

English Translation of the Four Marriage Hymns:

In the first round of the marriage ceremony the Guru has shown the duties of the householder life. Sing the Bani (sacred hymns) instead of the Vedas and hold fast to the faith which they reveal so that God may free you from all evil inclinations. Cling to the righteousness and contemplate God's Name which is the theme of all scriptures. Devote yourself to the True Guru and all evil will depart. Those minds are indeed blessed which are filled with the sweetness of the Name. To them bliss comes effortlessly.

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In the second round of the marriage ceremony you are to recognise that God has caused you to meet the True Guru who washes away the self-centredness of those that sing God's praises. I stand reverently face to face with the Guru. God is the soul of the universe, the only One, being within us and outside us. There is nothing in which God does not pervade. Songs of rejoicing are heard in the company of the godly. Slave Nanak says, in the second round divine music is heard.

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In the third round of the marriage ceremony the longing for God and detachment from the world wells up. By our good fortune, in godly company, we encounter God whose purity is found through singing divine praises. Good fortune has brought us into the fellowship of the saints in which the story of the ineffable One is told. God's love fills our minds and absorbs us, as we have been blessed with a good destiny which is recorded on our foreheads. In the third circling, says Nanak, God's love is awakened in the heart.

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In the fourth round of the marriage ceremony the mind attains divine knowledge and union with God becomes complete. This blissful state is reached through the Guru's grace. The sweetness of the beloved pervades our souls and bodies. God is dear to me and I to God on whom my mind is fixed day and night. By exalting God I have achieved my heart's desire. The beloved (God) has completed the union. The bride's mind has blossomed with the beloved's name. The beloved is united with the holy bride. Says slave Nanak, in the fourth round I have become one with the One.

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Discover Sikhi

A Sikh Wedding



Outline of a Sikh Wedding Day:

- 1. Departure of Baraat:** Baraat is the term used to describe the party from the Grooms side. The Baraat will leave from the Groom's house to the Gurdwara where the wedding will take place.
- 2. Reception of Baraat:** The Groom's party is "received" by the Bride's party at the Gurdwara.
- 3. Milni:** (means "Introductions"): A short standing prayer is performed by the Sikh Granthi (equivalent of Priest), followed by the formal public introductions of the main male relatives in the families.



- 4. Tea:** Tea with strict vegetarian savouries and sweets will be served and are normally taken standing at tables. Chairs are seldom provided.



Importance of Marriage:

The Sikh wedding ceremony is called "Anand Kaaraj" which literally means "Ceremony of Bliss". 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.

The four nuptial rounds (Laavaa'n) were written by the fourth Sikh Guru, Guru Raam Daas Ji, 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 the Guru 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 judgements. Commit to the institution of marriage as part of one's spiritual path.

Next, the couple are told that they have been blessed to be a part of the Saadh Sangat (the Company of the Holy), and that their lives should be an example of service and divinity to all around them, to fulfil 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.

7. Departure of Doli: After the marriage ceremony has finished the bride and groom along with close relatives and friends go to the bride's parental home. When the bride and groom arrive at the house then the bride's sisters, friends and family enjoy teasing the groom and the party and ask for money to enter the house. It is all in a humorous and fun atmosphere.



The bride then departs from her parent's house (a very sad and touching occasion). In some cases, she changes into new clothes that are presented to her by the groom's family before departing.



5. The Sikh Wedding Ceremony (Anand Kaaraj): This is the formal part of the ceremony and always takes place in a Gurdwara. Please observe the rules applicable which are described in the "Visiting a Gurdwara" pamphlet. Also described here is the clothing to be worn. Please note that as you will be required to sit on the carpeted floor, suitable clothing should be worn.

Keertan - The singing of the Sacred Hymns from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji.



Ardaas - The congregation stands up to do a collective prayer to share their blessings and prayers for the couple. Sometimes only the key people (Bride, groom, both parents of bride and groom) will stand straight with folded hands and join in this prayer, while the congregation quietly sit and listen.



Pallaa Ceremony - The father or a senior member of the bride's family gives away the bride and places the Pallaa (long scarf) of the groom into the hands of the bride symbolising that from now on the husband's duty is to honour, cherish and support the bride and that the bride and groom are bound together. Whilst this ceremony is being conducted the Raagis (musicians) sing appropriate hymns.



Laavaa'n - There are four marriage hymns. The Bride and Groom will listen to the first hymn. At the completion of this they bow down to show acceptance. The same hymn is then sung by the Sikh religious musicians whilst the Bride and Groom walk around Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji as a physical commitment to the vow and to express the fact the Guru is the centre of their lives. The conclusion of the ceremony is followed by Keertan (singing of sacred hymns) to celebrate, and the congregation usually offers a donation to the musicians as a token of joy.



Ardaas - All the congregation will stand and join in the ardaas. This followed by Hukamnama (Holy Edict) read from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji which all the congregation attentively listens to whilst sitting down.

Karhaah Parshaad - Blessed "Sweet pudding" is served as a form of sacred communion. (It is made of wheat flour, sugar, clarified butter and water). It is received with placing both hands opened and placed together.



Sagun: Both parents congratulate the couple. In many cases guests follow to present the couple with gifts of a cash offerings in their lap, which contributes to the couple's new start in life.

Lunch: According to Sikh tradition, the Sikh wedding ceremony is concluded with the communal pure vegetarian meal (Langar) shared in the Gurdwara.

