

Sahaja Marriages

1st October, 2016

Principles and Protocols

BACKGROUND & PRINCIPLES

“Marriage is an auspicious occasion, is the most auspicious occasion in the life of human beings. It is auspicious, that’s why it’s joy giving and the vibrations flow with that auspiciousness all over the world. [...] Marriage is meant to give joy. Is meant to give cheerfulness, happiness and all the blissful things that you can think of achieving through our combinations with two human beings. [...] You have to bring glory to the system of marriages because it is the system established by God Almighty. Not by human beings, it’s a wrong idea. It is established by God Almighty to have an auspicious occasion, where such an auspicious thing is taken. The sacredness of this is to be maintained...”

Her Holiness Shree Mataji Nirmala Devi, 1981 “Marriage is meant to give Joy”, UK

Sahaja Marriages have been established by Shree Mataji more than 35 years ago and are a sacred ceremony based on Divine principles, which elicit spiritual and material blessings. In Sahaja Yoga, couples have had the unique opportunity to be blessed by the attention of our Divine Mother and Guru for this process. Shree Mataji generously blessed Her children through this institution, granting us the opportunity to have a happy family life. Sahaja marriages facilitate individuals’ spiritual growth and the growth of the world Sahaja collective, and have a rippling effect through families, communities and between countries.

The principles of Sahaja marriages are based on Shree Mataji’s teachings collected in writing and provided orally to the yogis and yoginis who have assisted Mother in this most auspicious process. Some excerpts and references to Shree Mataji’s talks are included at the end of this document.

One of the main principles governing the Sahaja collective is that of pure relationships within the collective. Purity of relationships means that we should consider each and every yogi and yogini of the Sahaja collective as our brother

or sister. As purity is the quality of our mooladhara which is the chakra sustaining our Kundalini in Her ascent, for the ascent of the collective, purity is one of the bases, without which any collective cannot grow.

Yogis and yoginis who chose to pursue a Sahaja marriage and to marry a partner with whom to share the broader principles of Sahaja life, have been willing to surrender the process of finding a spiritual partner to Shree Mataji in her Nirakar form. With infinite motherly love, She has matched thousands of yogis and yoginis throughout the years in her Saakar form, looking for the best match from all points of view, spiritual, emotional, and material.

Shree Mataji has always warned yogis and yoginis not to search for a life partner within the Sahaja collective, as this is against the principles of Sahaja Yoga. In several cases when this has happened, the couple has been asked to step back from the Sahaja collective for some period of time. The Marriage Committee is not in the position to sanction before the world collective any self-matches performed by yogis/yoginis within the Sahaja family.

Shree Mataji also wished to break and discontinue traditions and practices which were very harmful for individuals as well as society, i.e. caste system, dowry, and all elements void of spiritual values. She also had the noble vision of combining different cultures & countries together to overcome the global elements of hatred, quarrels, greed and to make such marriages an ideal example for society. The newborn generation from such marriages would be made of born realised souls, tasked to guide the future evolution of Sahaja Yoga and the world.

Sahaja marriage is a kind of arranged marriage which follows a traditional pattern whereby the matching of couples is performed through vibratory awareness. Generally, in traditional arranged marriages, the parents and elders decide on the life partner for their sons and daughters. In Sahaja Yoga a group of yogis and yoginis (Indian Sahaja Marriage Committee), performs the matching of applicants through vibratory awareness / sahaja principles and following Mother's indications. After this process, the matched couples are announced and they have some time to meet and get to know each other. The final decision to marry remains theirs, and nobody is in any way forced to accept such a match if they do not feel sure about it. It is recommended that after a

match is declared, the boy and girl should discuss about their background, upbringing, education, work environment, personal likes and dislikes, conditions, bindings and finally decide to go ahead.

Please note, that after going through the Sahaja marriage ceremony, your marriage is sanctified before the Nirakar form of Shree Mataji. This is a spiritual marriage that should be considered with utmost respect, and approached after a deep inner preparation.

When applicants who cannot be physically present at the ceremony are matched, a temporary period of engagement is possible. This should not be taken as an indication of allowing to “test” the relationship while remaining in Sahaja Yoga, but only as a practical solution to individual situations. Shree Mataji in some very specific cases in the past had in fact proposed engagements to younger yogis and yoginis, with the warning that the relationship should still be maintained as pure as brother/sisterhood until the marriage. For the moment the Marriage Committee is not considering engagements as such in its scope of activities. Only in those cases where a matched couple cannot marry in the current Sahaja ceremony (because, for instance, a visa was not obtained or one or the other partner was unable to attend), the applicants will need to apply in person as a couple at a later marriage ceremony, at their earliest convenience.

In order to allow already married couples to receive Her blessings, in the past years Shree Mataji also allowed such couples legally married outside of Sahaja Yoga to apply for a Re-marriage.

For the moment, these are the only two acceptable ways for couples to be able to apply for a Sahaja Marriage, in line with Shree Mataji’s indications.

The issue of disparity in numbers between ladies’ and men’s applications must be noted. It is widely known that yoginis who apply far outnumber (by 4-6 times) the yogis, so every year there are many yoginis for whom there are just not suitable matches. In this context, finding a partner and marrying outside of Sahaja Yoga can also carry God’s blessings, especially if the partner absorbs Sahaja Yoga. Such a couple can be re-married in a Sahaja ceremony later on. It

can also happen that men who have applied are not matched, as no suitable match is found for them.

Spiritual growth of the individuals, the family and the collective is stimulated by a successful Sahaja marriage which spread happiness in the society around. It expresses subtle qualities such as: innocence, benevolence, love, joy, sweetness, generosity and fondness for others, for the entire collective. The marriage becomes a vehicle to have vibrant, joyful families and a blossoming society.

When fully blessed, these Sahaja marriages can be auspicious channels in allowing the flow of the Love of the Divine through the hearts of all those involved, opening a common spiritual path of joy and growth.

Those yogis and yoginis who seek the privilege to have a marriage that is blessed by Her Holiness Shree Mataji Nirmala Devi in Her Nirakar form should put forward their names, but only when they feel ready to make this commitment for life. In the case of a multicultural union, the yogi/yogini should be open and surrendered and ready for an unpredictable change in lifestyle.

All applicants are invited to read with attention the Marriage vows, in the appendix, that are read during the Marriage ceremony as resolutions towards the respective spouses and towards Sahaja Yoga. If they do not feel ready or wish to accept and sustain such vows they should not make the choice of entering into a Sahaja Marriage.

With such resolution and sincerity in their hearts, they should realize that marriage in Sahaja Yoga is not something to be taken lightly or with superficiality... it blesses society with an auspicious family, it blesses the family with the comfort and strength of love, it blesses the couple with the opportunity to reach balance and fulfil their spiritual potential.

Both spouses should be ready to embark on a lifelong path of change, love, growth, sharing, understanding, support, challenges, blessings and fulfilment, in line with our Divine Mother's teachings.

INDIAN SAHAJA MARRIAGE COMMITTEE

It was decided in the meeting of the Sahaja Yoga Central Committee of India on September 15, 2013, that an Indian Sahaja Marriage Committee would be constituted to look after various aspects of the Sahaja Marriages. It was also decided that Sahaja marriages should only be held at Ganapatipule during International Christmas Puja/seminar in December every year as used to be done by Her Holiness Shree Mataji for several years.

With the blessings of Her Holiness Shree Mataji Nirmala Devi, an Indian Sahaja Marriage Committee has been constituted for the sahaja marriages to be solemnized every year at the International Christmas Puja / seminar, at Ganapatipule and at the International venues.

The Committee shall work according to principles and teachings of Her Holiness Shree Mataji Nirmala Devi, rely on sound judgment, wisdom and on a collective vibratory decision process. It shall strive to provide transparent information on protocols and practices to the collective, while keeping full confidentiality on personal information of the applicants. No information and confidential data, provided either by the applicants or by the coordinators, will be disclosed to anyone outside the committee, except for the respective contact details of the matched couples.

The members of the Indian Sahaja Marriage Committee will perform their duties with no personal involvement on the matters. In case any member or close relation of any member of the committee has submitted a marriage application, the member can provide support & guidance but will abstain from performing duties in relation to such a matching process.

Some of the activities performed by the Indian Sahaja Marriage Committee shall be as follows:

- Proposing shared protocols and guidelines for the activities of the Committee to be adopted by the collective
- Providing information about marriage ceremonies to be held
- Providing updated marriage application forms and instructions in advance of the ceremony
- Providing proper guidance and counselling to the applicants, regarding the importance and purpose of sahaja marriages and managing their queries

- Collecting and filing application forms from all over the world
- Scrutinising marriage application forms, verifying credentials of applicants (they should be atleast 2 years in Sahaja Yoga) and completeness and correctness of information provided by the applicants
- Performing the matching process as described above
- Informing applicants, coordinators/ organizers of the marriage ceremony, and matched couples about the outcomes of the process
- Coordinating the logistics and managing the Marriage ceremony
- Keeping information and progress of children from sahaja marriages (Number of children per marriage)

The current Indian Sahaja Marriage Committee members are given in APPENDIX I.

MATCHING AND MARRIAGE PROTOCOLS

The matching process starts when the marriage team assembles to sort and verify the marriage application forms before the occasion of the sahaja marriages. The Marriage team then meets several times and conducts the registration of all acceptable forms, following the preliminary protocols for the application forms received. The protocols and principles followed are based on Shree Mataji's guidelines, following the manner in which the marriages and matches were done for the sahaja marriages solemnised at Ganapatipule for several years in the Saakar divine presence of Shree Mataji.

These guidelines were practical and Sahaja in nature, yoginis are initially aligned with yogis of greater height and who are older than them. Suitability and common interests are checked, educational background and a sense of their complementarity will be taken into account. Willingness to change countries and dedication to Sahaja Yoga are also factors to be considered. Yogis from the same collective are not matched, as they cement the brother/sister relationship of the local collective.

After the preliminary protocols have been followed to match potential couples from the point of view of suitability, the proposals are validated by vibrations. The Yogis of the Marriage team checks the vibrations from the preliminary assessment of couples.

The majority of the Marriage Team who are checking the vibrations do so in the light of their own spiritual ability, experience and wisdom. There might be several reviews. When there is clear indication of cool vibrations from the majority of the marriage team the couple is then considered suitable for a proposal, and the proposed match is then offered to the Feet of Shree Mataji.

Generally the match is announced few days before the sahaja marriages. After match announcements, the couple is expected to meet and talk to each other within the time period available and convey their decision to the Marriage Committee. No matched couple is in any way forced to proceed with a Sahaja marriage. Please consider the Sahaja Marriage as a very strong subtle work and show understanding and maturity throughout the process.

If for any VALID REASON, one or both the applicants do not want to proceed with the Sahaja Marriage, they will be considered for other possible matches, ONLY IF TIME AND CONDITIONS allow. The reasons for refusal will be sought from them by the Marriage Committee or by the signing coordinator as a sign of respect for the ceremony and for the refused applicant.

In case of a match, where one or both the matched applicants are not present at the ceremony, the couple should promptly communicate and interact with each other and then communicate their decision to accept or refuse the match to the Marriage Committee jointly during the month following the match announcement.

The Marriage team strives to perform its duties as pure instruments of Shree Mataji, so that the Grace of Shree Mataji is invited to flow through this most important expression of our sahaja culture.

REGISTRATION OF MARRIAGES SOLEMNISED AT GANAPATIPULE:

At present in the state of Maharashtra, India, procedure of registration of marriages is being done as per provisions of MAHARASHTRA REGULATION OF MARRIAGE BUREAUS AND REGISTRATION OF MARRIAGES ACT 1998. This Act was enacted and came into force from 15 April 1999.

Prior to this, procedure of registration of marriages was being done under the provisions of THE BOMBAY REGISTRATION OF MARRIAGES ACT 1953. This Act provided for registration of marriage in the office of Registrar, within whose jurisdiction the marriage was solemnized. This provision was misused and people took undue advantage of this provision by getting their marriages registered anywhere. Therefore as per directions of court, this new law of 1998 was enacted.

As per provisions of section 6 of new Act, under which we are governed now, the duty of registration of marriage is given to the Registrar within whose jurisdiction the HUSBAND ORDINARILY RESIDES OR WHERE EITHER ONE OF THE PARTIES ORDINARILY RESIDES. (Ordinarily means permanently for this purpose. Party must have documentary proof of his residence such as, Ration Card, Aadhar Card, Voting Card, Driving License etc.)

Though, sahaj marriages are solemnised at Ganapatipule, (Ratnagiri District, Maharashtra), almost all the Brides and Bridegrooms are from different parts of India or from different countries. They are not ordinarily or permanently resident of Ratnagiri District. Hence Marriage Registrar of Ratnagiri cannot register sahaja marriages solemnised at Ganapatipule. Only if the bride or bridegroom (married at Ganapatipule) is from Ratnagiri District, then with documentary proof of registration, the bride or bridegroom can get their marriages registered in the office of Marriage Registrar, Ratnagiri.

In view of this legal position, for sahaj marriages solemnized at Ganapatipule, it is not possible for organisers to get the Registration of the marriages in Ratnagiri District. It is suggested that the concerned parties, or their parents / center coordinators, get these marriages registered in the Registration offices (having jurisdiction) by submitting the prescribed form. After solemnization of marriage, registration is simple procedure, requiring ONE DAY only. A copy of Certificate can be forwarded to the Marriage Committee thereafter for record.

EXCERPTS FROM TALKS BY HER HOLINESS SHREE MATAJI

For a comprehensive collection of extracts from Shree Mataji's talks on marriage we advise to read the book "Marriage in Sahaj Yoga" published by the Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi Sahaja Yoga World Foundation.

Some specific talks on marriage and related subjects:

- 1980 The value of marriage, UK
- 1980 Marriage and collectivity, UK
- 1981 Marriage is meant to give joy, UK
- 1984 Raksha Bandhan, UK

"...Today is a day we celebrate in India, where relationships between brothers and sisters have to be established, they're very pure. Brothers and sisters' relationships is without any lust or greed. It is pure relationship where the sister prays for the protection of the brother, and brother prays for the self-sufficiency of the Kshema, well-being of the sister. So this time you have to think of your other Sahaja yoginis and yogis who are like your brothers and sisters. You have to think like that. Purify your hearts. It's something funny in these countries you know that, there no such relationship exists. Purify your mind today on that point, that everybody else is my brother or sister. If you are married it's alright, but look at everyone, try to look at everyone as a brother and sister. ..."

- 1983 Diwali Puja, London, UK

"...One of the things I discovered here, in the West, that though we have understood the importance of Mooladhara, which is a very important thing, that unless and until we establish our Mooladhara fully we are not going to have speediest ascent. Despite all that, there are lingering things you see around. Like, people start choosing their life-partners in Sahaja Yoga. That is not allowed. That is not allowed. You are not to spoil your Ashrams, your centres-using them for a marriage- searching society. You must respect this point, you must respect. If you have to marry, then you can find your life partners 'outside' Sahaja Yoga-to begin with. But if you want to marry 'in' Sahaja Yoga, then you should not go on searching people in Sahaja Yoga. It is very dangerous thing for Sahaja Yoga itself, and for you people. That is one thing one should never try to do with Sahaja Yoga. For all practical purposes you are brothers and sisters. And that's why I always encouraged marriage between people who belong to another country or another centre. As we are now having a big marriage

programme, I would say that most of the marriages which were done like that are very successful than the marriages that were selected and were done. It's very wrong to do such a thing as to arrange your marriage with a Sahaja Yogi by yourself. It will be dangerous. I don't want to say anything; but it wouldn't turn out to be good because it is anti-God activity. Absolutely anti-God. ..."

- 1984 Raksha Bandhan, London, UK

"...So in Sahaja Yoga the purpose of these marriages is to have you connected internationally so you all transcend all the barriers of your nationality, barriers of racialism, barriers of caste, barriers of so much of materialism..."

- 1993 Talk to brides, Ganapatipule, India

"...When it comes to love, how do we express our love ? By sharing all our joys, all our pains, all our problems..... But in Sahaja Yoga it is a little more, I think quite a lot more, much more. Here you have to share the community, the marriage is not for individuals in Sahaja Yoga, not at all. If anybody has a feeling a marriage in Sahaja yoga is between two people, is a wrong thing; it is two communities, it can be two nations, it can be completely two universes. So it is not to be enjoyed between yourself. If you are good husband wife to each other, it is not sufficient in Sahaja Yoga. That love should be enjoyed by every one else in the society, in the community. If you cannot do that then you have not achieved Sahaja-Yoga marriage, it is just an ordinary marriage as people have, it's just that. There's nothing special about it. Such marriages should be able to give chances for very great souls to come on this earth. A person who is married in Sahaja Yoga, who are Sahaja Yogis, who are sharing their love equally with the Sahaja Yogis and the society that is Sahaja Yoga, then only great people will be born..."

- 1980 The value of marriage, Dollis Hills, UK

MARRIAGE VOWS

The marriage vows below will be read at the ceremony and represent the vows that each applicant is willing to accept and sustain by entering into a Sahaja Marriage.

The bride-groom says thus, to the bride:

I remember Shree Adi Shakti Mataji in my heart, and tell you that you must keep the chastity necessary for a good Mooladhar. Benevolence and auspiciousness lies in completely accepting innocence and forsaking cunningness.

I remember Shree Adi Shakti Mataji in my heart and tell you that the divine aesthetics of married life should be seen in our life, our home should be aesthetically decorated. We should do all our work within, and abiding by the Dharma. I shall extend hospitality to Sahaja Yogis and associate with you in performing the duties toward Dharma. May we achieve the blessings of enjoying the joy of collectivity.

I remember Shree Adi Shakti Mataji in my heart and tell you that I will hand over to you all the money that I earn, as it has come as the reward of your Punya. You should spend the money carefully and after consulting me, keeping in mind that all the wealth belongs to God. We should spend our wealth feeling that we are receiving God's blessings. There should be no hankering for material objects; and, completely detached, we should nourish our Mahalakshmi principle.

I remember Shree Adi Shakti Mataji in my heart and tell you that I will never hurt your feelings and shall forget all the mistakes made in our lives in the past. My love for you would be limitless and so should be yours. Do not suppress your feelings, tell me if your mind is at anguish or someone troubles you. I will always stand by you, protect you, and never listen to any false complaints against you.

The bride tells thus, to the bride-groom:

I remember Shree Adi Shakti Mataji in my heart and tell you that I shall bring the divine sweetness into your life. I will cook delicious food that can be enjoyed by you. We should

eat only the food cooked by Sahaja Yogis. Do not force me to meet or be in the company of those who are not good Sahaja Yogis. We should never use bad language and should never shout at each other. You should quietly listen to me and I shall quietly listen to you.

I remember Shree Adi Shakti Mataji in my heart and tell you that we both should regularly meditate, and teach our children and our friends how to meditate. Our life should be of penance but we should not complain or tell others about it and should be always happy. Your eyes should be pure and free from lust for women and without greed for anything.

I remember Shree Adi Shakti Mataji in my heart and tell you that we should understand that Her Holiness Mataji Shree Nirmala Devi has conferred Her blessings on us, and we should completely surrender and dedicate our hearts to Her. This dedication should be through integration of body, mind and intellect. We should be aware how tremendous and unprecedented a work is Self Realization, and everything else in our life is unimportant. We should unceasingly enjoy Her ever-flowing grace, devote and regularly offer puja to Her, and be extremely humble in Her presence. Please correct me if you find me failing in this.

Brides and Bride-Grooms say together:

I shall open the path of Moksha which I have got with the blessings and grace of Her Holiness Shree Mataji also to others, and shall achieve in the company of such a great and realised person, the well-being of the whole universe.

APPENDIX I

The current Indian Sahaja Marriage Committee members are as under:

	Name	Place
1	Mrs (Dr) Deepti Singh	Uttar Pradesh
2	Mrs. Deepali Talageri	Mumbai
3	Mr R D Bhardwaj	Uttar Pradesh
4	Mr S C Rai	Delhi
5	Mr. Amogh Sase	Mumbai
6	Mr. Sangram Parab	Mumbai
7	Mr Shrirang Jadhav	Navi Mumbai
8	Mr Jaisingh Patel	Mumbai

The above list of members shall be periodically reviewed. Advocate Milind Shedsale, Kolhapur will look after the legal aspects of the sahaja marriages.