

Major Aims of Hindu Marriage:

The purpose of Hindu marriage, according to the sastras, is to enable a man to become a householder, to procreate sons necessary for salvation and for performance of sacrifices to the gods. Vatsayana, although mainly concerned with the physical side of marriage, also considered dharma and artha, i.e. spiritual as well as social and economic welfare along with progeny. K.M. Kapadia viewed three basic aims of Hindu marriage:

(1) Dharma,

(2) Praja and

(3) Rati.

(1) Dharma:

‘Dharma’ plays a great role in Hindu marriage. The Hindu way of life and culture has always been influenced and guided by ‘dharma’. As such the Hindu marriage is concerned with the fulfillment of ‘dharma’ or religious duties. In this regard, says K.M. Kapadia. “Marriage was desired not so much for sex or for progeny as for obtaining a partner for the fulfillment of one’s religious duty.”

The Vedas ordain that the householder should perform the Pancha Maha Jajnas or five great sacrifices for the rishies, gods, ancestors, guests and all creatures of the world. This repayment of debt can be performed only when the man lives with his wife in the household and the presence of both of them is required for this religious rite. Because of the necessity of the wife for performance of religious rite, she is designated as the “Dharma Patni”. In no other religion excluding Hinduism marriage has been more strongly associated with and prompted by religion.

(2) Praja:

Praja or progeny has been considered as the second major aim of Hindu marriage. “The sastras enjoin man to marry for the purpose of procreating a son necessary for the salvation of his soul”. In the ancient age it was believed that a Hindu must marry in order to beget a male child who will come to the rescue of his father from falling into the ditch of hell called ‘Put Narka’. The son performs the funeral rites of the father and enables him to avoid the ‘Put Narka’ after his death. Therefore the son has been termed as ‘Putra’.

(3) Rati:

‘Rati’ or the satisfaction of sexual desire is given the least importance in Hindu marriage. Therefore, Kapadia has said, “marriage was not desired so much for sex or elaborate as for obtaining a partner for the fulfillment of one’s religious duty.” Vatsayana was mainly concerned with the physical side of marriage, relating to pleasures and amenities of married life.