

Marriage



SRI AUROBINDO KAPALI SHASTRY INSTITUTE OF VEDIC CULTURE

#63, 13th Main, 4th Block East, Jayanagar

Bangalore – 560 011

Phone: +91-80-26556315

Email: info@vedah.com

Web: www.vedah.org



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Overview

Vedic vision of mankind is splendid. Man is essentially the spiritual being characterised by immortality and freedom. From this luminous source one has to understand the goal and meaning of life. Unfortunately, due to ignorance, the person sinks deep into the fleeting desire of indulgence and the gross material enjoyment. Under any circumstance, man cannot escape the fruits of his actions. As a result, he has to encounter the effects of such actions done through "thoughts-words-deeds" during this life or next life.

To derive success and happiness in married life, experiential Vedic knowledge proves essential. Vedic thoughts provide considerably useful information and tips regarding marriage.

Concept of Family being the emergent institution of the contemporary human civilization, the Vedas provide adequate solutions to the resultant problems that may arise in marriage. Even after knowing a lot one can't declare that I know everything. Given below are some salient information and ideals. The practice of these ideals will be of great help in the success of married life.

- Both husband and wife with mutual understanding and trust in each other should be able to offer love & affection to each other, the family, the society and to the Providence.
- Not only the husband and wife, but even the other members of the family should be able to grasp the goals of marriage as well as life. With the light of knowledge & wisdom, the journey should be onward & forward in the path of fulfilment.
- If the husband and wife tread the life together with harmony and unity of "thoughts-words-deeds", marriage becomes the root of happiness, the source of power and the individual's progress too. The couple should constantly think good of each other. They should develop their minds to adequately respond to the subtle feelings and the needs of each other. This drives out the ego barriers and the vanity in them. Envy, selfishness & self-centredness and the destructive and negative elements get weakened.
- Marriage strengthens the unbreakable mutual bond and the mutual commitment, which in turn becomes the most nourishing feature.
- Even sex brings real happiness only when one submits himself to the framework or safeguarding limits of righteousness (dharma). During the woman's periodic menstrual cycles and certain prohibited situations, sexual urge has to be forsaken. Vedic heritage (convention) advises only ten nights in a month to be good enough for conceiving.



- Only such families and such a society, where the husbands and wives conduct themselves with identical mental attitudes, mutual respect and honour, would progress with peace, prosperity and fraternity.
- In fulfilment of the goals of life, all family members should be in a position to regulate their "body-mind-intelligence". From this one can obtain the total vision, wisdom of what is just and unjust, and efficient work habits, thereby getting success in occupation and a honourable position in the society.
- Family members should attach great importance to the interests of the entire family, the individual self interests may have to be sacrificed if need be for the sake of family. At the same time, enough freedom and opportunity have to be provided for each member to strive with his self-effort to attain the higher elevations.
- Every member of the family should imbibe the vision that "individual cannot sustain/nourish the Cosmos, but the Cosmos only nourishes/sustains the individual", so that he can relegate to the background the self-centredness with ease and poise.

Marriage Sacrement (*Samskara*)

Engagement (*nischitartha*)

Marriage is the choice of bride and bridegroom. Colour, caste, sect, ancestry (gotra), family lineage, existing relationships, age factors, occupation, health, educational background, economic conditions, home and living situations and several other such aspects are considered. Counsels and directions from Ayurvedic school of health & medicines, and the *Dharma shastra* i.e. scriptural knowledge of the rules and conducts are of great help. Then comes the procedure, whereby is done the promise/confirmation of the choice.

Relatives of the bridegroom go to the house of the bride and place in her hands fruits and flowers stating that they desire to choose her as wife of the bridegroom. Father of the bride discusses the offer with his daughter, wife, his family members and his relatives, elders and the wise. After getting their concurrence, he conveys the acceptance. Symbolically, the coconuts and fruits are tied up within a piece of cloth and worshipped. The knot of this bundle is removed only after the completion of marriage. Relations of bridegroom honour the bride with cloth, jewellery, flowers and fruits, coconuts, beetle nuts and leaves, sacred red and turmeric powders called as *kumkum* and *arisina*. As a part of her (bride's) prayer for the longevity of her future spouse, the bride worships goddesses Gowri, Lakshmi, and Shashi and gives *Bagina* (consisting many sacred items in the sacred box) to *Sumangalis* (women with eternal wife-hood).



Entry to Marriage Platform (*Mantap Pravesha*)

At an auspicious time on the day determined earlier, the bridegroom with all his relatives & friends goes to bride's house and enters the duly decorated marriage platform. He gets all due honours and great privileges that are normally due for a honourable guest coming to any house. This is called "*Madhu Parka*" in the scriptures and is colloquially called as *Vara Pooja*. Bridegroom is made to sit in *Bhadrasana*. His feet are washed. He is offered ghee, curds and honey duly mixed and held in a bronze vessel. Bridegroom drinks it three times with appreciation. Bridegroom is garlanded and given dual auspicious fruits and cloth. The rule is to give a cow as per Vedic principle. But now the practice is to give a coconut. He is supposed to symbolically represent the Lord Uma-Maheswar, Lord Lakshmi-Narayan, and Shachi-Indra.

Kalasha aradhana (installing the deity through placing coconut on the vessel containing sacred waters), *Ganapati Pooja*, *Swasti Vachana*, *Nandi Samaradhana*, *Ankurarana*, *Mantapa Devata Sthapana*, *Raksha bandhana*, *Gowri Pooja* and *Sabha pooja* are other aspects.

Expectations

Remembering the celestial couples Lakshmi-Narayan, and Uma-Maheswar, and pouring the "*jeera & jaggery*" on each other's head at an auspicious time, the bride and bridegroom gaze at each other with an intense feeling of love. The sentiment conveyed in the chanting of a *mantra* at that time is as follows:

"Oh Varuna...Oh Brihaspati... Oh Indra... Oh Surya... shower Grace on her. Let her looks be ever auspicious. By her looks, let no harm happen to me, who is going to be her husband and to my brothers (and the progeny we are going to have)."

"Oh woman... Let your looks be free of fear and worry, but serene (peaceful). Let you have the grace and a good mind. Let no hurt be caused to your husband by your sight. May you progress well. May you obtain the children who will survive. May you be acceptable to Gods. May you be auspicious and graceful to us. May you be pleasant to us. May all good come from you to other people and animals (that live in our house).

Marriage (Dhara)



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Bride's father along with his wife decides on charities. Greatness of the charity of giving away the daughter, the objectives, and the great benefits are all cited there. This charity is to please the Almighty. With the progeny coming out of her, the previous twelve generations get sanctified. Gowri, Lakshmi and Shachi are the goddesses present in the bride; Eshwara, Vishnu, and Indra are the gods in the bridegroom. Charities and honours in principle reach these gods and goddesses. These in turn will benefit the bride and bridegroom. Remembering the parents of previous three generations of both the bride and bridegroom, their blessings are invoked.

Palms of the bride containing the gold, rice grains, coconuts, beetle leaves and the sacred red and yellow powders are placed upon the similarly decorated palms of the bridegroom, and from the *kalasha* (the vessel), the purified water is constantly poured upon and so goes the charity. Marriage promise takes place now.

Bride's father to Bridegroom: You are not to go against her by departing from the three aspects of *Dharma* (righteousness), *artha* (economic well being), and *kama* (meeting the desires including sex).

Bridegroom: " Yes... Let it be so. I do not leave her. I do not go against her wishes." (He utters this three times.)

Bridegroom to Bride

"You have been given by *kama* (desire). You have been given to *kama*. Giver and Taker are both *kama*. Oh..Woman... You enter my mind by your sweet independent will/desire. I by my sweet independent will/desire will accept you. Oh... *kama*..She belongs to you and even this marriage. She is the offering to you. Being the essence of your body (*Anga*), let God called Angirasa accept you."

In other charities, giver says "*Na Mama'*, the gift does not belong to me. In the marriage this phrase is NOT used.

Just because the terminology "*Kanyadana*", prevails in the marriage system, it is uncharitable to imagine that she is a property or possession like gold, cow etc. belonging to father and the father can dispense in any manner at his whim. Our sages have recognized that every woman has her own independent personality, honour, aspirations, and rights. Even after the completion of the gift, the donor (father) will continue his relationship as father. Bridegroom also should not construe her to be an object of enjoyment like gold, silver, cloth etc. and misuse her at his whim and fancy to satisfy his lust and other selfish ends. He must understand that he has pronounced his promise three times, and then only obtained her. In his promise, *Dharma* & *Artha* are also added to *kama*. Sex is



not an abuse or ugly affair. It is one of the man's legitimate desire. *kama* means desire or wish. The word *kama* in its broader meaning and perspective also includes *Dharma* (Righteousness), *Artha* (Economic well being), *Moksha* (Salvation). The well sustained meaning of *kama* also embraces the couple's mutual love & sacrifice of the sacredness and purity and even other desires of the mind in conformity with righteousness.

In order to make his gift of bride more fruitful and fulfilling, the father donates cow, piece of land, gold, cloth etc. at this time to well-deserving people. Scriptures affirm of greater benefits from such gifts.

Scattering sacred rice grains (Akshataropana)

After washing symbolically the couple's palms with milk and ghee and filling them with sacred rice grains, and after placing the bride's palms upon the bridegroom's palms, the priest pours the sacred water from the *Kalasha*, the bronze vessel earlier worshiped, simultaneously chanting the hymn of best wishes like "Peace (*shanti*), Happiness (*tushti*), Nourishment (*pushti*), Progress (*Vrddhi*), Removal of obstacles (*Vighna*), Long life (*ayuh*), Health (*arogya*), Well-being (*svasti*) and auspicious celebrations (*mangala karma*). Let these come to the couple." Then while pouring the rice grains on each other's heads, the couple engage in the following dialogue:

1. Bridegroom: I wish for the celestial sacrifice (*yajna*). Let this oblation bring forth plenitude.

Bride: I wish for all-sided riches (*aishvarya*). Let the riches be multiplied.

2. Bridegroom: I wish for glory. Let glory be enriched.

Bride: I wish for beauty and harmony (*shree*). Let *shree* be abundant.

3. Bridegroom: I wish for Righteousness (*dharma*). Let the Righteousness be widespread.

Bride: I desire for progeny. Let our progeny be noble.

Hereafter their mutual aspirations are complementary thereby bestowing on them all round prosperity.

Bridegroom takes out a flower from the bunch of flowers decorating his head, and after immersing it in the ghee and milk, he draws *Tilaka* (sacred symbol) on the bride's forehead.



Similarly, the bride also takes out a flower from the bunch of flowers decorating her head, and after immersing it in the ghee and milk, draws a symbol on the forehead of the bridegroom. Here after each one exchanges the garlands.

Mangala Sutra

This is the sacred thread with small golden pendants or small black sacred beads or a piece of turmeric. It is also called *Mangalya*. Couple invoke Lakshmi, Saraswati, Gowri and Shachi Devi in this *Mangalya*, worship it and pray for a stable married life, endowed with health and progeny.

माङ्गल्यं तन्तुनानेन मम जीवन हेतुना ।
कण्ठे बध्नामि सुभगे त्वं जीव शरदां शतम् ॥

Mangalyam tantunanena mama jëvana hetuna

Kanthe badhnami subhage twam jëva sharadam shatam

"This *Mangalya* is responsible for my life (married life or household discipline). I am tying this to your neck. Live with me for hundred years."

Saying this mantra, the bridegroom adorns the neck of the bride with this *Mangala Sutra*. During this occasion, the bride receives all types of blessings. The essence of such blessings: ""Like Lakshmi to Vishnu, Parvati to Shankara, Arundhati to sage Vasishta, let you be a good and virtuous wife to your husband; be mother of noble progeny; retain eternal wife-hood; be righteous; be full of grace and light; be law abiding; bring happiness to your husband and relatives and live long well."

Mangalya is not the sign of slavery; it is the symbol of his commitment for meeting the necessary obligations and the symbol of protection and initiation. This is to bestow eternity for life. This is to bring assurance of giving happy married life to her.

Holding Hands (Panigrahana)

Bridegroom stands up, goes before the bride, stretches his right hand, holds her right hand and makes her to stand up. This is called *Panigrahana*. A chanting is done, it's meaning is as follows:



गृभ्णामि ते सौभगत्वाय हस्तं मया पत्या जरदष्टिर्यथा सः ।
भगो अर्यमा सविता पुरंधिर्मह्यं त्वादुर्गार्हपत्याय देवाः ॥

(Rigveda Samhita - 10.85.36)

"Aspiring to propitiate prosperity (like progeny etc.) and with an intent that you should continue to live even up till old age with me, your husband, I hold your hands. The deities like Bhaga, Aryama, Savitr and Purandhi have graced you to me for perpetuating good household."

The parting of the bride from her parents is considered to be the boon/gift from the deities. With the benedictions of cooperation, inspiration and permission from these deities, the father parts with his daughter. Hope is derived from the resolution made by the bridegroom that he would take proper care of the bride in the path of righteousness, as acceptable to these deities.

Seven Steps (Saptapadi)

Both of them together go around the sacred fire in seven steps. The couple putting forward their steps together indicates their friendly love. Mantra chanted during this occasion is as follows:

- ॐ इष एकपदी भव सा मामनुव्रता भव पुत्रान् विन्दावहै बहून् ते सन्तु जरदष्टयः ॥ 1
ॐ ऊर्जे द्विपदी भव सा मामनुव्रता भव पुत्रान् विन्दावहै बहून् ते सन्तु जरदष्टयः ॥ 2
ॐ रायस्पोषाय त्रिपदी भव सा मामनुव्रता भव पुत्रान् विन्दावहै बहून् ते सन्तु जरदष्टयः ॥ 3
ॐ मार्याभव्याय चतुष्पदी भव सा मामनुव्रता भव पुत्रान् विन्दावहै बहून् ते सन्तु जरदष्टयः ॥ 4
ॐ प्रजाभ्यः पञ्चपदी भव सा मामनुव्रता भव पुत्रान् विन्दावहै बहून् ते सन्तु जरदष्टयः ॥ 5
ॐ ऋतुभ्यः षट्पदी भव सा मामनुव्रता भव पुत्रान् विन्दावहै बहून् ते सन्तु जरदष्टयः ॥ 6
ॐ सखा सप्तपदी भव सा मामनुव्रता भव पुत्रान् विन्दावहै बहून् ते सन्तु जरदष्टयः ॥ 7

(Ashwalayana Grhyasutra - 1-7-19)

A step for food in life

Another step for strength in life

Yet another step for wealth & prosperity



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One step for love & affection

One step for beauty of progeny

One step for opportune time

One step for everlasting friendship.

"Aum... to get food, place your first step following me; to get strength, place your second step; to get wealth and prosperity, place your third step; to get happiness, comforts, place your fourth step; to get right progeny, place fifth step; to get opportune time, place sixth step; with your seventh step, you follow me for friendship. By these seven steps, we have now become friends. Let your bonds of love be there for ever. I will never part your love. Let you also not part my love. Let us be together. Let us think together. By loving each other, let us live amicably well. Let us enjoy all happiness and good things. Let our aspirations, ceremonies and minds come together.

This practice of seven steps is called "*Saptapadi*" and signifies the wholeness of the institution of marriage. These aspects have been taken cognizance, not only by our ancient doctrines, but also by our courts of law of the present times.

Laja Homa

Laja means rice corn. *Homa* means a ritual using celestial fire. Bridegroom takes the rice corns in his palms and pours them on to the fire. Meaning of the chanting is as follows:

"Let Agni, the mystic Fire protect her and bless her with children and long life. Let her large heartedness never become empty. Let her live long as kind mother of children. Let her to derive joy from these children."

While pouring the rice corns into celestial fire the bride prays "Let my husband live long and my new relatives prosper well."

"My offerings to the God Agni is to obtain 'abundance' to you, my husband. Let us share wealth and happiness equally well, and let the Fire-God grant our prayers."

For the marriage conducted during day-time, bridegroom shows the Sun to the bride and tells.... "This Sun's rays of illumination make the Gods pleasant and turn out to be traveling eyes of the world. Let us be able to see the Sun for a cycle of hundred years. Let us therefore live for hundred years. Let us derive



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greater happiness. Let us derive constant progress through out our times. Let us hear only "good" for these hundred years. Let us speak only "good" for these hundred years. Let us not meet any failure these hundred years. Let us be able to look to Sun for long."

For the marriage conducted during night times, bridegroom shows to bride in the sky, those illuminating stars of Dhruva, and the field of seven great seers of eternity (*Saptarshi Mandala*) and particularly the significant stars of Vasishta and Arundhati. Arundhati and Vasishta testify the great virtues of a long married life, good progeny, eternal love and unflinching commitment of the couple towards each other. Looking at these great souls prostrate before them remembering their great glory and their guiding spirits, and praying for their grace and benediction makes the marriage ceremony complete with divine grace.

Benedictions (Ashirvaada)

Phala Pooja (worshipping of auspicious coconuts, flowers & fruits), *Sabha Pooja* (worshipping of the marriage platform), honoring all the elders and the wise, treating friends assembled there with utmost respect and reverence, exchanging the cloth and pleasantries demonstrating love and friendship, several sumptuous feasts and other celebrations form part of the marriage function.

Blessings and best-wishes are showered by all the people on the couple. *Vedic* chanting is done, whose meaning is as follows :

"May all of you look at the bride, and pray for her (*Sumangali*) eternal wife-hood and bid a nice farewell to her."

"Oh the God Indra... Befit her for the mother-hood and eternal wife-hood. Grant her ten virtuous children. Let her husband be the eleventh."

"Oh woman (bride)... Be a lovely and affectionate princess to your father-in-law, husband's sister, brother and his wife in your family. (This is symbolic to mean that she should be the source of inspiration and joy.)

The hearty, overwhelming emotional sentiments and feelings drench the entire partaking occasion. Everyone prays for her "good" with deep loving counsels of ""Dos & Don'ts." We give below two excerpts from our ancient books summarising the advice to the couple.

1) Great poet Kalidasa in his poetic drama "*Abhijnana Shakuntala*", makes out the following epilogue as emanating from the Shakuntala's guardian-father, the great sage Kanva...



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"(OH..Shakuntala)... Serve the elders. Behave as pleasant person to your co-sisters. By any chance, if your husband is in angry mood or disagreement, do not make hasty opposition. Transact appropriately with servant people. Do not lose your balance when the prosperity embraces you. Such women are befitting to be called *Grihini*, i.e. worthy house-wife.

"(Oh... Dushyanta) Our only possession is 'Equipoise' (and no other wealth with us). But you are the one born in the great tradition of *Chandra Vamsha*. You, on your own, have come forward and wedded her. She has evoked her love for you on her own, as though there is no part from any of her relations. You have to contemplate on these aspects and conduct with her with due honour. Any thing beyond this is left to their respective fate. From the bride side, we have nothing more to tell."

2) Pampa, the grand old poet, in his work '*Adi Purana*', brings out the following epilogue at the marriage time by the father of the bride, to son-in-law Vajrajangha and the daughter Shrimati.

(To son-in-law) "Ponder over about the greatness of your ancestors. Mind the unbreakable relationship and the new relationships with us; you teach her patiently without any anger, even by chance she utters anything undue out of ignorance. See to it that this beautiful girl is not put to sorrow and made to get engrossed in the memory of her parents. Oh Vajrajangha... I only seek this from you."

(To daughter) "Be conscious of your husband's will and conduct yourself with due sensitivity. Do not be angry at your husband, even if he tells anything contrary. Abide well in your present glorious elevation of wife-hood, ably and stably. Beget joyous and auspicious children."

However much the times may change and however much our high and great procedures and practices are reformed, the moral and ethical values and ideals eternally relevant for all people and for all times to come, are prevalent in our institution of marriage. The effort here is only to highlight the importance of the institution of marriage.

The marriage ends with the expression of thanks of the brides parents to all the participants.

"This bride is full of virtues. May all of you bless her. Come to our abode again and again."

Finally the mantra recited is :



द्यौः शान्तिः अन्तरिक्षं शान्तिः
पृथिवी शान्तिरापः शान्तिः
ओषधयः शान्तिः वनस्पतयः शान्तिः
विश्वेदेवाः शान्तिः ब्रह्म शान्तिः सर्वं शान्तिः
शान्तिरेव शान्तिः सा मा शान्तिरेधि
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ।

(Shukla Yajurveda Samhita - 36.17
Atharvaveda Samhita - 19.9.14)

Dyauh Shantihi Antariksham Shantihi

Prithvi Shantirapaha Shantihi

Aushadayahaha Shantihi Vanaspatiyaha Shantihi

Viswadevata Shantihi

Brahme Shantihi Sarvam Shantihi

Shantireva Shantihi

Sama Shantiredhi

Aum Shantihi Shantihi Shantihi

(S.Y.V. 36.17, Atharva Veda - 19.9.14)

Symbolisms of Rituals

1. Symbols have a great place of significance in marriage rituals (and even other rituals). Any thing may be unseen by eye or it may be a concept or ideal that crops up in the mind. To reflect that through a visible sign or a known thing (or appropriate words) is the advantage of symbols.

A symbol throws light on a particular ideal, at least to some extent, if not fully. Symbol has some nearby or far off relationship to an ideal/concept. The moment



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a symbol is seen, the visualization of that ideal/concept should occur to one's mind. The practice of many people in a society using these symbols since long would easily register an indelible impression in people's minds. For example ghee, known as clarified butter, is also bright, hence it is a standard symbol of mental clarity; any clear thought is said to be shining.

So the act of rubbing the ghee on the forehead is a prayer for the mental clarity to manifest and increase. Some think that this act indicates friendship. Obviously friendship can only thrive in an atmosphere of mental clarity.

Here, the external form of the symbol by itself is not important. It is enough if the symbol can throw light on the cherished ideal, which it represents. Purpose of the symbol is to serve only as means to an end. When the man's verbal capacity cannot efficiently and completely explain a particular idea, it can be featured through appropriate symbols designed with the help of creative power of mind.

Symbols have come for effective use in religion-related work, heart centered activities and the emotional world of poetry.

There is an instance in the marriage ceremony, where the bridegroom holds the feet of bride, lifts them and place them on a hard stone. (One cracks a jokes that the husband has already started holding the feet of his sweet heart.) (One may be aware of the significance of this symbolic act or may entertain the attitude of negative cynicism instead of positive appreciation.) Those who are not aware of the significance must ponder over as to why the piece of stone has been brought to marriage platform. One may guess this act as testing, whether the girl can stand erect and walk properly. To understand the symbolism, note that a stone is a symbol of something hard. Stepping on a stone is the symbol of overcoming the obstacles. The symbolism is :

"You rise up and stand up on this stone. Be as hard as stone. Stamp upon your enemies (as you are now on this stone). Drive out the enemies to their rightful corners."

This inner meaning is conveyed by the accompanying chant.

The whole range of such practices is to embrace both the outer activity for fun, and to draw the inner essence for guidance in life. The practice of external rituals without grasping the inner truth is just an absurdity. Similarly thinking all these practices, as senseless, mechanical, blind heritage is also an absurdity. Considering the human sentiments and deficiencies from all angles and implications, and to fill the psychological gaps for pursuing towards future life enrichment, such symbolic rituals in the marriage ceremony are necessary.



2. Hindu convention does not approve the idea that marriage is a mere mutual agreement of two persons or a deal. A marriage involved not only the two partners, but their respective families, sects, castes, and even their vast society of friends and well-wishers. Another important aspect is the cosmic guiding force which is controlling all the human activities externally and internally, and which remains the cause for such marriage in the cosmic law. Therefore the whole insistence that the marriage ritual be done as per the *dharmic* rites and holding the God as witness. The righteous and divine force further strengthens the mutual bond of love & relationship between the couple. If such a stand-point is either weakened or denied, the system of marriage would lose its sanctity and significance and becomes pale. If the institution of marriage is weakened, then it weakens even the institution of family. If the base of the family is destabilized, then the whole edifice of the society loses its strength and safety.

3. Look at the position of a small plant with creeper being removed from one place and planted in a new pit at a new place. To enable them to root well and grow with mutual support, do they not require greater effort, care, protection and nourishment? Marriage is also similar. *Panigrahana* (holding each others' hands), heart-touching (touching the hearts), *Sahabhajana* (dining together in the same plate or leaf), *Samanjana* are practices with deep meanings behind them. In *Samanjana* act, the bride's father applies ghee to both the bride and bridegroom for their bond and the *Vedic* chant prays the deities to grant them that bond. The higher and noble aspiration here is that there should be unification and integration of the couple's body, spirit and the mind.

4. The marriage is a seminal event in one's life. There are possibilities of variety of expectations, fears and anxieties to arise and bother the minds. Symbolic rituals and prayers are incorporated in the marriage ceremony only to identify such evil cares and influences and drive out those forces far away, so that the couple may start the trouble free new life. A greater focus is also directed towards cognising the woman's position in the scheme of nature, and the framework of society and other peculiar circumstances. In the back drop of this, we should understand the utterance ""Let your looks at your husband and new relatives be kind and compassionate and not fearful.""

5. Hindu system of marriage is the one permanent and stable bond. A marriage taking place as a result of short-lived bodily sexual urge or out of the necessity to fill the temporary economic adversity or gap, may crack down any time due to even silly reasons. The dualities of happiness & sorrow are inevitable facets of life. It is the elder's desire that the couple understand the art of enjoying, sharing and living, which enrich their friendship towards life fulfilment. Idea behind showing the star of Dhruva, Arundhati, and Vasishta is only to reflect this upon.



6. An elementary objective of marriage is to beget the progeny and sustain the continuance of human race. This is basic to animality. A natural sexual urge is enough for this work. But in *Hindu* convention and way of life, this aspect has been accepted; and on its foundations, other ideals also have been built and incorporated. Repeated reference to "progeny" in the marriage prayers is justified, so also the aspect of wealth, food, cattle, age, health, property etc, and the friendship and co-operation between the two sides of relationships. It is worthy to take note that the ideals of marriage involve economic, social and cultural value systems.

7. The role of prayers to Sun in the *Vedic* system of marriage is exemplary. Essence of some of the chanting is as follows:

"This bride was first possessed by the deity Soma; later by the deity Gandharva; thirdly, Agni (God) is your master and fourthly the human man. Soma gave you to Gandharva. Gandharva gave you to Agni. Agni has given you to me for obtaining progeny and wealth."

This verse has been subjected to wrong and vile interpretations by persons who have no initiation into Hindu culture and *Vedic* language and those who do not have sympathy to the convention and those who are indifferent to it. Soma, Gandharva, and Agni are the divine forces. Only their benedictions and grace have led to the development of this girl. This girl is construed to be the boon, gifted to men by Gods. This has been narrated in the symbolic and poetic style in the aesthetic sense. *Atri Smriti* has described as follows:

"Soma is the purifying force for women. Gandharva is the force gifting melodious tone and fine speech. Agni force will make her fit to all kinds of sacrifices."

Soma is the presiding lord for all plant life and human mind. He nourishes the body and mind of the woman first. Gandharva is the presiding lord for all music, dance and romance. He prepares the woman in these moulds out of his grace. He prepares the woman-hood to full virtue, and regulate her menstrual cycle. Marital relationship of the bride and particularly the begetting of the progeny is a sacrifice. Agni by his grace, makes her fit for participation in all sacrificial acts.

8. The two lives (couple) who have been immature so far, and living and thinking depending upon the elder's care without much responsibility, have been let open now by the marriage, which imposes independent and new responsibilities on the couple. Hereafter, they start their (*Griha*) new household (not house) and get and nourish the children and undertake five types of obligations. *Vivaha* is a *Sanskrit* word which invokes all these significant responsibilities. 'Vi' means 'particularly', and 'Vaha' means 'carrying' i.e. sharing responsibility. In other words, it is to undertake and administer the duties and obligations. It is also as



Marriage

Vudvaha, journey to higher states of consciousness. *Lagna*, *Kalyana*, *Mangala Karya* are also used for marriage.

Our Hindu marriage system prescribes mutual sacrifice for each other and both of them should serve the society in the spirit of service and sacrifice and thereby achieve welfare "here & there" by meeting their duties & obligations. The wish that there be happiness from marriage is appropriate. Happiness in its elementary understanding is bodily happiness. Those who nourish the feeling that marriage is only for such happiness, will soon get necessarily disappointed. Self-centred and individually confined happiness are not the aims of marriage. Ritual involving the psychological preparation to couple to enable them to step in the new path of life with awareness, happiness, and responsibility is Hindu marriage.

Mere ideals are not enough. They should be able to achieve a distinction whereby they are the source of inspiration and guidance, serving as proof for emulation. Parvati-Parameshwara, Lakshmi-Narayana, Saraswati-Brahma, Shachi-Indra, Sita-Rama, Rukmini-Krishna, Draupadi-Pandavas, Atri-Anusuya, Savitri-Satyavan, Nala-Damayanti, Ahalya-Gautama, and other hundreds of ideal couples have stood as examples of beacon light. Remembering them daily and particularly during marriage ceremony is very essential. One of the clear symbols of marriage is the ideal couple-hood of Lord Parameswara holding his other-half of his body in female form, as his consort Parvati Devi, popularly known as Ardha Narishwara. Great poet Kalidasa in his hymn prays as follows:

वागर्थाविव सम्प्रुक्तौ वागर्थः प्रतिपत्तये ।

जगतः पितरौ बन्दे पार्वतीपरमेश्वरौ ॥

(Raghuvamsha - 1-1)

Vagarthaviva Sampruktau Vagartah Pratipattaye

Jagatah Pitarau Vande Parvati Parameswarau

"Sound and Substance have to unite together. Eternal Mother and Eternal Father of this Universe, Parvati and Parameshwara are united together well without separation. I am prostrating before them to grant me inspiration for incorporating appropriate sounds (*vak*) and meanings in composition of poetry.

परस्पर तपस्सम्पत् फलायितपरस्परौ ।

प्रपञ्च मातापितरौ प्राञ्चौ जायापती स्तुमः ॥



Paraspara Tapassampat Phalayita Parasparau

Prapancha Mata Pitarau Pranchau Jayapati Stumah

As a fruit of penance done by each one, to obtain the other, they have now become husband and wife. Prostrations to those divine eternal couple, who are the celestial parents of this great cosmic existence.

