



Thank you for joining us to celebrate the marriage of



Order of Ceremony

1. DVARA PUJA - *Reception of the groom*

The bride's family will welcome the baraat and the bride's mother will lead them into the mandap.



2. GANESH AND NAVGRAHA PUJA -

The first pooja

The priest begins the marriage ceremony with a prayer to Lord Ganesh, the Remover of Obstacles, to ensure everything proceeds smoothly. This is followed by the Graha Shanti - a prayer to the nine planets of our solar system to bless the bride and groom with inner strength, courage and peace of mind during the proceedings.



3. KANYA AGMANAM AND JAIMALA -

Bride's entrance and garland exchange

As the Bride approaches the mandap, she faces the Groom as they each put a garland of flowers around the other. This indicates the desire and acceptance to be united in matrimony.



4. KANYA DAANAM - *Giving away the bride*

The bride's mother will announce that she is entrusting the groom with her daughter. She will place her daughter's hand in the hand of the groom for what is known as the hasta melap where the couple vow to accept each other in an equal partnership of love and respect.



5. PRATIJNA AND PANI GRAHANAM - *Vows and holding of the bride's hand*

The bride and groom recite a mantra promising to never do harm to each other in all endeavors in life.



The groom then takes the bride's right hand in a certain gesture and promises to protect and cherish her throughout their life together. Water is poured over their hands to solidify the promise.

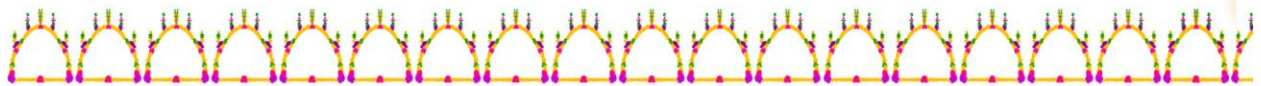
6. GRANTHI BANDHANAM - *Binding the knot of affection*

The bride's sister will tie the groom's stole to the bride's chunni (scarf). The knot represents that they are bound to each other in mind, body and soul for the rest of their lives. It also symbolizes how their lives are being joined together through this ceremony.



7. AGNI STAPANAM HUTAYAH - *Establishing the sacred fire/havan*

The priest will light a small fire in a copper vessel known as an agni kund. The fire is invoked to act as a pure and sacred witness to the vows that are to be taken by the couple.





8. MANGAL PHERE - *Circling the fire*

The couple walks around the sacred fire four times. Each round represents four aspirations:

1. Dharma: Life of Piety and Goodness
2. Artha: Ample Wealth and Successful Livelihood
3. Kama: Fulfillment of Desires
4. Moksha: Attainment of Liberation



The Groom leads the first three rounds signifying his contribution in helping the union attain Dharma, Artha, and Kama. The Bride leads the fourth round in leading their spiritual journey together. Each time around, they stop to touch a stone in their path with their toe, representing the obstacles in life they will overcome together. At the end of the four phera, the Bride/Groom's close family member offers his blessings and fills her open hands with puffed rice wishing the couple wealth and prosperity.

1. Let us take the first step to provide for our household, keeping a pure diet and avoiding things that may harm us.
2. Let us take the second step to develop our physical, mental and spiritual strength.
3. Let us take our third step to increase our wealth by righteous and proper means.
4. Let us take our fourth step to acquire knowledge, happiness and harmony by mutual love, respect and trust.
5. Let us take the fifth step so that we may be blessed with strong and virtuous children.
6. Let us take the sixth step for self-restraint and longevity.
7. Let us take the seventh step to be true companions and remain life-long partners by this union.

They are now husband and wife.

9. LAJA HOMAM - *Offering of oblations into the fire*

During this stage of the ceremony, oblations are offered to the sacred fire. The groom's brother puts puffed rice into the bride's hands, half of which slips into the groom's hands under hers, which then slips into the fire. This is done three times over whilst the bride prays to God for the long life, happiness and prosperity of her new husband.



10. SHILAROHAN - *Ascending the stone*

The mother of the bride assists her to step onto a stone (shila) and counsels her to prepare herself for a new life. A married couple are likely to encounter ups and downs, joys and sorrows, sickness and health. Despite difficulties facing them, they are enjoined to remain steadfast and true to each other.



11. SAPTAPADI - *Seven steps*

The couple then take seven steps together, making the following seven vows:



12. MANGALA DHARANAM AND SINDUR DAANAM - *Signs of marriage*

The groom puts the mangalsutra (black bead necklace) on the bride and sindoor (vermillion) in her parting, as symbols of marriage. The parents and crowd are invited to bless the couple.



13. ANNA PRASANNA - *Honoring the remnants of sacrifice*

In the last symbolic rite, the couple make offerings of food into the sacred fire with the chanting of Vedic Havan Mantras. Having done this, the couple feed a morsel of food to each other symbolizing mutual love and affection.



14. ASEERVATHAM - *Blessings from family members*

This is the final stage where there is benediction by the elders. Firstly, the priest blesses the newlywed couple, after which other elders do the same. The married couple take blessings from both sets of parents by touching their feet.

