# Sikhism Views on Divorce

Adherents of Sikhism are not given the right to divorce expect in cases of extreme circumstances. Even when this happens, it is not legislated within Sikhism as it is decided by Hindu, Muslim, Western and other courts. Sikh marriages are monogamous and the sacrament is considered a sacred bond for attaining worldly and spiritual joy.

While the provision for divorce does not exist in Sikhism, it does occur among Sikhs. The parties asking for the divorce however are required to follow civil law of the land and ensure they proceed with the process accordingly. There are no provisions for divorce through the religious channels and no restrictions on remarriage.

The Guru Granth Sahib has not specified any word for  ‘divorce’ and the act is considered in holy Granth apart from the term ‘chhutee’ which means ;escaped’ or ‘released’ there is no other term that specifies the act of separation.

Many Sikh sources mention difficulties of divorce in their tradition and some quotes elaborate this clearly for instance –“In the case of broken marriage, divorce is not possible according to the Sikh religious traditions. The couple can., however, obtain a divorce under the Civil law of the land”.

The Sikh wedding ceremony is translated as ‘Blissful Occasion or Event’. Marriage is regarded by the Sikhs as a sacred, mutual bond between a man and a woman. It is a true partnership that is made and those united become united not only in spirit but in body and mind as well. Marriage is considered the strongest bond between the relatives groom and bride as well as relatives of both families.

It is based on the concept that is depicted in Laava hence the Sikh marriage is more than a mere legal and physical fusion of two souls. The couple is supposed to think and feel alike and they both must be identified completely with the other. The western mind finds it difficult to comprehend Anand Karaj concept as it is specified in Sikh culture.

Most Sikhs do not accept the consideration of divorce unless the relationship is broken down completely and all reconciliation avenues are exhausted. There are several options that must be undertaken and explored before the divorce is accepted by the community. The relationship is considered central to Sikhi and a crucial aspect for Sikh’s way of life.

Marriage in Sikhi is considered as the birth of a ‘new person’ into the family hence it is an introduction of a new soul. When a baby is born into a family, the family cannot make the decision to ‘divorce’ the child. In the same manner, it is deemed impossible to ‘divorce’ a groom or bride who has joined the family.

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