

Chapter 1 : Hinduism - Facts about Hindu Religion

Hindu Philosophy of Marriage Centuries ago, civilized societies recognized and acknowledged the most basic instincts of all- i.e. the need for companionship - and founded an honorable institution known as marriage.

The gods, Bhaga, Aryaman, Savitur and Pushan gave you to me for leading the life of a householder. Give her ten sons and make the husband the eleventh. May you live happily for a hundred years! Marriage For Money A marriage of the demons asuras results when money is taken in exchange for the bride. Yagnavalkya Smriti According to Hinduism, marriage vivaha between two persons is a sacred relationship that is not limited to this life alone. It extends across seven or more lives, during which the couple help each other progress spiritually. The adage that marriages are made in heaven is very much true in case of Hinduism. Two souls come together and marry because their karmas are intertwined and they have to resolve many things together upon earth in order to ensure their mutual salvation. The relationship between a couple is essentially a relationship of the souls. It is not necessary that their gender roles are fixed for ever. Some times they may switch roles and the husband may become the wife and the wife the husband. Sometimes they may also temporarily part their ways and come together again after one or two lives in a grand reunion. Marriage in Hinduism is a sacred relationship. It is both an obligatory duty dharma and a samskara sacrament. It is an essential aspect of the four ashramas brahmacharya, grihastha, vanaprastha and sanyasa 1 and the four aims purusharthas of human life, namely, dharma, artha wealth , kama sensuous pleasures and moksha salvation. For a Hindu woman marriage marks the end of her life as a maiden. After marriage her relationship with her parents remain formal and minimal. Marriage therefore become a matter of anxiety and stress for many women, till they become familiar with their new surroundings and the new people in their lives. The early stages of marriage is a make or break situation in case of many. Hindu marriage tradition recognizes seven different types of marriage, ranging from the popularly known arranged marriages to the extremely rare and forced marriages through abduction. Generally most of the marriages are arranged with the consent of the bride and the bridegroom and the blessings of the elders. Caste, natal charts, gotra kinship or family lineage , family background, financial status of the groom, appearance and character of the bride and the bridegroom, the willingness of the parents are some important considerations in arranged marriages. In some parts of southern India, marriages between cousins children of brother and sister are considered normal. Polygamy was an acceptable norm in ancient Hindu society. But presently Hindus are expected to be strictly monogamous. Hindu Marriages in Modern Society Love marriages are on the increase, but there is still a lot of skepticism about them. Love marriages within the same caste and financial background are favored, compared to inter-caste and inter-religious marriages. Couples who dare cross the social conventions have to cope with a lot of social pressure within their families and outside. These problems are more acute in the rural areas compared to the urban areas and metropolitan cities. Much depends upon the family background. If parents are educated and enlightened on both sides, things would be easier for the children, who get involved in unconventional relationships. One of the evils of Hindu marriages is the ubiquitous dowry system. The amount of dowry can be a very substantial amount, even in dollar terms, depending upon the financial status of the parties involved. Sometimes greedy mother-in-laws and husbands subject the poor brides to innumerable hardships for not meeting their expectations in respect of the dowry. Cases of bride burning are not unknown. Indian penal code prescribes severe punishment for such acts. But the cases take years and decades before the courts deliver justice. Hindu marriages are also very expensive because of the status, dowry, expensive gifts, family prestige and other issues involved. Marriage Rituals In arranged marriages the marriage is consummated through elaborate ceremonies presided over by a Vedic priest well versed in Vedic mantras. The marriage date is fixed after consulting the astrological charts and then invitations are sent. Before the marriage date, both the parties spend a lot of time in preparation and exchange of gifts. The marriage ceremony is generally a lengthy affair. A lot of vedic mantras are chanted during the ceremony, while a band plays on in the back ground. All the guests are entertained with food and beverages. Meat and alcohol are not generally served during such ceremonies, except in some communities. After this both of them play some

traditional games between themselves to lighten the atmosphere and provide entertainment to the guests. This is followed by a gift ceremony during which the couple acknowledge the gifts brought by the guests for their wedding. The marriage rituals usually vary from region to region and caste to caste. However following are some of the most common and popular rituals. Their nails are polished and they are decorated in the traditional fashion. In case of bride, her hands and feet are decorated with henna mehendi and turmeric. The groom wears the traditional dress of white cotton dhoti and the girl a well decorated saree. Welcoming the groom and his family *Vara Satkaaram, baraathi* - The groom usually arrives at the marriage place on a horse back or in a vehicle, in a procession, accompanied by all his family members and a musical band, his face covered with the flowers dangling from his headgear. After some dancing and hugging, they are led to a specially designated place, where they are seated and served with snacks and drinks till the marriage begins officially and the bride is invited to the marriage altar *mandap*. In some instances the expenses are shared by the groom side also. The bride and the bridegroom are usually kept on fast till the marriage is officially completed. He washes his feet with water and gives him new clothes to wear. The bridegroom promises to look after the bride as his better half and protect her for the rest of her life. *Fire ceremony homam* - The sacred fire is lit and the priests chant sacred mantras offering oblations to various gods to make the marriage a success and bless the couple. *Accepting the bride pani grahanam* - The groom holds the left hand of the bride with his right hand, as a symbolic gesture of accepting her as his bride, amidst vedic chants and some accompanying rituals. *Marriage vows pratigya karan* - The bride and the groom take vows to remain loyal to each other, performing their respective dharmas duties. *Walking around fire agni parikrama* - The bride and the groom walk around fire seven times, with fire as the witness, to sanctify the marriage. In some communities, the groom ties a sacred thread *mangal sutra* around the neck of the bride as a mark of the marriage bond. *Taking seven steps together seven steps* - The bride and the groom walk seven steps together, each step calling for a particular auspicious situation in their lives: *Star gazing* - The bride and the groom are shown either the pole star or the star of *Arundhathi*, advising them to remain steadfast in their lives like the stars. *Breaking the fast anna prasan*: The couple share a meal together and express their mutual love and affection. *Receiving Blessings* - Elderly members of both families bless the couple and give them various gifts as a mark of their affection and status. *Playing fun games* - The marriage rituals are usually followed by some fun games between the bride and the groom, such as picking a ring from a vessel filled with water, playing with flower balls etc. During this ceremony the bride is handed over to the bridegroom and his parents by the bride's parents, amidst a display of rare emotions, with a request to look after their daughter for the rest of her life. Hindus accept registered marriages also as a part of the social changes that are sweeping across their society. But many would prefer a traditional marriage for the sake of the sentimental thrill that is associated with them. A few simple and straight facts about Hindu marriages. Hindu marriage is essentially an extension of the four aims *purusharthas* and the four stages *ashramas* of human life. Unless a person has accepted the life of renunciation out of his intense longing for liberation, marriage is sacred responsibility *dharma* of each and every individual in society. Hindus consider marriage as a sacred relationship, between two souls, not just two bodies. Marriage is meant for the continuation of family and practice of *dharma*. In Hindu tradition, there is no concept as divorce. Once married, a couple are wedded for life. In the traditional marriage, the bride and the bridegroom are considered as divinities. Then they both take seven steps *saptapadi* together around the fire uttering vows of friendship and mutual loyalty. Hindu marriage tradition recognizes the importance of a woman in the family. She is expected to share the responsibilities of the household like a goddess *grihalakshmi* and enjoy the love and care of her husband and children. According to Hindu marriage Act passed in India, the eligible age for marriage is 21 years in case of a boy and 18 years in case of a girl. This law has been passed mainly to ban child marriages and such practices as polygamy, which is recognized as a punishable offence.

Chapter 2 : Marriage in Hinduism

In most Hindu wedding ceremonies, a climax is reached in the ceremony known as Maangalyaddhaaranam - confirms for ever and seals the bond between the bride and the groom through the tying of a golden necklace around the bride's neck by the groom.

The relationship between the two does not necessarily have to begin only when they have attained birth as human beings. The gender of the two partners also does not have to be the same in all the births. As the stories in the Puranas confirm, two individual souls may come together any time during their existence upon earth, even when they assume a lower life form, such as that of any animal or bird, and carry forward their relationship further into higher life forms such as that of human beings. Once married, a couple are expected to uphold their family names by remaining faithful and truthful to each other and by enacting their respective roles as laid out in the Hindu law books. As the epic Ramayana and the Mahabharata illustrate, a couple ought to stick together through the ups and downs of life, however challenging and arduous the situation may be, taking care of each other and keeping faith in each other. In Hinduism, the institution of marriage is not peculiar to humans only. Even gods do marry and lead married lives just as humans. In the Hindu temple rituals, gods are married ritually to their divine consorts by the temple priests with all the fanfare once a year or every day. Devotees participate in such ceremonies as guests and bless the divine couple with love and devotion. Through their actions and their attitude towards their partners, the gods exemplify the ideals of marriage life for the ordinary mortals. At times they also indulge in excesses, which are justified by the scriptures as divine plays *lilas* with some latent purpose, acceptable and justifiable in the divine sphere, but not so in case of human beings, since unlike gods, men are subject to the limitations of the earthly life and the cycle of births and deaths. According to the beliefs of Hinduism, marriage is a sacred institution devised by gods for the welfare of human beings. Its primary purpose is procreation and continuation of life upon earth. Sexual union is intended solely for this purpose and should be used as such. Its secondary purpose is upholding of the social order and the Hindu dharma, while its ultimate aim is spiritual union with the inmost self, which is possible when a couple perform their obligatory duties and earn the grace of God through their good karma. A man and a woman are believed to come together as a husband and wife primarily for spiritual reasons rather than sexual or material, although they may not be mentally aware of the fact. Once married, the couple are expected to carry out their respective traditional duties as householders and upholders of family traditions and work for the material and spiritual welfare of each other, the members of their family and also society. Marriage in Hinduism, therefore, is not just a mutual contract between two individuals or a relationship of convenience, but a social contract and moral expediency, in which the couple agree to live together and share their lives, doing their respective duties, to keep the divine order *rita* and the institution of family intact. As the torch bearers of Hindu dharma, in their capacity as individual souls, whose destinies are intertwined by their previous karmas, a married couple have a responsibility towards their society, the gods, other living beings and their ancestors. In short, in Hinduism marriage is a social and family obligation to perpetuate a divine centered life in which self-realization rather than sexual gratification is the reason for its continuation. The concept of divorce is alien to Hinduism, as marriages are meant to last for a life time. Neither men nor women can throw away their marital relationships on some flimsy or selfish or whimsical grounds. Remarriage is permitted only under exceptional circumstances. Polygamy was a normal practice among Hindus just a few centuries ago. Presently, in India, the Hindu Marriage Act not only prohibits it but also makes it a punishable offence. In the earthly plane, a marriage symbolically represents the same relationship that exists at the universal level between the Purusha, the Highest Supreme Self or Father God and Prakriti, the Universal Divine Mother or Mother Goddess, who as the dynamic energy of God is responsible for manifesting the Creation under the Will of God. Together they participate in the act of creation and bring forth all the beings as their progeny. In a marriage earthly beings perform the same role, except in a limited manner. According to the Vedic tradition marriage is the means by which a man perpetuates himself through his progeny. A father extends himself into his future life and also into the next world through his children. In

this process he is helped by his wife who bears him children through the sacred union in which there is a transfer of sexual energy rethas. In traditional Hinduism, marriage is the best means for the continuation of family and the Hindu tradition, by fulfilling which the two partners in the marriage cocreate their future and become qualified for their salvation. The roles of a husband and wife in a marriage are expected to be complimentary, because without the help from the other neither of them can fulfill the duties and obligations of the married life. The Hindu law books try their best to delineate the roles and responsibilities of each partner in a marriage so as to avoid any confusion. The couple have to follow their family rules and make sure that they do not contribute to the social disorder. In a traditional Hindu family, married couples have to perform many traditional duties, some of which have to be performed by them alone and some in association with the other. Among others, the following are some of their common duties and obligations. Participate in the creation of progeny Work for the welfare of the family members. Respect the Hindu dharma and family traditions by performing the obligatory duties, various samskaras and rituals. Perform devotional services, charitable works and other morally and spiritual uplifting activities. Serve the gods, earthly beings, the ancestors and the dependent parents and relationships. Look after each other through thick and thin. Hindu scriptures do show a clear bias towards men and take the superiority of men in marital relationships for granted. They declare that a woman ought to be respected, protected and kept happy and that the happiness of women in the household is vital for the prosperity, peace and happiness of a family. They also recognize the importance of women in the affairs of their families and in molding the character and integrity of their children. However, at the same time they emphasize the need to keep women under constant vigilance by their men, since, according to them, women cannot be completely trusted or left to themselves. They also do not consider gender equality as an important consideration in marriage or in society, although they do emphasize that each partner in a marriage has a unique role to perform, which cannot be discharged by the other. Man is recognized as the primary upholder of the dharma, the main recipient of all ritual honors, where as his wife participates in them as his partner and associate saha dharma charini to complement his efforts. He is incomplete without her and so does she. But when it comes to the comparison, he clearly stands above her. When he leaves the world, she loses every thing, her wealth, her identity, her comforts and her status. Thus clearly and unequivocally the Hindu scriptures relegate women to a subordinate position in relationship with men. Marriage has another dimension in Hindu religion, which is unique by itself. Marriage is not viewed as a purely human affair, but as a sacred covenant between a man and a woman in which gods participate as witnesses as well as donors of the bride. During the marriage ceremony, the priest first marries the bride to the gods and then presents her to the bridegroom as a gift from the gods. Then he asks the groom to take an oath with gods as the witnesses that he would protect her and abide by her for the rest of his life. The idea behind this practice is that a man ought to respect his wife and treat her well as a divine gift since he cannot perform his obligatory duties as the upholder of the dharma all by himself. Besides, the belief that he has received the bride in good faith from the gods themselves puts him under a moral obligation to treat her well. In modern Hindu society the equation between man and woman is changing. With the decline in our concern for upholding the Hindu dharma and in our anxiety to emulate the modern lifestyles to look progressive, liberal and advanced, a good number of Hindus are shunning anything and everything that remotely looks orthodox Hinduism. With the decline in family values and changes in the family structure, there is a significant overlapping of roles and responsibilities between men and women in Hindu families. Men still enjoy some degree of advantage over women in marital relationships. But in a society where religion is no more central to human endeavor as it used to be, we may see further deterioration in their role as the protectors and upholders of traditional values. The traditional beliefs and practices associated with the institution of marriage still hold good in many orthodox Hindu families, where women continue to perform their obligatory duties in their subordinate position. We are not however sure how long this will continue. In Hinduism there are both moving parts and stable parts. The stable parts, which are essentially its core beliefs and concepts, keep the appeal of the Hindu religion intact, while the moving parts, which are essentially its practices and applied aspects, keep it moving and evolving and contribute to its resilience and vitality. Despite all the flux and commotion that is going on in the present-day Hindu society, marriage is still a viable and powerful institution

where divorce rates are considerably lower than those of the western countries and where marriages are more stable and enduring.

Chapter 3 : Mantras for a Hindu Wedding | Dr. A. V. Srinivasan

According to the beliefs of Hinduism, marriage is a sacred institution devised by gods for the welfare of human beings. Its primary purpose is procreation and continuation of life upon earth. Sexual union is intended solely for this purpose and should be used as such.

Some feel that this criticism is correct, while many in spite of realising that this criticism is spiteful, yet are unable to refute it. While some scholars or students put forth inappropriate ideas out of ignorance. The Hindu faith becomes shaky because of non refutation of all such inappropriate ideas and criticisms and this causes degradation of Righteousness. The barbaric culture of making a woman an object of barter is prevalent even in the present times. Kanyadan is not a form of dowry. Kanyadan is not monetary. There is no expectation of monetary benefit like getting dowry here. There is no such thought or idea. The gold ornaments and jewellery given to the bride by her father, brothers and relatives is Salankrut Kanyadan. There is not even an iota of concept of money of any monetary thought here. The jewellery given to the bride by her father during the wedding is the Streedhan of the bride. She alone has the right to own it. Hence there can be no comparison between them. Living with another person on realising the incompatibility with one partner is also a kind of divorce: Living together and separating on realising ones incompatibility is a kind of divorce. In America, couples live with other partners on realising their incompatibility after living together for many years. This is how they finish their life living with numerous partners. Can it be said that this method helped in reducing the incidents of divorce? High promiscuity increases psychological instability and life does not remain happy contented and stable. This has made the westerners too realise the importance of family. The Communists view about the institution of marriage 3A. They say, marriage constrains free-life promiscuous life! They also say that the government shall look after the children. The Hindu society is based on the science of Righteousness and human beings benefit through the institution of marriage: How long has this thought been prevalent? Communism has dissipated in just 60 years after it took root in society. Our social system is based on science. We preserve the continuity of lineage by following class code, family code etc. The progeny that is created through our marriage will be there as long as there are rivers, mountains and forests on earth. People in society have a good character through marriage while promiscuity takes them towards degradation: And for this marriage is important. Spiritual up-liftment is the goal of man. And the carnal desire in man is present only for reproduction. Through marriage, life becomes happy as one attains happiness and affection, society becomes righteous, while promiscuity makes man an addict as there is nothing to bind him. The ill-effects of promiscuity can now be seen in the Westerners. Present society gives permission for extra marital relationships for the satisfaction of carnal desires. Immorality gets acceptance through promiscuity: Promiscuity always is a form of revenge. Promiscuous person always gives various explanations like it is love etc to give credence to their immorality. People with superiority complex have powerful emotions. But emotions cannot give credibility to all things. The progeny born out of promiscuity goes on the negative ways and so causes the degradation of society: The children born in wedlock get good upbringing love and protection. But the progeny of promiscuity is deprived of all this and go on the wrong path and become addicts. This causes the degradation of society as well. This is the reason for the fall in values in the west. Lust cannot give constant love. Promiscuity and free life create diseases like AIDS and its bad effects have to be borne later. That is, man destroys his life for the sake of satisfying his momentary desires. What is the use of such temporary happiness? Why should birthday be celebrated as per Hindu lunar calendar? Anjali Gadgil , 21st January , 4 p. The birthday is the day to assess spiritual progress of the embodied soul: Here growth indicates spiritual progress. The spiritual progress of an embodied soul begins at birth. Even if an individual does not undertake actual spiritual practice, due to various spiritual rituals performed on him the sattva component in him increases thus initiating his spiritual progress. Birthday is the day to take stock of the effect of spiritual rituals on his subtle body. Madhura Bhosale, 13th May , 8. Through this action which raises the sattva component in the atmosphere, the embodied soul achieves stability of the inner mind. Anjali Gadgil, 28th August , History and importance of a birthday celebration 2. Accordingly, that particular centre in the

spiritual energy system is already in an activated state or a state where the journey of the spiritual energy has halted. He would touch the chakra beyond the one where the spiritual energy flow was arrested with unbroken rice grains in the fingers. This would resume the further journey of the spiritual energy. So, a mere glance at that chakra would restart his spiritual progress. The embodied soul himself was capable of perceiving the progress of the spiritual energy in his chakras. After having received blessings the embodied soul would seriously enhance his efforts to increase spiritual progress. On the subsequent birthday when the individual would go for blessings to the saint He would bless him only after assessing if his spiritual progress had occurred in the past year. Madhura Bhosale, 8th May 3. Importance of celebrating the birthday as per the Hindu lunar calendar Even though according to astrology, the date of birth as per the Hindu lunar calendar is inauspicious, it is still advisable to celebrate it on that day as the benefits derived are more than if celebrated on the date of birth according to the Western calendar. We advise that the birthday should be celebrated as per the Hindu lunar calendar. So what stand should be adopted? On this day the probability of harm is more means that, chances of obstacles in any auspicious task is high so the misconception that was formed was that one cannot perform any holy ritual for the embodied soul on this date of the Hindu lunar calendar. Thus, there is no rule that one must not perform any ritual on this day and the statement from astrology is baseless. Anjali Gadgil, 4th March , 7. Blessings and good wishes endow maximum benefit: Since the blessings and good wishes of relatives and well-wishers bring maximum benefit to the individual celebrating the birthday as per the Hindu lunar calendar is more beneficial. One develops the strength to combat obstacles in life: As a result, he derives spiritual prowess to combat problems in his future life. Anjali Gadgil, 21st January , 9.

Chapter 4 : Indian Wedding & Engagement Photography - Traditional Hindu Wedding Ceremony - HÃrning

According to "Manusmriti" ("Laws of Manu"), there are 8 types of Hindu marriages. 1. Brahma Vivah. Brahma vivah is considered the best marriage. In this the boy and girl belonging to good families and the same varna get married.

It is explained as the necessary law of life and equated to satya Sanskrit: The weak overcomes the stronger by Dharma, as over a king. Some of these include Niyama Sanskrit: Classical Hindu law John Mayne, in , wrote that the classical Hindu law has the oldest pedigree of any known system of jurisprudence. As more literature emerges, and is translated or interpreted, Mayne noted that the conflict between the texts on every matter of law has multiplied, and that there is a lack of consensus between the Western legal scholars resident in India. An attempt was then to find any old surviving Sanskrit text that mentioned elements of law, and this is how Western editors and translators arrived at the equation that "dharma shastra equals lawbook, code or Institute", states Rocher. Hindu jurisprudential texts contain elaborate and careful philosophical reflections on the nature of law and religion. The nature of Hindu law as a tradition has been subject to some debate and some misunderstanding both within and especially outside of specialist circles. These express that Shruti, Smriti and Achara are sources of jurisprudence and law. For example, [35] The source of Dharma is the Veda, as well as the tradition [Smriti], and practice of those who know the Veda. What is given in the tradition [Smriti] is the second, and the conventions of cultured people are the third. When these do not address an issue, the practice of cultured people becomes authoritative. The whole Veda is the first source of the sacred law, next the tradition and the virtuous conduct of those who know the Veda further , also the customs of holy men, and finally self-satisfaction Atmanastushti. The root of the religion is the entire Veda, and then the tradition and customs of those who know the Veda , and the conduct of virtuous people, and what is satisfactory to oneself. The Veda, tradition, the conduct of good people, and what is pleasing to oneself â€” they say that is four fold mark of religion. Consequently every rule of dharma must find its foundation in the Veda. Strictly speaking, the Samhitas do not even include a single precept which could be used directly as a rule of conduct. One can find there only references to usage which falls within the scope of dharma. By contrast, the Brahmanas , the Aranyakas and the Upanishads contain numerous precepts which propound rules governing behavior. In a cause where the accusation is for murder, for a robbery, for adultery, for It is unclear, states Terence Day, whether these were part of the original, because the stylistic, structural and substantive evidence such as inconsistencies between versions of different manuscripts of the same text suggest changes and corruption of the original texts. As the British colonial rule took over the political and administrative powers in India, it was faced with various state responsibilities such as legislative and judiciary functions. Over time, between , a series of British parliamentary acts were passed to revise the Anglo-Hindu and Anglo-Muslim laws, such as those relating to the right to religious conversion, widow remarriage, and right to create wills for inheritance. The changes triggered discontent, call for jihad and religious war, and became partly responsible for the Indian revolt against the British rule. Modern Hindu law After the independence of India from the colonial rule of Britain in , India adopted a new constitution in Article 44 of the Indian constitution mandates a uniform civil code, eliminating all religion-based civil laws including Hindu law, Christian law and Muslim law throughout the territory of India. This debate remains unresolved.

Chapter 5 : Hindu Marriages And The Duties Of Husband And Wife In A Traditional Hindu Family

For a Hindu, marriage is a sacrament between souls, not bodies. Gender doesn't really matter unless you look at the responsibilities assigned to each sex by the ritual mantras but we don't follow those rules anymore. If we did, women wouldn't get out of the house ever again. The ancients knew about.

Through sex is one of the function of marriage it is given third place, indicating there by that it is least desirable aim of the marriage. To stress the lower role of sex in marriage, the marriage of a Sudra is said to be for pleasure only. The Sudra is considered to be a contemptible fellow who has no high purpose in life. Consequently the brahmanic legislators enjoined that a sudra wife would be taken only for pleasure. This association of Sudra wife with sex is another way of indicating the proper place of sex in marriage. The institution of Hindu marriage occupies a prominent place in the social Institution of the civilized world. Hindu marriage can be defined as religions sacrament in which a man and woman are bound in permanent relationship for physical, social and spiritual purpose of dharma, procreation and sexual pleasure. The Hindu marriage is not really a social contract but a religious sacrament. It results in a more or less permanent relationship between a man and woman. Their aim is not nearly physical pleasure but spiritual advancement. It is not merely an individual function but has a serial enjoyment of sexual pleasure. It exhibits unintegral approach to this serial institution. The main aim of Hindu marriage can be summarized as follows. According to the Hindu scriptures marriage is a basic of all religion activities. In the words of K. M Kapadia "marriage is primarily for the fulfillment of duties; the basic aim of marriage was dharma". In Hindu families the child is given a very important place. According to Riga Veda, the husband accepts the palm of wife in order to get a high breed progeny. According to manu, the chief aim of marriage is procreation Mahabarat has also maintained the same view. The Hindu scriptures have compared the sexual pleasure with the relation of divine bliss. According to vatsyanyan sexual pleasure is the chief in aim marriage. Each is bound to the other until the death of either of them and the wife is supposed to be bound to her husband even after his death. Concept of marriage, that it is, indissoluble, is a lofty one because it means that the husband and wife after marriage age to adjust their tastes and temper their ideas and interest, instead of breaking with each other when they find that these differ. Hindu marriage, thus viewed, is not an ordinary affair where in the weakness of flesh plays a dominant part. On the contrary, demands of personal gratification and pleasures are subordinated, and the individual is called upon to make marriage a success by means of compromise and adjustment. Despite the fact that marriage was considered to be irrevocable the two partners were not regarded as beings equal in their obligations, privileges there was obvious discrimination made in their responsibility towards each other and in responsibility for succession of marriage. It is a sacrament also in another sense. A Hindu male goes through the performance of several sacraments during the course of his life. Which begins with the laying of the fetus and end with the cremation of his body. Their importance in Hindu life can be understood from the fact that while in the early law cremation was prescribed for a child who had completed two years, in the later law it was enjoined in the case of a child who had undergone the sacrament of tonsure. Similarly, marriage is said to be essential for woman because that is the only sacrament that can be performed for her. Even in the performance of religious duties the wife was more of a passive partner and was generally selected from a family, which did not neglect the performance of sacred rites. Marriage was a serious duty towards the family and the community and there was little idea of individual interest. The social background provided by the authoritarian joint family, and caste with its dominion small spheres of life, afforded no scope for the recognition of any personal factor, individual, interest or aspiration, in the relations between husband and wife. Dharma, Artha, Kama and even moksha are some of the guiding factors of Hindu marriage. Attainment of lines is also the main object of a married life. A man is only half of a whole unless he is not married. Marriage is also essential according to Hindu scriptures because only by entering a matrimonial alliance with opposite sex, a man can enter into grahs thaskram, and it is only this asharma where he is allowed to practice dharma, artha, kama and mokhsa. On the other hand, marriage is considered to be self-contented social institution. But is not a social institution in the same sense in which family is Mr. Sumner has rightly pointed out that the term

marriage has always been elastic and variable usage.

Chapter 6 : Hinduism - Hindu Wedding Information

Marriage in Hinduism The aims of Hindu marriage are said to be dharma, praja (progeny) and rati (pleasure). Through sex is one of the function of marriage it is given third place, indicating there by that it is least desirable aim of the marriage.

For an American Bride or a Groom and also for many Americans who attend Hindu weddings so I will attempt to write a brief primer for those who would like to understand the basic concepts of Hinduism. It is the oldest religion in the world with no known founders, no beginning date nor founding location. It prescribes the "eternal" duties all should follow, to uphold the laws of Nature, in the right manner. It is a pragmatic, all inclusive, non-proselytizing, evolving, non institutionalized and a universal way of life. The Hindu way of life supports those laws at an individual level by doing the right thing, every time and in every instance. Principle of Non Duality: In practical terms, it can equated to Total Universal Energy. Atman is identical with the transcendent self, Brahman. The Adwait or Non Duality philosophy is consistent with our understanding of the Universe. It was always there and will always be unlike the Big Bang theory. A simple example is the life cycle of water; the heat Energy from the Sun transforms water from ocean into clouds and then into rains which fill our rivers. The water goes back to ocean, restarting the cycle. According to these texts, time is cyclic, which repeats itself forever. A day of Brahma is 8. A good education will guarantee a stable and good income life. For every crime, there will be a punishment, sooner or later. The original concept of rebirth is that one may be reborn as any of the millions of living beings; as the lowest amoeba or as the highly developed human being, based on your past Karma. Thus a human being with a bad Karma, can still be reborn as a human being; just not with as prosperous or healthy life as the one with good Karma. Theory of Rebirth Since Atma is eternal and everything goes thru cycles, the Atma or soul reincarnates, evolving through many births. All creation goes thru the cycle of birth and death. The ten reincarnations indicate that the Hindus believe in the theory of Evolution. Multiple Paths to Realize God: The pursuit of Truth, Satya and non injury, physically and mentally, Ahimsa, are the essential pursuits for every Hindu. There are four Vedas: The Gita upholds the essence and the theological tradition of the Upanishads. The trinity of Gods, consists of Brahma, the creator, Vishnu, the maintainer and Shiva, the destroyers. Their consorts, Sarasvati, Laxmi and Parvati, are the Shakti, the true powers behind the trinity. Different sects within Hinduism worship different divinities based on their own beliefs and stories from Puranas. Moksha is also considered to be liberation from the cycles of birth and death. These ashramas are Brahmacharya, Grahastha, Vanaprastha and Sannyasa. The overall movement from ashram to ashram facilitates the pursuit of the individual soul, Atman to the Universal Spirit, Brahman. These were never based on which class one was born in. It was never meant to be the way it is practiced. Untouchables is not a caste per the scriptures; it is one of the bad discrimination practices for the lowest level of service providers that evolved over time. It is illegal in India. The ancient Hindu sages respected nine heavenly bodies that " circle " around the Earth against the fixed stars and the five big elements which are absolutely essential to our very existence! The nine heavenly bodies are named in order of the Week Days: The five basic elements from which everything is evolved are: Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Space. We always respect these fundamental elements that sustain our life. Thus, any kind of pollution that affects these elements in inconsistent with our philosophy. Individual horoscopes are based on relative positions of the heavenly bodies at the time of birth. Astrologers use them to predict the future and compatibility of the bride and the groom for their marital success. There is no scientific evidence to support predictions based on individual horoscopes ; it is purely a matter of belief. But there is no question that these planets affect all of us; collectively but not individually. Prayers and Idol Worship: The concept of the Universal Reality is very abstract. Hence, Hindus worship various deities with different attributes and different forms as manifestations of that Universal Reality. An image or an idol worship allows one to concentrate on their personal deity with devotion and belief. We believe that all prayers and worship ultimately lead to the same God. I am sure all interfaith couples do try to address many immediate and future religious and cultural issues during their courtship days. Being an all inclusive and pragmatic religion, all Hindus respect other religions and other ways

of life. An interfaith couple is encouraged to visit InterfaithShaadi. Hindus do not insist on conversion of non-Hindus for the sake of matrimony. How to become a Hindu? Is there a conversion process? The concept of missionary conversion is anathema to the precepts of Hinduism. However, that view is changing with the arrival of missionary Islam and Christianity in India, because of genuine desire from many non-Hindus to become one and due to increase in Hindu-Non Hindu marriages. The best way to become a Hindu is to be a Hindu; just follow its way of living! Hinduism is a diverse system of thoughts and beliefs. It has no traditional ecclesiastical order, no centralized religious authority, no universally accepted governing body, no prophet s , no binding holy book nor any mandatory prayer attendance requirements. Most Hindu sub-schools and sects do not actively seek converts. Individuals have a choice to enter, leave or change their god s , spiritual convictions, accept or discard any rituals and practices, and pursue spiritual knowledge and liberation moksha in different, individual ways. There are a few "how to become Hindu" books and articles, available for interested persons. It would be helpful to learn and participate in community activities such as various festivals, read and discuss ancient literature, learn and engage in rites of passages and adopt the Hindu way of life to fully assimilate in Hindu culture. Major Symbols of Hinduism: As explained earlier, following is the meaningful to me: It also represents the Purushartha: Dharma natural order , Artha wealth , Kama desire , and Moksha liberation. Yoga means to bind, join, attach and yoke, to direct and concentrate all our powers of body, mind and soul to make union with the Ultimate Universal Spirit or God. The various physical postures that constitute the western Yoga practice, are the third limb of the eight limbs of the Raj Yoga. Basic principles of Hinduism are based on logic and science and are pragmatic and evolving. All Pandits should use the rituals as stepping stones to convey our rich heritage to the next generation. I hope this short primer will generate your interest in learning more about Hinduism. Please feel free to contact me at pamag43 gmail.

Chapter 7 : Basis for Marriage is Friendship – Hindu Philosophy of Marriage | Hindu Blog

Hindu wedding rituals may vary in detail depending on which part of India the bride and the groom come from. Notwithstanding regional variations and diversity of languages, culture, and customs, the basic tenets of a Hindu marriage are common throughout the Indian subcontinent.

After the student bachelor has completed his gurukulavasa, his parents approach the parents of a girl belonging to a good family and ask them to give away their daughter in marriage to their son--to make a gift of their daughter kanyadana to him. A marriage arranged like this is brahma. There is no "commercial transaction" and the goal of a brahma marriage is the dharmic advancement of two families. Of the eight forms of marriage the dharmasastras regard this as the highest. Marrying a girl to a rtvik priest during a sacrifice is called " daiva ". This type of marriage is considered inferior to brahma. The third form, "arsa" suggests that it is concerned with the rsis, sages. It seems the marriage of Sukanya to Cyavana Maharsi was of this type. But from the dharmasastras we learn that in arsa the bride is given in exchange for two cows received from the groom. If the term is taken to mean "giving away a girl in marriage to a rsi", we must take it that the girl is married off to an old sage because the parents could not celebrate her marriage according to the brahma rite at the right time. The fact that cows are taken in exchange for the bride shows that the groom does not possess any remarkable qualities. According to the sastras, in marriages of noble kind there is no place for money or anything smacking of a business transaction. In prajapatya there is no trading and kanyadana is a part of it as in the brahma ceremony. In the asura type the groom is in no way a match for the girl, but her father or her relatives receive a good deal of money from the man who forces them to marry her to him. In arsa in which cows are given in exchange for the bride there is no compulsion. Nor is the groom wealthy or powerful like his counterpart in the asura type. Many rich men must have taken a second wife according to the asura type of marriage. The next is gandharva. The very mention of it calls to mind Sakuntala and Dusyanta. The gandharva type is the "love marriage" that has such enthusiastic support these days. It was in this manner that krsna Paramatman married Rukmini. The eighth and last is paisaca. Rukmini loved Krsna, did she not? She is seized against her wish and her family antagonised. We have the brahma type at one end and the paisaca at the other. There cannot be the same system or the same arrangement for everybody. Our sastras have taken into account the differences in temperament and attitude among various sections of people and it is in keeping with the same that they have assigned them different rites, vocations, etc. All our present trouble arises from the failure on the part of men, who advocate the same system for all, to recognise this fact. There are tribals living in the forests who look fierce and have a harsh way of life. But at heart they may be more cultured than townspeople, not to speak of the fact that they are useful to society in many ways. They have frequent family feuds. In consideration of this raksasa and paisava marriages may have to be permitted in their case. After the marriage, they are likely to forget their quarrels and live in peace with each other. Ksatriyas who are physically strong and are used to material pleasure are allowed the gandharva form of marriage and their girls have even the right to choose their husbands as in the svayamvara ceremony. It is for these reasons that the dharmasastras, which are based on the Vedas and which constitute Hindu law, permit eight forms of marriage. In all these eight, the bride and groom have the right to be united in wedlock with the chanting of mantras. But brahma is the highest of the eight forms. In it the bride must not have attained puberty. Meanwhile, they grow old and their marriage is conducted in the arsa, daiva, or prajapatya way. Only these types are permitted for Brahmins. But for the rest other types are also allowed. They may marry a girl who has come of age either in the gandharva way or in a svayamvara. The marriage mantras are intended for all the eight forms. It means that they are employed even in the marriage rite of girls who have attained puberty. The two mantras quoted above are recited in all the eight types of marriage. They are addressed by the groom to the bride who comes to him after she has attained puberty and after she has been under the guardianship successively of Soma, gandharva and Agni. The mantras are chanted not only in brahma marriages but also in all other forms. The same are addressed by the groom to his child bride also. Though his marriage is being solemnised to the child bride now, he will start living with her only after she comes of age, after she becomes a young woman. He will

bring her home to live with him only after she has come successively under Soma, gandharva and Agni. So he chants the mantras in advance. Nowadays we sometimes perform a number of samskaras together long after they are due according to the sastras. For example, we perform the jatakarma if a son as well as his namakarana and caula during his upanayana when he is 20 or 22 years old and not long before his marriage. Similarly, instead of such postponement of the rites, in the brahma marriage the mantras mentioned above are chanted in advance. I will give you an example in this context. When the brahmacharin performs the samidadhana he prays before Agni to grant him good children. How absurd would it be for our reformers to argue, on the basis of this prayer, that a young boy must have children when he is yet a celibate-student and that he may become a householder only later. The point to note is that the boy prays on advance for good children. The Vedic mantras cited by reformers must be seen in the same light. The mantras [quoted by reformers] are appropriate for the marriage of a girl who has come of age also. If the mantras in question are chanted at the time of the marriage of girls who have come of age, it does not mean that all marriages are to be celebrated after the girls have attained puberty. According to the brahma form of marriage, the girl must not have had her menarche. There is incontrovertible proof for this in the Vedic mantra chanted at the end of the marriage rite. His name is Visvavasu. The mantra I referred to is chanted by the groom addressing this demigod. Leave this girl and go. Go to another girl child. Have I not become the husband of this girl? So give her over to me and go to another girl who is not married and lives with her father. Here is proof that the bride is not under Agni and has not had her menarche. The question now is about the verse from the Manusmṛiti cited by the reformists. According to it, a girl may wait three years after her menarche and then seek her husband on her own. There is an answer to this. The general rule according to the dharmasastras is that a girl must be married before she attains puberty: But if they turn out to be irresponsible or otherwise fail to find a groom? Or if the girl has no guardian, no one to care for her? The lines quoted by the reformers from the Manusmṛiti apply to such a girl. She may look for a husband on her if none of her relatives, neighbours or well-wishers take the trouble of finding her a groom even after she has attained puberty. Though the reformists quote from the Vedas and sastras in support of their view, they fail to take into account the context in which the relevant passages occur. They see them in isolation. That is why they keep arguing that the customs followed by people steeped in our traditions are contrary to the sastras. In the Chandogya Upanisad there is mention of a sage called Cakrayana Usasti whose wife had not come of age. The reformists do not examine such references in our ancient texts with a cool head but are carried away by their emotions. In the past the common people did not know how to counter the arguments of the reformists. Even so they did not accept their views thinking it best to follow the practices of their elders, of great men. Later Harbilas Sarada introduced the bill which [on its passage] came to be called the Sarada Act. Many people in the South think Sarada was a woman and call the law named after him the "Sarada Act". The Central legislative assembly was equally divided on the bill -- 50 percent for and 50 per cent against. Then the British asked one of the nominated members to vote in favour of the bill; and thus the minimum age of marriage for girls was raised by a legal enactment. The mind of our British rulers worked thus: Let us give it some satisfaction by being of help in inflicting an injury on the Hindu religion. There is no respect any longer for old customs and traditions. When the Sarada Act came into force in British India, some Sanskrit scholars returned the "Mahamahopadhyaya" title conferred on them by the government. The latter was settled in Kasi and had the "Dravid" tagged on to his name to make it known that he belonged to the land of the Tamils. How many people today are inspired to rise in protest against the changes introduced by our government in our sastric observances. Our children must be taught the substance and meaning of the sastras in a comprehensive manner. To speak to them about one aspect here and another there will lead to a haphazard and confused view. The half-baked research carried on in the Vedas has given rise to the opinion that the scriptures favour love marriage. The canonical texts must be seen in their entirety. When a subject is examined, its underlying meaning and purpose must be grasped.

Chapter 8 : Hindu Vedic Philosophy (Devotional): The Stories of Bhaktas -7

Communism has dissipated in just 60 years after it took root in society. USSR became fragmented. Our social system is based on science. The purpose of marriage in Hindu society is to create good people, eternally preserving Righteousness and culture, achieving man's worldly good and also attaining spiritual contentment. We preserve the continuity of lineage by following class code, family code etc.

Hindu Panchang Hindu Philosophy Philosophy is the rational aspect of the faith, in any culture or Religion. It is an integral part of Hindu religious beliefs and culture in India. It is a rational inquiry into the nature of truth or reality, giving clear solutions to many problems of life and human behavior. It shows the ways to get rid of the pain and sufferings, to get happiness and peace of mind and to attain liberation and eternal bliss. Theology is considered important in most world religions. Philosophy is often agnostic and it is not part of the religious study. Hindus consider philosophy as an integral part of their religious experience. In Hindu culture, theology is well mixed in all aspects of life through its mythology, art, music and dance and they all carry a moral. Hindu Philosophy is not merely a speculation or guess work of a solution for human problems and doubts, but an organized doctrine based on the mystical experience of the Sages and Seers. It also explains his duties during this birth as well as about his past and his future. It investigates and inquires the Truth and allows us to think and reason in our search for a solution. Even though the Agamas and Vedas appear to be professing different doctrines, they both are written on the same philosophy but for different population group. The Agamas give us the Theological aspect of our practice with prayers to God in various manifestations. The Vedas give us all the rituals and also the philosophy of our religious practice. All of them are based on the principle that the Soul is a part of the Divine spirit and is covered by the sheaths of "Upadhis" as an effect of ones Karma. It goes through endless rebirth according to ones Karma to purify itself. Every one should follow his Dharma and perform their duties or Karma without attachment, as an offering to God to receive eternal salvation and liberation as Moksha. Philosophy is the rational aspect of the faith, in any culture or Religion. The Divine Laws that holds True for ever. The teachings of Hindu philosophy are given to us in the Upanishads which are the wealth of our knowledge. The ethics and tenets are obtained from them through the Six Dharsanas and various later schools of philosophers. The glory of Hindu philosophy is seen in the teachings of Hindu dharma, the theory of karma and rebirth, the six dharsanas, and the four yogas or spiritual disciplines. They not only create the questions in our mind to think but also give us the answers to the problems. Dharma means "that which holds" the people of this world and the whole creation. It is the eternal Divine law of God. That which brings well being to man and supports the world with prosperity is dharma. It is the absolute Truth and laws of righteous living. The four Vedas are the authority of Dharma. Ancient sets of Rules that holds and changes with Time. Purushartha are the four kinds of human aspirations, which are dharma, artha, kaama and moksha. Among these, dharma is the foremost and is the gateway to moksha or immortality and eternal bliss. Practice of proper Dharma gives an experience of peace, joy, strength and tranquillity within ones-self and life becomes thoroughly disciplined. It is classified as [i] Samanya dharma or the general and Universal Dharma and [ii] Vishesha dharma or specific personal dharma. Samanya dharma includes contentment, forgiveness, self-restraint, spiritual knowledge, absence of anger, non-greediness, non-stealing, truthfulness, purity, non-violence, control of senses and desire, discrimination between right and wrong and between real and unreal. They also include the specific dharmas for the four ashramas and four varnas. These are the regular duties including the rituals and services to the family, community, ancestors and God that every one is expected to perform. We have separate Dharma for each of the four Yugas or time periods. Varying Rules of Duty for Different Times. The Vedas give different rules of Dharma for people of different age groups, different family traits and different periods of time. The ashrama dharma gives the standards of living for different age groups of individuals. The varna dharma is one that is most misinterpreted and misused. If properly interpreted and understood, it is the most efficient sociological system of the nation. It is indeed a splendid theory with a flawless rule. But, the defect came from somewhere else. Various dharma sashtras, or smritis, written by Rishis like Manu, Parasara, and Yaagnavalkya, have varied for different

periods of time according to varying social and emotional surroundings of the Hindu society [Yuga-Dharma]. The Hindus often follow the teachings of various Dharma sastras for the philosophical guidance for daily living. An unencompassed light, Transcendent and Immanent The Divine is both in us and out of us. God is neither completely transcendent nor completely immanent. Those who emphasize the Transcendence of the Supreme to the human insist on the specifically religious consciousness, of communion with a higher than ourselves with whom it is impossible for the individual to get assimilated. There cannot be a fundamental contradiction between the philosophical idea of God as an all-embracing spirit and the devotional idea of a personal God who arouses in us the specifically religious emotion. The personal conception develops the aspect of spiritual experience in which it may be regarded as fulfilling the human needs. God is represented as possessing the qualities we lack. Justice, love and holiness are the highest qualities we know and we imagine God as possessing them, though these qualities exist in God in a different sense from their existence in us. The difference between the Supreme as spirit and Supreme as person is one of stand point and not of essence, between God as He is and as he seems to us.

Hindu marriage joins two individuals for life, so that they can pursue dharma, artha, kama, and moksha together. It is a union of two individuals as husband and wife, and is recognized by law. In Hinduism, marriage is followed by traditional rituals for consummation. In fact, marriage is not considered complete or valid until consummation. It also joins two families together. Favorable colours are normally red and gold for this occasion.

Thursday, January 21, Hindu Philosophy of Marriage Centuries ago, civilized societies recognized and acknowledged the most basic instincts of all - i. Experience has shown that this institution can help navigate the complex ocean of life full of conflicts, questions, concerns, temptations, joys, sorrows, ups and downs. Hindu ancestors set aside some guidelines to make sure that the institution is a permanent one capable of not only bringing happiness to two young people but also providing a delicate balance so that the family enjoys the fullness of life within the framework of what they called Dharma, the Hindu code of right conduct. The subject matter of marriage has been discussed and debated ever since. They continue and say "If there is one prevailing wish that husbands and wives have for their marriage, it is to be close companions for life. One cannot desire another person over the long haul without really being best friends with that person. One of the questions the Yaksha asked Yudhishtira was "kimsvin mitram ghesatah? Who is the friend of a householder? To which the prince answered "bhaaryaa mitram ghesatah," i. According to Hindus, therefore, the basis for marriage is friendship and such friendship is the understanding, the promise and the commitment that unites a man and a woman. With such authority, there is then no question about the role of a woman, her importance, her position in this equation that binds them together. Let us explore this further. In most Hindu wedding ceremonies, and especially among South Indians, a climax is reached when a particular event takes place. Legally, ethically and morally that moment is the sacred moment in the wedding when they become husband and wife. But what happens afterwards is truly the most significant and meaningful for the rest of their life together. Because, in a following ceremony known as saptapadi the bride and the groom hold hands and take seven steps together as husband and wife as they walk around Agni, the God of fire and pledge to each other their eternal friendship. What they say after they have taken those seven steps is unquestionably the foundation for a successful marriage. May I deserve your friendship. May my friendship make me one with you. May your friendship make you one with me. Samraajni shvashurebhava Be queenly with your father-in-law Samraajni shvashruvaambhava Be queenly with your mother-in-law Nanandaari saamraajnibhava Be queenly with his sisters Saamraajni adhidevrshu Be queenly with his brothers. Nothing short of the status of a queen is what the scriptures prescribe. Hindu ancestors went even further: In one question the Yaksha asks Yudhishtira: Again the basis of friendship in marriage is emphasized. The basis of Hinduism is rooted in the Vedas composed around B. A specific reference to the wedding ceremony of Suryaa daughter of Surya, the sun god is found in the Rig Veda. The Vedic ideal of marriage, according to Abhinash Chandra Bose The Call of the Vedas, page , Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, "is that of perfect monogamy, the life-long companionship of two people. Some Vedic prayers blended into a wedding ceremony are directed towards acquiring intellectual power, wisdom, efficiency, spiritual vigor, higher talent etc. Other prayers are for strength, valor, power, fearlessness and qualities of heroism leading to Kshaatraveerya - the physical prowess. Acquisition of these two attributes, in Hindu thought, leads to fulfillment of Chaturvidhaphalapurushaartha, the four aspects of life known as Dharma, Artha and Kama leading to the fourth- the complete release of bondage and to total freedom known as Moksha. The inclusion of Artha financial aspect and Kama aspects of love in this series confirms the practicality of Vedic thought. The demands of Artha and Kama in the life of married people are in apparent conflict with the dictates of Dharma and Moksha. How does the Hindu resolve this apparent contradiction? This in fact was the third question on the subject asked of Yudhishtira by the Yaksha: How can these contraries be reconciled? How can a householder necessarily involved in the pursuit of good life seeking artha and kaama in raising a family and serving a community not find himself in conflict with Dharma and how can he strive for moksha? Notice that Artha and Kama are safely sandwiched between Dharma and Moksha. If salvation is to be your goal, the ancient Hindus said, then by all means practice fully in the affairs

of the society, raise a family, enjoy the good life in a responsible way, serve the community- all within the framework of Dharma. How does a ghrasttha reconcile these contrary requirements? It is that protection coming from such a spouse, that torch light, that spirit of friendship and cooperation and sacrifice that gives a reasonable chance for a couple to succeed in meeting this challenge of conflicting attributes. Each step in a Vedic wedding ceremony conveys implicitly or explicitly an understanding between the couple. The life companion inherited this burden of providing the umbrella of Dharma so that the family she was going to raise - her own family - would be a Dhaarmic one. That is why a Hindu wife is not simply called a patni wife but she is always referred to as Dharmapatni, wife-in-Dharma. This then is the reason for that very special, very unique, very necessary role a woman was called upon to play in the Hindu household.