

A Sikh Minister performs the Anand Karaj as given by Guru Ram Das Ji (from Victory & Virtue by the Office of the Bhai Sahiba



1. Set up the Gurudwara as usual, making sure there is enough room for the couple getting married to walk around the Siri Guru Granth Sahib. A full-volume, Gurmukhi Bir of the Siri Guru Granth Sahib is used.
2. Guruprashad is present before the Laava(n) starts.
3. Begin the wedding with Kirtan, which can be of any length depending upon the desires of the parties involved and the time available. The couple(s) getting married sit as a part of the Sadh Sangat.
4. The Minister addresses the sangat and directs the couple to come and sit in front of the Siri Guru Granth Sahib, with the bride on the left side of the groom.
5. The Minister explains the Sikh concept of marriage emphasizing what the couple is about to commit. This is the appropriate time to describe the meaning of the four rounds. (The Minister is discouraged from interrupting the Laava(n) once it has begun.) The Minister may ask the couple to affirm that they understand and are ready to proceed.

6. The Wedding Ceremony now begins by the ragis reciting *Keetaa loree-ai kam*. This Shabad states that a Sikh will always begin a venture of any kind with Ardas. It should not be too long, rather sung as part of the ceremony, not as a prolonged Shabad.
7. Ardas is recited in order for the family to seek the blessings for the couple. For this Ardas, only the one reciting the Ardas, the couple and the parents or acting guardians stand. This is a special time for the family, giving their children unto the Guru, and close friends, other family members and the Sangat should respect this. This Ardas should distinctly ask for the blessings of this couple and not include many other requests (i.e. for the Siri Singh Sahib, etc.) *Agia bhai akal ki* is not recited after this Ardas. *Bole So Nihal, Sat Siri Akal* is done.
8. Hukam. The Granthi takes a Hukam from the Siri Guru Granth Sahib, which should be recorded for the information of the couple, then turns to page 773 where the *Laava(n)* begins.
9. *Palaa*. The *Palaa* is the shawl folded lengthwise which links the couple throughout the marriage ceremony. The ragis sing the Shabad *Palai tendai lagee* as the *palaa* is being placed over the shoulder of the groom. The right



end is placed in his hands and the left end is given to the bride to hold, by her father or the one acting in that capacity.

10. The Granthi reads the First Round in Gurmukhi. At this time the English translation may be recited. The ragis now sing the First Laava(n) as the couple rises and slowly, meditatively walks clockwise around the Siri Guru Granth. The man leads the woman, both holding on to their ends of the palaa. After the round is completed, simultaneously with the ending of the first Laava(n), the couple bows and sits, waiting for the second round. A common practice is for close family members and friends to stand behind the Guru as a show of support and love for the couple. This must be done with consciousness. There should not be so many people that the ragis or the Minister or the Guru are blocked from the sight of the sadh sangat. A gentle touch on the back or smile can be shown, but it is inappropriate for them to talk to the couple, whisper in their ears, joke with them, pull them, hug them, at this time. The couple is participating in one of the most sacred ceremonies of their life and this should be respected.



11. Second round is done the same as the first.

12. Third round is done the same as the first.

13. Fourth round is done the same as the first. As the couple finishes circling the Siri Guru Granth Sahib for the fourth and last time, the Sadh Sangat may

shower the couple with flower petals in joyous exaltation and congratulations while the ragis sing *Viaa hoa mere baaboolaa*. The flower petals have been distributed to individuals during the third round, with an explanation to the guests when to throw the petals. According to Sikh Codes of Conduct the couple has been officially married by the Guru at this point.

14. The Minister may close with a few words and make a legal pronouncement of marriage.

15. The couple may simultaneously feed each other fruit at this time as the first act of marriage.

16. If they have rings, they may exchange them at this time. (This is not part of the Sikh traditions, but is not contra-indicated either.)

17. Song of the Khalsa.

18. Ardas for the entire Sadh Sangat.

19. Hukam (and English translation).

20. Distribution of Guruprashad.

Remember that . . .

- A wedding ceremony is open to all, and no one may be excluded. A simple langar can be served for all and, if desired, a more formal reception may be held elsewhere, with limited invitations according to one's budget and personal choice.
- If a guest is incapable of sitting on the floor, they may have a chair to sit on, but it is best for it to be towards the back of the Gurdwara, or over to the side.

- Photographers should be instructed to be as conscious as possible, with awareness of the sacredness of the Court of the Guru.
- A Sikh Minister should conform to the laws of the country and be sure the couple has obtained the required license prior to the wedding ceremony.
- Those preparing to serve as ragis should ensure that the pronunciation and rhythm be as accurate as possible.
- The Minister can let the couple know that s/he is available to them for questions, counseling or support during their marriage.



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