



## Bhakta Traditions

Traditions = customs/beliefs/rites practiced by our forefathers and were passed on from generation to generation by observation and imitation.

Today, we are the beneficiaries of these traditions. They give us identity and a sense of belonging.

Where did our traditions come from?

Vedic Scriptures/teachings



Our Vedic Sanskruti has simply divided life in four logical stages/ashrams

**Brahmacharya ashram (student life)**

Birth to age 20/25

**Gruhastha ashram (family life)**

Age 25 to 50

**Vaanprashtha ashram (retirement)**

Age 50 to 75

**Sanyasa ashram (renunciation)**

Age 75 to 100+



# Brahmacharya ashram (student life)

- Period of formal education.
- Learns to become a responsible citizen.
- Attains both spiritual and practical knowledge.
- Prepares for professional, family and religious life.
- Lasts until the age of approximately 25.



## Gruhastha ashram (Family Life)

- Begins when a man gets married.
- Undertakes the responsibility for earning a living
- Supports his family – wife and children.
- Supports his parents, siblings, and community
- Religious or spiritual practices are done in the context of worldly life and service to others
- Lasts until the age of approximately 50



# Vaanprashtha ashram(retirement)

- Time for shifting focus towards inner spiritual practices of meditation, contemplation, and prayer.
- Hand over responsibilities to grown children
- Relationships with grown children and community are more in the role of a matured mentor.
- Lifestyle is more simplified, and the couple may retreat to a quieter place for deeper spiritual practices.
- Lasts until the age of approximately 50-75



## Sanyasa ashram (renunciation)

- Retreats from active involvement in all worldly goals.
- Seeks only spiritual goals in this final phase.
- No longer has political, professional, or social engagements.
- Shifts towards being an elder teacher of spiritual knowledge.
- Lasts until the age of approximately 75-100+.



To shape and prepare us for life, 16 sanskars (rites of passage) are bestowed upon us. The first ten can be categorized in the following manner:

### Pre-natal Sankars

- **1. Garbha-dhanam**

The first coming together of the husband & wife for conception.

- **2. Poosum-vanam**

Ceremony performed when the first signs of conception are observed.

- **3. Seemanto-nayanam (Baby shower)**

Ceremony performed for the safe and healthy outcome of the pregnancy, and to motivate the mother to have positive thoughts.



## Childhood

### ○ 4. **Jaat-karma** - Birth Ceremony

The Jaat-karma ceremony welcomes the newborn into this world. The main objective of this birth ceremony is to arouse all the sensory organs.

### ○ 5. **Naam-karana**- Naming the Baby

In this ceremony the child is given a formal name.

Performed on the 11th day. (Foi names the baby)

### ○ 6. **Nishkramana** - First Outing

Performed when the child is taken out of the house for the first time. It's done usually in the fourth month when all the motor and sensory organs of the baby are strong enough to tolerate the sun, moon, the wind etc.





- **7. Annaprasanna - Feeding of solid food**

This ceremony is performed, when the child is given solid food (anna) for the first time. Usually rice with milk and sugar (Dudhpaak?)

- **8. Chudakarana - Hair Cutting**

Ceremony in which the child's hair is shaved for the first time. Done at age of 12 to 36 months. (Baabri) It is believed to increase intelligence

- **9. Karna-vedha- Ear Piercing**

Ear piercing ceremony that is performed at 3 to 12 months old. It is believed that this keeps the brain in balance



## Educational Sanskars

- **10. Upanayan - Sacred thread ceremony (Janoi)**

Ceremony where a sacred thread is put on. This means accepting moral laws, directions, and responsibilities of everyday life.

- **11. Vedarambha - (Study of Vedas)**

Means “the beginning of gaining knowledge” (first day of school). Guru guides the child to become a responsible citizen.

- **12. Samaavartan - End of Studentship**

Returning home after completion of education



- **13. Vivaha - Marriage**

Unite with understanding. Step that leads to Gruhastha Ashram

- **14. Vaanprastha**

As old age approaches, the person retires for a life of tapas & spiritual studies.

- **15. Sanyas**

Before leaving the body, a Hindu sheds all sense of responsibility & relationships and prepares for spiritual life.

- **16. Antyeshthi - Funeral**

The last rites done after the death.



**Bhakta traditions are somewhat simplified and are done without the presence of a “Brahmin”, “Purohit”, or “Pandit”**

**Today’s Focus: Traditional Bhakta Vivah - Wedding or Lagna (Lagan)**

**Main Ceremonies:**

- **Vivah** - Engagement
- **Kankotri** - Invitations
- **Pithi**- Applying of Tumeric
- **Mosadu** - Honoring the Maternal uncle (Mama)
- **Receiving of Jaan(Utaaro)** - Arrival of Groom’s side
- **Kapada chadhava-nu** - Gifting of clothes to bride
- **Var-raja-ne Ughlaave** - Adorning of the Groom



- **Varghodo** - Groom's procession
- **Varghodo's arrival at mandap** - Welcoming the varghodo to the altar
- **Kanya nu aagman** - Bride's arrival at the altar
- **Hasta melap** - Union of Bride and Groom
- **Kansar** - Offering sweet dish
- **Kanya vidai** - Farewell to Bride



## ○ **Vivah** - Engagement

- **Mehman (Parana)** - 5-7 of Groom's Paternal Family - Father, Kaka, Fuwa, Brothers, and Brothers-in law go as guests to the bride's home.
- The bride will get blessings from them.
- The father-in-law will bless her with a token of 5-11 rupees/dollars.
- The bride's parents will double this amount and send their blessings to the groom in return.
- The elders then discuss the logistics of the wedding: the date and venue etc.



## વિવાહ સમયે

૧. માતા જશોદા સાંભળો વાત, કન્યા મેં એક દીઠી છે જાત,  
કંચન વર્ણ સમાન છે ગાત્ર, તો કહાન કુંવર પરણાવીએ રે...

1.

**Mata Jashoda sambhdo vaat, kanya mein ek dithi chhe jaat**

**Kanchan varna samaan chhe gaatra, tau Kahaan kuvar paranaviye re**

Oh mata Jashoda listen, I have found an ideal bride with unique qualities.

Her body is like precious gold, so let us marry the prince “Kahan”/Krishna (to her).



૨. નંદ જશોદા હરખે અપાર, સાંભળી વિવાહ વાત વિસ્તારી,  
ગોકુલમાં થયો જૈ જૈ કાર, તો લાલજીનો વિવાહ ગાઈએ રે...

2.

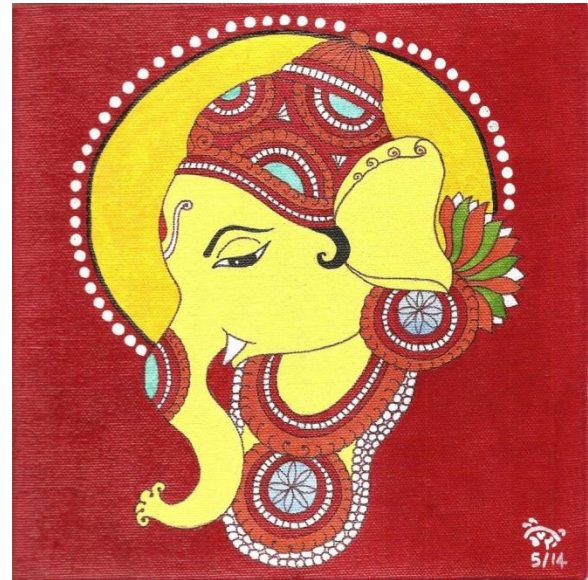
**nanda jashoda harkhe apaar, sambhdi vivah vaat vistaari,  
gokulma thayo jai jai kaar, tau Laljino vivah gaayi-e re...**

Jashoda's son (Krishna) is delighted, hearing of the engagement  
Joy and cheering is in Gokul , so let us celebrate Lalji's (groom's)  
engagement...





kankotri



## ○ **Kankotri** – Wedding Invitation

### **Who writes them?**

- Paternal and maternal family and friends

### **Who is invited?**

- The first kankotri is placed at the Gaadi.
- A kankotri is delivered to the Surat Mandir
- The Mahant/Bawaji .
- All relatives and friends
- The Bride's father sends a hand written kankotri to the groom's family
- The mother of the bride and groom hand delivers a kankotri to her parent's/brother's home (mosad – mosadu invitation at same time)

### **Who is listed as hosts in the kankotri?**

- The paternal family names are listed as hosts of the wedding.  
The names of the vadils are listed first.



૧. જીરે પગરણો વ્હેલા પધારજો,  
સધારજો રે સધારજો સેવકના કામ...પગરણો...  
જીરે તમો વિના સર્વ શોભે નહિ,  
ઘણું લોભે રે ઘણું લોભે મળવા મન...પગરણો...

1.

**jeere pagrane vehla padhaarjo,  
sadhaarjo re sadhaarjo sevakna kaam.. pagrane...  
Jeere tamo vina sarve shobhe nahi,  
Ghanu lobhe re ghanu lobhe madva mann..pagrane**

Oh dear, come soon to this auspicious occasion,

Bless this servant and bless this occasion...

Oh dear, without you, they all look out of place

I am eager and anxious to meet you...



# Pithi



# Pithi - Haldi

## What is Pithi?

- ❖ It is a paste of turmeric and sandalwood/rose-water (vano?) and is applied on the bride and groom three days before the wedding.

## What is the significance of Pithi?

- ❖ It removes obstacles and ushers in a life of prosperity for the couple, as they begin a new life together.
- ❖ The yellow color, representative of the sun, is considered very auspicious.
- ❖ Medicinal qualities- Antiseptic and anti-inflammatory. It boosts immunity and helps relieve nervousness and the wedding jitters.
- ❖ Beauty - It is known as an effective exfoliating agent. It removes dead cells and detoxifies the skin, and makes it glow.

## Who applies the pithi?

- ❖ Mamis, bhabhis, beno, fois, and friends (female).



After Pithi there are two other significant ceremonies:

## Thambhli (pillar) puja

Thambli puja is placing/planting of a wooden pillar in the front of the bride and groom's home to make it auspicious. This is performed by the paternal family. Once this pillar is placed, the wedding mandvo is built upon/around it.

- It is a reminder to the couple of their elders and ancestors (the pillars of their family).
- Shows unity and support of the family. “As a family we will stand together and make this occasion a success”.

## Saakar Padau

Saakar Padau is sharing of **saakar** (crystal sugar) and a small monetary token.

- Bride's brothers will present saakar padau to groom. Then the groom's mother will keep half with them, and send the other half back to the bride's family.



## પીઠી

૧. જીરે એકાદશી મહાસુદની, ત્યાં દિવસે હોય વૈવા મેદની,  
ત્યાં સંત સર્વે હોય નોતરા, એવા વિવાહના નીપજે છાંટણા...

**1.**

**Jeere ekadashi mahaasudni, tyaa divase hoi vaiva medni,  
Tyaa sant sarve hoi nautra, eva vivahna nipje chhaat-na**

Oh dear, tenth day of the full moon cycle, that is the day of the engagement  
Where saints and all are invited, this type of engagement produces  
sparkles (good relation)



૨. સખી રે આજ આનંદ મારે ઉલટયો,  
અલબેલાજી આવ્યા મારે ઘેર...આનંદ મારે ઉલટયો...

**2.**

**Sakhi re aaj anand maare ulatyo,**

**Albelaji avyaa mare gher...anand mare ulatyo**

Oh friend, today happiness has returned  
the Lord has come to my home...  
happiness has returned...





# Mosadu



## ○ Mosadu – Reception of Maternal uncle (Mama)

- On this day, the mama's family and friends are the guests of honor. They are treated with utmost respect.
- The mother of the bride or groom eagerly waits for this special day.
- To demonstrate their support, the bride's mama brings her gifts that include the traditional paanetar (the bridal silk sari), and the groom's mama brings him his sherwani (traditional suit).
- This ceremony takes place one day before the wedding or right after the Pithi.



## મોસાળુ

૧. કંકુ છાંતી કંકોતરી મોકલી કોડે, કહાવે સુભદ્રાબેન વીરા વેલા આવજો,  
કૃષ્ણજીને બાલિભદ્ર બેઉ બંધવા, તમો આવો તો થાય સુખ ચેન, વીરા વેલા આવજો,

**Kanku chhaati kankotari mokali kode,  
Kahave Subhadraben vira vela aavjo,**

**Krushnaji-ne Balibhadra bev bandhva,  
Tamo aavo tou thai sukh chen, vira vela aavjo**

With vermilion sprinkled on Kankotri - sent it with love,  
Subhadhra pleads to her brothers to arrive soon

Krishna and Balram both brothers...

Upon your arrival, I will be filled with joy and comfort.

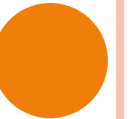
Please arrive soon.



૨. રાધાજી રે ઘણું હરખ્યાં મન, આજ અમારો અવતાર છે ધન્ય,  
પ્રગટ્યું પૂર્વ જન્મનું પૂન્ય તો, પૂરણ બ્રહ્મા ને પરણીએ...

**Radhaji re ghanu herkhyaa mann, Aaj amaaro avtaar chhe dhanya  
Pragatyu purva janam-nu punya tou, Puran brahma ne paraniye**

Oh Radhaji, we are overjoyed, today our life is blessed,  
Because past good deeds have come to fruition, I am marrying Brahma



## ○ Receiving of Jaan (Utaaro)

- Nariyel exchange – symbolic of Samarpan (surrender)
- Laadva presentation – 5-7 vadils from groom's side (father, uncles, older brothers, etc) present the bride with sweets and a token of money (11-21 rupees/dollars). Bride receives blessings from them.
- Brides sisters will serve the groom water or cold drinks. (The sisters will ask for a payment)



- Bhetwaanu - The bride's family will welcome the groom's family by embracing (hugging) them.
- Groom's family and friends are served refreshments and snacks.
- This gives them time to rest and freshen up before the wedding ceremony.



## જાનના ઉતારા વખતે

૧. રૂકમણી લખી કાગળ મોકલે રે,  
દુવારીકાના નાથ રે જાદવરાય કુંદનપુર મેં પધારજો રે...

1.

**Rukmani lakhi kaagad mokale re,  
Dwarikana naath re Jadavrai Kundanpur mei padhaarjo re...**

Rukhmani writes a letter and sends it (invites),  
Lord of Dwarika(Krishna) and Jadavrai, please come to  
Kundanpur

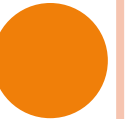


૨. તું તો રામ રટણ કર રંગમાં,  
તારું જાય રે...જુવાનીનું જોર અવસર આવો નહિ મળે...

2.

**Tu tou Ram ratan kar rangama,  
taru jay re Juvaninu jor avsar aavo nahi made...**

Recite Ram's name with joy,  
You are losing your youth and vigor, you will not get  
another moment like this





- **Kapada/lugda and maatli chadhava-nu**

Groom's family brings the bride 5 pairs of clothes with jewelry, and a maatli (clay pot) filled with nuts, gorpapdi, pataasha, copru etc.



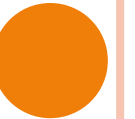
## કપડા ચઢાવવા જાય ત્યારે

૧. હું તો હરજી જોવાને નિસરી,  
મારા ગુરુજીએ રે...(૨)...દીધો ઉપદેશ વહાલાજીને નીરખવા...

1.

**Hu tou Harji jovane nisari,  
mara guruji-e re...(2) didho updesh vahalajine nirakhva....**

I went in search of “Hariji”,  
My Guru advised me to know the “Beloved”  
(Param atma)



૨. જી રે આ રે લીલા રે દીનાનાથની,  
એને મોહ્યાં રે (૨) સર્વે સંસાર ...હરિ રસ મીઠડો..

2.

**Ji re aa re lila re dina-nathni,  
aene mohya re(2) sarve sansar...hari ras mithado..**

Oh this is a divine play of the Lord,  
He captivated the entire life with His sweet nector...



**Var-rajane Ughlave** - Adorning of the groom before the wedding.

Mami gives the groom garland and coconut to prepare him for his next step in life.



वरराजने उघवावे त्तारे

१. तुलसीना क्यारामां कंकुना छांटा,  
त्यां बेसी श्रीकृष्ण नाह्या रे...गोकुलना रहेवासी...

1.

**Tulsina kyarama kankuna chhata,**

**Tya besi ShreeKrishna nahya re...Gokulna rahevaasi.....**

In a tulsi planter there are sprinkles of vermillion

That is where Shree Krishna sat and cleansed...oh residents  
of Gokul...



૨. હાથમાં નાળિયેર રે ભાઈના ડોકે વરમાળા,  
એરે વરમાળા ભાઈની કોણે રે મોકલાવી..  
કારસન ગામમાં ભાઈના મામા દેસાઈ રે,  
ભાઈની મામીએ મોકલાવી.....

2. **Hathma nariyer re bhaina doke varmala,  
Ere varmala bhaini kaune re mokalavi..  
Carson gaam-ma bhaina mama Desai re,  
Bhaini mami-e mokalavi.....**

With coconut in hands and garland around brother's(groom) neck, Who sent that garland ...

From the city of Carson, brother's mama - "Desai"

Brother's mami sent it...



# Varghodo



## ○ Varghodo - baaraat

- Arrival of Groom accompanied by family, friends to brides home/wedding venue on horse buggy/luxury car.
- Procession consists of family and friends, and is welcomed by Brides family.
- Geets and Bhajans are sung.
- The Vadil (elder) carries the Naad Brahma to be placed at the Gaadi.





## વરઘોડો

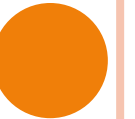
૧. ઘોડી વરઘોડો ગાયે રામચંદ્રનો રે, કિરપા કરો રે સરસ્વતી માતા,  
મુજ રંકની રાખોની લાજ...રઘુનાથજીની ઘોડલી...

1.

**Ghodi varghodo gaaye Ramchandrano re, Kirpa karo re Saraswati mata,  
Muj rankni rakhoni laaj...Raghunathji-ni ghodli....**

Horse praises groom's procession as it was Ramchandra's, Oh Mother Saraswati  
bless us

Protect the honor of my poor soul...Raghunath's horse



# Welcome to Mandap



- **Welcome to Mandap** - Arrival of varghodo (groom).
  - The groom's family and friends are received by the brides family.
  - Brides mother will receive the groom at the venue entrance and lead him to the mandap/altar.



## મંડપમાં જાનનો આવકાર

૧. રાજા જનકને માંડવે...  
ભાવે મળ્યા છે ભૂપ...(૨)...રાજા જનકને માંડવે...  
સીતા બેઠાં છે બારીએ, નિરખ્યાં રામચંદ્ર રૂપ...રાજા જનકને...

**Raja Janakne maandve...**

**Bhave malya chhe bhup...(2)...raja Janakne mandve...**

**Sita bethaa chhe bariye, nirakhyaa Ramchandra roop...**

**raja Janakne...**

At raja Janak's altar...

With love, met king (Dashrath)... At raja Janak's altar...

Sita awaiting in the balcony, saw handsome Ramchandra appear...

At raja Janak's altar



# Kanya-nu aagman



- **Kanya-nu aagman** - Bride's arrival at the Mandap

The presentation of the Bride

The bride is escorted to the mandap by her mama and mami, with the mami carrying the garland and pooja thali.



કન્યાનું આગમન થાય ત્યારે

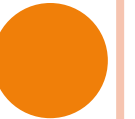
૧. સજની રે સ્વપ્ન્યાંતર મુને લાધ્યું રે મારું મન નંદકુવર શું બાંધ્યું રે...  
જાણે હું તો પાતળિયા વર પરણી રે, એતો મારા કયા જનમની કરણી રે...

**Sajni re swapna-antar moone laadhyu re maru mann nandkuvar  
shu baandhyu re...**

**Jane hu tou paatliya var parani re, etou mara kya janamni karni  
re...**

Oh dear friend, I attained the prince I dreamt of

I am marrying an ideal groom, it's the fruit of my past karma...





Hasta Melap





## ○ **Hasta melap** – Marriage ceremony

- Mama placing hand of bride(niece) in grooms hand and officially giving her away. Covering the holding hands represents the eternal bond of marriage
- Exchange of garlands. Bride places garland on groom first then the groom over the bride.
- Kalvo khavdave – Bride's mother and kakis will offer the new couple patashu, paan, water etc.
- Kanya-daan – the father hands over all his rights and duties towards his daughter to her groom. This way the father gives her daughter as a gift to the groom. As per tradition, the groom is considered a form of Lord Vishnu and the bride is a form of Lakshmi.



## હસ્ત મેળાપ વખતે

૧. આ વર કન્યાનું સુંદર જોડું, અહો પ્રભુજી અમર રહો...  
જ્યારે સીતાજીએ તપ કર્યા, ત્યારે રામજી સરખા સ્વામી મળ્યા..

**Aa var kanya-nu sundar jodu, aho prabhuji amar raho...**

**Jyare Sitaji-e tap karya, tyare Ramji sarkha swami malya...**

Oh Lord please keep this handsome couple together eternally...

Because Sitaji did penance, she attained a husband like Ram..





The Marriage ceremony is completed

Now, as a couple, they will go to the Gaadi and seek Kabirji's blessings.

They get blessings from the Mahant/Bawaji (if in India) and the elders.



## પરણી ને ઉઠે પછી

૧. પરણ્યા પરણ્યા સીતાને શ્રીરામ, જાદવરાય પરણ્યા રૂકમણી..  
ગોમતીજી મેં ગડગડિયાં નિશાન, જાદવરાય પરણ્યા રૂકમણી..  
જનસમાજ મેં હસ્તમેળાપ કરાવ્યો રે..  
હાથી ઘોડાના દે છે કન્યાદાન, જાદવરાય પરણ્યા રૂકમણી..

**Paranya paranya Sitane ShreeRam, Jadavrai paranya Rukmani...**

**Gomtiji mei gadgadiya nishaan, Jadavrai paranya Rukhmani...**

**Janasmaaj mei hastamelap karavyo re...**

**Haathi ghodana de chhe kanyadan, Jadavrai paranya Rukmani...**

Married are Sita and Ram, Jadavrai (Krishna) and Rukmani...

The whole orchestra played at the Gomti river bank, Jadavrai (Krishna) and Rukmani are married...

The union took place in a large gathering...

Elephants and horses are given as gifts, Jadavrai (Krishna) and Rukmani are married...



# Kansar Ceremony



## ○ Kansar – Sweet Cracked Wheat

- Mother of bride offers sweet kansar to the newly wedded couple. This is their first meal as a married couple.
- Kansar is considered “sukan” – auspicious.
- May their lives be filled with sweetness/ happiness
- This is when the bride’s brothers will grab his suit/sherwani and won’t let go until a payment is made. They need a promise from the groom that he will treat their beloved sister like a princess, the way they did so far.



## કંસાર ખવડાવે ત્યારે

૧. વર કન્યા જમે રે કંસાર, કંસાર કેવો ગળ્યો લાગે રે..

**Var kanya jame re kansar, kansar kevo gadiyo laage re..**

Groom and Bride eat kansar, Oh how kansar tastes so sweet

૨. રુષીએ મંગલ વર્તાવયા રે, સાસુ પીરસે કંસાર,  
જનક હરખમાં આવીઆ રે, આપયા ધૃત ભંડાર રે ... રાજા જનકને..

**Rushi-e mangal vartaavya re, sasu pirse kansar,**

**Janak harakh-ma aviyaa re, aapya dhрут bhandaar re...**

**Raja Janakne..**

Rushi blessed the couple, mother-in-law serves kansar,

Janak is overjoyed, so he gifted treasures



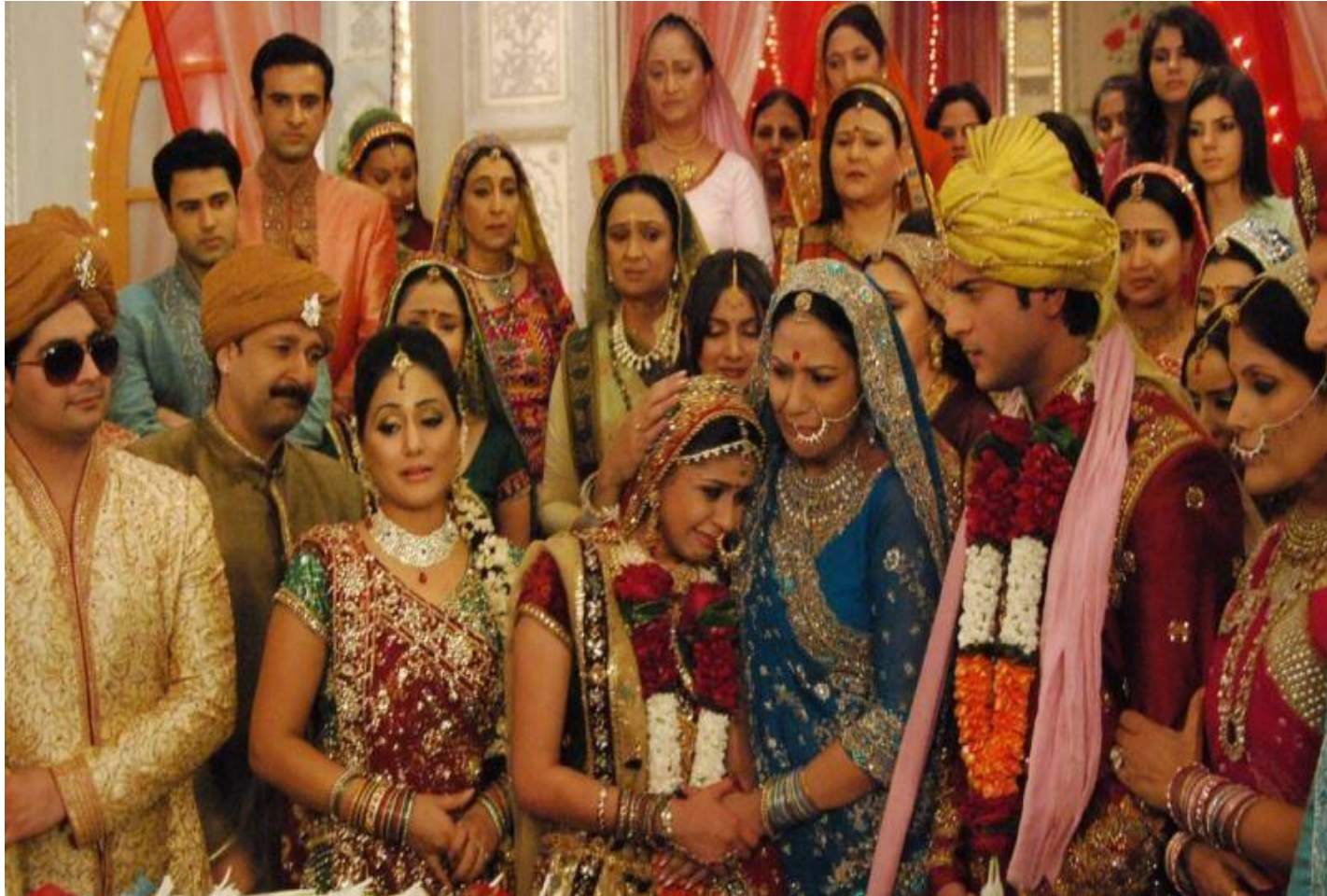
**Kanya Vidai** - Sending off the bride to the groom's home.

- Bride says her final goodbye to her family.
- Her father gives his prized possession to the groom's father.
- The mother advises her to respect her in-laws and accept her new life and new home
- The wedding procession ends joyfully, yet it's bittersweet and highly emotional for those closest to the bride, as she is parting with them.





# Kanya Vidai



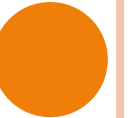
## કન્યા વિદાય વખતે

૧. સમજુ બાળકી જાય સાસરે, વચન માડીના ધ્યાનમાં ધરે,  
સસુર પક્ષમાં લાજથી રહી, કસૂર કામમાં કરશો નહિ...

**Samju baadaki jaay sasre, vachan maadina dhyanma dhare  
Sasur pakshmaa laajthi rahi, kasur kaam-ma karsho nahi...**

Thoughtful/polite bride goes to her in-laws, promises to uphold  
her mother's advice

Live with in-laws with honor, perform your duties without any mistakes



૨. મારી લાડકવાયી જાય છોડી મૈયરીયાની માયા  
બેની લાડે કોડે સાસરીયે સીધાવજે,  
બેની સદ્ગણી થઈ બન્ને કુળ દીપાવજે...

**Maari laadakvayi jaay chhodi maiyaryaani maya  
Beni laade kode sasariye sidhavje,  
Beni sadguni thai bann-ne kul dipaavje...**

My beloved daughter is leaving behind motherly love  
Oh sister stay with your in-laws with love and respect,  
Oh sister be virtuous and make both families proud...



**After Marriage, the couple enters the Grushastha Ashram to uphold their new duties and responsibilities**



## Kabirji's Message:

**Simple Living. High Thinking**

