

AMRIT SANCHAR (GUIDE)
From Victory and Virtue: Ceremonies and Code of Conduct of Sikh Dharma
(The Office of the Bhai Sahiba)

Set-Up For the Amrit Ceremony

The Amrit ceremony can be held in the Gurdwara, or any room which has been cleaned and prepared to serve as the Guru's Court. If there is an Akhand Paath in progress during the appointed time for the Amrit ceremony, then another Palki should be set up in another room, so that there is only one ceremony conducted per room.

- It is preferable to conduct the ceremony during the Ambrosial hours, just before or at dawn; set-up, therefore, should be done the night before.
- The Gurdwara or room to be used must be thoroughly cleaned prior to set-up.
- Clean white sheets are to be put down to cover the entire floor.
- Serving bowls for the Gurprashad, a kirpan to cut it, and napkins should be placed near the Guru, on a small table, for example. Be sure to place the Gurprashad on a table, and not on the floor.
- Place fresh flowers before the Guru if they are available.
- Place six Siri Sahibs (swords) in front of the Guru's ramalas, for use by the Panj Piaray and the Granthi.
- The single volume Gurmukhi Bir of the Siri Guru Granth Sahib is used, along with an English Translation. Each Hukam should be read out in Gurmukhi and then translated into English (or the language of the people present in the ceremony).
- A nitnem should be kept near the Guru, to read the following banis in this order: [Japji Sahib](#), Jaap Sahib, Tev Prasad Swaiya, Bayntee Chaupe, and Anand Sahib. The Panj Piaray will read these banis if they do not have them memorized.
- An area about five feet square is prepared directly in front of the Palki Sahib, where the Panj Piaray will prepare the Amrit. Since the Panj Piaray will be kneeling during the ceremony, it is considerate to set down padding (blankets, foam, etc. but not sheepskins) and cover it with white sheets. After the Amrit is prepared, and before it is administered, this padding should be removed.



- An iron bowl (bata) is placed in the center of the square padded area. Iron is preferred to steel, since the iron will react with the water and release its essence into it. A small stool should be available, upon which the bata is placed when the Amrit is administered. Roll up a towel and place it around the base of the bata, to hold it steady, like tabla rings steady the tablas.
- Place a large iron kanda (sword) in front of the bata.

- Have some towels available for the Panj Piaray when they administer the Amrit.
- Have extra iron bowls available for use during the Amrit ceremony.
- Have a clean cloth or ramala to cover the bata.
- Keep a notebook and pen available.
- Water will be needed for the Amrit, and also for the Panj Piaray and Granthi and prashad servers to wash their hands, if no running water is available.
- Patasis from the Harimandar Sahib, or white sugar, are kept on the side, to be put into the water at the beginning of the ceremony by a Khalsa woman who represents Mata Sahib Kaur Ji.
- If the ceremony is to be observed by a large number of people, consider using a sound system, with a microphone set up behind the Palki for the reading of the Hukams, and one in front of the Palki for the Panj Piaray to use.
- Arrange in advance for someone to play kirtan—preferably a Shabad written by or about Khalsa or Guru Gobind Singh; Song of the Khalsa and Anand Sahib will be played at the end of the Amrit Ceremony.
- There should be two or three Amritdhari sevadars available to help with the ceremony, preferably with experience. They serve as guardians of the ceremony. They will assist the Panj Piaray, hand out towels, and remove wet towels, as well as remove the extra sheets and padding. The sevadars are to have karas, kangas, kirpans, and kacheras available and will give them to the candidates before the ceremony, if necessary.
- A sevarar should record the names and addresses of the new Khalsas, as well as the Hukam page numbers, and mail this information to the Chancellor's Office in Los Angeles, and the the Office of the Bhai Sahiba in New Mexico.
- **The Panj Piaray**

Any Amritdhari Sikh who has maintained his or her Rehit, who has led an exemplary life, maintaining consistent bana, banis, simran and seva, who has not betrayed the Khalsa Panth, who is in good health (if female, should not be menstruating at the time), who can recite the banis accurately and quickly, can be chosen to serve as one of the Panj.

Forty days before the Amrit ceremony, eight people should begin to prepare for it; two will serve as alternates, if any of the others cannot serve. The group should meet several times during the forty days; if they live far apart, a phone meeting—conference call—might be more practical. A few days prior to the ceremony, an actual meeting is advisable. In these meetings, a head Piaray is appointed who will direct the course of events at the ceremony. This is the time to acknowledge as a group the responsibilities of being clear channels for the Guru's energy.

The order of events and details are discussed and rehearsed if necessary, to insure a graceful and dignified ceremony. Remember that each should take a full bath or shower after rising from sleep the morning of the ceremony, including washing the hair.

Each Piara chooses one of the banis to recite.

Each Piara will represent one of the five aspects of Khalsa. Each one comes with individual weaknesses, and yet once the Piara is challenged in front of the Siri Guru Granth Sahib and the Ardas and the Hukam have been done, the five become the Embodiment of the Guru, and shall act as channels for His energy. They have lost their separate identities, and are now the Panj Piaray.

Each of the original Panj Piaray exemplified an aspect of Khalsa:

- Bhai Daya Singh (kindness)
Bhai Dharam Singh (righteousness)
Bhai Mokam Singh (organization)
Bhai Himmat Singh (courage)
Bhai Sahib Singh (majesty)

BANA FOR THE PANJ PIARAY

The Panj should be dressed identically. Choose a single color for the cholas and cummerbunds (white, blue or orange are suitable). Ladies are to wear white churidas, men need not wear them. White, blue or orange turbans, with a chuni for women.

All five K's are to be worn, including kirpans at least six inches long. Jewellery, malas or khandas may be worn only if they are consistent among all six. This is part of the outward manifestation that they have merged in unity as the Embodiment of the Guru.

MEETING WITH THE CANDIDATES

Sometime before the ceremony, all the candidates, including those who wish to re-take their vows, meet with a representative of the Panj. At this time, they will discuss the principles of Khalsa, the ceremony and any questions they may have.

They will receive the following instructions, to allow each individual the greatest opportunity to experience a total transformation:

- Take a full bath or shower the morning of the ceremony, including washing the hair
- Men and women both tie their turban so it can be opened at the top
- All hair is tied in a Rishi knot
- Men keep their beards unrolled
- No jewellery is to be worn
- Come wearing the 5 K's: hair clean and tied up, steel or iron kara, kanga in the hair, kirpan worn outside the kurta (do not wear a leather sheath), kacheras.
- Remember to bring a donation for the Guru

- Be prepared to stay as a distinct group, without bathroom breaks or breaks to re-tie turbans, until the entire ceremony is completed
- Wear clean clothes
- Be sure the candidates understand how to cup their hands to receive the Amrit and Prashad. Shawls can be worn in cold weather.

THE MORNING OF THE AMRIT CEREMONY

The Panj Piaray and the Granthi meet before the candidates arrive, to check that everything is properly set up, and that all supplies are ready. The sevadars should also be present to assist them.

When the candidates start arriving, they can sit in another room and chant Wahe Guru until they are called in. One Piara checks that all candidates have all 5 K's, have washed their hair, removed extra jewelery, and understand the commitment they are about to confirm.

Each of the Panj Piaray washes a Siri Sahib and places it in front of the Siri Guru Granth Sahib.

SUDAI - THE CHALLENGES

The challenges will be held in privacy, in the presence of the Panj Piaray, the Granthi and the Siri Guru Granth Sahib. First the Granthi is challenged, then each one of the Panj Piaray and finally, anyone wishing to re-take their Amrit vows.

Sudai of the Granthi

The Panj Piaray stand with swords drawn, while the Granthi presents him/herself before the Guru for questioning. (Someone has replaced the Granthi behind the Guru during the Granthi's Sudai.) The Head Piara, or any one of the Panj, does the questioning. The Granthi is addressed by name, and answers these questions:

1. "Do you keep your five K's?"
2. "Do you read your five Banis daily?"
3. "Have you committed any of the kurehits?"
4. "Have you ever betrayed the Khalsa, in thought, word or deed?"

If the Granthi is found to be fit, the Head Piara greets him or her with, Wahe Guru Ji Ka Khalsa, Wahe Guru ji ke Fateh!

The Granthi now bows before the Siri Guru Granth Sahib, with the prayer to experience and live the purity which is Khalsa. The Granthi then takes his/her place behind the Guru.

Sudai of the Panj Piaray

The Granthi now calls upon each Piara. The questions above are addressed to each Piara

individually. When each Piara is found to be worthy of serving in the Amrit ceremony, s/he bows to the Siri Guru Granth Sahib, stands and proclaims: Wahe Guru Ji ka Khalsa, Wahe Guru Ji ke Fateh!

Ardas is offered, asking for the blessings upon the Panj Piaray and the Amrit ceremony which is about to begin. A Hukam is taken and translated.

Sudai of Those Re-taking Their Vows

Kurehits are actions which, when taken, invalidate one's Amrit vows. They include:

- " cutting any hair from the body
- " committing adultery, or having sex outside of marriage
- " eating meat
- " use of tobacco, alcohol or narcotic drugs

Amrit transforms a person so completely, that it is only needed once in a lifetime. However, the kurehits will be like spots on one's purity, and to re-establish one's identity as Khalsa, the cleansing power of the Amrit ceremony is needed again. This opportunity should not be misused. Amrit is not like Confession and Atonement in the Catholic religion in which one sins and is absolved.

When someone has committed a kurehit and wishes to renew his or her vows, s/he will need to meet privately with the Panj Piaray on the morning of the Amrit ceremony. During this meeting, which is held in private, the kurehit is confessed. The Panj Piaray then have the opportunity to question the person about his or her attitude regarding the kurehit and his or her commitment to the renewed vows.

To re-establish the understanding of the principles of Khalsa, the Panj Piaray may give the person special meditations, Banis or Seva such as: cleaning the Gurdwara, washing the feet of those who come to Gurdwara, serving Lungar, etc. A forty day period is often given. This Seva is given as a way to consolidate and confirm outwardly the commitment made internally. It is not a punishment.

Sudai of the Amrit Candidates

The candidates are then brought into the Gurdwara one by one, where they bow to the Guru, make their offerings and are individually challenged. One of the Panj Piaray asks such questions as:

- "Are you willing to keep your rehit after today?"
- "Are you willing to consider that your head belongs to the Guru?"

- "Are you willing to accept the advice the Panj Piaray will give today?"

After each candidate is found to be eligible to receive Amrit, he or she is led out and the next candidate is brought in. This procedure is followed for all of the Amrit Candidates.

The Amrit candidates and the general sangat are now invited into the Gurdwara. Ardas is offered, asking for blessings upon the ceremony.

Bolay so nihaal...Sat siri akal is not proclaimed at this time. A Hukam is taken and the translation is read.

Preparation of the Amrit

Those who are to be baptized now stand and meditate upon the Siri Guru Granth Sahib, mentally chanting Wahe Guru, while keeping their gaze on the Amrit being prepared. (Any person who is unable to stand due to a physical disability may sit.)

First water is poured into the bata, the iron bowl. The amount depends on how many will be baptized. During the first Amrit ceremony, Mata Sahib Kaur added the sugar to the water, to insure that sweetness and compassion would temper the steel with which the Khalsa was being



imbued. As the sugar (patasis white sugar cakes are traditionally used) is added, meditate upon these qualities.

The Panj Piaray sit in a semi-circle around the iron bowl in virasan (sitting on the left heel, with the right knee raised). Each Piara places his or her fingertips on the edge of the bata, keeping the eyes focused upon the water, concentrating upon the banis.

Their ten eyes represent the Ten Gurus, who are giving their energy to the Amrit, as their ten hands prepare it. One sevadar stands with a Siri Sahib during the ceremony, serving as guardian over the proceedings.

The Head Piara sits in the center, holding the Khanda in his right hand, with the thumb on top.

Moving the Khanda forward and backward through the water, he begins to chant [Japji](#)

Sahib while his other hand holds the edge of the bata. Once the Khanda enters the water, it is

not taken out of the water again until the ceremony of preparing the Amrit is ended.

All should keep their eyes focused upon the water, to energize the Amrit as they silently chant

along with the Banis.

After Japji Sahib is completed, the first Piara proclaims, Wahe Guru Ji ka Khalsa, Wahe Guru Ji

ke Fateh! This will be repeated at the completion of each of the Banis. S/he then gives the

Khanda to the Piara directly to his/her right, who recites Jaap Sahib.

The third Piara recites Tev Prasad Swaiya while continuing to stir with the Khanda. The fourth

Piara recites Baynti Chaopai, including the Aril; and the fifth Piara, who is directly on the left

side of the first Piara, recites the entire forty Pauris of Anand Sahib. The Khanda is then passed

into the hands of the first Piara again.

When the Banis are completed, the Head Piara continues to stir the Amrit as all five slowly stand, lifting the bata into the air. The Head Piara offers an Ardas to bless the Amrit while they all continue standing. The bata is then placed upon a small stool; the blade of the Khanda remains in the Amrit.



The Amrit Procedure

Men and women stand on their respective sides of the Gurdwara. One Piara is designated to help the candidates as they come up, showing them how to sit in virasan, cup the hands, etc. Candidates are called up one at a time to receive the Amrit, alternating between men and women. The candidate sits in virasan in front of the bata, facing the Guru. An empty iron bowl is placed between the bata and the candidate, to catch any spills. Any Amrit spilled into the second bowl remains there. The Panj Piaray stand on either side of the bata without turning their backs to the Guru. The candidates place both palms up, their right palms tightly over the left.

Each Piara, while administering the Amrit to the candidates, should be careful not to touch the candidates, so as to keep the vibration of the Amrit untouched. Each Piara proclaims, Wahe Guru Ji ka Khalsa, Wahe Guru Ji ki Fateh! while placing a sip of the Amrit into the cupped hands of the candidate; he or she then immediately drinks the Amrit and responds, Wahe Guru Ji ka Khalsa, Wahe Guru Ji ki Fateh! This is repeated a total of five times for each of the candidates.

Each Piara then sprinkles some Amrit into the eyes of the candidate. The candidate keeps his/her eyes focused upon the Guru. The Khalsa greeting is proclaimed by the Piara as the Amrit is sprinkled, and repeated by the candidate. This is repeated a total of five times for each candidate.

Each Piara then scoops some of the Amrit into his or her hands, and drops it onto the top of the head at the Crown Chakra (the Dasam Dwar or Tenth Gate) of the candidate. The Khalsa greeting is called and repeated five times for each candidate. The turban (or chuni) should have been moved away from the Crown Chakra so that the water drops directly upon the hair.

All the Piaray together then lightly place their right hands upon the head of the candidate. At the same time, they recite the Gur Mantra: Wahe Guru. The candidate repeats Wahe Guru after the Piaray. This is repeated five times.

The newly initiated Khalsa bows to the Guru, moves to the side and faces the Sadh Sangat, greeting them with folded hands, Wahe Guru Ji ka Khalsa, Wahe Guru Ji ki Fateh! The Sangat responds to the greeting, and then the newly initiated Khalsa sits down in the Sangat, and adjusts his or her turban to cover the head again, without leaving the room.

This entire sequence is repeated for each of the candidates.

Instructions to the New Amritdhari Sikhs

When everyone has completed his or her baptism, all the candidates stand in a circle together, facing the Siri Guru Granth Sahib. One Piara goes around with the iron bowl, giving some Amrit to each of the new Khalsas to drink from the bowl itself until it is empty.

The Panj Piaray now stand on either side of the Siri Guru Granth Sahib, each holding a Siri Sahib. One Piara gives the following instructions:

- The Mul Mantra is now your Root Mantra, your Source Mantra; it will give you your foundation, and serve as an anchor in your life.
- The Mul Mantra is recited line by line by the Panj Piaray, with the new Khalsa repeating each line.

- They are further instructed that their Gur Mantra is Wahe Guru and it will bring them to ecstasy and held them to fulfill their destiny.

The instructions continue:

- You have taken rebirth as Khalsa, and therefore your spiritual father is Guru Gobind Singh and your spiritual mother is Mata Sahib Kaur, and your birthplace is Anandpur Sahib.
- Men take the surname of Singh (Lion). Your new identity is fearlessness. Women take the surname of Kaur (Princess). Your new identity is one of graceful fearlessness. Both men and women take the last name of Khalsa. You have joined the family of the Pure Ones.
- Kurehits are actions which, when taken, invalidate one's Amrit vows. They include: cutting any hair from the body; committing adultery or having sex outside of marriage; eating meat; use of tobacco, alcohol or narcotic drugs.
- At the first Amrit ceremony, Guru Gobind Singh gave the Rehit, which was recorded and passed down through the generations:
 - Keep the Five Kakar's (5 K's): Kara, Kanga, Kirpan, Kesh and Katcheras
 - Bana: Dress for the Guru, not for the fashion of the world
 - Five Banis to be read each morning and two evening prayers: [Japji Sahib](#) and Shabad Hazaray; Jaap Sahib; Tav Prasad Swaiyas; Baynati Chaopai; Anand Sahib; and in the evening Rehira (including Baynati Chaopai) and Kirtan Sohila.
 - Amrit Vela: Rise before the sun rises to praise God
 - Belief in the Oneness of God
 - Your Guru is Siri Guru Granth Sahib, now and forever
 - Das Vandhh: Give one-tenth of your earnings to the Panth
 - Seva: Do service selflessly, without thought of reward
 - Vand Chako: share your earnings with those in need
 - Naam Japo: Chant the Naam, the Name of the Lord
 - Kirat Karo: Earn your money righteously and honestly
 - These technologies, when practiced, maintain the transforming power of the Amrit, and will keep you in your purest consciousness.

The Head Piara may ask the Panj Piaray to suggest anything which has been left out. At this time, the suggestions of learning Gurmukhi, martial arts, using the Khalsa greeting, may be put forth.

Each Piara will alternately raise the Siri Sahib and call out, Bolay so nihal! The Sangat will answer: Sat Siri Akaal!

All will then be seated for the remainder of the ceremony: a Khalsa Shabad, Song of the Khalsa, Anand Sahib, Hukam and Guruprashad. The ceremony is completed.