

Ethnic Traditions

African – Page 1

Chinese – Page 2

Hindu – Page 3

Irish – Page 7

Jewish – Page 9

Mexican – Page 14

Polish – Page 19

African Jumping the Broom

Jumping the Broom

The Broom is laid down before the Bride and Groom as they turn around after the Introduction.

An older relative reads:

Jumping the broom is an African tradition dating back to before the first Europeans visited West Africa. It should be practiced by all in honor and respect to our African and African American ancestors and heritage. This "leap" into new life as husband and wife symbolizes the coming together of both families, and commitment to each other as husband and wife. It represents strength, love, togetherness, loyalty, and respect, which is essential for a successful marriage.

The broom handle represents God or the creator. The straws represent the countless numbers of ancestors. The binding represents the newlyweds ties to family, church and community.

The concept behind the broom is also to build an heirloom that can be passed down from one generation to another.

The Bride and Groom jump the Broom.

Chinese Tea Ceremony

1.

Chinese Tea Ceremony

Grm and Bde will take a tray holding a teapot and four teacups from a stand next to their parents, and pour tea, and then offer it to the parents. First Bde will hold the tray while Grm pours tea into two tea cups and offers it to Bde's parents. Bde's parents will take a sip of tea from their cups and replace the cups on the tray, along with a red envelope. Then Grm will hold the tray and Bde will repeat the process, offering tea to Grm's parents. After Grm's parents take a sip of the tea, Grm will replace the tray on the stand.

2.

Tea Ceremony

The Tea Ceremony is an official ritual to introduce the newlyweds to each other's family, and it is a way for newlyweds to show respect and appreciation to their parents. The newlyweds stand in front of their parents, serving tea to both sets of parents. Parents give their words of blessing, and gifts, usually Li Shi, (*Red Envelope with money*) to the newlyweds.

Bde will serve Grm's side of family first, followed by Grm. Then, Grm will serve Bde's side of the family starting with her Father while Bde starts with her Mother.

Hindu Wedding Ceremony

Grm and Bde have put together a unique ceremony; a fusion of cultures and traditions. (Name of the Hindu Priest), will officiate the ceremony and, at each step, I will read an explanation.

Hindu Ceremony

Before Grm and Bde exchange their vows, they will move under the mandap and participate in the Hindu portion of the ceremony.

The Bride hands her flowers to the Maid of Honor.

1. Potho Bhostro

Grm will be offered new clothes by Bde's Father as a sign of accepting Grm into his family. A prayer will also be offered to the gods and ancestors before the ceremony starts.

2. Shaaat Paak (Completion of seven circles)

The Bride will complete seven circles around the Groom escorted by (name), a brother figure. The belief is that seven circular orbits symbolize the eternal universe, and the completion of seven circles signifies that the attraction between the Bride and Groom will be eternal.

3. Maala Bodol (Exchange of garlands)

The Bridesmaids will hand garlands of fragrant flowers to Bde and Grm. They will place the garlands on each other and then exchange the garlands three times. This symbolizes the first step in which they accept each other for life.

4. Shubho Drishti (First Look)

Now that they have placed garlands on one another, Bde and Grm will look at each other in front of all of you. This exchange of a loving glance is to initiate them to be together officially in the eyes of society.

5. Shampradhan (Giving Away the Daughter)

Bde and Grm will take their places under the mandap where Bde's Father will hand her to Grm. The couple's hands will be bound by a sacred thread amidst a recital of Vedic chants and placed on a manghal ghot.

6. Yaagna (Prayer in Front of Fire)

Now Bde and Grm will sit in front of the sacred fire and chant mantras after the (Hindu Priest's name). Agni, the fire god will be made the divine witness to the marriage.

7. Shaaat Paaak (Completion of Seven Circles)

This time the seven circular rounds will be taken together by the couple around the fire thereby solemnizing this occasion. Bde's sari will be tied to Grm to symbolize their commitment and connection to one another.

8. Anjali (Offering to the Fire)

An offering to the fire will be made. Puffed rice will be placed in Bde's hands and Grm, standing close to her, will hold her hands from the back and extend their arms forward. They then will pour the offering into the fire together.

9. Shap-ta padhi gha-man (Seven Steps)

Bde will now complete seven steps with Grm's help. This ritual symbolizes the journey of life, which they both should travel together hand in hand. They should be with each other through thick and thin. According to Hindu belief if two people walk seven steps together then they will remain together for life. Each of the seven steps translate into the following blessings:

First - May this couple be blessed with an abundance of resources and comforts, and be helpful to one another in all ways.

Second - May this couple be strong and complement one another.

Third - May this couple be blessed with prosperity and riches on all levels.

Fourth - May this couple be eternally happy.

Fifth - May this couple be blessed with a happy family life.

Sixth - May this couple live in perfect harmony... true to their personal values and their joint promises.

Seventh - May this couple always be the best of friends.

10. Shidoor Dhaan (Giving Shidoor)

Grm will apply shidoor (vermillion, a red powder) in Bde's hair parting. This symbolizes the married status of women in West Bengal.

11. Ashirbhaad (Blessing by Parents)

Now the parents of the Bride and Groom will come to the front and bless the couple to have a long, happy, and prosperous marriage. Grm's Mother will now place a bangle on Bde, a sign of welcoming Bde and accepting the marriage of the couple.

Seven Steps from the Hindu tradition.

Shap-ta padhi gha-man (Seven Steps)

Bde and Grm will now take seven steps together.

Grm and Bde get ready.

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This ritual symbolizes the journey of life, which they both should travel together hand in hand. They should be with each other through thick and thin. According to Hindu belief if two people walk seven steps together then they will remain together for life. Each of the seven steps translate into the following blessings:

First - May this couple be blessed with an abundance of resources and comforts, and be helpful to one another in all ways.

Grm and Bde take the First Step.

Second - May this couple be strong and complement one another.

Grm and Bde take the Second Step.

Third - May this couple be blessed with prosperity and riches on all levels.

Grm and Bde take the Third Step.

Fourth - May this couple be eternally happy.

Grm and Bde take the Fourth Step.

Fifth - May this couple be blessed with a happy family life.

Grm and Bde take the Fifth Step.

Sixth - May this couple live in perfect harmony... true to their personal values and their joint promises.

Grm and Bde take the Sixth Step.

Seventh - May this couple always be the best of friends.

Grm and Bde take the Seventh Step.

Grm and Bde return in front of Judge Armstrong.

Irish Traditions

See Benedictions for Irish Blessings.

Irish - 1.

Irish Exchange of Rings

Grm and Bde have chosen Celtic wedding rings. A Celtic motif wedding ring has universal, symbolic meaning. In the most general sense, the knots express two different paths woven together. Life itself can be viewed as a great web of interconnectedness which is expressed in the knot work. Even our own spiritual path, metaphorically, can be viewed as a tapestry of interconnected experiences. The Celtic wedding ring is a talisman which reminds us, in physical form, of our mystic connection with another person and the great web of life.

Consider the circle. We speak of a circle of friends and live in circular cycles, such as the day and the season. Native cultures throughout the world hold ceremonies in protective circles. A knot work pattern with circles or variations of circles certainly has some important keys to relationships and community. In the broadest sense, the ring itself is a circle, and putting it on has also always been symbolic of sealing a commitment.

Irish - 2.

Irish Exchange of Rings

Grm and Bde have chosen Cladaugh wedding rings.

By tradition, the Cladaugh ring is taken to signify the wish that love and friendship should reign supreme. The hands signify friendship, the crown loyalty, and the heart love. The ring's popularity has become popular since the middle of the last century. The way the ring is worn is of great importance as this is what gives it significance. Worn on the right hand with the heart facing outward it means that your heart has not been given. Worn on the same hand with the crown facing out it means that love is being considered. But the pride of place is on the left hand, with

the heart turned in, indicating that the wearer is happily married and the love and friendship will last forever, the two never separated and that the ring bearer's love has finally found a home in marriage.

The Best Man hands the Bride's ring to the Groom.

To Groom: Grm, as you place this ring on Bde's finger, please repeat after me.

With this ring, / I thee wed.

The Maid of Honor hands the Groom's ring to the Bride.

To Bride: Bde, as you place this ring on Grm's finger, please repeat after me.

With this ring, / I thee wed.

Irish - 3.

Ribbon Ceremony/Handfasting

The ancient Celts tied the hands of the Bride and Groom.

Judge Armstrong loosely binds the hands together.

Here before witnesses, Grm and Bde have sworn vows to each other. With this cord, I bind them to the vows that they each have made.

Judge Armstrong wraps the ribbon loosely around both arms.

However this binding is not tied, so that neither is restricted by the other, and the binding is only enforced by both their wills.

Jewish Traditions

Breaking of the Glass

The breaking of the glass at the end of a wedding ceremony is a Jewish tradition. It is a beautiful ending for any wedding.

Breaking the glass serves to remind us of two very important aspects of a marriage. The Bride and Groom - and everyone - should consider these marriage vows as an irrevocable act - just as permanent and final as the breaking of this glass is unchangeable. But the breaking of the glass also is a warning of the frailty of a marriage. That sometimes a single thoughtless act, breach of trust, or infidelity can damage a marriage in ways that are very difficult to undo - just as it would be so difficult to undo the breaking of this glass. Knowing that this marriage is permanent, the Bride and Groom should strive to show each other the love and respect befitting their spouse and love of their life.

NOTES:

Chuppah - *Huppāh* – Canopy over the Bride and Groom.

Mazel Tov - 'mäzel ,tôv, ,tôfl Literally in Hebrew - Good Star - Congratulations or Good Luck

A glass or a light bulb can be used. A glass may be difficult to break, but a light bulb breaks easy and makes a noise. It should be hidden inside a white towel – so no one can see it's a light bulb and the glass doesn't get all over the floor.

Breaking Glass – 1

Breaking of the Glass Under Foot

The tradition of the breaking of a glass serves to remind us of two very important aspects of a marriage. Gm and Bde - and everyone - should consider marriage vows as an irrevocable act - just as permanent and final as the breaking of this glass is unchangeable. But the breaking of the glass also is a warning of the frailty of a marriage. A single thoughtless act, breach of trust, or infidelity can damage a marriage in ways that are very difficult to undo - just as it would be so difficult to

undo the breaking of this glass. Knowing that this marriage is permanent, Bde and Grm should strive to show each other the love and respect befitting their spouse and the love of their life.

The Best Man places the glass, wrapped in a white towel, on the floor in front of the Groom.

As the glass is broken, please respond with “Mazel Tov,” which means “Good Fortune” in Hebrew.

The Groom then smashes the glass with his foot and kisses the Bride.

Guests: Mazel Tov!

Breaking Glass - 2

Breaking of the Glass Under Foot

A glass wrapped in a cloth is placed at the Groom’s feet.

And now, Grm, you will break this glass underfoot as an expression of your sharing with family and friends in times of joy and in times of need. Please respond with “Mazel Tov,” which means “Good Fortune” in Hebrew.

*The Groom smashes glass with his foot.
The Bride and Groom kiss.*

Guests: Mazel Tov!

Breaking Glass - 3

Breaking of the Glass Under Foot

The breaking of the glass at a wedding is a symbolic prayer and hope that you will spend as many years together in happiness as it would

take to collect all the pieces of the glass and reassemble it. After Grm breaks the glass we will shout, “Mazel Tov” which means congratulations!

*The Groom smashes glass with his foot.
The Bride and Groom kiss.*

Guests: Mazel Tov!

Breaking Glass - 4

Breaking of the Glass

No ceremony is complete without some sort of unity symbol! Grm was raised Jewish. It is custom in Jewish tradition to have a breaking of the glass.

There are several different meanings for the breaking of the glass. One is that the shattered glass reminds us of the fragility of relationships and that we must treat our relationships with special care. It also represents that in times of extreme joy we must also remember how quickly it can end and that life can bring us sadness and sorrow.

Some even believe that it signifies the last time the Groom can put his foot down.

Pause for Laughter

Following the breaking of the glass it is tradition for the guests to yell “Mazel Tov” meaning congratulations or good luck.

****BREAK GLASS****

Guests: “Mazel Tov”

Breaking Glass - 5

And now, Grm will break this glass underfoot with the implied prayer that as this glass shatters so may your marriage never break. The promises made by the Bride and Groom like the breaking of the glass, are irrevocable.

Please respond with “Mazel Tov,” which means “Good Fortune” in Hebrew.

*The Groom smashes glass with his foot.
The Bride and Groom kiss.*

Guests: “Mazel Tov”

Chuppa

Grm and Bde are standing under a chuppa, a marriage canopy which symbolizes shelter, protection, and a shared home. The open sides indicate a willingness to offer hospitality to family and friends. The open roof serves as a sign that this marriage will be blessed with as many children and grandchildren as stars in the heavens.

The Kiddush Cup

Two thoughts are suggested by this cup of wine. The first is that wine is a symbol of the sweetness we wish for your life. There will be times when you drink from other cups, from bitter ones; but life offers opportunity to savor the sweetness. The awareness of the possibility of a life filled with true meaning is what we toast: the good that is life. The second is that wine is a symbol of sharing. You have shared many years together, and out of this time has grown the love which brought you to this day. As you continue to share in each other's life, you will, as a symbol of this enduring cooperation, share this cup of wine.

The Bride and Groom drink from the wine cup.

Wine is associated with celebration and joy (simchal). Kiddush is a prayer of sanctification. The cup of wine is a cup of joy (simchal). It is to thank God for making us holy through the sanctification of marriage.

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Blessing over the Wine

This cup of wine is symbolic of the cup of life. Wine is a symbol of joy, of the richness of life and the sweetness of love. It is appropriate therefore, that on this happy occasion you toast life with this ancient symbol. Blessed be life, health, and the love that enables you to celebrate the happiness of this most important day.

Groom: “Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu melech haolom, borei p’ri hagafen”

Bride: "Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine."

Circling the Groom

The Bride will observe the Biblical custom of “Circling the Groom” seven times. This practice is seen as a powerful act of definition, where the Bride will symbolically create the space that they will share as husband and wife. In Judaism, the number seven is mystical and represents completion and fulfillment. Just as the creation of the world was finished in seven days, the seven circles complete the couple’s search for each other.

The Bride circles the Groom Seven Times.

Mexican Traditions

Lariat

The Lariat Ceremony is performed right after the Vows and before the Exchange of Rings. A double Rosary was used in one ceremony and a soft decorative rope in others.

The Lariat Ceremony

Grm and Bde would like to honor their Padrinos of the Lasso, (*name*) and (*name*), who will now place the two loops of the lasso around the Bride and Groom. This symbolizes that they have chosen as separate individuals to be bonded in marriage, representing a greater union of their souls as well as the union of their families.

*(*name* and *name*) will step up while this is being said
and place the Lasso
around the Bride and Groom and then step down again.*

Exchange of Rings

Like the circles of the lasso, a wedding ring has no definable beginning or end. A wedding ring, by its circle, celebrates the continuity of life. By this exchange of rings between you, we wish that at the end of your lives you will look at the two rings and be able to say these two things to each other: "Because you have loved me, you have given me faith in myself and, because I have seen the good in you, I have received from you a faith in humanity."

The rings that you have are a symbol of the shared and continually growing love and respect that you have for each other today and in the future as you enter that future as husband and wife.

Another version

The Lasso - El lazo

As part of the ceremony to symbolize unity, a large loop of rosary beads or a lasso (cord) is placed in a figure eight shape around the necks of the couple after they have exchanged their vows. It also is beautiful when made of entwined orange blossoms (which symbolize fertility and happiness). A double rosary lasso may also be used.

A special person/couple places the lasso around the shoulders of the bride and groom, groom's shoulder's first. The lasso may also be tied around their wrists. The couple wears the lasso throughout the remainder of the service. The loop is symbolic of their love that should bind the couple together everyday as they equally share the responsibility of marriage for the rest of their lives.

At the end of the ceremony, the lasso is removed by either the couple that placed the lasso on the couple, or by Judge Armstrong. The lasso is given to the Bride as a momento of her becoming the mistress of the groom's heart and home.

The 13 coins - Arrhea

The Arrhea, derived from the Spanish term “earnest money,” symbolizes a pledge to care for one another. The Groom gives 13 coins to the Bride, symbolizing his ability to support and care for her. It is a complete and unrestricted offering of his dedication for her welfare and their welfare as husband and wife. In return, the Bride gives the coins back to the Groom, symbolizing her partnership in supporting and caring for him, as well.

As reader is reading, coin bearer stands up and walks to the center aisle with coins. Groom walks over to meet him/her and takes the coins. Groom then walks and gives coins to Bride, dropping them slowly in her hands

To Groom: Grm, please repeat after me.

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Bde, I offer these coins / as a pledge of my dedication to you, / the care of our home / and the welfare of our family.

Bride pauses momentarily, and then places her hands on Groom's, letting the coins fall into his hands.

To Bride: Bde, please repeat after me.

Grm, I offer these coins / as a pledge of my dedication to you, / the care of our home / and the welfare of our family.

Groom then returns them to the Bride, who hands them to the Maid of Honor. Then Bride and Groom face the Judge Armstrong.

May you use your gifts wisely for your family's welfare in your married life.

By this act of joining hands, and the exchange of vows, rings and arrhea, you do now solemnly declare, in the presence of God and of these witnesses, that you take each other as husband and wife, and engage to love, and to honor, and to comfort, and to cherish each other, so long as you both shall live.

Another version

The Thirteen Gold Coins - Trece monedas de oro

The madrina de arras holds the 13 coins the Groom presents to the Bride. The coins, or arrhea, was a Roman custom of breaking gold or silver, one half to be kept by the woman and the other half by the man, as a pledge of marriage.

The Groom gives the Bride thirteen gold coins as a symbol of his unquestionable trust and confidence. He pledges that he places all of his goods into her care and safekeeping. Acceptance by the Bride means

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taking that trust and confidence unconditionally with total dedication and prudence.

The custom of the coins originated in Spain. Thirteen gold coins (arras) are given to the Bride by the Bridegroom, signifying he will support her. Often presented in ornate boxes or gift trays, this represents the Brides dowry and holds good wishes for prosperity. These coins become a part of their family heirloom.

The number 12 represents Christ and his 12 apostles. The coins are presented by a friend or relative (usually the purchaser). Judge Armstrong then hands them to the Bride who places them in the Groom's cupped hands at the beginning of the ceremony. The coins are then placed on a tray and handed to an assistant to be held until later in the ceremony. Near the end of the ceremony the box and coins are given to Judge Armstrong who places the coins in the box and hands them to the Groom.

The Groom will then pour the coins into the Bride's cupped hands and places the box on top. This represents his giving her control as his mistress of all his worldly goods. Sometimes their hands are tied with a ribbon for this portion of the ceremony.

Other Participants

The madrina de copas carries the wine glasses for the toast. Madrinas or padrinos carry a prayer book, a rosary, a guest book for signatures and an embroidered pillow to commemorate the day. There also is a madrina de velacion, who the Bride has chosen to turn to for guidance throughout her married life. Godparents of the Bride and Groom give the couple a prayer book, rosary, and kneeling pillow for the ceremony.

The last persons in the procession carry the recuerdos, which are remembrances given to the guests. In addition there can be several sets of wedding sponsors, similar to Godparents, who look after the couple promising them financial and spiritual aid.

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Another version

The Thirteen Coins

The custom of presenting thirteen coins originated in Spain. The number Thirteen represents Christ and his twelve apostles. Thirteen coins are given to the Bride by the Groom, signifying he will support her. This represents the Bride's dowry and holds good wishes for prosperity. These coins shall become a part of their family heirloom.

The Groom gives the Bride thirteen coins as a symbol of his unquestionable trust and confidence. He pledges that he places all of his goods into her care and safekeeping. Acceptance by the Bride means taking that trust and confidence unconditionally with total dedication and prudence.

The Groom pours the coins into the Bride's cupped hands. This represents his giving her control as the mistress of all his worldly goods.

The Bride hands her flowers to the Maid of Honor.

Judge Armstrong assists to pour the coins from the box into the Groom's hands.

The Groom pours the coins into the Bride's hands.

The Bride then places the coins back into the box.

A Polish Tradition

Polish Ceremony

Bde and Grm have chosen to honor their heritage with a Polish tradition, which has been passed down through the centuries. It involves the symbolic sharing of bread, salt, wine, and a silver coin.

Bread

As you eat this piece of bread,

The Bride and Groom each take a piece of bread.

may you never go hungry or be in need.

Wine

As I give you this sip of wine,

The Bride and Groom each drink a sip from the same glass.

enjoy the sweetness of life with good health, good cheer, and the company of good friends.

Salt

As you place a speck of salt on each other's tongue,

The Bride and Groom place salt on each other's tongues.

may you overcome the bitterness of life.

Silver Coin

As I give you this silver coin to hold between your right hands together,

Judge Armstrong gives the Bride and Groom a silver coin.

may you be wealthy and abundant.