

## **The Origin, Present, and Future of the Ring**

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The emergence of certain objects is invented by people's needs. Clothes were invented to protect the body from the external environment, and houses allowed people to stay in one area stably instead of nomadic life. However, in addition to this, as people's quality of life has increased, more than just needs have emerged. People call it luxury goods. People wear them to show off their honor and wealth, and a typical example is accessories. There are many accessories, but accessories that have a different meaning than an overstatement are rare. The ring has a different meaning than just the purpose of showing off or embellishing. Then, why has only the ring preserved its meaning from the past to the present, unlike other accessories?

A ring is a circle-shaped accessory that fits on the finger. Modern rings are mainly made of metals such as iron, gold, and silver, and even if they are made of grass and flowers, they are called rings if they are shaped like rings. People attach various meanings to the ornaments called rings. In modern times, typically, wearing a ring on the right-hand ring finger is a class ring. (Staff Writer, Apr 9, 2020) Furthermore, each finger which ring is on has various symbolic meanings. For example, the pinky finger indicates professional status, the middle finger for responsibility, the pointing finger for leadership, and the thumb for self-assertion. (Atlantic city jewelry, Dec 18, 2014) On the other hand, the symbolic meaning of the wedding ring on the left fourth finger has exceptionally been allowed by several countries and for now, spread to most countries.

Ancient Egyptians first used rings at weddings early in 3000 BC. The ring is made of braided hemp or circular reeds. It was a symbol of eternity not only for the Egyptians but also for many other ancient cultures. The hole in the center of the ring represents a gateway or door leading to a future event. The ring was placed on the fourth finger of the left hand. The practice is said to be the origin of many later traditions because Egyptians believed that veins were directly connected from the left fourth fingers to the heart. Today, most people called the left the fourth finger a ring finger. However, the reed rings were not durable and eventually used rings made of bone, leather, or ivory. As more expensive materials are used, the value of

the ring represents the degree of wealth of a person, and the quality of love shown. (Liz Leafloor, Oct 9, 2015)

Passing through the Egyptian era, the beginning of the wedding ring, the Roman era also continued the tradition of the wedding rings. In ancient Roman, the wife was a man's property right, so if the woman agreed to marry the man, the man gave the ring to the woman's father. Furthermore, the groom put a key ring on the ring to show that he believed the bride had become his property and made her wear the ring in a public place. (Liz Leafloor, Oct 9, 2015) This custom most closely resembles the symbolic meaning of the present wedding ring. The similarity of the current wedding ring and ancient Roman wedding ring is that indirectly indicates to others that men and women are married. On the other hand, what is different from the ancient Roman is that the present wife is not a sign of her husband's property, but rather of a symbol of love.

Of course, like the Jewish culture, there are exceptions. Jews originally did not exchange rings when they got married. According to Mishnah, men contract to marry a woman in one of three ways. First give money to her, second marriage contract, and third complete the relationship. (MJL, No Date) As in ancient Rome, it was the same to regard wives as men's property, but exchanging rings was not an essential part of marriage. For example, there is no mention of a wedding ring in the Bible. Rather, the exchange of wedding rings is a custom absorbed by the wider culture where Jews lived. Despite the customs absorbed by other cultures, they wear wedding rings on their right index finger. However, because the Jewish wedding ring also has the same meaning as today's general wedding ring culture, Jews now move the wedding ring to the left-hand ring finger after the wedding ceremony.

Hindu women in India also have special wedding ring customs. Unlike other cultures that wear wedding rings on their fingers, they wear rings on their toes. People call that kind of ring toe ring. Hindu women in India wear toes on their second toes when they get married, for religious and cultural reasons, but also for scientific reasons. The ancient Egyptians wore rings because they believed they had a vein connected to the heart on their left fourth finger. However, although this is a fact without scientific evidence, the reason for wearing a toe ring on the second toe against Indian Hindu women is clearly scientific. Scientists say the nerves in the second toe are directly connected to the uterus and the pressure on the nerves gives

the effect of acupressure. (TNN, Apr 13, 2019) Indian Hindu women's toe ring is not taken off for the rest of their lives after marriage, and according to their custom, they wear silver rings, not gold rings on the toe. They wear wedding rings on their toes for religious, cultural, and scientific reasons.

As such, the culture of wedding rings has been activated in many cultures, but still, they have not been activated in many cultures. The practice of exchanging rings at weddings in most countries, as it is now, is closely related to the diamond industry. In the 1940s, a global diamond mining company called De Beers launched a campaign under the slogan 'Diamonds is Forever' to popularize diamonds. They linked the eternity of diamonds to the persistence of marriage and it was a success. (The History of the Diamond as an Engagement Ring, No Date) Even when the U.S. economy was bad in the 1930s, they advertised Marilyn Monroe who was the top female star at that time with expensive diamond accessories. This led to a surge in demand for diamonds among women, and men bought diamond rings to show off their economic power. This popularity of diamond rings naturally flowed into each country, riding on the trend of globalization, and the custom of exchanging rings between the bride and groom also settled.

In addition, the ring has a meaning of commemoration. In addition to weddings, rings are made to celebrate big events such as first birthday parties and sports events. So is my first ring. My first ring was made to celebrate my first birthday. Although not in my memory, my parents surely gave me a ring as a present so as not to forget my first birthday. The same is true of sporting events. Winning in competitive leagues like the NBA, MLB and the NFL takes enormous time and effort. The club celebrates by creating a ring to commemorate a championship victory that may have never happened in a player's life. Like this, the ring does not just mean eternity and love. It is made to celebrate any happy occasion.

As the standard of life has improved and the ring industry has become larger than before, the current ring has little meaning, unlike the past. Now the ring industry has become huge and the fashion industry has also grown. Many fashion brands launch fashion rings as part of fashion, not focusing on wedding rings. Young people also express themselves by consuming their rings. Some may see this negatively. Some may think that the meaning of the ring is tarnished, and others may think that it does not match the origin of the ring. But I see this kind of phenomenon positively.

This phenomenon is considered to be a ring popularization phenomenon, such as the ring has become popular with the prosperity of the diamond industry in the past. People should not see the current fashion ring as a fade in the meaning of the ring, but as a means of expressing themselves or as part of their individuality. This is a natural phenomenon that keeps pace with the times through and the second popularization of the ring. The shape of the ring will not change in the future, but it will become more and more popular and come in more meaning to many people.

Rings have involved many meanings, such as eternity, love, commemoration, or individuality, starting from ancient Egypt and passing through the ancient Roman and today. The birth and end of a thing begin with the needs of people. The ring is just an accessory. This is not directly related to people's lives and is not indispensable. However, perhaps this symbolic meaning is the reason why the ring, which used to be nothing but luxury goods, has existed so far. Positive meanings such as the desire of mankind to be eternal, love, which is the most fundamental emotion of mankind, and commemoration, which means the celebration of the happiest moment, will continue to be with the ring in the distant future.

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