

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



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Translations Shauna Singh Baldwin
Edited and Redesigned Dr. Kanwaljit Singh Patiala

About the Sikh Wedding

In the Sikh tradition, marriage takes more than love between two people and physical liaison, through 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 to fulfil 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 Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

The Bani Lavan (being recited at the time of Lavan), is a journey toward bliss, describes marriage as a metaphor for the journey of the soul reaching for infinite. You circle the Siri Guru Granth Sahib four times to commit to each other, making your promises with the teachings of the Prime Guru as witness.

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

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** – The wedding ceremony begins with singing and chanting Gurbani, the text of Sri Guru Granth Sahib.
- **Milni** – On arriving members of the groom's family meets and greets the counterparts relatives of bride's family to signify the union of the two families.
- **Couple Arrive** – The groom is seated facing Sri Guru Granth Sahib and the bride sits beside him on the left.
- **Prayer (Ardas)** – The couple and their parents stand for offering Ardas for successful completion of the ceremony, and benign blessing of the Akalpurakh. The rest Sangat remain seated.
- **Gurvaad** – After the Ardas a randomly chosen Shabad is consulted as an order of the Akalpurah as a thought and blessings for the day.
- **Palla** – Traditionally the bride's parents tie one end of the groom's scarf/Shawl to their daughter's, symbolizing their union. The ceremony is accompanied by singing the Shabad 'Pallē Taindē Lāgī.'
- **Circumambulation** – The Granthi recites Bani related to first Lav. The bride and groom circle Sri Guru Granth Sahib along with Lava Bani singing by the Kirtani Jatha. This is repeated for all the four Lavan.
- **Conclusion** – The wedding ceremony is concluded with the singing of 'Anand Sahib' succeeded by 'Via Hōā Mērē Bābulā' and 'Pūrī Āsā Jī Mērī Mansā'.

Four Circumambulations

LAVAN PHERE

The ‘Lavan’ bani associated with the four nuptial rounds is written by Guru Ramdas (fourth Sikh Guru) on the occasion of his own wedding. It contains four verses.

First tells about the commitment 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.

Second tells the couple they have met the True Guru. Now they have to rise above self-ness in favour of unity and commitment to the institution of Anand-Karaj as to a spiritual path.

Third tells the couple that they are blessed to be part of a congregation (Sadh-Sangat) and their lives should be an example of Sewa (helpfulness) to all.

Finally, the Guru predicts the couple can unite with the infinite, if they follow the path as advised.

Four Circumambulations

LĀVĀN BĀNĪ

ਸੂਹੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੪ ॥

sūhī mahalā 4.

ਹਰਿ ਪਹਿਲੜੀ ਲਾਵ ਪਰਵਿਰਤੀ ਕਰਮ ਦ੍ਰਿੜਾਇਆ ਬਲਿਰਾਮ ਜੀਉ ॥

hari pahilaṛī lāv paraviratī karam driṛāiā bali rām jīu.

In the first round of the marriage ceremony, the Lord sets out His Instructions for performing the daily duties of married life.

ਬਾਣੀ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਵੇਦੁ ਧਰਮੁ ਦ੍ਰਿੜਹੁ ਪਾਪ ਤਜਾਇਆ ਬਲਿ ਰਾਮ ਜੀਉ ॥

bānī brahamā vēdu dharamu driṛahu pāp tajāiā bali rām jīu.

Instead of the hymns of the Vedas to Brahma, embrace the righteous conduct of Dharma, and renounce sinful actions.

ਪਰਮੁ ਦ੍ਰਿੜਹੁ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਵਹੁ ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਦ੍ਰਿੜਾਇਆ ॥

dharamu driṛahu hari nāmu dhiāvahu simriti nāmu driṛāiā.

Meditate on the Lord's Name; embrace and enshrine the contemplative remembrance of the Naam.

ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਪੂਰਾ ਆਰਾਧਹੁ ਸਭਿ ਕਿਲਵਿਖ ਪਾਪ ਗਵਾਇਆ ॥

satiguru guru pūrā ārādhahu sabhi kilavikh pāp gavāiā.

Worship and adore the Guru, the Perfect True Guru, and all your sins shall be dispelled.

ਸਹਜ ਅਨੰਦੁ ਹੋਆ ਵਡਭਾਗੀ ਮਨਿ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਮੀਠਾ ਲਾਇਆ ॥

sahaj anandu hōā vadabhāgī mani hari hari mīṭhā lāiā.

By great good fortune, celestial bliss is attained, and the Lord, Har, Har, seems sweet to the mind.

ਜਨੁ ਕਹੈ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਲਾਵ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਆਰੰਭੁ ਕਾਜੁ ਰਚਾਇਆ ॥੧॥

janu kahai nānaku lāv pahiṛī ārambhū kāju rachāiā.੧.

Servant Nanak proclaims that, in this, the first round of the marriage ceremony, the marriage ceremony has begun. ||1||

ਹਰਿ ਦੂਜੀ ਲਾਵ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਮਿਲਾਇਆ ਬਲਿ ਰਾਮ ਜੀਉ ॥

hari dūjarī lāv satiguru purakhu milāiā bali rām jīu.

In the second round of the marriage ceremony, the Lord leads you to meet
the True Guru, the Primal Being.

ਨਿਰਭਉ ਭੈ ਮਨੁ ਹੋਇ ਹਉਮੈ ਮੈਲੁ ਗਵਾਇਆ ਬਲਿ ਰਾਮ ਜੀਉ ॥

nirabhau bhai manu hōi haumai mailu gavāiā bali rām jīu.

With the Fear of God, the Fearless Lord in the mind, the filth of egotism is
eradicated.

ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਭਉ ਪਾਇਆ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਇਆ ਹਰਿ ਵੇਖੇ ਰਾਮੁ ਹਦੂਰੇ ॥

niramalu bhau pāiā hari guṇ gāiā hari vēkhai rāmu hadūrē.

In the Fear of God, the Immaculate Lord, sing the Glorious Praises of the
Lord, and behold the Lord's Presence before you.

ਹਰਿ ਆਤਮ ਰਾਮੁ ਪਸਾਰਿਆ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਸਰਬ ਰਹਿਆ ਭਰਪੂਰੇ ॥

hari ātam rāmu pasāriā suāmī sarab rahiā bharapūrē.

The Lord, the Supreme Soul, is the Lord and Master of the Universe; He is
pervading and permeating everywhere, fully filling all spaces.

ਅੰਤਰਿ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਏਕੇ ਮਿਲਿ ਹਰਿ ਜਨ ਮੰਗਲ ਗਾਏ ॥

antari bāhari hari prabhu ēkō mili hari jan maṅgal gāē.

Deep within, and outside as well, there is only the One Lord God. Meeting
together, the humble servants of the Lord sing the songs of joy.

ਜਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੂਜੀ ਲਾਵ ਚਲਾਈ ਅਨਹਦ ਸਬਦ ਵਜਾਏ ॥੨॥

jan nānak dūjī lāv chalāī anahad sabad vajāē.੨.

Servant Nanak proclaims that, in this, the second round of the marriage
ceremony, the unstruck sound current of the Shabad resounds. ||2||

ਹਰਿ ਤੀਜੜੀ ਲਾਵ ਮਨਿ ਚਾਉ ਭਇਆ ਬੈਰਾਗੀਆ ਬਲਿ ਰਾਮ ਜੀਉ ॥

hari tījṛī lāv mani chāu bhaiā bairāgīā bali rām jīu.

In the third round of the marriage ceremony, the mind is filled with Divine Love.

ਸੰਤ ਜਨਾ ਹਰਿ ਮੇਲੁ ਹਰਿ ਪਾਇਆ ਵਡਭਾਗੀਆ ਬਲਿ ਰਾਮ ਜੀਉ ॥

sant janā hari mēlu hari pāiā vaḍabhāgīā bali rām jīu.

Meeting with the humble Saints of the Lord, I have found the Lord, by great good fortune.

ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਹਰਿ ਪਾਇਆ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਇਆ ਮੁਖਿ ਬੋਲੀ ਹਰਿ ਬਾਣੀ ॥

niramalu hari pāiā hari guṇ gāiā mukhi bōlī hari bāñī.

I have found the Immaculate Lord, and I sing the Glorious Praises of the Lord. I speak the Word of the Lord's Bani.

ਸੰਤ ਜਨਾ ਵਡਭਾਗੀ ਪਾਇਆ ਹਰਿ ਕਥੀਐ ਅਕਥ ਕਹਾਣੀ ॥

sant janā vaḍabhāgī pāiā hari kathīai akath kahāñī.

By great good fortune, I have found the humble Saints, and I speak the Unspoken Speech of the Lord.

ਹਿਰਦੈ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਧੁਨਿ ਉਪਜੀ ਹਰਿ ਜਪੀਐ ਮਸਤਕਿ ਭਾਗੁ ਜੀਉ ॥

hiradai hari hari hari dhuni upajī hari japīai masataki bhāgu jīu.

The Name of the Lord, Har, Har, Har, vibrates and resounds within my heart; meditating on the Lord, I have realized the destiny inscribed upon my forehead.

ਜਨੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਬੋਲੇ ਤੀਜੀ ਲਾਵੈ ਹਰਿ ਉਪਜੈ ਮਨਿ ਬੈਰਾਗੁ ਜੀਉ ॥੩॥

janu nānaku bōlē tījī lāvai hari upajai mani bairāgu jīu.੩.

Servant Nanak proclaims that, in this, the third round of the marriage ceremony, the mind is filled with Divine Love for the Lord. ||3||

ਹਰਿ ਚਉਥੀ ਲਾਵ ਮਨਿ ਸਹਜੁ ਭਇਆ ਹਰਿ ਪਾਇਆ ਬਲਿ ਰਾਮ ਜੀਉ ॥

hari chauthaī lāv mani sahaju bhaiā hari pāiā bali rām jīu.

In the fourth round of the marriage ceremony, my mind has become
peaceful; I have found the Lord.

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਸੁਭਾਇ ਹਰਿ ਮਨਿ ਤਨਿ ਮੀਠਾ ਲਾਇਆ ਬਲਿ ਰਾਮ ਜੀਉ ॥

gurmukhi miliā subhāi hari mani tani mīthā lāiā bali rām jīu.

As Gurmukh, I have met Him, with intuitive ease; the Lord seems so
sweet to my mind and body.

ਹਰਿ ਮੀਠਾ ਲਾਇਆ ਮੇਰੇ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਭਾਇਆ ਅਨਦਿਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਈ ॥

hari mīthā lāiā mērē prabh bhāiā anadinu hari liv lāī.

The Lord seems so sweet; I am pleasing to my God. Night and day,
I lovingly focus my consciousness on the Lord.

ਮਨ ਚਿੰਦਿਆ ਫਲੁ ਪਾਇਆ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮਿ ਵਜੀ ਵਾਧਾਈ ॥

man chindiā phalu pāiā suāmī hari nāmi vajī vādhāī.

I have obtained my Lord and Master, the fruit of my mind's desires.

The Lord's Name resounds and resonates.

ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭਿ ਠਾਕੁਰਿ ਕਾਜੁ ਰਚਾਇਆ ਧਨ ਹਿਰਦੈ ਨਾਮਿ ਵਿਗਾਸੀ ॥

hari prabhi ṭhākuri kāju rachāiā dhan hiradai nāmi vigāsī.

The Lord God, my Lord and Master, blends with His bride, and her
heart blossoms forth in the Naam.

ਜਨੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਬੋਲੇ ਚਉਥੀ ਲਾਵੈ ਹਰਿ ਪਾਇਆ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਅਵਿਨਾਸੀ ॥੪॥੨॥

janu nānaku bōlē chauthī lāvai hari pāiā prabhu avināsī.4.2.

Servant Nanak proclaims that, in this, the fourth round of the
marriage ceremony, we have found the Eternal Lord God. ||4||2||

ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੩ ਅਨੰਦੁ

rāmakalī mahalā ੩ anandu

੧ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

ik-ōṁkār satigur prasādi .

Raamkalee, Third Mehl, Anand ~ The Song Of Bliss:
One Universal Creator God. By The Grace Of The True Guru:

ਅਨੰਦੁ ਭਇਆ ਮੇਰੀ ਮਾਏ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਮੈ ਪਾਇਆ ॥

anandu bhaiā mērī māē satigurū mai pāiā .

I am in ecstasy, O my mother, for I have found my True Guru.

ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਤ ਪਾਇਆ ਸਹਜ ਸੇਤੀ ਮਨਿ ਵਜੀਆ ਵਾਧਾਈਆ ॥

satiguru t pāiā sahaj sētī mani vajīā vādhāīā .

I have found the True Guru, with intuitive ease, and my mind vibrates with
the music of bliss.

ਰਾਗ ਰਤਨ ਪਰਵਾਰ ਪਰੀਆ ਸਬਦ ਗਾਵਣ ਆਈਆ ॥

rāg ratan paravār parīā sabad gāvāṇ āīā .

The jewelled melodies and their related celestial harmonies have come to
sing the Word of the Shabad.

ਸਬਦੇ ਤ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਹਰੀ ਕੇਰਾ ਮਨਿ ਜਿਨੀ ਵਸਾਇਆ ॥

sabado t gāvahu harī kērā mani jinī vasāīā .

The Lord dwells within the minds of those who sing the Shabad.

ਕਹੈ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਅਨੰਦੁ ਹੋਆ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਮੈ ਪਾਇਆ ॥੧॥

kahai nānaku anandu hōā satigurū mai pāiā .੧.

Says Nanak, I am in ecstasy, for I have found my True Guru. ||1||

A Wedding Blessing

(By Guru Ramdas)

ਵੀਆਹੁ ਹੋਆ ਮੇਰੇ ਬਾਬੁਲਾ ਗੁਰਮੁਖੇ ਹਰਿ ਪਾਇਆ ॥

vīāhu hōā mērē bābulā guramukhē hari pāiā .

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

ਅਗਿਆਨੁ ਅੰਧੇਰਾ ਕਟਿਆ ਗੁਰ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਪ੍ਰਚੰਡੁ ਬਲਾਇਆ ॥

agiānu andhērā katiā gur giānu prachanḍu balāiā .

The darkness of ignorance has been dispelled. The Guru has revealed the blazing light of spiritual wisdom.

ਬਲਿਆ ਗੁਰ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਅੰਧੇਰਾ ਬਿਨਸਿਆ ਹਰਿ ਰਤਨੁ ਪਦਾਰਥੁ ਲਾਧਾ ॥

baliā gur giānu andhērā binasiā hari ratanu padārathu lādhā .

This spiritual wisdom given by the Guru shines forth, and the darkness has been dispelled. I have found the Priceless Jewel of the Lord.

ਹਉਮੈ ਰੋਗੁ ਗਇਆ ਦੁਖੁ ਲਾਘਾ ਆਪੁ ਆਪੈ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਖਾਧਾ ॥

haumai rōgu gaiā dukhu lāthā āpu āpai guramati khādhā .

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.

ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਵਰੁ ਪਾਇਆ ਅਬਿਨਾਸੀ ਨਾ ਕਦੇ ਮਰੈ ਨ ਜਾਇਆ ॥

akāl mūrati varu pāiā abināsī nā kadē marai n jāiā .

I have obtained my Husband Lord, the Akaal Moorat, the Undying Form. He is Imperishable; He shall never die, and He shall never ever leave.

ਵੀਆਹੁ ਹੋਆ ਮੇਰੇ ਬਾਬੁਲਾ ਗੁਰਮੁਖੇ ਹਰਿ ਪਾਇਆ ॥੨॥

vīāhu hōā mērē bābulā guramukhē hari pāiā .੨.

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

Congratulations

