



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

SikhNet

www.SikhNet.com

Design and Photography by Gurumustuk Singh Khalsa

About The Sikh Wedding

Marriage is a spiritual identity, not just a love affair between two people. The focus of marriage is not romantic love or physical liaison, though these aspects of marriage naturally bring their own delight. The Sikh marriage is all about love, but what kind of love? It is the Love of the Soul-bride for God, that longing to merge with the Infinite. A Sikh marriage is two people trying to help one another in this merger. The highest love is assisting another in the merger of the soul with the infinite, helping the Beloved to find the true purpose of their life.



3 "In the third round of the marriage ceremony your heart is filled with Divine Love. By my great destiny I have met the humble Saints who love the Lord and I have found God. I have found the pure Lord and I sing His Wonderful Praises. I sing the Guru's Bani. By great good destiny I have found the humble Saints and I speak in the silent language of the Infinite. The Lord's Name - Har, Har, Har, vibrates and resounds within my heart. Meditating on God, I have realized the great destiny written on my forehead. Servant Nanak proclaims that in this third round, the heart is full of Divine Love of the One God.

4 "In the fourth round of the marriage ceremony I have found God and my mind is filled with peace. Living as a Gurmukh, I have met Him with simple ease. My mind and body are full of sweet delight. I am pleasing to God - and night and day I lovingly focus my awareness on Him. I have merged with the One in everyone and all my desires are fulfilled. The Lord's Name resounds and reverberates within me and all around me. The One God, my Lord and Master, merges with His Divine Bride and her heart blossoms with His Holy Naam. Servant Nanak proclaims that in this fourth round, we have become One with the Eternal Lord. "

The Four Wedding Rounds

English Translation

1 "In the first round of the marriage ceremony, the Lord gives you His instructions for married life. Instead of performing rituals by routine, embrace the righteous life of Dharma, and do nothing that separates you from God. Meditate on God's Name. Embrace and practice Simran - the continuous remembrance of your True Identity. Worship and adore the Guru, the Perfect True Guru, and all the errors of your past shall be washed away. By your great destiny, you shall know that bliss which passes all understanding, and the Lord - Har, Har, will become sweet to your mind. Servant Nanak proclaims that in this first round, the marriage ceremony has begun.

2 "In the second round of the marriage ceremony, the Lord guides you to meet the True Guru - the One Teacher. Filled with the awe of the Infinite, your ego dissolves away. In awe of the One who is forever pure, sing His Wonderful Praises and see God in all. The Lord - the Supreme Soul, is the Master of the Universe. He fills everything, everywhere. He fills all spaces. Deep within you, and outside you as well, see only One God. God's humble servants meet together and sing the songs of joy and ecstasy. Servant Nanak proclaims that in this second round, the music of the spheres resounds. "

In the Sikh marriage ceremony we are offered a way to bring this support into our lives. Guru Ram Das has given us a formula for a successful marriage in the form of four rounds (Laavaa). In fact, he describes for us the sacred journey of the soul merging with the infinite. When applied to marriage it results in happiness and fulfillment.

The Sikh man and woman marry to help one another on the spiritual path, surely. Marriage is also a cozy haven of love and joy in this world. However, one's main support and mainstay is God and in one's ability to access that Source of Life. The gift to the Sikh is the Siri Guru Granth Sahib. Why does the couple circle the Siri Guru Granth Sahib as they commit to each round? It is not just a ritual. You are making a commitment with the Guru as witness. And as you circle the Siri Guru Granth Sahib you are reminded that the Guru is the center of your life, from which springs your life and the understanding of the journey of the soul crossing this world ocean. The Siri Guru Granth Sahib represents the core of you. The Sadh Sangat is your support system.

Sikh Marriage Ceremony

Brief Overview

- **Kirtan**— The wedding ceremony begins with Shabad Kirtan (Spiritual Music).
- **Couple Arrive** — The groom appears first and is seated before the Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The bride sits beside him on his left.
- **First Shabad**— “*Keetaa lorhee-ai kamm*” is sung.
- **Prayer (Ardas)**— The couple and their parents stand (while the rest of the congregation remains seated) for the recitation of the Sikh Prayer called *Ardas*, & request God’s support and blessings for the marriage.
- **Wedding Hukam** (Holy Order) - Random reading from the Siri Guru Granth Sahib.
- **Palaa** — The father of the bride then hands one end of the groom’s scarf/shawl to his daughter. This act is generally done during (or just before) the singing of the hymn “*Palai taidai laagee*”
- **The Four Rounds** - The Lavaan (Wedding Hymn) is then recited and sung one by one. During each *Laav*, the bride and groom circle the Sri Guru Granth Sahib symbolizing that God will be the center of their marriage and their support in life.
- The hymn “*Vee -aa hoa mere baabulaa*” is sung, signifying that the wedding ceremony is complete.

The Four Wedding Rounds

The four nuptial rounds were written by Guru Ram Das for his own wedding. In them 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 get out of their ego identification and sacrifice to the unity, to the merger, and rise above their personalities and judgments. Commit to the institution of marriage as part of one’s spiritual path.

Next, he tells the couple that they have been blessed to be a part of the Sadh Sangat, and that their lives should be an example of service and divinity to all around them, to fulfill the great destiny they have been given.

Finally, the Guru says that the merger has taken place with the Infinite, because one has followed his advice. Each has inspired the other towards that merger.