

Hymn 2

"In the second round of the marriage ceremony, the Lord leads you to meet the True Guru, the Primal Being With the Fear of God, the Fearless Lord in the mind, the filth of egotism is eradicated. In the Fear of God, the Immaculate Lord, sing the Glorious Praises of the Lord, and behold the Lord's Presence before you. The Lord, the Supreme Soul, is the Lord and Master of the Universe; He is pervading and permeating everywhere, fully filling all spaces. 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. Servant Nanak proclaims that, in this, the second round of the marriage ceremony, the unstruck sound current of the Shabad resounds." (SGGSJ, pp.773-774)

Hymn 3

"In the third round of the marriage ceremony, the mind is filled with Divine Love. Meeting with the humble Saints of the Lord, I have found the Lord, by great good fortune. I have found the Immaculate Lord, and I sing the Glorious Praises of the Lord. I speak the Word of the Lord's Bani. By great good fortune, I have found the humble Saints, and I speak the Unspoken Speech of the Lord. 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. Servant Nanak proclaims that, in this, the third round of the marriage ceremony, the mind is filled with Divine Love for the Lord." (SGGSJ, pp.773-774)

Hymn 4

"In the fourth round of the marriage ceremony, my mind has become peaceful; I have found the Lord. As Gurmukh, I have met Him, with intuitive ease; the Lord seems so sweet to my mind and body. The Lord seems so sweet; I am pleasing to my God. Night and

day, I lovingly focus my consciousness on the Lord. I have obtained my Lord and Master, the fruit of my mind's desires. The Lord's Name resounds and resonates. The Lord God, my Lord and Master, blends with His bride, and her heart blossoms forth in the Naam. Servant Nanak proclaims that, in this, the fourth round of the marriage ceremony, we have found the Eternal Lord God." (SGGSJ, pp.773-774)

THE MECHANICS OF SIKH MARRIAGE

It takes many things to make a marriage work, including commitment, laughter, friendship and forgiveness. Successful couples enjoy each others company when times are good and provide support to each other when times are difficult. The ability to resolve conflict is very important in any marriage; this is why Sikhism is an institution of willingness, in which two identities want to amalgamate. A Sikh marriage is not a contract or legal document but it is an amalgamation of two egos to bring out a neutral new personality. Hence, in Sikh marriage, qualities such as humility, the removal of ego, love for God and a spiritual lifestyle are given the utmost importance.

SUMMARY OF SIKH MARRIAGE

Marriage in Sikhism is considered the highest and most fruitful path because it requires more work to deal with another ego than simply having to deal with our own. Humility, selflessness, love and spirituality are considered important factors in making a marriage a successful and blissful experience.

Sikh Marriage

INTRODUCTION TO SIKH MARRIAGE

Marriage is considered a sacred institution in most cultures and religious traditions. This infobite looks at the Sikh marriage ceremony and the important ingredients for a successful marriage. The centre of all Sikh marriages is the Sikh Holy Scriptures, Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji (SGGSJ)

WHAT IS SIKH MARRIAGE?

The Sikh marriage ceremony (Anand Karaj) is the prescribed form of Sikh marriage. The words literally translate as 'Blissful Union'.

The Sikh marriage is a very special ceremony in which two individuals are joined in an equal partnership in the presence of Waheguru (God).

Marriage is a spiritual journey, not just a love affair between two people. A Sikh marriage is two people trying to help one another in their merger with God. The highest love is assisting another in the merger of the soul with the infinite (God), helping their beloved to find the true purpose of their life.

The Anand Karaj provides Sikhs with a formula for a successful marriage in the form of four rotations around the Sikh Holy Scripture, the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji (SGGSJ) whilst hymns are sung. The religious hymns sung describe the sacred journey of the soul merging with the infinite (God) and when applied to marriage, it results in happiness and fulfilment.

The couple circle the Guru to make a commitment with each round to God, with Guru as the witness. With each round, the couple are reminded that both God and Guru are at the centre of their lives, from whom they will receive support and understanding on their spiritual journey together.

SIKH MARRIAGE CEREMONY (ANAND KARAJ) – BRIEF OVERVIEW

- **Kirtan** – The wedding ceremony begins with Shabad Kirtan (Spiritual Music)
- **Couple Arrive** – The groom appears first and is seated before Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, shortly followed by the bride.
- **First Hymn** – “keeta loree-ai kam so har pah akhiai” (SGGSJ, p.91) is sung ushering the couple to always ask God and Guru for anything they wish to accomplish
- **Ardas** – The couple and their parents stand and make a supplication and request for God's support and blessings for the marriage.
- **Hukamnama** (Holy Order) – A randomly selected reading from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji to provide guidance for the couple.
- **Shawl** – The father of the bride then hands one end of the grooms scarf/ shawl called a 'palaa' to his daughter.
- **The Four Rotations** – The laavan (wedding hymn) is then recited and sung one by one. During each laavan, the bride and groom circle Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji signifying that God only will forever remain at the centre of the lives.
- **Last Hymn** – “Vee-aa hoa mere baabulaa” (SGGSJ, p.78) is sung, signifying that the wedding ceremony is complete

THE COMMITMENTS MADE DURING THE FOUR ROUNDS

The couple to be married will sit in front of the Guru and make four rotations around SGGSJ signifying their acceptance of four promises made between the couple and God. These promises include:

1. Performing good deeds, living a spiritual

lifestyle and loving both God & Guru.

2. Keeping the fear of God in mind and working towards becoming humble and removing ego from ones mind. The couple are also enjoined to recognise the one God who is manifest in all his creation, including in the hearts of all people.
3. Practicing love for God and commitment to seeking the sanctuary of the saints (Saadh Sangat or holy congregation).
4. Having achieved union with God, the couple should help other souls who are also on their spiritual journey.

TRANSLATIONS OF THE 4 MARRIAGE HYMNS

The four hymns sung during the marriage ceremony describe the union of the soul to the infinite (God). So it is these hymns which are used to unite the souls of two individuals so that the following scenario is achieved:

“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” (SGGSJ, p.788)

Hymn 1

“In the first round of the marriage ceremony, the Lord sets out His Instructions for performing the daily duties of married life. Instead of the hymns of the Vedas to Brahma, embrace the righteous conduct of Dharma, and renounce sinful actions. Meditate on the Lord's Name; embrace and enshrine the contemplative remembrance of the Naam. Worship and adore the Guru, the Perfect True Guru, and all your sins shall be dispelled. By great good fortune, celestial bliss is attained, and the Lord, Har, Har, seems sweet to the mind. Servant Nanak proclaims that, in this, the first round of the marriage ceremony, the marriage ceremony has begun.” (SGGSJ, pp.773 -774)