

Hindu Arya Samaj Weddings

Listed below is the authentic Arya Samaj wedding ritual. Members of any Hindu community regardless of caste and region can follow the Arya Samaj wedding rituals. Therefore, the other ceremonies which precede the wedding ceremony can be typically of that community. It is interesting to note that in Bangalore the Arya Samaj has recently begun conducting cross cultural weddings. Previously it was imperative that both the bride and the groom came from Hindu families, otherwise the wedding could not be performed in the Arya Samaj way, but this is not the case any more.

The Arya Samajis were the early propagators of widow re-marriages in India.

List of ceremonies:

- 1) Milni
- 2) Jayamala
- 3) Madhuperk
- 4) Kanyadaan : Giving away of the bride
- 5) Havan : Lighting of the sacred fire
- 6) Panigrahan Sanskar : Groom pledges to look after his bride
- 7) Shilarohan : Mantras chanted to solidify the union
- 8) Lajahom : Bride takes vows to remain in her husband's home
- 9) Parikrama : Taking of the 4 steps around the fire
- 10) Saptapadi : seven steps taken by the couple
- 11) Sprinkling water : Invoking blessings of the deities
- 12) Hriday Sparshmantra : Couple takes a vow to be loyal to each other
- 13) Sindoor : Groom applies the vermilion powder on his bride
- 14) Dhruvanakshatra : Looking towards the pole star
- 15) Arundhati nakshatra: Invoking the blessings of Arundhati and Vashisht
- 16) Ashirwaad : Blessing the couple

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1.MILNI

This is probably the first time that all the relatives from both families meet each other. This ceremony is to help them get acquainted. It is very typical for each relative to embrace his counterpart (groom's and bride's fathers; maternal uncles (or mamas) paternal uncles (or chachas) in the other family at least 3 times each.

When the Milni is over the bride's relatives present the groom's relatives with money. The Milni marks the beginning of a new relationship or Sambandh, and both sides now become Sambandhis. They are now part of one unit and are in essence supposed to stand by one another in times of trouble. The groom's father is usually presented with a Dushaala or shawl on this occasion.

The groom is then brought to the threshold and the bride's mother performs the 'aarti' to welcome her son-in-law. The ingredients for the Aarti typically are: a diya or lamp, sweets, churaa or dried dates, sindoor, and rice. Once the Aarti is performed the mother-in-law to be feeds the groom a sweetmeat and adorns his forehead with the Tilak.

Requirements:

Garlands
Tilak
Gifts for Groom's parents
Shawl

2. JAYAMALA

Once the mother-in-law to be has welcomed the groom, the bride is escorted to the threshold to welcome her beau in the traditional way by garlanding him. This exchange of garlands between the couple is known as the Jayamala. Owing to the size of the gathering, these days it is rather rare that wedding rituals are performed in the house. If the wedding is being held in a banquet hall or hotel, this ceremony is usually performed in full view of all the guests, on a raised platform or the Mandap itself.

Requirements:

Garlands for Bride and Groom

3.MADHU PERK

Once the bride and the groom have entered the Mandap the Vedic Rites begin, the first one being the Madhu perk. The bride gives the groom water 3 times. The first time he sprinkles it on his feet, the second time, all over his body and the third time he drinks the water.

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Significance: In olden days this was the traditional way to welcome a guest into your home.

Madhuperk is a typical mix of curds, ghee and honey. Once the groom is welcomed, he has to sprinkle a little of this madhuperk in all directions, and then he has to eat it 3 times.

Significance: In case of any sourness or bitterness (symbol –curds) entering into the relationship, both partners must endeavour to remove it with sweetness (symbol-honey). Madhuperk is also a symbol of nourishment.

Requirements:

Madhuperk (mixture of curds, ghee and honey)

4. KANYADAAN

The girls parents offer their daughter's hand in marriage to the groom and he accepts it. Significance: Commitment.

5. HAVAN

This is the lighting of the fire to invoke the blessings of AGNI or the God of Fire. There are 2 types of Havan – the "sadharaan" (ordinary) or the " vishesh " (special).

The vishesh Havan is the chanting of Mantras and praying to all the DIVYASHAKTIS or forms of God. The basic Vedic belief is that there is but one God but because of the Divyashaktis he is addressed by different names. The ARYA SAMAJIS do not indulge in idol worship. The main "prarthana" or prayer during the lighting of the Havan is the prarthana of " GRAHAST JIVAN" (married life), asking the various deities to remove all obstacles from the lives of the bride and groom and relieve them from all sorrows.

Requirements:

Ghee or clarified butter
Sacred fire

6. PANI GRAHAN SANSKAR

The groom stands up and takes the hand of his bride in his and chants mantras, promising to look after his wife till her old age and keeping her happy at all times. He *Write to us at jai@shaadionline.com*

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accepts her as his POSHYA (meaning that he will provide all her needs) The bride and groom now take one PARIKRAMA around the fire. This signifies that the fire is now a witness to his vows. (AGNISAKSHI).

Requirements:

Laja or puffed rice

7. SHILAROHAN

Bridegroom chants a mantra, and the bride's mother places her daughter's right foot on a stone.

Significance: The rock is a symbol of stability, permanence, firmness. The bride's position in the groom's home is now permanent, and as a couple they will now face all adversities like 2 solid rocks.

Requirements:

Angavastra for the Groom

8. LAJAHOM

Laja is puffed rice, a symbol of prosperity. The bride's brother stands slightly behind the couple. The couple now face each other. The bride places both her hands into the grooms and her brother then puts the puffed rice into them. Together they offer it as an AHUTEE or sacrifice, into the Havan, all the while chanting mantras praying for prosperity.

This ritual is performed 3 times and each time the mantras chanted have a different meaning.

1. The first – the girl prays to God saying “ I am offering you this Ahutee or sacrifice that you may separate me from my father's home, but don't ever separate me from my husband's side.”
2. The second- The girl prays for her husband's long life and asks for God's blessings to lead a happy married life.
3. The third- She prays for the prosperity of all her husband's relatives and asks for blessings for her husband's success.

9. PARIKRAMA

This ritual involves going around the fire 4 times, each Parikrama strengthening the bond between the couple. The first 3 times the bride must lead as she is the embodiment of Goddess Lakshmi. It is only after the 4th Parikrama that she becomes the

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‘ardhangani’ and is now her husband’s responsibility. After this the pujari ties the brides saree pallav to the grooms ‘angvastra’ with 3 knots.

10. SAPTPADI

These are the 7 steps taken by the bride and groom together, each step taken has a significance.

1. 1st step – Boy prays and asks the Almighty to help him to fulfill the needs of his family.
2. 2nd step- Together they pray for energy or URJA SHAKTI, so that they may have the strength to fulfill all their worldly duties towards each other and their family members.
3. 3rd step- The groom takes a vow to earn money by honest means and the bride to spend it wisely,
4. 4th step- They pray for happiness for themselves and other family members.
5. 5th step- A vow to beget good, God-fearing offspring as their contribution to society. They pray that their offspring will be a boon to both families coming together because of this alliance.
6. 6th step- A prayer for the seasons. No matter which season, they should be compatible at all times. They will stick by each other in good times and bad.
7. 7th step- This step is for friendship. The couple vow to share all their joys and sorrows as friends do , pray for companionship, and vow never to keep each other in the dark.

After the SAPTPADI the couple take one parikrama around the fire together with neither of them leading.

11. SPRINKLING WATER ON THE COUPLE

Older members of the boys family sprinkle water on the couple and 4 mantras are chanted by the pujari. The essence of the mantras at this time is to ask blessings from the deity to help the newly weds to keep their heads cool and calm at all times. This bears more significance for the bride because it is she who is going into new and unfamiliar surroundings, and will have to adjust, and try to get along with her husband’s family.

Requirements:

Sindoor or vermilion

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12. HRIDAY SPARSHMANTRA

The bride and groom place one hand on each other's hearts and chant mantras together. The meaning- " I am installing you in my heart from today, I will be loyal to you, this alliance is made in Heaven, let us ask the Almighty for his blessings."

Requirements:

Mangalsutra

13. SINDOOR

The sindoor is the sign of a married lady. Here the groom applies sindoor in his bride's hair (usually the center parting) and adorns her with the Mangal sutra. In some families they also put toe-rings on the girl's feet.

The bride and groom now feed each other with sweets and mantras are chanted.

The mantras here hold good for both and are not one sided, the couple jointly vow to feed each other and fulfill all their obligations towards each other. It is not only the wife's duty to ensure that her husband is fed, he in turn also has to see that she has eaten.

14. DHURVNAKSHATRA

The couple are instructed to look towards the Pole Star (Dhruvnaakshatra),(amidst the chanting of mantras) because it is always firm in its place, never moving. The vows: "I will live permanently with you"

Requirements:

Akshat or coloured rice

15. ARUNDHATI NAKSHATRA

Arundhati was the wife of the sage Vashist. The Arundhati and Vashist Nakshatra are 2 stars that are joined together and appear as such at all times.

The vows; "We will remain together for the rest of our lives".

Requirements:

Flowers

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16. ASHIRWAD

Now that the wedding ceremony is complete, the newly weds are to be blessed by the elders. Coloured rice or AKSHAT and flowers are showered on the couple by all the close relatives and friends present.

AKSHAT is a symbol of prosperity and FLOWERS denote happiness.

Hindu Arya Samaj Weddings is now complete

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