

The *Rukhsati* or bride's departure is a very important and symbolic ritual of the larger wedding ceremony. It marks the departure of the bride from her parent's house and care to that of her husband's and in-law's (since the joint-family system is still quite dominant in both urban and rural parts of the country). The bride's family walks with her and the groom to see her off. The sister(s) of the bride generally hold(s) her dress to prevent her from tripping and also provide emotional support to her (mostly in a subtle manner) from the stage (where the bride and groom generally sit) to where the groom's car is waiting. The brother(s) (and sometimes the father) hold a copy of the Quran on top of her head to bless the marriage. This act symbolizes the shadow of the protection and guidance of the Quran, which the family hopes is always on her.

The groom's car is generally decorated with flowers to mark the joyous occasion.

Before leaving for her new abode the bride's family hugs and kisses her. This is a very emotional time for the family (both female and male members) and many a tear is shed.

**About CultureTalk:** CultureTalk is produced by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and housed on the LangMedia Website. The project provides students of language and culture with samples of people talking about their lives in the languages they use everyday. The participants in CultureTalk interviews and discussions are of many different ages and walks of life. They are free to express themselves as they wish. The ideas and opinions presented here are those of the participants. Inclusion in CultureTalk does not represent endorsement of these ideas or opinions by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages, Five Colleges, Incorporated, or any of its member institutions: Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.