



ਸ੍ਰੀ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਰਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਮਹਾਇ ॥

# ANAND KARAJ

A guide to the Sacred Sikh Wedding Ceremony







# WELCOME

We are honoured to welcome you to this sacred occasion where two souls join together in love and spiritual harmony in the presence of Sri Guru Aadh Granth Sahib Ji.

This booklet is designed to help you understand the importance of each part of the ceremony, inviting reflection from everyone present.

Whether you are familiar with the Namdhari Sikh Maryada tradition or joining us for the first time, we hope it brings clarity and a sense of belonging.

Thank you for sharing in this joyous and holy event. May Sri Satguru Ji's blessings be with the couple and all gathered here today.







## NAMDHARI SIKHI

Namdhari Sikhs are grounded in the teachings of Sikh scriptures and uphold the belief in the continued living lineage of the Sikh Gurus. Central to our spiritual practice is Naam Simran, the meditative remembrance and continuous focus on the Divine Name.

At the heart of Sikh teachings are the fundamental pillars that guide us:

- Naam Japna: The meditative remembrance and a continuous connection with the Divine
- Kirat Karni: Earning an honest living through hard work and integrity
- Vand Chakna: Sharing generously with the less fortunate and caring for the community.

We recognise that the Divine pervades not only in every human being but all of creation, every element, every creature.

Making every corner of the natural world infused with sacred essence. This understanding calls us to live with mindfulness, embodying purity, symbolised by our distinctive, simplistic white attire.

Our lives are thus guided by steadfast integrity and an enduring dedication to justice and ethical conduct in harmony with the oneness of all existence.





## ANAND KARAJ

The Anand Karaj, meaning “blissful union” is the sacred Sikh marriage ceremony. While the Lavaan (recitation of four sacred Gurbani verses, and the couple complete circumambulation) were composed by Sri Satguru Ram Das Ji, it was Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji who, in 1863 in the village of Khote, first established the Anand Karaj as a distinct form of a Sikh wedding.

Satguru Ji introduced this maryada at a time when Punjabi marriage customs were increasingly shaped by Brahmanical ritual.

Practices such as caste-based exclusion, astrological matchmaking, dowry demands and lavish feasting had begun to obscure the simplicity and depth of Sikh teachings. More gravely, the economic burden of dowries had contributed to the tragic practice of female infanticide.

In response, Satguru Ram Singh Ji offered a Gurmat aligned alternative, one that rejected superstition, social hierarchy and material excess. They re-centred the Sikh wedding around the remembrance of the Divine and our ethical learnings. The couple walk around a sacred Havan and Lavaan Paath are recited.

Each circumambulation marked a step not only in their union with one another, but in their shared journey towards the divine.

In this tradition, marriage is not a social transaction, but a sacred covenant and a union of souls joining forever.





## CEREMONY

### **Asa Di Vaar**

The morning begins with the singing of Asa Di Vaar. Asa Di Vaar is a deeply spiritual morning prayer composed by Sri Satguru Nanak Dev Ji and Sri Satguru Angad Dev Ji. It is a ballad of hope that guides individuals towards living a truthful, humble, and God-centred life.

It challenges false rituals, ego, and injustice, while promoting equality, compassion, and devotion. Often recited in Gurdwaras during the early hours, Asa Di Vaar uplifts the soul and encourages self-reflection, making it a cornerstone of Sikh spiritual practice.

### **Congregation**

The bride and groom arrive separately to join the congregation seated on the floor, reflecting the principle of spiritual equality.

### **Ardas**

Before the Anand Karaj, both the bride and groom recite the Ardas, demonstrating their ability and readiness to engage in prayer. This moment affirms their sincere commitment to Sikh values and their preparedness for the journey ahead.

### **Bride & Groom**

In Sikh Dharma, the husband's role is not one of dominance, but of deep responsibility, equality, and spiritual partnership. Before sitting, the bride will pay her respects to her husband-to-be by bowing her head. He must honour his wife as an equal soul-journeyer, an embodiment of the divine light.





## CEREMONY

### Amrit Shakna

Before continuing, the couple receives Amrit (sanctified water) as a form of baptism and initiation.

They must wear the five Kakaar (articles of faith):  
Kesh, Kangha, Kachera, Karah, and Kirpan.

This act reflects their readiness to uphold Sikh values within marriage. Receiving Amrit marks their acceptance of the Guru's discipline and their willingness to lead a life of devotion, simplicity, and truth.

### Naam

The couple is blessed with Naam, given to them by an ordained person.

Naam Simran is a central spiritual practice in Sikhism.  
The term can be broken down as:

Naam (ਨਾਮ): This means "Name" — specifically, it refers to the Name of God, or Divine Presence.

Simran (ਸਿਮਰਨ): This means "remembrance" or "meditative repetition."

Together, Naam Simran means meditative remembrance of the Divine Name — not just repeating words, but cultivating a deep, ongoing awareness of God in one's mind and heart.





### **Havan**

At the heart of the Anand Karaj is the Havan, a fire ceremony performed by seven Amritdhari (baptised) Sikhs. Seven prayers are read from the Sri Aadh and Sri Dasam Guru Granth Sahib:

*Jap Ji Sahib*  
*Jaap Sahib*  
*Chaupae*  
*Chandi di Vaar*  
*Ugardi*  
*Chandi Charitar Doosra*  
*Akaal Ustat*

The promise the couple are making is to love, support, and respect each other, and it's witnessed by something greater.

This commitment is for the rest of the couple's lives. The Havan (fire) serves as a powerful reminder that one day, our bodies too shall return to this very element – reminding us of life's impermanence.

As the couple walks around the sacred Havan (fire), they reflect deeply on the Lavan being recited, each verse of Gurbani guiding them through the spiritual purpose of their union and the journey they now begin together.





### Lavaan

The four Lavaan are from a hymn composed by Sri Satguru Ram Das Ji, guiding the soul through deepening stages of spiritual union. The couple walk clockwise around the Havan, the groom leads and the bride follows.

1st Laav (ਪਹਿਲੀ ਲਾਵ)

Gurbani (Gurmukhi):

ਹਰਿ ਪਹਿਲੜੀ ਲਾਵਿ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਮਿਲਾਇਆ ॥  
ਬੜੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਪਾਈਐ ਭਾਇ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਹਰਿ ਮਨਿ ਭਾਇਆ ॥  
ਨਦਰੀ ਕਰਮਿ ਪਾਈਐ ਸਚੁ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਤਲਵੰਡੀ ਸਚੁ ਸੰਜੋਇਆ ॥  
ਆਨੰਦੁ ਭਇਆ ਮੇਰੀ ਮਾਏ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਮੈ ਪਾਇਆ ॥  
ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਤ ਪਾਇਆ ਸਹਜ ਸੇਤੀ ਮਨਿ ਵਜੀਆ ਵਾਧਾਈਆ ॥  
ਰਾਗ ਰਤਨ ਪਰਵਾਰ ਪਰੀਆ ਸਬਦ ਗਾਵਣ ਆਈਆ ॥  
ਸਬਦੇ ਤ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਹਰੀ ਕੇਰਾ ਮਨਿ ਜਿਨੀ ਵਸਾਇਆ ॥  
ਕਹੈ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਲਾਵ ਪਹਿਲੜੀ ਅਰੰਭੁ ਕਾਜੁ ਰਚਾਇਆ ॥

Translation:

In the first round of the marriage ceremony, the Guru brings the couple together with the Divine.

By the Guru's grace, they realise God's presence and feel love for the Truth in their hearts.

Through Divine blessing, the True Lord is attained — Truth becomes their foundation.

Joy wells up within as they find the True Guru.  
They begin their spiritual journey with peace and inner celebration.

Surrounded by the jewels of melody, they sing the Shabad (Divine Word).

Sing the praises of the Lord, whose Name lives in their hearts.  
Says Nanak, this is the first step — the journey of union has begun.





2nd Laav (ਦੂਜੀ ਲਾਵ)

Gurbani (Gurmukhi):

ਹਰਿ ਦੂਜੜੀ ਲਾਵ ਚਿਤੁ ਲਾਇਆ ਬੈਰਾਗਮਿ ਮਨੁ ਭਇਆ ॥  
ਸੰਤ ਜਨਾ ਮਿਲਿ ਹਰਿ ਜਪਿਆ ਵਡਭਾਗੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤਿ ਹੋਇਆ ॥  
ਮਨਿ ਚਿੰਦਿਆ ਫਲੁ ਪਾਇਆ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਤੁਠਾ ਕਰਿ ਆਇਆ ॥  
ਅਨਦਿਨੁ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਵੇ ਦਿਨ ਰਾਤੀ ਭਿੰਨੀ ਵਾਜੇ ਨਾਦਾਨੇ ॥  
ਹਰਿ ਜੀਉ ਨਿਤ ਸਚੇ ਸਾਲਾਹੀਐ ਲੋਭੁ ਤਜਿ ਤ੍ਰਿਸਨਾ ਵਸਾਇਆ ॥  
ਸਬਦਿ ਮਰੈ ਮਨੁ ਬੁਝੈ ਹਰਿ ਪਾਈਐ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਤਤੁ ਗਿਆਨਿਆ ॥  
ਕਹੈ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਲਾਵ ਦੂਜੀ ਲਾਗਾ ਮਨੁ ਭਇਆ ॥

Translation:

In the second round, the mind turns inward with love and yearning for the Divine.

In the company of saints, they chant God's Name and receive His blessing.

The mind's desires are fulfilled by the grace of the Guru.  
Day and night, they sing Divine virtues — their hearts echo with sacred music.

They praise the Eternal Lord and overcome greed and longing.  
Dying to ego through the Shabad, they gain spiritual wisdom and realise the essence of truth.

Says Nanak, in this second step, the mind is filled with loving devotion.





3rd Laav (ਤੀਜੀ ਲਾਵ)

Gurbani (Gurmukhi):

ਹਰਿ ਤੀਜੜੀ ਲਾਵ ਮਨੁ ਚਾਉ ਭਇਆ ਬੈਰਾਗੀਆ ਬੈਰਾਗੁ ਭਇਆ ॥  
ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਮਿਲਣ ਕੀ ਏਹੁ ਤਰੀਆ ਲਾਗੀ ਮਨਿ ਅਤਿ ਭਾਇਆ ॥  
ਸੰਤ ਜਨਾ ਮਿਲਿ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਧਿਆਇਆ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਮਨਿ ਵਸਾਇਆ ॥  
ਮਨਿ ਤਨਿ ਮੀਠਾ ਲਾਗਾ ਹਰਿ ਸਚੇ ਸਾਚਿ ਸਮਾਇਆ ॥  
ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਰੰਗਿ ਰਾਤੀ ਲਾਵੈ ਸਚਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਸਚਾ ਪਾਇਆ ॥  
ਸਾਧੂ ਸੰਗੁ ਮਿਲਿ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਵੈ ਹਰੀ ਨਾਮਿ ਸਮਾਇਆ ॥  
ਕਹੈ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਲਾਵ ਤੀਜੀ ਮਨਿ ਚਾਉ ਭਇਆ ਬੈਰਾਗੀਆ ॥

Translation:

In the third round, the mind is filled with joy and deep longing for union with God.

This stage deepens the connection — the soul desires nothing more than to merge with the Divine.

In the company of saints, they meditate on God and enshrine His Name in their hearts.

The Lord becomes sweet to both body and mind; they merge into His eternal truth.

Drenched in Divine love, they unite in Truth and find the True One.

In the company of the virtuous, they sing the Lord's praises and are absorbed in His Name.

Says Nanak, in this third step, the soul becomes full of love and devotion.





4th Laav (ਚੌਥੀ ਲਾਵ)

Gurbani (Gurmukhi):

ਹਰਿ ਚਉਥੜੀ ਲਾਵ ਮਨਿ ਸਹਜੁ ਭਇਆ ਹਰਿ ਪਾਇਆ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਅਪੁਨਾ ॥  
ਹਰਿ ਆਤਮ ਰਾਮੁ ਪਸਰਿਆ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਸਰਬ ਰਹਿਆ ਭਰਪੂਰਾ ॥  
ਅੰਤਰਿ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਏਕੇ ਮਿਲਿ ਹਰਿ ਜਨੁ ਪਰਵਾਨੁ ਭਇਆ ॥  
ਸਹਜ ਅਨੰਦੁ ਹੋਆ ਵਾਜੇ ਵਾਜੇ ਹਰਿ ਬਿਨੁ ਹੋਰੁ ਨ ਦੂਜਾ ॥  
ਭਰਮੁ ਗਇਆ ਭੈ ਮਨਹੁ ਚੂਕਾ ਹਰਿ ਪਾਇਆ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਅਪੁਨਾ ॥  
ਨਿਰਭਉ ਭੈ ਮਨੁ ਹੋਆ ਹਰਿ ਪਾਇਆ ਸੁਖੁ ਸਮਾਇਆ ॥  
ਕਹੈ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਲਾਵ ਚਉਥੀ ਹਰਿ ਪਾਇਆ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਅਪੁਨਾ ॥

Translation:

In the fourth round, the soul reaches a state of peace and balance, and realises the presence of the Lord.

God is now known as the inner soul, the ever-present Master, filling all spaces.

Within and beyond, there is only One — the devotee becomes accepted and united with God.

Joy and divine harmony resound; there is no other, only the Lord remains.

Doubt disappears, fear leaves the mind, and the soul finds its true home.

Fearless and serene, they merge into peace through union with the Divine.

Says Nanak, in this final step, the soul has found its beloved Lord.





### **Anand Sahib**

Following the Lavaan, verses from Anand Sahib are recited. This Prayer expresses joy and gratitude, celebrating the bliss of living in harmony with the Guru's path.

### **Final Ardas**

The congregation then stands to join in the final Ardas, offering collective prayer with folded hands for blessings and guidance in the couple's new life.

The bride and groom bow together before  
Sri Satguru Ji's Assan and the  
Sri Guru Aadh Granth Sahib Ji, completing the ceremony  
with the receiving of infinite blessings from all those  
present in the congregation.

### **Karah Parshad**

The ceremony concludes with the distribution of Karah Parshad, a sacred sweet prepared in equal parts of flour, sugar, and ghee. It is offered to all, symbolising equality and the sweetness of grace. Karah Parshad is received while seated, with cupped hands joined together.

### **Langar**

After the ceremony, all are invited to share in Langar, a vegetarian meal prepared with devotion and served equally to all. Guests sit together on the floor, practising commensality; the act of eating side by side as equals. The shared nutritious meal embodies the values of simplicity, humility and unity.





# DRESS CODE AND CONDUCT

To help maintain the peaceful and sacred atmosphere of the Gurdwara, we kindly ask all guests to observe the following:

## Dress Code

- Please wear modest clothing that covers the shoulders and legs.
- Everyone should cover their head with a scarf or turban while inside the Gurdwara. White or light colours are preferred.  
*(Can be provided if required)*
- Kindly avoid leather items such as shoes, bags, or belts, in respect of the community's commitment to non-violence and care for all living beings.

## Conduct

- Remove your shoes before entering the prayer space, using the shoe racks provided.
- Kindly sit on the floor during the ceremony, unless you need a chair or space for a wheelchair.
- Speak softly and avoid using mobile phones during the service.
- Men and women are seated separately.
- Alcohol, meat, and any non-vegetarian items are not allowed anywhere on the premises.
- Smoking, tobacco, and the use of vapes are prohibited.

If you have any questions or need guidance, you are most welcome to speak with any member of the team.

Thank you.

Namdhari Sikh Sangat UK

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