Logic of incest in other societies

Dr. Kersey Antia, Jul 7, 2020

There are references in the Old Testament to incest. Seth Daniel Kunin has examined Hebrew mythology about incest from a structuralist perspective based on the theoretical and methodological apparatus of Claude Levi Strauss and other scholars. He posits: "Structuralism provides an approach to understanding the manipulation of symbolic systems within culture. It places mythological material in the context of symbolic systems as a whole. "Each such system is governed by the understanding logic and a logic of its own through which myths can be rationalized and accepted. He holds that history can be a medium for mythology since mythology uses history and the historical form as an additional support for the logic it has set out to develop. (The Logic of Incest: A Structuralist Analysis of Hebrew Mythology, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, Supplement Series 185, Sheffield Academic Press, England, 1995). As the logic behind *khvaetvadatha*, originally meaning self-sacrifice, much later on got mingled with the concept of preservation of *khwarrah,* which is a highly mythical notion generated by the royalty to substantiate their genealogical claim to the throne, all of which falls into the mythical realm, a structural analysis of this unique myth, if attempted, may prove meaningful in understanding the part played by myths on this subject.

Many ancient people practiced marital arrangements that may seem strange to us. For example, Wilfred Madelung reports that the Khazimiyya "permitted marriage of a second wife together with her paternal or maternal aunt" and the "marriage of grandaughter and grandaughters of brothers and sister". He adds: "According to pseudo-Nashi", the Khazimiyya based their abnormal doctrines on the principle that only religious laws stipulated by the Qur'an or unanimously agreed by all Muslims were binding. Qur'an IV 23 forbade Muslims to marry the mother of their wives or their stepdaughters but in parts of the Qur'anic verse permission to marry one's granddaughters could readily be deduced". Wilfred Madelung, *Religious Trends in Early Islamic Iran*, Bibliotheca Persica, 1988 (p. 64).