



# Vedic Vivaah Sanskar

(Vedic Wedding Ceremony)

“Vivaaha” - The Hindu / Vedic marriage ceremony: an auspicious “Sanskar” and a sacred step in one's spiritual, physical and social growth.



The basis of a happy married life following the Vivaaha is love, devotion, dedication, selflessness and mutual growth.

The “Mandap”: this is a canopy structure made of willow in our case and decorated with flowers. The flowers represent beauty and joy.

The four pillars represent the four cornerstones of love and happiness in a marriage:

- 1) the right choice of partner:
- 2) a positive attitude toward each other and the world in general;
- 3) an agreement to approach parenting as equal partners; and
- 4) an enduring love for each other.

The “Agni”: a fire in the centre of the Mandap around which the ceremony is conducted. This personifies knowledge, power, morality, selflessness and ensures the promises made today are kept for life in the light of God.

The Agni is a divine witness to the union of the bride and groom and brings warmth throughout married life.

The order and meaning of Vivaah Sanskar:

#### 1. Jai Mala (Wedding Garland)

The bride and groom greet each other and exchange flower garlands signifying their mutual respect and acceptance of each other.

#### 2. Prarthana Mantra (Prayers)

Veda Mantras are chanted to invoke the blessings of God.

#### 3. Madhu Parka (Ceremony to ensure friendship)

The bride offers the groom a mixture of honey and yoghurt. Honey symbolises the sweetness of eternal love and yoghurt is for good health.

#### 4. Achamana (Purification)

Water is sipped three times for purification of the heart, body and soul.





#### 5. Mauli Bandhan (Tying the religious thread)

Coloured threads are tied on the bride and groom's wrists and others in the mandap participating in the marriage ceremony, for them to receive blessings from God.

#### 6. Kanyadaan (Giving parental consent and blessings to the daughter)

The parents of the bride place their right hand on the right hand of the groom giving their consent to the marriage. The act of giving one's daughter's hand in marriage is considered the ultimate offering a parent can give.

#### 7. Agni Pranidhaan (Kindling the sacred fire)

The wedding is solemnised before fire, the symbol of knowledge, power and purity.

#### 8. Yajna or Havan (Fire ritual)

In Hinduism, fire is the sustainer of life symbolising the illumination of the mind, knowledge and happiness. The bride and groom perform the havan to commence the religious ceremony. Ghee (clarified butter) and saamagree (mixture of herbs, spices and grains) are put into the sacred fire amidst the reciting of mantras to invoke the blessings of God.

#### 9. Paani Grahan and Pratijnya (Taking of the sacred vows)

The groom and bride make a solemn pledge before God that they have become one and will forever love each other.

#### 10. Gatha Bandhan (Tying of the knot)

“Chunnis” (scarves) worn by the bride and groom are tied together in a knot symbolising their unity forever.

#### 11. Shilaa Rohan (Rock ceremony)

The bride's right foot is placed on a piece of rock signifying that the bride and groom promise to remain true to each other, as firm as a rock, regardless of any obstacles in life.





### 12. Laaja Homa (Parched rice ceremony)

Parched rice is offered by the bride and groom together to the sacred fire symbolising a wish for the prosperity and wellbeing of the couple and the couple's desire to share their good fortune with the world. The Vedic hymns recited at this time are prayers for prosperity and fertility.

### 13. Mangal Parikrama (Going round the fire seven times)

The bride and groom go round the fire seven times. During the first six rounds the groom leads the bride and during the last round the bride leads the groom. These represent the marriage vows and symbolise the following:

Dharma: Righteousness

Artha: Prosperity

Kaama: Coming together and sharing responsibilities

Moksha: To attain the ultimate happiness with the help of physical, mental and spiritual development.

### 14. Saptapadi (Seven steps)

The bride and groom take seven steps forward symbolising the beginning of their journey through life together. It represents sharing and equality within marriage.

### 15. Sindoor (Vermilion powder)

The groom puts Sindoor in the hair parting of the bride and welcomes her into his life as his eternal partner (soul mate).

### 16. Aashirvaad (Blessings)

Relatives and guests recite a hymn and shower blessings upon the couple of good luck, prosperity and a long and happy married life.

### 17. Shanti Paath (Prayer for Peace)

This prayer is recited at the end of all Vedic ceremonies and functions. It is a prayer for "perfect peace and tranquillity to reign through the Universe".

