

Hindu Marriage: An Aspect of the Atharva Veda

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ABSTRACT

Marriage is very important among all the saṃskāras in Ārya life. Among the various reforms in the Ṛ̥ghya Sūtras, Dharma Sūtras, Smiri Śāstra, the marriage reform was prepared in the desire to preserve the socialism of Ārya life. Sṃskāra in the hindu community is sometimes 10, sometimes 12, sometimes 18, sometimes more. But marriage is the most important in all Ṛ̥ghya Śūtras. It is no exaggeration to call it a major reform of domestic life. In the 10.85 sūkta of *Rgveda* popularly known as Sūryā sūkta deals with marriage. There are 47 mantras. Mantras are chanted differently in various marriage rituals. Marriage rituals are discussed in the five sections of the first chapter of Āśvalāyaṇa Ṛ̥ghyasūtra (5,6,7,8, 9). In the fifth chapter, Āśvalāyaṇa will says that, first of all we have to look about the bride's *kula* that is about her family, her pedigree. "*kulamagre parikṣeta ye matṛtaḥ pitṛtaśceti*" (AŚ. 1/5/1). Atharvaveda saṃhitā has many more mantras besides the two marriage sūktas and the *Rgveda* mantras in the 14th stanza. The first sūkta has 64 mantras, the second sūkta has 75 mantras. total 139 mantras. Their use in various rituals according to Kausika Sūtra. From pedigree test to marriage finally *caturthīmaṅgal* and to see Dhruvatārā, keeping the family together, the importance of daughters to keep the joint family together – all are discussed. And as usual sayan's commentary is missing. After checking the sings of prospective bride and groom, the marriage is arranged. Śāstrācāra, lokācāra, Grāmadharma, Janapadadharmā are to be observed simultaneously. On this occasion lighting a fire, placing a pitcher full of water in the north-east, circumambulating (saptapadī) him. Bride can touch the rock (silā) by foot. Circumambulation of the fire. *Lājkhai homa*, throwing *ājya* into the fire, *saptapadīgamana*, arriving at the wedding hall, showing Druva nakṣarta, Arundhati nakṣarta and saptarṣimandal in the sky, sitting on cowhide, then homa, eating card, applying *ājya* on the body. After three days of Brhmacarya and lying on the ground, then on the fourth day donating weeding clothes to Brāhmins. Most of have to be organized. In the Atharvaveda the mantras are much more consistent and also much more numerous. Although its significance has less important today, this institution (marriage) is ideologically important enough to reflect the ideals of Ārya caste togetherness in domestic life.

Key Words: Hindu Marriage, Atharva Veda

I. Introduction

Meaning of the Veda is "to know" or "knowledge". In the world literature 'Veda' is the oldest book, now the question is what is the meaning of the Veda? The Veda means to know or knowledge. Out of Vid+ghṃ is Veda that means knowledge,

and in other side Vid+ac is also Veda and that means to know. Now the point is this if the meaning of the Veda is knowledge then it is not at all a 'book' or if it is the meaning of 'know' then so many questions are arise, for example what is the media or what is the source of that very much knowledge? Because knowledge is always abstract. Any way the meaning of the Veda is to know. Sāyanācārya says in his Ṛgvedabhāṣyopakramaṇikā about the meaning of the Veda. Yajñvalka give us a very nice definition- Pratyakṣkhenānumityā vā yastupāyo na vuddhyate/Etad vidanti vedena tasmāt vedasya vedatā//This definition is very well known. Meaning of this Pratyakṣkhenānumityā which not can be reached by perception or supposition, that can be known only by the Veda, and that is why Vedas Vedism. This all are the word by word meaning of the Vedas. But without this meaning Vedas have also another definition. Jaimini said that mantra-brāhmanayorvedanāmadheyam that means Mantra and Brāmhana together are Veda. But yāñikas says that mantra and brāmhana are not similar. They also said that those mantras are accepted in yañnas, that very much mantras are mantra, other is brāmhana.

Veda has also one spiritual definition-Vetti rūpaṃ vid gayane, vinte vid vicārane/Vidyate vid sattayāṃ lābhe vindati vindate// Simple meanings of this definition in my point of view is at first to the knowledge of the general object/thing, and then justify, after that the knowing of the knowledge of the existence. Vedaḥ akhiladharmamūlam this definition is given by Manu. (manusaṃhitā 2/6)? Śaṃkarācārya says that Veda is a śruti.

II. Discussion About Atharvaveda

Once upon a time *Atharvaveda* existed in nine schools, but now a days only two schools are available of this Veda. The schools are *Śaunka* and *Paippalāda*. *Śaunaka Saṃhitā* is preserved by tradition. *Paippalāda Saṃhitā* is also available. We found more or less nine names of this Veda, they are *Atharvaveda*, *Āngirasa Veda*, *Atharāngirasa Veda*, *Brahma Veda*, *Bṛgvaṅgiro Veda*, *Chando Veda*, *Mahī Veda*, *Kaṭa Veda*, and *Bhaiṣajya Veda* etc. I will discuss in brief history of this Veda.

About the importance of the *Atharvaveda* sāyaṇa says that the other three Vedas express only the spiritual things, but the *Atharvaveda* expresses both

spiritual and earthly prosperity. Other than this, no other Veda presents detailed discussion of culture and civilization as the *Atharvaveda*. The *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* says that there are four performers of *Yajña* who are *Hotā*, *Adhvaryu*, *Udgātā* and *Brahmā*. Among them the *Brahmā* is to be well versed in the *Atharvaveda*. According to the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* we know *yajña* has two aspects, physical and mental and this mental aspect of the *Yajña* is established by the *Brahmā* only.

Atharvaveda contains 20 *kāṇḍas*, 730 *Sūktas*, and more or less 6000 *mantras* (5988?). We take a short sketch of the subject matter of the each *kāṇḍas* of this Veda. From *Kāṇḍa* 1-7 discussed with the normal world, *śānti* and *pauṣṭikarma* etc. from *Kāṇḍa* 8-12 discuss with religious and philosophical thought. 13th *kāṇḍa* called *rohitāsūkta*, 14th *kāṇḍa* called *vivāhakāṇḍa* (about marriage), 15th *kāṇḍa* is called *vrātyakāṇḍa*, 16th *kāṇḍa* is called *śānti svastyayana* 17th *kāṇḍa* is called *ādityastuti*, 18th *kāṇḍa* called *pitṛ karma* i.e. funeral rites. 19th *kāṇḍa* famous for *kālasūkta* and other so many topics. And 20th *kāṇḍa* comprises the prayer of various gods Agni, Indra etc. It has taken almost all hymns from the RV.

Kāṇḍa-1: There are 35 hymns and 153 *mantras*. The *mantras* deal with some medical therapeutics, liberty from captivity etc.

Kāṇḍa-2: This *kāṇḍa* contains 36 hymns and 207 *mantras*. The *mantras* deal with some remedies, eliminations of enemies, killing of disease etc.

Kāṇḍa-3: This *kāṇḍa* contains 31 hymns and 230 *mantras*. Election of the king, construction of building, agriculture and treatment of the diseases etc.

Kāṇḍa-4: 40 hymns and 324 *mantras* are there in this *kāṇḍa*. *Brahma-vidyā*, coronation of the king, rains, getting freedom from sins is the main subject of this *kāṇḍa*.

Kāṇḍa-5: This *kāṇḍa* contains 31 hymns and 376 *mantras*. This *kāṇḍa* deals with some spiritual knowledge, treatment of diseases etc. (Missing Sāyaṇa commentary)

Kāṇḍa-6: There are 142 hymns and 454 *mantras*. Treatment of the diseases, freedom from evil dreams agriculture is the matter of this *kāṇḍa*.

Kāṇḍa-7: This *kāṇḍa* comprises of 118 hymns and 286 *mantras*. Subject matter of this *kāṇḍa* is soul, *pūrṇimā*, *amāvasyā*, destruction of enemies etc.

Kāṇḍa-8: This *kāṇḍa* contains 10 hymns and 293 *mantras*. It deals with, how to attain longevity of life and destroy enemies etc. (Sāyaṇa commentary is missing)

Kāṇḍa-9: This *kāṇḍa* contains 10 hymns and 313 *mantras*. Subject matter is interesting. This *kāṇḍa* deals with *Madhu-Vidyā*, *Kāma*, house- building, hospitality cows etc. (Missing *Sāyaṇa* commentary) spiritual. A number of hymns on guest (*atithi*) of appears first time in this *Kāṇḍa*.

Kāṇḍa-10: This *kāṇḍa* contains 10 hymns and 350 *mantras* and the matter of discussion is spiritual knowledge, treatment of snake poison, cows etc. (*Sāyaṇa* commentary is missing)

Kāṇḍa-11: Comprises with 10 hymns and 313 *mantras*. It deals with *Rudra*, *Prāṇa*, *Brahman* and freedom from sins etc.

Kāṇḍa-12: This chapter has 5 hymns and 304 *mantras*. The most popular is *Bhūmi-sūkta*. (*Sāyaṇa* commentary is missing)

Kāṇḍa-13: The *kāṇḍa* has only 9 hymns and 188 *mantras*. It deals with some spiritual knowledge. (*Sāyaṇa* commentary is missing) famous *rohita* hymn is to be found.

Kāṇḍa-14: This chapter has 2 hymns and 139 *mantras* and deals with the marriage ceremony, (*Sāyaṇa* commentary is missing).

Kāṇḍa-15: This chapter contains 18 hymns and 230 *mantras* and the main discussion of this chapter is the *Vrātya Brahman*. (*Sāyaṇa* commentary is missing)

Kāṇḍa-16: This book has 9 hymns and 103 *mantras* and deals with the release from pain and suffering. (*Sāyaṇa* commentary is missing)

Kāṇḍa-17: This book has only one hymns and 30 *mantras* and deals with the appeal one's prosperity.

Kāṇḍa-18: This has 4 hymns and 283 *mantras* and deals with *Pitṛ medha Yāga*.

Kāṇḍa-19: This has 72 hymns and 453 *mantras* and deals with *Yajña*, *Puruṣa sūkta* stars *Kāma*, division of the *Atharvaveda* etc.

Kāṇḍa-20: This book comprises has 143 hymns and 958 *mantras*, deals with *Somayāga* etc.

A short picture of Atharvanic society:

Prosperity, health of children, fertility, rain, fertility of the land, sufficient crops, increase in wealth, success in business, security of home and fields, electricity and fire are among the sutras related to social life. Protection from the danger of crop loss, snakebite, sudden death, attack of enemy and self-defense against destructive demon power ect. From all these programs a clear picture

emerges of an agrarian society, whose aim was prosperity and abundant crops. Hospitality was, however, considered a duty to be observed in all agrarian societies and the *Atharva Veda* is also very clear on this point. Hospitality is considered a sacred social duty. Obviously, this practice is a sign of the worldview of the Aryans, the permanent residents and permanent residents and founders of the colony. As the Aryans were still quite mobile, they depended to some extent for their existence on the prosperity of permanent householders. From the list of gifts given to guests, it appears that the necessary help was given to the newcomer to live permanently among the unfamiliar villages or food or food is praised in glowing terms; hence we find a description of a dish full of warm, yellow and nourishing food, which itself became a symbol of the sun, for indirectly all food originates from the sun. Life force, that mysterious entity that separates life from life, is produced from food. The type of blessings showered upon the bride in the tenth mandala of the *Rgveda* suggests that Atharvavedic society was qualitatively different from the society of that time. After the establishment and other isolated signs, women lost freedom and dignity in that society. But there is a clear reference to widow marriage. Found in the Atharvaveda (5/17/8;9/5/27) again there is a mention of *sati* (18/3/1,3). Application of suktas related to various aspects of agriculture is a notable feature of Atharvaveda. Most of the *Rgveda* was written before the Aryas became agrarians; therefore, although many suktas are devoted to the growth, health and safety of cattle, other animals and horses, suktas related to agriculture are rare. In the Atharvaveda we often find many new names for plants and their use in various magical processes. At this stage 'godhana' has become synonymous with 'wealth' and many prayers reflect the society's concern for their health, safety, multiplication, disease prevention etc. The focus on animals necessary for agriculture is natural, since the Atharvaveda was composed mainly by people whose economic base depended on agriculture. From the references to *sabhās* and associations we are informed about autonomy, the existence of petty states and the need for an efficient administrative system. As the Atharvavedic priest was closely associated with the king, it is natural that there are references to various aspects of administration in this tradition. In an age when the whole of northern India was divided into numerous petty kingdoms and each king was

eager to increase his political power, prestige and wealth by annexing neighboring kingdoms, the role of the Atharvavedic priest naturally acquired a political dimension. Apart from performing magical acts to vanquish the enemy, the priest had to assume an all-responsible role during coronation or military campaigns. The rise and dominance of the kshatriyas as a social class is one of the most important aspects of the Atharvaveda. Somajāgas reign in the era of elaboration and protracted development. The predominance of class is quite natural, as no other class could bear the financial responsibility of the extremely expensive and excessively long yajnas. A special form of Agni named 'Kshatribhrit Agni' was conceived as the patron of the Kshatriyas. The importance of Brahmin and priestly community was not less. The emphasis on the sanctity of the Brahmin as a social class suggests that some of the relevant sutras of the Atharvaveda were composed much later, in the late Vedic period, when social hierarchies were clear and Brahmins were at the top of society.

About Atharvavedic marriage:

In the chapter fourteen of the Atharvaveda contains sūkta relating to marriage. Its first to twentieth mantra describes Suryaa's marriage, since then, human marriage has been discussed. Here there is a prayer for domestic peace and for husband and wife to be in harmony with each other till the end of life. Sage savitri said that marriage is also a new birth. The bride and groom are wished for long life. After destroying all the evils, let the bride enter the patigriha that is in lows house. Also in this sūkta the increase of relatives of the spouse is also mentioned. The union of the bride and groom after marriage is beautifully described in this marriage sūkta. Mantra number twenty-seven says that if the groom covers up his body with the bride's clothes then the bride is ashamed.

The dirty clothes of the new bride belong only to Brahma. Brahma will instead perform a prāyaścitta ceremony for the new bride so that the new bride will not be physically harmed. At present this dress of the bride sullenly deserves a barber. In the Atharvaveda's marriage stage blesses the bride and groom for good luck and prosperity. Here also the groom is told to speak well of the bride. A holy love that should exist between husband and wife is understood by reading this part and this is proved in mantras 14/1/51 and 52. Here we see what qualities in a

wife can make her beloved by all. Here's a prayer, it seems that girls were quite influential in that era. Such a glimpse is found in the mantra 14/1/62 in the Atharvaveda.

A careful review of the whole sūкта shows that marriage is centered on women, her goodness, her actions, her beauty, her path, all these are as if the sage had prepared around her. A total of 64 mantras are chanted by the new bride. Many of these exist in the Rgveda 10/85 sūktas. Although some mantras are new. It should be remembered that the sage of two sūktas is a woman. Her name is sāvitrī. Husband and wife are purifying body and mind together.

The main topic of the fourteenth chapter is marriage. In two sūktas almost all the auspiciousness of marriage, long life by defeating evil forces, wish for long life. Prayers for children, animals, wealth, radiance, power are raised in such abundance that they are not available in any other saṃhitā together. The most important thing is to put the bride at the center of the wedding. Domestic life should revolve around the bride. The repeated declaration of women as Kalyāṇī, Sumangali, Samrajñī proves that Vedic India gave the highest importance to the bride, an ideal indeed of pride. As Rishikā Sāvitrī's utterances have described many rituals, reforms, ceremonies of marriage, the ideals of marriage have been brought to life in the words of the bride and groom. All the responsibilities of the bridegroom's house are given to the bride to alleviate the pain of leaving the parental home. The bond between home and society in the Indian way of life, the picture of living happily in a full world is unparalleled. Marriage is a very sacred bond. No matter how questionable it is today. An important fact we find here is that marriage is shown here as a lovely union festival. Here the sage has frankly admitted the physical and emotional union of husband and wife. At the same time, the unity of the coexistence of all the relatives, the father in law, mother in law, son, and daughter describes the immense glory of marriage sūкта.

III. Conclusion

At present, divorces and bride torture are taking place from house to house for small reasons. The bride has to save her life with the help of the law. Dishonor, insult when the bride's constant companion is precisely when this marriage sūkta of the Atharvaveda brings us a path to finding the right path.

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