

# **Anand Marriage<sup>1</sup> - Development and History**

## **Anand Marriage Act 1909**

Kulwant Singh Khokhar, 12502 Nightingale Drive, Chester, VA 23836, USA.

E-mail [khokharks@aol.com](mailto:khokharks@aol.com). Phone (804) 530-0160. Fax – same as phone.

Tuesday, October 4, 2005

Anad Karaj i.e. Anan-Vivah - Anand is Joy, Karaj is an act: undertaking. Viah or Vivah means marriage. Anand Karaj is marriage performed by Anand ceremony.

Marriage is an act of taking girl as wife by her husband from the house of her father-mother. In Anand Karaj, four lavan' (name of Hymns) are recited from Guru Granth Sahib (the Sikh Holy Book), and with each Lavn', the boy followed by the girl, circumambulate (goes around) Guru Granth Sahib.

### **Imagery**

Development of physical relations in animals is natural: instinctive. Saris-crane and Koonj-crane partner for life. Might be that man with proportionally highest brain mass had less developed instinct that is apparent even now, and animals and birds were his teachers. The man watched them and learnt pairing etc.

We watch it daily that every living thing protects its produce till it becomes independent, loves, and cares for it. In this, they are no way less than intelligent man. It is possible that man and woman started living together due to common factor of love for progeny, and need for its protection and provisions. This created a small group – family.

The essential need of sharing, developed mutual attachment in man and woman, and it evolved into sense of possession i.e. relationship – she is my wife, he is my husband. This was to manage responsibilities, and division of labor for proper and meaningful living. Many families got together and gave birth to society and its ethics – discipline. Everyone had to stay within one's social limits and norms, so that everyone could protect one's rights, and should not try to cross one's boundary – try to possess a thing belonging to anyone else. Everyone became witness to this discipline to protect families. Out of this, developed rules and regulations of society, including promise to live as wife and husband. It was beginning of marriage.

The form of marriage kept evolving with progress in development of society. Gradually, promise to live together was made in the presence of parents, relatives and friends, all as witnesses. Marriage became socio-religious ceremony - man and woman should live together as husband and wife only after religious marriage ceremony.

Man, woman, put in effort to get rid of laborious marriage ceremony, and it laid plinth of civil marriage – promise in the court of law (before magistrate) and registration as husband and wife.

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[1] Base of this write up is article written in Gurmukhi, on October 25, 1992, about 13 years back, for talk in Gurdwara Sahib at Greensboro, North Carolina, USA. It has now been written in English, is updated with added Gurbani quotes, and is grossly modified.

Court marriage was still a law with its own strict bindings and responsibilities. This put into practice the idea of living in friends – live together without marriage, producing children or not. This living together had no bindings of law and no responsibilities of it – full freedom. Out of it, in a very natural way, came out the system of single parents. Live in friends and single parents as yet are mostly confined to advanced countries. From time to time, marriage diversified into its many forms –

\*\* Living together without marriage.

\*\* Selection by partners, or by middleman with approval of parents.

\*\* Marriage planned by the boy and girl, with proper understanding and cooperation of parents.

\*\* Love marriage, taking parents into confidence or not.

\*\* Marriage after making payment for the partner. Greed of parents often led to mismatches – Sixteen years old girl married to sixty years old man.

\*\* Exchange marriage – Sister of A marries B, and sister of B marries A.

\*\* Abduction and marriage. Forced marriage – by threats etc., or conquer and take away girl as wife.

**Svambar** – Open selection of boy by girl is an old story of the past history. Feminine liberty, or may be indirectly that shortage of high quality girls gave them rights to select their partner for marriage. Svambar was mostly limited to Rajas or a few rich. Sita selected Ram Chandar, and Dropadi selected Pandav this way.

**Auction** - A mandi is place where animals are auctioned or sold. The town of Mandi in Himachal Pradesh got its name because there the women were auctioned. In the middle of Mandi town, there is a covered shed beside a bricked tank where these auctions were made.

**Child Marriage** – Small children are married. I saw a child marriage in about 1940-42, at Kalabagh, North Western Frontier. Father carried his son and performed Lavan', followed by girl in the lap of her father.

The Sikh Gurus <sup>2</sup> (from 1469 to 1708) promoted equality of women with men, honored, and elevated their status. The Gurus, and their emissaries preached against infanticide, child marriage, Satti, marriage by taking money, dowry, and taking more than one wives.

### **Manu and Muhammedans**

Manu allowed ten wives, and Muhammedans played it down to four. It appears that it was very sad plight of women at Manu's times. Having ten wives is no way less than keeping a herd of goats. Might be the women were in great abundance.

Poverty, responsibility to bring up girl, Parda system (keeping girls separate and under cover), expenditure on education of girl, abduction of girls by the powerful, difficulty of finding suitable match for the girl, made a girl undesirable. This led to keen desire to get boys, and sad plight of girls created a feeling that girl was a disgrace. People started practicing Doodh Peeta Karna (infanticide by dipping nose and mouth in milk). It

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[2] Sikh Gurus - Sikh Itihas, Bhag Pehla, Professor Kartar Singh, S.G.P.C. Amritsar, 1977. Page 158.

got so deeply ingrained that even after so much education and advancement, still (2005) more than many kill girls at their birth.

In Hindus, marrying a herd of women, and the idea of safety of honor of the family etc. led to Satti – burning of wife with dead husband. Apparently, it was an effort to check adultery. Rite of Satti went deep into the minds of Hindu women, and it became a sort of discipline for them. Mostly, no women wanted to get murdered for nothing, and for no fault of her. Families and Hindu priests brainwashed women that these will attain emancipation, and go to heaven by performing Satti. They forced her to die under effect of intoxicants. Intoxicated, dazed, disoriented, and helpless woman was made to sit on pyre, and was burnt alive.<sup>3</sup>

### **Dahej i.e. Daaj, Gifts, Dowry**

Lack of some qualities, or less education in girls, but desire to get a well educated, well settled boy with better prospects, brought in a competitive race to make offers of cash and kind – so to say price of the boy, paid to the parents or directly to the boy. Even before spread of this trend, it was common in Banyas – trading Hindu community. This spread to other communities when these had extra money with them – rich people. It gave birth to demands of the boys, and it became a problem for the poor people to find suitable matches for their girls. With education of girls, as reaction to demands of the boys and their parents, some girls had courage to brush aside such greedy people.

### **Love Marriages**

Nursing was a profession for girls, particularly the Christian. But, in India, generally it was not accepted as quite respectable. Same was the fate of girls as teachers. Even before middle of the last century (2000), girls started adopting nursing. Increasing number of population, and need for more money due to increasing expenses, girls from other communities were attracted by nursing. Parallel to it was the profession of teaching for girls.

Coeducation started in a very limited way mostly after 1940. Especially in the state of Punjab, it was very late (1965-1970) that girls first appeared at the business counters. Gradually, girls appeared in sufficient numbers in all spheres of life. Free and frequent mixing of girls and boys led to love marriages. It further developed into inter cast marriages. Love marriage was a blessing, and mostly it solved at least the problem of huge dowry.

Leaving aside greedy parents, problem of dowry was further addressed to by the boys and girls migrating to foreign countries. They could not take all weight of dowry with them. Migration also increased the trend of inter community marriages. Thin population of a community in a particular locality, increased the percentage of inter caste marriages. The Indian girls and boys started marrying local boys and girls. All these factors made dowry much less important, and generally it came down to reasonable gifts except for a few who were well advantaged.

Earning girls and boys took up responsibility of arranging and spending, or sharing expenditure of marriage with their parents. Liberty of girls and boys further

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[3] Satti - Gurshabad Ratnakar, Kahn Singh Nabha, 1960, Bhasha Vibhag, Punjab, Patiala, 1960. Satti, Page 112.

liberated parents from responsibilities of marriage, and for them made things easy as well as tolerable.

### The Sikh Gurus

Women were treated worst than slaves. The Sikh Gurus <sup>4</sup> were the first who honored women, and restored dignity of the womanhood. In the fifteenth century (1469), Guru Nanak <sup>5</sup>, the first Guru of Sikhs, was pioneer in promoting the women lib, and lifted them out of non-entity. His this marvelous effort is grace of Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh Holy Granth (Book). He expresses his doctrine in his composition –

ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨ॥ ਗੁਰੂ ਗਰੰਥ-੪੭੩-੯  
So keo mand.d.aa aakhiaae jit.u jan:mhe raajaanl  
ਗੁਰੂ ਗਰੰਥ-੪੭੩-੯  
ਗੁਰੂ ਗਰੰਥ-੪੭੩-੯  
ਸ਼ੋ ਕਿਤੁ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨ॥ ਗੁਰੂ ਗਰੰਥ-੪੭੩-੯  
Guru Granth-4739-  
ਗੁਰੂ ਗਰੰਥ-੪੭੩-੯

**Why call woman degraded who bears kings! Guru Granth-473-9**

In the Sikh world, discipline of “Aeka naree sad.a jat.ee” – man with a single wife is celibate, was preached. The Sikh Gurus promoted householder’s life to solve problems created by the unmarried, and rejected surrendering married life in search of God.<sup>6</sup>

### Marriage Ignoring Caste

Guru Amar Das <sup>7</sup> got his many followers married without any consideration of caste. These include Bhai Prema (Murari), and Bhai Sajjan Sach. The same way Guru ji married his elder daughter Bibi Dani to Sri Rama ji, and younger daughter Bibi Bhani to Jetha Ji (Guru Ram Das).

### Satti

Guru Amar Das <sup>8</sup> prohibited self-immolation of women with her dead husband –

ਸਤੀਆ ਏਹਿ ਨ ਆਖੀਅਨਿ ਜੋ ਮਝਿਆ ਲਗਿ ਜਲੰਨਿ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤੀਆਂ ਜਾਣੀਅਨਿ ਜਿ  
ਬਿਰਹੇ ਚੋਟ ਮਰੰਨਿ॥ ਮਃ ੩॥ ਭੀ ਸੋ ਸਤੀਆ ਜਾਣੀਅਨਿ ਸੀਲ ਸੰਤੋਖਿ ਰਹੰਨਿ॥ ਸੇਵਨਿ ਸਾਈ ਆਪਣਾ ਨਿਤ ਉਠਿ ਸੰਮਾਲੰਨਿ॥  
ਗੁਰੂ ਗਰੰਥ-੩-੭੮੭-੮

Sat.eeaa aehe na aakheeanne jo mar.eaa lagge jalanh-e| Nanak sateaan’ jaan.eeanne jae birhae  
chot maranh-e Bhee so sat.eeaa jan.ee-an-ne seel sant.okh rahanh-el Saevanne saae aapn.aa  
nit.e outh:e sa:mhalanne / Guru Granth-787-8

ਸਤੀਆ ਏਹਿ ਨ ਆਖੀਅਨਿ ਜੋ ਮਝਿਆ ਲਗਿ ਜਲੰਨਿ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤੀਆਂ ਜਾਣੀਅਨਿ ਜਿ  
ਬਿਰਹੇ ਚੋਟ ਮਰੰਨਿ॥ ਮਃ ੩॥ ਭੀ ਸੋ ਸਤੀਆ ਜਾਣੀਅਨਿ ਸੀਲ ਸੰਤੋਖਿ ਰਹੰਨਿ॥ ਸੇਵਨਿ ਸਾਈ ਆਪਣਾ  
ਨਿਤ ਉਠਿ ਸੰਮਾਲੰਨਿ॥ ਗੁਰੂ ਗਰੰਥ-੩-੭੮੭-੮

**Satiaan' are not those who burn them with their dead husbands. Nank,**

**Satti is the one who does not stand separation (from the Lord). Satti**

[4] Sikh Itihas, Professor Kartar Singh. Page 158.

[5] Guru Nanak – Baba Dayal Ji, Edited J.S. Grewal, 2002, Chandigarh. Page 2.

[6] GurShabd Ratnakar, Kahn Singh Nabha, referred to above. Anand - Page 75.

[7] Sikh Itihas Part I, Prof: Kartar Singh, S.G.P.C., 1977. Page 156.

[8] Sikh Itihas Part I, Prof: Kartar Singh referred to above. Page 157.

is that who is contented, and remembers her Spouse (God) constantly.

#### Guru Granth-3-787-8

### **Vidhva Vivah <sup>9</sup>– Widow’s Marriage**

In the Hindu faith, even very young widows were not allowed to remarry. In homes, widows worked like servants and slaves. These were considered ill omen and almost untouchable. Guru Amar Das <sup>10</sup> brought a basic change in this thinking, and advocated widow-marriage. It made widow a useful and respectable member of society, and addressed to the ills stemming out of not marrying widows. It was transformation in society. Guru Arjun Dev promoted Vidh:va Vivah by marrying a widow to Hema Chowdhary. The Gurus, by introducing various ceremonies independent of the Hindu system, added individuality to the Sikh faith, and made these ceremonies part of the Sikh religion. Sikhs got their own ceremonies.

### **Anand Karaj – Anand Viah**

Anand means Joy, delight, happiness! Karaj is an undertaking.

### **Guru Amar Das**

Guru Amar Das initiated Anand Viah - Anand Marriage.<sup>11</sup> He had composed Anand (Guru Granth Sahib, Page 917), a composition having forty steps or stanzas. The marriage was solemnized by reciting Anand (Anand Sahib), and Ardas (invocation – supplication), and this ceremony got the name of Anand Viah, or Anand Karaj. Perhaps, his daughter Bibi Bhani was married to Bhai Jetha ji (Gur Ram Das) by reciting Anand.

### **Guru Ram Das**

Guru Ram Das promoted Anand Viah, He composed Lavan’ (Guru Granth Sahib. Page 773-Line 16). Lavan’ means circumambulating going around). It has four stanzas, each pointing to the responsibilities, and orientation to God.

Marriage is performed by reciting this Bani, and circumambulating Guru Granth Sahib with its each step (stanza) – four Lavan’. The Bani of Lavan’ combines householder’s life with attachment to God – ideal and ethical married life.

He also composed <sup>12</sup> Ghor.iaan’ in Raag Vad-hans, and Chhand, both Hymns related to marriage (for singing at marriage). The Sikh Gurus brought out a social reform by liberating marriage from castes, stopping Satti, and by advocating Vidhva Vivah (widow’s marriage).

Guru Nanak Cev, the first Sikh Prophet, refused to marry by ancient Hindu ceremony of Vedi. It caused a furor, but things settled down soon. He <sup>13</sup> wrote Mool Mantar on a paper, placed it on a low stool, and performed Lavan’ – went around it four times,

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[9] Vidhva Viah - Sada Itihas Part I, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Principal Satbir Singh, New Book Company, Mai Hira Gate, Jalandhar City, 1971. Page 168.

[10] Vidhva Viah - Sada Itihas, Principal Satbir Singh, referred to above, Page 133.

[11] Anand Viah - Sada Itihas, Principal Satbir Singh, referred to above. Page 132.

[12] Anand Sahib and other Bani - Sikh Itihas Part – I, Pro: Kartar Singh, referred to above. Page 179. Sada Itihas Part – I, Principal Satbir Singh. Page 148.

[13] Mool Mantar - Guru Nanak’s Town Batala, Dr. Kulwant Singh Khokhar, Caxton Printers, Batala, 2003. Page 13.

followed by the girl. Evidently, from the fourth Guru onward the Guru's marriages were most probably performed by Anand Karaj.

### **Sikh Marriages in Old Times**

Various Guru Bilas, and most of the history books do not properly dilate on the subject of Sikh marriages in old times. Various Guru Bilas are in poetry, and in a language that is not quite easy to be followed by everyone – common man, and many things do not get clarified to a reasonable extent. These need to be translated into an easy language.

### **Guru Gobind Singh**

Guru Gobind Singh promoted Anand Karaj. In this context, his Hukam Namahs by various authors provides no clarification. In Reht Namah by Bhai Daya Singh <sup>14</sup> is written that a Sikh should not get married by a Brahmin.. It means that Sikh should not marry by Vedic ceremony, and should not get it done except by Anand Karaj.

Bhai Mani Singh was contemporary of Guru Gobind Singh. In *Bhagtawali* by Bhai Mani Singh, under the heading *Vajub-al-Araz*, Guru Gobind Singh <sup>15</sup> advised that marriage should be done by Anand Karaj, and after that it should be got done by Brahmin.

### **Maharaja Ranjit Singh**

After Guru Gobind Singh and Banda Bahadur, up to the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh,<sup>16</sup> Hindu priests had great hold on masses including Sikhs. Hindu majority, and overwhelming Hindu environment as well as their influence suppressed Anand Karaj, and marriage by Vedic had upper hand. Vedic Vivah was performed even in the household of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. <sup>17</sup> Maharaja's marriage was also performed by Vedic.

*Contemporaries of Maharaja Ranjit Singh* - Baba Sahib Singh Bedi, and Sant Bir Singh of Narangabad - There are no example of Anand marriage in their followers. In *Prem Sumarag Granth*,<sup>18</sup> for marriage Havan (fire) is mentioned – taking Lavan' around fire.

### **Sir Baba Khem Singh**

He was great grandson of Baba Sahib Singh Bedi, and was founder of Singh Sabha, Amritsar branch. Regarding marriage, he advised his supporters to continue what had been done before (Vedic marriage), but to give up bad songs and to sing Gurbani. (Sikh Dharam De Sidhant, Dr. Man Singh Nirankari. Page 47).

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[14] Reht Namah - Rehtnamae, Piara Singh Padam, Bhai Chatar Singh Jiwan Singh, Amritsar, Reprint 1991. Page 77.

[15] Gurmatt Martand - Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha, S.G.P.C., Second Edition 1978 A.D. Page 111.

[16] Maharaji Ranjit Singh – Parasaraprasna – Kapur Singh, Edited by Piar Singh and Madanjit Kaur, Guru Nanak Dev University, 1989 A.D., Pages 238 to 239.

[17] Maharaja Ranjit Singh – Marriage. Sikh Dharam De Sidhant, Dr. Man Singh Nirankari, referred to above.

[18] Sikh Dharam De Sidhant, Dr. Man Singh Nirankari, referred to above. Page 43 to 47. Prem Sumarag Granth, possibly belongs to the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

## **Udasi and Nirmalae**

Udasi Sadhus and Nirmalae controlled, and were caretakers of historical Gurdwaras. There is no evidence to tell that they did any thing to support Anand Vivah. (Sikh Dharam De Sidhant, Dr. Man Singh Nirankari, Page 47).

## **Suppression of Anand Karaj**

After Guru Gobind Singh, Banda Bahadur promoted Anand Karaj, but soon Sikhs developed political differences. Due to power-struggle, the Sardars of Sikh Missals had no time to pay attention to the Sikh ceremonies including Anand Karaj.

Antagonists of Anand Karaj were not ready to accept Anand Karaj as divine. Their problem was that Anand Karaj was a toppling kick into the tummy of income of Hindu priests. They did not want to give up their hold. They were supported by other fanatic elements of different denominations particularly Aryasmaji.

Vedi Vivah was performed by Hindu priests, and besides it being their source of income, these priests who were Brahmins, could not tolerate anything other than Vedi Vivah to maintain its superiority, and their own dignity. They felt that any other marriage insulted and degraded them. It was in their interest to eliminate Anand Karaj. Vedic marriage had its grip in 1900 AD, as well. My father (author's) S. Mela Singh Khokhar<sup>19</sup> was married by a Pundit in that year.

## **Revival of Anand Karaj**

So far (2005 A.D.), the best work on Anand Karaj is by Dr, Man Singh Nirankari, retired Head of the Eye Department, and Principal of Government Medical College (Glancy Medical College of pre partition time), Amritsar, in his book Sikh Dharam De Sidhant. He has discussed the subject in detail including contribution by Nirankaris.

Anand Karaj survived because it had become part of the Sikh faith. The Sikh religious ceremonies, especially Anand Karaj was so much suppressed and interfered with, that reaction for renaissance brought into fore front some active and energetic Lehrs – movements, to counter anti Sikh propaganda including Anand Karaj.

Nirankari movement, and after this Namdhari movement, adopted marriage by Anand Karaj. Singh Sabha Lehr, improved religious thinking and practices, and strengthened revival of Anand Karaj. Gurdwara Sudhar Lehr (Akali movement), liberated Gurdwaras from Udasis, Mahants, and revived, as well as promoted Anand Karaj. In the end, Anand Karaj Act 1909, breathed full healthy life into Anand Karaj and gave it full strength.

## **Nirankari Lehr**

Founder of Nirankari movement **Baba Dayal ji**<sup>20</sup> (1773 – 1855 A.D.), realized that Sikhs did not adhere to their religious practices, and these were suppressed by practices of Hindu priests. He determined to awaken the Sikhs. In 1808 A.D. he got himself married

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[19] Jiwan Marag, Dr. Kulwant Singh Khokhar, Academy of Guru Granth Studies, USA, 1983-84, Abridged from autobiography of S. Mela Singh Khokhar, 1958 A.D.

[20] Baba Dayal ji Nirankari: Dayal ji – Sikh Dharam De Sidhant, Dr. Man Singh Nirankari, referred to above. Pages 48 to 53. Encyclopedia of Sikhism, Chief Edited Harbans Singh, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1992, Page 126.

with Shabad-Kirtan and Ardas, in Dharamsala of Sant Budhu Shah, Sewa Panthi, in Bhera (now in Pakistan).

In 1855, his son *Baba Darbara Singh Nirankari*, married a couple in Nirankari Darbar in Rawalpindi (now in Pakistan), by Anand Karaj. In this ceremony, four Lavan' in Raag Suhi were recited, and the boy followed by girl, went around Guru Granth Sahib with each recitation of Lavan' (total four rounds). This Anand Karaj movement initiated by Nirankaris faced strong opposition and difficulties, but Nirnkaris whole-heartedly persisted in following their effort to revive Sikh procedures.

In 1855 A.D., Baba Darbara Singh married with Anand Karaj, Bholu Singh son of Nihal Singh Kakkar, and Nihali daughter of Waheguru Singh (Hari Singh Siali, Khatri). It was an open, fearless and united challenge to the opponents of Anand Vivah.

In 1861 A.D., Baba Darbara Singh was refused by Granthis and Pujaris of Harimandir Sahib and Akal Takht to hold Anand Karaj in Akal Takht, Amritsar. Nothing deterred Baba Darbara Singh. With cooperation of Thakur Gulab Singh, he performed Anand Karaj of Boota Singh with Mira Dai daughter of Karam Singh, in the Gurdwara of Thakur Dayal Singh, at Amritsar. It was an eye opener to Mahants and Granthis of Harimandir Sahib, and Akal Takht, as well as was a lesson to others in Amritsar.

In the time of *Baba Ratta ji Nirankari*, during 1992 A.D. to 1998 A.D. Anand marriages were performed at Lahore, and Peshawar etc. Nirnkaris pursued Anand marriages devotedly, adding to its acceptance, practice, and popularity in the Sikh masses.

### **Namdharis**

Baba Ram Singh Namdhari,<sup>21</sup> was founder of Namdhari movement. He visited Dewan of Nirankaris. Anand Karaj was being performed. After Dewan (program in Gurdwara) was over, Baba Ram Singh discussed the newly started Anand Vivah with Baba Darbara Singh, and got information about this ceremony. Baba Darbara Singh asked Baba Ram Singh to cooperate in promoting Anand Karaj. Baba Ram Singh Namdhari, adopted Anand marriage in 1863 A.D. with the difference that Pherae (Lavan' - going around) were done around Vedi cum Havan.

### **Singh Sabha Lehr**

When Namdhari Lehr was suppressed by the English Government, Singh Sabha Lehr<sup>22</sup> came into being in Amritsar, in 1873 A.D. Later, its branches opened at Rawalpindi, an Lahore. Its motive was to remove all non-Sikh ceremonies from the Sikh world, and to bring revolution in the Sikh life – living as per the Sikh dictates. They reformed working in Gurdwaras, and day-to-day religious life of Sikhs.

In 1883, Khalsa Dewan Amritsar was established, and after that Khalsa Dewan Lahore (1886) was formed. Due to differences in Khalsa Dewans Amritsar and Lahore, Chief Khalsa Dewan was formed at Amritsar (1902). Its president was Bhai Sahib Arjun

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[21] *Baba Ram Singh Nirankari* - Sikh Dharam De Sidhant, Dr. Man Singh Nirakari, referred to above. Pages 53. Itihasik Lecture – Sikh Itihas Part II, Giani Partap Singh, Bhai Jawahar Singh Kirpal Singh and Co., Amritsar. Page 508.

[22] Singh Sabha Lehr – Itihasik Lectures, Giani Partap Singh, Bhai Jawahar Singh Kirpal Singh and co., Amritsar, 1973, Page 518.

Singh Bagarian, and S. Sunder Singh Majithia was its secretary. All Singh Sabhas of Punjab came under Chief Khalsa Diwan.

All these agencies worked to uplift Sikh masses, and brought revolution in the Sikh thinking, and in their religious practices. These organizations also took up extensive tours, to preach and awaken Sikhs to the ethics of their faith. Gurmukhi printing-type was made in 1887. Gurmukhi papers were started, schools, colleges were opened. And Gurmukhi was promoted. Attention was also paid to technical training. Old Sikh literature was studied, translations were undertaken and history was studied as well as written.

Singh Sabha Lehr became powerful to effectively neutralize anti Sikh propaganda. With full force it worked side-by-side Nirankari and Namdhari Lehrs to promote Anand Karaj.

### **Gurdwara Sudhar Lehr**

Gurdwara Sudhar Lehr or Akali Lehr.<sup>23</sup> Dismantling of and reconstruction of the boundary wall of Gurdwara Rakab Ganj, New Delhi; prohibition on Kirpan and then its liberation; firing at Bajbaj Ghat on pilgrims of Kama Gata Maru ship that returned from Canada; life imprisonment and hanging of its passengers; and Jallian Wala Bagh massacre, led Sikhs to think seriously of their survival. They held a meeting at Amritsar, Sikh League was started in 1919 A.D., and in 1920, a paper “Akali” was started from Lahore. This was the birth of Akali Lehr.

Its main motive was to liberate historical Gurdwaras from Mahants and Pujaris. It actively launched Morchas (agitations) to liberate many Gurdwaras including Harimandir Sahib, Tarn Taran, Nankana Sahib, Guru Ka Bagh, Panja Sahib, Jeto etc. It directly promoted application of Sikh ethics – its discipline and procedures. This further helped to popularize Anand Karaj.

### **Problems with Anand Karaj**

As Anand Karaj was revived, sometimes problems arose. These mainly were of difference of opinion to marry with Anand Karaj or Vedi. Hindu–Sikh marriages were common. Sikhs and even some Hindus wanted marriage with Anand Karaj and Hindus in general wanted it with Vedi. At such an occasion my grandfather Bhagat Boor.s Mall, brought about compromise to perform marriage with Anand Karaj at girl’s house, and after that at boys house with Vedi if they so desired.

Anand Karaj became popular in a short time, because it was simple, easy, cheap, free from dowry, gave equal rights to women, one wife was advocated, and it was free from bindings of caste system.

Hindus having faith in Guru Nank (Nanak Panthi), practiced this ceremony in their own way. Dr. Man Singh Nirankari told me that in the family of Dr. Dukhan Ram, Eye Surgeon to the President of India, prior to performing marriage ceremony Anand Sahib was recited in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib, Ardas (supplication) was said, and after that Vedi Vivah was performed.

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[23] Gurdwara Sudhar or Akali Lehr – Itihasik Lectures, Giani Partap Singh, referred to above. Page 526.

## **Anand Karaj**

Anand Vivah <sup>24</sup> - In the presence of Guru Granth Sahib (the Sikh Holy Book), Kirtan (devotional music) be performed. The bridegroom sits before Guru Granth Sashib, bride sits on his left. The boy and his father (or his senior relative), the girl and her father (or her senior relative) stand up and Bhai ji (one who is conducting marriage), says Ardas (supplication) for initiation of Anand Karaj, and after that they sit down,

Bhai ji informs the boy and girl about responsibilities and duties of a householder, and of their individual conduct in context to the Hymns called Lavan'. The boy and girl bow to Guru Granth Sahib as their acceptance of what they have been told, (and their consent to marry each other).

Girl's father (or her senior relative) gives Palla of the boy to her daughter to hold. Palla means one end of the long cloth put across the neck of the boy.

Bhai ji recites four Lavan' (name of specific Hymns) one by one. After each Lavn', Ragis (devotional singers) or Sangat (congregation) sing the same Lan'v, and the boy followed by the girl holding Palla, go around Guru Granth Sahib from its left to right. They both sit down after the lavn' (going around) is complete – the girl sits on left of the boy, and they bow to Guru Granth Sahib. This way, all four Lavan' are recited, and the boy and the girl go around Guru Granth Sahib four times. Total four Lavan'.

Ragis or Sangat sing Anand Sahib (Chhota – first five and the last i.e. 40<sup>th</sup> stanza). Ardas for completion of Anand Karaj is recited, and Parshad is distributed. It completes Anand marriage.

Anand marriage is solemnized between Sikh girl and Sikh boy. (They may adopt Sikh faith before marriage, or promise to adopt it afterwards. Author's opinion). The same Anand ceremony is applicable for remarriage e.g. of a widow or widower. Underage girl and boy should not be married. Price should not be charged for the boy or girl. Generally, a Sikh should have only one wife. An Amritdhari boy should also make his wife Amritdhari. Amritdhari is one who is properly inducted into the Sikh faith by taking Amrit – the Holy Drink.

## **Anand Marriage Act 1909**

In 1905 A. D., Tikka (Prince) Ripudaman Singh, and his father Maharaja Hira Singh of Nabha, visited Baba Ratta ji Nirankari during Gurdwara session, Tikka Ripudaman Singh was influenced by preaching of Baba Ratta ji, and Anand Karaj performed there. As a result of it, he sent *Anand Marriage Bill* to Imperial Legislative Council. He was member of this Council. <sup>25</sup>

After Ripudaman Singh, S. Sunder Singh Majithia became member of the council. On August 27, 1909 A.D., S. Sunder Singh Majithia presented Anand Marriage Bill to the Council. The president was Lord Minto. In his speech, S. Sunder Singh Majithia very strongly advocated this bill. He told the Council that Anand marriages were already practiced by Nihangs, Bandai (followers of Banda Bahadur), Nirankaris, Namdharis, and that since last 30 years many marriages had been performed by Anand. The Bill was sent

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[24] Anand Vivah – Sikh Reht Maryada, 25<sup>th</sup> Edition 1998, Dharam Parchar Committee, S.G.P.C., Amritsar, Page 22 to 24.

[25] Anand Marriage Act – Sikh Dharam De Sidhant, Dr. Man Singh Nirankari, referred to above, Page 54.

to Select Committee, and its members were Mr. Sinha, Sir Herbert Rezli, and S. Sunder Singh Majithia.

On September 10, 1909, the Select Committee placed the Bill before Council with its recommendation. Meeting of the Council was held on October 22, 1909, and Anand *Marriage Act 1909* was passed.

Some Mahants including of Harimandir Sahib, Amritsar, and Taran Taran, Pujaris, and as well some ignorant Sikhs opposed the Bill, but Anand Marriage Act silenced all its opponents, and gave strength as well as legal acceptance to Anand Karaj. It is strange that even now, magistrates issue the marriage-certificates on the forms of Hindu Marriage Act.