

## **CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE** *(Hindu – Celtic Wedding)*

### **Before the ceremony:**

10 am—Start Choorā

11 am—Choorā complete, \_\_\_\_\_ gets dressed while others mingle/nibble. Play lovey dovey Indian music.

### **11:20 BHARAT ARRIVES: PIPER WILL PLAY TO INTRODUCE GROOM'S PARTY**

### **11:30 MILNI: CEREMONY BEGINS AT THE LAKE EDGE. LAY CHAPLAIN STARTS HERE BY SAYING:**

*We are gathered today to witness a sacred covenant. We have come to celebrate the love and the trust, which has brought \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_ to marry.*

*I am a Lay Chaplain with the Unitarian Church of Vancouver. It is my privilege to officiate the marriage ceremony between such fine and thoughtful people.*

*Some of you already attended the Choorā ceremony in the morning. Choorā are the red bangles (originally ivory), which are given to the bride by her maternal uncle and aunt. They signify that the girl is ready to be a bride.*

*Now, we are going to start the actual wedding program with a Milni ceremony. Milni is the formal introduction between two families. The bride's family welcomes and greets the groom's family by placing garlands on them. The groom's family reciprocates by doing the same to the bride's family.*

*Firstly, I call on the fathers to welcome one another.*

### **LAY CHAPLAIN WILL CONTINUE TO ANNOUNCE EACH PAIR AS THEY COME FORWARD TO EXCHANGE GARLANDS**

### **JAYA MALA: BRIDE AND GROOM EXCHANGE THEIR GARLANDS. BRIDE.**

*Now we are going to witness the Jaya Mala ceremony. Jaya Mala is the first ceremony when the bride and bridegroom accept each other. This is also done with the exchange of garlands.*

### **BRIDE AND GROOM EXCHANGE GARLANDS WHILE PRAYERS ARE RECITED BY BRIDE'S FAMILY.**

*Om bhoo buha swah.*

*Tat savitur vare niium.*

*Bhargo devasya dhi mahi*

*Deyo yo nah prachodayat*

**(REPEATED 4 TIMES UNTIL BRIDE AND GROOM EXCHANGE GARLANDS AND PEOPLE TAKE PICTURES).**

**THE OFFERING: BRIDE AND GROOM SACRIFICE RINGS FROM THE PAST.**

*From ancient times, Celts have venerated water sources, believing that every lake, well, river and stream had a goddess responsible for it. Known as the Lady of the Lake in Arthurian legend, Celtic myth teaches that the Celts made offerings of silver, gold and other valuables into her waters as they were regarded as special sources of wisdom and renewal. What is interesting is that, even in modern times, water worship continues. People today still make offerings, because every time you see somebody throw a penny into a lake or a fountain, that's what they're doing. They're paying sacrifice to the Lady of the Lake.*

**In Hinduism, water is one of the main elements of life. It is worshipped, and seen as auspicious to take a dip in many rivers.**

*For Bride and Groom, , today is a day for wisdom and renewal; renewal in the form of new lives that begin today, and the wisdom to live them well. Groom and Bride have taken tokens of their past and fastened them to this arrow. As an offering to each other, and as an offering to the Lady of this Lake. Bride and groom will fling their rings into the lake. The past is past!*

**INGATHERING AND SEATING:**

*Thank you . If will please follow our piper into the feasthouse for the remainder of the ceremony. Thank you.*

**EVERYONE IS LED INSIDE BY A PIPER AND TAKES THEIR SEATS. THE FIRST ROW ON EACH SIDE BEING HELD IN RESERVE FOR PARENTS. LAY CHAPLAIN AND WEDDING PARTY WAIT OUTSIDE.**

**12:00 PROCESSION: WHEN ALL ARE SEATED, PIPER CHANGES TUNE AND THE WEDDING PARTY ENTERS IN PROCESSION.**

**OPENING WORDS: RING TIBETAN BELL.**

*In the sacredness of ceremony, I ask you to please check that anything that goes “beep” is turned off. Thank you.*

*When cultures meet in a loving embrace, hearts and minds open into a new richness of spirit. We bring together the metaphorical binding in both cultures—Celtic Handfasting and the Hindu Granti Bhandhan. Clearly this is more than a marriage of two people in love, for the families interconnect and will be blended into a larger whole. Bride and groom have taken great care to create a ceremony that honors both their cultural tradition and their spiritual paths. And so we have created together a marriage that reflected who they really are in their lives today. Both Bride and Groom told me that they want to feel truly married by the end of this ceremony. A rich synthesis of ritual and meaning supports this desire.*

*Symbolism does not end with the actions and people involved in the ceremony. Many of the items themselves also hold special meaning within this ceremony. Bride and Groom have*

*decided to perform whole ceremony in front of the fire. In Hindu mythology 'fire' is the symbol of light, power and energy. It is the great purifier. That is why fire itself acts as the primary witness to the ceremony. In the western European tradition, it also represents the hearth, the physical center of the home and metaphoric center for the family.*

**INVITATIONS:**

*Family is another aspect of great importance to this couple. In honor of the blending of the two families, Groom's parents will welcome Bride into their families by the sharing of the Quiaich; a Scottish ritual of hospitality and kinship.*

**GROOM'S PARENTS SHARE THE QUAICHE WITH BRIDE. THEY HUG AND THEN THEY SIT IN THE FRONT ROW ON GROOM'S RIGHT.**

***NOW BRIDE'S PARENTS WELCOME GROOM INTO THEIR FAMILY BY OFFERING MADHU PURKH, A MIXTURE OF HONEY, GHEE AND YOGOURT, TO HIM.***

**BRIDE'S PARENTS OFFER GROOM A TASTE OF MADHU PURKH. THEY HUG AND THEN THEY SIT IN THE FRONT ROW ON BRIDE'S LEFT.**

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:**

*We are called together today for an occasion of utmost importance in the lives of Groom and Bride. They have invited all of you to share in their joy, to participate in the celebration of their union.*

*For them, marriage means that they are going to count on one another, that they are going to treat one another with care, and that they are going to continue to share their lives with each other as partners, and as friends. They are building their future together. Marriage is an expression of the spiritual bond that they experience together. They see their union not as a time of static contentment with each other and the world around them, but as an ongoing process of exploring the fullness of their individual persons, and sharing their friendship and love with you, their friends and family.*

**THE DECLARATIONS:**

*Do you, Groom arrive here today freely willing to enter into marriage with Bride?*

**Groom's Response:** I do.

*Do you Bride arrive here today freely willing to enter into marriage with Groom?*

**Bride's Response:** I do.

**GRANTHI-BANDHAN AND HANDFASTING:**

*Every culture uses unique symbolism to signify the marital bond and express it to the community. Groom and Bride have chosen different types of bindings from both Hindu and Celtic traditions to publicly signify their commitment to one another.*

**FRIEND WILL LOOSELY TIE BRIDE'S SCARF AND GROOM'S KILT "FLY PLAID" IN GRANTHI BANDHAN. GRANTHI BANDHAN IS THE HINDU TRADITION IN WHICH THE BOND BETWEEN A HUSBAND AND WIFE IS PHYSICALLY REPRESENTED BY A KNOT TIED BETWEEN BRIDE AND BRIDEGROOM'S GARMENTS. BY TYING THIS KNOT TODAY, BRIDE AND GROOM ARE TIED TOGETHER EMOTIONALLY AND SOCIALLY FROM THIS TIME FORWARD.**

**LAY CHAPLAIN:***And now we tie the lovers' knot, to handfast these two lives together.*  
**FRIEND LOOSELY WRAPS THE HANDFASTING BRAID AROUND THEIR ARMS 3 TIMES.**

Handfasting comes from the Celtic tradition and is practiced by peoples ancient and modern. Tying the knot did not start out being an abstract term; the lovers' knot, or handfast, that binds two hands together representing an indissoluble union, and the tying of the knot is still practiced as a symbol of love, affection, faith, friendship, and responsibility.

**PREFACE TO THE VOWS:**

*The garments offered by each of you are extensions of yourselves, just as is your mutual love. Your hands touch each other's skin. Cherish this touch, for you touch not only your own, but another life. Be sensitive to its pulse. Seek always to understand and respect its rhythm.*

**THE COUPLE'S HANDS REMAIN BOUND DURING THE EXCHANGE OF VOWS, AND DURING THE EXCHANGE OF SYMBOLS OF LOVE.**

**EXCHANGE OF VOWS: GROOM AND BRIDE FACE ONE ANOTHER AS THEY EXCHANGE THEIR VOWS.**

**RING EXCHANGE: LAY CHAPLAIN CALLS FOR THE RINGS.**

*The rings are an ancient symbol, blessed and simple. Round they are, like the sun, like the eye, like the arms that embrace. Circles they are, for love that is given comes back round again. May these symbols remind you that your love, like the sun, illuminates; that your love, like the eye, must see clearly; and that your love, like the arms that embrace, is a grace upon this world.*

**RING AND SINDOOR VOWS:**

*Groom, please repeat after me.*

**GROOM, STILL HANDFASTED TO BRIDE, SLIDES RING PARTLY ON.**

Bride, I give you this ring as a lasting symbol of the promises made between us this day.**AND GENTLY TWISTS RING FULLY ON.**

**BRIDE, STILL HANDFASTED TO GROOM, SLIDES RING PARTLY ON.**

*Groom, I give you this ring as a lasting symbol of the promises made between us this day. And gently twists ring fully on.*

*As ring is the symbol of a married woman in Scottish tradition, Sindoor is the symbol in Hindu tradition. Sindoor is red powder, which married woman wear in the parting of their hair. For the first time it is done by the husband at the wedding ceremony. By doing this he accepts her as his wife and welcomes her to his life.*

**GROOM TAKES SINDOOR CONTAINER FROM ERIN PUTS SINDOOR IN BRIDE'S HAIR.**

*In addition to the groom, both mothers, all three aunts, Poonam and Erin will also put sindoor into Bride's hair to symbolize her new married state.*

**LAY CHAPLAIN UNTIES THE COUPLE WITH THESE WORDS.**

*Thank you ladies. As I now release your physical bonds know that your bond yet remains: your wedding bands and the sindoor are a reminder of the internal knot is forever in your hearts. Please join me for signing.*

**SIGNING:**

**COUPLE, WITNESSES AND LAY CHAPLAIN MOVE TO THE SIGNING TABLE. THERE IS A MUSICAL INTERLUDE OF AUTORIKSHA MUSIC FOR THE 4 OR 5 MINUTE PAUSE. THE GROUP RETURNS TO THE FIREPIT WITH LAY CHAPLAIN WALKING WITH THE COUPLE TO THE SIDE THEY WERE STANDING.**

**PRONOUNCEMENT: LAY CHAPLAIN JOINS HANDS WITH COUPLE**

*Bride and Groom, since you have spoken a covenant of love and trust to each other, as you have joined yourselves in marriage, I am delighted to pronounce you legally wed.*

**KISS:***I invite you to seal your marriage with a kiss. (You do)*

**PRESENTATION:***It is my great honour to present to you our newly married couple  
\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_*

**BLESSING:**

**May the blessings of the air be upon you;  
A soft breeze to refresh you,  
A strong wind to lift you up,  
Great golden wings to enfold and heal you.  
May the blessings of fire be upon you,  
A blazing torch to light your path,  
A flaming sword to protect and defend you,  
The glowing sunlight to shine on you and warm your heart.**

**May the blessings of water be upon you,  
 The soft sweet rain to wash you tenderly and nourish you,  
 A rushing river to carry you forward,  
 The vast depths of the sea to bring you wisdom.  
 May the blessings of the earth be upon you,  
 The green grass to lay soft under you.  
 May your journeying be blessed.  
 May all of your endings and beginnings be blessed.**

**LAY CHAPLAIN :***I ask the group to say the Ashirvad Mantra while throwing flowers on the newly married couple. And follow up with the Shanti Path, a Hindu prayer for universal peace.*

#### ASHIRVAD MANTRA HERE

Om dyo shanti antariksha gwam  
 Shanti Prithavi, Shanti Rapa  
 Shanti Roshdyah, Shanti Vanspataya,  
 Shanti vishe deva, Shanti brahma  
 Shanti sarvam shanti shanti Reva  
 Shanti sa ma shanti redhi  
 Om shanti, shanti, shanti, Om.

*This now ends the wedding ceremony. Once the piper has accompanied the wedding party outside, they are available for pictures with whoever so chooses. Snacks will be served shortly.*

**WHEN FINISHED THE PIPER PLAYS A JOYOUS TUNE. BRIDE AND GROOM GO TO BRIDE'S PARENTS AND TOUCH THEIR FEET AND HUG, AND TO GROOM'S PARENTS TO HUG. WHEN THE BRIDE AND GROOM HAVE DONE THIS, THEY EXIT TOGETHER, WHILE STILL ACCOMPANIED BY THE PIPER.**