



## Jain

### Pre-Wedding Rituals

#### INTRODUCTION

The book, Jain Vivaha Vidhi, describes Jain marital practices, but the rituals carried out vary within every Jain community. Regardless of variance in rituals, for the Jains, marriage means a public declaration of a man and a woman's intention to be together for the entire life. The community gives support to the couple by being a part of it.

But unlike Hinduism, the Jain community condemns the practice of negotiating a dowry before marriage. Jains believe that there should be no waste of money or time. Nevertheless, marriage is an once-in-a-lifetime occasion that has to be celebrated properly and grandly.

#### PRE-WEDDING RITUALS

##### Vagdana

A typical Jain Marriage initiates with "Vagdana" - wherein the parents of the bride and groom declare the intention to marry them after which the "Pradana" takes place where the bride is gifted with ornaments

##### Laghana Lekhan

This ceremony marks the finalization of the marriage negotiation. On this occasion, pooja is held at the girl's house and all the relatives are invited. The laghana, also known as the mahurat, is determined by the priest.

##### Sagai and Lagna Patrika Vachan

The Engagement or sagai ceremony is held at the groom's house. The groom would wear the traditional Jain headgear, wash his hands and perform the Vinayakyantra. After the Vinayakyantra puja, the bride's brother applies tilak on the groom's forehead and gifts him a gold chain, a ring, clothes, coconut, sweets and money. The groom is then presented the lagna patrika. The priest reads out the patrika and the groom seeks the blessings of the elders. Several days before the wedding, the matruka sthapan and kulkar sthapan are held.

##### Matruka Sthapan

Heavenly goddesses are invoked by sacred prayers and called upon to take up temporary residence in the bride's home. This ensures the happiness and fertility of the couple.

##### Kulkar Sthapan

This is a similar ritual for the groom's home. The seven gods are called upon by prayer and asked to take up temporary residence in his home. This ritual ensures the happiness, fertility and maintenance of family traditions for the couple.

Seven days after the wedding, another ceremony is held to gratefully send off the deities in both homes. In the days before the marriage, the skin of both bride and groom is regularly massaged with perfumed oil, turmeric and other substances to beautify them for the marriage. Pujas for the couple's well being are also performed in the local temple.

##### Mandapa-Vedi Pratishtha

Jain marriages are performed under a mandap. In the days before the wedding, this structure and a vedi (altar for the sacred fire) are made. The mandap is built at the bride's home although it is often moved to a hired hall for the marriage ceremony itself.

### Wedding Rituals

#### WEDDING RITUALS

##### Ghudhchadi

On the day of the marriage before the baraat (the groom's procession) leaves for the bride's place, the ghudhchadi ritual takes place at the boy's house. The groom is given a headgear and, beginning with his mother, all the relatives apply tika on his forehead.

##### Vara Ghoda

This is where the groom rides the horse. Similar to the Hindu traditional baraat, Jains include a groom's procession in the wedding festivities. Traditionally the groom would arrive on horseback, but present day processions are normally done in a car until the last hundred metres. The party then walks the rest.

##### Torana Vidhi

Upon reaching the destination, rites of welcoming is performed. The bride welcomes the groom with a traditional garland. He then stands on a small stool while the bride's mother and other ladies welcome him by waving a lamp in front of him and offering him a length of red cloth. The groom then enters the mandap, on his way stepping on two earthenware bowls placed in his path. This guards against evil spirits influencing the ceremony.

As the procession comes to the marriage hall, the Jain Brahmin conducting the wedding will chant a mantra for the arriving groom. The mantra praises Lord Adinath, the originator of the arts, customs and institutions of humankind.

##### Paraspara Mukh Avalokana

The bride and groom are allowed to take a look at each other's faces in this ceremony.

##### Varmala

The garlanding ceremony takes place. Inside the mandap, two chairs are placed. The groom enters first and sits on the left-hand chair. The bride then enters, often led by her maternal uncle and sits as well. A series of prayers are then spoken asking for the protection and blessings of the gods.

### Kanyavaran

Also known as the Kanyapradan ceremony, it has the parents or the uncle of the bride keeping one dollar and twenty-five cents and rice on the right hand of the bride. And then the presentation of the bride to the groom takes place. The father would publicly proclaim this formal presentation of the bride in front of all the assembled guests. The groom thus receives the bride. This occasion is marked with the priest pouring water on the hands of the bride and groom chanting the mantra three times.

### Hasta Melap

In this joining ceremony, the Brahmin will place a single cloth garland around the couple's necks. Following the garlanding, the bride's parents wash the groom's feet, wipe them and dress them with flowers. The groom is then given sandalwood paste and other auspicious items to hold. The priest then places the bride's hand into the groom's. Linking the two together for life, he will say:

"Aum Arham. O Jiva you are the one with soul. May you two become partners with the same time, mind, karma, shelter, body, action, love, desire, wishes, joy, sorrow, longevity, with the same hunger and thirst. May you have similar progress; may you enjoy the same good things; words, forms, scents, touch, ashrava, bandha, sanvara, nirjara, moksha (effects of karma). May you obtain a lasting relationship and unity by way of this joining of hands."

### Toran Pratishtha

After Hasta Melap, the Goddess Lakshmi is honoured in the Toran Pratishtha ceremony. The priest first gives rice, sandalwood and flowers to the bride's parents saying, "AUM HRIM, SHREE, NAMO, worshipped by all, respected by all, the most important one. O Goddess, please fulfill our wishes." The bride's parents then throw the mixture on the arch of the mandap, the Toran.

### Vedi Pratishtha

Toran Pratishtha is followed by Vedi Pratishtha, a prayer in honour of the gods of Kshetras (directions and fields).

### Agni Sthapan

After Vedi Pratishtha, a sacred fire is lit in a small vessel on the vedi (altar). A prayer accompanies this ritual action, called Agni Sthapan: "AUM HTAM HRIM HROM. I bow to the sacred fire, shining like pure gold, whose big flames radiate the eternal light, energy and virtues, whose vehicle is the goat and who consumes the offerings. O Fire God, come and stay in this kunda SWAHA."

Offerings are then made to the Fire God asking him to take the offerings and pass them on to the gods, the nine planets and the heavenly bodies. The offerings, placed into the fire, are ghee, betel nuts and certain grains and seeds.

### Abhisheka

Following the offerings, the couple's heads are anointed with water in a ceremony called the first abhisheka. As he anoints the couple the priest says, "AUM ARHAM. You have now occupied these seats. You are together for a noble purpose. May you bind yourselves in an eternal bond. ARHAM AUM"

### Gotrachar

After this first abhisheka, the lineage's of the bride and groom are announced in the gotrachar ritual. After the bride and groom state their lineage's, the declaration of marriage is read by the priest finishing with, "May these two be granted peace, contentment, prosperity, and wisdom. ARHAM AUM."

The couple is then given rice, flowers, incense and mithai (sweets) to offer to the Fire God in a Puja.

### Granthi Bandhan

Granthi Bandhan takes place after the havan. In this, a married woman takes the corner of the pallu of the bride's sari and then ties it to the shawl of the groom. A mantra is also recited on this occasion following which the couple takes four rounds of the fire.

### Agni Pradakshina

The couple circles the sacred fire four times. Prior to this, however, the bride's brother gives them both handfuls of rice that they alternately give to the priest as they pass. The priest offers the rice into the fire. Specific mantras are spoken for each round.

Mantra for the First Round:

"AUM ARHAM. Without beginning is the world...is the soul... is time... is attachment. Anger, ego, illusion, greed are associated with the body and different Karmas. There are words, forms, liquids, smells and touches which are desirable or undesirable.

"You have joined each other in front of the Siddha, Kevali, other Gods, Fire, men and women, rulers, people, teacher, father and mother and other relatives - so please encircle this fire."

Mantra for the Second Round:

"AUM ARHAM. 'Illusion Karma' lasts for a long time. It adheres firmly and cannot be eliminated easily. Twenty-eight types of this Karma include anger, ego, deceit, and greed in different degrees and different time-spans. Other things like feelings associated with mind and body are longer lasting too.

"This love and joining together is also the fruit of your past karma; may it last as long as this world lasts. So please encircle this fire."

Mantra for the Third Round:

"AUM ARHAM. There are karmas related to feelings of comfort and discomfort, hearing, seeing, tasting, smelling, touching - all these could be a good experience or a bad experience. May you have all good health and experience.

### Kanyadaan

Before the fourth round, kanyadaan is performed. In this ritual, the father of the bride offers his daughter to the groom. The priest first gives grains of jav, tal, a small bit of grass and a drop of water to the bride's father. He then says a mantra, stating first the date, time and place and then the following to the groom: "This bride who is arrayed in the best of clothing, best of jewellery and carrying a fragrant, beautiful garland has come to you. The bride's father is handing over his beloved daughter to you. Please accept her."

The grooms says, "I take thee." The Brahmin then says, "Truly taken. Let there be peace, wealth, comfort and contentment. Let there be happiness." The priest then recites the wedding vows and the couple accepts them. Following their acceptance, the priest directs the couple to circle the fire. At this point, the groom will say "I take thee," to the bride and the bride's father will give the jav, tal, grass and water mixture to the bride and groom. After receiving the mixture from his new father-in-law, the groom will say, "I have now taken thee."

After kanya dan, the fire is circled for a fourth and final time.

Mantra for the Fourth Round:

"Attachment to the world is due to Mahoniya, Vedaniya, Nam, Gotra and Ayu Karma (several karma types).

"Inflow of karma actions, bondages and pleasures are inter-related. This is how your joining together is a natural and binding result of your karma."

After the fourth round, the bride and groom change seats: the groom now sits on the right, and the bride to his left.

**Vakshepa**

The priest then says, "Lord Adinath was married by this same ritual and got happiness. May you be happy." With this, he sprinkles Vakshepa on the couple's heads. The bride's father then gives water and tal to the groom with the words, "Please take this." Ritually, the groom responds with, "I have taken it. I have accepted it." The water and tal are then taken by the priest and sprinkled on the bride.

**Second Abhisheka**

The priest addresses the couple wishing them well: "O man and wife! Your marriage has taken place by the unavoidable fruit of your previous karmas. It cannot be altered. It cannot be avoided. You have gone through this because of previous karmas. May you obtain unbroken, undisturbed peace, happiness and all-around joy.

"O children! You two have been married. Now you two are equal in love, experience, happiness and good conduct. You are two friends in happiness and misery, in virtues and faults. May you become equal in mind, speech and action, and in all the good virtues."

**Kar-mochan**

In this ceremony, the couple's hands are released. A mantra is spoken for this release: "AUM ARHAM. You are the life. You are bonded by Gnanavarniya, Darshnavarniya, Vedaniya, Mohaniya, Ayu, Nama, Gota, Antaray Karma (the kinds of karma). Your karmas are bound by their character of quality, quantity, peace and binding power. May you obtain moksha by way of progressing on the fourteen gunasthan (stages of spiritual ascent). ARHAM AUM.

"You have released your hands but your love is unbroken."

With this, the hands are released and the bride's father offers a symbolic gift to the groom. A blessing from the priest follows kar-mochan. He says: "We congratulate you on your marriage. May the gods of heaven grant you the blessings of prosperity, joy, wisdom and love forevermore. Whatever gods we have invited, we say farewell to you and request that you return when required for a similar auspicious occasion. If we have been guilty of any faults in these rituals, please forgive us."

With the priest's words, the wedding is concluded.

## Post Wedding Rituals

**POST-WEDDING RITUALS****Ashirvada**

The elders give their blessings to the married couple.

**Reception**

As in all marriages, a wedding feast for the assembled guests follows this

**Sva Graha Agamana**

The bride comes to her own new house

**Jina Grahe Dhan Arpana**

The Jains believe in giving away alms in Jain temples as a thanksgiving to God.

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