

# *Anand Karaj*

## *Explanation Of The Sikh Wedding & Translation Of Hymns*

*"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 Amar Das*



***Prepared for the marriage of:***

## **Agenda**

- 9:30 AM    **Milni**
- 10:15 AM    **Tea**
- 11:00 AM    **Anand Karaj**
- *Ardas & Hukamnama*
  - *Palle Di Rasam*
  - *Lavaan*
  - *Anand Sahib (and other hymns)*
  - *Ardas & Hukamnama*
  - *Speeches*
  - *Blessing of Bride & Groom*
- 12:00 PM    **Langar**

*This document has been prepared to better understand what takes place at a Sikh wedding. We hope that you find the explanations useful and insightful.*

## **Gurdwara Introduction**

The *Gurdwara* is the Sikh place of worship. *Gurdwara* means "The Door to the Guru," or "The Guru's Gate." Every *Gurdwara* contains the *Darbar*, a main hall where the holy scriptures reside, and the *Langar*, the community kitchen.

Activities in the *darbar* revolve around the holy scripture of the Sikhs, the *Siri Guru Granth Sahib*. The *Guru Granth Sahib* is usually located at the front of the *darbar* on a raised platform. The *Siri Guru Granth Sahib* is the embodiment of the Word, and the *Shabads* which are the songs of worship and prayer of the Gurus. Guru Nanak, the first of the Sikh Gurus, received the Guruship from the Word of God, and transmitted it to all mankind. The Mantle of Guruship passed through ten bodies, until Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth Master, compiled these sacred teachings into their present form, and gave the Guruship back to the Word of God, where it now resides, and will for all time.

When we enter the Presence of the Guru, we do so with ultimate respect and humility. All that we think and say and do in the Presence of the Guru should reflect this attitude of gratitude and humility. The key to all behavior in *Gurdwara* is grace. Whatever you do, maintain your grace. *Gurdwara* is a group meditation – please respect the devotion and the love of the other members of the *Sadh Sangat*, the Company of the Holy. They are in the *Gurdwara* to experience the Guru, to receive His Blessing, and grow in consciousness.

## **Entering The Gurdwara**

Upon entering a *Gurdwara*, take off your shoes, wash your hands, cover your head (with a handkerchief or scarf). Tobacco, alcohol or intoxicants of any kind must never be brought into *Gurdwara*.

On entering the main hall (*Darbar*), Sikhs will walk up and bow to the *Guru Granth Sahib* as the first thing they do, touching the floor with their forehead. This is done as an sign of respect for the truths contained in the scriptures. People also place an offering of food or money in front of the *Guru Granth Sahib*. This is used to run the *Gurdwara* and the free food kitchen (*Langar*). The offering is not charity, but a sharing of God's gifts. Offering of money is usually between \$1 to \$5. If a person has no money or food to offer, they may offer flowers, or just some silent words of sincere thanks. Non-Sikh visitors should also bow and make an offering.

After bowing and offering, one should sit down in the *Sangat* (congregation). Men sit on one side and women on the other, in a cross-legged position. Everyone sits on the floor in a *Gurdwara*. This is to be humble before the *Guru Granth Sahib*, and because it gives everyone a place of equal status to sit. One should never sit with their feet pointing at the *Guru Granth Sahib*.

## **Marriage Ceremony**

So as never to forget God when rejoicing or celebrating worldly pleasures, and to include God in all affairs, the Sikhs recite the same four stages from the Guru Granth Sahib during weddings as advised by the Guru for the wedding of a human “bride” with the Almighty. This ceremony is called the Anand Karaj, or “blissful union”.

### **Milni**

The Sikh wedding starts with the *Milni*, or introductions. Various family members from both families come together to exchange gifts. This is usually done outside of the Gurdwara upon the arrival of the groom’s family. A small prayer (Ardas) is done before the *Milni* ceremony.

### **Tea**

Tea and snacks are served in the *langar* hall before the ceremony begins in the *darbar* or main hall.

In the *darbar*, the couple bows, and seats itself in front of *Guru Granth Sahib* with the groom on the right. The groom is seated first and the bride is accompanied into the *darbar* by her family.

## **Anand Karaj**

### **Ardas & Hukamnama**

The Anand Karaj ceremony begins with a hymn (*Keeta Lordie Kam So Har Pe Akhiye*) and a prayer (*Ardas*) in which the bride, groom and parents stand. After the prayer, the Guru Granth Sahib is opened to a random page and the hymn found at the top of the left-hand page (the *Vak* or *Hukam*) is read aloud. The text found is considered to be a relevant lesson for the day.

### **Palle Di Rasam**

The groom brings a decorated red scarf or palla to the ceremony. In the *Palle Di Rasam* ceremony, the father of the bride takes one end of the a decorated red scarf (*palla*) worn by the groom and places it in the hands of the bride. This signifies the start of the bride's new life with her husband.

The hymn, *Palai tendai lagee*, is sung during this ceremony.

## **Laavan**

The *Laavan*, composed by Guru Ram Das, is the hymn in four stanzas which is recited and sung to solemnize nuptials in Sikhism. The Sikh marriage ceremony is known as *Anand Karaj*, "Blissful Occasion"; it can take place anywhere, home or gurdwara, so long as the Guru Grant Sahib is present.

The marriage ceremony commences with the opening of the Guru Granth Sahib and with the reading of the *Laavan*. *Laavan*, literally "circling", describes marriage as a rite of passage into higher and higher circles of existence. In Sikhism, marriage is both literal and metaphorical. On the literal level it is a union of two people; on the metaphorical level it is a union of the microcosmic self with the Macrocosmic Reality. After husband and wife become one, they begin their passage together to a union with the Ultimate.

The journey begins with the active work in the world and the adoration of the Name. The second verse describes a higher state wherein the Ultimate Reality is recognized within all that is seen and heard. The Divine is encountered everywhere and the mystical melody is heard within the depths of the self. In the third circle, that feeling surges higher and the self becomes fully absorbed in the divine love. As the fourth round commences, the divine sweetness begins to pervade the entire self and unites the individual with the Infinite Self.

As each verse is recited and sung, the couple reverently circumambulate the Guru Granth Sahib clockwise.

## **Conclusion Of Ceremony**

### **Anand Sahib and Other Hymns**

Six verses of the *Anand Sahib* (Song Of Bliss) and several celebratory hymns are also sung at this time by the *ragis* (musicians). Examples include *Poori Asa Ji Mansa Mere Ram* and *Lakh Khusian Patshayian Je Satgur Nadar Kare*, and *Viah Ho Mere Babala*.

### **Ardas & Hukamnama**

The entire congregation then stands with hands together facing the Guru Granth Sahib for a final prayer. The *Hukam*, or divine command, is again received from the Guru Granth Sahib by opening at random.

### **Parshad**

After the *Hukam* is read, *parshad* is served to the entire congregation. *Parshad* is a sweet made from equal quantities of wheat flour, sugar, and clarified butter.

### **Sagan Line**

At the conclusion of the *Anand Karaj*, close relatives and friends will line up behind the bride and groom and individually congratulate them on their marriage. Small monetary gifts are often offered to the new couple in this popular cultural tradition.

### **Langar**

After congratulating the couple, friends and family share a traditional meal in the community kitchen. This meal is taken while seated on the ground to illustrate and contemplate the equality of all humanity and the humility on an individual before the Almighty.

## **Keeta Lordie Kam So Har Pe Akhiye**

*“Whatever work you wish to accomplish-tell it to the Lord”*

Shabad of Guru Nanak

Which is the swan, and which is the crane? It is only by His  
Glance of Grace.

Whoever is pleasing to Him, O Nanak, is transformed from a  
crow into a swan.

Whatever work you wish to accomplish-tell it to the Lord.

He will resolve your affairs; the True Guru gives His Guarantee  
of Truth.

In the Society of the Saints, you shall taste the treasure of the  
Ambrosial Nectar.

The Lord is the Merciful Destroyer of fear; He preserves and  
protects His slaves.

O Nanak, sing the Glorious Praises of the Lord, and see the  
Unseen Lord God.

(Guru Granth Sahib Page 91)

## **Palle Tenda Lagee**

*“I have grasped hold of the hem of Your robe, Lord”*

Shabad of Guru Arjan

I have totally discarded praise and slander, O Nanak; I have  
forsaken and abandoned everything.

I have seen that all relationships are false, and so I have grasped  
hold of the hem of Your robe, Lord.

I wandered and wandered and went crazy, O Nanak, in  
countless foreign lands and pathways.

But then, I slept in peace and comfort, when I met the Guru,  
and found my Friend. ||2||

When I forget You, I endure all pains and afflictions.

Making thousands of efforts, they are still not eliminated.

One who forgets the Name, is known as a poor person.

One who forgets the Name, wanders in reincarnation.

One who does not remember his Lord and Master, is punished  
by the Messenger of Death.

One who does not remember his Lord and Master, is judged to  
be a sick person.

One who does not remember his Lord and Master, is egotistical  
and proud.

One who forgets the Name is miserable in this world. ||14||

(Guru Granth Sahib Page 963)

## **Laavan**

Shabad of Guru Ram Das

Creator, as we revolve in the first divine circle, We resolve to return to the world of action. As we resolve to act rightfully, and make Your Word our god and scripture, our misdeeds are dispelled. Scriptures steadfastly urge us to act righteously and contemplate Your Name. By remembering the True Guru, all our misdeeds and offences are dispelled. Bliss is ours at once, we are blessed with great fortune, and the Divine tastes so very sweet. Nanak the slave says, the first circle the wedding ceremony is begun.

In the second circle, we meet the True Guru, the Primal Being. By the fear of the Fearless One, our self gets rid of the filthy ego. In pure awe of the Divine, we sing praise day and night, and we see the Divine present everywhere. Infinite in all directions, intimate in everyone, within and without, there is only the One. Joining the faithful, we sing songs of joy. Nanak the slave says, in the second circle the soundless Word begins to play.

## **Laavan (Cont'd)**

In the third circle, the bliss of detachment fills the mind. By joining the faithful, we join the Transcendent One. We are blessed. We attain the Immaculate One, we worship the One with praise, and we recite the Word. By joining the faithful, we join the Blessed One. We tell the untellable story. Our heart begins to beat with the divine melody. We recite the Name with fortune glowing bright on our foreheads. Nanak the slave says, in the third circle the Divine One rises in our detached mind.

In the fourth circle, we find equanimity, we unite with the Divine One. Through the Guru, we naturally become one with the One, body and mind exult in delicious joy. But we taste the sweetness only if we please The One, by meditating day and night. My Guide, all my desires are fulfilled; through the divine Name, felicitations ring. The Sovereign's blessing completes the wedding rite; and the bride is in bliss with the Name in her heart. Nanak the slave says, in the fourth circle the imperishable Groom is wed.

(Guru Granth Sahib Page 773)

## **Poori Asa Ji Mansa Mere Ram**

*“My hopes and desires have been fulfilled, O my Lord”*

Shabad of Guru Arjan

My hopes and desires have been fulfilled, O my Lord.

I am worthless, without virtue; all virtues are Yours, O Lord.

All virtues are Yours, O my Lord and Master; with what mouth  
should I praise You?

You did not consider my merits and demerits; you forgave me  
in an instant.

I have obtained the nine treasures, congratulations are pouring  
in, and the unstruck melody resounds.

Says Nanak, I have found my Husband Lord within my own  
home, and all my anxiety is forgotten.

(Guru Granth Sahib Page 576)

## **Lakh Khusian Patshayian**

*“Hundreds of thousands of princely pleasures are  
enjoyed, if the True Guru bestows His Glance of Grace”*

Shabad of Guru Arjan

All things are received if the One is obtained.

The precious gift of this human life becomes fruitful when one  
chants the True Word of the Shabad.

One who has such destiny written on his forehead enters the  
Mansion of the Lord's Presence, through the Guru. ||1||

O my mind, focus your consciousness on the One.

Without the One, all entanglements are worthless; emotional  
attachment to Maya is totally false. ||1||Pause||

Hundreds of thousands of princely pleasures are enjoyed, if  
the True Guru bestows His Glance of Grace.

If He bestows the Name of the Lord, for even a moment, my  
mind and body are cooled and soothed.

Those who have such pre-ordained destiny hold tight to the  
Feet of the True Guru. ||2||

(Guru Granth Sahib Page 44)

## **Anand Sahib - "Song of Bliss"**

Shabad of Guru Amar Das

I am in ecstasy, O my mother, for I have found my True Guru. I have found the True Guru, with intuitive ease, and my mind vibrates with the music of bliss. The jewelled melodies and their related celestial harmonies have come to sing the Word of the Shabad. The Lord dwells within the minds of those who sing the Shabad. Says Nanak, I am in ecstasy, for I have found my True Guru. ||1||

O my mind, remain always with the Lord. Remain always with the Lord, O my mind, and all sufferings will be forgotten. He will accept You as His own, and all your affairs will be perfectly arranged. Our Lord and Master is all-powerful to do all things, so why forget Him from your mind? Says Nanak, O my mind, remain always with the Lord. ||2||

O my True Lord and Master, what is there which is not in Your celestial home? Everything is in Your home; they receive, unto whom You give. Constantly singing Your Praises and Glories, Your Name is enshrined in the mind. The divine melody of the Shabad vibrates for those, within whose minds the Naam abides. Says Nanak, O my True Lord and Master, what is there which is not in Your home? ||3||

## **Anand Sahib (Cont'd)**

The True Name is my only support. The True Name is my only support; it satisfies all hunger. It has brought peace and tranquility to my mind; it has fulfilled all my desires. I am forever a sacrifice to the Guru, who possesses such glorious greatness. Says Nanak, listen, O Saints; enshrine love for the Shabad. The True Name is my only support. ||4||

The Panch Shabad, the five primal sounds, vibrate in that blessed house. In that blessed house, the Shabad vibrates; He infuses His almighty power into it. Through You, we subdue the five demons of desire, and slay Death, the torturer. Those who have such pre-ordained destiny are attached to the Lord's Name. Says Nanak, they are at peace, and the unstruck sound current vibrates within their homes. ||5||

Listen to the song of bliss, O most fortunate ones; all your longings shall be fulfilled. I have obtained the Supreme Lord God, and all sorrows have been forgotten. Pain, illness and suffering have departed, listening to the True Bani. The Saints and their friends are in ecstasy, knowing the Perfect Guru. Pure are the listeners, and pure are the speakers; the True Guru is all-pervading and permeating. Prays Nanak, touching the Guru's Feet, the unstruck sound current of the celestial bugles vibrates and resounds. ||40||

(Guru Granth Sahib Page 917)

## **Viah Ho Mere Babala**

***“My marriage has been performed, O my father. As Gurmukh, I have found the Lord.”***

### **Shabad of Guru Ram Das**

My marriage has been performed, O my father. As Gurmukh, I have found the Lord.

The darkness of ignorance has been dispelled.

The Guru has revealed the blazing light of spiritual wisdom.

This spiritual wisdom given by the Guru shines forth, and the darkness has been dispelled.

I have found the Priceless Jewel of the Lord.

The sickness of my ego has been dispelled, and my pain is over and done.

Through the Guru's Teachings, my identity has consumed my identical identity.

I have obtained my Husband Lord, the Undying Form.

He is Imperishable; He shall never die, and He shall never ever leave.

My marriage has been performed, O my father. As Gurmukh, I have found the Lord. || 2 ||.

(Guru Granth Sahib Page 78)

Note: Gurmukh (“facing the guru”) refers to an individual who has centered their life around the Almighty.

## **Ardas – “Supplication”**

After first contemplating the Primal Power of the Almighty, call to mind Guru Nanak. Then let your mind dwell on Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das and Guru Ram Das, may they watch over us. Meditate in remembrance upon Guru Arjun, Guru Hargobind and Siri Har Rai. Dwell upon Guru Har Krishan, seeing whom all sufferings shall depart. Meditate in remembrance upon Guru Teg Bahadur, and the nine treasures shall hasten to your home. May they protect and help us everywhere. And the Tenth Master, Guru Gobind Singh Ji, father of the Khalsa who has blessed us with the gift of Amrit - may we enjoy his protection everywhere. The Light of the Ten Gurus, the Living Guru, the Word of God, the Truth of Truths, the Siri Guru Granth Sahib; contemplating Its divine darshan, Khalsa Ji Sahib, Bolo Ji, "SIRI WAHEGURU!"

Let us lovingly remember the Panj Piaray; the four sons of Guru Gobind Singh; the forty liberated ones; those who have meditated upon the Naam, and shared with others in need, without thought of reward. Those who held firm to their faith in the face of adversity and hardship. Those who have taken up the Sword to defend the weak and oppressed. Those who saw the faults in others, but overlooked those faults, and instead saw the Spirit of God in all people. Thinking of their deeds, Khalsa Ji Sahib, Bolo Ji, "SIRI WAHEGURU!"

(continued on next page)

## **Ardas (Cont'd)**

Let us remember all those Sikh men and women who, for the sake of the Dharma, and the religious and spiritual freedom of everybody, gave their heads, and allowed themselves to be cut apart, limb by limb, joint by joint; who had their scalps torn from their heads; who were stretched and broken upon the wheels of torture; who were beaten and sawn apart, but never gave up their faith, and their determination to live according to the Sikh rehat, with all their hair, to their last breath.

Let us always remember those Gursikhs who, in the service of our holy Gurudwaras, in the spirit of non-violence, allowed themselves to be brutally beaten, burnt and boiled alive, and yet still uttered no words of protest, but instead, placed their trust, and their lives, in the Hands of God, in sweet surrender to His Will. Remembering their sacrifice, and their glorious victory, Khalsa Ji Sahib, Bolo Ji, "SIRI WAHEGURU"

Let us hold dear in our consciousness the Five Holy Takhts, the Thrones of Spirituality, all Gurudwaras and all those holy places consecrated(blessed) by the Guru's Footsteps; thinking of all those places where the Guru's Sikhs gather together in Sangat and Pangat, in worship and fellowship, Khalsa Ji Sahib, Bolo Ji, "SIRI WAHEGURU!"

May the primary prayer of the Khalsa be to always hold in the heart. "WAHEGURU , WAHEGURU, WAHEGURU."

## **Ardas (Cont'd)**

As we think of Him, so may we be blessed. May God's Grace and Protection extend to all bodies of the Khalsa, wherever they may be. May the Lord's Glory be fulfilled, and may His Sweet Will prevail. May we achieve Victory through the Charity of Brotherhood and the Sword of Righteousness. Deg, Teg, Fateh!. May the Khalsa triumph and prevail forever. May the choirs of the Sikhs, our banners, our shrines, abide forever and ever. Khalsa Ji Sahib, Bolo Ji, "SIRI WAHEGURU!"

May the minds of the Sikhs be humble, but their wisdom be profound; may You Yourself be the keeper of our wisdom, O Waheguruji. Grant to Your Sikhs the Gift of Sikh Dharma, the Gift of Your Naam, the gift of long and uncut hair, the Gift of Faith, of confidence in You, the gift of wisdom and discernment, the Gift of reading and understanding the Word of Your Bani. Grant us the Blessing of bathing in the Nectar pool of the Harimandir Sahib. May the Sikhs be united in love and brotherhood. Khalsa Ji Sahib, Bolo Ji, "SIRI WAHEGURU!"

O beloved Father, please give Your Help and Support to the Sikh Panth, now and always. Save us, Lord, from the five demons, of lust, anger, greed, attachment and pride. Keep us forever attached to Your Lotus Feet. O Kind and Loving Father. May Your Grace and Protection extend to our labors of this and all days, so that our thoughts, words and deeds may be in harmony with Your Will. May we always accept Your Will, and do what is right. Give us Light and Understanding, Dear Lord, that we may know what is pleasing to Your Will. (Continued)

## **Ardas (Cont'd)**

Waheguru ji, Honor of the humble, Strength of the weak, Shelter of the shelter-less, True Father, we offer this prayer in Your Presence; by Your Grace we are gathered together this day, to sing Your Sweet Bani, to hear your life-giving Word, and speak of Your Manifold Blessings. May these things find a loving place within our hearts, and serve to draw our souls ever closer to You. Please bless this Chardi Kala divaan that we may persevere in this effort to gather and practice the Guru's Word in this land so far from our roots.

*Specific prayers or supplications are added here*

Please bless this Prashad and Guru ka Langar, which have been prepared in the Guru's Kitchen. Bless those who have prepared it, those who serve it, and those who partake of it. Bless us with the Holy Word of Your Hukam. Inspire us to walk on the path of Gurmat shown to us by You through the Holy Word of Gurbani. Please forgive us our many sins, our errors and omissions, and help us, that we may keep ourselves pure, in the face of the challenges and temptations of the world. Bless us with company of only people of love, that we may remember Your Naam in their presence.

Through the gift of the Naam given to us by Nanak, may we always remain in Chardi Kala (Eternal Optimism). Within Your will, we pray for the welfare of all humanity,

Nanak naam chardi kala, Tere bhaanay sarbatt ka bhala

WAHEGURU ji ka khalsa, WAHEGURU ji ki fateh!!!

Bolay so Nihaal ! Sat Sri Akal !!!