

WEDDING CEREMONY

Written by Dr D.S. Sekhon
Tuesday, 04 December 2012 22:27

Getting married and raising a family is a sacred institution in Sikhism because perpetuation of human life is a natural law. All the Sikh Guru Sahiban were married and had families. The Eighth Master, Guru Har Krishan Sahib could not reach the marriageable age because He left this mortal world when He was not even quite 8 years old. All the Sikh priests are expected to get married. A Sikh wedding is a joyous occasion and all relatives and friends get together for the sacred ceremony. The actual ceremony is performed in the presence of the holy Guru Granth Sahib, and all vows are taken there. There is a recitation of holy Shabads from Guru Granth Sahib, and a prayer is performed to end the ceremony. **Actually, there is no holy Shabad in Guru Granth Sahib exclusively dedicated to wedding ceremony. The shabads which are recited at the ceremony actually are related to the wedding of the human bride (see the definition of MEHLA above) to the groom – Waheguru (God).**

Before the bride and the groom walk into the Gurdwara (Sikh Temple), Guru Granth Sahib is already occupying the throne, and the raagi Singhs are singing some holy Shabads. After the bride and the groom have entered the Gurdwara, and have taken their seats in front of Guru Granth Sahib after paying respects to the holy Guru, the ceremony starts with a short prayer in front of Guru Granth Sahib in which the names of the bride and the groom are announced and a collective request is made to Waheguru to bless the would be couple. Next, the following holy Shabad is sung by the raagis (professional Shabad singers).

ਸਰੀਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਕੀ ਵਾਰ, ਪਉੜੀ ॥ ਕੀਤਾ ਲੋੜੀਐ ਕੰਮੁ ਸੁ ਹਰੀ ਪਹੀ ਆਖੀਐ ॥ ਕਾਰਜੁ ਦੇਇ ਸਵਾਰੀ ਸਤਗੁਰ ਸਚੁ ਸਾਖੀਐ ॥ ਸੰਤਾ ਸੰਗ ਨਧਿਯਾਨੁ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਚਾਖੀਐ ॥ ਭੈ ਭੰਜਨ ਮਹਿਰਵਾਨ ਦਾਸ ਕੀ ਰਾਖੀਐ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਹਰੀ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਇ ਮਲਖੁ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਲਾਖੀਐ ॥

§ Siri Raag ki Vaar, Pauri (91). Keeta lorreeye kum so Hur peh aakheeye. Kaaraj deaye suvaar Satgur such saakheeye. Santaan sung nidhaan Amrit Nanak Hur goon gaaye Alukh Prabh laakheeye. chaakheeye. Bhaiy bhanjan meharvaan dass kee raakheeye.

Word meaning: **Lorreeye** = want (done); **Kaaraj** = task; **Suvaar** = finish successfully, complete; **Sakheeye** =

teaching, advice;

Nidhaan

= treasure;

Chaakheeye

= taste;

Bhaiy

= fear;

Bhanjan

= destroyer;

Meharvaan

= kind;

Dass

= slave, devotee;

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Alakh

= which cannot be visualized; Laakheeye = understand, realize

Meaning: Oh my friend! If you want success in some task, then according to the True Teaching of the Guru, pray to Waheguru for the success. The kind Waheguru nicely completes that task. You are able to realize the treasure of Waheguru's Naam in the company of holy men, and thus taste the spiritual life-sustaining ambrosia. Also, pray to fear-destroyer Waheguru to save your honour (in His Court). By singing the praise of Waheguru, you can realize Him.

NOTE: To learn about Naam in detail, please read the book: The Divine Message of Guru Granth Sahib by Dr. Devinder Singh Sekhon

After the recitation of this holy Shabad, the father of the bride makes the bride to hold one end of the scarf which is held by the groom at the other end. This ceremony, which is somewhat similar to the Western Ceremony where the father gives away the bride, signifies that now the girl is a part of her husband's life. **The following holy Shabad is sung at this time, which as you will see, is actually meant for the of the human bride with Waheguru as the real and everlasting relation.**

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**§ Sloak M: 5 (963). Ustat ninda Nanak Ji mein hubh vanjaayee, chhorriya hubh kiji,
tiyagi. Hubhay saak kurraaway ditthay tau pallay taindhay laagi**

Word Meanings: Ustat = (false) praise; Ninda = malicious criticism; Hubh = all; Vanjaayee = quit; Tiyagi = selfless; Saak = relations; Kurraaway = short lasting; Pallay = hold the apparel (take shelter)

Meaning: (Guru Nanak says) Oh Waheguru! I have quit all the false praise and unwarranted mud-slinging on others, and have become completely selfless. Having realized that no worldly relation is everlasting, I have come to hold your scarf (take your asylum).

Next, the actual wedding ceremony is performed when the raagis recite the following holy Shabad in four successive parts and the bride and the groom take the vows by kneeling before, and going around Guru Granth Sahib four times. This ceremony is called “Laavaan” or Anand

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Karaj. The holy Shabad is recorded next.

(Laavaan)

ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥ :4॥ ਹੁਰ ਪੇਹਲਿਰੀਏ ਲਾਨਵ ਪੇਰਵੀਰੀਏ ਕਰਮ ਢਿਰ੍ਰਾਯਾ ਬਲਿਰਾਮ ਜੀਓ। ਬਾਨੀ
ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਾ ਵੇਦ ਧਰਮ ਢਿਰ੍ਰਹੁ ਪਾਪ ਤਾਜਾ ਬਲਿਰਾਮ ਜੀਓ। ਧਰਮ ਢਿਰ੍ਰਹੁ ਹੁਰ ਨਾਮ ਧਿਆਵਹੁ
ਸਿਮਰਿ ਨਾਮ ਢਿਰ੍ਰਾਯਾ। ਸਤਗੁਰੁ ਗੁਰ ਪੂਰਾ ਆਰਾਧੋ ਸੁਭ ਕਿਲਵਿਖ ਪਾਪ ਗਵਾਯਾ।
ਸੇਹਜ ਅਨੰਦ
ਹੋ ਵਾਡਬਾਗੀ ਮੁਨ ਹੁਰ ਹੁਰ ਮੇਥਾ ਲਾਯਾ। ਜੁਨ ਕਾਹੀਯ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਾਨਵ ਪੇਹਲੀ ਆਰੰਭ ਕਾਜ
ਰਾਚਾਯਾ।

§ **Suhi Chhant M:4 (773).** Hur pehalirree laanv pervirtee kerm drirraaya Baliram jeeo. Baani
Brahama Ved dharam drirrhau paap tajaya Baliram jeeo. Dharam drirrhau Hur naam dhiaavho
Simrit naam drirraya. Satguru Gur poora araadho subh kilvikh paap gavaaya.

Sehaj anand

hoa vadbhaagi mun Hur Hur meetha laya. Jun kahaiy Nanak laanv pehali arambh kaaj
rachaaya.

Word Meaning: Hur = Waheguru; **Pehalirree** = first; **Laanv** = stage (step); **Pervirtee** = eng
aging in activities of life (connecting with Waheguru);

Kerm

= task; act;

Drirraaya

= repeat to succeed;

Baliram jeeo

= gladly willing to die for Waheguru (Waheguru can use my life in whatever way He chooses);

Baani = Gurbaani

= The holy compositions of Guru Granth Sahib;

Tajaya

= got rid of;

Dhiaavho

= recite with full concentration;

Araadho

= worship;

Subh

= all;

Kilvikh

=

Paap

= sins;

Gavaaya

= lost, got rid of;

Sehaj

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= the state of when mind quits wandering;

Anand

= bliss;

Vadbhaagi

= very lucky;

Aarambh

= start;

Kaaj

= task;

Rachaaya

= created

Meaning: The first stage to connect to Waheguru is your willingness to dedicate your life to Waheguru, and to recite His Name repeatedly. All the rituals or the commandments of Brahma's Vedas are covered when you recite Gurbaani (A Sikh does not need to follow the rituals of the Vedas), which also dispels all your sins. The repeated recitation of Waheguru's Naam is the real sacred thing to do. Even the Simritis (a few of the many Hindu holy books) emphasize the recitation of Waheguru's Naam. Worship the perfect Guru to rid yourself of all the sins. By worshipping the Guru and by reciting Waheguru's Naam (Gurbani) you achieve the stage where your mind is no longer running after the mundane things and you feel blissful. (Guru) Nanak says that this is the first stage or (step) towards achieving with Waheguru.

ੴ ਸਤਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਭਉ ਭਾਇ ਭਖਿ ਭਰਮੁ ਭਇਓ ਭਉ ਭਾਇ ਭਖਿ ਭਰਮੁ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਭਉ ਭਾਇ ਭਖਿ ਭਰਮੁ ਭਇਓ ਭਉ ਭਾਇ ਭਖਿ ਭਰਮੁ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਭਉ ਭਾਇ ਭਖਿ ਭਰਮੁ ਭਇਓ ਭਉ ਭਾਇ ਭਖਿ ਭਰਮੁ ॥

Hur doojrri laanv Satgur Purakh milaaya Baliram jeeo. Nirbhou bhaiy mun hoye haumein maill gavaaya Baliram jeeo. Nirmal bhao paaya Hur goon gaaya Hur vekhaiy Ram hadooray. Hur Atamram pasaariya Suvaami serb rahiya bherpooray. Unter baaher Hur Prabh aiko Hur jun mangal gaaye. Jun Nanak doojee laanv chalaayee unhad shabad vajaaye. 2.

Word Meaning: Doojrri = second; **Purakh** = omnipresent Waheguru; **Nirbhou** = fearless

Bhaiy

= fear;

Haumein

= self-centeredness;

Maill

= filth;

Nirmal

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= clean, respectful;

Hadooray

= right in front;

Atamram

= Waheguru;

Passaariya

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= spread;
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Suvaami

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= Master;
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Serb

\equiv everywhere;

Bherpooray

= filling completely;

Unter

= in side;

Mangal

= songs of praise (happiness);

Unhad

= never changing;

Shabad

= musical note;

Vajaaye

= played musical instruments

Meaning: In the second stage, the kind Waheguru creates an opportunity for the individual seeking with Him to meet (experience) the Guru. When that happens, the individual washes away the filth of selfishness and becomes completely selfless and fearless (no worldly fear can intimidate him). Rather than any worldly fear, the individual now experiences a respectful fear of Waheguru and sings His praise. He feels the presence of Waheguru around Him and everywhere in the universe. He sees only Waheguru inside him and everywhere and feels blessed to sing His praise. (Guru) Nanak says that in the second stage, the individual seeking with Waheguru feels as if a continuous and uniform music is always playing in his heart.

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Hur teejarri laanv mun chao bhayaa bairaagian Baliram jeeo. Sant junaa Hur mail Hur paaya vadbaagian Baliram jeeo. Nirmal Hur paaya Hur goon gaaya mukh bolli Hur baani. Sant junaa vadbhageen paaya Hur katheeye Akatth kahanee. Hirday Hur Hur Hur dhoon oopjee Hur japeeye mastak bhaag jeeo. Jun Nanak bollay teejee laavayn Hur oopjay mun biraag jeeo. 3.

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Word Meaning: Teejarri = third; **Chao** = uplift of mind; **Bairaagian** = detached from worldly attractions;

dbhaagian

= very lucky people.

Nirmal

= clean, unblemished;

Katheeye

= discuss, consider;

Akath

= indescribable Waheguru;

Hirday

= in the heart;

Dhoon

= sound, Shabad;

Oopjee

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= sprouts;
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Mastak

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= forehead;
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Mastak Bhaag

= good luck written on your forehead (it is believed that based on your deeds, your fortune is engraved on your forehead);

Meaning: In the third step (mental stage), the individual seeking with Waheguru, becomes detached from the worldly attractions and his mind experiences an uplift (or bliss). In the company of the holy men, such lucky people will achieve with Waheguru. By singing the praise of Waheguru while uttering the holy Gurbaani with their tongue, they will be one with the pure (unblemished) Waheguru (who is above the effects of Maya. Such lucky individuals sing the praise of and discuss the wonderful traits of the indescribable Waheguru in the company of holy men. Waheguru's Shabad sprouts in the heart of the lucky people and they recite His Naam all the time. (Guru) Nanak says that in the third stage, the individual feels detachment from the worldly attractions.

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Hur chauthirree laanv mun sehj bhayaa Hur paaya Baliram jeeo. Gurmukh milliia subhaaye Hur mun tun meetha laaya Baliram jeeo.

Hur meetha laaya meray Prabh bhaaya undin Hur liv laayee.

Mun chindiya Ful paayaa Suvamee Hur Naam vajji vadhayee.

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Hur Prabh Thakur kaaj rachayaa dhun hirdaiy naam vigaasi. Jun Nanak bollay chauthee laaveyn Hur paayaa Prabh avinaashi.

Word Meaning: **Chauthirree** = fourth; **Sehj** = stage of mind where it quits wandering; **Bhay** =

happened;

Baliram jeeo

= gladly willing to lay down life (completely dedicated to Waheguru);

Gurmukh

= by Guru's grace;

Subhaaye

= because of affection and clean mind;

Liv laayee

= no other thought than Waheguru on the mind;

Mun chindiyaa

= whatever the mind wished;

Ful

= reward;

Vajji **Vadhaayee**

= happiness struck the mind (felt blissful);

Kaaj rachaaya

= initiated the task;

Dhun

= human bride;

Hirdaiy

= in the heart;

Vigaasi

= overjoyed;

Avinaashi

= non-destructible

Meaning: I love Waheguru so much that I will gladly die for Him anytime. In the fourth stage, the individual seeking with Waheguru has complete control on his mind, and he realizes Waheguru. By the grace of the Guru, he realizes Waheguru due to his devotion and control on his mind. He finds Waheguru very sweet in his body and mind. He liked Waheguru and found Him very sweet; and day and night his mind is focussed on Waheguru only. The Master Waheguru initiated the task of with the devotee, and the devotee is rewarded with wish he had in mind. His heart is blissful because of Waheguru's Naam. The slave (Guru) Nanak says that

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in the fourth stage, the devotee is united with the non- destructible Waheguru.

At the conclusion of Laavaan, the Raagi Singhs recite the following holy Hymn to complete the ceremony.

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§ **Siri Raag M:4, Chhant (78):** Viyaah hoya meray baabula gurmukhay Hur paaya. Agyaan andhayra cuttiyaa Gur Gyaan perchund balaaya.. Baliyaa Gur gyaan andhayra binsiyaa Hur rattan pdaarath laadha. Haumein roag gaya dukh laatha aap aapay gurmat khaadha. Akaal moorat vur paaya abinashee nah kday murray nah jaaya. Viyaah hoya meray baabula gurmukhay Hur paaya.

Word Meaning: Baabula = oh father; Gurmukhay = By surrendering to the Guru; Hur = Waheguru; Agyaan = ignorance (lack of Divine knowledge); Andhayra = darkness; Gyaan = Divine knowledge; Perchund = very bright; balaaya = lighted up; Binsiyaa = disappeared; Rattan Pdaarath = highly valuable substance; Laadha = found; Haumein = selfishness; Roag = illness; Laatha = took off; Aap Aapay Khaadha = killed selfishness; Akaal Moorat Vur = Waheguru husband upon which time has no effect; Abinashee = indestructible;

Meaning: Oh my father! With the grace of the Guru, the marriage ceremony with Waheguru has been completed. When the Guru lighted up the lamp of the Divine knowledge, the darkness of ignorance disappeared with the bright light of Knowledge. When the darkness disappeared, I found the invaluable Waheguru. With the wisdom of the Guru, I destroyed my entity and the illness of my selfishness is gone. I have found that husband in Waheguru who is indestructible, upon which time has no effect and who never dies or goes away. By Guru's grace, my wedding ceremony is over, oh my father!

As you can see, again this holy Shabad has nothing to do with the worldly wedding between a man and a woman

After this ceremony, the whole congregation joins in the full Prayer thereby ending the

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ceremony. As you must have noticed, the holy Shabads which are recited are not meant for the worldly weddings.

However, it is a great custom in Sikhism that we recite Gurbani at all occasions which is the Teaching of Guru Sahiban.