

Akhand Paath at Home

What is the procedure for doing an Akhand Paath?

Akhand Paath (Akhand = uninterrupted, without break; paath = reading) is non-stop, continuous recital of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji from beginning to end. Such a recital is usually completed within 48 hours, however time should not be an issue. The entire Sacred Volume of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, 1430 large pages, is read through in a continuous ceremony. This reading must go on day and night, without a moment's intermission. The relay of reciters who take turns at reciting Gurbani must ensure that no break occurs. As they change places at given intervals, one picks the line from his predecessor's lips and continues. According to Sikh history, Akhand Paaths were rarely done. In the Guru Sahibaan's history, only three Akhand Paaths took place, on the other hand the Guru Sahibaans held numerous Sehaj Paaths on different occasions such as jyoti jyot (physical passing) of the previous Guru or other occasions.

Conjecture traces the popularity of Akhand Paaths to the turbulent days of the 18th century when persecution had scattered the Sikhs to far-off places. In those exilic, uncertain times, the practice of accomplishing a reading of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji by a continuous recital is believed to have popularised Akhand Paaths due to the circumstances.

MARYADA (PROTOCOL) FOR AN AKHAND PAATH

In accordance to the Panthic Sikh Rehit Maryada:

Whichever family or congregation undertakes the reading should carry it out itself through its members, relatives, friends etc. all together. The number of reciters is not prescribed. If a person, themselves cannot read, they should listen to 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 family is listening in to the reading. The reader should be served with food and clothing to the best of the host's means.

Placing a pitcher filled with water, jyot (ceremonial clarified-butter-fed lamp), coconut, etc. around, during the course of the Akhand Paath or any other reading of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, or reading other Scriptural texts (e.g. Japji Sahib) side by side with or in the course of the Akhand Paath is contrary (*Not right*) to Gurmat (the Guru's way).

Commencing the Reading

While undertaking a full reading of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, Karhah Prashad (sacred pudding) should be brought for offering and after reciting Anand Sahib (six stanzas) and offering Ardaas, a Hukamnama (edict) should be taken (at random). One should, thereafter, begin the non-stop reading.

Concluding the Reading

The reading of the whole Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji (intermittent or non-stop) may be concluded with the reading of Mundaavni (literally meaning 'the seal') or Raag Mala (an index of different Raags) according to the convention traditionally observed at the concerned place. Thereafter, after reciting Anand Sahib, Ardaas for the conclusion of the reading should be offered and Karhah Parshaad (sacred pudding) should be distributed.

On the conclusion of the reading, offering of draperies, having regard to the requirements of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, and of other things, for Panthic causes, should be made to the best of means.

For more information you can always contact the Gurudwara supervisor on details available in the contact us section.

