

*A Manual of Hindu Marriage*



*Pandit ShriRam SharmaAcharya*

# ***A Manual of Hindu Marriage***

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## CONTENTS

|  |    |
|--|----|
| PREFACE.....   | 5  |
| CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS .....                               | 6  |
| CEREMONIAL EXPENDITURE .....                               | 6  |
| PURPOSE BEHIND SACRED RITES.....                           | 8  |
| AN IDEAL MARRIAGE.....                                     | 8  |
| A CHECKLIST OF ARRANGEMENT.....                            | 10 |
| GENERAL ARRANGEMENTS.....                                  | 11 |
| THE PRELIMINARY RITUALS .....                              | 11 |
| MANGALAACHARNAM .....                                      | 12 |
| PAVITRIKARANAM.....  | 12 |
| AACHAMANAM.....  | 12 |
| SHIKHAAVANDANAM .....                                      | 12 |
| PRAANAAYAAMAH .....  | 12 |
| NYAASAH .....  | 13 |
| PRITHIVEE POOJANAM .....                                   | 14 |
| VAR SATKAAR.....   | 14 |
| AASAN.....   | 15 |
| PAADYA.....  | 15 |
| ARGHYA .....   | 16 |
| AACHAMAN.....  | 16 |
| NAIVEDYA-MADHUPARKA.....                                   | 17 |
| VARAN SOOTRA DHAARANAM .....                               | 17 |
| CHANDAN DHAARNAM .....                                     | 17 |
| YAGYOPAWREET DHAARANAM.....                                | 18 |
| KALASHPOOJANAM .....                                       | 18 |
| DEEP POOJANAM .....  | 19 |
| GURU POOJANAM.....   | 19 |
| GAYATREE POOJANAM.....                                     | 20 |
| GAYATRI POOJANAM .....                                     | 20 |
| GAURI POOJANAM.....  | 21 |
| SARVADEV NAMASKARH .....                                   | 21 |
| SHODASHOPACHAAR POOJANAM .....                             | 21 |
| SWASTIWAACHANAM.....                                       | 22 |
| RAKSHAVIDHAANAM.....                                       | 23 |
| (Mantra for protection of Yagya and its participants)..... | 23 |
| VIVAHA GHOSHNA.....  | 23 |
| MANGALA ASHTAKAM.....                                      | 24 |
| PARASPAR UPAHAAR- VASTROPAHAAR .....                       | 25 |
| PUSHPOPHAAR MAALYAARPAN.....                               | 26 |
| HASTAPEET KARANAM.....                                     | 26 |
| KANYAADAAN GUPTADAAN .....                                 | 27 |
| KANYAADAAN.....  | 28 |

|                                     |    |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| GAUDAAN .....                       | 29 |
| MARYAADAARKARNAM .....              | 29 |
| PAANIGRAHAN .....                   | 30 |
| GRANTHI BANDHAN .....               | 31 |
| PROCESS AND CONCEPTUALISATION ..... | 32 |
| THE OATH-TAKING CEREMONY .....      | 32 |
| DIRECTION AND MOTIVATION .....      | 33 |
| PROCESS AND CONCEPTUALISATION ..... | 33 |
| OATHS FOR THE GROOM .....           | 33 |
| OATHS FOR THE BRIDE .....           | 35 |
| YAGYA .....                         | 37 |
| AGNISTHAAPANAM .....                | 37 |
| SAMIDHAA DHAANAM .....              | 37 |
| JAL PRASECHANAM .....               | 38 |
| AAJYAAHUTIHI .....                  | 38 |
| GAYATRI MANTRAHUTIHI .....          | 38 |
| PRAAYASHCHITYA HOMAH .....          | 39 |
| SHILAROCHANAM .....                 | 40 |
| LAAJAAHOMAH .....                   | 40 |
| PARIKRAMAA .....                    | 42 |
| SATAPADI .....                      | 43 |
| AASAN PARIVARTANAM .....            | 47 |
| PAADPRAKSHAALANAM .....             | 47 |
| SOORYA DHYAANAM .....               | 48 |
| DHRUVA DHYAANAM .....               | 48 |
| SHAPATH AASHVAASAN .....            | 49 |
| SUMANGALEE-SINDOOR DAAN .....       | 49 |
| MANGAL TILAKAM .....                | 50 |
| SWISHTAKRIT HOMAH .....             | 50 |
| POORNAHUTIHI .....                  | 50 |
| VASORDHAARAA .....                  | 51 |
| NEERAAJANAM – AARATEE .....         | 51 |
| GHRIT-AVAGHRAANAM .....             | 51 |
| BHASMA-DHAARANAM .....              | 52 |
| KSHAMAA PRAARTHANAA .....           | 52 |
| SAASHTAANG NAMASKAARAH .....        | 52 |
| ABHISHEK SINCHANAM .....            | 52 |
| VISARJANAM .....                    | 53 |
| About the Author .....              | 55 |



## **PREFACE**

Marriage is an important institution of human society. In the remote past of human history man was living and behaving like an animal. Then he was hardly ever aware of his relationships to his parents, brother and sisters. In the biological kingdom, this primitive man was even subordinate in status to the animals. Neither did he have the strength of an elephant nor the sharp teeth and claws of the carnivore. He did not even have the hard protective hide of the rhinoceros and could not save his life by any other extraordinary physical capability. Nevertheless, he did possess the unique human instinct of cooperation and organization, with the help of which, he could dominate over the animals besides protecting and proliferating his own species. But in spite of this natural trait, in absence of permanent arrangements for housing, food and clothes, the primitive man was living in small groups, in large caves and on trees. Since in those days the institution of family had not come into existence, the relation between man and woman was different from what it is today, in modern times. Then, all women members of the community were being treated as common sexual partners and their progenies regarded as children of the community. According to a reference in Mahabharat, analyzing the problems of this system, a social reformer named Shwet Ketu proposed and established the institution of marriage from which evolved the present set of family.

There is little doubt that tradition of marriage has made a significant contribution in organization and development of human society and with the help of this institution man has been able to make significant achievements by joining much larger families and thereby enlarging the scope of cooperation to cover larger and larger fields of activities. Giving due importance to this human necessity, the Indian philosophers declared the ceremony of marriage as a sacrosanct religious rite, decreeing that the bond between husband and wife be considered everlasting, pious and in all activities of life, the couple were to participate with absolute cooperation of body and soul, so that their resultant contribution became many times than even their combined individual input.

This institution of family further enlarged to constitute ethnic groups, which later became the foundation stones for the various nations of the world. The tradition of marriage was adopted by people all over the world with ceremonial modifications according to local requirements and social milieu of the region. Nevertheless, the basic framework of the process continued to be the same-in that the suitability of the would be husband for a maiden was first ascertained by the father of the girl and in his approval, the couple was declared as man and wife after participating in some religious ceremony. While handling over the responsibilities for looking after the bride (Kanya Dan), the groom was also gifted

with articles of domestic requirements like eatables, clothes and kitchenware, to enable the newly-weds establish their home conveniently.

## CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS

Nowhere in the scriptures (Smritis and Puranas) there is a reference to the so called tradition of pre-fixing a dowry prior to matrimony, entertaining large number of guests from the groom's party or celebrating the event with pompous dance, music and feasts for days together. Though in religious books, procedures for performance of Hawan (Yagya) are given in great detail, wherein the couple is asked to enter into an agreement and take oath with the divine powers as witness, none of the sacred books mention about the multifarious practices and rituals in vogue today; presentations of cash, ornaments and articles during the rituals (Neg-Jog) or expensive exhibitionism. The elaborate descriptions of marriages given in some poetries and epics are in fact gross poetic exaggerations of events described by earlier poets, which the later writers had penned down to suit the then prevailing environment. The temporal contemporaneity of most of the local matrimonial customs is also proved by their variety from region to region. For instance, whereas in some areas, the bride's guardians are required to pay a substantial dowry to the groom, in others, it is the groom who pays the bride-money. While in some castes special care is taken to avoid matrimonial alliance between families having even remote ancestral affinity (Gotra), in others, some small ethnic groups amongst Brahmins, who consider themselves to be blue-blooded, prefer marrying their sons and daughters to the children of first cousins. Amongst the Brahmins of Malabar region, the maternal uncle of the groom takes part in those rituals, in which elsewhere the groom participates. Member of many castes initially dress the bride as a widow and have a formal period of profound mourning before the matrimony takes place. Amongst some castes, the bride is carried in lap by her father-in-law. Thus in the Hindu community there are many such queer practices, customs and traditions of matrimony, which though local and considered strictly according to prescribed religious procedures, are often contradictory to each other. It is thus quite apparent that any assertion about a particular custom being a divine decree or a scriptural proclamation (Ved Vakya) would only indicate the ignorance of the person.

## CEREMONIAL EXPENDITURE

The event of marriage is undoubtedly an occasion for celebration, since it marks the intimate union of two souls of personnel belonging to two different families, through which open many avenues of progress and prosperity. With the help of institution of marriage man gets an opportunity to choose and live with a partner for life-close confederate with whom he (or she) is fully assured of intimate

interaction and dependence in moments of pleasure and pain, profit and loss. Hence there is a justification in celebrating the moment with close friends and relatives. For the same reason, it is also not unfair for the parents of the bride and the groom to give some gifts and presentations to the newly-weds. Besides, if a marriage ceremony according to some specified religious procedure is also made into a program of entertainment, it becomes a special event for commemoration of pleasant memories later. However, when the desire for entertainment and exhibitionism crosses boundaries of decency and pragmatism and becomes an obsession, it creates a dangerous situation for the family economy. This is one reason, because of which for most of the persons marriage ceremonies have become a liability and people are particularly worried about the marriage of their daughters.

Now-a-days, some well-to-do factions of society are indulging in various types of unnecessary exhibitionist expenditure during marriages. In the vain attempt to emulate the former, even to a limited extent, an average family becomes bankrupt and has to face the consequences for years.

Extravagance in matrimonial rites is the most damaging aberration of this glorious tradition. In a large number of cases, the guardians of the groom expect the bride's parents to give the maximum dowry in cash and kind which is often beyond the means of the donor, who somehow managing to meet the demand even by disposing of personal assets, plunges deep into indebtedness. The bride's people too do not lag behind in this unhealthy practice and expect the groom's parents-who have already incurred huge expenditure in making the boy educated and self-earning, to give expensive ornaments and clothes to the bride and in the process both reach the brink of economic disaster.

In this way, the members of the groom's and bride's family enter into an unhealthy competition of taking the maximum advantage from the other party-the former looking for a donor of maximum dowry and the later for one who can gift most expensive ornaments and clothes. In the process, both are subjugated to back-breaking economic burdens and after a couple of marriages in the family become bankrupt.

The expenditure on arrangements for marriage too is no less expensive. Unbearable financial stress is to be borne by the groom's party in decorations and conveyance of the marriage-procession and in reception thereof by the bride's people. Those intending to join the groom's procession abstain from their jobs for long durations, and incur heavy expenditure exclusively for preparing new clothes, besides making the groom and his family feel greatly obliged for their company. The latter too, expressing gratitude for gracing the procession make elaborate arrangements for conveyance and other facilities. Nevertheless,

in spite of best efforts, the bride's people are unable to satisfy the large number of persons accompanying the groom's party and as a consequence remain under constant stress. Only the one who has gone through this experience of making arrangements for boarding, lodging and entertaining a marriage party can appreciate the stress and problems involved in the activity.

#### PURPOSE BEHIND SACRED RITES

Marriage is a sacred union of two souls. In course of the ceremony, sacrificing their individual identity, two human beings pledge to constitute a set of complementary units of personalities. Each man and woman in this world is born with certain specific characteristic-some talents and some shortcomings. In the union by marriage, either of the couple pledges to make up for the deficiencies of the other partner by supplementing from one's own efficacy. In this way the totality of near perfect personalities is evolved. For this very reason, marriage has been considered a necessity for leading a natural human life. The purpose of matrimony is to make two persons coordinate their movement onto the path of progress like two wheels of a carriage by supplementing each other's requirements with one's own energy, qualifications and motivations. Carnality has a very insignificant and subordinate role in married life. The principle objective of matrimony is to produce that strong force by union of two souls, which is capable of helping either of the partners in promoting all-round material, secular as well as spiritual progress in life.

#### AN IDEAL MARRIAGE

Now a days matrimonial are principally influenced by carnality. In selection of a spouse greater importance is being attached to visual appeal, complexion, physical features, make-up and other external aspects of personalities. If such a tendency is allowed to persist, the institution of marriage will be reduced merely to a social sanction for cohabitation, which would tantamount to nothing but legalized prostitution. In such a state of affairs, this country (India) would also face conjugal problems like the west. Attraction or disillusionment arising out of physical qualifications or otherwise would result in frequent divorces and remarriages. The present trend encouraging selection of a bride on the basis of her physical qualifications is bound to have a reaction on future and would boomerang with the girls accepting only physically appealing men as their life partners. In such a situation either of the partners would be deprived of the real advantages of a happy family life. Hence, before it is too late, this worsening trend should be arrested and as was the practice earlier, ignoring physical appearance, preference should be given to virtue and emotional compatibility in selection of a life partner. Let the person to be married peep deeper into the beauty of the soul of the partner and make maximum possible effort to



supplement the deficiencies in and environment of love, tolerance, spiritual affinity, faith and understanding. Even if some reformation does not become possible, the shortcomings should be ignored without any discontentment. This is the basic principle for achieving a life-long happy conjugal relationship. Instead of looking forward to physical advantages from the life partner, the husband and wife should think of surrendering personal interests and creating possibilities of progress in life with joint endeavor.

One does have full freedom to choose a life partner after searching, scrutinizing and verifying whatever attributes one considers necessary. However, this process should end before the marriage. After matrimony there remains no scope for ignoring the spouse under the excuse of a false judgment of one's own self. Whatever be the virtues or shortcomings of the spouse, after the marriage one becomes ethically bound with the responsibility of sustaining the relationship. In fact the sacred rites during the ceremony are performed to achieve this very objective.

The presence of respectable persons of the society, Gurus, family members, relatives and invocation of divine powers on the occasion of this ceremony is necessary, so that either of the defaulters ignoring the sacred agreements of joint responsibility is desisted from doing so and punished for dereliction of duty in married life. In presence of respectable persons of the society, the bride and groom announce their decision to remain united through a number of pledges. The convention of taking the pledge itself is the sacred ceremony of marriage.

On this occasion, both bride and the groom are asked to fix this concept firmly and indelibly in mind, that erasing their erstwhile individual personalities, they are evolving into a unified entity of mind and soul. The from now inwards, they would neither dictate terms to each other nor dominate over the other spouse for taking personal advantage or for expressing one's superiority. On the contrary, each spouse would act for convenience of the other. Considering personal desires and necessities subordinate to those of the other partner, both would maintain a spirit of benevolence and be liberal and tolerant to enable the vehicle of married life move smoothly. Let either spouse understand these aspects thoroughly and take a pledge to follow the codes of conduct throughout life. This is the objective of this auspicious ceremony. Only after thoroughly appreciating these aspects and unconditionally and truthfully accepting, should the couple unite in matrimony. Let the bride and the groom be apprised of these facts well before participation in sacred rites or else they may be informed when seated for the ceremony and their acceptance sought. Only after ascertaining about their concurrence and hearty acceptance should the process of ceremony be carried forward.

## A CHECKLIST OF ARRANGEMENT

It is necessary to know the requirements and make prior arrangements for welcoming the bridegroom, invoking the invisible divine powers (Dev Poojan) and performance of Yagya (oblations in consecrated fire) and other rites. For a program of mass-marriage, there should be adequate arrangements for a couple on each seat. For effective management, on each seat, and experienced person (well-versed in rites) may be appointed. If the ceremony is to be performed for one couple only, the priest (Acharya) himself can take charge. Apart from general arrangements, the priest should also confirm the adequacy of essential items required for the rites.

A checklist of items against the main rites is given hereunder –

### RECEPTION OF BRIDEGROOM-

A Thal (metal plate) for washing the hands and feet of the groom to prevent spilling of water. To be removed after hands and feet are washed (after Madhu Perk Pan)

### YAGYOPVEET-(Wearing the consecrated thread)

A pair of yellow colored Dhoti and Kurta is to be worn by the groom.

### ANOUNCEMENT OF CEREMONY-

Full family details of the bride and the groom to be recorded beforehand. Garments and garlands to be gifted are to be readily available.

### KANYADAAN (Handing over charge of bride to her new guardian)-

Paste of ground turmeric for coloring the palms of bride. About 250 gm of Aata (wheat flour) for the secret gift (Gupta Daan).

### GRANTHI BANDHAN (Tying nuptial knot)-

Turmeric, flowers, rice, fresh grass-blades (Doorva), coins-five auspicious items.

### HALDI CHANDAN (Turmeric treatment)

To be performed after Dev Poojan (optional). See the mantra at the appropriate place in the text.

### SHILA AROHAN

A flat piece of rock or stone will be required.

### OBLATIONS

Besides the herbal mixture for yagya, roasted unthreshed rice-corns will be required for Laja Home.

#### PAD PRAKCHAALAN (Washing the feet)

For washing the feet of the couple a large metal plate (Parat or Thal) will be required.

#### BLESSINGS BY RELATIVES AND GUESTS

Keep flowers and rice in sufficient quantity for each guest to be sprinkled at appropriate time.

#### GENERAL ARRANGEMENTS

From the very beginning an environment may be created to generate general interest in the proceedings so that the close relatives and friends of the couple become emotionally involved in the rituals and are not merely indifferent spectators. This emotional involvement practically helps in achieving the objective of the sacred rituals. For this purpose an appeal may be made individually to each person or to the group as a whole.

#### YAGYOPAVEET

The bachelors present on the occasion are made to wear a new yagyopaveet whereas others put on a new pair of yellow-colored clothes.

If the man to be married has earlier gone through the yagyopaveet ceremony, the one he is wearing is ceremoniously replaced with a new one and a new pair of clothes is also worn. It is advisable to perform this ritual early in the morning, on the day of marriage. It appears odd to make the well-dressed groom undress during the ceremony for wearing or changing the yagyopaveet. If convenient, after the reception, the groom may be made to wear the yagyopaveet over the clothes, which may be put underneath afterwards.

#### DWAARCHAAR (Reception of groom)

The groom is offered a special seat and formally honored. Thereafter, the bride is invited and the couple is asked to exchange garlands and gifts of clothes. The traditional letters/cards prepared for the occasion may also be exchanged.

In course of private household marriages, at times the members of bride's and groom's family insists on some local customs and rituals. Such requests may be carefully noted before the ceremony and skillfully incorporated in the mainstream of the ceremony.

#### THE PRELIMINARY RITUALS

Invite the bride and the groom to the matrimonial alter. Welcome them on their entry with the mantra "Bhadram Karnebihi....", showering with grains of rice. Let

the bride be seated on the right of groom. The father, brother and other relatives of bride, who will be taking part in Kanyadaan later, are also seated besides the bride. The articles for the rites are kept before each individual. All persons present are made to perform the six consecrating rites namely pavitrikaran, achman, shikhaa bandhan, praanaayaam, nyaas, prithivipoojan etc.

#### MANGALAAACHARNAM

(Welfare mantra)

OM! BHADRAM KARNEBHIHI SHRINUYAAMA DEVAA, BHADRAM  
PASHYEMAAKSHABHIRYAJATRAHAA.  
STHIRAIRANGAISTUSTUVAA, GWAM, SASTANOOBHIHI,  
VYASHEMAHI DEVHITAM YADAAYUHU.

#### PAVITRIKARANAM

(Cleansing of mind, and soul)

Take a little water in the palm of the left hand and cover it with the right hand. After the enunciation of mantra sprinkle the water backward over the head and body.

OM! APAVITRAH PAVITRO-VAA, SARVA VASTHAAM GATOPI  
VAA. YAH SMARETPUNDAREEKAASHAM,  
SABAAHYAABHYANTARAH SHUCHIHI. OM PUNAATU PUNDARI  
KAAKSHAH, PUNAATU PUNDARIKAASHAH, PUNAATU.

#### AACHAMANAM

(Cleansing of faculties controlling thoughts, speech and deeds.)

Take a little water in the palm of right hand and sip it three times successively with pronouncement of each mantra.

- 1) OM! AMRITOPASTARANAMASI SWAAHAA
- 2) OM! AMRITAAPIDHAANAMASI SWAAHAA
- 3) OM! SATYAM YASHAH SHREERMAYI SHREEHI SHRAYATAAM  
SWAAHAA.

#### SHIKHAAVANDANAM

(Invocation for receiving constructive inspirations)

Take a little water in the palm of the left hand. Dip fingers of right hand in it and then place the tips of fingers held together in the occiput. (Persons maintaining Shikha to tie it in a half knot)

OM! CHIDROOPINI MAHAAMAAYE, DIVYA TEJAH SAMANVITE.  
TISTHA DEVI SHIKHAA MADHYE TEJO VRIDDHIM KURUSHWA ME.

#### PRAANAAYAAMAHA

(Absorption of bio-energy from cosmos and expulsion of undesirable effluents of mind after reaction of this energy within self)

The middle finger, ring finger and the thumb of the right hand are used in the breathing exercise for drawing in bio-energy from cosmos.

- (1) Close the right nostril by pressing at the side by thumb and inhale slowly through the left one. Conceptualize that you are drawing in the cosmic energy of rising sun as a bright golden mist.
- (2) Close the left nostril as well by pressing on side with the middle and ring finger. Hold the breath. Conceptualize that the energy drawn in is activating a small bright spot at your naval and burning the blemishes covering it removing the effluent as a dark smoke.
- (3) Release the pressure on the right nostril and exhale slowly through the nostril. Conceptualize that the mental effluents are escaping through the exhalation.
- (4) Close the right nostril and hold the breath.
- (5) Now inhale through the right nostril and closing it after inhalation again by the thumb to retain breath.
- (6) Exhale through the left nostril while keeping the right one closed with the thumb. Close the left nostril and hold the breath.

Serial numbers 1 to 6 make one cycle of the Pranayam. At least one cycle is to be completed.

Points to remember:

- (1) Inhalations and exhalations are carried out slowly with maximum retention and expulsion of air.
- (2) Inhalation is carried out through the same nostril through which exhalation is done.
- (3) Breath is retained for a while both after inhalation and exhalation.

OM! BHOOH OM! BHUVAH OM! SWAH OM! MAHAH, OM! JANA OM!  
TAPAH OM! SATYAM. OM! TATSAVITURVARENYAM, BHARGO  
DEVASYA DHIMAHI DHIYO YO NAH PRACHODAYAT.  
OM! APOJYOTEE RASOMRITAM, BRAHMA BHOORBHUVAH SWAH O-  
O-M.

**NYAASAH**

(Cleansing of nerve centres controlling sense organs and locomotion).

Take a little water in the palm of left hand. Wet the fingers of the right hand in it. Touch the directed sense organs (lips, both nostril, both eyes, both ears, both arms, both thighs respectively-first the left one and then the right) and sprinkle on the body backwards with the respective mantras.

OM! VAANGME AASYESTU. (Lips)

OM! NASORME PRAANOSTU. (Both nostrils)

OM! AKSHNORME CHAKSHURASTU. (Both eyes)

OM! KARMAYORME SHORTRAMASTU. (Both ears)

OM! BAHVORME BALAMASTU. (Both arms)  
OM! OORVORME OJOSTU. (Both thighs)  
OM! ARISHTAANIME-ANGAANI, TANOOSTANVAA ME  
SAHSANTU-U-U. (Sprinkle on the body backwards with both hands)

#### PRITHIVEE POOJANAM

(Invocation of tolerance from motherly qualities naturally inherent in earth)  
Sprinkle a few drops of water on earth with the mantra.

OM! PRITHVI TVAYAA DHIRTAA LOKAA, DEVI TWAM  
VISHNUNAA DHIRTAA LOKAA, DEVI TWAM VISHNUNAA  
DHRITAA. TWAM CHA DHARAI MAAM DEVI, PAVITRAM KURU  
CHAASANAM.

#### VAR SATKAAR (Honoring the groom)

Being the most honorable guest, the groom is respectfully received with chanting mantras.

##### Directions and Motivation

The groom is honorably received as an important guest. In family life, the lady in charge of the house holds the supreme status. With all humility, the groom and his well wishers come to bride's house to ask for her hand. It, therefore, becomes the prime responsibility of bride's people to give due respect to the groom's party and reciprocate the goodwill expressed by latter in connection with the noble cause of marriage.

##### Points to remember

For the bride's people – Var literally means the one worthy of acceptance. Therefore, agree for the matrimonial alliance only after thoroughly evaluating the groom as an appropriate life-partner for the girl. Thereafter, the groom is honored with this point of view and the grace of Almighty sought for maintenance of this goodwill.

For the groom's people – On being honored, do not feel unnecessarily egoistic. Remember that our sages had made the system of honoring the groom for his gentlemanly qualities like modesty, humility, duty consciousness and spirit of cooperation. Hence in order to be instinctively appreciated by the bride's family, it is imperative to make these attributes manifest. Such a behavior is bound to evoke a favorable response and an extremely cordial relationship between the two families.

For both parties –The factor most detrimental for establishing congenial relationship between the two families is the narrow selfish outlook instigating insistence on desired transaction in cash or kind. On the pretext of rituals when either party exert pressure for giving dowry, ornaments, clothes etc. or insist on some sort of exhibitionism, the goodwill dissipates and undercurrents of

antipathy and reaction develop. Keeping in view the necessity of long-term goodwill between the families, keep discussions and action on such destructive issues at arms length.

Let it be remembered that in course of reception, heartfelt cordiality is considered more important than physical treatments. It is, therefore, necessary to be emotionally involved in each ritual with a sense of goodwill.

#### ACTION AND CONCEPTUALIZATION

Holding a few grains of rice in hand, let the receptionist conceptualize that the most virtuous attributes of the groom are being honored. Invoke divine powers for augmentation of these attributes with the following mantra:

OM! SAADHUBHAVAAN AASTAM  
ARCHYSHYAAMO BHAVANTAM.

Taking the rice offered by the receptionist in his right hand, the groom conceptualizes that he is conceding to shoulder the responsibility of maintaining a high character worthy of being appreciated by the bride's people of whom the receptionist is a representative.

Let the groom respond by saying:

OM! ARCHAI.

#### AASAN

(Seating)

Let the receiving personnel touch the seat (or a symbolical article like seat cover) and pronounce the mantra. Pray that the groom finds a suitable environment for development of virtues of a high order and thus becomes worthy of our (of the bride's family) affection.

OM! VISHTARO, VISHTARO, VISHTARAH, PRATIGRIHYATAAM.

Receiving the Vistar from the father in law (receptionist) the groom says:

OM! PRATIGRIHNAAMI.

Now respectfully offer him the seat with the following mantra:

OM! VARSHMOSMI SAMAANAANAAM UDYATAAMIVA SOORYAH.  
IMANTAMABHITISHTHAAMI, YO MA KASHCHAA-BHIDAASATI.

#### PAADYA

(Feet washing)

From a small pot let the receptionist pour water on the feet of the groom (held in a large plate to avoid spilling). Conceptualize that the feet being washed are worthy of reverence since these are going to advance in a direction to make the person (groom) an ideal householder as envisaged by the rishis (sages).

Say:

OM! PAADYAM, PAADYAM, PAADYAM, PRATIGRIHYA-TAAM.

The groom responds by saying



OM! PRATIGRIHNAAMI.

While washing the feet, the receptionist invokes the Ishtdeo ( the family deity chosen for some specific attributes of God), to keep the zest of the groom for advancing towards ideals.

OM! VIRAAJO DOHOSI VIRAAJO DOHAMASHIYA MAYI  
PAADYAAYAI VIRAAJO DOHAH.

ARGHYA

(Washing hands with consecrated water)

Let the receptionist hold the pot of scented consecrating water in hand and conceptualize that by touching it the hands of the receiver (groom) will be spiritually motivated for performance of righteous activities.

Say:

OM! ARGHO, ARGHO, ARGHAM,  
PRATIGRIHYATAM.

Receiving the pot the groom says:

OM! PRATIGRIHNAAMI

While washing hands with this consecrated water, groom conceptualizes that the spiritual powers are motivating his hands to perform righteous endeavors. In the process the following mantra is pronounced:

OM! APAHSTHAYUSHMAABHIHI, SARVAANKAA MAANA  
VAAPNAVAANI. OM! SAMUDRAM VAH PRAHINOMI, SWAAM  
YONIMABHIGACHCHATA. ARISHTAASMAAKAM VEERAA,  
MAAPARAASECHI MATPAYAH.

AACHAMAN

(Partaking of consecrated water)

Let the receptionist present the pot containing consecrated water and conceptualize that the water is going to bestow divine powers for making the speech and personality of the groom implemental in development of an upright character.

OM! AACHAMANEYAM, AACHAMANEYAM, AACHAMANIYAM  
PRATIGRIHYATAAM.

Taking the pot in hand the groom says:

OM! PRATIGRIHNAAMI

While sipping the water three times, the groom concentrates on deeply imbibing the above concept in his mind, intellect and inner-self. During the process he chants the following mantra:

OM! AAMAAGAN YASHASAA SAGWAM SRIJ VARCHASAA. TAM  
MAA KURU PRIYAM PRAJAANAAMADHIPATI,  
PASHOONAAMARISHTIM TANOONAAM.



### NAIVEDYA-MADHUPARKA

(Partaking consecrated food)

Prepare a sample mixture of pure, wholesome, energizing natural food by mixing milk, curd, honey, sugar and leaves of Tulsee. Let the receptionist hold the pot containing a little of this mixture (about 25ml.) in hand and invoke divinity to always provide the groom such food i.e. food material which is pure, honestly and affectionately produced, procured and prepared, is health-promoting to enable him retain his virtuous attributes throughout life. Let it be handed over to the groom with the following mantra.

OM! MADHUPARKO, MADHUPARKO, MADHUPARKAH,  
PRATIGRIHYATAAM.

Receiving the pot of consecrated food in hand the groom says.

OM! PRATIGRIHNAAMI.

Partaking the consecrated food the groom conceptualizes that he is pledging himself to consume only honestly produced, procured and lovingly prepared and served health-promoting food for imbibition of virtues in thoughts, speech and deeds. While taking this food let him pronounce the mantra;

OM! YANMADHUNO MADHAVYAM PARAMAGWAM  
ROOPAMANNAADYAM. TENAAHAM MADHUNO-MADHAVYEN  
PARAMEN, ROOPENA-ANNAADYEN PARAMO, MADHA  
VYONNAADOSANI.

Thereafter, let the groom wash hands and rinse mouth with water.

### VARAN SOOTRA DHAARANAM

(Designating the couple as groom and bride to be wedded)

With the foregoing rituals, the groom stands spiritually committed to high ideals of a responsible householder and citizen. He has now become eligible for the matrimonial ceremony.

Let the priest formally designate the couple as bride and the groom by tying the consecrated thread (Kalava-red-yellow colored strands of thread) on their wrists (right wrist of the groom and left one of bride). While tying the thread the following mantra is pronounced;

OM! YADAAABADHNANDAANKSHAAYANAA, HIRANYA GWAM  
SHATAANEEKAI, SUMANASYA-MAANAAHAA. TANMA  
AABADHNAAMI SHATA-SHAARADAAI  
AAUSHMAANJARADASHTIRYATHAA SAMMA.

### CHANDAN DHAARNAM

(Application of vermilion on forehead-an expression of goodwill of the priest wishing the person to achieve an elevated status.)

Let the priest put the vermilion mark (a mixture of water, lime and turmeric powder) on the foreheads of the couple wishing them progress in all walks of life with the following mantra.

OM!GANDHADWAARAAM DURAADHARSHAAM  
NITYAPUSHTAAM KAREESHINEEM. EESHWAREEM SARVA  
BHOOTAANAAM TAAMIHOPAHVAYE SHRIYAM.

#### YAGYOPAWEET DHAARANAM

(Wearing consecrated thread across left shoulder-a constant reminder of pledge to follow Gayatri-disciplines).

In many castes amongst Hindus, the Yagyopaweeet ceremony is performed at an earlier age. If the groom has not worn Yagyopaweeet earlier he is made to wear it ceremoniously according to prescribed procedure. According to custom a bachelor wears a Yagyopaweeet consisting of a single strand of threads, whereas during the matrimonial ceremony he is made to wear a pair of Yagyopaweeets. This is to signify the twofold responsibility as now he is required to take his wife along with himself in endeavors to follow a life-style conforming to disciplines of Gayatri and Yagna i.e. commitment to social welfare at the expense of personal interests. The consecrated thread serves as a constant reminder to this commitment.

Perform the ceremony with the following mantra:

OM! YAGYOPAWEETAM PARAMAMPAVITRAM  
PRAJAAPATERYATSAHAJAMPURASTAAT. AYUSHYAMAGRYAM  
PRATIMUNCH SHUBHRAM, YAGYOPAVEETAM BALAMASTY  
TEJAH.

#### KALASHPOOJANAM

(Symbolic invocation of cosmic powers in a spherical vessel.)

The Kalash (A miniature pitcher containing water) symbolizes cosmos with all its powers of divinity, whereas water contained in it designates the faith of the devotee. (Water is the most effective solvent in nature, so is faith for divine attributes). The ritual indicates that with profound faith one is capable of absorbing all powers of God present in the cosmos.

Invoke these powers by offering oblations to the Kalash with the following mantras:

OM! TATWAAYAAMI BRAHMANAA VANDAMAANAH, TADAA-  
SHAASTE YAJAMAANO HAVIRBHIHI. AHEDAMAANO VARUNEH  
BODDHURUSHA GWAM, SA-MAANA AAYUHU PRAMOSHEEHEE.

(In process of invocation, rice, grains, flowers and water are obliterated)

Now the priest prays with the following mantras while other persons bow with folded hands.

OM! MANOJOOTIRUSHATAAMA AJYASYA,  
BRIHASPATIRYAGYAMIMAM TANOTWARISHTAM, YAGYA GWAM  
SAMIMAM DADHAATU. VISWE DEVAASA-IH MAADAYANTAAM-  
O-OM PRATISHTHA.

OM! VARUNAAMI, NAMAH. AAVAAHYAAMI, STHAAPAYAAMI,  
POOJAYAAMI, DHYAYAAMI. GANDHAAKSHATAM PUSHPAANI  
DHOOPAM DEEPAM NAIVEDYAM SAMARPAYAAMI. TATO  
NAMASKAARAM KAROMI.

Pray with folded hands:

OM! KALASHASYA MUKHE VISHNUHU,  
KANTHE RUDRAH SAMAASHRITAH.  
MOOLE TASYA STHITO BRAHMAA,  
MADDHYE MATRIGANAHAH SMRITAAH.  
KUKSHAU TU SAGARAAH SARVE,  
SAPTADWEEPAA VASUNDHARAA.  
RIGVEDOTH YAJURVEDAH,  
SAAMAVEDO HYATHARVANAH.  
ANGAISHCHA SAHITAHAH SARVE,  
KALASHANTU SAMAASHRITAAH.  
ATRA GAAYATRI SAAVITRI,  
SHAANTI PUSHTIKAREE SADAA.  
TWAYI TISHTHANTI BHOOTAANI,  
TWAYI PRAANAHAH PRATISHTHITAAH.  
SHIVAH SWAYAM TWAMEVAASI,  
VISHNUSTWAM CHA PRAJAAPATIHI.  
AADITYAA VASAVO RUDRAA,  
VISHWEDEVAAH SAPAITRIKAA.  
TVAI TISHTHANTI SARVEPI,  
YATAH KAAMAFALAPRADAHAH.  
TWT PRASAADAADIMAM YAGYAM,  
KARTUMEEHE JALODBHAVA.  
SAANNIDHYAM KURU ME DEVA,  
PRASNNO BHAV SARVADAA.

DEEP POOJANAM

(Invocation of cosmic energy of sun represented in the flame and brilliance of the consecrated wick lamp).

Pray with the following mantra:

OM! AGNIRJYOTIRJYOTIRAGNIHI SWAAHAA. SOORYO  
JYOTIRJYOTIHI SURYAH SWAAHAA. AGNIRVARCHO JYOTIR-  
VARCHAHA-SWAAHAA. SOORYO VARCHO JYOTIRVARCHAHA  
SWAAHAA. JYOTIHI SOORYAH SOORYO JYOTIHI SWAAHAA.

GURU POOJANAM

(Communion with the powers of Guru)

Guru is manifestation of celestial powers of God in superman who helps the devotee to commune with the Almighty. It is therefore absolutely necessary for a

seeker to seek patronage of a credible human-Guru, who would provide spiritual energy to the devotee and in future regulate it according to latter's requirement. The credibility of Guru lies in these qualification: (1) He must not only be learned in scriptures but know their subtle secrets and must realized their true import in his own life (Shrotriya), (2) a person with spotless character (Vrijino), (3) uninfluenced by any desire, he should have no other motive except that of purely doing good to others (Akamahata) and (4) he must have realized God i.e. achieved salvation (Brahmavittam).

OM! GURURBRAHMAA GURURVISHNUHU, GURUREV  
MAHESHWARAH. GURUREV PARABRAHMA, TASMAI SHREE  
GURAVE NAMAHA.  
AKHANDAMANDALAKAARAM, VYAAPTAM YENA  
CHARAACHARAM, TATPADAM DARSHITAM YENA TASMAI SHREE  
GURAVE NAMAHA. OM SHREE GURAVE NAMAHA, AAVAAHAYAAMI  
STHAAPAYAAMI DHYAAYAAMI.

#### GAYATREE POOJANAM

Invocation of Gayatri; the source of scriptural wisdom(Ved Mata), divine powers(Dev Mata), creator, preserver and manager of cosmos(Vishva Mata)- establisher of creative knowledge(Sadgyan) and goodwill (Sadbhav) and the cause and effect of successive cycles of cosmic phenomena, their creation and projection.

OM! AAYAATU VARADE DEVI, AKSHARE BRAHMA VAADINI.  
GAAYATICHCHHANDASAAM MAATAH, BRAHMA YONE  
NAMOSTUTE. OM SHREE GAAYATRAI NAMAHA. AAVAAHAYAAMI  
STHAAPAYAAMI DHYAAYAAMI. TATO NAMASKAARAM KAROMI.  
OM STUTAA MAYAA VARADAA VEDAMAATAA,  
PRACHODAYANTAAM PAAVAMAANI DWIJAA-NAAM, AAYUHU  
PRAANAM PRAJAAM PASHUM, KEERTIM DRAVINAM BRAHMA  
VARCHASAM, MAHYAM DATTWAA VRAJAT BRAHMA LOKAM-  
MA.

#### GAYATRI POOJANAM

Invoke Ganesh- foremost amongst revered powers of divinity as representative of wisdom and prudence. The invocation is carried out in the beginning of all religious rituals to ward off likely interference, obstacles or disturbance by visible or visible or invisible, known and unknown forces.

OM! EK DANTAAI VIDMAHE, VAKRATUNDAAI DHEEMAHI.  
TANNO DANTEE PRACHODAYAAT.  
ABHEEPSITAARTH SIDDHYARTHAM, POOJITO YAH  
SURAASURAIH. SARVAVIGHNAHARASTASMAI, GANAADHI-  
PATAYE NAMAHA.

OM! SHREEMANMAHAA GANAADHIPATAYE NAMAH.  
AAVAAHAYAAMI, STHAAPAYAAMI, DHYAAYAAMI.

#### GAURI POOJANAM

Pray to the universal maternal power of God symbolizing faith, purity of thoughts and action.

OM! GIRIJAYAI VIDMAHE, SHIVAPRIYAYAI DHEEMAHITANNO  
GAURI PRACHODAYAAT.  
SARVAMANGAL MAANGALYE, SHIVE SARVAARTH SAADHIKE.  
SHARANYE TRYAMBAKE GAURI, NAARAYANI NAMOSTUTE.  
OM! SHRI GAURYAI NAMAH. AAVAAHAYAAMI, STHAAPAYAAMI,  
DHYAAYAAMI.

#### SARVADEV NAMASKARH

(Invocation of all divine manifestations related to the devotee)

OM! SIDDHIBUDDHISAHITAAI SHREE MANMAHAA GANAADHIPATAYE  
NAMAH.  
OM! LAKSHMEENAARAYANAABHYAAM NAMAH.  
OM! UMAA MAHESHWARAABHYAAM NAMAH.  
OM! VAANEE HIRANYA GARBHAABHYAAM NAMAH.  
OM! SHACHEE PURANDARAABHYAAM NAMAH.  
OM! MAATAA PITRI CHARAN KAMALEBHYO NAMAH.  
OM! KULADEVATAABHYO NAMAH.  
OM! ISHTA DEVATAABHYO NAMAH.  
OM! GRAAMA DEVATAABHYO NAMAH.  
OM! STHAAN DEVATAABHYO NAMAH.  
OM! VAASTU DEVATAABHYO NAMAH.  
OM! SARVEBHYO DEVEBHYO NAMAH.  
OM! SARVEBHYO BRAAHMANEBHYO NAMAH.  
OM! SARVEBHYASTEERTHEBHYO NAMAH.  
OM! ETATKARMAPRADHAAN SHREE GAYATREE DEVYAI NAMAH.  
OM! PUNYAM PUNYAAHAM DEERGHAMAAYURASTU.

#### SHODASHOPACHAAR POOJANAM

(Formal reception of all divine powers-a 16 course treatment)

OM! SARVEBHYO DEVEBHYO NAMAH.  
AAVAHA-YAAMI, STHAAPAYAAMI.

1. AASANAM SAMARPAYAAMI.
2. PAADYAM SAMARPAYAAMI.
3. ARGHYAM SAMARPAYAAMI.
4. AACHAMANAM SAMARPAYAAMI.
5. SNAANAM SAMARPAYAAMI.
6. VASTRAM SAMARPAYAAMI.

7. YAGYOPAVEETAM SAMARPAYAAMI.
8. GANDHAM VILEPAYAAMI.
9. AKSHATAAN SAMARPAYAAMI.
10. PUSHPAANI SAMARPAYAAMI.
11. DHOOPAM AAGHRAAPAYAAMI.
12. DEEPAM DARSHAYAAMI.
13. NAIVEDYAM NIVEDAYAAMI.
14. TAAMBOOLPUNGIFALAANI SAMARPAYAAMI.
15. DAKSHINAAM SAMARPAYAAMI.
16. SARVAABHAAVE AKSHATAAN SAMARPAYAAMI. TATO  
NAMASKAARAM KAROMI.

OM! NAMOSTWANANTAANI SAHASRA MOORTAYE, SAHASRA  
PAADAAKSHISHIRORUBAAHAVE. SAHASRA NAAMNE PURUSHAANI  
SHAASHWATE SAHASRA KOTEE YUG DHAARINE NAMAH.

#### SWASTIWAACHANAM

This mantra helps in success of all virtuous ventures, ensures peace and objectivity. It is considered auspicious and welfare-promoting.

1. OM! GANAANAAM TWAA GANPATI GWAM HAWAAMAHE,  
PRIYAANAAM TWAA PRIYAPATI GWAM HAVAAMAHE,  
NIDHINAAM TWAA NIDHIPATI GWAM HAWAAMAHE,  
VASOMAM. AAHAMAJAANI GARBHADHA MAATWAMA JAASI  
GARBHADHAMMA.
2. OM! SWASTI NA INDROVRIDDHA SHRVAHAHA, SWASTINAH  
POOSHAA VISHWAVEDAAHAA.  
SWASTINASTAARKSHYOARISHTANEMIHI, SWASTI NO  
BRIHASPATIRDADHAATU.
3. OM! PAYAH PRITHIVYAAM PAYAOSHADHEESHU, PAYO  
DIVYANTARIKSHE PAYODHAAHAA, PAYASWATEEHI PRADISHAH  
SANTU MAHYAMMA.
4. OM! VISHNO RARAATAMASIVISHNOHO, SHNAPTRESTHO  
VISHNOHO, SYOORASI-VISHNORDHRUVOSI VAISHNAVAMASI  
VISHNAVE TWAA.
5. OM! AGNIRDEVATAA-VATODEVATAA, SOORYO DEVATAA,  
CHANDRAMAA DEVATAA, VASAVO DEVATAA, RUDRAA  
DEVATAA, AADITYAA DEVATAA, MARUTO DEVATAA,  
VISHWEDEVAA DEVATAA, BRIHASPATTIRDEVATENDRO  
DEVATAA, VARUNO-O-O DEVATAA.
6. OM! DYAUHU SHAANTIRANTARIKSHA GWAM SHAANTIHI,  
PRITHIVEE SHAANTIRAPAH SHANTIROSHADHAYAH SHAANTIHI.  
VANASPATAYAH SHAANTIRVISHWEDEVAAHAA, SHAANTI

RBRAHMA SHAANTIHI, SARVA GWAM SHAANTIHI, SHAANTI-  
REVA SHAANTIHI, SAA-MAA SHAANIREDDHI.

7. OM! VISHWAANIDEVA SAVITARDURITAANI PARAASUWA, YAD  
BHADRAM TANNA AASUWA. OM! SHAANTIHI! SHAANTIHI!!  
SHAANTIHI!!!  
SARWAARISHTA SUSHAANTIRBHAWATU-U-U.

### RAKSHAAVIDHAANAM

(Mantra for protection of Yagya and its participants)

Since in the process of Yagya beneficent powers of God are invoked, there are many invisible and visible forces which tend to create disturbance and make the devotee, physically and psychologically desist from the ritual. In ancient times these destructive forces appeared as demons (Rakchasas). Hence these mantras are pronounced to ward off such eventualities. Stand up and with the enunciation of corresponding mantra, sprinkle grains of rice in ten directions (in order: E, SE, S, SW, W, NW, N, NE, Zenith, Nadir and all directions respectively)

1. OM! POORVE RAKSHATU VAARAAHAH, (E)  
AAGNEYAAM GARUDADHWAJAH. (SE)  
DAKSHINE PADMANAABHASTU, (S)  
NAIRITYAAM MADHUSOODANAH. (SW)
2. PASHCHIME CHAIV GOVINDO, (W)  
VAYAVYAM TU JANAARDANAH. (NW)  
UTTARE SHREEPATEE RAKSHET, (N)  
AISHAANYAAM HI MAHESHWARAH. (NE)
3. OORDHAWAM RAKSHATU DHAATAA VO,  
(ZENITH)  
HYADHONANTASHCHA RAKSHATU. (NADIR)  
ANUKTAMAPI YATSTHAANAM,  
RAKSHATWISHO MAMAADRIDHRIK.
4. APASARPANTU TE BHOOTAA (ALL DIRECTIONS)  
YE BHOOTAA BHOOMI SANSTHITAH.  
YE BHOOTAAH VIGHNA KARTAARAH,  
TE GACHCHANTU SHIVAAGYAYAA.
5. APAKRAAMANTU BHOOTANI,  
PISHAACHAAH SARVATODISHAM,  
SARVESHAAMAVIRODHENA,  
YAGYA KARMA SAMAARABHE.

### VIVAHA GHOSHNA

(Announcement of matrimonial ceremony)



The matrimonial ceremony is announced in a standard format in Sanskrit. The announcement mentions about the Gotra (Spiritual lineage referring to the rishi, who was initially accepted as the Guru of the clan to which the person belongs). If the Gotra is not known, name it as Bhardwaj the gotra of Acharyashri and give the parental introduction (Name of father and grandfather) of the bride and the groom. It is declared that with this announcement the couple is formally entering into matrimony. With this announcement, everyone is being informed that after this ceremony the cohabitation of couple will have religious sanction. Here it may be mentioned that the Hindu society considers secretive love affairs and physical relationship undesirable from the point of view of ethics, religion and legality. If a couple intends to live as man and wife, it is mandatory to have it declared publicly. Any relationship with a person other than a lawful spouse is considered a vice. The cohabitation of a man and a woman therefore requires a formal announcement in a marriage ceremony.

SWASTI SHREEMANNAND NANDAN CHARAN KAMAL BHAKTI  
SADVIDYAA VINEET NIJKUL KAMAL KALIKAA PRAKAASHANAIK  
BHAASKAR SADAACHAAR SACHCHARITRA SATKUL SATPRATISHTHAA  
GARISHTHASYA..... GOTRASYA..... MAHODAYASYA  
PRAPAUTRAH..... MAHODAYASYA PAURTAH. MAHODAYASYA  
PUTRAH. MAHODAYASYA PRAPAUTREE..... MAHODAYASYA PAUTREE  
MAHODAYASYA PUTREE. PRAYATPAANIHI SHARANAM PRAPADYE.  
SWASTI SAMVADESHOO BHAYORVRIDDHIRVAR  
KANYAYOSHCHIRANJEEVINAU BHOOYAASTAAM.

#### MANGALA ASHTAKAM

With the following mantras, the multifarious super powers of God, their incarnations and manifestations in animate and inanimate elements of nature are invoked for creation of a favorable environment and a happy future life of the couple. The priest pronounces the mantras loudly and melodiously.

1. SHREEMATPANKAJAVISHTARO HARIHARAU, VAYURMA HENDRO  
NALAH, CHNDRO BHAASKAR VITTAPAAL VARUNA,  
PRETAADHIPAADIGRAHAAH. PRADYUMNO NALAKOOBARAU  
SURGAJAH, CHINTAAMANIHI KAUSTUBHAH, SWAAMI  
SHAKTIDHARASHCHALANGALADHARAH, KURVANTU VO  
MANGALAM.
2. GANGAA GOMATI GOPATIRGANPATIHI, GOVIND  
GOVARDHANAU, GEETAA GOMAI GORAJAU GIRISUTAA,  
GANGAA DHARO GAUTAMAH. GAAYATREE GARUDO  
GADAADHARGAYAA, GAMBHEER GODAAVAREE, GANDHARV  
GRIHA GOP GOKUL DHARAH, KURVANTU VO MANGALAM.
3. NETRAANAAM TRITAYAMMAHAT PASHUPATEH, AGNESTU  
PAADATRAYAM, TATTADVISHNU PADATRAYAM TRIBHUVANE,  
KHYAATAAM CHA RAAMATRAYAM, GANGAA



- BAAHUPATHATRAYAM SUVIMALAM, VEDATRAYAM  
BRAAHMANAM, SANDHYAANAAM TRITAYAM  
DWIJAIRABHIMATAM, KURVANTU VO MANGALAM.
4. VAALMEEKIHI SANAKAH SANANDANAMUNIHI, VYASO-  
VASHISHTHO BHRIGUHU, JABAALIRJAMADAGNIJAHNU JANAKO,  
GARGONGIRA GAURAMAH. MAANDHAATAA BHARATO  
NRIPASHCHA SAGARO, DHANYO DILEEPO NALAH, PUNYO  
DHARMASUTO YAYAATI NAHUSHAU, KURVANTU VO  
MANGALAM.
  5. GAUREE SHREEKULADEVATAA CHA SUBHAGAA KANDOO  
SUPARNAA SHIVAAH, SAAVITREE CHA SARASWATEE CHA  
SURABHIHI, SATYAVRATAARUNDHATEE. SWAAHAA  
JAAMBAVATI-CHA RUKMABHAGINEE,  
DUHISWAPNAVIDHVANSINEE; VELAA CHAAMBUNIDHEH  
SAMINAMAKARAA, KURVANTU VO MANGALAM.
  6. GANGAA SINDHU SARASWATEE CHA YAMUNAA, GODAAVAREE  
NARMADAA; KAAVEREE SARAYOO MAHENDRATANATAA,  
CHARMANVATEE VEDIKAA. SHIPRAA VETRAVATEE  
MAHAASURANADEE, KHYYAATAA-CHA-YAA GANDAKKEE;  
POORNAAH PUNYA-JALAIHI SAMUDRASHITAAH, KURVANTU VO  
MANGALAM.
  7. LAKSHMEEHI KAUSTUBH PAARIJAATAKSURAA,  
DHANVANTARISHCHAND-RAMAA; GAAVAH KAAMDUGHAAH  
SURESH-WARAGAJA, RAMBHAADI DEVAANGANAHAH. ASHWAH  
SAPTAMUKHAH SUDHAA HARIDHANUHU, SHANKHO VISHAM  
CHAAMBUDHE; RATNAANEETI CHATURDASH PRATIDINAM,  
KURVANTU VO MANGALAM.
  8. BRAHMAA VEDPATIHI SHIVAH PASHUPATIHI, SOORYO  
GRAHAANAAM PATIHI; SHUKRO DEVPANIRNALO NARAPATIHI,  
SKANDASHCHA SENAAPATIHI. VISHNU RYAGYAPATIRYAMAH  
PITRIPATIHI, TAARAAPATI SHCHANDRAMAA, ITYETE  
PATAYASSUPARNA SAHITAAH, KURVANTU VO MANGALAM.

#### PARASPAR UPAHAAR- VASTROPAHAAR

(Presentation of clothes and ornaments)

According to tradition, the families of the groom and bride exchange gifts, clothes, ornaments etc. on the occasion of marriage. This is ceremoniously carried out before the beginning of the main function. The clothes and ornaments are worn by the couple before they are seated on the matrimonial altar. This ceremony may be performed symbolically by exchanging yellow scarves (Dupatta). Where there is an insistence on ornaments, it would be decent if the

couple is made to wear light, inexpensive auspicious ornaments only like rings and Mangalsutra (A gold necklace with beads worn by married women in India)

While making the other partner wear the ornaments, let either couple conceptualize that through this act each is appreciating the sanctity of the responsibility for augmenting the honor and presentability of the partner, increasing the status of the spouse in society and taking a pledge for the same. This exchange of gifts takes place with recitation of following mantra by the priest.

OM! PARIDHAASYAI YASHODHAASYAI, DEERGHAA-YUTWAAY  
JARADASHTIRASHMI, SHATAM CHA JEEVAAMI SHARADAH,  
PUROOCHEE-RAAYASPOSHMABHI SAMYA-YISHYE.

PUSHPOPHAAR MAALYAARPAN  
(Garlanding)

Conceding mutual compatibility, the bride and the groom garland each other. The bride having preference, precedes the groom (The flowers in the garlands signify goodwill and virtues of the person holding the garland which are being exchanged with the partner). During the process, let the couple conceptualize that through this act they are taking a vow to make up for the shortcomings of the person being garlanded by one's own virtues and remain emotionally harmonious in each action like the flowers tied in the garland; that in this objective they will succeed with the blessings of divine powers and enlightened persons present on the occasion. Let the bride garland the groom first.

OM! YASHASAA MAADYAAVAA PRITHIVEE, YASHASENDRAA-  
BRIHASPATEE. YASHO BHAGASHCHA MAA VIDADYASHO MAA  
PRATIPADYATAAM.

HASTAPEET KARANAM

(Coloring the hands of bride yellow)

The ritual of Hastapeet karanam precedes (with a paste prepared by adding turmeric to water) by her guardians and close relatives. The teenage girl to be married will soon become a woman in charge of a household. Yellow color is considered auspicious and symbolical of creativity (c.f. blooming of yellow flowers in spring). The maiden, who had so far lived under the tender and affectionate care of her parents, is not accustomed to taking heavy responsibilities. After marriage she will become responsible for many new creative ventures (e.g. motherhood and rearing of the children). Hence her hands should now assume a different complexion. Besides being auspicious, the yellow color also symbolizes the divine power of creativity and prosperity (Laskhmi). While coloring the hands of the bride, her parents and guardians symbolically motivate her and emotionally prepare her for the new creative role, which she is

going to play in future with divine assistance and for which she is required to make her hands i.e. herself stronger and more propitious.

#### PROCESS AND CONCEPTUALIZATION

Let the guardians and relatives (who are to take part in Kanyadan letter) smear the turmeric paste on the hands of the bride with enunciation of the mantra. Conceptualize that in the presence of divine powers, her hands are being cleansed of the bad traits of selfishness and are being strengthened with the motivation for sacrificing personal interests for acts of benevolence. Also let the bride take a silent resolve to make hard endeavor to strengthen and persevere this new trait.

OM! AHIRIV BHOGAIH PARYETI BAAHUM, JYAAYAAHETIM  
PARIBAADHAMAANAH. HASTAGHNO VISHWAA VAYUNAANI  
VIDVAAN PUMAAN PUMAA GWAM SAM PARIPAATU VISHVATAH.

#### KANYAADAAN GUPTADAAN

(Handing over charge of bride to the new guardians and secret donation)

#### DIRECTION AND MOTIVATION

During the process of Kanyadan, it is customary to give an undeclared amount (or ornament) to the bride. It is handed over to her concealed in a lump of Aata(kneaded flour). In fact this is the traditional form of dowry. While bidding farewell to the bride, the guardians give her some cash or ornaments as gift which may be required by her in moments of contingency. This gift is absolutely private and remains a secret between the donor and the receiver bride. Other persons are neither expected to know, nor inquire about this gift. The In-laws of the bride have no right to suggest, demand or inquire about this dowry. Nor there is any need for its exhibition, since the donation is given by persons (who may be rich or poor) according to their financial status and convenience and it is not supposed to instigate discontentment or appreciation from any quarter whatsoever. Besides, if the amount becomes public it is likely to generate a trend of emulation and competition creating social problems. The bride's people, in such a case would also be exposed to undue pressure and if the amount is considered inadequate, the groom's party will get an opportunity to behave impudently. Hence, while giving directives in regard to donation of contingent amount to the bride, the farsighted Rishis, (keeping in view the possibility of misuse of this custom by greedy persons for personal gains or for some other menial objective) introduced a proviso about total secrecy of dowry and discussion on the subject was strictly forbidden. For the sake of convention, it is sufficient today to conceal a one rupee coin in Aata for Guptdan.

## KANYAADAAN

Kanyadan means transfer of responsibilities pertaining to physical and emotional requirements of the bride by her guardians to the groom and his people. Until her marriage, the parents of the girl are totally responsible for upbringing, development, security, happiness, counseling, consoling and encouraging the girl. After marriage, her husband and his relatives will have to undertake these responsibilities. With the rite of Kanyadan, it is being ensured that in the new environment of household of her husband, the bride does not find herself as a forlorn stranger and on the contrary continues to receive the same affection, cooperation, goodwill and attention which she was getting from her parents. While agreeing to take part in Kanyadan and taking the responsibilities ensuing from betrothal, the groom and his guardians must sincerely appreciate that henceforth they are becoming sincerely answerable to the society for these duties which they will have to perform in all eventualities.

Here it is necessary to explain, that Kanyadan does not mean a conventional Daan as is literally meant in case of various types of donations made in cash or kind (Daan of property, livestock etc.) The bride cannot be treated like property since only later can be donated to any person for exploitation as one likes. Each human being appears in this world as an independent entity and has a characteristic environment of one's own. No human being therefore has any right to donate or sell another of his kind. Even parents do not own their children as property. If it transpires, it would only tantamount to negation of independent natural existence, a contravention of human right. Marriage is a bilateral agreement to be sincerely and honestly followed by the bride and the groom. Viewing the spouse as an object of merchandise, whether sold, purchased or bartered and behaving like an owner would only mean a violation of human rights. Kanyadan is never meant as such. The ritual has only one objective i.e. to ensure continuation of a congenial environment for the bride.

On entering a new household and living amongst total strangers, the psychologically tender bride has to face many problems of adjustment. Hence in this initial transitional period of change in environment, the household members of the groom must be especially careful about the greater need of affection and assistance to the bride. Bride's people may also not become totally indifferent to the bride after marriage. They are also expected to contribute throughout for the betterment of her future.

With Kanyadan, the spiritual-lineage of the bride (Gotra-named after the primary Guru of the clan) is also changed and after marriage she is considered as belonging to the Gotra of her husband. With recitation of mantra, divine powers are invoked to provide emotional strength to the couple for happily adjusting to the changed environment. After the invocation mantra, the speaker (who is

taking the pledge) places both hands of the bride joined together-palms upwards in the hands of the groom held underneath the hands of the bride in a similar manner.

**KANYADAN SANKALP (The pledge)**

ADYETI.....NAAMAAHAM..... NAAMNIMIMAAM KANYAAM...../  
BHAGINEEM SUSNAATAAM YATHAASHAKTI ALANKRITAAM  
GANDHAADI ARCHITAAM VASTRAYUGA CHCHHANNANNAAM  
PRAJAAPATI DAIVATYAAM SHATGUNEEKRIT JYOTISH-  
TOMAATIRAATRA-SHATFAL PRAAPTI KAAMOHAM.....NAMNE  
VISHNUROOPINE VARAAI BHARAN POSHAN AACHCHHADAN  
PAALNAADEENAM SWAKEEYAUTTARDAAYITWA  
BHAARAMAKHILAMADYA TAVA PATNEETWEN TUBHYAMAHAM  
SAMPRADADE.

Conceding the groom says.  
OM SWASTI..

**GAUDAAN**

(Donation of a Cow)

A cow is symbolical of purity and dedication to benevolence. Whatever is given as gift by bride's people must be associated with purity of thoughts and a genuine desire to help. The donation itself be such as to motivate the receiver in endeavors for becoming pure and benevolent. If the bride's parents find it convenient to give and those of the groom have adequate place for looking after, a cow may be gifted during the ritual of Kanyadan. It would be an appropriate gift for promotion of health in bride's family.

This age-old tradition of Gaudan must be kept alive. If in the changed social scenario of modern times, the giver or the receiver finds it inconvenient to maintain a cow, some amount on cash or an ornament may be given during Kanyadan in lieu of Gaudan.

OM! MAATAA RUDRAANAAM DUHITAA VASOONAAM  
SWASAADITYAANAAMAMRITASYA-NAABHIHI. PRANU VOCHAM  
CHIIKITUSHE JANAAI MAA GAAMANAAGAAMADITIM VADHISHTA.

**MARYAADAANKARNAM**

(Binding in discipline)

**PROCESS AND CONCEPTUALIZATION-**

After the Kanyadan-Gaudan, the participants of these rituals make a humble appeal to the groom in the presence of gentlemen of society and invited divine powers as witness, to behave with humility after getting married. The groom

concedes to this request. This special ritual has been prescribed to ensure a specific code of behavior conforming to norms decided by ancient Rishis for civilized and disciplined living. Since after marriage the groom receives additional rights, there is a likelihood of inflation in his ego and possibilities of misappropriation of advantages. Therefore with this rite the groom is asked to keep inviolate the limits defined by the Rishis in matters pertaining to religion, resources and sex. The request is made very humbly and the groom happily conveys his acceptance.

#### ACTION AND CONCEPTUALIZATION

Let the participants (who have taken part in Kanyadaan earlier) take flowers, rice, grains and little water in the right hand and conceptualize that they are motivating the groom for a disciplined behavior. While promising to be disciplined, the groom invokes the divine powers to help him in the venture.

Let the participants pronounce the following mantra:

OM! GAUREEM KANYAAMIMAAM PUJYA! YATHAA SHAKTI  
VIBHOOSHITAAM. GOTRAAI SHARMANE. TUBHYAM, DATTAAM DEV  
SAMAASHRAYA. DHARMASYAACHARANAM SAMYAK,  
KRIYATAAMANAYAA SAH.  
DHARME CHAARTHE CHA KAAME CHA, YATWAM NAATICHARE  
VIBHO.

The groom concedes by saying:

NAATICHARAAMI.

#### PAANIGRAHAN

(Becoming hand in glove: joining hands)

After the groom has conveyed his willingness to abide by the codes of marital disciplines, the bride and the groom are made to clasp each others' right hands. This the gesture of Panigrahan. The action is like shaking hands as though one is reassuring the other person. Conceptualization is similar to that during Kanyadaan. While letting the bride hold his hands the groom too feels that henceforth the coordinating nucleus of his character, desires, ambitions and activities, which was so far own self, will be wife and he will be assisting her in this venture by relinquishing these exclusive personal rights in favor of his bride.

The moment husband and wife resolve to move hand in hand and motivate each other in the knowledge of respectable members of the society, the basic objective of marriage is achieved.

#### PROCESS AND CONCEPTUALIZATION

When the mantra is pronounced, let the bride extend her right hand towards the groom, who then clasps her hands (along with the thumb) in his hands. During the process, both conceptualize that in the auspicious environment of the ceremony, they are accepting responsibility for each other with a feeling of love and understanding.

OM! YADAISHI MANASHAA DOORAM, DISHONU-PAVAMAANO VAA.  
HIRANYAPARNO VAIKARNAH, SA TWAA MANMANASAAM KAROTU  
ASAU.

### GRANTHI BANDHAN

(Typing the nuptial knot)

In the process of Panigrahan the bride and the groom had given mutual reassurance of support. Now it is the turn of society to strengthen this bondage. The bond is symbolically established by tying a knot between the scarves worn by the bride and the groom, which means creation of a new entity, comprising a set of two bodies and two minds. Now each one of the couple becomes a complement of the other. Along with the knot are tied five articles, namely a coin, flower, green grass (Droova), turmeric (haridra) and rice grains (Akchat).

The coin indicates that neither of the couple could have exclusive, personal, proprietary rights in financial matters. That irrespective of personal income, neither of earning members would have absolute freedom of expenditure. From now onwards, there will be a joint ownership of the earnings and property. The planning and mode of expenditure would be decided after mutual consultation and agreement.

Droova symbolizes an everlasting, active, live, feeling of love. Grass never loses its biological characteristic of growth. A little sprinkling of water makes dry grass green. Let the matrimonial bond be ever green like grass with either couple having infinite love and fellowship for the other person throughout life. Let each partner consider one's own discomforts and sufferings insignificant in comparison to those of the spouse and take greater care of the conveniences and happiness of the other person. Let there be a constant overflow, exuberance of love from the depths of one heart to the other.

Haridra symbolizes health. Let each spouse constantly endeavor to improve the physical and mental health of the other to maximum extent. Let neither behave in a manner detrimental to the health of the other person. Nor should one act to create emotional stress for the other.

Akchat in the knot reminds the couple of their multifarious responsibilities towards various groups of people and society as a whole. The married couple



will have a circle of close friends and relatives. It is the joint responsibility of husband and wife to take appropriate care in maintaining a congenial relationship with them individually and collectively. Paying greater attention to one or a few, disregarding others is not advisable. Besides, it is also the responsibility to each conscientious human being to look after the society as well, apart from one's own family. Let neither of couple compel or confine other in activities for the sake or one's own selfish interest. Nor should one deprive the partner of opportunities of social services in context of time, resources and assistance. The concept symbolized in Grains of rice in the knot is that you are not merely made for each other but the responsibilities and commitments towards the society are also tied up with your matrimonial bond as a very significant objective. (A sapling grown out of a grain of rice when transplanted elsewhere grows to produce thousands of grains. Similarly the goodwill and benevolent acts transplanted by the couple in society would generate the same attributes in many a person.)

Flowers in the knot apprise the couple of the necessity to be always smiling, relaxed and radiate happiness and fragrance of virtues, so that their company becomes enjoyable. Let each amongst the couple persistently make an endeavor to keep the other person happy and keep fondling and caressing. Let either work for spreading the fragrance of name and fame of the partner far and wide and be Eveready to praise even trivialities. One should be especially careful to avoid disgracing or showing indifference to the spouse in presence of other persons. Thus this nuptial knot with the five auspicious articles is meant to remind the married couple for ever about the real objectives of matrimony.

#### PROCESS AND CONCEPTUALISATION

Let the knot be tied by the Acharya (Priest), a representative of the Acharya or some other respectable person. Bringing the corners of the two draperies worn by the bride and the groom together, tie a knot with the five auspicious articles. Conceptualizing that the invocation of divine powers is making these articles effective in augmenting righteousness and goodwill and creating a strong bond between the marrying persons to enable them achieve the objective of matrimony successfully.

Pronounce the following mantra while tying the knot:

OM! SAMANJANTU VISHVEDEVA AHAA, SAMAAPO HRIDAYAANI NAU.  
SAM MAATARISHWAA SAM DHAATAA, SAMUDESHTREE DADHAATU  
NAU.

#### THE OATH-TAKING CEREMONY



## DIRECTION AND MOTIVATION

The event of taking charge of an important office is essentially associated with an oath-taking ceremony. By way of performance of rites of Kanyadan, Panigrahan and Granthi Bandhan, the bride, groom and society express their approval of the matrimonial union of the couple. Thereafter, are performed a series of rites for scriptural molding of the two individuals into a joint unit of amalgamated personality. The process takes place in presence of sanctified fire and divine powers as witness. In the ritual they are made to understand in detail their individual responsibilities and take a pledge to shoulder them together sincerely and faithfully. In this context it is to be kept in mind that the duties of the groom are primary and for this reason he is made to take the oath before the bride.

## PROCESS AND CONCEPTUALISATION

While taking oath the groom and the bride are given flowers, rice and a little water in hand. The priest pronounces the mantra related to the oath in Sanskrit explaining the vernacular. On completion of each oath, the oath-taker is asked to convey acceptance by saying I promise in Sanskrit. Thereafter, he oblates the rice, grains and flowers on the alter.

## OATHS FOR THE GROOM

- 1- DHARMA PATNEE MILITWAIVA, HYEKAM  
JEEVANAMA AVAYOH. ADYAARABHYA YATO ME  
TWAMARDDHANGINEETI GHOSHITAA.

From this moment, declaring the bride as my better-half and amalgamating my personality with that of my wife, I am creating a new living entity. I shall take as much care of my wife, as I do for parts of my own body.

- 2- SWEEKAROMI SUKHEN TWAAM, RIHLAKSHMI MAHANTATAH.  
MANATRAYITWAA VIDHAASYAAMI, SUKAARYAANI TWAYAA-  
SAH.

I am happily handing over the significant authority for financial management of my household to my wife promise to consider her views and suggestions in all of life significant.

- 3- ROOP SWAASTHYA SWABHAANTU, GUNADOSHADEEN  
SARVATAH. ROGAAGYAAN VIKAARAASHCHA, TAVA  
VISMRTYACHETASAH.

I shall not develop or nurture any aversion towards my wife on account of conditions related to her appearance, beauty, health, natural traits, disease or mistakes due to her ignorance. Nor shall I express discontentment in this context.

I shall also maintain a cordial relationship with her by either patiently and lovingly making attempts for improvement in any shortcomings in her or make adjustments otherwise.

- 4- SAHACHARO BHAVISHYAAMI, POORNA SNEHAM PRADAAITE.  
SATYATAA MAM NISHTHAA CHA, YAS YAADHAARAM  
BHAVISHYATI.

I shall always be a close friend of my wife and also show maximum possible affection to her. I shall follow this pledge faithfully in letter and spirit.

- 5- YATHAA PAVITRA CHITTEN, PAATIVRATYAM DHRITAM VRATAM.  
TATHAIV PALAYISHYAAMI, PATNIVRAT MAHAM DHRUVAM.

I shall strictly follow the codes of behavior specified for a husband in reciprocation of those made for a wife. I shall neither think of nor indulge in adultery.

- 6- GRIHASYAARTHA VYAVASTHAAYAAM, MANTRA YITWAA  
TWAYAA SAH. SANCHALANAM KARISHYAAMI,  
GRIHASTHOCHIT JEEVANAM.

In domestic matters, I shall let my wife have upper hand and adopt a life-style becoming of an ideal householder by making a family budget in consultation with my spouse.

- 7- SAMRIDDHI SUKH SHAANTINAAM, RAKSHANAAM TATHAA  
TAV. VYAVASTHAAM SANKARISHYAAMI, SWA SHAKTI  
VAIBHAVAADIBHIIHI.

I shall faithfully utilize my strength and resources in making arrangements for pleasure, peace, progress and protection of my wife.

- 8- YATNASHEELO BHAVISHYAAMI, SANMAARG SEVITUM  
SADAA. AAVAYOH MATBHEDAANSHCHA, DOSHAANSAN  
SHODHYA SHAANTTTAH.

I shall unilaterally make every possible effort to keep my own behavior towards my wife exemplary and resolve all differences and mistakes peacefully. I shall neither blame, insult nor ignore my wife in the company of other persons.

- 9- DEVAGNI SANMANUSHYAANAAM, SAANNIDHYE  
KRITANISHCHAYAH. TWAAM PRATYAHAM BHAVISHYAAMI,  
SAHISHNUHU MRIDULASTATHAA.

With the divine powers, sacred fire and gentleman as witness, I take a pledge to be tolerant and soft spoken with my wife.

10- BHAVATYAAMASAMARTHAAYAAM, VIMUKHAA YAANCHA  
KARMANI. VISHWAASAM SAHYOGANCH, MAM PRAAPASYASI  
TWAM SADAA.

I give an assurance that even in the event of my wife becoming infirm, invalid or finding her indifferent towards her responsibilities due to some reason, I shall not deviate in the least from my own responsibilities and continue to extend my cooperation to her.

11- MADHURAA PREM SANYUKTAAM, VAARTAA  
SATYAVYAVHRITIM. DRIDHAM PATNIVRATMEKAM VACHO  
ME TAV SANNIDHAU.

I pledge to remain sweet and affectionate during conversation with my wife and in course of my behavior with her. I also promise to be strictly faithful to her.

#### OATHS FOR THE BRIDE

1- SWAJEEVANAM MELAYITWAA, BHAVATAH KHALU JEEVANE.  
BHOOTWAA CHAARDHAANGINEE NITYAM, VASISHYAAMI  
GRIHE SADAA.

Amalgamating my life-style with that of my husband, I shall create a new entity of human existence. In this way I shall always be living as his true better-half (Ardhangini)

2- SHISHTATAA POORVAKAM SARVAIH, PARIWAAR JANAIH SAH.  
AUDAARYEN VIDHAASYAAMI VYAVAHAARAM CHA  
KOMALAM.

I shall always consider all friends and members of my husband's family as integrated units of one system, maintain cordial relationship with all of them, serve them open heartedly and behave with them sweetly.

3- TYAKTVALASYAM KARISHYAAMI, GRIHKARYE  
PARISHRAMAM. BHARTURHARSHAM HI GYAASYAAMI,  
SWEEYAAMEV PRASANNATAM.

Resisting indolence, I shall perform domestic chores laboriously. In this way, I shall extend appropriate cooperation to my husband in his progress and betterment of standard of living.

- 4- SHRADDHAYAA PAALAYISIYYAAMI, DHARMAM  
PAATIVRATAM PARAM. SARVADAIVAANUKOOLYEN,  
PATYURAADESHAPAALIKA.

I shall remain faithful to my husband; be always favorable to him respectfully; shall never be hypocritical in my behavior towards him. I shall also make it a habit to follow his advice and instructions in letter and spirit promptly.

- 5- SUSHROOSHANAPARAA SWACHCHHAA. MADHURPRI  
YABHAASHINI. PRATIJAANE BHAVISHYAAMI SATATAM  
SUKHADAAYINEE.

I shall cultivate virtues of selfless service, cleanliness, pleasantry and sweet-conversation. On the other hand, I shall carefully avoid development of vices and bad habits like jealousy, nagging and grumbling. In this way, I shall always make my presence pleasurable.

- 6- MTI'AVYAYEN GAARHA STHYASANCHAALANE HI  
NITYADAA. PRAYATISHYE CHA SOTSAAHAM, TAVA,  
AHAMANUGAAMMEE.

I shall manage domestic requirements by keeping the house-hold expenditure to a minimum. I shall avoid extravagance. In spite of my husband becoming financially or physically weak, I shall enthusiastically continue to follow disciplines of an ideal house-holder.

- 7- DEVASWAROPO NAARINAM, BHARTAA BHAWATI  
MANAVAH. MATVETITWAM BHAJISHYAMI, NIYATA  
JEEVANAA-VADHIM.

Regarding my husband as a representative of God, sent as a life-long companion, I shall overlook differences of opinion with him and remain active throughout my life in rendering services due of me. I shall never insult or ignore my husband publicly or privately.

- 8- POOJYAASTAVA PITARO YE, SHRADDHAYAA PARAMAA HI ME.  
SEVAYAA TOSHAYISHYAAMI, TAANSADA VINAYEN CHA.

I shall always keep all those persons contented with my services and humility who are held in high esteem by my husband and are dear and near to him.

9- KADA API KWA API KIM API, KARISHYE NA PARANGMUKHEE.  
PRATI JAANAAMI MAM CHA, TWAMEVA SARVAMEVA HI.

At all moments of life and under all circumstances, even on temporal estrangement, I shall continue to perform my duties towards my husband without expecting anything in return.

**YAGYA**

After taking the oaths, for ingraining the concepts in the nature and mind of the couple and nurturing them further, an environment of spirituality is created by making them take part in a Yagya.

The standard procedure of Gayatri Yagya consists of the following rituals successively.

**AGNISTHAAPANAM**

Enunciating the following mantra, honorably and with reverence take embers or burning camphor in a spoon or some small vessel and place it in the Havan Kund (receptacle for lighting fire for oblations).

OM! BHOOR BHUVAH SWARDY AURIVA BHOOMNA, PRITHIVEEVA  
VARIMNAA. TASYAASTE PRITHVI DEVAYAJANI,  
PRISHTHEGNIMANNADAMANNA-DYAAAYAA DADHE, AGNIM DOOTAM  
PURODADHE. HAVYAVAAHAMUPABRUVI DEVAAM-AASAA-  
DAYAADIH, OM AGNAYE NAMAH AVAAHAYAAMI, STHAAPAYAAMI,  
POOJAYAAMI, GANDHAAKSHATAM PUSHPAANI DHOOPAM DEEPAM  
NAIVEDYAM SAMARPAYAAMI.

**AGNI PRADEEPANAM**

Now further ignite the fire into a leaping flame by adding small pieces of wood and camphor and airing it with a hand-held fan.

OM! UDBUDHYASWAAGNE PRATI JAGRIHI, TWA MISHTAA POORTE-SA-  
GWAM SRIJETHAAMAYAMCHA. ASMINTSADHASTHE  
ADHUTTARASMIN, VISHWEDEVAA YAJAMAANASHCHA SEEDATA.

**SAMIDHAA DHAANAM**

Now take four Samidhas (15-30cm, long slender pieces of wood) and dipping either ends in Ghee (butter-oil) oblate them in the burning fire with the following mantras successively. The Samidhas are held between the thumb, ring finger and middle finger of the right hand and while placing them in fire the wrist is turned upwards.

- 1- OM! AYANTA IDHMA AATMAA, JAATAVEDASTENEDHYASWA  
VARDHASWA, CHEDDHAVAR- DHAYA CHAASMAAN PRAJAYAA,  
PASHUBHIR BRAHMAVAR-CHASE NAANNAADYEN SAMEDHEYA  
SWAAHAA. IDAM AGNAYE JAATAVEDASE IDAM NA MAMA.

- 2- OM! SAMIDHAAGNIM DUVASYATA, GHRITAIRBO  
DHAYATAATITHIM. AASMIN HAVYAA JUHOTANA SWAAHAA.  
IDAM AGNAYE IDAM NA MAMA.
- 3- OM! SUSAMIDDHAAI SHOCHISHE, GHRITAM TEEVRAM  
JUHOTANA. AGNAYE JAATAVEDASE SWAAHAA. IDAM AGNAYE  
JAATVEDASE IDAM NA MAMA.
- 4- OM! TAM TWA SAMIDBHIRANGIRO, GHRITEN VARDHAYAAMASI.  
BRIHACHCHHOCHA YAVISHTHYA SWAAHAA. IDAM AGNAYE  
ANGIRASE IDAM NA MAMA.

#### JAL PRASECHANAM

Holding water in the Prokshani ( a wooden spoon-shaped instrument with the smaller arm) pour water successively on the eastern, western, northern borders of the Kund and thereafter all around it along with enunciation of respective mantras.

OM! ADITENUMANYASWA. (EAST WARDS)

OM! ANUMATENUMANYASWA (WEST WARDS)

OM! SARASWATYANUMANYASWA (NORTH WARDS)

OM! DEVA SAVITAH PRASUVA YAGYAM, PRASUVA YAGYAPATIM  
BHAGAAI. DIVYO GANDHARVAH KETPOOHOO, KETAM NAH PUNAATU,  
VAACHASPATIRVAACHAM NAH SWADATU-U-U.

#### AAJYAAHUTIHI

Where Yagyas are performed elaborately on a large scale for large number of participants, oblations are offered to all divine powers, whereas in case of small ceremonies only seven oblations are given with Ghee. After each oblation, the left-over Ghee in the Sruva (a pencil-shaped wooden instrument with an obloid head at one end with a hole in it for holding Ghee for oblations) is dropped in the water kept in Praneeta (a rectangular spoon kept for the purpose) with enunciation of Idam na mama at the end of each mantra. Drops of Ghee collected in Praneeta will be used later for Avghran.

1. OM! PRAJAAPATAYE AWAHAA. IDAM PRAJAAPATAYE IDAM NA  
MAMA.
2. OM! INDRAAI SWAAHAA. IDAM INDRAAI IDAM NA MAMA.
3. OM! AGNAYE SWAAHAA. IDAM AGNAYE IDAM NA MAMA.
4. OM! SOMAAI SWAAHAA. IDAM SOMAAI IDAM NA MAMA.
5. OM! BHOOHU SWAAHAA. IDAM AGNAYE IDAM NA MAMA.
6. OM! BHUVAH SWAAHAA. IDAM VAYAVE IDAM NA MAMA.
7. OM! SWAH SWAAHAA. IDAM SOORYAI IDAM NA MAMA.

#### GAYATRI MANTRAHUTIHI

Now give twenty-four oblations with Gayatri Mantra. The oblations with Ghee are given with the help of Shruva. Other oblations with the Havishya (a mixture of

herbs and other ingredients) are given by the persons participating in the Yagya with right hand, holding the Havishya in the ring-finger, middle finger and thumb, wrist turned upwards.

OM! BHOOR BHUWAH SWAH TATSAVITUR VARENYAM BHARGO  
DEVASYA DHEEMAHI DHIYO YO NAHA PRACHODAYAAT. IDAM  
GAYATRYAI IDAM NA MAMA.

PRAAYASHCHITYA HOMAH

(Penitential Oblations)

Direction and motivation:

Five additional oblations are given with Gayatri Mantra as a penance for pre-existing retrogressive traits of personality. The oblations are made simultaneously by the groom with ghee and by the bride with Havishya. During the process both conceptualize that whichever of their earlier negative tendencies are likely to hamper the development of a happy conjugal relationship, are being burnt to ash along with each oblation. Pre-marital intimate relationship with the opposite sex, if any, may be forgotten (and forgiven) like an unpleasant dream. Now onwards for such affairs of past life, neither would blame the other spouse nor would memories thereof cast shadows on present married life or make one accuse the other partner of misdemeanor. With this ritual, the couple is also bound to get rid of addictions like drug abuse, drunkenness, intoxication and smoking. The repentance for the past mistakes is also associated with a pledge to desist from repetition of the same in future, so that progress in married life does not face any hurdles.

PROCESS AND CONCEPTUALIZATION

While making oblations in fire with mantras, let the bride and the groom think that with each penitential oblation, the inner-self is being cleansed of the imprints of vicious acts and thoughts of earlier life. Submit the oblations with pronouncement of Swaha and bow with folded hands after Idam Na Mama.

OM! TWAM NO AGNE VARUNASYA VIDWAAN, DEVASYA HEDO  
AVAYAA SISEESHTHAAHAA. YAJISHTHO VAHNITAMAH  
SHOSHUCHAANO, VISHWAA DWESHAA GWAM SI  
PRAMUMUGDHYASMATA SWAAHAA. IDAMAGNEE VARUNAABHYAAM  
IDAM NA MAMA.

OM! SA TWAM NO AGNEVAMO BHAVOTI, NEDISHTHO ASYAA USHASO  
VYUSHTAU. AVAYAKSHVA NO VARUNA GWAM RARAANO, VEEHI  
MRIDEEKA GWAM SUHAVO NA EDHI SWAAHAA. IDAMAGNEE  
VARUNABHYAM IDAM NA MAMA.



OM! AYAASHCHAAGNESYA NABHISHASTIPAASHCHA,  
SATYAMITWAMAYAA-ASI, AYAA NO YAGYAM VAHAASYAYAA, NO  
DHEHI BHESHHAJA GWAM SWAA IAA. IDAMAGNAYE AYASE IDAM NA  
MAMA.

OM! YE TE SHATAM VARUN YE SAHASRAM, YAGIYAAHA  
PAASHAAVITATAA MAHAANTAH. TEBHIRNOADYA SAVITOTA  
VISHNUHU, VISHWE MUNCHANTU MARUTAH SWARKAAHAA  
SWAAHAA. IDAM VARUNAAI SAVITRE VISHNAVE VISHWEBHYO  
DEVEBHYO MARUD BHYAH SWARKEBHYASHCHA IDAM NA MAMA.

OM! UDUTTAMAM VARUNA PAASHAMAS MADVAADHAMAM,  
VIMADHYAMA GWAM SHRATHAI ATHAAVAYAMAADITYA VRATE  
TAWAANAAGASO, ADITAYE SYAAM SWAAHAA. IDAM VARUNAAYAA-  
DITYAADITAYE CHA IDAM NA MAMA.

#### SHILAAROHANAM

The ritual of Shilaarohanam is like putting a stamp on the document of oaths taken by the couple. With it, the bride and the groom reaffirm the resolve to stand as a rock against all future eventualities. (The reader is reminded of the well-known episode of Ramayan, wherein Angad the emissary of Ram, had dared Raven to move his firmly-posed foot). Through this ritual, the participant-couple is also asked to take the oath of matrimony seriously and not merely as casual statements to be forgotten on the least pretext. The solemn promises made during the ceremony are expected to withstand pressure and last for ever.

#### PROCESS AND CONCEPTUALISATION

With the pronouncement of mantra, the bride and the groom place their right foot together on a piece of rock and conceptualize that the combination of their firm resolve and divine grace is providing them strength to shoulder responsibilities and overcome obstacles in married life.

OM! AAROHAMASHMAANAMASHMEVA TWA GWAM STHIRAA  
BHAVA. ABHITISHTHA PRITANYATOVABAADHASWA  
PRITANAAYATAH.

#### LAAJAAHOMAH

The next rite is a combined process of Laajahoma and Parikramaa by the couple around the sacred fire in which the brother of the bride (or a close cousin) also takes part.



On completion of each cycle of circumambulation Parikramaa of the couple around the fire, the brother of the bride standing aside hands over handful of baked corns of paddy (from a plate held in hand) to his sister (bride), who in turn gives it in the hands of the groom. The groom then oblates these corns into the sacred fire Laajaahome along with pronouncement of mantra. The process is repeated three times. Thrice the bride hands over the corns to the groom after successive cycles of circumambulation and on each occasion the groom oblates them in fire. With this rite, the bride symbolically informs the groom, that whatever has been received by her from her parental home for her personal use, she is not holding secretly for her own sake only, but sharing it with her husband. This act of the bride is a reciprocation of husband's commitment according to which he too is expected to share his earnings with his spouse. In this way the couples share their achievements without any reservation and are not secretive about them. The act of the groom in oblating the corns signifies his sense of self-respect in refusing to accept anything that is not acquired by his own personal endeavor rather than sustain on donations from someone else. On burning in fire, material becomes gaseous and disseminates in the atmosphere for all and sundry. Thus in the process, on giving oblations in fire, is imbibed a great ideal i.e. one must not accept anything free and even if something is acquired in this manner, it must be spent for the benefit of the masses. In fact this itself is the objective of many other occasions of public feasting. The purpose of mass-banquets after the death of either parents or a relative in family was (in ancient days) to ensure the utilization of inheritance for sustenance of such classes of society as the Brahmins, who were fully engaged in social welfare activities. The sentiments of guardians of the bride in giving her gifts in cash and kind as dowry for her own use may be appreciated, but there is no justification for the husband or her in-laws in demanding or utilization thereof for their personal requirements. A self-respecting, self-dependent individual would never accept such free gifts. Besides, a conscientious person knows that unearned money and that too given by someone in a spirit of benevolence tends to make one indolent and counterproductive. It is therefore advisable to utilize free gifts and donation for the welfare of society only. Yagya signifies this very ideology. There is an established tradition amongst the Hindus to donate substantially in cash and kind on all auspicious occasions.

It would be much more justifiable to distribute all free gifts amongst those who need them. In so magnificent a heritage from ancient Indian culture, the inhuman demands of dowry from bride's guardians, by today's money greed Shylocks, who would like to collect the last drop of blood from the former, appears in sharp contrast. In fact, the guardians of bridegroom should be gratefully obliged from the very core of their heart to the parents of bride, who part with their most precious possession apart from their own flesh and blood. The groom and his people should, in fact, seek every possible opportunity to express their gratitude

in reciprocation of this extraordinary gesture. The prevalent trend in any quarter of the society of conniving to inflict physical and mental torture and exploitation during marriage ceremonies only indicate that established tradition is being blatantly violated and religion is being totally ignored. This ritual of Lajaahome is specially meant to strike hard on such regressive trends in the society so that people view dowry in the right perspective.

## PARIKRAMAA

(Circumambulation)

Let the bride and the groom perform circumambulation around the sacred fire moving clockwise. In the first four cycles, the groom moves behind the bride and thereafter in the remaining three, the order is reversed. The relevant mantra is pronounced during each circumambulation and on completion of each cycle an oblation is given by both persons with Gayatri Mantra. The initial order of circumambulation signifies the leadership and priority of wife in domestic and family matters, in which, the husband follows wife's advice. It is also natural, since a woman is naturally adept and experienced in this field. The later circumambulations carried out with the groom in the lead, show the need for experience and guidance of husband beyond home, which is generally a man's domain. Nevertheless, in either case, decisions are to be taken after mutual consultations. Either of the couple are advised to develop greater expertise in the field of activities of the spouse.

Nature has made clear distinctions in the areas of excellence of man and woman. A woman has greater tenderness of heart, more capacity to love and emotional reactivity than man. Man, on the other hand, has more physical strength and dexterity of action. In human life both aspects have a relevant place. Nevertheless, in overall view, a woman's status, dignity and opinion in human life has greater significance. For this reason, the bride is asked to lead in four circumambulation and the groom in three. The ratio of honor due to woman and man is 4 to 3. That is why, in social interactions women are given preference over gentlemen. (Note the nomenclature of duos of Indian deities-Sita-Ram, Radhey-Shyam. Laxmi-Narayan, Uma-Mahesh etc.)

## PROCESS AND CONCEPTUALIZATION

Parikramaa and Lajaahome are carried out simultaneously. After Shilaarohan, while still standing the couple give one oblation with Gayatri Mantra. Thereafter, begins the process of Parikramaa with the bride leading in the first four cycles in a clockwise direction. On completion of each cycle one oblation is given with Lajaahome. This is followed by three additional cycles in which the groom moves ahead of the bride. During the Parikrama the bride and the groom conceptualize being increasingly engulfed by the divine energy generated from the oblations from without and motivations for dedication to society from within. They also

concentrate on the concept of leading an ideal family life conforming to ideals imbibed in the process of Yagya.

LAAJAAHOMA MANTRAH:

1. OM! ARYAMANAM DEVAM KANYAA AGNIMAYAKSHATA. SA NO ARYAMAA DEVAH PRETO, MUNCHANTU MAA PATEH SWAAHAA. IDAMARYAMNE-AGNAYE IDAM NA MAMA.
2. OM! IYAM NARYUPABROOTE LAAJAA NAAWAPANTIKAA. AAYUSHMAANASTU ME PATIREDHANTAM, GYAATAYO MAMA SWAAHAA. IDAM AGNAYE IDAM NA MAMA.
3. OM! IMANLLAAJAANA AVAPAAM-YAGNAU, SAMRIDDHIKARANAM TAVA. MAMA TUBHYAM CHA SAMVANANAM, TADAGNIRANUMANYATAAMIYA GWAM SWAAHAA. IDAM AGNAYE IDAM NA MAMA.

PARIKRAMAA MANTRAH:

OM! TUBHYAMAGRE PARYAVAHANT-SOORYAAM, VAHATU NA SAH. PUNAH PATIBHYO JAAYAANDAA AGNE PRAJAYAA SAH.

SATAPADI

(The seven steps)

Directions and Motivation

After the Parikramaa, Saptapadi is performed. The bride and the groom move seven steps together, as a team, like soldiers on the march. The path of forward movement is demarcated by keeping a handful of grains of rice or earthen cups tied with Kalaavaa (auspicious thread) at equidistant spots in front of the couple in a straight line ahead of them. Both are then asked to take the first step and cover the first spot with the toe of the right leg. The relevant mantra is pronounced by the priest during the movement. Thereafter, they move to the next spot with enunciation of respective mantra.

In this way the seven spots are covered successively.

The first step is taken for FOOD, the second for STRENGTH, the third for RESOURCES, the fourth for ENTERTAINMENT, the fifth for FAMILY, the sixth for CONJUGAL RELATIONSHIP and the seventh for FRIENDSHIP. After marriage, the life of the married couple basically involves seven fields of activity. Saptapadi outlines their appropriate contributions to each of these fields.

THE FIRST STEP (FOOD)

Food must be health-promoting. Over-indulgence in savoriness and gluttony should find no place in the house-hold kitchen. Nutritional value should be given preference over taste. An ideal family-person is one who knows how to

make contribution to better production, preservation and utilization of food material. In spite of heavy expenditure on food, if it is over-cooked, ill-stored, wasted in kitchen or on dining table, made unhealthy by excess of spices, cooked in unhealthy conditions or subjected to other such irregularities, it would only destroy family health and economy. It is the primary responsibility of married couple to ensure nutritional value and purity of food.

#### THE SECOND STEP (STRENGTH)

Exercise, hard work, proper food and regular food-habits preserve health. Study, discussions and contemplation increase the intellectual efficacy. The couple should be ever vigilant towards these aspects and keep on looking for ways and means for becoming more effective, healthy and strong.

#### THE THIRD STEP (RESOURCES)

Effective financial management of house-hold affairs necessitated proper budgeting. Not a penny should be wasted in unproductive ventures. However, let one not be a miser where expenditure is justified. Instead of wasting money in exhibitionism, addictions and projection of self-image, money should be saved for upliftment of living standard of the family. In fact husband and wife both contribute towards family resources in their own way. Their contributions, though belonging to different fields of activity, are equally significant. Whereas man's domain is outdoor, where he works to earn by various occupations, the woman at home contributes to the family resources, by efficient economical management of domestic affairs. It is as much necessary for the married couple to take care of financial management at home by keeping discipline in domestic expenditure, as it is to find avenues for augmenting family resources by outdoor occupations.

#### THE FORTH STEP (RELAXATION AND ENTERTAINMENT)

Such an environment of relaxation, entertainment, amusement, pastime and interaction of humor is required to be created, that even with minimal means of comfort and resources one budgets the contentment and pleasures of the rich. Let the couple make an endeavor to remain happily relaxed, ever-smiling and find happiness in small events and thinking. Problems should not be taken too seriously. Let them believe in the adage Contentment is the Key to lasting happiness.

#### THE FIFTH STEP (INTER-PERSONAL AND SOCIAL INTERACTION)

Norms of etiquette should never be lost sight of in dealing with younger and older persons. Dependent animals and attendants should also be treated as members of family. There should not be any carelessness in being ever watchful and active in taking appropriate care of the dependents and making arrangement for their safety, comfort and welfare.

#### THE SIXTH STEP (SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP)

Reproduction is a need of nature. Being a natural instinct, sex plays an important role in married life. Nevertheless, in this context self-restraint should be observed with maximum strictness and vigilance, since any deviation therefrom is likely to damage the health of either couple. In spite of being married, the couples are advised to follow Brahmcharya (Sex-discipline) appropriately avoiding reckless sexual activity. Let the couple regard each other more as partners and intimate friends and save themselves from the damaging consequences of reckless sex. Think a million times about the financial, physical and psychological implications before bringing a child in the family.

#### THE SEVENTH STEP (CONJUGAL RELATIONSHIP)

The seventh commitment of the couple is towards maintenance of conjugal friendship and strengthening it progressively. Let either amongst the couple introspect minutely whether any such mistake is being repeatedly committed, which is likely to create a situation for estrangement or alienation or discontentment of the spouse. Even if the other partner is behaving erratically, the reaction should not be retaliatory, sharp or hurting. On the contrary, a gentle, tolerant, affectionate reciprocity makes the person pensive and may motivate repentance inducing latter to take steps for penance, retribution or reformation of self.

Tit for tat may be an effective strategy for an alien to a certain extent, but for winning the heart of one's intimate associate in family there is no option to forgiveness, expression of fellowship and selfless service.

In a nutshell, the foregoing are the seven pillars of ideals and principles of conjugal relationship, adopting which the couple can be rest assured of a happy family life.

#### ACTION AND CONCEPTUALIZATION

Let the bride and the groom stand side by side. With each step forward, the relevant mantra for invocation of requisite divine power is pronounced. Meditating on the same, with folded hands, the couple moves forward and successive steps are taken. During the process both conceptualize that they are taking the pledge for a progressive life in presence of divine powers as witness and that their own resolve and divine grace would jointly help them throughout their life.

#### MANTRAAS FOR SAPTAPADI

1-(For food, with omnipresent God as witness)

OM! EKO VISHNUR JAGATSARVAM, VYAPTAM YEN CHARAACHARAM  
HRIDAYE YASTATO YASYA TASYA SAAKSHEE PRADEEYATAAM.

The first step—

OM! ISH EKPADI BHAVASAA MAAMANUVRATAA BHAV,  
VISHNUSTWAANAYATU PUTRAAN VINDA VAHAI, BAHOONSTE SANTU  
JARADASHTAYAH.

2-(For strength with the witness of soul, God, earth, space, learned persons,  
radiations of sun and moon)

OM! JEEVAATMAA PARMAATMAA CHA, PRITHIVEE AAKAASHAMEVA  
CHA. SOORYACHANDRADWAYOR MADHYE, TASYA SAAKSHEE  
PRADEEYATAAM.

The second step---

OM! OORJE DWIPADI BHAVASAA MAAMANUVRATAA BHAVA  
VISHNUSTWAANAYATU PUTRAAN VINDAA VAHAI, BAHOONSTE  
SANTU JARADASHTAYAH.

3-(For resources of Gayatri with the trinity of attributes, powers, sensory and  
extra-sensory existence)

OM! TRIGUNASHCHA TRIDEVAASHCHA, TRISHAKTIHI  
SATPARAAYANAHAH. LOKATRAYE TRISANDHYAAYAHAH, TASYA  
SAAKSHEE PRADEEYATAAM.

The third step---

OM! RAAYASPOSHAAI TRIPADI BHAVASAA MAAMANUVRATAA  
BHAVA, VISHNUSTWAA NAYATU PUTRAAN VINDAA VAHAI,  
BAHOONSTE SANTU JARADASHTAYAH.

4-(For happiness, with all scriptural doctrines and eternal time as witness)

OM! CHATURMUKHASTATO BRAHMAA, CHATWAARO VED  
SAMBHAVAH. CHATUR YUGAAH PRAVARTANTE, TESHAAH SAKSHEE  
PRADEEYATAAM.

The fourth step---

OM! MAAYO BHAAVAI CHATUSHPADEE BHAVASAA  
MAAMANUVRATAA BHAVA, VISHNUSTVAANAYATU PUTRAAN  
VINDAAVAHAI BAHOONSTE SANTU JARADASHTAYAH.

5-(For personal management with the five physical and extra-sensory shells of  
human existence (annamai kosh, manomai kosh, pranmai kosh, vighnamai kosh and  
anandmai kosh) and their motivative powers as witness.)

OM! PANCHAME PANCH BHOOTAANAAM, PANCH PRAANAIH  
PARAAYANAHAH. TATRA DARSHAN PUNYAANAAM, SAAKSHINAH  
PRAAN PANCHADHAA.

The fifth step---

OM! PRAJAABHYAH PANCHAPADEE BHAVA SAA MAAMANUVRATAA  
BHAVA. VISHNUSTWAANAYATU PUTRAAN VINDAAVAHAI BHOONSTE  
SANTU JARADASHTAYAH.



6-(For sex-with the climates and the six types of sensory pleasures as witness.)  
OM! SHASHTHE SHASHTH RITUNAAM CHA, SHANMUKHAH SWAAMI  
KAARTIKAH. SHADRASAAH YATRA JAAYANTE, KAARTIKEYAASHCHA  
SAAKSHINAH.

The sixth step---

OM! RITUBHYAH SHATPADEE BHAVASAA MAAMANUVRATAA BHAVA.  
VISHNUSTWAANA-YATU PUTRAAN VINDAAVAHAI BAHONSTE  
SANTU JARADASHTAYH.

7-(For conjugal relationship-with the seven seas, continents and the invisible presence of wives of the seven Rishis as witness.)

OM! SAPTAME SAAGARAASHCHAIV, SAPTADWEE PAAH SAPAVATAAH.  
YESHAAM SAPTARSHI PATNEENAAM, TESHAMAADARSHA  
SAAKSHINAH.

The seventh step---

OM! SAKHE SAPTAPADI BHAVA SAA MAAMANUVRATAA BHAVA.  
VISHNUSTWAANAYATU PUTRAAN VIDAAVAHAI, BAHONSTE SANTU  
JARADASHTAYAH.

#### AASAN PARIVARTANAM

(Interchange of seats)

After Saptapadi, the bride and the groom are asked to interchange the seating positions. Up to the ritual of Saptapadi the bride takes a seat on the right of the groom. After the oaths taken during Saptapadi she becomes an integrated unit of the family, who can now share close family secrets. In Hindu society, wife is given a senior status in the family. Amongst the Hindu deities to the name of the male counterpart occupies the second position (Sita-Ram, Radhey-Shyam, Laxmi-Narayan, Uma-Mahesh, Shachi-Purander etc. The two represent the energy-chetan and the physical-jud complements of divine powers which work in unison for creation). The interchange of position also signifies mutual sharing of rights and privileges.

Change the position with the following mantra.

OM! IH GAAVO NISHEEDANTU IHYAASHVAA IH POORUSHAAHAA. IHO  
SAHASRADAKSHINO YAGYA IH POOSHA NISHEEDANTU.

#### PAADPRAKSHAALANAM

(Washing the feet)

After the interchange of seats the bride and the groom are regarded as devotee entering the hermitage of family-life. As an honor to them, therefore, their feet are washed. Let a married couple or some representative of bride's family perform this rite. Prior to taking part in the rite, the couple is to undergo purification by themselves by the consecrating Pavitrikaran mantra. Thereafter



they wash the feet of the marrying couple with ground turmeric and Doorva by pouring water on their feet(placed in a large plate.) With the enunciation of the first mantra, wash the feet three times and with the second one, offer the desired presentation(cash or ornaments)

OM! YAA TE PATIGHNEE PRAJAAGHNEE PASHU GHNEE, GRIHAGHNEE YASHOGHNEE NINDITEE, TANOORJAARA GHNEEM TATA-ENAAMKAROMI, SAA JEERYA TWAM MAYAASAH.

OM! BRAHMANAASHAALAAM NIMITAAM, KAVIBHIRNIMATAAM MITAAM. INDRAAGNEE RAKSHA TAAM SHAALAAM, AMRITAU SOMYAM SADAH.

### SOORYA DHYAANAM

(Meditating on sun- when marriage is performed during day.)

Savitaa-the energy of God operating in sun, is the most powerful source of energy on this planet. Let the couple maintain permanency of activity, glory and a prominent position (in society) like the sun in this planetary system. As the sun follows the same path of revolution in this system, with its benign influences, let the newlyweds resolve to be steady in activities of welfare in their society.

OM! TACHCHAKSHURDEVAHITAM PURASTA-CHCHHUKRA-MUCHCHARAT. PASHYEMA SHARADAH SHATAM, JEEVEMASHARADAH SHATA GWAM, SHRINUYAAMA SHARADAH SHATAM, PRABRAVAAMA SHARADAH SHATAMADEENAAHAA, SYAMA SHARADAH SHATAM, BHOORYASHCHA SHARADAH SHATAAT.

### DHRUVA DHYAANAM

(Meditating on the Polar Star-when marriage is performed during night)

The Polar Star named in Indian scripture as Dhruva Tara, is regarded as a synonym for steadfastness. This star was named after a Rishi of the same name, who had showed exemplary courage as a child and did not deviate in his persistent endeavor in seeking a communion with God. The Polar Star, as we know, does not change its position with respect to our planetary system whereas other stars and planets are ever in motion.

The objective of meditating on Polar Star is to remind the couple that they are expected to be steadfast in carrying out their responsibilities, would not deviate from the pledge made for the ideals, live accordingly and fulfill the promises made. The Polar Star also motivates one to be stable in mind and firm in performance of duties.

OM! DHRUVAMASI DHRUVAM TWAA PASHYAAMI, DHRUVAIDHI POSHYE MAYI MAHYAM TWAADAAT. BRIHAS PATIRMAYAA PATYAA, PRAJAAVATEESANJEEV SHARADAH SHATAM.

## SHAPATH AASHVAASAN

(Mutual Reassurance)

Keeping their right hands over the head of the other the bride and the groom take a final oath and give a touching, heartfelt assurance to each other, that let there be no doubt in their sincerity. That they are emphatically and sincerely assuring each other of their honesty, sincerity and faithfulness for whole of life.

It is the bane of modern society that man has begun to treat woman disdainfully and his behavior towards her has become hypocritical, exploitative and perfidious. Whatever intimacy man is cultivating with the other sex today, is with the ulterior motive of exploiting her youth and sex. As soon as the bond of this loose relationship of youth and sex slackens, the treatment of man towards woman becomes harsh and sadistic. The woman of this world is living today as a bonded labor- a virtual slave of man. Her freedom is lesser in society and home than even of a domesticated animal. Blatantly disregarding ethics in domestic life, man is behaving like a characterless, uncivilized human being-using his resources selfishly and recklessly without caring for the needs of his wife. This is the state of affair and in most of the family-relationships today.

Under the circumstances, a woman, in general, is likely to be skeptical and might consider this oath-taking ceremony as hypocritical and perfunctory. In the prevailing situation, her apprehensions are only a natural reaction.

Some amongst married men even go to the extent of marrying a second time under the lame excuse of getting an issue, a son which they could not obtain from the existing wife or on some other trivial pretext of incompatibility. The bride who is very well aware of such trends in the society does have apprehensions about her future life. Here lies the significance of the reassurance given by the groom during the present rite. Keeping his right hand over the head (or right shoulder) of the bride the groom implores not to be considered as one of the aforesaid hypocrites. With the deities (divine powers) and elites of the society as witness, he gives an assurance that he would behave like a gentleman. On the other hand, the bride also reciprocates her dedication to the husband. The following mantra is pronounced during the ritual.

OM! MAMA VRATE HRIDAYAM DADHAAMI, MAMA CHITTAMANU  
CHITTAM TE ASTU. MAMA VAACHAMEKAMANAA JUSHASWA,  
PRAJAAPATISHTWAA NIYUNAKTU MAHYAMMA.

## SUMANGALEE-SINDOOR DAAN

(Application of vermilion mark on the parting of hair on the head of the bride)

With the application of vermilion mark on the head of the bride, the groom puts a stamp on his pledges which now identifies him in the society as husband and benefactor of his wife and prays to Almighty to give him sufficient strength and

motivation for elevating her qualifications and status. Wife always wears this mark on the parting of hair on her head as a proud insignia of a worthy husband. Action—With the pronouncement of mantra, the groom applies the vermilion mark (Sindoor) three times on the middle of the head of the bride with the help of a coin or ring.

OM! SUMANGALEERIAM VADHOORIMAA GWAM SAMETA PASHYATA.  
SAUBHAAGYAMASYAI DATWAA YAATHAASTAM VIPARETANA.  
SUBHAGAA STREE SAAVITRYAASTAV SAUBHAAGYAM BHAVATU.

#### MANGAL TILAKAM

(Application of Tilak by the bride)

In reciprocation of groom's gesture in Sindoor Dan the bride applies Tilak on the forehead of her groom with the concept that she too is honoring him and pledging to increase his status and honor in the society.

OM! SWASTAYE VAAYUMUPA-BRAVAAMAHAI, SOMAM SWASTI  
BHUVANASYA YASPATIHI. BRIHASPATIM SARVAGANAM SWASTAYE,  
SWASTAY-AADITYAASO BHAVANTU NAH.

#### SWISHTAKRIT HOMAH

(Penitential oblations)

Successful fruition of an action depends on its appropriate performance. To err is human. In order to make amends for any mistakes committed inadvertently during all foregoing rituals, an additional oblation is given with sweets (with the help of Shruchi-the wooden spoon-shaped equipment with the longer hand). The following mantra is enunciated.

OM! YADASYA KARMANO TYAREERICHAM, YADWAANYOONA-  
MIHAAKARAM, AGNISHTAT-SWISHTAKRID VIDYAT-SARVAM,  
SWISHTAM SUHUTAM KAROTU-ME. AGNAYE SWISHTAKRITE  
SUHUTAHUTE, SARVAPRAAYASHCHITTAA-HUTEENAAM  
KAAMAANAAM SAMARDHA-YITRE, SARVAANNH KAAMAAT-  
SAMARDHAYA SWAAHAA. IDAMAGNAYE SWISHTAKRITE IDAM NA  
MAM.

#### POORNAHUTIHI

(The final oblation)

This is carried out with a dry fruit of coconut (The outer hard shell is removed. A hole is made for filling the Havishya)

OM! POORNAMADAH POORNAMIDAM, POORNAAT  
POORNAMUDACHYATE. POORNASYA POORNAMAADAAI,  
POORNAMEVA AVASHISHYATE. OM POORNAADARVI PARAAPATA,  
SUPOORNAA PUNARAAPATA. VASNEV VIKREENAA VAHAA

ISHMOORJA GWAM SHATAKRATO SWAAHAA. OM SARVAM VAI  
POORNA GWAM SWAAHAA.

VASORDHAARAA

While standing pour ghee with the help of Shruchi(see Swistikrit homah above) in an uninterrupted flow over the sacred fire with the following mantra.

OM! VASOH PAVITRAMASI SHATADHAARAM, VASOH PAVITRAMASI  
SAHASRADHAARAM DEVASTWAA SAVITAA PUNAATU VASOHO,  
PAVITREN SHATADHAAREN SUPWAA, KAAMADHUKSHAH SWAAHAA.

NEERAAJANAM – AARATEE

(A supplication to all divine powers)

OM! YAM BRAHMAVEDAANTA VIDO VADANTI, PARAM PRADHAANAM  
PURUSHAM TATHAANYE. VISHWODGATE KAARANAMEESHWARAM  
WAA TASMAI NAMO VIGHNA VINAASHANAAL.

OM! YAM BRAHMAA VARUNENDRA RUDRA MARUTAH, STUNVANTI  
DIVYAIH STAVAIH. VEDAIH SANGAPADAKRAMOPANISHADAIH,  
GAYANTI YAM SAMA GAH. DHYAANA AVASTHITA  
TADGATENAMANASAA, PASHYANTI YAM YOGINO, YASYAANTAM NA  
VIDHU SURASUR GANAHAH DEVAAI TASMAI NAMAHAH.

GHRIT-AVAGHRAANAM

(Assimilation of energy from oblations)

The Ghee dropped in the water kept in Praneeta is smeared in palms of both hands by rubbing them together. Thereafter, palms of both hands are held together in a vertical position (parallel to the body with the elbows at side). Thus warming the hands in the fire of Havan Kund, it is conceptualized that they are assimilating the energy of Yagya through radiation. Thereafter, this energy is imbibed in self by smelling and touching the parts of the body as directed with enunciation of mantra.

OM! TANOOPAA AGNESI, TANVAM ME PAAHI.

OM! AAURDA AGNESI, AAURME DEHI.

OM! VARCHODAA AGNESI, VARCHO ME DEHI.

OM! AGNEYANME TANWAA, OONANTANMA AAPRINA.

OM! MEDHAAM ME DEVAH, SAVITAA AADADHAATU.

OM! MEDHAAM ME DEVEE, SARASWATEE AADADHAATU.

OM! MEDHAAM ME ASHWINAU, DEVAA VAADHATTAAM-  
PUSHKARASRAJAU.

Pronounce Gayatri Mantra repeatedly till each person present has completed the ritual.)

**BHASMA-DHAARANAM**

(Application of Ash-the essence of Yagya)

In a corner of Yagya Kund insert the Sphai (the flat wooden equipment like the letter opener) for collecting ash from the sacred fire. With pronunciation of respective mantra, take a little of this ash (Bhasm) on the tip of ring finger and touch respectively on the forehead, throat, left arm (below the shoulder) and heart.

OM! TRYAAUSHAM JAMADAGNEH-ITI LALAATE.

OM! KASHYAPASYA TRYAAUSHAM-ITI GREEVAAYAAM.

OM! YADDEVESHU TRYAAUSHAM-ITI DAKSHIN BAAHUMOOLE.

OM! TANNO ASTU TRYAAUSHAM-ITI HRIDI.

**KSHAMAA PRAARTHANAA**

(A prayer seeking forgiveness for inadvertent mistakes.)

OM! AAVAAHANAM NA JAANAAMI,

NAIV JAANAAMI POOJANAM.

VISARJANAM NA JAANAAMI,

KSHAMASWA PARAMESHWAR!

MANTRAHEENAM KRIYAAHEENAM,

BHAKTIHEENAM SURESHWAR!

YATPOOJITAM MAYAADEV!

PARIPOORNAM TADASTU ME.

YADAKSHARA PADABHRASHTAM,

MAATRAA HEEENAM CHA YAD BHAVET.

TATSARVAM KSHAMYATAAMDEV!

PRASEED PARAMESHWAR!

YASYASMRITYAA CHA NAAMOKTYA,

TAPOYAGYAKRIYAADISHU.

NYOONAM SAMPOORNATAAM YAATI,

SANDYO VANDE TAMACHYUTAM.

PRAMAADAATKURVATAAM KARMA,

PRACHYAVETAADHWASRESHU YAT.

SMARNAADEV TADWISHNOH,

SAMPOORNAM SYAADITI SHRUTIHI.

**SAASHTAANG NAMASKAARAH**

(Supplication with prostration)

OM! NAMOSTWANANTAAI SAHASRA MOORTAYE, SAHASRA

PAADAAKSHISHIRORUBAAHAVE. SAHASRA NAAMNE PURUSHAAI

SHAASHWATE SAHASRA KOTEE YUG DHAARINE NAMAHA.

**ABHISHEK SINCHANAM**

(Watering the seeds of virtuous traits)

Let the wife and husband be seated. With the water in Kalash sprinkle few drops with the help of a flower over the couple and conceptualize as though the virtuous traits sown during this ceremony are being watered to grow into plants. Wish that with the goodwill of everyone present the virtues will grow to bear fruits of success and skill.

1. GANAPATIHI GIRIJAA VRISHABHADHWAJAH,  
SHANMUKHO NANDEEMUKH DIMDIMAA.  
MANUJAMAL TRISHOOL- MRIGATWACHAH,  
PRATIDINAM KUSHALAM VAR KANYAYOH.
2. RAVI SHASHEE-KUJ-INDRA-JAGATPATIHI,  
BHRIGUJ -BHANUJ-SINDHUJ-KETAWAH.  
UDUGANAA-TITHIYOG CHA RAASHAYAH,  
PRATIDINAM KUSHALAM VAR KANYAYOH.
3. VARUN INDRA KUBER HUTASHANAHAH,  
YAM SAMEERAN VAARAN KUNJARAAH.  
SURGANAAH SURAASHCHA MAHEEDHARAAH,  
PRATIDINAM KUSHALAM VAR KANYAYOH.
4. SURASARI-RAVINANDINI-GOMATI,  
SARYUTAAMAPI SAAGAR GHARGHARAA.  
KANAKAYAAMAYI-GANDAKI-NARMADAA,  
PRATIDINAM KUSHALAM VAR KANYAYOH.
5. HARIPUREE-MATHURAA CHA TRIVENIKAA,  
BADARI-VISHNU- BATESHWAR-KAUSHILA.  
MAYA-GAYAAMAPI-DARDAR- DWAARIKAA,  
PRATIDINAM KUSHALAM VAR KANYAYOH.
6. BHRIGU MUNISHCHA PULASTI CHA ANGIRA,  
KAPILAVASTU AGASTYA CHA NARADAH.  
GURU VASHISHTHA SANAATAN JAIMINEE,  
PRATIDINAM KUSHALAM VAR KANYAYOH.

RIDVEDOTH YAJURVEDAH,  
SAAMVEDOHYA-THARVANAH.  
RAKSHANTU CHATUROVEDAAH,  
YAAVACHCHANDRA DIVAKARAU.

VISARJANAM  
(Bidding farewell)

All divine powers invited (invoked) are now given a farewell with the following mantras.

1. GACHCHHATWAM BHAGAVANNAGNE  
SWASTHANE KUND MADHYATAH.  
HUTAMAADAAI DEVEBHAYAH,  
SHIGHRAM DEHI PRASEEDA ME.

2. GACHCHHA GACHCHHA SURASHRESHTHA,  
SWASTHAANE PARAMESHWARA!  
YATRA BRAHMAADAYO DEVAH,  
TATRA GACHCHHA HUTAASHANA!
3. YAANTU DEVAGANAHAH SARVE,  
POOJAAMAADAAI MAAMAKEEM.  
ISHTAKAAM SAMRIDHYARTHAM,  
PUNARAAGAMANAAYA CHA.

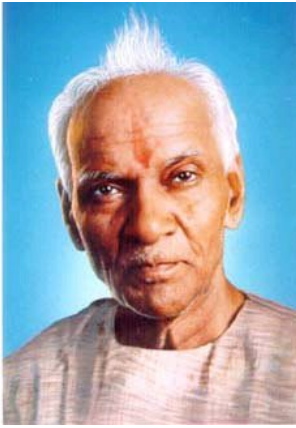
Now each person present on the occasion is given flower and rice grains with a little water in right hand, which they shower on the couple in unison with the enunciation of auspicious welfare-mantra (Manglam Bhagwaan Vishnuhu ...or Shree Varchaswa Mayushyamarogyam....)

All other socialites of the family and distribution of Prasadam may now be carried out. After the completion of the ceremony, the married couple is escorted to pay obeisance at the place of worship in the home, at Shakti Peeths etc. wherever they exist, or to some important recognized place of worship.



## About the Author:

**Shriram Sharma Acharya:** A seer-sage and a visionary of the New Golden Era.



His personality was a harmonious blend of a saint, spiritual scientist, yogi, philosopher, psychologist, writer, reformer, freedom fighter, researcher, eminent scholar and visionary. He pioneered the revival of spirituality and creative integration of the modern and ancient sciences and religion relevant in the challenging circumstances of the present times. In 1979, he founded the Brahmavarchas Research Institute, the research center in Haridwar (India) dedicated to the integration of the modern and ancient sciences in a practical way motivated by the noble goal of health and happiness for all. This center houses well equipped laboratories of Haemetology, Biochemistry, Neurophysiology, Cardiology, Phytochemistry, Psychometry, Yagyopathy etc.

At the age of 15, (Jan 18<sup>th</sup>, 1926) a great Himalayan yogi, Swami Sarveshvaranandji appeared before him in astral body from the flame of the Dipaka (lamp) and guided him throughout his entire life. The next 24 years of his life were devoted to 24 Mahapurashcharanas –each consisting of the rhythmic recitation (japa) of 2.4 million Gayatri Mantra with strictest of disciplines. In 1943, he married Bhagwati Devi, and ever since, the saintly couple dedicatedly pursued the noble mission of spiritual upliftment of humankind.

Realizing the potential of inspiring literature and its relevance in the present era of intellectual evolution, he had chosen writing as the principal mode towards uprooting the evil tendencies and blind faith from people's minds and arousing the indwelling wisdom, strength and spiritual bliss. He wrote about 3000 enlightening books in Hindi on almost all topics concerning human life. He translated the entire Vedic Vangmaya (4 Vedas, 108 Upanishads, 18 Puranas etc.) in Hindi elucidating the tradition, style, universality and history of Vedic Literature. He also practiced higher-level Sadhana on the arduous heights of the Himalayas and established enliven contact with the Rishis of the Himalayas. During 1984-1986, he carried out the unique spiritual experiment of Sukshmikarana, meaning sublimation of vital force and physical, mental and spiritual energies. He authored a special set of 20 books highlighting the future of the world and conveying the message of the dawn of the New Era of Truth during the 21st Century. On 2nd June 1990, he voluntarily shed his physical sheath.

For more information:

To find out more about Shriram Sharma Acharya and his spiritual establishment visit [www.awgp.org](http://www.awgp.org)

Dev Sanskriti Viswa Vidyalaya is a university envisioned by Shriram Sharma Acharya to meet the pressing need to impart global education on scientific spirituality and life style with new thought of ethical, moral and spiritual transformation. Visit [www.dsvv.org](http://www.dsvv.org) for more information.

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