

VIVAH  
THE HINDU MARRIAGE



*Jyotishacharya Shastri Dandil  
Roshan Singh*





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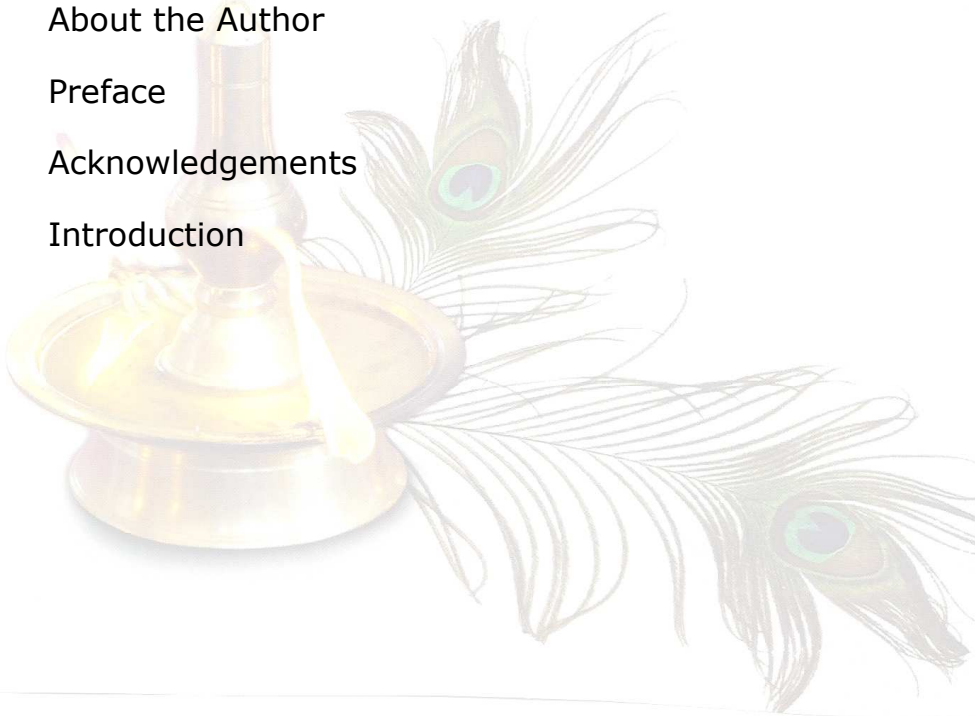
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# Dedication

To my beloved mother  
Bhanudevi (Devi) Singh

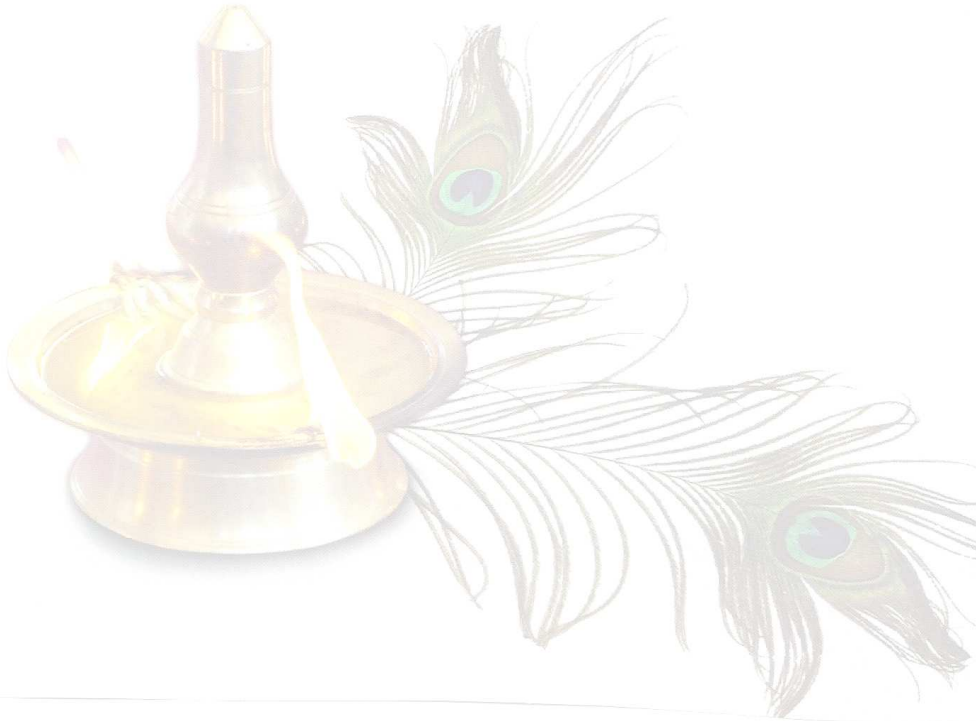
Who brought me into this world, and reared me  
with Love and thought me the values of leading  
a pure and noble life.

To my dear wife  
Jayanthee Devi (Jay) Singh  
For her humility and care in standing on my side  
in trial and tribulation.

To my dear children  
Maneshree and Avishkar Singh  
For being sincere, dedicated and loving children

To the future generations  
That will marry and maintain their vows  
according to the principals of our great heritage  
that has stood the test of time.

# Forward



## About the Author



Pundit Roshan Singh is a renowned and highly respected Priest. He is an ordained Pundit who has been initiated by Sri Srimand Bhaktivedanta Narayana Gosvami Maharaj of the Gaudiya Brahma Samprada of India an unbroken chain of disciplinic succession coming from Lord Krsna himself.

He has studied astrology and vaastu shastra under various spiritual master of India.

He is also an Ayurvedic Health Care Practitioner having studied under the tutorship of the world famous Dr David Frawley of the American Institute of Vedic Studies.

Pundit Roshan is well conversant with the major religions of the world in particular Hinduism. He has a profound knowledge of the Bhagavad-gita and the Srimad Bhagvatam. His discourses over national TV, Radio and at public programs have always been well received.

He is known for the exemplary manner in which he conducts the 16 sanskaars especially Hindu Marriage ceremonies.

He is the first Hindu pundit in the Republic of South Africa to bring honour to his people by being appointed as the countries first Marriage Officer.

He is the recipient of an Award of Honour from the All India Federation of Astrologers Societies for his contribution in the field of Vedic Sciences.

He hold the position of Marriage Officer, Justice of the Peace and Commissioner of Oaths.

Punditji is the Director of Ripple Effect Wellness Centre that was established in the year 2000 that offers a Vedic



Solution to all problems & diseases under one roof. The centre offers services in Astrology, Numerology, Palmistry, Crystal & Gemstone Healing, Chakra Balancing, Vaastu Shasta and Ayurveda.



# Preface



## Acknowledgements



# Introduction









# *K*anya Daan

The giving away of the bride in a Hindu wedding

*Jyotishacharya Shastri Pundit Roshan Singh*

First Hindu Pundit In the Republic of South Africa to be appointed as a Marriage Officer

*Having completed every family and scriptural observance,  
According to the Vedas, the glorious monarch –  
(Janaka)  
Gave his daughter Sita to the Lord (Ram)*

Ramayana

*Until the bride has performed the Saptapadi she  
is considered unmarried.*

Manusmriti



## **Arrival of the Barat**

The grooms marriage party is known as the barat. This procession arrives at the brides home or the wedding venue with much pomp and joy. In India the bridegroom arrives on horseback accompanied by a musical band with members of the family that dance and sing in a procession. In South Africa it is done in a much more conservative manner with some singing that is done by older ladies of the family or by persons that are hired to sing *samdhi Milan and parchan songs*.

## **Do Mela and Samadhi Milan**

The two families assemble at the entrance of the wedding venue and approach one another step by step while appropriate mantras are chanted by the revered Pundit. The mood is intensified as female members of the bride's family or ladies that have been hired to sing songs to welcome the groom and his family. The songs are taken from the great epic The Ramayana and one is reminded of the marriage of Lord Rama to Mother Sitadevi.

The father of the bride offers a lota of water to the grooms father in which a coin is placed. The brides father in a mood of total humility requests the grooms father to take his daughter as his own and forgive him for his shortcomings in bringing up his daughter and providing her with education, clothing, food and shelter within his limited capacity.

The Pundit chants appropriate *svasti vachan* and *swagat* mantras wherein the grooms father accepts that the bride is *paraya dhan* or borrowed wealth, and in reality is his real daughter which he has come to claim. He vows to take her into his home and care for her more than her father, as she belongs to him and his family. He promises her father that he will do everything in his capacity to ensure that she will always be happy in his home.

The grooms father accepts the *lota* or vessel of water and offers it to the Lord promising to carry out his vow. He takes the coin from the *lota* and retains that always as a symbol of *Luxmi* or wealth. Water is sacred and is a symbol of purity. The handing over of water to the grooms father is a confirmation of the unity of the two families that are expected to be as pure and eternal as water.

### **Dwar Pooja**

The bridegroom is given a very prestigious welcome by his father in law at the entrance of the venue. *Dwar* or entrance, *Pooja* or prayer, is conducted by the revered Punditji. It is a purificatory ceremony and simultaneously offerings are made to *Sri Ganesh* and the 33 000 000 *devi* and *devatas* to be present in the ceremony and give their blessings to the occasion. The groom is treated with great love and respect. An *asan* or seat is offered to him, his feet are washed, his forehead

is anointed with *chandan tiluk* as if her were the very incarnation of Lord Vishnu himself.

## **Parchan**

The bride's mother with seven married ladies together with other ladies of the family welcome the groom ceremoniously. He is considered to be the epithet of Lord Vishnu himself. He is beckoned to come and be united to *Maha Lakshmi*.

In the Ramayan it is stated :

*Ehi bhanti jani baraat awat  
Bajahe bahu baajahi  
Rani suhsini boli parichani  
Hetu mangal saajahi*

### **TRANSLATION**

**When it was known that the marriage procession was approaching, all sorts of music began to play. She summoned married woman whose husbands were alive and prepared with their help auspicious materials for the ceremony of waving lights round the bridegroom.**

Now that the duty of men is over the female members of the family take over to welcome him and tease him by singing appropriate *mangal geet and parchawan* songs

The mother of the bride waves kindled lights around the groom and restrains her tears of joy in reflecting upon

the handsome groom that is to take the hand of her daughter in marriage. She and the bevy of married ladies gracefully offer him waving lights and other auspicious items.

*Parchan Geet*  
*A song to welcome the bridegroom*  
*Mangal Gaan*

*Gawahou mangal charji*  
*Var bhyahan aaye*  
*Dalo gale jai malaji*  
*Var bhyahan aaye*  
*Mangal murti, soondar surati*  
*Karjor Namaste sounawahou*  
*Var bhyahan aaye*  
*Soondar thar kapur ki bati*  
*Prem se aarti outarahou*  
*Var bhyahan aaye*  
*Shoudh din shoubh ghadi*  
*Aaj tou lana*  
*Karhou soumangal charji*  
*Var bhyahan aaye*  
*Dekhat Chandra chakor*  
*Sukhi bhaye*  
*Teisse he dulhan aayji*  
*Surya samouha kumud sakuchani*  
*Dekhte Chandra vikasji*  
*Var bhyahan aaye*  
*Var dulhan donon howein chairanjiv*

*Sukh pawahon jagmahiji  
Var bayahan aaye  
Prem se aarti outarji  
Var bhyahan aaye*

### **The Bride comes to the Maroh**

The bride is brought to the Maroh generally accompanied by a bevy of young unmarried girls. They are generally her sisters, cousins and close friends. The mood is pensive, she takes graceful and measured steps. In the Ramayana this is described beautifully by Sri Tulsidasji as follows :

*Siya sundarta barni najayi  
Ladhu mati bahut manohartayi  
Aawat dikhi baratinha Sita  
Roop rasi sab bhanti punita  
Sabhi manhi man kiye pranama  
Dekhi Ram bhaye purankama*

### **TRANSLATION**

Sita's beauty and elegance is indescribable  
Surpassing her charm  
I have no words to describe her beauty  
When the members of the bridegroom's party saw her,  
They greeted her from the core of their hearts.  
Ram was filled with love at the sight of her.

Everyone's eyes become focused upon the glamorously bedecked and beautiful Dulhin who is adorned with her bridal attire and jewellery known as solah shringars. (16 items that make up her full attire). She is blissful yet sad within, as she takes each step to meet the partner with whom she is to spend an entire lifetime with. In the old days she was led into the Maroh with her Bhowji for brothers wife who would have her head covered as a mark of respect for her elders.

### **Tag-paat**

The bride grooms eldest brother welcomes the bride to his family and offers her the assurance that she will always be protected and well provided for and that she will not lack anything in her marriage. He calls upon all the devas to be with him in making this commitment on behalf of his family. While sacred mantras are chanted by the Punditji the jetbhai offers her well decorated and beautifully wrapped gifts consisting of cosmetics, jewellery, sandals, clothing, mitaai, a token of money and sandals. The sandal is not offered to the haris or the alter but handed over to the brides attendant. A red sutra or sacred thread that is blessed by the Punditji is placed around the bride's neck. This is known as Tag-paat. The bride is then led back into the dressing room known as the Kohbar. In this way the Kanya Nirikshan or Vastra Samarpan Vidhi is concluded.

### **Varpujan**



The bridegroom enters the Maroh to carry out his nuptial rites. The bride's father holds his hand and gently requests him to take a seat on the asna that has been specially made for him. He is offered three pieces of sacred kusha grass. The first is placed in front of him – signifying that he is willing to enter into the next phase of his life householder's life known as grihastashram. The second is thrown behind him signifying that he vows to leave behind him the life of youthful frivolity and the third he places under his feet stating that he vows to walk on a firm foundation paving his way for prosperity and happiness.

The bride's father symbolically washes the groom's feet in a thali and continues to offer him water to wash his face and to sip, this is known as prokshan as the groom is the chief guest of honour and treated like a Monarch. He is then offered flowers and akshat after which a tilak of sandalwood paste is placed on his forehead as this is a fit welcome for the Gods.

Madhuparka is a word that comes from two words put together namely, madh meaning honey and parka meaning mixture. This consists of yoghurt, honey and ghee. This is offered to the groom, which is indeed a sign of the great respect that the bride's father has for the groom as this is generally offered to distinguished personalities such as kings, saints and guru's. The sweetness in mouth is symbolic of the type of personality that he will be now and always, in his

thoughts, words and actions. It is a reminder to him that he will radiate this sweetness to his wife, family and society now and always. The ghee signifies long life, the essence of honey is sweetness itself while curd being white stands for purity and is medicinal.

The mantra : akala-mrtu-haranam

Sarva-vyadhi-vinasanam

Visnoh padodakam pitva

Sirasa dharayamy aham

### **TRANSLATION**

Having drunk the water from the lotus feet of Lord Vishnu, which destroys all disease and takes away the chance of dying untimely, I hold that water on my head.

He vows that his relationships with his wife will be as sweet as honey, as affectionate to each other as ghee and as flexible and clear in their minds as curd.

## **The bride returns to the Maroh**

### **Varmala**

The presiding brahmana commences the wedding proper with a formal welcome address.

The couple are now requested to exchange garlands in the presence of the Lord, their elders, parents, friends and well wishers. They vow to keep their marriage ever united in firm resolve to become an integral part and parcel of one another. This is done while appropriate mantras are changed.

Om svasti no govigndah svasti no 'cyutanantau

Svasti no vasudevo visnur dadhatu



Svasti no narayno naro vai  
Svasti nah padmanbhah pursottamo  
dadhatu  
Svasti no visvakseno vivesvarh  
Svasti no krsikeso harir dadhatu  
Svastino vainateyo harih  
Svasti no 'nyan-suto hanur  
bhagavato dadhatu  
Svasti svasti su-mangalaih keso mahan  
Sri-krsnhsac-cid-ananda-ghanah  
sarvesvaresvaro dadhatu

Sometimes if possible other Brahamana's that are present will chant the following mantra while rice mixed with hardi is thrown to bless and bring auspiciousness to the occasion.

Om asya karmana punyham bavanto bhruvantu  
Om punyham om punyham om  
punyham  
Om asya karmana svasti bhavantu bruvanto  
ayusman svasti  
Om svasti om svasti om svasti  
Om asya karmana rddhim bhavanto bruvantu  
Om rddhyatam om rddhyatam om  
rddhyatam

## **Kanya Daan**

The Kanya Daan is the most touching ceremony in the entire vivah sanskaar. It is when the pride is given away to the groom ceremoniously.

In the Ramayana Sri Tulsidas Maharaj says :

Iyam Sita mama sutaa  
Saha dharma chari tara  
Pratiksha chainam bhadkamte  
Panim grihnishwa panina  
Pativrata mahabhoga  
Chaye vanugata sada

### **TRANSLATION**

At this appointed day and hour, here is my daughter, Sita, who will ever tread with you the path of Dharma. Take her hand in yours. Blessed and devoted, she will every walk with you like your own shadow.

Achmana

A purificatory ceremony call achmana is carried out whereby the bridal couple and their parents wash their hands and sip water. The pundit chants :

Om apavitrah pavitro va  
Sarvavastham gato 'pi va  
Yah smaret pundarikaksam  
Sa bahyabhyantarah sucih  
Sri-vishnuh sri-vishnuh sri-vishnuh

The brides youngest brother who stands behind his sister is requested to pour water over his sisters hands that are placed in the hands of her parents which are placed in the hands of the groom. A sankalpa mantra is repeated by the bride's parents wherein they declare that the hand over their daughters hand to the groom for the propitiation of Narayan and Lakshmi to bring pure and God longing children into the world that will care for their parents and love and serve God. That

they will respect their parents and carry out their Pitr – Rin or ancestral debts and thirdly that the bride and groom will pay their debts to society by caring for the sick and needy.

The parents offer a gift to the bridegroom and to the Punditji in the form of dakshina for having so graciously conducted this most auspicious act of Kanya Daan. The Punditji offers his blessing to the parents and the bridal couple and Shanti pancakam mantra are chanted :

Om sam no mitrah / sam varunah /  
Sam no bhavatu aryama / sam no indro  
brhaspatih /  
Sam no visnur urukramah / namo brahmane  
Namaste vayo / tvam eva pratyaksam  
brahmasi /  
Tvam eva pratyaksam brahma vadisyami /  
Rtam vadisyami / satyam vadisyami / tan  
mam avatu /  
Tad vaktaram avatu / avatu mam / avatu  
vaktaram /  
Om shantih shantih shantih //

Om sam no mitrah / sam varunah /  
Sam no bavatu aryama / sam no indro  
brhaspatih /  
Sam no vishnur urukramah / namo brahmane /  
Namaste vayo / tvam eva pratyaksam  
brahmasi /  
Tvam eve pratyaksam brahmavadisam / rtam  
avadisam /

Satyam avadisam / tan mamavit /  
Tad vaktaram avit / avin mam / avid vaktaram /  
Om Shantih Shantih Shantih //

Om Sah nav avatu  
Saha nau bhunaktu  
Saha viryam karavavahai  
Tejasvi nav adhitam astu mad vidvisavhai  
Om Shantih Shantih Shantih //

Om purnam adah purnam idam  
Purnat purnam udacyate  
Purasya purnam adaya  
Purnam evavasisyate  
Om Shantih Shantih Shantih //

Om taccham-yoravrnimahe  
Gatum jaynaya  
Gatum jaynapataye  
Daivi svastirastu nah  
Svasitr manusebhayah  
Urdhvam jigatu behsajam  
Sam no astu dvipade  
Sam catuspade  
Om Shantih Shantih Shantih //

### **Gaat Bandhan**

Now that the bride has been gifted to the groom and the latter has accepted to take her into his life and to fulfil all responsibilities in offering her love and care, the

bride's sister or sister in law tie the sacred knot known as granthi bandhan. While this is being done sacred verses from the Vedas are chanted. Therefore this knot can never be broken spiritually. It is on the strength of this act that the Hindu Marriage is declared as Vivah Sanskaar. There is no opposite word to Vivah Sanskaar which shows that the Hindu marriage is an eternal union between the two that have vowed and pledged before the assembled and God that they will remain committed to one another forever.

### **Agni Stapana**

The sacred fire known as Pundarikaksha which is another form of Bhagvan Sri Vishnu or the Laukik Agni which is the folk fire of the families presiding diety, is kindled and lit from the lamp that is placed on the mangal kalash that is in front of them. Here prayers are offered to Luxmi Narayana to appear and be witnesses to the vows that will be taken.

### **Homa**

Many offerings known as Homa are made to the blazing fire. The principal one's being Rastrabhrit, Jaya, Abhyatan and Laja homa.

The rastrabhrit, jaya and abhyatan homas encompass prayers for victory and protection and focus on the Lord to remove any hostile forces known and unknown to the bridegroom.

The Laja homa symbolises fertility and prosperity. In each of these homa's grains and ghee is offered to the sacred fire.

### **Rastrabhrit Homa**

Hindu's firmly understand that man is an individual but at the same time he belongs to a family and the family belongs to a society which makes him a social being. He is supposed to live for society and the society nourishes him. The rastrabhrit homa is to assure the bride that he will protect her and assist her in adjusting to the new environment that she now enters into.

### **Jaya Homa**

Here offerings are made to Prajapati or the Lord of the Universe and is conducted by the bride and groom. Offerings of samagree and grains are offered by the bride while the groom offers ghee to the sacred yajna or fire. These offerings are done for good conscience, positive thoughts and the power of discrimination.

### **Abhyatana Homa**

This homa is dedicated to Indra, Yama, Vayu, Surya, Chandrama, Brihaspati, Mitra, Vruna, Samudra, Anna, Soma, Savitr Rudra, Tvastar, Vishnu, Marutahs and Pitarahs the controllers and elements that constitute the constructive energy of the material world, Bhagvan Sri Krsna being the supreme controller of all of them.

### **Laja Homa or Lawa Milaai**

In this most auspicious ceremony a chosen brother from the bride and grooms home mix the paddy or puffed parched rice which is known as laja. This is symbolic of fertility and prosperity. The significance of the ceremony is that just as rice when sown has to be transplanted from one place to the paddy field to produce a crop of abundance, the bride has to be to the home of her husband where she will prosper and bring up a wonderful family filled with love and harmony.

### **Bhawar**

The circumambulation of the sacred fire.

An offering of Lawa is made by the bride who has her hands in the cupped hands of the groom. The lawa is put into their hands by the brides brother who takes it from the suph or winnowing basket. The couple led by the bride then take graceful and measured steps around the fire. This procedure is repeated three times as the invited guests keep their eyes on this wonderful event.

### **Shila Rohan**

After each circumambulation the bride places her right foot on a stone and vows to be as steadfast as the stone in her marriage. To stand on the side of her husband in trial and tribulation and not to be the cause of any unhappiness in his life. This is known as Shila Rohan or Asma Rohan.

Mantra :           Om imam asmanam aroha  
                                  Asmeva tvam sthira bhava  
                                  Dvisantam apavadhasva



Ma ca tvam dvisatam adhah

### **TRANSLATION**

I mount this stone that is unmovable in heat and cold and vow to remain steadfast on the side of my husband in trial and tribulation and be fixed in devotion at the feet of the Lord.

The groom then leads the bride around the fire. No mantra is recited but soft shehenai music can be heard in the background. The groom then takes the right hand position and is ready to take the seven steps with his beautiful bride.

### **Saptapadi**

This is the rite when the couple take the seven steps on the sacred kusa grass. The word saptapadi is a compound word derived from two words, sapta meaning seven and pada meaning steps.

*Yavat saptapadi nasty*

*Tavat saptapadi kumarika*

### **TRANSLATION**

Until the bride has performed the saptapadi she is still considered unmarried.

The first Step -Om ekam ese visnus tva nayantu - For food we pray to Anapurna the Goddess of Food.

The second Step – Om dve urje visnus tva nayatu - For strength we pray to Mother Durga

The third Step – Om trini vratay visnus tva nayatu - For wealth we pray to Mother Lakshmi



The fourth Step – Om catvari mayo-bavaya visnus tva  
nayatu - For happiness we pray to Sukh Varsha

The fifth Step –Om panca-pasubhy visnus tva nayatu -  
For the protection of animals we pray to Prajapati

The sixth Step – Om sad rayas posaya visnus tva nayatu  
- For the seasons we pray to Ritu Varsha

For the seventh step the bridegroom tells the bride :

Om sapta-saptabhy hotrabhyo visnus tva nayatu

Come, now we are friends after having taken  
these seven steps

Together. Our love is consolidated. In this, the  
seventh step,

Our love is consolidated. Besides serving our  
parents, family and

Friends we shall together also serve the country  
and protect our  
Religion.

The conch shells are sounded and flower petals rain  
upon the couple while bells toll sweetly.

### **THE AUSPICIOUSNESS OF THE NUMBER SEVEN**

Seven is considered to be a very auspicious number for  
Hindus as we have the seven worlds or lokas, seven  
seers or rishis, seven aspects of the divine mother or  
shakti, seven rays of the sun, seven underworlds, seven  
notes of music, seven colours of the rainbow, seven  
horses of dawn, seven types of food, seven sacred  
mountain, seven natures, seven days in the week, seven

nerves in the body, seven main planets, seven islands in the scripture and seven qualities of the fire.

### **SURYA DARSHANA**

This is done if the wedding is conducted during the day. Surya Darshana is when the husband requests his wife to look at the sun which is considered to be one of the creations of God that is constant, fixed and effulgent.

Om ta chakshur devahitam  
Parastat chukra mucharat  
Pasyem sharadah shatam  
Jeverm sharadah shataghvam  
Shrunuyam sharadah shatam  
Prabhawam sharadah shatam  
Dinah shyam sharadha shatam  
Bhuyascha sharadah shataat

### **TRANSLATION**

That God who is benevolent is all-seeing.  
Prior to the creation of this world, he existed.  
Pure and perfect and will ever continue to be.  
Meditating on him may we see a hundred autumns,  
May we speak a hundred autumns,  
May we enjoy freedom for a hundred autumns and longer  
and beyond these hundred autumns,  
May we enjoy all these blessings

### **DRUV DARSHANA**

This is done if the wedding is conducted during the night Druv refers to the Pole Star and darshana means to look.

### **SINDUR DAAN**

Sri Sant Tulsidasji describes this in the Ramayan :

Ram Siya sir sindur dehi  
Sobha kahi na jati vidhi kehin

### **TRANSLATION**

Sri Ram applied the vermilion to Sita's head brilliant beyond description.

The bride groom anoints the centre or parting of the hair of the bride with sindhur which is called sindhur daan which literally means the gift of auspiciousness for willingly accepting to change her status from bride to wife. This is also known as sumagali. Mang is the corrupt form of a Sanskrit word "mangal" signifying blessing and auspiciousness.

### **THE MANTRA**

Om sumangali riyam  
Vadhurimam samet pasyat  
Sawbhagya masyeya  
Dattwaya athastam viparetana

### **TRANSLATION**

You are my panigrahita the one whose hand I have grasped with whom I will lead an eternal life. I request the assembled to bless us now and always.

### **THE MANTRA**

Om saubhagamastu  
Om saubham bhavatu

### **TRANSLATION**

May you be blessed with good fortune.  
May you be blessed with prosperity.

## **MANGAL SUTRA**

A chain set in golden and black beads is placed around the neck of the bride by the groom. This is known as mangal-sutra or a thread of auspiciousness. The bride is expected to adorn her forehead with the red dot and sindhur and wear the mangal-sutra on a daily basis hereafter. It is always a reminder of the day she married her beloved and the vows that she took with him. In applying the sindhur dot on her forehead and in her maang she says : I cannot be the sun in your life, but will make every endeavour to be like a ray of sunlight. I pray for the longevity of your life to exceed that of mine so that I will not have any occasion to remove this sign of auspiciousness. May it last forever.

### **EXCHANGE OF RINGS**

This is a western tradition and has crept into the Hindu marriage over the times. No mention is made of the exchange of rings in any of our scriptures nor in any of the books on the 16 sanskaars. Nowadays the Pundit would chant the swasti vachan mantra of blessing and bless the rings.

### **ASHIRVAD**

The revered Punditji invites the parents and the assembled guests to bless the couple. The wedded couple would then prostrate before the Brahaman who conducted the wedding ceremony and then proceed to take the blessings of their parents.

### **SHANTI PAAT**

The prayer of peace known as Shanti Paat is chanted requesting the Lord to bring peace to the entire creation.



### **CHUMAN**

This is a blessing ceremony done immediately after the wedding ceremony is concluded by the Pundit. Female members of the bride's family bless them with rice and running grass. The rite is intended to release the couple from the formal wedding ceremony and allow them to meet the assembled guests and indulge in the festivities.

At this point the couple joins the rest of the guests in a banquet dinner and celebrate with music, song and dance.

After dinner they would then be met and congratulated by their guests.

### **BIDAAI**

This is a very moving part of the life of the bride as she has to depart from her dearly beloved family with whom she has grown and spent her entire life. She hugs her mother, members of her family and finally her father and bids farewell to them forever, to go to the

home of her husband with whom she will spend the rest of her life.

## **Jyotishacharya Shastri Pundit Roshan Singh**

Vedic Astrologer (studied under various spiritual masters in India)

Ayurvedic Health Care Practitioner (American Institute of Vedic Studies)

Marriage Officer (Licence Number : Q22548)

32 Guey Avenue, Highway Gardens, Edenvale, Gauteng  
494 Annet Drive, Reservoir Hills, Durban (up Mountbatten Drive, Opposite the Reservoir)

Phone : 0825749357

Email : punditroshan@telkomsa.net

Website : [www.astroworld.co.za](http://www.astroworld.co.za)

[www.purebhakti.com](http://www.purebhakti.com)

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