



# *Anand Karaj*

*The Sikh Marriage Ceremony*

*"They are not said to be husband  
and wife who merely sit together.  
Rather they alone are called  
husband and wife, who have  
one soul in two bodies."*

*~ Guru Amardas*





**Brochure:** Sikhnet.Org

**Translations:** Shauna Singh Baldwin



## *About The Sikh Wedding*

In the Sikh tradition, marriage takes more than love between two people and physical liaison, though these natural aspects bring their own delights. Marriage is about two people trying to help one another toward the divine, and you marry to help one another fulfill your life's purpose.

So, a Sikh wedding ceremony is a metaphor, in which we sing of the soul's longing to merge with the Infinite, and married love as a path, circling to the final merging.

The Sikh wedding ceremony enacts this metaphor, describing the desired four stages for a successful marriage in the form of rounds (lavan phere) of the 11th guru: the teachings written in the *Siri Guru Granth Sahib*.

The poem *Anand Karaj* (Journey Toward Bliss) describes marriage as a metaphor for the journey of





the soul reaching for the infinite. You circle the *Siri Guru Granth Sahib* four times as you commit to each other, making your promises with the teachings of the Prime Guru as witness.

Circling of the *Siri Guru Granth Sahib* reminds that the Prime Guru (Paun Guru) is the center of life, the creative principle from which life springs. As you circle, you enact the symbolic journey of the soul spiraling about the center.

Each witness to your wedding, each member of the community (sadh sangat), is also involved in your promise. The community is pledging to support and assist you in choosing right actions (karam) to help you on your path toward union with the ultimate.





# *Sikh Wedding Ceremony*

## *Brief Overview*

- **Kirtan**—We begin the wedding ceremony by singing and chanting shabads from the text of the *Siri Guru Granth Sahib*.
- **Milni Ceremony** — The groom arrives. Each member of the groom's family meets and greets his/her counterpart relative in the brides family, signifying the union of two families.
- **Couple Arrive** — The groom is seated facing the *Siri Guru Granth Sahib*. The bride sits beside him on his left.
- **Prayer (Ardaas)** — The couple and their parents stand (the rest remain seated) for the recitation of the *Ardaas* requesting the Prime Guru's support and blessings for the couple.
- **Vaak** (blessing) — *The Siri Guru Granth Sahib* is opened at random, and consulted. The first shabad beginning at the top left corner of the page is read as a thought and blessing for the day.
- **Pallaa** — The parents of the bride tie one end of the groom's scarf/shawl to their daughter's, symbolizing their union. The ceremony is accompanied by singing "*Palai taindai laagee.*"
- **The Four Rounds (Lavan Phere)** —The bride and groom circle the *Siri Guru Granth Sahib* as the *Lavan* is chanted.
- **Conclusion:** We sing the shabad "*Veeaa hoa mere baabulaa*" (We are united, my beloved) to conclude the wedding ceremony.



## *The Four Wedding Rounds (Lavan Phere)*

The poem *Lavan* that accompanies the four nuptial rounds was written by the fourth Nanak, Guru Ram Das, for his own wedding.

He tells us that the first commitment is for one to be true to one's own soul, to be committed to righteousness, be on the spiritual path and communicate with the soul through personal spiritual practice.

Then he tells the couple that they have met the True Guru, they can rise above self-ness in favor of unity, committing to the institution of marriage as to a spiritual path.

Next, he tells the couple they are blessed to be part of a community (sadh sangat), and that their lives should be an example of service (sewa) to all, to fulfill their destiny.

Finally, the Guru predicts the couple can unite with the infinite, if they follow the path he advises.

Each will have inspired the other towards that union.





## *The Four Wedding Rounds* *English Translation*

### I

Har pahilarhee laav parvirtee karam dhirhaaiaa bal raam jeeo.  
In this first phase of your wedding you pledge  
to the Beloved Guru to be pure-hearted in action.

banee barahmaa vayd Dharam darirhu paap tajaiaa bal raam jeeo.  
No need to sing hymns of the vedas to Brahmand,  
only embrace righteous ways, and renounce  
harmful ones to be worthy of the Beloved Guru.

Dharam darirhu har naam dhiaavahu simrit naam dhirhaaiaa.  
Remember Naam (the all-pervading divine);  
contemplate and remember all facets of Naam.

satgur gur pooraa aaraadhahu sabh kilvikh paap gavaaiaa.  
If you worship the Perfect Guru with all your  
being; the harms you do shall be dispelled.

sahj anand hoaa vadbhaagee man har har meethaa laaiaa.  
May the Guru – all praise – bring good fortune,  
complete contentment, and a sweetness of mind.

jan kahai naanak laav pahilee aarambh kaaj rachaaiaa.  
With this, Nanak says, take your first steps  
together, creating your new life.



## II

nirmal bhao paaiaa har gun gaaiaa har vaykhai raam hadooray.  
Cleansed of fear, you will feel moved to praise  
every facet of the Beloved Guru, and know  
the Guru's eternal presence.

har aatam raam pasaariaa suaamee sarab rahiaa bharpoorey.  
for the Beloved Guru is everywhere, fully filling  
all space, all creation.

antar baahar har parabh ayko mil har jan mangal gaaey.  
Within and without, when the Beloved One  
meets us, everyone sings with joy.

jan naanak doojee laav chalaase anhad sabad vajaaay.  
Nanak declares, in the second phase of your  
marriage, the unspoken words of the Prime Guru  
will reverberate in you.

## III

har teejrhee laav man chaao bhaiaa bairaageeaa bal raam jeeo.  
Now in the third phase of your wedding,  
the Beloved Guru fills your minds  
with Divine Love.

sant janaa har mayl har paaiaa vadbhaageeaa bal raam jeeo.  
How fortunate are you to encounter the Beloved  
One, to know divine love as true devotees do.

nirmal har paaiaa har gun gaaiaa mukh bolee har banee.  
Sing praises of every facet of the Kindest One,  
with divine song.

sant janaa vadbhaagee paaiaa har katheeai akath kahaanee.  
How fortunate are we to accept the Beloved One,  
to fathom the unspoken speech of the Guru.



hirdai har har har dhun upjee har japeeai mastak bhaag jeeo.  
May the beloved Name — Har, Har, Har— vibrate  
and resound in your hearts. In constant  
remembrance may you live your good fortune, the  
destiny inscribed on your foreheads.

jan naanak bolay teejee laavai har upjai man bairaag jeeo. | |3| |  
Nanak declares, in the third phase of your  
marriage, fill your minds with love for the One.

#### IV

har chautharhee laav man sahj bhaiaa har paaiaa bal raam jeeo.  
Now in the fourth phase of your wedding, let your  
minds be peaceful to greet the Beloved Guru.

gurmukh miliaa subhaaay har man tan meethaa laaiaa bal raam jeeo.  
Gurmukh are those who have met the Guru, minds  
at ease; mind and body sweetened and  
strengthened.

har meethaa laaiaa mayray parabh bhaaiaa andin har liv laaee.  
The Beloved Guru brings sweetness when night  
and day, we lovingly worship the One.

man chindiaa fal paaiaa suaamee har naam vajee vaadhaaee.  
Then with unworried mind, you will receive that  
reward desired by all devotees: Naam will resound  
everywhere.

har parabh thaakur kaaj rachaiaa dhan hirdai naam vigaasee.  
Like your spouse, let the Supreme Guru blend  
with you, let Naam bloom in your hearts.

jan naanak bolay chauthee laavai har paaiaa parabh avinaasee.  
Nanak declares in the fourth phase of your  
marriage, you will be united with the imperishable



## ***The Anand Sahib (Song of Bliss)***

by Guru Amar Das, 3rd Nanak.  
*Siri Guru Granth Sahib*, Ang (page) 917 to 922.

Anand bhaiaa mayree maaay satguroo mai paaiaa.

I am in bliss, mother, for I have found my true teacher.

satgur ta paaiaa sahj saytee man vajeeaa vaadhaaeaa.

I have found the teacher through perfect harmony;  
my mind rings with congratulations.

raag ratan parvaar pareeaa shabad gaavan aaeaa.

Jeweled melodies rise in praise of celestial harmony.

sabdo ta gaavhu haree kayraa man jinee vasaiaa.

Those within whom the Prime Guru lives, sing this shabad along with me.

kahai naanak anand hoaa satguroo mai paaiaa.

I am in ecstasy, Nanak says, for I have found my True Guru.

## ***Sikh Principles to Live By***

**Kirat Karo:**

work for your living

**Vand Chako:**

share with others

**Naam Japo:**

meditate on the Name

(the divine presence)



## *Ardaas*

by Guru Arjan, the 5th Nanak. Ang (page) 268.

Tu thaakur tum peh ardaas:

**You are our leader; before you, I appeal:**

Jeeo pind sabh tayree raas.

**This life and body are all your creation.**

Thum Maath Pithaa Ham Baarik Thaerae.

**You are mother and father; we are your children.**

Tumaree Kirpaa Meh Sukh Ghanayrey

**We garner our comforts only by your will.**

Koe na jaanay tumraa unt.

**No one knows the extent of your being,**

Oochay tey oochaa bhagavant.

**most generous of all givers.**

Sagal samagree tumaray soothar dhaaree.

**All existence is woven from your thread.**

Tum tey hoe so agyakaaree.

**From your command comes all happening.**

Tumaree gath mith tum hee jaanee.

**You alone know your limits, your vastness.**

Nanak daas sadhaa kurbaanee.

**Nanak, always your servant, submits before you.**



## *A Wedding Blessing*

By Guru Ram Das, the 4th Nanak. Ang (page) 78

Veah hua mere babula gurmukh har paya

*We are united, my beloved.*

*I felt the guru's light touch my face*

Agyan andhera kateya gur gyan parchand balaya

*Senseless darkness was dispelled  
in the blaze of the Guru's wisdom.*

Balia gur gyan andhera bhinasiya; har ratan padarath ladha

*The Guru's wisdom shone forth,  
chased darkness away. Such a  
jewel is the Prime Guru's wisdom.*

Haumai rog gaya dukh ladha aap-apey gurmat khada

*My self-absorption was dispelled, my sorrows  
are past. Learning the Guru's wisdom,  
my true self consumed my false one.*

Akal murat var paya avinasi na kadey marey na jaya

*I glimpsed the one with undying form,  
the imperishable, the one who never leaves.*

veah hua mere babula gurmukh har paya

*We are united, my beloved.*

*I felt the Guru's light touch my face.*

*Congratulations!*



