having placed a stone near the northerly junction of the pegs (I, 3, 14), (the teacher) makes the boy tread on (that stone) with his right foot, with (the verse) “Tread on this stone; like a stone be firm. Destroy those who seek to do thee harm; overcome thy enemies.”<sup>2</sup>

After the completion of his studies, a student is enjoined to take, with the permission of his parents, a wife, and ~~she~~ should be a ‘naked’ girl, i.e. a child who has not learned to wear clothes, belonging to the same country and caste, but to a different Gotra.<sup>3</sup> The choice here is limited.

Like Baudhayana, Hiranyakeshin begins his treatise with the marriage ceremonial. The sacrificial fire is lit, and the bridegroom, after performing the preparatory rites, looks at the bride, who is led to him with the recitation of the verse ‘auspicious ornaments wears this bride.’<sup>4</sup>

They then jointly offer oblations to the fire while chanting verses from the Mantra-Patha,<sup>5</sup> the verses occur too, in the Mantra-Brahmana, but there the order is different from M.P.; Hiranyakeshin follows the order of M.P. This is followed by Ashmarohana, in which the bride steps on the stone in the manner described before and recites a verse of the Mantra-Brahmana, which is omitted in the Mantra-Patha.<sup>6</sup>

This is followed by the main ceremonial<sup>7</sup> in which the bridegroom takes hold of the maiden’s hand in the manner described before, and says: ‘Sarasvati promote this, O gracious one, rich in studs, thou whom we sing first of all that is.’ This is followed by the usual verse of the Rig-Veda to

1. M.B. I. 4. 1.

2. H.G.S. I, 6, 19, 8.

3. Ibid I. 6, 19.

4. Ibid I, 6. 19. 4.

5. M.P. I. 4, 7-10.

6. M.B. I. 2. 1.

7. H.G.S. I, 6, 20, 1.

solemnise the rite; but the author adheres to the version of Baudhayana and says, "I seize thy hand that we may be blessed with offspring."<sup>1</sup>

Circumambulation follows this vow, during which usual verses from the Rig-Veda are chanted.<sup>2</sup>

The next ceremony is Lajahoma. Here the bridegroom pours the fried grain into her joined palms, saying: 'This grain I pour (into thy hands); may it bring prosperity to me and may it unite thee with me.'<sup>3</sup> He then offers it through her to the fire saying: "This woman, strewing grain into the fire, prays thus: 'May my husband live long; may my relations be prosperous'." This ritual differs from that of the other schools in two ways: (1) It is the bridegroom and not the father or brother of the girl that pours the fried grain; (2) The oblation is offered by the bridegroom instead of the bride. This is repeated thrice, as elsewhere, while different prayers are uttered<sup>4</sup> after which the ceremony of Saptapadi here called 'Vishnukrama' or 'steps of Vishnu' is performed.<sup>5</sup> The verses indicating the significance of the steps are recited by the bridegroom. The language is that of the Mantra-Patha; but the significance of the steps is according to Mantra-Brahmana for the sixth step is meant for wealth, it is the same as in Mantra-Brahmana, whereas in Mantra-Patha the sixth step is for the 'season'. He stops her at the seventh step and takes the vow of eternal friendship.<sup>6</sup> It is followed by some rituals that are omitted in the other schools. This is evidently a later development. He then seats her to the west of the fire and sprinkles water on her head, chanting verses from Taittiriya Samhita and Taittiriya Brahmana<sup>7</sup> indicative

1. Cf. Shank. I, 13, 2; Ashva. I, 7, 3; Paras. I, 7, 2.

2. R.V. X. 85. 44, 37, 40, 41, 45.

3. H.G.S. I. 6. 20. 3.

5. Ibid I. 20. 9.

4. Ibid I. 6. 20; 5, 6, 7.

6. Ibid I. 6, 21. 2.

7 Tait. Sam IV. 1. 5. 1. Tait Bra. I. 4. 8.

of the magnificence of water. The priests pour seeds (of rice etc.) on the head of the bridegroom and bride.<sup>1</sup>

Now commences the ceremonial for the departure to the new home, the nuptial fire has to be carried behind in a vessel<sup>2</sup> and it has to be kept constantly burning. If it goes out, all the rules given by Apastamba for rekindling have to be followed.<sup>3</sup> After entering the house in the manner prescribed in Apastamba they sit on a skin spread for the purpose; but here the wife has to sit behind her husband<sup>4</sup> and a verse from the Mantra-Brahmana<sup>5</sup> is recited. It occurs in the Mantra-Patha<sup>6</sup> as well, but the version of Hiranyakeshin is different.

'Here may cows sit down, here the horses, here the men. Here may also Pushan with a thousand (sacrificial) gifts sit down.'

Silence is observed until twilight, when they go out of the house and worship first the quarters of the horizon<sup>7</sup> chanting verses from Taittiriya Samhita<sup>8</sup> and then with appropriate verses, worship the stars, the moon, the seven Rishis<sup>9</sup> and lastly the pole star, which is worshipped as Brahman.<sup>10</sup> 'I know thee as firm as Brahman'. This is followed by the cooking of Sthalipaka and the offering of oblations with it and the observance of Brahmacharya for three nights. On the fourth night, oblations have to be offered to the fire reciting Riks<sup>11</sup> after which they are allowed to consummate the marriage, the ceremony being performed with appropriate verses.<sup>12</sup>

1. H.G.S. I, 6, 21, 6.

4. H.G.S. I, 22, 9.

2. Ibid. I, 7, 22, 2 and 3.

5. M.B. I, 3, 13.

3. Ibid I, 22, 6-9.

6. M.P. I, 9, 1. Hiranyakeshin uses निषीदन्तु for प्रजायद्भ्यम् of M.B. and the Mantra-Patha does not refer to 'Pushan' at all but has रायस्पोषो instead.

7. H.G.S. I, 22, 11.

10. H.G.S. I, 22, 14; 23, 1

8. Tait. Sam. IV, 7, 14, 2.

11. M.B. I, 4, 1-4.

9. H.G.S. I, 22, 12, 13.

12. H.G.S. I, 24, 3-6.

The ritual, as it has come down to us, is inconsistent: by enjoining a man to marry a naked girl or virgin, Hiranyakeshin seems to imply an institution of child-marriage, which is inconsistent with the purpose of the ceremonial. Hence it seems to be more likely that the injunction to marry a 'naked' girl or virgin is an interpolation by later authors.

The marriage ritual is followed by a sacrificial ceremonial in which verses from various sources presaging the birth of a healthy son are chanted. Some of these are from the Atharva-Veda.<sup>1</sup> In this connection the author refers to two other law-givers, probably his immediate predecessors or contemporaries—Atreya and Badarayana.

The next important book of this school is the Grihya Sutra of Bharadvaja, which has been considered by Dr. Winternitz to be prior to that of Hiranyakeshin. This Grihya Sutra is not widely known nor is it quoted in the *nibandhas*. It does not differ much in matter and treatment of subject from the other law-givers of this school, though Bharadvaja has added a number of new Mantras. He begins with Upanayana and enumerates seven Pakayajnas.

In marriage, one ought to seek the following: wealth, beauty, knowledge or intellect and relations. Bharadvaja lays stress on intellect, as he considers it impossible to live with a girl who is devoid of it.<sup>2</sup>

In the selection of the girl he follows more or less the method of Apastamba, though he does not enumerate the girls to be rejected as unsuitable. Four lumps of mud, each indicating a special quality have to be brought from different places. One lump must be from a Vedi or sacrificial ground; the second is of cow-dung, the third made of earth taken from a furrow, and a fourth from a cremation ground<sup>3</sup> and the bride is asked to touch one of them.

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1. A.V. III, 23, 5; 4; 1.

2. Bh. G. S. I. 11.

3. Bh. G.S. I. 11.

If she touches the one of Vedic earth, she is supposed to give birth to a son, a professor learned and capable of performing sacrifices; if she touches the one of cow-dung, she will be rich in cattle; if she touches the one from the furrow, she will be rich in fields, and, if she touches the one from the burial ground, she will be *Adahanashikshni*, and she should not be accepted as a bride. After enumerating these, the author says: "Truly there are many marks. But those who can judge of marks quote a verse: 'whomsoever his soul takes delight in and whomsoever his eye dwells on, her he will consider as being provided with good marks. What shall he do with knowledge (about marks) ?' "

By this remark he circumvents the task of enumerating the bad signs, which Apastamba has given in such detail. Probably Bharadvaja may be quoting the view expressed by Apastamba in his Grihya Sutra, when he says, 'A wife who is pleasing to his mind and his eyes will bring happiness to him; let him pay no attention to the other things; such is the opinion of some.'<sup>1</sup> It cannot be taken as an 'ironical passage,' as has been supposed by some.<sup>2</sup>

The girl has first to be bathed and dressed in a new cloth given to her, to the accompaniment of a verse from Mantra-Brahmana.<sup>3</sup> The author quotes the verse from memory, and hence it is slightly different from the original.<sup>4</sup> It is omitted in the Mantra-Patha. She is dressed while two verses from the Mantra-Patha are recited.<sup>5</sup> Oblations are offered to the fire with invocation to Agni and Soma, and with the three Mahavyahritis, Bhuh, Bhuvah and Suvaha. These are followed by another set of obla-

1. A.G.S. I. 3. 20.

2. Bh. G.S. by H.J.W. Solomons, Intro. P. 15.

3. MB. I. 1. 5.

4. Bh. G.S. I. 13.

5. M.P. II, 2, 6 and 7. Of these two lines are found in MB. (I, 1, 6).

tions<sup>1</sup> which are offered while verses from the Mantra-Patha are chanted.<sup>2</sup> The order of the verses followed here is exactly in accordance with that of the Mantra-Patha, but their form coincides with that of the Mantra-Brahmana<sup>3</sup> for all the verses end with 'Svaha,' which is the peculiar Vedic form of offering at Vedic rites and is retained in the Mantra-Brahmana, but has been discarded in the Mantra-Patha. This shows that the Mantra-Brahmana was the older form of ritual, which had its sway over all the Vedic schools, and, though the Mantra-Patha subsequently came into existence, and attained prominence, the influence of the Mantra-Brahmana was not altogether lost.

Sacred grass is now spread round the fire, and both the bride and bridegroom sit facing each other; her hands are filled with water and she offers it to the goddess to drink with the prayer that she may be pleased to fulfil their desires. Then, reciting a verse from the Mantra-Patha, the bridegroom takes her right hand with his right hand, either by her thumb or the whole hand according to the sex of the child he desires. While holding her hand, he recites the usual vow beginning with 'I seize thy hand'.<sup>4</sup> Here the author follows the version of the Mantra-Brahmana.

This is followed by verse from Mantra-Patha a Mantra-Brahmana<sup>5</sup> much altered in form. The author seems to have been quoting from memory and thus has mixed up the refrains of many verses. The next two verses are from the Rig-Veda and the Atharva-Veda.<sup>6</sup> It is followed by the verse 'O Sarasvati! promote this (our undertaking) O Gracious One, rich in studs; thou whom we sing first of all that is.'

1. Bh. G.S. I. 14.

2. MP. I. 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

3. M.B. I. 1, 7-13.

4. M.B. I. 1, 7-13.

5. M.B. I. 2, 10, M.P. I. 3, 3.

6. M.P. I. 1, 4; M.B. II. 2. 11.

7. R.V. X. 85. 40 and 41; cf. M.P. I. 3. 1 and 2; A.V. XIV., 2. 3 & 4. M.B. I. 1. 7.

This is followed by Lajahoma,<sup>1</sup> in which the brother of the bride fills her hands with fried grain. She offers oblations to the fire, after the circumambulation, chanting verses beginning with the one prescribed by the Mantra-Brahmana.<sup>2</sup>

After this the Saptapadi ceremonial takes place. The bride has to take the seven steps, each indicating a quality: the significance of the steps is in accordance with the Mantra-Brahmana for the Mantra-Patha assigns the sixth step to the seasons, and Bharadvaja assigns it to prosperity and wealth as in the Mantra-Brahmana.

As in Baudhayana, the bridegroom extends his right hand from over the bride's right shoulder and touching her heart with his hand says, 'May thy heart be mine, may thy thoughts be mine; may thou listen to me with one heart and follow me and be my friend.' This is in Baudhayana and is the verse of the Mantra-Brahmana.

The rest of the verses are also used by Hiranyakeshin, but in another context.

'Honey, this is honey, my tongue's speech is honey; in my mouth dwells the honey of the bee; on my teeth dwells concord.'

'The (magic charm of) concord that belongs to Chakravaka birds, that is brought out of the rivers, of which the divine Gandharva is possessed, thereby we are concordant.'

Water is then sprinkled on the bride's head while appropriate verses are chanted and she is led into the house and is seated on a red bull's hide and the following verse is recited:

'May the cows, the horses, and men prosper here; may riches dwell here, even though thousand-gifted.'<sup>3</sup>

1. Bh. G.S. I. 16

2. M.B. I. 2. 3; M.P. I. 5. 2.

3. This verse is found in the Mantra-Brahmana (I, 3, 13);

Sthalipaka is next prepared, and oblations are offered to the fire. This fire has to be kept glowing throughout their life by the couple, offering oblations to it in the morning and in the evening.

As elsewhere, they have to sit in silence until dusk, when the husband leads his wife from the room and, pointing out to her the pole star and Arundhati, offers prayers with the verses, 'I salute thee, O Brahman, thou the immovable and the firm one' etc.

As in other schools, Bharadvaja enjoins the observance of Brahmacharya for a period of three nights, i.e. the married couple have to abstain from taking salt, and to sleep on the ground, for three consecutive nights. On the fourth night a fire has to be lit in the inner apartment, and oblations offered to the fire, with the verses 'Agni! thou art expiation' etc. These are from Mantra-Patha.<sup>1</sup>

This is followed by the vow which is found in all the Grihya Sutras: 'He am I, she thou; the heavens I, the earth thou; the Saman I, the Rik thou'.

Thus ends the marriage ceremonial of Bharadvaja. The ritual is evidently earlier than that of Hiranyakeshin and even of Apastamba, but is later than that of Baudhayana. Bharadvaja's rituals are less complicated, and he follows Baudhayana more than anybody else, and quotes in full the verses to be recited at each ritual. These verses are more in accordance with the Mantra-Brahmana than with the Mantra-Patha.

Like other law-givers, Bharadvaja prescribes on the 4th month of pregnancy the Simantonnayana and Pumsavana on the third month as usual.

We next come to the White Yajur-Vedic school, as

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it is also to be found in Mantra-Patha, but the version here is slightly different, *rayasposha* being substituted for *Pusha*.

1. M.P. I. 10.

represented by Paraskara whose Grihya Sutra forms an appendix to the Shrouta-Sutra of Katyayana. The account of Maharnava also throws some light on the question as to where it was prevalent. The domestic or sacred fire is called 'Avasathya' by the author who lays down that it must be lit at the time of marriage, though according to some others in his time, it has to be done at the time of the division of inheritance.<sup>1</sup> It is mentioned by Shankhayana<sup>2</sup> and it may be that the author is referring to him and his school.

The Pakayajnas are four, according to Paraskara and his followers: the *Huta* and *Ahuta*, the *Prahuta* and *Prashita* and these have to be instituted in 'the outer hall,' on five occasions, of which one is the wedding and another is the Simantonnayana, the two chief rituals for women.<sup>3</sup>

Of all the law-givers, it is Paraskara who first gives a clear injunction allowing polygamy as legal. Though the Dharma-Sutras, i.e. the earliest ones, have not prohibited it, the Grihya-Sutras, which are in all probability the older rituals, are silent about it; Shankhayana and Ashvalayana do not even mention the discrimination of caste or country. Baudhayana mentions only the distinctions to be made between people of the north and south. For example, when seeking the hand of a girl of the north, a wooer has to be sent, but not if the girl belongs to the south. Apastamba limits it to a country and 'Gotra', but Paraskara, allows 'three wives to a Brahmana, two to a Rajanya, one to a Vaishya, in accordance with the order of castes, and a Shudra wife can be wedded by all castes without the performance of sacred rites.'<sup>4</sup>

At the outset two new garments are given to the bride, and she wears both of them chanting different verses.

1. Paraskara G.S. I. 2. 1; I. 2.

2. Shank. G.S. I. 1. 4.

3. Paraskara G.S. I. 4. 2.

4. Paraskara G.S. I. 4, 7-11.

The couple are then anointed, with the verse 'May the Vishvedevas, may the waters unite our hearts.'<sup>1</sup> The bridegroom, after accepting the bride from her father,<sup>2</sup> takes her with him from the place. This verse conveys the idea that the bridegroom takes her to his house, where the rest of the marriage ceremonials take place; for Paraskara does not detail or mention again any ceremonial of departure as the other law-givers do. They are made to face each other, while the verse beginning with 'With no evil eye' is recited. This version agrees with the Mantra-Patha.<sup>3</sup>

They then go near the fire and sit down on a mat or on grass spread for the purpose.<sup>4</sup> At this point the author relates the various kinds of oblations to be offered, and describes and defines some of them. The manner in which these verses are introduced into the text and their inconsistency with the rest of the matter seems to point to their being, in all probability, later interpolations.<sup>5</sup>

Oblations are offered to the fire with the usual verses of the marriage ritual, citing verses of the Mantra-Brahmana.<sup>6</sup>

This is followed by the Lajahoma ceremony.<sup>7</sup> This ritual differs from that of the other schools. We have seen elsewhere that the oblations of fried grain are offered to the fire by the bride, as she stands on a stone, and in some places after circumambulation. Here she does it only while standing by the fire. The brother of the maiden pours the fried grain mixed with Sami leaves into her joined palms, and she offers this to Agni with the usual verses. Two of these verses<sup>8</sup> are from the Mantra-Brahmana and the Mantra-Patha; but both versions differ from that of Paraskara.

1. M.P. I 11-3 and M.B. I. 2. 9.

2. Paraskara G. S. I. 4. 15.

3. M.B. I. 2. 11; M.P. 1.4.

4. Paraskara G.S. I. 5, 1, 2.

5. Ibid. I. 5. 4-10.

6. M.B. I. 1. 9, 10 and 14.

7. Paraskara G.S. I. 6.

8. H.B. I. 2. 2; H.P. I. 5. 2.

The Lajahoma is followed by the Panigrahana, in which the usual vow of marriage is taken before the fire. The verse recited here is the usual one beginning with 'I take thy hand'. It has to be noted here that with the exception of the above verse different schools have adopted different verses in different contexts. The verse that follows the above ritual is:

'He am I, she art thou; she art thou, he am I; the Saman I, the Rik thou; the heavens I, the earth thou, etc.', and we know that this verse is also used elsewhere in the ceremonial. The latter part of the verse is different from that of the Atharva-Vedic version, and hence we can presume it to be a later development. It is omitted in the Mantra-Patha as well as the Mantra-Brahmana.

Next is the Ashmarohana ceremony, where the maiden treads upon a stone while the bridegroom utters the following:

'Tread on this stone, like a stone be firm' etc. He then sings a song in adoration of Sarasvati, and fried grain is poured into the fire thrice, accompanied by circumambulation. The rest of the grain is poured by the neb of a basket at the fourth time. Then comes the Saptapadi ceremony<sup>1</sup> in which the bridegroom leads the bride through seven steps. The verse indicating the significance of the steps agrees with Ashvalayana. Though it agrees in essence with the Mantra-Patha, this verse does not follow the order of the words. Here it runs:—

'One for sap, two for juice, three for the prospering of wealth, four for comfort, five for cattle, six for the seasons. Friend be with seven steps. So be thou devoted to me.'

“(The words) ‘May Vishnu lead thee’ are added to every part (of the formula).” Here the prayer of the Saptapadi is divided into two parts.

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1. Paraskara G.S. I. 8. 1.

Paraskara, however, adopts the vow of oneness uttered at the time of marriage as instituted by the Mantra Brahmana. The bridegroom touches the bride's heart with his hand and chants it.

This is followed by a request to the audience to shower blessings before they take their leave.

At this point a strong man snatches the bride from the ground and carries her to an out-of-the-way house and places her on a red bull's hide.<sup>1</sup> We know that this manner of carrying the bride is omitted in the rituals of the other law-givers. Then the verse 'Here be prolific, O Cow,' is recited.

Gifts according to the caste of the bridegroom are given to the priest who conducts the ceremony.<sup>2</sup> As elsewhere, the pole star has to be shown, with the words, 'Firm art thou; I see thee, the firm one. Firm be thou with me, O thriving one.' Even if the bride does not see the pole star, she has to say, 'I see.'

As in the other schools, the couple have to observe Brahmacharya for at least three nights, or six or twelve nights. Hence the rituals of Paraskara do not postulate child-marriage.

It is evident from the above that Paraskara differed from his predecessors in some respects, and some of his new additions to the marriage ritual have come down to posterity. The singing of a song by the bridegroom, the lifting up of the maiden by a strong man as a part of the marriage ritual are still to be found even today in the marriage ceremonials in some parts of India.

The next two Khandikas deal with matters not germane to the marriage ceremonial. Thus Khandika nine deals with the injunctions for maintaining the domestic sacred fire and of offering oblations to it in the morning and

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1. Par G.S. 1. 8. 9.

2. Par G.S. I. 8, 14-18.

in the evening and the verses to be used for the purpose. Khandika ten deals with what should be done when the axle of the chariot of a king breaks down and how the fault should be expiated.

On the fourth night, oblations are offered to the fire with the expiation formulae addressed to Agni, Vayu, Surya, Chandra and Gandharvas. These verses are from the Mantra-Brahmana slightly altered.<sup>1</sup>

The bridegroom then makes the bride eat cooked food with the words 'I add breath to thy breath, bone to thy bone, flesh to thy flesh, skin to thy skin, and 'therefore,' says the author, 'one should not wish to sport with the wife of a Shrotriya who knows this,' and thereby gives a reasonable ground for the justification of the power of a Shrotriya to destroy a lover of his wife, for which, as we have already seen, the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad institutes a ritual in the form of an incantation.<sup>2</sup>

At the end of the ceremonial of the fourth day, they could live together. Hence the rituals of Paraskara too do not postulate child-marriage. Paraskara departs from the tradition of the other schools in his injunctions for the Pumsavana and the Simantonnayana ceremony; the other schools have prescribed the former to be performed on the 3rd month and the latter in the 4th month of pregnancy; but Paraskara prescribes the former in the second or third month<sup>3</sup> and the latter on the sixth or eighth month. The rituals too differ from those of the other schools. It has to be noted how the later law-givers gradually diverged from their predecessors and made the ritual more and more complex. Another important point is the difference in the rituals prescribed by Paraskara, when a father returns home, from that of the earlier law-givers. Here, a father,

1. Paraskara G.S. I, 11, 1-4. M.B. I. 4, 1, 2, 3, 4.

2. Ibid I. 11. 5.

3. Ibid I. 14. 2.

on his return from a journey, should kiss the forehead of his son, uttering verses from the sacred books, whereas he should only kiss the daughter silently on her forehead. The sacred invocations are denied to her. Elsewhere, in Apastamba, we have seen that a girl has to be greeted with sacred verses only and not with a kiss as in the case of the son. This reflects an important change in the outlook of life. Even in the time of Apastamba a daughter was not considered to be so impure as to be denied the sacred prayers; but in Paraskara's time the evolution was complete, and woman had lost her position in the religious sphere.

In the Initiation Ceremony<sup>1</sup> Paraskara does not prescribe that a student should beg first from his mother, but inserts it and ascribes it to another author.<sup>2</sup>

'From his own mother, first, according to some (teachers).'

But it is not clear to whom he is referring; it might be to his predecessors or to his contemporaries.

We next come to the Grihya-Sutra of Gobhila, which belongs to the Sama-Vedic school. Though it has traditionally been ascribed to the school of the Sama-Veda, it has really very little connection with it. It is directly connected with the Mantra-Brahmana and is based on it. The Mantra-Brahmana, according to tradition, originally formed part of the Chhandogyopanishad, and sets forth in a nutshell the Grihya rituals. The verses of the marriage rituals of the Mantra-Brahmana, as has been shown before, are taken mostly from the Rig-Veda<sup>3</sup> and the Atharva-Veda. The Grihya-Sutra of Gobhila not only presupposes the Mantra-Brahmana, but forms a supplement to it, as it describes only the details of the ceremonials that have to follow the utterance of each verse of the Mantra-Brah-

1. Paraskara G.S. II. 5. 1.

2. Ibid II. 5. 7.

3. R.V. X. 85; A.V. XIV. 1 and 2.

mana. When these rituals came into existence, it is difficult to determine. Many years must have elapsed after the composition of the Mantra-Brahmana for the growth and development of the ceremonials. The Chhandogyopanishad, while giving details of certain rites in connection with marriage ignores the particular ceremonials described in the Grihya-Sutra, a fact which shows that these rituals were not developed in those times. The detailed ceremonies of marriage, Upanayana etc., are centred round the verses of the Mantra-Brahmana. Gobhila wrote his book only for students who knew the Mantra-Brahmana by memory as Apastamba did for those who knew the Mantra-Patha for he quotes only the first words of the verses of the Mantra-Brahmana, and it would be a hard task for anybody, who did not know the Mantra-Brahmana, to find out the references; for the verses are not to be found in the Sama-Veda or in any other Vedic Samhitas belonging to the school of the Sama-Veda. So the Mantra-Brahmana was recognised as a text book for the Grihya rituals, based on which the later law-givers developed their ceremonials. The fact that Baudhayana refers to it and makes it binding on every student to read it shows the importance it had gained in the field of rituals. Gobhila, while referring to the verses of the Mantra-Brahmana, follows the exact order of the Mantra-Brahmana. But, as the Grihya-Sutra of Gobhila was a later work, and had a much wider scope than the Mantra-Brahmana, we find him supplementing the text of the Mantra-Brahmana from other sources; thus, in the marriage ritual, when the bride has been shown the Pole Star, she addresses the star thus:—

“Firm art thou, May I become firm in the house of my husband” and on seeing the star the bride says, “I am held fast here.”<sup>1</sup>

1. Gobhila G.S. II, 3. 9.; II. 3. 11.

These verses are not in the Mantra-Brahmana, and, as they are evidently later developments, and were so essential that without them the marriage ritual could not be described completely, Gobhila gives the full text of the verses, which are either his compositions or are copied from other schools.

Gobhila proceeds to the description of the domestic sacrifices<sup>1</sup> after describing the Shrouta ceremonies, and enjoins that all these ceremonials should begin with Anvaharya or Shraddha<sup>2</sup> and the commentator, Pandit Chandra-Kanta Tarakalankara (p. 22) explains them as 'Those, after which the real ceremony is accomplished'; hence they are the oblations to be offered to the gods at the beginning of the ceremony.

A student, according to Gobhila, is allowed to marry after the completion of his studies,<sup>3</sup> and before doing so he should make the place ready for the sacrifice, and for that he has to select a level place or one that is inclined towards north-east, and should besmear it with water brought from a hidden place. Lines have then to be drawn over it crosswise and at right-angles to each other, and four more between these right-angles. On this place sacred fire has to be lit.<sup>4</sup> The fire lit at the time of the marriage ceremony is regarded as the sacred domestic fire<sup>5</sup> and it should be kept up as long as the man lives.

Gobhila, like the later law-givers, refers to the auspicious characteristics of a girl but does not enumerate them.

A man should woo a girl, who is endowed with auspicious characteristics, and who is under the influence of a propitious star. If the qualities of the girl are not evident, choice should be made in the following manner: clods of

1. Gobhila G.S. I. 1. 1.

2. Ibid I. I. 5.

3. Ibid I. 1, 7 and 8.

4. Ibid I. 1. 9-10.

5. Ibid I. 1. 20 and 21.

earth, formed of clay from different places, one from an altar, one from a furrow, one from a pool, one from a cowshed, one from the junction of four roads, from a gambling place, a cremation ground, from sterile soil, and an additional ninth one a mixture of all kinds of earth.<sup>1</sup>

Gobhila thus goes a step further than his predecessors, and makes the number of clods nine. Marks are now put on them, and chanting verses from the sacred book the clods are placed before the girl, who is asked to touch one of them. If she touches one of the first four clods, she is eligible for marriage, and if not, she is rejected.

Different, however, was the opinion of some, and Gobhila refers to it.

‘According to some (teachers) also, if (she takes) the mixed one,<sup>2</sup> she is eligible for marriage.’ But it is not known to whom he is referring. It may, probably, be the view of some law-giver who flourished before Gobhila, and whose treatise is lost to us.

The bride has then to be bathed with several ingredients, after which Sura of the first quality is sprinkled on her head three times, so that she might imbibe the spirit of intoxication, as is implied by wine. A verse from the Mantra-Brahmana, which agrees with the sense of the ceremony, is uttered—“O Kama! Thy name is known to (the world); thou art known as intoxication; for thee (is this maiden) made as wine; resort to her; O Agni! here is thy best birth; thou art created for Tapasya—Svaha.”<sup>3</sup>

Preparations for the main ceremonial are then made: two priests, one with a jar of water, and the other with a goad, go round the fire and stand to the south of it; fried corn and a mill-stone, too, are brought, the former for the Lajahoma ceremony and the latter for the Ashmarohana

1. Gobhila G.S. II. 1. 1-5.

2. Ibid II. 1. 9.

3. M.B. I, 1, 2.

ceremony.<sup>1</sup> The husband has to dress the bride with the new garment, uttering an appropriate verse from the Mantra-Brahmana.<sup>2</sup> A sacrificial cord is then put on her left shoulder, which is significant of her initiation.<sup>3</sup> She is then taken to the place of the ceremony and the verse 'Soma gave to Gandharva, Gandharva gave to Agni, so now Agni has given to me this maiden and sons and riches' is then recited. She is brought there veiled, and in that condition she pushes forward to the west of the fire a rush mat with her foot, and she utters, 'May my master create for me auspicious, thornless paths, by which I can enter the world of my lord' and, if the bride, owing either to her bashfulness or to her illiteracy, is unable to utter the Mantras, the bridegroom has to do it on her behalf.

Six oblations are offered to the fire by the bride and bridegroom, after taking their seats on the rush mat. Verses from the Mantra-Brahmana, praying for the protection of the couple are recited.

'May Agni come hither, the first of the gods. May he release the children of this wife from the fetters of death. May (this) King Varuna grant, that this wife may not weep over distress (falling to her lot) through her sons.'<sup>4</sup> Other verses significant of averting all evils from the bride are chanted.<sup>5</sup>

The preliminary part of the marriage ritual concludes with them. It is followed by Lajahoma. The couple, rising up from their seats after the sacrifice, stand side by side, and while the bridegroom holds the joined palms of the bride, her mother or brother approaches her with roasted grain,<sup>6</sup> and makes her ascend the stone with the tip of her right foot, as the verse from the Mantra-Brahmana,

1. G.G.S. II. 2. 14-17.

3. G.G.S. II. 1. 19.

2. M.B. I. 1. 5 & 6.

4. M.B. I. 1. 9.

5. Ibid I. 1. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14; II. 2. 26.

6. G.G.S. II. 2. 3.

significant of the Lajahoma ceremony, is recited by the bridegroom: 'Tread on this stone; be firm like a stone; destroy thy enemies and be not degraded before them.' The fried grain is next poured into her joined palms by her brother, and she makes an offering of it to the fire, while the bridegroom utters a verse from the Mantra-Brahmana:

Circumambulation now follows, in which the following is recited:

'The maid parting from the fathers, goes to the world of her husband, and has performed the preliminary rite; besides as the girl, united with thee, has plunged through the streams of water, so may we plunge through our enemies.'<sup>1</sup>

Again she treads on the stone, when her brother pours the fried grain into her hands and she sacrifices in the manner described above, three times.<sup>2</sup>

Thus ends the Lajahoma Ceremony, and it is followed by the Saptapadi, in which she has to take seven steps in a north-eastern direction, each significant of a quality, and a verse from the Mantra-Brahmana is recited.

The Saptapadi ends with the following:

'With seven steps, we have become friends; may I attain to friendship with thee; may I not be separated from thy friendship. Mayst thou not be separated from my friendship.'

This ritual signifies that the bride has attained all the qualities imperative for the prosperity and happiness of a home life by traversing the seven steps.

The assembled people are requested to shower their greetings on them: 'Auspicious is this bride. Approach, behold her; having given her your congratulations, depart to your several homes.'

The priest, who has in his hands a vessel full of sancti-

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1. MB. I. 2. 5.

2. G.G.S. II. 2, 9-10.

fyng water, sprinkles it on the heads of the couple with an appropriate verse:

'May the Vishvedevas unite our hearts. May the waters cleanse us. May Matarishvan, may Dhatar purify us! May the goddess Udeshtri unite us!'<sup>1</sup>

The verse, as it stands, was originally meant to be uttered by the couple in the form of a prayer to the gods for attaining purity of heart and for protection from any obstacle that may bar their union of hearts. But here the original significance was evidently forgotten, and the priest recites it instead of the couple. It indicates the long lapse of time that has intervened between the composition of the Mantra-Brahmana and the Gobhila Grihya-Sutra.

This is followed by the Ceremony of Panigrahana, in which the joined hands of the bride are lifted up with the left hand of the bridegroom, and her right hand together with the thumb is grasped by him, while he recites the following verses: 'I grasp thy hand for good fortune, that with me, as husband, thou mayst be long-lived. Bhaga, Aryaman, Savitar, Purandhri, the gods have given thee to me for housewifeship.'

At the end of the Ceremony the bride is carried away to the house of a Brahmana, where the nuptial fire is never extinguished; a bull's hide is spread for her, on which she has to sit silently until dusk. As the stars appear on the horizon, they go out of the house, and the silence is broken by the husband, pointing out to her the Pole Star and Arundhati, which are considered as emblems of steadiness. A verse is repeated from the Mantra-Brahmana:--

'Steady is the sky, steady is the earth, steady is this entire Universe; steady are these mountains, steady is this bride in her husband's family.'<sup>2</sup> For a period of three

nights they should both avoid eating saline and pungent food, and should sleep on the ground.

The Arghya reception to the bridegroom is to be given at the end of this ceremony, as an indication that he is accepted as the son-in-law. According to the opinion of other law-givers, to which Gobhila refers in this connection, it is given at the beginning of the ceremony.

Now the parting ceremony is described. A verse from the Mantra-Brahmana appropriate to the occasion is recited :

‘O Surya, step into this well-made, golden-coloured and good-wheeled chariot ; may it lead you to the world of immortality ; mayst thou make thy husband comfortable)’.<sup>1</sup>

To secure safety on the road, the crossways, rivers, and undulations (of the soil), big trees and burial grounds prayers are addressed to the gods.

On arrival at the new home the bride is welcomed by Brahmin women of good character, and she is made to sit down on a bull’s hide with the verse :

‘Here be prolific, O cows, here O horses, and O men. May Pusha, the thousand-gifted, also make his dwelling here.’

A boy is then placed on her lap ; and into his hands lotus roots or fruits are given. The placing of the boy is, probably, in anticipation of her giving birth to a son.

On the fourth day expiatory *ajya* oblations to the fire are given addressing Agni, Vayu and Surya.

‘Agni ! thou art expiation ; thou art the expiation of the gods. I, the Brahmana, approach thee, desirous of protection. What substance dwells in her, that brings death to her husband, drive that away from her.’

Thus ends the sacrifice, at the close of which the couple are allowed to consummate the marriage.

The Pumsavana ceremony takes place on the third month of conception as usual, but here Gobhila introduces many mantras that are omitted in the Mantra-Brahmana and hence quotes their full texts in the Sutas.<sup>1</sup>

The Simantakarana ceremony, elsewhere, in other schools known as Simantonnayana Ceremony, is prescribed in either the fourth, sixth or eighth month.

As has been observed before, some of the *Smritikaras* like Yama and Harita have clearly stated that women were initiated to vedic studies in the days of yore. In the face of these remarks it is incongruous to see that none of the ceremonies or initiation mentioned in the Grihya Sutas give scope to a woman. But according to the statements of the above law-givers, it must have existed at a certain stage of Hindu life. This is further corroborated by the ceremony prescribed by Ashvalayana for a student on completing his studies. In this ceremony the priest is required to tie on the two ear-rings with the words: "The sharpness of the stone art thou! protect my ear".<sup>2</sup> Then he, after besmearing his two hands with *ajya* has to salve a Brahmana his face, a Kshatriya, his shoulders, a Vaisya, his stomach, and a woman, the *upastha*."

The Khadira Grihya-Sutra represents the schools that gained influence in the extreme south of the peninsula, and it belongs to the Sama-Veda. The author of this Grihya-Sutra bases his rituals on Gobhila and his treatise is concise. We do not find here anything supplementary to the rituals of Gobhila.

It might be added in conclusion, that the Grihya-rituals differed at different places and periods. In spite

1. G.G.S. II. 6, 7, 8.

2. S.B.E. Vol. XXIX, P. 227, A.G.S. Ch. III, Kh. 8, 10 and 11.

of the superficial differences the kernel of the ceremonials is the same in all. The ceremonials mentioned in the Mantra-Brahmana were developed elaborately, and by the symbolical representation of many ideas, the simple rituals of the Mantra-Brahmana are made complex by the addition of various ingredients. The influence of the Atharva-Veda is obvious. The bathing of the bride with Sura, the choice of the maiden by an earth-clod proof, the holding of the hand of the maiden either by her thumb or otherwise each symbolically representing the nature of the child desired, the mounting of the stone as a sign of her firm establishment in the family, the traversing of the seven steps, each representing a special quality, the pointing of the pole-star and Arundhati, so that she may acquire a steady character, and all such details represent a mixture of the supernatural with the actual, the magical with the symbolical.

But in spite of these, the marriage rituals were all instituted for mature persons. There is no room for child-marriage in any of these, as the bride goes to live with her husband immediately after the marriage. The ceremony, in almost all cases, extended over four days, after which the married couple departed to their new home.

It has to be noted in this connection, that the rituals of the north differed from those of the south: Shankhaya-na's system differed from that of Ashvalayana. It is obvious that the later schools differed from the former by striking a note of rigidity. Thus Apastamba and Ashvalayana instituted the selection of the maiden through an ordeal, and according to some auspicious marks, which the earlier law-givers had discarded. The transitional stage is reflected in Bharadvaja, who, after describing the different kinds of earth-clods to be set up for the clod-proof, and after referring to the auspicious characteristics of the girl, concludes by saying that it is best to marry one who can win

one's heart or affection. Apastamba definitely thinks that the old laws were not applicable to the new order and he institutes more rigorous laws. Hence we find that, the later the time of the law-giver, the more rigid is he in not allowing freedom to women. To sum up, the Grihya rituals were all centred on the production of a son for performing funeral obsequies for a man after his death. It was an investment of the man for his life after death; hence the *summum bonum* of a woman's existence came to be for this one purpose only.

Agni represented the Supreme Reality. Marriage was solemnised before Agni; woman's existence merged with that of a man through the ceremony, and hence it was imperative for the couple to carry this Supreme Witness along with them and cherish it in their home with devotion all their lives; and at death the body was to be consumed by this sacred fire.

What is the philosophical justification of these rites?

As Agni signified the Supreme Reality, so also each and every ceremony had some spiritual aim, which is not clear in some places. As the bride is to be primarily responsible for the welfare, peace and prosperity of the family without which life will not be full and as she is to perpetuate the family by giving birth to healthy children who will be capable of protecting the country and safeguarding its interest, proper precautions are taken so that the aim may not be frustrated.

The selection of the bride through clods of earth showed the innate nature of the girl. Beauty and charm is given the first place. Solemn oath is taken before the Supreme God Agni and the ceremonies that follow, are to make her loyal and faithful.

The Ashmarohana and the showing of the Pole Star point to the steady character of a woman. Stone is the

emblem of steadiness and the bride by mounting it is supposed to imbibe that quality.

As the bride has to bring health, wealth and happiness for the prosperity of the house, by traversing the Seven Steps of Saptapadi each indicative of a certain aspect, the bride is supposed to have imbibed all these qualities, at the end of which the husband sought the fellowship of his wife by saying: "May thy heart be mine, May thy thoughts be mine, Mayst thou listen to me with one heart and follow me and be my friend."

Thus man and woman became spiritually one each supplementing the other; as Heaven is to Earth, as Saman is to Rik, so is man to his wife. The Paraskara Grihya Sutra states in clear terms this spiritual unity: "With thy breath I join my breath, with your bones, my bones, with thy flesh my flesh, with thy skin my skin."

Thus the aim of life is to have a harmonious and prosperous life and to live true and loyal to God.



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