

*One Absolute Manifest. Victory belongeth to be wondrous Destroyer of darkness.*

# **THE CODE OF SIKH CONDUCT AND CONVENTIONS**

English Version of  
**THE SIKH REHT MARYADA**



*Published by*  
**DHARAM PARCHAR COMMITTEE**  
Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee,  
Sri Amritsar



## **PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH VERSION OF REHT MARYADA**

This English version of the Sikh Reht Maryada is a faithful translation of the Punjabi original. Translations do not generally need prefaces. Why the author of this version has chosen to write a preface, therefore, needs to be explained.

Translation of any work is an extremely hard job: translation of a book of laws is very much harder, particularly if the laws in question are moral or religious rules or social conventions which inevitably embody subtle nuances of a religion's metaphysical, moral and social philosophy. The translator in this case becomes burdened with the dual responsibility of ensuring that his translation embodies the full as also the exact import of the original.

In the specific context of the Sikh Reht Maryada, that was essential for two reasons. Like any book of laws and rules promulgated by any other religion, the English version of the Sikh Reht Maryada may be taken as a key to the Sikh spiritual and social philosophy. It must, therefore, most faithfully, reflect the views of its exalted authors (men of profound learning, who had not only deeply meditated on Sikhism but lived it and who drew upon the collective wisdom of an extraordinarily fervent generation of Sikh divines and intellectuals, apart from a large number of texts, for compiling these rules) untainted by the translator's own moral or cognitive predilections which may affect his interpretation of these rules without his being even aware of it.

The second reason why the English version should

embody the full and exact import of the original is that with the Sikh diaspora over the globe, the links of the Sikh migrants to other Indian states and foreign countries with Punjabi are loosening. Also, people, the world over, have begun to evince interest in Sikhism and some have embraced this religion. For ensuring uniformity of observances and avoiding unintended heresy, it was absolutely necessary that the English version of the Reht Maryada was not just a translation but a totally exact version of the Reht Maryada.

For securing that, the author of this Version has tried his level best to translate the original Punjabi text literally. Where the words used in the original did not have exact equivalents in English. or embodied exotic concepts, he has employed descriptive phrases to bring the ideas they convey within an English knowing reader's ken.

For these very reasons, he has religiously adhered to the original text, appending footnotes where elaborations were necessary. At one or two places, he has interpolated a phrase. But that was to impart specificity to the context after making sure that the interpolation did not, in the least, affect the sense or tenor of the text. As regards the footnotes in the ensuing version, these fall into two categories. The original (punjabi) version, had some footnotes. For the author of this version, they were the part of the sacrosanct text. They appear in this version against numerals. The footnotes contributed by him appear against astrick marks.

But, the author of this version has made a rather radical departure from the system of division of the original text and recast the text into divisions and sub-divisions devised entirely by him without rearranging the text. He submits it in all humility that he had found the division



and classification of the original text some-what confusing. He felt that dividing the text into sections, chapters and articles would place the subject matter of the text in a clear and intelligible perspective. So, without tempering with the text in the slightest and preserving the subject-wise classification in the original, he has organised the entire text into six sections, thirteen chapters and twentyseven articles. Headings for most of the chapters were available in the original text. Where they were not, they have been provided by him.

And now, a few remarks which are indirectly but nonetheless, vitally relevant to the essence of this translator's mission : producing an English version of the Sikh Reht Maryada with the object of promoting uniformity in the Sikh conduct and observances in the interest of deeper religious cohesion. The Sikh Reht Maryada, as the ensuing preface to the original Punjabi text will show is the product of collective Panthic wisdom. What is more, some of the greatest Sikh scholars and savants of all times contributed to it and deliberated on its contents. So this work should take precedence on any sectional beliefs and preferences. In a wider context, the contents of the Reht Maryada should be taken as the final word as to the matters they deal with. That will foster panthic cohesion.

And finally, this English version of the Reht Maryada is in a very real sense the product of a collective endeavour. Into its making have gone not only this translator's modest talent for translation and labour but also the initiative taken by Dr. Surjit Singh Gandhi, who, in fact, prepared a version himself for the S.G.P.C. and put that at this translator's disposal—this translator thankfully acknowledges having relied on it for guidance in relation to several subjects—

and constant goading by Principal Satbir Singh, a well-known Sikh Scholar and a member of S.G.P.C. and S. Manjit Singh, during whose earlier tenure of office as Secretary, S.G.P.C., the preparation of this version was taken up. No less valuable is the contribution of those who went through the manuscript to ensure that it completely corresponded to the Punjabi original. Considering the high status of these persons in the realm of Sikh religious learning, their approval of this English version of the Reht Maryada should bestow on it the status of an authentic version. Omitting to mention the name of Mr. Mewa Singh (who so painstakingly prepared the type-script from a none too neat manuscript) in this context, will be an unpardonable lapse. And finally, equally valuable in the production of the work has been the contribution, in its laser typesetting, of Mr. Gurvinder Singh of Standard Data & Word Processors, Patiala, a young man endowed with extraordinary competence and immense patience.

This translator humbly dedicates his labour to all those who search for guidelines as to the truly Sikh conduct for self-education or for regulating their secular and religious life.

Patiala, 31st August, 1994

**Kulraj Singh**

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# THE CODE OF SIKH CONDUCT AND CONVENTIONS

## PREFACE

The All India Sikh Mission Board accorded their acceptance to the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbhandhak Committee's Conduct and Conventions Sub-Committee's draft of conduct and conventions by their resolution no. 1 of 1st August 1936 and the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbhandhak Committee, by their solution No. 149 of 12th October, 1936. The S.G.P.C.'s Advisory Committee on Religious Matters again considered the draft in its meeting on 7th January, 1945 and made recommendations for certain additions to and deletions from it. The undermentioned gentlemen were present at this meeting of the Advisory Committee:

1. Singh Sahib Jathedar Mohan Singh, Jathedar Sri Akal Takht;
2. Bhai Sahib Bhai Achhar Singh, Head Granthi, Sri Darbar Sahib, Amritsar;
3. Prof. Teja Singh M.A., Khalsa College, Amritsar;
4. Prof. Ganga Singh, Principal, Shahid Sikh Missionary College;
5. Giani Lal Singh M.A., Professor, Sikh Missionary College, Amritsar;
6. Prof. Sher Singh M.Sc., Government College, Ludhiana;
7. Bawa Prem Singh of Hoti;
8. Giani Badal Singh, Incharge, Sikh Mission, Hapur.

The additions and deletions as per the Advisory Committee's recommendations received the S:G.P.C.'s acceptance by its resolution No. 97 passed at its meeting held on 3rd Feb., 1945.

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1. An Abridgement of the mul mantar (lit. fundamental formula or root chant) with which the Sikh holy book, the Adi Granth, begins and with the full or abridged form of which all Sikh religious writings and quite often, Sikhs' private documents including letters and account books, begin. Several abridgements of the mul mantar are current. These are used more or less as an invocation. For the full mul mantar, refer to page 45.

## INTRODUCTION

The code of conduct and conventions recorded in the pages that follows was received by the S.G.P.C. from its Code of Conduct and Conventions Sub-Committee with its report reproduced here-in-below:

### **Report of S.G.P.C.'s Code of Conduct and Conventions Sub-Committee**

To

The Secretary  
S.G.P.Committee,  
Amritsar

Sir,

The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee had constituted a sub-committee comprising the undermentioned gentlemen for preparing a draft of code of conduct and conventions to enable it to determine and prescribe a proper set of conventions for gurdwaras (Sikh place of worship):

Giani Thakar Singh, Amritsar; Giani Sher Singh; Bhai Budh Singh; Akali Kaur Singh; Sant Sangat Singh of Kamaliya; Bhai Kahn Singh of Nabha; Sant Gulab Singh Gholiya; Bhai Labh Singh Granthi, Sri Harimandar Sahib; Bhai Hazur Singh of Hazur Sahib (or a representative of his); Pandit Basant Singh of Patiala; Bhai Vir Singh of Amritsar; Giani Hira Singh Dard; Bawa Harkishan Singh, Principal, Guru Nanak Khalsa College, Gujranwala; Bhai Trilochan Singh of Sur Singh, Distt. Lahore; Giani Hamir Singh of Amritsar; Pandit Kartar Singh of Dakha, Distt.



Ludhiana; the Jathedar of Sri Akal Takht ; the Jathedar of Takht Sri Kesgarh Sahib; the Jathedar of Takht Sri Patna Sahib; Prof. Ganga Singh; Prof. Jogh Singh; Sant Man Singh of Kankhal; Justice Teja Singh; Bhai Randhir Singh and Prof. Teja Singh (who was to be the convenor of the sub-committee).

The meetings of this sub-committee were held on Oct. 4 and 5, 1931, Jan. 3, 1932 and Jan. 31 1932 at the Akal Takht. The following members kept attending these meetings and participating in the deliberations:

Akali Kaur Singh; Giani Sher Singh; Sant Man Singh of Nirmala sect; Prof. Ganga Singh; the Jathedar of the Akal Takht; the Jathedar of Takht Sri Kesgarh Sahib; Giani Hira Singh Dard; Bhai Labh Singh Granthi; Giani Thakar Singh; Giani Hamir Singh; Bawa Harkishan Singh, M.A.; Justice Teja Singh; Bhai Trilochan Singh; and the undersigned, the convenor.

Apart from these, the following gentlemen, attended occasionally:

S. Dharam Anant Singh, Principal. Sikh Missionary College; S. Bhag Singh, Advocate, Gurdaspur; S. Wassawa Singh, Secretary. S.G.P.C.; Master Tara Singh (President. Shiromani Akali Dal); among others.

The draft is submitted to the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbhandhak Committee. We hope you will get this draft printed and published for ascertaining the general Panthic opinion as to it and after receiving various opinions. present it in the S.G.P.C.'s general meeting for final acceptance.

After this, the draft was once again deliberated upon on 8th May, 1932 at the behest of the S.G.P.C. The following gentlemen were present at the meeting on 8th May:

Justice Teja Singh; Sant Teja Singh, Granthi. Sri Nankana Sahib; Giani; Gurmukh Singh Musafar; Giani Nahar Singh; S. Wassawa Singh, Secretary S.G.P.C.; Bhai Kartar Singh Jhabbar; S. Waryam Singh Gamula (member incharge, Nankana Sahib); Bhai Pratap Singh book-seller; S. Lal Singh (S.G.P.C.); Jathedar Mohan Singh (Sri Akal Takht); et. al.

Later, on the insistence of several gentlemen, another meeting of the Conduct and Convention Sub-Committee was held on 26th September 1932 to consider the draft once again. The following members attended that meeting:

Giani Sher Singh; Giani Thakar Singh; Giani Hamir Singh; Bhai Labh Singh, Granthi, Sri Darbar Sahib; Giani Gurmukh Singh Musafar; Bhai Joginder Singh (Mit-Jathedar Takht Sri Kesgarh Sahib); Justice Teja Singh; Giani Nahar Singh; and the undersigned, the convenor.

Apart from these, Sant Teja Singh M.A., also participated in the deliberations. The committee deliberated upon the entire draft with utmost care and corrected it minutely.

Now this draft is again being submitted by the Conduct and Conventions Sub-Committee to the S.G.P.C. Kindly get this draft printed and circulated among the congregations for their final opinion. Besides, a special session of the S.G.P.C. may be convened to consider it and accord to the approved draft the S.G.P.C.'s final acceptance.

Sd. Teja Singh

1st Oct., 1932

Convenor, Conduct and Conventions  
Sub-Committee

**The list of Individuals and Associations who sent  
their opinions concerning the Draft.**

The names of the individuals who sent their opinions as to the draft of the Code of Conduct and Conventions and its contents :

1. Bhai Sajjan Singh, Custodian of the office of Gurdwara Sri Hazur Sahib, Nander;
2. S. Hazara Singh, Patiala, Government Contractor, Bhawanigarh;
3. Giani Hira Singh Dard, Lahore;
4. Bhai Hamam Singh Naacheez, Village Naushehra Soon Sakesar, Distt. Shahpur;
5. Bhai Pratap Singh, Publisher and Book-seller, Amritsar;
6. Bhai Ram Singh, Dera Baba Mishra Singh, Chowk Lachhmansar, Amritsar;
7. Giani Nahar Singh of Asli Qaumi Dard, Amritsar;
8. Giani Nahar Singh of Asli Qaumi Dard, Amritsar (Reacting to the second draft);
9. S. Ganda Singh V.C.O. (Retd.), Examiner Persian Writings, office of the Deputy Commissioner, Jalandhar City;
10. Vaid Naurang Singh, Gurbachan Singh Tanghi, Amritsar;
11. Bhai Mela Singh, Gurdwara Churasti Attari, Amritsar;
12. Sardar Bahadur Bhai Sahib Kahn Singh, Nabha;
13. Anonymous devotee;
14. Anonymous devotee;
15. Sant Tehl Singh Ji, Majitha, Amritsar;
16. Bhai Narain Singh, Masit Palkot, P.O. Garhdiwala (Hoshiarpur);

17. Bhai Uttam Singh Chinagong (Bengal), P.O., Railway Building, Chittangong;
18. Editors, The Khalsa and The Khalsa Advocate, Amritsar;
19. Bhai Amrik Singh, Lime Merchant, Gujranwala;
20. Sant Gulab Singh, Khalsa Anand Bhawan, Moga (Ferozepur);
21. Giani Hira Singh, Dhudial, Jhelum;
22. Bhai Nand Singh Engineer C/o Baba Bakhtawar Lal Sharma, Bathinda;
23. Master Bachan Singh 'Bachan', Sidhwan Kalan (Ludhlana);
24. Bhai Bishan Singh Suhana, G.D. Khalsa High School, Jalandhar;
25. Bhai Nazam Singh Sadhaar, Dinapur (Patna);
26. Sant Gulab Singh Gholiya, Moga;
27. Ganda Singh Jaachak, Amritsar;
28. Master Puran Singh Anandpuri, Chowk Karori, Amritsar;
29. Giani Bachittar Singh C/o Khalsa Trading Agency, Calcutta;
30. Bhai Tripat Singh, Nagoki Sarli (Amritsar);
31. Giani Ran Singh, Gurdwara Damdama Sahib, Mirpur (via Jhelum);
32. Bhai Chattar Singh, Gurdwara Saranban City, Malayasia;
33. Bhai Thakar Singh Sansaar, Village Fatehgarh Ghanayian, P.O. Gurdaspur;
34. Pandit Kartar Singh, Dakha (Ludhiana);
35. Bhai Prem Singh Giani, Khalsa High School, Kalar (Rawalpindi);

36. Bhai Gurdit Singh Dars, Chak No. 132, P.O. Multan;
37. Bhai Sunder Singh Duberan (Rawalpindi);
38. Giani Bhagat Singh, Khalsa High School, Baba Bakala, Amritsar;
39. Bhai Saran Singh, Granthi, Gurdwara Ratan Tala, Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Karachi;
40. Bhai Chhehbar Singh, Head Master, Khalsa Updeshak College, Orphanage Gharjakh (Gujranwala);
41. Bhai Mal Singh Khosla, Kashmir State;
42. Dr. Teja Singh Giani, Fateh Chak (Tarn Taran);
43. Bhai Gurmukh Singh, Granthi, Barhundi (Ludhlana);
44. Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid, Tarn Taran (Amritsar);
45. Bhai Jodh Singh, Kripan Bahadar, Alowal, (Malay State);
46. Bhai Prem Singh, Govt. Pensioner, Mangat (Gujrat);
47. Bhai Mahan Balbir Singh Akali, Village Patto Singh Wali, P.O. Ferozepur;
48. Bhai Manohar Singh, First Head Clerk, Local Gurdwara Committee, Amritsar;
49. Bhai Mahinder Singh, President, Gurdwara Committee Samadh Bhai, Village Anuke (Ferozepur);
50. Bhai Gurbachan Singh (Ketrygess M.P. nett Jormun'e B.Sc.).

Opinions as to the draft of the Code of Conduct and Conventions and its contents were received from the following Panthic associations:

1. Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Khadoor Sahib (Amritsar);
2. Khalsa Committee (School), Hoti;
3. Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Gujranwala;
4. Sikh Women's Educational Committee, Shaankar (Jalandhar);

5. Sangat Takht Sri Kesgarh Sahib, Anandpur;
6. Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Gujarkhan;
7. Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Chak Jhumra Mandi (Lyallpur);
8. Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Kuntrila (Rawalpindi);
9. Akali Jatha Amritsar City;
10. Sikh Teachers' Association, Khalsa School, Khaaria (Gujrat);
11. Khalsa Central Diwan, Shiromani Panth, Malouni Jatha, Majha;
12. Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Dhudial (Jhelum);
13. Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Bombay;
14. Guru Nanak Khalsa Mission School, Dehra Sahib, Jama Rai;
15. Khalsa Diwan Lahore Cantt;
16. Central Sikh Naujuwan Sabha, Burma Taunji (S.S.S.) and Khalsa Diwan Burma;
17. Secretary, Akali Jatha, Tehsil Ambala;
18. Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Khushab (Sargodha);
19. Pacific Coast Khalsa Diwan, Stockton (America);
20. Gurdwara Committee, Momeo (Burma);
21. Jathedar Budha Dal Nihang Singh Chalda Vehir, Dhobi Mandi, Lahore.

## **Sikh Code of Conduct and Conventions**

### **Section One**

#### **CHAPTER-I**

#### **The Definition of Sikh**

##### ***Article 1***

Any human being who faithfully believes in

- (i) One Immortal Being,
- (ii) Ten Gurus, from Guru Nanak Dev to Guru Gobind Singh,
- (iii) The Guru Granth Sahib,
- (iv) The utterances and teachings of the ten Gurus and
- (v) the baptism bequeathed by the tenth Guru, and who does not owe allegiance to any other religion, is a Sikh.

## **Section Two**

### **CHAPTER-II**

#### **Sikh Living**

##### ***Articles II***

A Sikh's life has two aspects—individual or personal and corporate or Panthic.

### **CHAPTER-III**

#### **A Sikh's Personal Life**

##### ***Article III***

A Sikh's personal life should comprehend :

- (i) meditation on Nam (Divine Substance)<sup>1</sup> and the scriptures,
- (ii) leading life according to the Gurus' teachings and
- (iii) altruistic voluntary service.

#### **Meditating on Nam (Divine Substance) and Scriptures**

##### ***Article IV***

- (1) A Sikh should wake up in the ambrosial hours (three hours before the dawn), take bath and, concentrating his/her thoughts on One Immortal Being, repeat the name Waheguru (Wondrous Destroyer of darkness).
- (2) He/She should recite the following scriptural compositions every day:
  - (a) the Japu, the Jaapu and the Ten Sawayyas (Quartets)—beginning 'Sarawag sudh'—in the morning.

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1. Also translated as God's attributed self .



- (b) Sodar Rehras comprising the following compositions:
- (i) nine hymns of the Guru Granth Sahib, *occurring in the holy book after the Japuji Sahib*,<sup>1</sup> the first of which begins with ‘Sodar’ and the last of which ends with ‘saran pare ki rākhō sarmā’,
  - (ii) The Benti Chaupai of the tenth Guru (beginning ‘hamri karō hāth dai rachhā’ and ending with ‘dusht dōkh te lehō bachāi’,
  - (iii) the Sawayya beginning with the words ‘pae gahe jab te tumre’,
  - (iv) the Dohira beginning with the words ‘sagal duār kau chhād kai’,
  - (v) the first five and the last pauris (stanzas) of Anand Sahib<sup>2</sup> and
  - (vi) the Mundawani and the Slok Mahla 5 beginning ‘terā kitā Jato nāhi’—in the evening after sunset.
- (c) the Sohila—to be recited at night before going to bed. The morning and evening recitations should be concluded with the Ardas (formal supplication litany).

(3) (a) The text<sup>3</sup> of the Ardas :<sup>4</sup>

One Absolute Manifest; victory belongeth to the  
Wondrous Destroyer of darkness. May the might of the  
All-powerful help!

Ode to his might by the tenth lord.

Having first thought of the Almighty's prowess, let

1. The phrase in italics has been interpolated by the translator to help locate the hymns more conveniently.
2. The object of reciting the Anand as part of Sodar Rehras or at the conclusion of the congregational gathering is just to express joy and gratitude for the communion with the Guru.
3. This is a model of the Ardas. It may be adapted to different occasions and for different purposes. However, the initial composition with ‘Pritham Bhagauti.....’ and the concluding phrases commencing ‘Nanak Nam;’ must not be altered.
4. LIT. Supplication or prayer. In reality, it is a litany comprehending very briefly the whole gamut of Sikh history and enumerating all that sikhism hold sacred. Portions of it are invocations and prayer for the grant of strength and virtue. It concludes with: O Nanak. may the Nam (Holy) be ever in a ascendance: in Thy will, may the good of all prevail!

us think of Guru Nanak. Then of Guru Angad, Amardas and Ramdas— may they be our rescuers! Remember, then, Arjan, Harigobind and Harirai. Meditate then on revered Hari Krishan on seeing whom all suffering vanishes. Think then of Tegh Bahadar. remembrance of whom brings all nine treasures. He comes to rescue everywhere. Then of the tenth lord, revered Guru Gobind Singh, who comes to rescue everywhere. The embodiment of the light of all ten sovereign lordships. the Guru Granth—think of the view and reading of it and say, ‘Waheguru (Wondrous Destroyer of darkness)’.

Meditating on the achievement of the dear and truthful ones, including the five beloved ones, the four sons of the tenth Guru, forty liberated ones, steadfast ones, constant repeaters of the Divine Name, those given to assiduous devotion, those who repeated the Nam, shared their fare with others, ran free kitchen, wielded the sword and everlooked faults and shortcomings, say ‘Waheguru’, O Khalsa.

Meditating on the achievement of the male and female members of the Khalsa who laid down their lives in the cause of dharma (religion and righteousness), got their bodies dismembered bit by bit, got their skulls sawn off, got mounted on spiked wheels, got their bodies sawn, made sacrifices in the service of the shrines (gurdwaras), did not betray their faith, sustained their adherence to the Sikh faith with sacred unshorn hair uptill their last breath, say, "Wondrous Destroyer of darkness", O Khalsa.

Thinking of the five thrones (seats of religious authority) and all gurdwaras, say, "Wondrous Destroyer of darkness", O Khalsa.

Now it is the prayer of the whole Khalsa. May the conscience of the whole Khalsa be informed by Waheguru,

Waheguru, Waheguru and, in consequence of such remembrance, may total well-being obtain. Wherever there are communities of the Khalsa, may there be Divine protection and grace, the ascendance of the supply of needs and of the holy sword, protection of the tradition of grace, victory of the Panth, the succour of the holy sword, ascendance of the Khalsa. Say, O Khalsa, "Wondrous Destroyer of darkness."

Unto the Sikhs the gift of the Sikh faith, the gift of the untrimmed hair, the gift of the discipline of their faith, the gift of sense of discrimination, the gift of trust, the gift of confidence, above all, the gift of meditation on the Divine and bath in the Amritsar (holy lank at Amritsar). May hymns-singing missionary parties, the flags, the hostels, abide from age to age. May righteousness reign supreme. Say, "Wondrous Destroyer of darkness."

May the Khalsa be imbued with humility and high wisdom! May Waheguru guard its understanding!

O Immortal Being, eternal helper of Thy Panth, benevolent Lord, bestow on the Khalsa the beneficence of unobstructed visit to and free management of Nankana Sahib and other shrines and places of the Guru from which the Panth has been separated.

O Thou, the honour of the humble, the strength of the weak, aid unto those who have none to rely on, True Father, Wondrous Destroyer of darkness, we humbly render to you.....<sup>1</sup> Pardon any impermissible accretions, omissions, errors, mistakes. Fulfil the purposes of all.

Grant us the association of those dear ones, on meeting whom one is reminded of Your Name. O Nanak, may the

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1. Mention here the name of the scriptural composition that has been recited or, in appropriate terms, the object for which the congregation has been held.

Nam (Holy) be ever in ascendance! In Thy will may the good of all prevail!

- (b) On the conclusion of the Ardas, the entire congregation participating in the Ardas should respectfully genuflect before the revered Guru Granth, then stand up and call out, "The Khalsa is of the Wondrous Destroyer of darkness: victory also is His." The Congregation should, thereafter, raise the loud spirited chant of Sat Sri Akal (True is the Timeless Being).
- (c) While the Ardas is being performed, all men and women in the congregation should stand with hands folded. The person in attendance of the Guru Granth should keep waving the whisk standing.
- (d) The person who performs the Ardas should stand facing the Guru Granth with hands folded. If the Guru Granth is not there, the performing of the Ardas facing any direction is acceptable.
- (e) When any special Ardas for and on behalf of one or more persons is offered, it is not necessary for persons in the congregation other than that person or those persons to stand up.

### Section Three

#### CHAPTER-IV

#### **Joining the congregation for understanding of and reflecting on Gurbani**

##### *Article V*

- (a) One is more easily and deeply affected by gurbani (the holy bani bequeathed by the Gurus) participating in congregational gatherings. For this reason, it is necessary for a Sikh that he visit the places where the Sikhs congregate for worship and prayer (the gurdwaras), and joining the congregation, partake of the benefits that the study of the holy scriptures bestows.
- (b) The Guru Granth should be ceremonially opened in the gurdwara every day without fail. Except for special exigencies, when there is need to keep the Guru Granth open during the night, the Holy Book should not be kept open during the night. It should, generally, be closed ceremonially after the conclusion of the Rehras (evening scriptural recitation). The Holy Book should remain open so long as a granthi or attendant can remain in attendance, persons seeking darshan (seeking a view of or making obeisance to it) keep coming, or there is no risk of commission of irreverence towards it. Thereafter, it is advisable to close it ceremonially to avoid any disrespect to it.
- (c) The Guru Granth should be opened, read and closed ceremonially with reverence. The place where it is installed should be absolutely clean. An awning should be erected above. The Guru Granth Sahib should be placed on a cot measuring up to its size and overlaid

with absolutely clean mattress and sheets. For proper installation and opening of the Guru Granth, there should be cushions/pillows of appropriate kind etc. and, for covering it, romalas (sheetcovers of appropriate size). When the Guru Granth is not being read, it should remain covered with a romal. A whisk, too should be there.

- (d) Anything except the afore-mentioned reverential ceremonies for instance, such practices as the arti<sup>1</sup> with burning incense and lamps, offerings of eatables to Guru Granth Sahib burning of lights, beating of gongs, etc., is contrary to gurmat (the Guru's way). However, for the perfuming of the place, the use of flowers, incense and scent is not barred. For light inside the room, oil or butter-oil lamps, candles, electric lamps, kerosene oil lamps, etc., may be lighted.
- (e) No book should be installed like and at par with the Guru Granth. Worship of any idol or any ritual or activity should not be allowed to be conducted inside the gurdwara. Nor should the festival of any other faith be allowed to be celebrated inside the gurdwara. However, it will not be improper to use any occasion or gathering for the propagation of the gurmat (The Guru's way).
- (f) Pressing the legs of the cot on which the Guru Granth Sahib is installed, rubbing nose against walls and on platforms, held sacred, or massaging these, placing water below the Guru Granth Sahib's seat, making or installing statues, or idols inside the gurdwaras, bowing before the picture of the Sikh Gurus or elders—all these are irreligious self-willed egotism, contrary to gurmat (the Guru's way).

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1. Waving of a platter with burning lamps and incense set in it in vertical circular motion.

- (g) When the Guru Granth has to be taken from one place to another, the Ardas should be performed. He/She who carries the Guru Granth on his/her head should walk barefoot; but when the wearing of shoes is a necessity, no superstitions need be entertained.
- (h) The Guru Granth should be ceremonially opened after performing the Ardas. After the ceremonial opening, a hymn should be read from the Guru Granth Sahib.
- (i) Whenever the Guru Granth is brought, irrespective of whether or not another copy of the Guru Granth had already been installed at the concerned place, every Sikh should stand up to show respect.
- (j) While going into the gurdwara, one should take off the shoes and clean oneself up. If the feet are dirty or soiled, they should be washed with water. One should circumambulate with the Guru Granth Sahib or the gurdwara on one's right.
- (k) No person, no matter which country, religion or caste he/she belongs to, is debarred from entering the gurdwara for darshan (seeing the holy shrine). However, he/she should not have on his/her person anything, such as tobacco or other intoxicants, which are tabooed by the Sikh religion.
- (l) The first thing a Sikh should do on entering the gurdwara is to do obeisance before the Guru Granth Sahib. He/She should, thereafter, have a glimpse of the congregation and bid in a low, quiet voice, "Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh."
- (m) In the congregation, there should be no differentiation or discrimination between Sikh and non-Sikh, persons traditionally regarded as touchable and untouchable, the so-called high and low caste persons, the high and the low.

- (n) Sitting on a cushion, a distinctive seat, a chair, a stool, a cot, etc. or in any distinctive position in the presence of the Guru Granth or within the congregation is contrary to gurmata (Guru's way).
- (o) No Sikh should sit bare-headed in the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib or in the congregation. For Sikh women, joining the congregation with their persons uncomfortably draped and with veils drawn over their faces is contrary to gurmata (Guru's way).
- (p) There are five takhts (lit., thrones, fig., seats of high authority): namely—
  - (I) The holy Akal Takht, Amritsar,
  - (II) The holy Takht, Patna Sahib,
  - (III) The holy Takht, Kesgarh Sahib, Anandpur Sahib,
  - (IV) The holy Takht Hazur Sahib, Nanded,
  - (V) The holy Takht Damdama Sahib, Talwandi Sabo.
- (q) Only an Amritdhari (baptized) Sikh man or woman, who faithfully observes the discipline ordained for the baptized Sikhs, can enter the hallowed enclosures of the takhts. (Ardas for and on behalf of any Sikh or non-Sikh, except a fallen or punished (tankhahia) Sikh, can be offered at the takhts.
- (r) At a high-level site in every gurdwara should be installed the nishan sahib (Sikh flag). The cloth of the flag should be either of xanthic or of greyish blue colour and on top of the flag post, there should either be a spearhead or a Khanda (*a straight dagger with convex side edges leading to slanting top edges ending in a vertex*).
- (s) There should be a drum (nagara) in the gurdwara for beating on appropriate occasions.



## CHAPTER-V

### **Kirtan (Devotional Hymn Singing by a Group or an individual)**

#### ***Article VI***

- (a) Only a Sikh may perform kirtan in a congregation.
- (b) Kirtan means singing the scriptural compositions in traditional musical measures.
- (c) In the congregation, kirtan only of Gurbani (Guru Granth's or Guru Gobind Singh's hymns) and, for its elaboration, of the compositions of Bhai Gurdas and Bhai Nand Lal, may be performed.
- (d) It is improper, while singing hymns to rhythmic folk tunes or to traditional musical measures, or in team singing, to induct into them improvised and extraneous refrains. Only a line from the hymn should be made a refrain.

## CHAPTER-VI

### **Taking Hukam<sup>1</sup> (Command)**

#### ***Article VII***

- (a) Doing obeisance to the Guru Granth Sahib, respectfully, taking a glimpse of the congregation, an embodiment of the Guru's person, and taking the
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1. Reading or Rending out to others, including the congregation, of a Shabad (hymn) or a unit of one or more slokas (short scriptural compositions normally of two to four lines) and a pauri (short stanza of four or more lines) from the Guru Granth Sahib after, or even without performing, Ardas is an important Sikh ritual. It is called Hukam laina (taking the order or command), Vak laina (taking the word), Awaz laina (taking the voice). The hymn or unit goes by the name of Hukam (order, command) Vak (uttered word) or Awaz (voice).

command : these together constitute the view of the Satguru (Immortal destroyer of darkness, the true guru). Raising the drapery covering the Guru Granth Sahib and merely taking a look or making others take a look at the exposed page, without taking the command (reading the prescribed hymn) is contrary to gurmata (Guru's way).

- (b) In the course of the congregational sessions, only one thing should be done at a time: performing of kirtan, delivering of discourse, interpretative elaboration of the scriptures, or reading of the scriptures.
- (c) Only a Sikh, man or woman, is entitled to be in attendance of the Guru Granth during the congregational session.
- (d) Only a Sikh may read out from the Guru Granth for others. However, even a non-Sikh may read from it for himself/herself.
- (e) For taking the command (Hukam), the hymn that is continuing on the top of the left hand page must be read from the beginning. If the hymn begins on the previous page, turn over the page and read the whole hymn from the beginning to the end. If the scriptural composition that is continuing on the top of the left hand page is a var (ode), then start from the first of the slokas preceding the pauri and read upto the end of the pauri. Conclude the reading at the end of the hymn with the line in which the name 'Nanak' occurs.
- (f) Hukam must also be taken at the conclusion of the congregational session or after the Ardas.

## CHAPTER-VII

### **Sadharan Path (Completion of Normal Intermittent Reading of the Guru Granth Sahib)**

#### ***Article VIII***

- (a) Every Sikh should, as far as possible, maintain a separate and exclusive place for the installation of Guru Granth Sahib, in his home.
- (b) Every Sikh, man, woman, boy or girl, should learn Gurmukhi to be able to read the Guru Granth Sahib.
- (c) Every Sikh should take the Hukam (Command) of the Guru Granth in the ambrosial (early) hours of the morning before taking meal. If he/she fails to do that, he/she should read or listen to reading from the Guru Granth some time during the day. If he/she cannot do that either, during travel etc., or owing to any other impediment, he/she should not give in to a feeling of guilt.
- (e) It is desirable that every Sikh should carry on a continuous reading of the Guru Granth and complete a full reading in one or two months or over a longer period.
- (f) While undertaking a full reading of the Guru Granth, one should recite the Anand Sahib (the first five and the last stanzas) and perform the Ardas. One should, thereafter, read the Japuji.

### **Akhand Path (Uninterrupted-Non-stop-Completion of the Reading of the Guru Granth Sahib)**

#### ***Article IX***

- (a) The non-stop reading of the Guru Granth is carried on at hard times or on occasions of elation or joy. It takes

approximately fortyeight hours. The non-stop reading implies continuous, uninterrupted reading. The reading must be clear and correct. Reading too fast, so that the person listening in to it cannot follow the contents, amounts to irreverence to the Scriptures. The reading should be correct and clear, due care being bestowed on consonant and vowel, even though that takes a little longer to complete.

- (b) Whichever family or congregation undertakes the non-stop reading should carry it out itself through its members, relatives, friends, etc., all together. The number of reciters is not prescribed.

If a person, himself, cannot read, he should listen into the reading by some competent reader. However, it should never be allowed to happen that the reader carries on the reading all by himself/herself and no member of the congregation or the family is listening in to the reading. The reader should be served with food and clothing to the best of the host's means.

- (c) Placing a pitcher, ceremonial clarified-butter-fed lamp, coconut, etc. around, during the course of the uninterrupted or any other reading of Guru Granth Sahib, or reading of other Scriptural texts side by side with or in the course of such reading is contrary to the gurmata (Guru's way).

## **Commencing the Non-Stop Reading**

### ***Article X***

While undertaking the intermittent reading of the whole Guru Granth Sahib, the sacred pudding (Karhah Prashad) for offering should be brought and after reciting the Anand Sahib (six stanzas) and offering Ardas, Hukam should be taken.

While beginning the unbroken reading, the sacred pudding should first be laid. Thereafter, after reciting the Anand Sahib (six stanzas), offering the Ardas and taking the Hukam, the reading should be commenced.

### **Concluding the Reading**

#### ***Article XI***

- (a) The reading of the whole Guru Granth Sahib (intermittent or non-stop) may be concluded with the reading of the Mundawani or the Rag Mala according to the convention traditionally observed at the concerned place. (Since there is a difference of opinion within the Panth on this issue, nobody should dare to write or print a copy of the Guru Granth Sahib excluding the Rag Mala). Thereafter, after reciting the Anand Sahib, the Ardas of the conclusion of the reading should be offered and the sacred pudding (Karhah Prashad) distributed.
- (b) On the conclusion of the reading, offering of draperies, fly-whisk and awning, having regard to the requirements of the Guru Granth Sahib, and of other things, for Panthic causes, should be made to the best of means.

## **CHAPTER-VIII**

### **Karhah Prashad (Sacred Pudding)**

#### ***Article XII***

- (a) Only the sacred pudding which has been prepared or got prepared according to the prescribed method shall be acceptable in the congregation.
- (b) The method of preparing the Karhah Prashad is this:  
In a clean vessel, the three contents (wheat flour, pure

sugar and clarified butter, in equal quantities) should be put and it should be made reciting the Scriptures. Then covered with a clean piece of cloth, it should be placed on a clean stool in front of the Guru Granth Sahib. Thereafter, in the holy presence of the Guru Granth, the first five and the last stanza of the Anand Sahib should be recited aloud (so that the congregation can hear)<sup>1</sup>, the Ardas, offered and the pudding tucked with the sacred Kirpan for acceptance.

- (c) After this, before the distribution to the congregation of the Karhah Prashad, the share of the five beloved ones should be set apart and given away. Thereafter, while commencing the general distribution, the share of the person in attendance of the Guru Granth Sahib<sup>2</sup> should be put in a small bowl or vessel and handed over. The person who doles out the Karhah Prashad among the congregation should do so without any discrimination on the basis of personal regard or spite. He should dole out the Karhah Prashad equally to the Sikh, the non-Sikh or a person of high or low caste. While doling out the Karhah Prashad, no discrimination should be made on considerations of caste or ancestry or being regarded, by some, as untouchable, of persons within the congregation.
- (d) The offering of Karhah Prashad should be accompanied by at least two pice in cash.

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1. If another vessel of the sacred pudding is brought in after the recitation of the Anand, it is not necessary to repeat the recitation of the Anand Sahib. Offering of the pudding brought later to the sacred Kirpan is enough.

2. Giving double share to the person in attendance constitutes improper discrimination.

## CHAPTER-IX

### **Exposition of Gurbani (Sikh Holy Scriptures)**

#### ***Article XIII***

- (a) The exposition of the Gurbani in a congregational gathering should be carried out only by a Sikh.
- (b) The object of the exposition should only be promoting the understanding of the Guru's tenets.
- (c) The exposition can only be of the ten Gurus' writings or utterances, Bhai Gurdas's writings, Bhai Nand Lal's writings or of any generally accepted Panthic book or of books of history (which are in agreement with the Guru's tenets) and not of a book of any other faith. However, for illustration, references to a holy person's teachings or those contained in a book may be made.

### **Expository Discourse**

#### ***Article XIV***

No discourse contrary to the Guru's tenets should be delivered inside a gurdwara.

### **Gurdwara Service**

#### ***Article XV***

In the gurdwara the schedule of the congregational service generally is :

Ceremonial opening of the Guru Granth Sahib, Kirtan, exposition of scriptures, expository discourses. recitation of Anand Sahib, the Ardas (*see Article-IV (3) (a) above*), the raising of Fateh slogan and then the slogan of Sat Sri Akal and taking the Hukam .

## Section Four

### CHAPTER-X

#### Living in Consonance with Guru's Tenets

##### *Article XVI*

A Sikh's living, earning livelihood, thinking and conduct should accord with the Guru's tenets. The Guru's tenets are:

- (a) Worship should be rendered only to the One Timeless Being and to no god or goddess.
- (b) Regarding the ten Gurus, the Guru Granth and the ten Gurus' word alone as saviours and holy objects of veneration.
- (c) Regarding ten Gurus as the effulgence of one light and one single entity.
- (d) Not believing in caste or descent, untouchability, magic, spells, incantation, omens, auspicious times, days and occasions, influence of stars, horoscopic dispositions, shradh (ritual serving of food to priests for the salvation of ancestors on appointed days as per the lunar calendar), ancestor worship, khiah (ritual serving of food to priests-Brahmins - on the lunar anniversaries of the death of an ancestor)<sup>1</sup>, pind (offering of funeral barley cakes to the deceased's relatives), patal (ritual

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1. Two words, shradh and khiah, occurring in this clause connote what appears to be the same thing—the ritual serving of food to the priests (Brahmins). The difference between the connotations of the two words is implicit in the dates on which the ritual is performed. The ritual of serving of food on the lunar anniversary of the death goes by the name Khiah; whereas the ritual of serving food on the lunar date corresponding to the date of death during the period of the year designated shradhs is known as shradh.



donating of food in the belief that that would satisfy the hunger of a departed soul), diva (the ceremony of keeping an oil lamp lit for 360 days after the death, in the belief that that lights the path of the deceased), ritual funeral acts, hom (lighting of ritual fire and pouring intermittently clarified butter, food-grains etc. into it for propitiating gods for the fulfilment of a purpose), jag (religious ceremony involving presentation of oblations), tarpan (libation), sikha-sut (keeping a tuft of hair on the head and wearing thread), bhadan (shaving of head on the death of a parent), fasting on new or full moon or other days, wearing of frontal marks on the forehead, wearing of thread, wearing of a necklace of the pieces of tulsī<sup>1</sup> stalk, veneration of any graves, of monuments erected to honour the memory of a deceased person or of cremation sites, idolatory and such like superstitious observances.<sup>2</sup>

Not owning up or regarding as hallowed any place other than the Guru's place—such, for instance, as sacred spots or places of pilgrimage of other faiths.

Not believing in or according any authority to Muslim seers, Brahmins' holiness, soothsayers, clairvoyants, oracles, promise of an offering on the fulfilment of a wish, offering of sweet loaves or rice

1. A plant with medicinal properties. Bot. *Ocimum sanctum*.
2. Most, though not all, rituals and ritual or religious observances listed in this clause are Hindu rituals and observances. The reason is that the old rituals and practices, continued to be observed by large numbers of Sikhs even after their conversion from their old to the new faith and a large bulk of the Sikh novices were Hindu converts. Another reason for this phenomenon was the stranglehold of the Brahmin priest on Hindus' secular and religious life which the Brahmin priest managed to maintain even on those leaving the Hindu religious fold, by his astute mental dexterity and rare capacity for compromise. That the Sikh novitiates included a sizeable number of Muslims is shown by inclusion in this clause of the taboos as to the sanctity of graves, shirni, etc.

pudding at graves on fulfilment of wishes, the Vedas, the Shastras, the Gayatri (Hindu scriptural prayer unto the sun), the Gita, the Quran, the Bible, etc. However, the study of the books of other faiths for general self-education is admissible.

- (e) The Khalsa should maintain its distinctiveness among the professors of different religions of the world, but should not hurt the sentiments of any person professing another religion.
- (f) A Sikh should pray to God before launching off any task.
- (g) Learning Gurmukhi (Punjabi in Gurmukhi script) is essential for a Sikh. He should pursue other studies also.
- (h) It is a Sikh's duty to get his children educated in Sikhism.
- (i) A Sikh should, in no way, harbour any antipathy to the hair of the head with which his child is born. He should not temper with the hair with which the child is born. He should add the suffix "Singh" to the name of his son. A Sikh should keep the hair of his sons and daughters intact.
- (j) A Sikh must not take hemp (cannabis), opium, liquor, tobacco, in short, any intoxicant. His only routine intake should be food.
- (k) Piercing of nose or ears for wearing ornaments is forbidden for Sikh men and women.
- (l) A Sikh should not kill his daughter; nor should he maintain any relationship with a killer of daughter.
- (m) The true Sikh of the Guru shall make an honest living by lawful work.

- (n) A Sikh shall regard a poor person's mouth as the Guru's cash offerings box.
- (o) A Sikh shall not steal, form dubious associations or engage in gambling.
- (p) He who regards another man's daughter as his own daughter, regards another man's wife as his mother, has coition with his own wife alone, he alone is a truly disciplined Sikh of the Guru.

A Sikh woman shall likewise keep within the confines of conjugal rectitude.

- (q) A Sikh shall observe the Sikh rules of conduct and conventions from his birth right upto the end of his life.
- (r) A Sikh, when he meets another Sikh, should greet him with "Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh"<sup>1</sup>. This is ordained for Sikh men and women both.
- (s) It is not proper for a Sikh woman to wear veil or keep her face hidden by veil or cover.
- (t) For a Sikh, there is no restriction or requirement as to dress except that he must wear Kachhehra"<sup>2</sup> and turban. A Sikh woman may or may not tie turban.

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1. Rendered into English: The Khalsa is Waheguru's; victory too is His!

2. A drawer type garment fastened by a fitted string round the waist, very often worn as an underwear.

## CHAPTER-XI

### **Ceremonies pertaining to Birth and Naming of Child**

#### ***Article XVII***

- (a) In a Sikh's household, as soon after the birth of a child as the mother becomes capable of moving about and taking bath (irrespective of the number of days which that takes), the family and relatives should go to a gurdwara with karhah prashad (sacred pudding) or get karhah prashad made in the gurdwara and recite in the holy presence of the Guru Granth Sahib such hymns as "pameshar ditā banā" (Sorath M. 5),<sup>1</sup> "Satguru sache diā bhej" (Asa M. 5)<sup>2</sup> that are expressive of joy and thankfulness. Thereafter if a reading of the holy Guru Granth Sahib had been taken up, that should be concluded. Then the holy Hukam (command) should be taken. A name starting with the first letter of the hymn of the Hukam (command) should be proposed by the granthi (man in attendance of the holy book) and, after its acceptance by the congregation, the name should be announced by him. The boy's name must have the suffix "Singh" and the girl's, the suffix "Kaur".

After that the Anand Sahib (short version comprising six stanzas) should be recited and the Ardas in appropriate terms expressing joy over the naming ceremony be offered and the karhah prashad distributed.

- (b) The superstition as to the pollution of food and water

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1. The Almighty Lord has granted support. (Sorath M. 5, Guru Granth Sahib p. 628)

2. The true Lord has sent this gift. (Asa M.S. Guru Granth Sahib, p. 396)

in consequence of birth<sup>1</sup> must not be subscribed to, for the holy writ is : *"The birth and death are by His ordinance; coming and going is by His will. All food and water are, in principle, clean, for these life-sustaining substances are provided by Him."*

- (c) Making shirts or frocks for children out of the Holy Book's draperies is a sacrilege.

### **Anand Sanskar (Lit. Joyful Ceremonial: Sikh Matrimonial Conventions and Ceremony)**

#### ***Article XVIII***

- (a) A Sikh man and woman should enter wedlock without giving thought to the prospective spouse's caste and descent.
- (b) A Sikh's daughter must be married to a Sikh.
- (c) A Sikh's marriage should be solemnized by Anand marriage rites.
- (d) Child marriage is taboo for Sikhs.
- (e) When a girl becomes marriageable, physically, emotionally and by virtue of maturity of character, a suitable Sikh match should be found and she be married to him by Anand marriage rites.
- (f) Marriage may not be preceded by engagement ceremony. But if an engagement ceremony is sought to be held, a congregational gathering should be held and, after offering the Ardas before the Guru Granth Sahib, a kirpan, a steel bangle and some sweets may be tendered to the boy.

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1. There is a wide-spread belief among certain sections of Indian people that a birth in a household causes pollution (sutak) which is removed by the thorough bathing of the mother, the baby and persons attending on her as also by a thorough cleaning of the house, the utensils and the clothes, after prescribed periods of ten, twentyone and forty days.

- (g) Consulting horoscopes for determining which day or date is auspicious or otherwise for fixing the day of the marriage is a sacrilege. Any day that the parties find suitable by mutual consultation should be fixed.
- (h) Putting on floral or gilded face ornamentation, decorative headgear or red thread band round the wrist, worshipping of ancestors, dipping feet in milk mixed with water, cutting a berry or jandi (*Prosopis spicigera*) bushes, filling pitcher, ceremony of retirement in feigned displeasure, reciting couplets, performing havans,<sup>1</sup> installing vedi (a wooden canopy or pavilion under which Hindu marriages are performed), prostitutes' dances, drinking liquor, are all sacrileges.
- (i) The marriage party should have as small a number of people as the girl's people desire. The two sides should greet each other singing sacred hymns and finally by the Sikh greetings of Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh.
- (j) For marriage, there should be a congregational gathering in the holy presence of Guru Granth Sahib. There should be hymn-singing by ragis or by the whole congregation. Then the girl and the boy should be made to sit facing the Guru Granth Sahib. The girl should sit on the left side of the boy. After soliciting the congregation's permission, the master of the marriage ceremony (who may be a man or a woman) should bid the boy and girl and their parents or guardians to stand and should offer the Ardas for the commencement of the Anand marriage ceremony.

The officiant should then apprise the boy and the girl of the duties and obligations of conjugal life according to the Guru's tenets.

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1. Sacrificial fire.

He should initially give to the two an exposition of their common mutual obligations. He should tell them how to model the husband-wife relationship on the love between the individual soul and the Supreme Soul in the light of the contents of circumambulation (lavan) hymns in the Suhi measure (rag) section<sup>1</sup> of the Guru Granth Sahib.

He should explain to them the notion of the state of "a single soul in two bodies" to be achieved through love and make them see how they may attain union with the Immortal Being discharging duties and obligations of the householders' life. Both of them, they should be told, have to make their conjugal union a means to the fulfilment of the purpose of the journey of human existence; both have to lead clean and Guru-oriented lives through the instrumentality of their union.

He should then explain to the boy and girl individually their respective conjugal duties as husband and wife.

The bridegroom should be told that the girl's people having chosen him as the fittest match from among a whole lot, he should regard his wife as his better half, accord to her unflinching love and share with her all that he has. In all situations, he should protect her person and honour, he should be completely loyal to her and he should show as much respect and consideration for her parents and relations as for his own.

The girl should be told that she has been joined in

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1. The bulk of the Guru Granth (the Sikh holy book) is divided on the basis of the ragas (measures) of the Indian Classical music. Suhi is one of the ragas featuring in the Guru Granth Sahib.

matrimony to her man in the hallowed presence of the Guru Granth Sahib and the congregation. She should ever harbour for him deferential solicitude, regard him the lord and master of her love and trust; she should remain firm in her loyalty to him and serve him in joy and sorrow and in every clime (native or foreign) and should show the same regard and consideration to his parents and relatives as she would, to her own parents and relatives.

The boy and girl should bow before the Guru Granth Sahib to betoken their acceptance of these instructions. Thereafter, the girl's father or the principal relation should make the girl grasp one end of the sash which the boy is wearing over his shoulders and the person in attendance of the Guru Granth Sahib should recite the matrimonial circumambulation stanzas (lavan of the fourth Guru in the Suhi musical measure section of the Guru Granth)<sup>1</sup>. After the conclusion of the recitation of each of the stanzas, the boy, followed by the girl holding the end of the sash, should go round the Guru Granth Sahib while the ragis or the congregation sing out the recited stanza.

The boy and girl, after every circumambulation, should bow before the Guru Granth Sahib in genuflexion, lowering their forehead to touch the ground and then stand up to listen to the recitation of the next stanza. There being four matrimonial circumambulation stanzas in the concerned hymn, the proceeding will comprise four circumambulations with the incidental singing of the stanza. After the fourth circumambulation, the boy and girl should, after

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1. Pp. 773-74.



bowing before the Guru Granth Sahib, sit down at the appointed place and the ragis or the person who has conducted the ceremony should recite the first five and the last stanza of the Anand Sahib. Thereafter, the Ardas should be offered to mark the conclusion of the Anand marriage ceremony and the sacred pudding, distributed.

- (k) Persons professing faiths other than the Sikh faith cannot be joined in wedlock by the Anand Karaj ceremony.
- (l) No Sikh should accept a match for his/her son or daughter for monetary consideration.
- (m) If the girl's parents at any time or on any occasion visit their daughter's home and a meal is ready there, they should not hesitate to eat there. Abstaining from eating at the girl's home is a superstition. The Khalsa has been blessed with the boon of victuals and making others eat by the Guru and the Immortal Being. The girl's and boy's people should keep accepting each other's hospitality, because the Guru has joined them in relationship of equality<sup>1</sup>.
- (n) If a woman's husband has died, she may, if she so wishes, finding a match suitable for her, remarry. For a Sikh man whose wife has died, similar ordinance obtains.
- (o) The remarriage may be solemnized in the same manner as the Anand marriage.
- (p) Generally, no Sikh should marry a second wife if the first wife is alive.
- (q) A baptised Sikh ought to get his wife baptised.

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1. Prem Sumarag.

## Funeral Ceremonies

### *Article XIX*

- (a) The body of a dying or dead person, if it is on a cot, must not be taken off the cot and put on the floor. Nor must a lit lamp be placed beside, or a cow got bestowed in donation by, him/her or for his/her good or any other ceremony, contrary to Guru's way, performed. Only Gurbani should be recited or "Waheguru, Waheguru" repeated by his/her side.
- (b) When some one shuffles the mortal coil, the survivors must not grieve or raise a hue and cry or indulge in breast-beating. To induce a mood of resignation to God's will, it is desirable to recite Gurbani or repeat "Waheguru".
- (c) However young the deceased may be, the body should be cremated, However, where arrangements for cremation cannot be made, there should be no qualm about the body being immersed in flowing water or disposed of in any other manner,
- (d) As to the time of cremation, no consideration as to whether it should take place during day or night should weigh.
- (e) The dead body should be bathed and clothed in clean clothes. While that is done, the Sikh symbols—comb, kachha, karha, kirpan—should not be taken off, Thereafter, putting the body on a plank, Ardas about its being taken away for disposal be offered, The hearse should then be lifted and taken to the cremation ground. While the body is being carried to the cremation ground, hymns that induce feelings of detachment should be recited. On reaching the cremation ground, the pyre should be laid. Then the Ardas for consigning

the body to fire be offered, The dead body should then be placed on the pyre and the son or any other relation or friend of the deceased should set fire to it. The accompanying congregation should sit at a reasonable distance and listen to kirtan or carry on collective singing of hymns or recitation of detachment-inducing hymns, When the pyre is fully aflame, the Kirtan Sohila (prescribed preretirement night Scriptural prayer) be recited and the Ardas offered, (Piercing the Skull half an hour or so after the pyre has been burning with a rod or something else in the belief that that will secure the release of the soul—kapal kriya—is contrary to the Guru's tenets.) The congregation should then leave.

Coming back home, a reading of the Guru Granth Sahib should be commenced at home or in a nearby gurdwara, and after reciting the six stanzas of the Anand Sahib, the Ardas, offered and karhah prashad (sacred pudding) distributed. The reading of the Guru Granth Sahib should be completed on the tenth day. If the reading cannot, or is sought not to, be completed on the tenth day, some other day may be appointed for the conclusion of the reading having regard to the convenience of the relatives. The reading of the Guru Granth Sahib should be carried out by the members of the household of the deceased and relatives in cooperation. If possible, Kirtan may be held every night. No funeral ceremony remains to be performed after the "tenth day."

- (f) When the pyre is burnt out, the whole bulk of the ashes, including the burnt bones, should be gathered up and immersed in flowing water or buried at that very place and the ground levelled. Raising a monument to the

memory of the deceased at the place where his dead body is cremated is taboo.

- (g) Adh marg (the ceremony of breaking the pot used for bathing the dead body amid doleful cries half way towards the cremation ground), organised lamentation by women, foorhi (sitting on a straw mat in mourning for a certain period), diva (keeping an oil lamp lit for 360 days after the death in the belief that that will light the path of the deceased), pind (ritual donating of Jumps of rice flour, oat flour, or solidified milk (khoa) for ten days after death), kirya (concluding the funeral proceedings ritualistically, serving meals and making offerings by way of shradh, budha marna (waving of whisk, over the hearse of an old person's dead body and decorating the hearse with festoons), etc. are contrary to the approved code. So too is the picking of the burnt bones from the ashes of the pyre for immersing in the Ganga, at Patalpuri (at Kiratpur), at Kartarpur Sahib or at any other such place.

## **Other Rites and Conventions**

### ***Article XX***

Apart from these rites and conventions, on every happy or sad occasion, such as moving into a new house, setting up a new business (shop), putting a child to school, etc., a Sikh should pray for God's help by performing the Ardas. The essential components of all rites and ceremonies in Sikhism are the recitation of the Gurbani (Sikh Scriptures) and the performing of the Ardas.

## Section Five

### CHAPTER-XII

#### Voluntary Service

##### *Article XXI*

(I) Voluntary service is a prominent part of Sikh religion. Illustrative models of voluntary service are organised, for imparting training, in the gurdwaras. Its simple forms are: sweeping and plastering the floors<sup>1</sup> of the gurdwara, serving water to or fanning the congregation, offering provisions to and rendering any kind of service in the common kitchen-cum-eating house, dusting the shoes of the people visiting the gurdwara, etc.

- (a) Guru's kitchen-cum-Eating-House. The philosophy behind the Guru's kitchen-cum-eating-house is two-fold : to provide training to the Sikhs in voluntary service and to help banish all distinction of high and low, touchable and untouchable from the Sikhs' minds.
- (b) All human beings, high or low, and of any caste or colour may sit and eat in the Guru's kitchen-cum-eating-house. No discrimination on grounds of the country of origin, colour, caste or religion must be made while making people sit in rows for eating. However, only baptised Sikhs can eat off one plate.

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1. In older times, buildings, particularly in rural areas had mud and not brick-paved or cement floors. To give to these floors firmness and consistency, they were thinly plastered with a diluted compound of mud.

## **Section Six**

### **CHAPTER-XIII**

#### **Facets of Corporate Sikh Life**

##### ***Article XXII***

The essential facets of Panthic life are:

- (1) Guru Panth (the Panth's Guru status);
- (2) The ceremony of ambrosial initiation;
- (3) The statute of chastisement for aberrations;
- (4) The statute of collective resolution;
- (5) The appeal against local decisions.

#### **Panth's Status of Guruhood**

##### ***Article XXIII***

The concept of service is not confined to fanning the congregation, service to and in the common kitchen-cum-eating-house, etc. A Sikh's entire life is a life of benevolent exertion. The most fruitful service is the service that secures the optimum good by minimal endeavour. That can be achieved through organised collective action. A Sikh has, for this reason, to fulfil his Panthic obligations (obligations as a member of the corporate entity, the Panth), even as he/she performs his/her individual duties. This corporate entity is the Panth. Every Sikh has also to fulfil his obligations as a unit of the corporate body, the Panth.

- (a) The Guru Panth (Panth's status of Guruhood) means the whole body of committed baptised Sikhs. This body was fostered by all the ten Gurus and the tenth Guru gave it its final shape and invested it with Guruhood.

## **Ceremony of Baptism or Initiation**

### ***Article XXIV***

- (a) Ambrosial baptism should be held at an exclusive place away from common human traffic.
- (b) At the place where ambrosial baptism is to be administered, the holy Guru Granth Sahib should be installed and ceremonially opened. Also present should be six committed baptised Sikhs, one of whom should sit in attendance of the Guru Granth Sahib and the other five should be there to administer the ambrosial baptism. These six may even include Sikh women. All of them must have taken bath and washed their hair.
- (c) The five beloved ones who administer ambrosial baptism should not include a disabled person, such as a person who is blind or blind in one eye, lame, one with a broken or disabled limb, or one suffering from some chronic disease. The number should not include anyone who has committed a breach of the Sikh discipline and principles. All of them should be committed baptised Sikhs with appealing personalities.
- (d) Any man or woman of any country, religion or caste who embraces Sikhism and solemnly undertakes to abide by its principles is entitled to ambrosial baptism. The person to be baptised should not be of very young age; he or she should have attained a plausible degree of discretion. The person to be baptised must have taken bath and washed the hair and must wear all five K's - Kesh (unshorn hair), strapped Kirpan (sword), Kachhehra (prescribed shorts), Kanga (Comb tucked in the tied up hair), Karha (Steel bracelet). He/She must

not have on his/her person any token of any other faith. He/She must not have his/her head bare or be wearing a cap. He/She must not be wearing any ornaments piercing through any part of the body. The persons to be baptised must stand respectfully with hands folded facing the Guru Granth Sahib.

- (e) Anyone seeking to be rebaptised, having committed an aberration, should be singled out and the five beloved ones should award chastisement to him/her in the presence of the congregation.
- (f) One from amongst the five beloved ones administering ambrosial baptism to persons seeking to be baptised should explain the principles of the Sikh religion to them:

The Sikh religion advocates the renunciation of the worship of any created thing, and rendering of worship and loving devotion to, and meditating on, the One Supreme Creator. For the fulfilment of such devotion and meditation, reflection on the contents of Gurbani and practising of its tenets, participation in the congregational services, rendering service to the Panth, benevolent exertion (to promote the good of others), love of God's name (loving reflection on and experience of the Divine), living within the Sikh discipline after getting baptised etc. are the principal means.

He should conclude his exposition of the principles of Sikh religion with the query: Do you accept these willingly?

- (g) On an affirmative response from the seekers of baptism, one from amongst the five beloved ones should perform the Ardas for the preparation of baptism and take the



holy Hukam (command).<sup>1</sup> The five beloved ones should come close to the bowl for preparing the amrit (ambrosial nectar).

- (h) The bowl should be of pure steel and it should be placed on a clean steel ring or other clean support.
- (i) Clean water and sugar puffs should be put in the bowl and the five beloved ones should sit around it in bir posture<sup>2</sup> and recite the undermentioned scriptural compositions.
- (j) The scriptural composition to be recited are : The Japuji, The Jaap, The Ten Sawayyas (commencing with sarawag sudh), The Bainti Chaupai (From "hamri karō hāth dai rachhā" to "dusht dōkh te lehō bachāi"), Anand Sahib.
- (k) Each of the five beloved ones who recites the scripture should hold the edge of the bowl with his left hand and keep stirring the water with a double-edged sword held in his right hand. He should do that with full concentration. The rest of the beloved ones should keep gripping the edge of the bowl with both hands concentrating their full attention on the ambrosial nectar.
- (I) After the conclusion of the recitation, one from amongst the beloved ones should perform the Ardas .

- 
1. Reading or Reading out of others, including the congregation, of a shabad (hymn) or a unit of one or more slokas (short scriptural composition normally of two to four lines) and a pauri (short stanza of four or more lines) from the Guru Granth Sahib after, or even without performing, the Ardas is an important Sikh ritual. It is called hukam laina (taking the order or command), Vak laina (taking the word), Awaz laina (taking the voice). The hymn or unit goes by the name of hukam (order, command) vak (uttered word) or awaz (voice).
  2. Sitting in bir posture comprises sitting resting the body on the right leg, the right calf and foot gathered inward and the left leg upto the shin kept in a verticle position.

- (m) Only that person seeking to be baptised who has participated in the entire ceremony of ambrosial baptism can be baptised. One who has turned up while the ceremony was in progress cannot be baptised.
- (n) After the Ardas as per clause (l) above, thinking of our Father, the tenth Master, the wearer of the aigrette, every person seeking to be baptised should sit in bir posture,<sup>1</sup> putting his/her right hand cupped on the left cupped hand and be made to drink the ambrosial mix five times, as the beloved one who pours the mix into his cupped hand exclaims : say, Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh! (The Khalsa is of the Wondrous Destroyer of darkness; victory, too, is His!) The person being baptised should after imbibing the ambrosia, repeat: Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh. Then five handfuls of the ambrosial mix should be sprinkled into the eyes of the person being baptised and another five into his hair. Each such sprinkling should be accompanied by the beloved one administering baptism saying, "Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh", and the person being baptised repeating the chant. Whatever ambrosial mix is left over after the administration of the ambrosial baptism to all individual seekers, should be sipped by all (men and women) baptised, together.
- (o) After this the five beloved ones, all together in chorus, communicating the name of Waheguru to all who have been administered the ambrosial baptism, recite to them the mul mantar (basic creed, seminal chant) and make them repeat it aloud:

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1. Sitting in bir posture comprises sitting resting the body on the right leg, the right calf and foot gathered inward and the left leg upto the shin kept in a verticle position.

ik aunkār satnām kartā purakh nirbhau nirwair akāl  
mūrat ajūnī saibhang gur prasād.<sup>1</sup>

- (p) After this, one from amongst the five beloved ones should explain to the initiates the discipline of the order : Today you are reborn in the true Guru's household, ending the cycle of migration, and joined the Khalsa Panth (order). Your spiritual father is now Guru Gobind Singh and spiritual mother, Mata Sahib Kaur. Your place of birth is Kesgarh Sahib and your native place is Anandpur Sahib. You, being the sons of one father, are, inter-se yourselves and other baptised Sikhs, spiritual brothers. You have become the pure Khalsa, having renounced your previous lineage, professional background, calling (occupation), beliefs, that is, having given up all connections with your caste, descent, birth, country, religion, etc ... You are to worship none except the One Timeless Being—no god, goddess incarnation or prophet. You are not to think of anyone except the ten Gurus and anything except their gospel as your saviour. You are supposed to know Gurmukhi (Punjabi alphabet). (If you do not, you must learn it.) And recite, or listen in to the recitation of, the undermentioned scriptural compositions, the dally repetition of which is ordained, every day: (I) The Japuji Sahib, (2) The Jaap Sahib, (3) The Ten Sawayyas (Quartrains), beginning “sarawag sudh”, (4) The Sodar Rahiras and the Sohila. Besides, you should read from or listen in to the recitation from the Guru Granth.

1. English Translation: One Absolute Manifest Eternal Reality. Creator Conscious. Without fear. Without ill-will. Timeless Being. Outside the cycle of transmigration. Self-created. Destroyer of darkness. Grace Incarnate.

The last two phrases are more often popularly translated as : Attained by the Guru's (Divine Preceptor's) grace.

Have, on your person, all the time, the five K's : The Keshas (unshorn hair), the Kirpan (sheathed sword)<sup>1</sup>, the Kachhehra<sup>2</sup>, the Kanga (comb), the Karha (steel bracelet).<sup>3</sup>

The undermentioned four transgressions (tabooed practices) must be avoided:

- (1) Dishonouring the hair;
- (2) Eating the meat of an animal slaughtered the Muslim way;
- (3) Cohabiting with a person other than one's spouse;
- (4) Using tobacco.

In the event of the commission of any of these transgressions, the transgressor must get rebaptised. If a transgression is committed unintentionally and unknowingly, the transgressor shall not be liable to punishment. You must not associate with a Sikh who had uncut hair earlier and has cut it or a Sikh who smokes. You must ever be ready for the service of the Panth and of the gurdwaras (Sikh places of worship). You must tender one tenth of your earnings to the Guru. In short, you must act the Guru's way in all spheres of activity.

You must remain fully aligned to the Khalsa brotherhood in accordance with the principles of the Khalsa faith. If you commit transgression of the Khalsa discipline, you must present yourself before the congregation and beg pardon, accepting whatever punishment is awarded. You must also resolve to remain watchful against defaults in the future.

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1. The length of the sword to be worn is not prescribed.

2. The Kachhehra (drawers like garment) may be made from any cloth, but its legs should not reach down to below the shins.

3. The Karha should be of pure steel.

- (q) The following individuals shall be liable to chastisement involving automatic boycott:
- (1) Anyone maintaining relations or communion with elements antagonistic to the Panth including the minas (reprobates), the masands (agents once accredited to local Sikh communities as Guru's representatives, since discredited for their faults and aberrations), followers of Dhirmal or Ram Rai, et. al., or users of tobacco or killers of female infants.
  - (2) One who eats/drinks left-overs of the unbaptised or the fallen Sikhs;
  - (3) One who dyes his beard;
  - (4) One who gives off son or daughter in matrimony for a price or reward;
  - (5) Users of intoxicants (hemp, opium, liquor, narcotics, cocaine, etc.);
  - (6) One holding, or being a party to, ceremonies or practices contrary to the Guru's way;
  - (7) One who defaults in the maintenance of Sikh discipline.
- (r) After this sermon, one from among the five beloved ones should perform the Ardas .
- (s) Thereafter, the Sikh sitting in attendance of the Guru Granth Sahib should take the Hukam. If anyone from amongst those who have received the ambrosial baptism had not earlier been named in accordance with the Sikh naming ceremony, he should renounce his previous name and be given a new name beginning with first letter of the Hukam now taken.
- (t) And finally, the karhah prashad should be distributed. All the newly launched Sikh men and women should eat the karhah prashad together off the same bowl.

## **Method of Imposing Chastisement**

### ***Article XXV***

- (a) Any Sikh who has committed any default in the observance of the Sikh discipline should approach the nearby Sikh congregation and make a confession of his lapse standing before the congregation.
- (b) The congregation should then, in the holy presence of Guru Granth Sahib, elect from among themselves five beloved ones who should ponder over the suppliant's fault and propose the chastisement (punishment) for it.
- (c) The congregation should not take an obdurate stand in granting pardon. Nor should the defaulter argue about the chastisement. The punishment that is imposed should be some kind of service, especially some service that can be performed with hands.
- (d) And finally an Ardas for correction should be performed.

## **Method of Adopting Gurmatta**

### ***Article XXVI***

- (a) The Gurmatta<sup>1</sup> can only be on a subject that affects the fundamental principles of Sikh religion and for their upholding, such as the questions affecting the maintenance of the status of the Gurus or the Guru Granth Sahib or the inviolability of Guru Granth Sahib, ambrosial baptism, Sikh discipline and way of life, the identity and structural framework of the Panth. Ordinary issues of religious, educational, social or political nature can be dealt with only in a Matta.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Holy resolution.

2. Resolution.

- (b) A Gurmatta can be adopted only by a select primary Panthic group or a representative gathering of the Panth.

### **Appeals against Local Decisions**

#### ***Article XXVII***

An appeal can be made to the Akal Takht against a local congregation's decision.

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