

A Wedding – Thankyou

Thank you for attending our wedding and wishing us a wedding life of Awareness. The first important day of our life is the birth day of our **Body**. In this first stage of life, the Brahmacharya, we matured the physical body. Today is the second most important day, the second stage of life to mature our **Mind**, the Graha Ashram. We understand that the purpose of marriage is to mature the mind by expanding our heart space to another person and share the easy and hard lessons of life.

Many weddings are done in presence of a huge gathering with all rituals, while others are simple without any ritual involving only the couple. However not all weddings are successful either because the couple cannot cope up with each other or caused by the interference of the in-laws.

Are these traditional wedding rituals a waste of time and money and meaningful for modern couples? Ancient wise people understood that the laws that govern the cosmos if reflected in our life will help us to solve problems that one will encounter in a married life. The Vedic system recognizes that in Cosmos, the Energy undergoes change within itself during the creation of the suns, planets and life on Earth. This aspect is seen in the Female body referring her to Sakthi. The Male is the unchanging phenomenon which initiates creation but remain the same in all creation.

As is the gigantic Universe, so is our Human Body (Yatha Pindae Thathae Brahmandae): In the Indian tradition, through the wedding rituals, the couple for the first time experience invoking the divinity as God and Goddess. To invoke divinity within us means, to identify (realize) the Cosmic principle of changing Sakthi and unchanging Shiva within us. The bride and the groom are also seen as Lord Vishnu and Lakshmi. Lakshmi and Vishnu represent the changing wealth Energy and the unchanging Intelligential factor both in the cosmos and also within ourselves. Married life is a journey to self realize that our real nature is not the mortal body but an miniature of the infinite Cosmic Energy. In the wedding, this ancient Indian Scientific concept is hammered through rituals. The father or the brother of bride, washes the groom's feet to acknowledge the Cosmic "Maleness" within him.

After **Vaak Daanam** (commitment through word) between the elders to guide the couples for a successful married life. The younger generation also honors the experiential marital wisdom of the elders by giving the elders to lead the wedding process. Kanya Daanam is done, where the father places the bride's hand on the groom hand as an act of seeking the commitment to reflect Cosmic order (Dharma) in the married life. Problems in married life is due to lack of understanding and incorporating the Cosmic pattern in our life.

A ritualistic Mangala Snaanam or sacred bath with turmeric and sandal wood paste symbolizing purification of thoughts, which means to give up all our pre-conceived notions of our individuality and learn to accommodate another person's view into our life. Symbolizing this the bride and groom wear new wedding clothes.

Maangalya dhaaranam is tying the Mangala Sutra around the neck of the bride by the groom. Sutra means "Truth" and Mangala means promising success. So Mangala-Sutra or Thaali is an assurance given that the married life promises success in knowing the Truth of life. The thread means to focus or tie the mind onto the Truth.

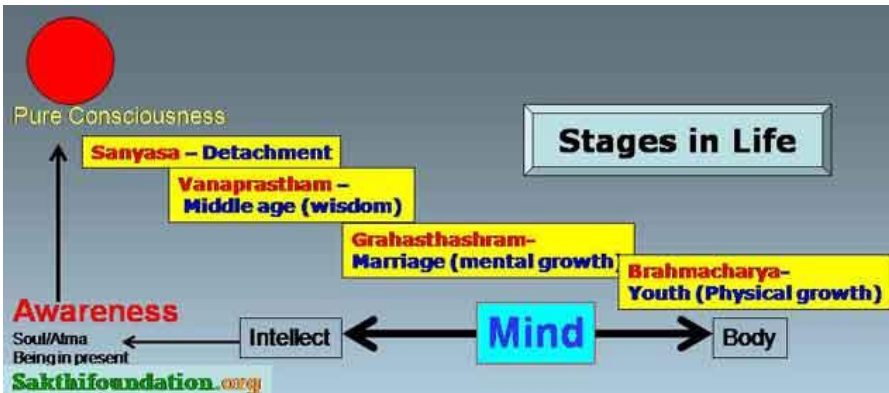
In Paani graham ritual, the groom lowers his right palm and encloses it over the right hand of the bride. This again is the trust of holding each other with unconditional love in a journey onwards. Unconditional love means love born out of performing one's duties more than the physical liking to the person. In this regards it doesn't matter, if the couple know each other before marriage or is an arranged marriage. Strengthening un-conditional love (duty bound love) more than the business mode emotional expectation is the key success to married life. Sit and discuss, not emotionally to justify one acts and pinpoint or blame others faults. But hold on to intelligence to be aware of your duties of married life. The concept of acceptance, that is accepting the other person as he or she is and helping that individual to rise from the limitations is the foremost duty to be performed in marriage life by both the partners. Only when the mind has to the attitude of acceptance, the emotional Ego becomes less powerful and then gives way to intellect to strengthen the relationship. By constantly giving more

importance to intelligence (duties as a husband and wife), one becomes aware of the Higher Cosmic Self.

Walking seven steps (**Sapta padi**) psychologically gives a friendship feeling. Instead of being bosses, both should be like friends, sharing the relationship with an open heart. During this ritual, the groom walks with the bride holding hands to the right side of the sacred fire. Knowledge purifies like Fire and so Circambulating fire symbolizes a knowledge-centered and driven married life. Both should be aware of the "Freedom" experienced in married life. Freedom does not mean to do whatever to satisfy the emotional urges of the individual but attain emotional independence. Emotional catering and appreciating everytime would be a torture for the other person, spoiling the relationship. Appreciation should be natural and not a conditional requirement and should not be a driving force to perform duties. If a couple achieve this emotional independence and freedom, the unconditional Love of Radha and Krishna blossoms.

Traditionally, stepping on a grinding stone, married men wear "Metti" a metallic ring on the toe ring to remind him to walking undeviated path in the married life. He takes the lead of being the model for the family to follow. The groom then points to the sky, the unmoving (unchanging) reference Pole star, the destination of their married life.

Graha Prevesam: This ceremony relates to the journey of the wife and husband to their "Home". The real home of all of us is the very "Source" (Consciousness), our real Self. This Journey to the Source is the very purpose of all of us and married life facilitates the process. Both of them enter the house with a lamp signifying knowledge to show the right path.



Final marriage Ritual: From the moment of marriage, both Husband and Wife should live as God and Goddess (Cosmic order). The last

ritual is in the private moment of first night. The Husband should prostrate at the feet of Wife to shed his Ego and surrender to the goal of attaining unconditional happiness or bliss with her. The wife also should do the same ritualistic prostration to the Husband's feet with the same understanding. This is the ideal way to start the married life.

Vaana-Prastham: Most important is to transit from the Second stage of life to the third stage of Vaana-Prastha. This is the stage of implementing the knowledge without being emotionally attached like a Professional doctor or judge. In Vaanaprastham, parents should give incharge to the newly married couple and stay in the background to share and guide through their wisdom and not emotionally attached to the mistakes the younger generation makes in the maturing process. Modern days there is so much of friction between the parents and younger generation because the parents do not proceed from the Graha Ashram to Vanaprastham. If not they will remain unripe sour fruits finding way to old-age homes. Younger generation also should self-correct the ignorant mistakes made by elders.

Knowing the meaning as well as awareness of the wedding rituals, will bring happiness in the married life. By reading this you are blessing and remembering our wonderful Married life. We seek the blessings of our parents and you elders by touching the feet, symbolizing the fact that we want to follow your foot steps of a successful journey together.

With love Bride (name) and Groom (name). Date: Place:

Source : Sakthi Foundation www.uni5.org