

KINSHIP

vengeance seeks every member alike of the murderer's clan.

This said, it must not be denied that a feeling of relationship in our closer sense of the word also began to show itself from a comparatively early period. Indeed, the Hebrews from the earliest times to which our historical records carry us may be said to have been distinguished by the energy of their 'family' feeling. As the limits of society extended, the primitive conception of blood-kinship described above would naturally grow weaker; that of *near* kinship in our sense of the word can retain its vigour and efficiency only within the narrower circle. Within the larger federation of tribes (the people or nation of Israel) the feeling was never very strong; bloody wars between individual tribes were not unknown, and it was long before the sense of oneness had thoroughly pervaded all portions of the body politic. In the end it was not by the conception of blood kinship but by the political organisation of the monarchy that this sense was called into being and maintained.

The question as to what constituted national kinship was answered by the genealogists. Each individual tribe was held to be derived from an ancestor whose descendants bore his name as their tribal name; the mutual relations of the tribe and the various clans comprising it were determined by the relationship of the ancestor of each clan to the patriarch from whom all alike claimed descent. In other words, the formation and development of tribes were held to have taken place under the dominion of the patriarchal system (GENEALOGIES i., § 2). Moreover, it is an actual fact that so far as our knowledge goes the patriarchal system was prevalent among the Hebrews from the earliest historical times. The head of the family is the man; the woman passes over to the clan and tribe of her husband, who is master both of herself and of her children (FAMILY, § 3 ff.; MARRIAGE, § 4 ff.). Kinship, tribe-connection, inheritance, are determined by the man.

Robertson Smith (*Kinship, passim*), however, has incontrovertibly shown that among the Semites as well as many other widely separated peoples

4. Matriarchy. matriarchy must at one time have prevailed. This expression, as distinguished from patriarchy, is meant not the dominion of the woman in the household, but rather that arrangement of family- and clan-relations in accordance with which the relation of the children to the mother was regarded as by far the more important, that to the father being of quite subordinate moment. It is the mother who determines the kinship. The children belong to the mother's clan, not to the father's. The wife is not under the power of the husband, but under the guardianship of her male relations. The head of the family is not the father but the maternal uncle, who has supreme authority over the mother and her children. Inheritance is not from father to son, but from brother to brother, from (maternal) uncle to nephew.

The existence of this matriarchy among the Semites is shown (among other proofs) by the existence of ancient words, common to various branches of the Semitic family, denoting relationship derived from the mother. In like manner there are feminine tribal names, and tribal heroines pointing to the same inference. With the Arabs down even to the days of Mohammed a kind of marriage (see below) was still kept up which entirely belonged to the matriarchal system.

For details as to matriarchy among the Semites in general the discussions of Robertson Smith,¹ Wellhausen,² and Wilken³ must be referred to. What specially interests us here is the fact that in the OT also traces of the existence of this institution among the Hebrews can still be found. Even if these were not absolutely

¹ *Ut supra*.

² 'Die Ehe bei den Arabern' in *Gött. gel. Nachr.* 421 ff. (1854).

³ 'Het Matriarchaat bij de oude Arabieren' in *Ooster. Monatsschrift f. d. Orient*, 1884.

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convincing in themselves, they would become so after the demonstration of the existence of the institution among the Arabs and other Semitic peoples. Alongside of the masculine tribal names we have a series of feminine ones:—Hagar, Keturah, Leah, Rachel, Bilhah, Zilpah. Stade conjectures that at one time there was a genealogical system according to which the tribes were all of them wives of Jacob (*GI* 146). Such feminine names at all events cannot be regarded as mere poetical adornments of the legends to which they belong; they must originally have been integral parts of the genealogical system.

Marriages of brother and sister, that is to say between children of different mothers, had nothing offensive to the moral sense of the older period (see MARRIAGE, § 21; it is a relic of the times when relationship was determined not by the blood of the father but by that of the mother, and when accordingly community of descent on the mother's side was the only bar to marriage. This explains also the possibility of the custom according to which the son could marry the stepmother, the father the daughter-in-law (see MARRIAGE, § 2). Notwithstanding the express prohibition of such unions they seem to have been not unknown down to a time as late as that of Ezekiel, although, on the other hand, marriages between maternal relations, between father and stepdaughter, father and daughter, mother and son were from the first regarded with horror (cp Gen. 19.30 ff.); in D express prohibition is not deemed necessary.

How deeply rooted was the view that relationship was constituted through the mother is shown by passages such as Gen. 42.38 43.29 44.20 27 ff.

6. Meaning of 'brother.' Judg. 8.19 9.3, where the designation of brother in the full sense of the word is reserved for sons of the same mother; as also by such narratives as that of Judg. 9.2 ff., where Abimelech is regarded by his mother's relations, the Shechemites, as one of themselves, and his maternal uncles are his natural allies. The prevalence of the same view is seen also in the practice of adoption by the mother (not the father) (Gen. 30.3), in the right of inheritance through the mother, as implied in Gen. 21.10 ('the son of this handmaid shall not inherit with my son'), in the right of the mother to give the name as shown in the older sources of the Pentateuch, though in P it is always the father who does so. In Eliezer's negotiations for Rebekah it is not her father Bethuel ('and Bethuel,' Gen. 21.50, is a late-redactional insertion) but her brother who is her guardian and carries on the transaction.

Another characteristic feature of matriarchal marriage is that it is not the woman who enters the man's tribe

7. Tribal relations. but the man who enters the woman's; she continues to belong to her own tribe. This also can be shown to have been the case in the Hebrew domain. Too much stress indeed must not be laid on the expression *לָקַח אִשָּׁה*, 'to go in unto,' the usual phrase in Hebrew and Arabic for the consummation of a marriage; but it is certain that among the Hebrews, as with the Arabs, the woman always figures in particularly close connection with the tent, and frequently as its mistress. In such cases as Gen. 24.67, indeed, we may be in the presence only of a custom which, in the case of wealthy people, allowed each wife (as with a rich sheikh at present) to have a separate tent. The narrative of Judg. 4.17 ff. (cp 5.24 ff.), however, is clear enough; it is Jael who owns the tent, who receives the fugitive into it, and who accords to him its protection. This is in exact accord with the present facts of Arab women as regards fugitives seeking protection. The story of Eliezer's wooing of Rebekah also assumes the possibility that the girl may not consent to leave her home, but may insist that her future husband should marry into her own tribe and