

A Comprehensive Study of Indian Marriages Through the Works of Devdutt Pattanaik

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Abstract

In Hindu religion, marriage is considered as a lifetime absolute commitment. In Hindu beliefs, the principle ground of marriage is for procreation and is also an approach to follow four goals of existence: dharma, artha, kama, and moksha. In viewpoint of one of India's most significant mythological writer Devdutt Pattanaik, the scheme of marriage has made progress with the passage of time from Vedic mantras to religious, social and cultural obligations. Marriage often marks a significant life transition from bramcharya to grihastha ashrama, introducing new roles and responsibilities. In Indian customs, ghrishta stage of life is a recommendation and not a requirement. Devdutt Pattanaik, in his works has elucidated about eight types of marriages according to ancient Indian texts. Marriage signifies a social pledge to a long-term relationship. Marriage is a part of God's customary grace. Marriage serves three basic motives- companionship, procreation and redemption. The custom of marriage also works as a vigorous tool to set gender roles. Ceremonial observance in marriage marks a major life stone in an individual's life that purifies the consciousness. Marriage is a divine ritual that marks the unification of soul and body. Marriage develops cognizance from thinking about oneself to thinking about family and others. Marriage is a spiritual voyage of one essence in two frames. It comes up with a powerful support structure as it grants individual to approach more resources. Marriage upholds important ideas such as trust, loyalty, sacrifice, and collaboration. In this way marriage elevates the human mind and soul as it is an association of tolerance and sacrifice and care for each other.

Keywords: Religion, Marriage, Procreation, Redemption, Association, Cognizance, Essence, Pledge, Commitment, Existence.

In Hinduism, Marriage is regarded as a lifetime absolute commitment between a husband and a wife, it is perceived as a sacred association that unifies souls, minds and bodies of two individuals in this life and in future lives. In Hindu faith, the principal grounds of marriage are for procreation and it is also an approach to follow the four goals of existence: dharma, artha, kama and Moksha. In Viewpoint of one of India's most significant mythological writer Devdutt Pattanaik, the scheme of marriage has made progress with the passage of time, from Vedic mantras to religious obligations and ultimately to a cultural norm and a social commitment. In Hindu marriage, the key witness and bystander is the fire deity or agni, in the togetherness of

family and friends. Hindu marriage is contemplated as a Vedic as it adheres to certain customs and practices. Most significantly, Vedic rituals acknowledge the marriage of equals and does not put the bride in inferior place. In Indian principles, marriage ceremony is a dignified pledge, accomplished in the name of God which is not detachable under any situation and circumstances. Marriage is observed as a Sacred and non-secular stage of life as a Hindu moves through the ashrams. Thus, in Hinduism, marriage is an institution in itself, a unification of body, mind and soul of two individuals to bring into existence and nourish the progeny of life and recompense the indebtedness of the forefathers. In Hindu epic. Mahabhartha, the committed allegiance in marriage is given utmost prominence out of so

many questions asked by the Yaksha. From Yudhishtira, one such question is, “Kinsvin mitram grihesatah?” “which means who is the friend of a householder?” To which he answered, “ bharyaamitram grihesatah, “which suggests that the friend of a householder is his better half.

The main objective of this chapter is to explore the relevance of the institution of marriage in giving shape to an individual's life at social, individual, psychological and spiritual levels by interpreting the mythical writings of Devdutt Pattanaik. Secondly, the present study also traces the origin of the marriage tradition in Hindu culture. Through the mythological writings of Pattanaik. The chapter also highlights marriage as a transformative experience through which an individual enters the grihasth ashram i.e. the most important phase of life which sustains the other three phases of life. All the more, the present study analyses the contribution of marriage in spiritual growth and completing the cycle of life while living in a household materialistic life. The study emphasizes the mythical viewpoint which reveals marriage as a spiritual connection of two souls rather than merely a social contract.

In Hindu spiritual beliefs, marriage is viewed as profoundly interdependent relationship where husband and wife are watched as two bisection of a whole, place reliance on each other for managing their duties, attaining growth and a melodious life together. In 1959, the most renowned American Social-Psychologist and Professor Harold Kelley and John Thibaut in their book. The Social Psychology of Groups puts forward

that the interdependence on each other is specified by an equilibrium of self and others where both the companions make efforts to meet each other's demands and needs. Devdutt pattanaik in his book Marriage informs about the deity Ardhanarishvara, an integrated configuration of Shiva (male) and Parvati (female), visibly consolidated the masculine energy and the other feminine energy, signifying the unification of two Hindu sacred texts like the Satpatha Brahmana have clearly stated that the wife is the half of husband, affirming that a man is not complete without his wife. Also, the wife is thought to be the Sahakarmini. which indicates that she has an equal role in all of her husband's deeds. In Hindu beliefs, both the halves are considered one and the same and the one half is incomplete without the other. The prehistoric Hindu traditions presume that an individual's life can never be accomplished in the absence of a wife. i.e. his ardhgini and is assumed the other half of the husband making him an absolute individual. In this way, in earliest Hindu ethics, the husband and wife are thought to be equivalent companions in life i.e. two halves of the single entity with neither being at higher level to the other, signifying the relevance of a stabilized association in marriage.

Marriage is a ubiquitous social establishment which lays out the structure within which an individual's all kinds of exigencies, basic needs, social, emotional, biological, psychological and even spiritual needs are fulfilled, Within the parasol of marriage, Humans begin to acquire the

Knowledge of their social and ethnic standards. The well Known German Sociologist George Simmel in his work Fragments of love, focus, attention on marriage as the societal and cultural construction of love as a requisite constituent of a satisfying living. Devdutt Pattanaik in Devlok elucidated marriage as a conceptualization of culture. It is a socially acknowledged union of two individuals, with norms, traditions and expectations. Pattanaik informs about the ancient tale of a little fellow Shwetaketu who once spotted her mother with other man. He deeply hated this and informed his father Uddalaka. But his father told him that their culture is like that way. And his mother has freedom to do what she wants. On this Shewataketu enacted a rule that a wife would have to be loyal to her husband, and she would not have the freedom to make relations with other man. Thus, marriage has cultural rules that establish boundaries around the relationship. Marriage is the base of household and parentage that admits individuals into family life.

In Hinduism, Marriage is of utmost importance amongst all the samskaras, the rites of passage. In accordance with Hindu Dharamshastras, an individual set foot in the Grihasth (householder) stage through the process of marriage. In Hindu narratives, Grihastha specifies the second phase of an individual's life and is recognized as the most dominant of all four stages in life. In Indian Customs, Grihastha stage of life is a recommendation and not a requirement. Devdutt Pattnaik in Devlok has elucidated about eight types of marriages according to

ancient Indian texts. The Primary set of four marriage forms were categorized as prashasta forms, and they were regarded admissible forms of marriage. Nevertheless, the level of validation varied among them. On the other hand, the remaining four forms of marriage were classified as aprashasta forms, and all of them were looked on as unacceptable for varied reasons. Prashasta vivah in Hinduism is regarded as virtuous form of marriage. The Prashasta forms of marriage comprises the Brahma Vivah, the Daiva Vivah, the Arsha Vivah and the Prajapatya Vivah. The Brahma form of marriage is contemplated as the most esteemed in Hindu Sacred texts. And it does not necessitate any dowry or marriage settlement. In this type of marriage, the bride's father scrutinizes the groom's familial background, character, skills, education and achievements before giving his girl in marriage. The Daiva form of marriage in Hinduism is thought about as lower in status to Brahma Vivah. In this sort of marriage, the girl's family searches for a worthy match. If the girl does not find out a worthy groom within a stipulated time, then her family makes preparation for her marriage to a priest who presides over offerings. This marriage is viewed as dishonoring the bride. The next manifestation of marriage is the Ansha marriage. The phase "Ansha" alludes to a Rishi or a sage in exchange for two cows. This contributes to suggest that a sage does not own huge assets, Arsha form of marriage normally takes place when the bride's family is not able to bear the cost of girl's marriage. This type of marriage is also thought to be lower in status due to its exchangeable nature. In Prajapatya

kind of marriage, a competent groom is allured with money and gifts by the bride's father to marry his girls. As stated by manusmriti, this term Prajapatya is used when the girl's father gives away his daughter with due ethics along with a verbal consensus to sustain dharma together. In prehistoric Indian narratives, there are four Aprashasta Kinds of marriage i.e. the Asura Vivah, the Gandharva Vivah, the Rakshasa Vivah and the Pishacha Vivah. The Asura form of marriage is thought to be immensely inferior. This form of marriage is associated with the groom conferring gifts upon the girl and her family to win her in marriage. So, it is broadly viewed as the business of putting up for sale of bride. The Gandharva marriage is related with the discretionary union of girl and her lover inspired by physical desire. This form of marriage is identical to the love marriage of the modern time. The Rakshasa kind of marriage is an immoral form of marriage, and it has been declared unlawful by Manusmriti. It is also recognized as marriage by hijacking. In this marriage, the groom engages in combat with the bride's family, conquer them and the girl is forcefully seized. The groom afterwards marries her. In Pishacha form of marriage, a man in a stealthily manner takes the opportunity of a woman who has fallen asleep, drunken or mentally disabled. It is depised in Hindu tradition and is considered the most inferior kind of marriage. The Vedic marriage notion is one that is absolutely sanctified and intended for a monogamous inter relationship between the bride and the groom who are quite grown up and inclined towards each-other.

Most often, the stage of celibacy or "Brahamacharya" is often viewed as an important stage for spiritual expertise as it has scope for considerable attention and less closeness to materialistic pleasures. But Hindu Spiritual conventions point up that a married person with a powerful sense of Dharma (righteous Living) can also lead to Moksha. Devdutt Pattanaik in Devlok converses about two Hindu school of thoughts. The classical Hindu Viewpoint affirms celibacy as a vigorous tool that supports to decontaminate body and soul in the process of spiritual development, which is a forceful pathway to Moksha. On the other hand, most Hindus accept that marriage is intended to synchronize the human consciousness so that it can be more tranquil for inner evolution. The spiritual head and the chairperson of divine Life society, Swami Chidananda Saraswati in his work The Role of Celibacy considers holding great respect for marital vows is learning discipline and sacrifice. In this way, a married person acquires the supreme love in the form of spiritual oblatory love and perceive oneself as mother or father of all life. and finally achieves moksha. Marriage is the set up of the expedition of three ultimate ashrams of life- Grihastha, Vanprastha and Sanyasa. This incorporates into marriage a discipline by its very nature. The Principles of Yoga- Knowing, controlling, implementing and mastering (Gyan, Aayam, Abhyas and Siddhi) are applicable to marriage as well. In marriage, the two individuals after understanding each other have to regulate their emotions, desires, demands etc. rather than forcing them on to the other person. They have to keep practicing this

for decades in order to achieve siddhi in their marriage is a spiritual tribute. If followed with right mindset and when lived with following values and Dharma within the conjugal relationships. If marriage is embodied into Sadhana, then it can become instrumental in attaining Moksha. In marriage, one must give assistance to the divine in one's companion. By putting up with one's partner's differences, one becomes disengaged from one's own personal desires and emerges to grow from selfishness to selflessness.

Marriage survives as the substructure which allows man and woman to unite and take on a joint responsibility to look for the pleasure of the God. Through His joint efforts, the two individuals work together to materialize their respective commitments to the creator and his creations. Marriage signifies a social pledge to a long-term relationship. Marriage is a part of God's customary grace. Marriage serves three basic motives- companionship, procreation and redemption. Marriage brings forth certain sacredness to the simple elementary needs that every human being has. The pledge of marriage gives individuals the support to defeat worldly desires. By indulging in deep, fulfilling love. Marriage is sworn to care for each other, and is not an obstacle to spiritual growth. The custom of marriage also works as a vigorous tool to set gender roles, as here, both the partners i.e. the husband-and-wife work to collaborate for each other's well-being and spiritual betterment. Ceremonial observance in marriage marks a major life stone in an individual's life that purifies the consciousness In Pattanaik's view, Marriage is

a divine ritual that marks the unification of soul and body, Marriage develops cognizance from thinking about oneself to thinking about family and others. In this way, marriage elevates the human mind and soul as it is an association of tolerance, sacrifice, and care for each other. Marriage is a spiritual voyage of one essence in two frames. It comes up with a powerful support structure as it grants individuals to approach more resources. Through their companions, and eventually it leads to a more stabilized, secure and satisfying life, sailing across the struggles, challenges and compromises in marriage leads to personal as well as spiritual growth.

In a nutshell, Indian marriage carries profound meaning both culturally and spiritually, reaching far beyond its role as a legal or social agreement. Marriage stands as a vital pillar of cultural identity, uniting individuals, families and entire communities. Culturally, marriage often marks a significant life transition from brahamacharya to grihasth aasharam, introducing new roles and responsibilities. Wedding ceremonies are typically rich in tradition and symbolic practices, reflecting the values, beliefs and history of a community. These cultural customs help preserve heritage and strengthen the social fabric by reinforcing commonly held norms and expectations. On a spiritual level, marriage is regarded as a sacred bond in numerous religious traditions. It is more than a union of two individuals- it is often viewed as a divine commitment, blessed by a higher power. It is believed to foster personal growth, spiritual awareness and a deeper connection to divine teachings. Through marriage, people

fulfill spiritual obligations and experience a sense of unity and sacred purpose. Additionally, marriage plays a key role in maintaining societal structure and continuity. It offers a supportive environment for passing on cultural and spiritual values to future generations. Marriage upholds important ideas such as trust, loyalty, sacrifice and collaboration- qualities essential to build strong families and harmonious communities. Ultimately, marriage is more than a personal commitment, it is a powerful institution that reflects a society's cultural foundations and spiritual beliefs, help in shaping both personal identity and collective life.

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