



"I (*Aneesh/Rakhi*) hold your hand for the prosperity of our house-hold life. You are my wife/husband in the letter and spirit of 'Dharma' and I am your husband/wife accordingly".



May God Bless these Hands . . .

**Wedlock**

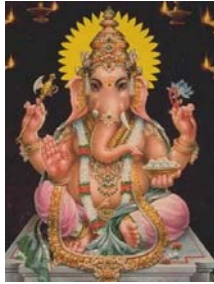
Rakhi and Anesh

# Marriage Ceremony

*October 19th 2008  
Irvine, California*



Our hearts remain always united and full of love towards each other . . . . . from now onward my heart is yours and your heart is mine. We may speak in one voice



Welcome to the Wedding Festivities of

Rakhi and Aneesh

### PROGRAM

Welcoming the Baraat & Milni

Wedding Ceremony

Cocktail Reception

Dinner and Dance

Doli

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**XII. Hridayalambhan:** (becoming sweethearts) The couple recites final Mantras for each other, from their heart, touching each-other's heart.

"Let our hearts remain always united and full of love towards each other. Let us always bear in mind that God himself has brought about our union by His infinite grace. From today onward my heart is yours and your heart is mine. May we speak in one voice."

**XIII. Surya and Dhruva Darhsan:** (visualizing the Sun and the Polestar)

"May we both see the sun together for a hundred autumns, May we live, hear, speak and enjoy full freedom of life and of the Nature. The Polestar is constant. May we cultivate constancy in all our dealings with each other and our families."

**XIV. Mangal Sutra:** (wedding necklace) *Aneesh* places the Mangal Sutra around *Rakhi's* neck as a symbol of their marriage. The Mangal Sutra is a status of a married woman, as well as a symbol of auspiciousness.

**XV. Jalsinchana:** (sprinkling water) *Aneesh's* father and mother sprinkle the water on the new couple and bless them to be always cool, calm and pure like water.

**XVI. Ashirwad:** (blessing) The audience, family and friends offer their blessings and shower flowers upon the newly married couple.

"This Bride and the Groom are lucky to have found each other. We bless both of you for a long and happy life. May your love for each other grow every day. May you be blessed with virtuous children to serve the family, nation and the society."

**XI. Sapta Padi:** (Seven Steps) *Rakhi* and *Aneesh* take their first steps together as a couple. This is the most important part of the wedding, and no Hindu Ceremony is considered legally valid without it. The Mantras recited during each step have the following significance:

1. **Ish (Nourishment):** a prayer for the nourishment of their household and for abundance of healthy food and water.
2. **Urja (Strength):** a prayer for lifelong physical strength in body, mind, intellect and the spirit.
3. **Rayas Posha (Wealth):** a prayer for earning wealth through righteous means and for managing it intelligently.
4. **Mayobhyah (Happiness):** a prayer for attainment of harmony, knowledge and joy through love and trust.
5. **Prajabhyah (Progeny):** a prayer for strong, healthy and virtuous children.
6. **Ritubhyah (Balance):** a prayer for harmonious and balanced lifestyle in society and in nature.  
" May we restrain and balance our appetites according to our capacities."
7. **Sakhe Saptapadi (Friendship):** Finally, a prayer to be the true companions and remain life long friends, through the vows of the union by this wedlock. And the blessings of our family and friends.

After the seven steps are completed, the husband and wife change seats, as she assumes a position to his left. This is considered the "married position". This also places each of them in the company of the other family members, thereby symbolizing the union of the two families.

The Hindu (Vedic) Marriage Ceremony has been performed in all its essentials for the last 5000 years. The symbolism invokes the forces of nature- fire (agni), sun (surya) Wind (vayu), water (jal), rocks (shila), north star (dhruva), - to bless the couple and to bear witness to the ceremonies. The priest recite the mantras in Sanskrit, an ancient Indian language, as the ceremony proceeds.

#### I. Welcoming the Baraat & Milni:

*Rakhi's* parents and relatives greet and welcome the Baraat, consisting of *Aneesh's* parents and relatives., Milni is the official greeting with a garland and an embrace of respective family members. In today's Milni, greetings will be exchanged between fathers, mothers, uncles, Brothers and Sisters.

#### II. Jai Mala:

*Aneesh* is greeted and welcomed by *Rakhi* at the entrance to the ceremonial enclosure (Vedi) with a garland, called Jai Mala. *Aneesh* greets *Rakhi* with a garland. Both take their seats at the Vedi, along with the priest, the parents and the participating relatives.

#### The Wedding Ceremony

The ceremony begins with the reciting of the Vedic Hymns, offering Seat and Drinking Water following sipping of the water three times to sanctify the body and the mind and the intellect.

**III Madhu Parka:** *Rakhi* offers *Aneesh Madhu Parka*, which is a mixture of honey and yogurt . Before he tastes it, *Aneesh* sprinkles it in six directions, including above and below with his ring finger, to invoke the Prana energy of all the directions. He recites a Mantra, which translates:

"God's creation is filled with honey. Night is sweet and so is dawn. Sun is sweet and so is Moon. I will always cultivate within me the sweetness of *Madhu Parka* in all my dealings."

**IV. Ring ceremony:** The rings are exchanged as a symbol of everlasting love.

**V. Rakhi Pratigrahan:** (Accepting responsibility for the bride) *Rakhi's* parents place her right hand in *Aneesh's* and declare to the gathering that they freely consent to the union.

*Aneesh* holds her hand within his, thereby accepting responsibility for *Rakhi's* well being for the rest of his life.

"O Bride, you attain the invincible maturity with the resplendency of the household life, acquire wealth and wisdom. O well dressed, may we live a hundred autumns together".

**VI. Havan:** (Holy fire) The ritual part begins after the priest ignites the *Agni* (holy fire), and recites the appropriate mantras.

Bride and Groom make offerings of Ghee (purified butter) and Samagri (a mixture of herbs, crushed sandal wood, and twigs) into the fire. Three specific sets of Mantras are recited, for the ideals of Patriotism, Will Power and Success, respectively.

The prayers, which are from the Vedas, in Sanskrit language, begin with the word "OM" (O' Lord) and end with "SWAHA" (Let there be happiness for all).

"We pray to Brahma, the creator of the universe, the regulator of night and day, the Moon and the Sun, the waters and the wind. May all these elements be the source of nourishment for us and the society. May we honor and protect these forces of nature"

"May the holy fire sharpen our intellects, May the Sun strengthen our back, front and the whole body. May Prajapati, the master of all creation bestow success in all our endeavors".

**VII. Pani Grahani:** (Marriage Vows and Declaration) Holding the holy fire as witness, *Aneesh* holds *Rakhi's* hand and both clasp their hand firmly. In this ceremony they vow to be responsible for each other and declare together:

"Let all persons present here know that we are accepting each other voluntarily and pleasantly, our hearts are concordant and united like water."

"We hold each other's hand for success in our house-hold life. We are partners in the letter and spirit of 'Dharma' of Husband of Wife accordingly".

**VIII. Shilarohan Vidhi:** (ascending the rock) *Rakhi* places her foot on a piece of rock. The rock embodies the ideals of strength and firmness of character.

"O bride, ascend this rock. Assume the steadfastness of the rock. Resist adversities with strength and, together with your husband, overcome challenges together".

**IX. Gath Bandhan:** (tying the knot) The sacred union of *Rakhi* and *Aneesh* is symbolized by tying the corner of her Chunni (headcover) to his scarf by *Leena* (*Aneesh's* sister) and *Priya* (*Rakhi's* Bhabhi). This is in preparation for the next step, the Mangal Phere.

**X. Mangal Phere or Lavan :** (walking around the fire) *Rakhi* is handed puffed rice into her cupped hands by her brothers. She subsequently transfers the rice into *Aneesh's* hands, and they collectively offer it to the Agni (fire). Symbolism of rice includes:

- \* Rice is considered a symbol of prosperity in Indian tradition since one seed can yield hundreds and thousands of grains.
- \* Rice always needs to be transplanted for the best crop, just as the bride and the groom are transplanted from their parents' homes.
- \* Rice and other grains nourish the body and the mind and intellect which help generate wealth.
- \* Always keep smiling as you face adversities. See how the rice gets puffed even when it faces the fire. Cheerfully accept the challenges of life.

With each offering of the rice, Bride and Groom walk around the fire, as the family shower them with petals. The couple go around the fire Four Times, *Rakhi* leading in the first three rounds, and *Aneesh* leads in the last.

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We are so used to hearing Seven Pheras (seven circles around the holy fire). Actually in the scripture there are only Four Mangal Pheras. Besides these four, there are three more. One in the very beginning, as bride & groom walk into the Mandap, in respect of the Mandap. Another Phera is taken when both take oath in Panigrahan and the last is taken when both walk Seven Steps together at the very end which is next ritual. Thus the total is SEVEN.