

2.15 Vivāhaḥ (Marriage)

The term literally means (viśiṣṭaḥ vāhaḥ prāpaṇam) to make a girl attain wifehood, i.e. earlier there was "strītvam" (girlhood) and after marriage she attains "bhāryātvam" (wifehood) also. This Saṃskāra is the most important of all.

Why Marriage: Taittirīyaśaṃhitā (6.3.10.5) says that a Brāhmaṇa is born with three debts and the debts of sages and forefathers have to be cleared by performing Yajñas (sacrifices) and producing children –

जायमानो ह वै ब्राह्मणस्त्रिभिर्ऋणवान् जायते ब्रह्मचर्येण ऋषिभ्यः यज्ञेन देवेभ्यः प्रजया
पितृभ्यः एष वा अनृणो यः पुत्री यज्वा ब्रह्मचारिवासी . . .
jāyamāno ha vai brāhmaṇastribhirṇavān jāyate brahmacaryeṇa ṛṣibhyaḥ yajñena
devebhyaḥ prajāyā pitṛbhyaḥ eṣa vā anṛṇo yaḥ putrī yajvā brahmacārīvāsī . . .

A Brāhmaṇa is born with three debts – he has to clear the debt of sages through Brahmacaryam (celibacy), that of deities / Gods through Yajñas (sacrifices) and that of forefathers through producing children. Therefore the Brāhmaṇa would be debtless if he has children, performs sacrifices and maintains Brahmacaryam.

Bride and bridegroom: Gautamadharmasūtram (Chapter 4) prescribed the qualifications of a bride and bridegroom –

गृहस्थः सदृशीं भार्यां विन्दते अनन्यपूर्वा यवीयसीम् (४.१)
gṛhasthaḥ sadṛśīm bhāryām vindate ananyapūrvā yavīyasīm (4.1)

One who wants to become a household should get a girl, who is of the same caste, not promised to others and younger in age.

Kāmasūtra (3.1.2) recommends an age gap of three years between the bride and groom. Just like raw pepper causes phlegm and dry pepper kills the phlegm, a girl elder than the groom would affect the longevity of the groom. Āyurveda says this clearly –

बाला प्राणप्रदा प्रोक्ता युवती प्राणधारिणी।
प्रौढा करोति वृद्धत्वं बृद्धा मरणमादिशेत्॥
bālā prāṇapradā proktā yuvatī prāṇadhāriṇī।
prauḍhā karoti vṛddhatvaṃ bṛddhā maraṇamādiśet॥

A girl much younger in age would increase the longevity of the groom, a young girl, i.e. younger in age but not too younger, would help maintain the longevity of the groom, a girl older in age would cause early ageing and too older a lady would cause early death.

असमानप्रवरैः विप्राः (४.२)
asamānapravaraiḥ viprāḥ (4.2)

The marriage should be between a bride and groom of different Pravaras.

Smṛtis prohibited marriage between a bride and groom of the same Gotra (i.e. those who are the progeny of the same sage).

A girl and a boy having Sāpiṇḍya (blood relation) should not marry:

ऊर्ध्वं सप्तमात् पितृबन्धुभ्यः। बीजिनश्च। मातृबन्धुभ्यः पञ्चमात्। (४.३,४,५)
ūrdhvaṃ saptamāt pitṛbandhubhyaḥ। bījinaśca। mātṛbandhubhyaḥ pañcamāt।
(4.3, 4, 5)

Seven generations above father or appointed father (who provides children through Niyoga / arrangement) and five generations above mother is the limit to select the girl.

As per the ancient Gṛhyasūtras and Dharmasūtras the girls were married around the time of puberty. Having brothers (sabhrāṭṛkā) is a must for a girl to be married, although some conditional procedure is offered for a girl without a brother (abhrāṭṛkā).

The Bride: Āpastambagṛhyasūtram prescribes the qualifications of a girl –

बन्धुशीललक्षणसम्पन्नाम् अरोगाम् उपयच्छेत्। आपस्तम्बगृह्यसूत्रम्, ३.१९॥
bandhuśīlalakṣaṇasampannām arogām upayacchet।
Āpastambagṛhyasūtram 3.19॥

A girl having good relatives, virtues like obedience, auspicious physical characteristics and healthy should be married.

Here health means not having incurable disease like leprosy.

The Bridegroom: Āpastamba clearly states the qualifications of a good bridegroom:

बन्धुशीललक्षणसम्पन्नः श्रुतवान् अरोग इति वरसम्पत्। आपस्तम्बसूत्रम् ३.२०॥
bandhuśīlalakṣaṇasampannaḥ śrutavān aroga iti varasampat। ibid. 3.20॥

A boy, who is supported by good relatives, virtues like obedience, auspicious physical characteristics, educated and healthy is a good bridegroom.

Here health means without any incurable disease like leprosy.

How to decide: Āpastamba (and others) offers an easy way of selecting a bride –

यस्यां मनश्चक्षुषोः निबन्धः तस्याम् ऋद्धिः नेतरत् आद्रियेत इत्येके।
आपस्तम्बगृह्यसूत्रम् ३.२१ ॥

yasyām manaścakṣuṣoḥ nibandhaḥ tasyām ṛddhiḥ netarat ādriyeta ityeke ।

ibid. 3.21 ॥

In which girl the mind and eyes get fixed, i.e. the girl liked by mind and eyes of bridegroom, is good as a wife and there will be all round prosperity. Some sages say that if that is the case then the other qualifications need not be given much importance.

Needless to say marriage between a bride and groom belonging to the same caste (in Spanish "Custa" means "group") such as Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya etc. is recommended.

Eight kinds of marriages: Marriages are divided into eight types –

ब्राह्मो दैवस्तथैवार्षः प्राजापत्यस्तथासुरः।
गान्धर्वो राक्षसश्चैव पैशाचश्चाष्टमोऽधमः ॥मनुस्मृतिः ३.२१ ॥
brāhmo daivastathaivārṣaḥ prājāpatyastathāsurah.
gāndharvo rākṣasaścaiva paiśācaścāṣṭamo'dhamah ॥Manusmṛtiḥ 3.21 ॥

Brāhma, Daiva, Ārṣa, Prājāpatya, Āsura, Gāndharva, Rākṣasa and Paiśāca are the eight kinds of marriages and the last one, i.e. Paiśāca is condemned.

Here is an explanation of the eight forms of marriage:

- i. Brāhmavivāha: Inviting a bridegroom, who is a scholar in Veda and Vedāṅgas etc. to bride's house, worshipping him as per the capacity and offering the girl.
- ii. Daivavivāha: A R̥tvik (priest), who pleased his Yajamāna (the master) of the Yajña etc., by his priesthood, is offered ornaments, clothes etc., worshipped as per the capacity and offered the girl.
- iii. Ārṣavivāha: Having received a pair (or two) of cows, i.e. a cow and an ox, from the bridegroom as a token, the girl is offered.
- iv. Prājāpatyavivāha: The donor of the bride says to the groom: "I offer you my girl, both of you should perform the auspicious rites and have good offspring", worships him and offers the girl.
- v. Āsuravivāha: Having paid some amount to bride's party, the groom weds the girl either in bride's house or elsewhere, with his own expenditure.

- vi. Gāndharvavivāha: It is nothing but the so called love-marriage.
- vii. Rākṣasavivāha: Marrying forcibly a scared girl after threatening her by several means.
- viii. Paisācavivāha: Approaching the girl clandestinely, sedating her or taking her while asleep and marrying secretly.

The above is just the division of the marriages that were taking place in the society. Among the eight Brāhma, Daiva and Prājāpatya are considered as the best as the donor of bride (Kanyādātā) personally gathers information about the groom and proceeds depending on the virtues.

Purpose of marriage: In the Saṃkalpa (the pledge made before any rite) of marriage, the following is stated –

धर्मप्रजासम्पत्यर्थं स्त्रियमुद्वहे
dharmaprajāsampatyartham striyamudvahe

I wed this girl for Dharma, offspring and Artha (money matters and day to day life).

Further it is asserted in scriptures –

या धर्मार्था सैव रत्यर्था या रत्यर्था सा धर्मार्था न भवति।
yā dharmārthā saiva ratyarthā yā ratyarthā sā dharmārthā na bhavati ।

The bride who is accepted as wife for Dharma is also for sexual life but the one taken for sexual life cannot be for Dharma.

Auspicious time for marriage: Āpastamba rules that all the auspicious stars mentioned in Jyotiṣam (Astrology) have to be taken for marriage –

सर्वाणि पुण्योक्तानि नक्षत्राणि। आपस्तम्बगृह्यसूत्रम्, २.१३॥
sarvāṇi puṇyoktāni nakṣatrāṇi । Āpastambagr̥hyasūtram, 2.13 ॥

For Sumuhūrta (an auspicious time span of forty eight minutes called Muhūrta) one should take all the stars said to be auspicious and listed in the works of Jyotiṣam (Astrology).

For want of space many more details related to Jyotiṣam with regard to marriage are not being provided but a few. The strength of Guru (Jupiter), who thwarts a hundred thousand defects and Śukra (Venus) who thwarts ten thousand defects is important.

Matching of horoscopes: This tradition has been there in Indian subcontinent since time immemorial. The horoscopes of bride and groom are referred to an astrologer (Jyautiṣika) who, in turn would advise whether the pair would make a good couple or not. The Jyautiṣika would take into consideration aspects such as Grahamaitrī (rapport between the lords of Rāśis of bride and groom – this is important for Brāhmaṇas).

Kujadoṣa (the defect of Mars placed in wrong house): This is a very important aspect in terms of compatibility between the horoscopes of bride and groom –

धने व्यये च पाताळे जामित्रे चाष्टमे कुजे।
स्त्रीणां भर्तृविनाशः स्यात् पुंसां भार्याविनाशनम्॥ अगस्त्यसंहिता॥
dhane vyaye ca pātāle jāmitre cāṣṭame kuje ।
strīṇāṃ bhartrvināśaḥ syāt puṃsāṃ bhāryāvināśanam ॥ Agastyasaṃhitā ॥

If Kuja (Mars) is placed in second, fourth, seventh, eighth or twelfth house (it is called Kujadoṣa) of the bride then it would cause the death of the groom and vice versa.

The above said houses are to be counted from Lagna (ascendant), Rāśi (the house in which Moon is situated) and Śukra (Venus). However the Kujadoṣa gets nullified if there is any of the three relations of Guru (Jupiter) with Kuja, i.e. Parivartana (swapping of houses by Guru and Kuja), or association (both Guru and Kuja in the same house) or aspect of Guru to Kuja (Guru has fifth, seventh and ninth aspects). Similarly for those who are born in Kuja's own houses, i.e. Meṣa (Aries) and Vṛścika (Scorpio), Mitrakṣetra (friend's house), i.e. Simha (Leo) of Ravi (Sun), Mīna (Pisces) and Dhanus (Sagittarius) of Guru, Karkaṭaka (Cancer) of Candra (Moon), Uccakṣetra (zenith) i.e. Makara (Capricorn) – Kujadoṣa is nullified –

अर्केन्दुक्षेत्रजातानां कुजदोषो न विद्यते।
स्वोच्चमित्रभजातानां पीडको न भवेत्कुजः॥ देवकेरळम् ॥
arkenduṣṭrajātānāṃ kujadoṣo na vidyate ।
svoccamitrabhajātānāṃ pīḍako na bhavetkujaḥ ॥ Devakeraḷam ॥

Further, there will be compatibility if Kujadoṣa is there in the horoscopes of both the bride and groom.

While fixing the Muhūrta (auspicious time) for marriage one has to take care of the conditions such as Jāmītraśuddhi (either no planet in the seventh house from Lagnam / ascendant or there is Śubhagraha / auspicious planet in that house) etc. that are prescribed in the works on Jyotiṣam such as Kālāmṛtam, Muhūrtacintāmaṇi etc.

Major events of marriage: Since marriage, unlike other Saṃskāras , has a lengthy process, there will be many events. So, some major events are being explained.

- i. Madhuparka: Literally it means "pouring honey". While receiving the bridegroom at the bride's house, honey etc. are offered just to honour the groom's party.
- ii. Parasparavīkṣaṇam: It means looking at each other. Just before the Muhūrta (fixed auspicious time) a piece of cloth is held between the bride and groom. At the time of Muhūrta the bride and groom look at each other while the groom recites a hymn (Ṛk – "abhrātṛghnīm"). Maṅgalāṣṭakas (auspicious verses such as "tadeva lagnam sudinam tadeva") are recited while the interposed cloth is held.
- iii. Kanyādānam (Gift of bride): It is in this rite that the father of the bride tells the bridegroom –

धर्मं चार्थं च कामे च त्वया एषा नातिचरितव्या
dharme cārthe ca kāme ca tvayā eṣā nāticaritavyā

You should not ignore this girl in terms of Dharma, Artha (money matters etc.) and Kāma (sex related matters).

Hereafter the bride is called Patnī / Bhāryā / Sahadharmaçāriṇī while the bridegroom is called Pati / Bhartā etc. Together both are called Dampatī.

The groom then responds –

नातिचरामि
nāticarāmi

I shall not ignore.

Jaimini in Pūrvamīmāṃsā (6.1.4.17) rules that both husband and wife have to do the rites jointly but not separately –

स्ववतोस्तु वचनादैककर्म्यं स्यात्
svavatostu vacanādaikakarmyaṃ syāt

In the case of a wife and husband with wealth, due to the Vedic sentence (dharme cārthe ca kāme ca nāticaritavyā) both are entitled to combinedly perform the same rite.

This is popularly referred to as

दम्पत्योः सहाधिकारात्
dampatyoh sahādhikārāt

Since the wife and husband have to do things together.

Pāṇini (4.1.33) also confirms the above said aspect –

पत्युर्नो यज्ञसंयोगे
patyurno yajñasaṃyoge

Patnī (wife) is a word produced on the root Pati (husband) if both of them together perform the rites.

- iv. Pāṇigrahaṇam and Pradhānahoma: Pāṇigrahaṇam (marriage) literally means "holding the hand" (of Patnī by Pati). "Pradhānahoma" is the principal fire for oblations (later there will be "Śeṣahoma" or remaining fire oblations). After holding Patnī's hand Pati combinedly performs the homa.
- v. Lājahoma: Patnī offers fried grain (lājas) in fire for three times while Mantras are being recited.
- vi. Agnipariṇayanam: It means going around the fire. Reciting some Mantras the Pati along with Patnī makes Pradakṣiṇam around the fire and the water jar.
- vii. Aśmārohaṇa: The Patnī is made to tread on a millstone. The above three, viz. lājahoma, agnipariṇayana and aśmārohaṇa are done thrice, one after the other.
- viii. Saptapadī: Literally it means a rite in which the Patnī is made by Pati to walk seven steps. According to tradition friendship is established between people by walking seven steps together or speaking seven words with each other –

साप्तपदीनं सख्यम् (पाणिनिसूत्रम् ५.२.२)
सख्यं साप्तपदीनं स्यात् (अमरकोशः २.८.१२)
sāptapadīnaṃ sakhyam (pāṇinisūtram 5.2.2)
sakhyam sāptapadīnaṃ syāt (amarakośaḥ 2.8.12)

This is a very important aspect of marriage. After completing the seven steps together with Pati, the Patnī would lose her father's Gotram (origin of inheritance from a sage) and needless to say would attain the Gotram of her Pati –

स्वगोत्रात् भ्रश्यते नारी विवाहात् सप्तमे पदे (स्मृतिः)
svagotrāt bhraśyate nārī vivāhāt saptame pade (smṛtiḥ)

The bride would lose her Gotram in the seventh step in the marriage.

Āpastamba clearly explains the procedure of Saptapadī –

अथैनामुत्तरेणाग्निं दक्षिणेन पदा प्राचीमुदीचीं वा दिशम् अभिप्रक्रमयति एकमिष
इति ॥

(आपस्तम्बगृह्यसूत्रम्, ४.१५)

athaināmuttareṇāgniṁ dakṣiṇena padā prācīmudīcīm vā diśam
abhiprakramayati ekamiṣa iti ॥ (Āpastambagr̥hyasūtram, 4.15)

After Pāṇigrahaṇam, a cloth has to be spread on the north side of the fire in such a way that the end-part of the cloth is left in the east or north, rice is to be put on the cloth and the Pati makes the Patnī walk along on the rice towards east or north for seven steps placing the right foot first.

At every step the Pati recites a specific Mantra –

Step 1: एकमिषे विष्णुः त्वान्वेतु
ekamiṣe viṣṇuḥ tvānvetu
May Viṣṇu give you rice for your first step.

Step 2: ऊर्जे विष्णुः त्वान्वेतु
ūrje viṣṇuḥ tvānvetu
May Viṣṇu give you strength for your second step.

Step 3: त्रीणि व्रताय विष्णुः त्वान्वेतु
trīṇi vratāya viṣṇuḥ tvānvetu
May Viṣṇu give you the will power to perform Vratas (rites with specific conditions) for your third step.

Step 4: चत्वारि मायो भवाय विष्णुः त्वान्वेतु
catvāri māyo bhavāya viṣṇuḥ tvānvetu
May Viṣṇu give you comfort for your fourth step.

Step 5: पञ्च पशुभ्यो विष्णुः त्वान्वेतु
pañca paśubhyo viṣṇuḥ tvānvetu
May Viṣṇu give you cattle for your fifth step.

Step 6: षडृतुभ्यो विष्णुः त्वान्वेतु
ṣaḍṛtubhyo viṣṇuḥ tvānvetu
May Viṣṇu give you wealth of seasons for your sixth step.

Step 7: सप्त सप्तभ्यो होत्राभ्यो विष्णुः त्वान्वेतु
sapta saptabhyo hotrābhyo viṣṇuḥ tvānvetu
May Viṣṇu give you the mercy of the seven sages for your seventh step

After the Patnī is on the seventh step the Pati recites the Mantra "sakhā saptapadā . . .
" – says Āpastamba –

सखेति सप्तमे पदे जपति
sakheti saptame pade japati
The Pati pronounces the Mantra starting "sakhā saptapadā" after the Patnī
is on the seventh step.

The following (portion of) Mantra is recited by the Pati when the Patnī is on her
seventh step:

सखा सप्तपदा भव। सखायौ सप्तपदा बभूव। सख्यं ते गमेयम्। सख्यात्ते मा
योषम्। सख्यान्मे मा योष्ठाः। समयाव सङ्कल्पावहै। संप्रियौ रोचिष्णू
सुमनस्यमानौ . . . ।
sakhā saptapadā bhava | sakhāyau saptapadā babhūva | sakhyam te
gameyam. sakhyātte mā yoṣam | sakhyānme mā yoṣṭhāḥ | samayāva
saṅkalpāvahai. saṁpriyau rociṣṇū sumanasyamānau . . . ।

O! my wife, who made seven steps! Be a friend of mine; you who made
seven steps, and me, both of us became friends. I got friendship and
hereafter I would not part with you, do not part from me. Let us be
together; let us take common decisions in household matters; let us have
mutual affection; let us shine by mutual dependence and let us be with
good minds . . .

ix. Gṛhapraveśa: After Saptapadī the Pati takes Patnī to his house while reciting the
following Mantras, which are significant –

. . . मूर्धानं पत्युरारोह प्रजया च विराड् भव। सम्राज्ञी श्वशुरे भव सम्राज्ञी श्वश्र्वां
भव ननान्दरि सम्राज्ञी भव।
. . . mūrdhānaṁ patyurāroha prajayā ca virāḍ bhava | samrājñī śvaśure
bhava samrājñī śvaśvrām bhava nanāndari samrājñī bhava ।

You sit on the head of your husband, i.e. be important (like the head for
body) for me, have good number of children (ten children are the limit), be
loved by father-in-law, mother-in-law, sister-in-law etc., i.e. maintain good
relation with all of them.

There is Homa (oblation in fire) at the time of Gṛhapraveśa.

- x. Dhruvārundhatīdarśanam: While reciting some Mantras, the Pati shows both the stars, viz. Dhruva and Arundhatī to Patnī at night on the day of marriage.
- xi. Āgneyasthālīpāka: Both, Patnī and Pati cook rice in a vessel and offer to fire (Agni) with Mantras. Patnī pounds the paddy and the Pati would see through cooking. After putting down the rice-vessel on Kuśas (holy grass) both Pati and Patnī, touching each other, have to offer the cooked rice as oblation to the fire, while Mantras are being recited. The rice is to be sprinkled with clarified butter (Abhighāra) twice, when the vessel is still on the hearth and after it is put down. In this rite Agni (fire) is the Devatā (deity). Sthālī is vessel and Pāka is cooking. So it is called Āgneyasthālīpāka.
- xii. Maṅgalasūtradhāraṇam: Tying an auspicious string with golden beads around the neck of Patnī by Pati. Maṅgalasūtram (the auspicious string) is considered important for a Patnī whose husband is alive. It is also a sign of a married woman.

Ardhāṅgī: The term is used to mean Patnī (wife). Literally it means "half of the body (of Pati)". This aspect is clearly stated in Veda itself:

अर्धो ह वा एष आत्मनो यज्जाया। शतपथब्राह्मणम्, ५.२.१.१०, ८.७.२.३॥
 अर्धो वा एष आत्मनो यत्पत्नी। तैत्तिरीयसंहिता, ६.१.८.५॥
 ardho ha vā eṣa ātmano yajjāyā | śatapathabrāhmaṇam, 5.2.1.1..., 8.7.2.3॥
 ardho vā eṣa ātmano yatpatnī | taittirīyasamhitā, 6.1.8.5॥

Jāyā / Patnī (wife) is certainly half of the body of Pati (husband).

Āpastamba rules out any difference between Pati and Patnī –

जायापत्योः न विभागोऽस्ति। पाणिग्रहणाद्धि सहत्वं कर्मसु तथा पुण्यफलेषु च।
 आपस्तम्बधर्मसूत्रम्, २.६.१३.१६, १७॥
 jāyāpatyoh na vibhāgo'sti | pāṇigrahaṇāddhi sahatvaṁ karmasu tathā
 puṇyaphaleṣu ca | Āpastambadharmasūtram, 2.6.13.16, 17॥

There is no any separation between Pati and Patnī, i.e. both are to be treated as a single entity. By Pāṇigrahaṇam (marriage) there will be togetherness between them in all rites and in the activities meant for Puṇyam (opposite of Pāpam / sin).

Patnī would partake the Puṇyam but not Pāpam of Pati.

2.16 Antyeṣṭi

The Saṃskāra to be performed at the end (of life), i.e. at the time of death of a person. The earlier fifteen Saṃskāras are performed while a person is alive. The last one, viz. Antyeṣṭi is performed after death of a person in order to get him a comfortable position. Antyeṣṭi is performed by sons.

जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युः ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च।
तस्मादपारिहार्येऽर्थे न त्वं शोचितुमर्हति ॥ भगवद्गीता, २.२७॥
jātasya hi dhruvo mṛtyuḥ dhruvaṃ janma mṛtasya ca
tasmādapārihārye'rthe na tvaṃ śocitumarhati ॥ Bhagavadgītā, 2.27॥

Śrīkṛṣṇa tells Arjuna during the great war of Mahābhārata – whoever is born has to die and one who is dead would be born, i.e. it is an unending cycle of birth and death. Therefore, you are not supposed to weep with regard to a thing that is inevitable.

People of Vedic tradition believe that the physical body is perishable whereas Ātmā (soul) is eternal / indestructible; there are Svarga (heaven) and Naraka (hell) that are caused by Karma (nemesi), viz. Puṇyam and Pāpam (sin); there is rebirth and an entity called Īśvara is running the universe.

After the death of a person, the near relatives would attain Aśaucam (impurity) for ten days. There is a lot of procedure to be followed right from burning the dead body to offering Daśadānāni (ten kinds of donations) among which is Godānam (donation of a milky cow with calf).

Different procedures of Antyeṣṭi are prescribed for different people, i.e. a Brahmachārī (celibate), a Śrotriya (Vedic scholar), a Yati (a Saṃnyāsī), a virgin, a married woman, a widow, a widower etc. Pitṛmedha has to be performed by the son. For the first twelve months, a monthly death ceremony called Māsikam is to be performed. Then yearly death ceremony called Ābdikam has to be performed. At every step there are some exemptions for people who cannot meet the standard procedure for some reason or the other. Such are called Āpaddharma (the Dharma in a hostile situation).

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