

The Second, Third and Fourth Nanaks

Guru ANGAD DEV Ji, Guru AMAR DAS Ji, Guru RAM DAS Ji

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The Second Nanak

Guru Angad Dev Ji

1. Early Life of the Second Nanak

1504 AD: Bhai Lehna ji (later, Guru Angad Dev Ji), was born in the village Sarai Naga (Matte Di Sarai) Punjab, on March 31, 1504. He was the son of a petty trader named Pheru ji. His mother's name was Mata Ramo ji (also Known as Mata Sabhirai, Mansa Devi, Daya Kaur). Baba Narayan Das Trehan was his grandfather, whose ancestral house was at Matte-di-Sarai near Muktsar. Pheru ji shifted back to this place. Under the influence of his mother, who was a devout Hindu, Bhai Lehna ji began to worship Durga (Devi, or mythological Goddess). He used to lead a batch of worshippers to Jawalamukhi Temple every year.

1520 (age 16): He was married to Mata Khivi ji in January 1520 and had two sons (Dasu ji and Datu ji) and two daughters (Amro ji and Anokhi ji). The whole family of Pheru ji had to leave their ancestral village because of the ransacking by the Mughal and Baloch militia who had come with Emperor Babur. After this the family settled at village Khadur Sahib beside the Beas river, near Tarn Taran Sahib (a small town about 25 km from Amritsar city).

1532 (age 28): One day Bhai Lehna ji heard the recitation of a hymn of Guru Nanak Dev Ji from Bhai Jodha ji (a Sikh of Guru Nanak Dev Ji) and was thrilled. He decided to proceed through Kartarpur to have a glimpse of Guru Nanak Dev Ji at the time of his yearly pilgrimage to Jwalamukhi Temple. Having informed his party, he rode towards the village for an audience with Guru Nanak Dev. On his way, he met the Guru who was returning from his fields to the village. Lehna ji asked him the way to Dharamsala (*inn*) where Guru Nanak Dev held religious meetings. Guru Nanak Dev said, "Please follow me. I am also going there." When they reached the door of the Dharamsala, Guru Nanak Dev said to Bhai Lehna., "Please fasten your horse to that stake and go in through that door."

On entering, Bhai Lehna saw that the one who had shown him the way was sitting on the seat of the Guru. Bhai Lehna bowed in respect and sat on one side thinking, "It was my fault that I was riding and the Guru was walking." While he was still absorbed in these thoughts, Guru Nanak Dev asked him, "Brother, what is your name?" Bhai Lehna replied, "My name is Lehna and I am leading the party of my villagers to the Devi." The Guru said, it is better to serve that Lord from whom the gods and goddesses of this world beg to fulfil the demands of their devotees." On hearing these words from the Guru, Bhai Lehna gave up the visit to the Devi. He told his villagers, "I no longer need to go to the goddess. I have found all that I want." His very first meeting with Guru Nanak Dev Ji completely transformed him. He renounced the worship of Durga, the Hindu Goddess, dedicated himself to the service of Guru Nanak Sahib, became his Sikh, and began to live at Kartarpur.

2. Becoming part of the Guru

Obeying the word of Guru Nanak Dev, Bhai Lehna gave up the visit to Vaishno Devi and became absorbed in the bliss of Gurbani recitation at Kartarpur. After four days, the Guru asked Bhai Lehna, "Please go home and inform your family and come back." Bowing to the command of the Guru he returned to Khadur. He entrusted the work of his shop to his eldest son Dasu. After some days, Bhai Lehna informed Mata Khivi, his wife, and started for Kartarpur with a bundle of salt on his head. Mata Khivi said to him, "Please ask some labourer to carry the bundle of salt to Kartarpur." Bhai Lehna replied, "One can get the work done from a laborer, but the service is only performed by himself."

On reaching Kartarpur, Bhai Lehna left the bundle of salt at home and went to the fields where the Guru was supervising the work. The Guru was getting weeds removed from the rice fields. The Guru placed a bundle of weeds on Bhai Lehna's head and said, "Take it home to the village." Slush was dripping out of the bundle of weeds and Bhai Lehna's new clothes were soiled. Upon reaching home, Mata Sulakhani pointed to his soiled clothes and said to the Guru, "You have spoiled the clothes of this gentleman by making him carry the bundle on his head. You should have sent the weeds through some labourer." The Guru said, "I have placed on his head the bundle, showing the path of truth to the people gone astray. It is not slush but saffron that has been sprayed on his garments."

To remove the difference in feeling due to caste and social status from the mind of Bhai Lehna, one day the Guru asked him to throw out a dead rat. Immediately, upon hearing the command, Bhai Lehna threw the rat out. On another day, while returning after bathing, the Guru threw the mug he was carrying into dirty water. Bhai Lehna took it out and handed it over to the Guru. In those days, the job of throwing away the dead or entering in the dirty water was thought to be the work of the poor and outcastes.

One day the Guru took a heavy stick in his hand and walked towards the forest. He hit everyone who tried to follow him. All except Bhai Lehna turned back for fear of being beaten. When Bhai Lehna kept on following, the Guru asked him, "Why are you not going back when all others have returned?" Bhai Lehna replied, "I have no one to rely upon except you. They have their shelters so they have gone back." The Guru said, "Now there is no difference between you and me. You have become part (Ang) of me."

1539 (*Lehna ji 35 years & Guru Nanak 70 years*): His devotion to Guru Nanak Dev Ji and his holy mission was so great that he was installed as the Second Nanak in September 7, 1539 by Guru Nanak Dev Ji himself. Earlier Guru Nanak Dev Ji tested him in various ways and found an embodiment of obedience and service in him. Guru Nanak Dev Ji gave him a new name Angad (Guru Angad Dev Ji). He spent six or seven years in the service of Guru Nanak Dev Ji at Kartarpur.

After the death of Guru Nanak Dev Ji on September 22, 1539, Guru Angad Dev Ji left Kartarpur for Khadur Sahib village (near Goindwal Sahib). He carried forward the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji both in letter and spirit. Yogis and Sants (saints) of different Hindu sects visited him and held detailed discussions about Sikhism with him.

3. The Second Nanak's Contributions

The appointment of Guru Angad by Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, as his own successor was an event of far reaching significance in the evolution of Sikhism. The second Guru, who was believed to have embodied the spirit of his great predecessor, consolidated the infant faith movement through his energy and his global vision.

Gurmukhi Script and Education

Guru Angad Dev ji started schools and also developed the Gurmukhi language in order to make education available to the downtrodden and the underprivileged of the society at that time. Guru Angad was a great teacher who personally taught Punjabi in Gurmukhi script to children. He provided education and means of communication to common folk who would no longer be dependent on the religious or political establishment to pursue their own economic, educational or spiritual goals. This was his way of empowering people to have higher goals in life.

A rudimentary Punjabi alphabet existed at the time of Guru Nanak, Guru Angad modified and polished it. Earlier, the Punjabi language was written in the Landa or Mahajani script. This script had no vowel sounds, which had to be imagined or construed by the reader in order to decipher the writing. Therefore, there was the need of a script which could faithfully reproduce the hymns of the Gurus so that the true meaning and message of the Gurus could not be misconstrued and misinterpreted by each reader to suit his own purpose and prejudices. The devising of the Gurmukhi script was an essential step in order to maintain the purity of the doctrine and exclude all possibility of misunderstanding and misconstruction by any person.

Since Guru Angad had adopted the modified alphabet, it was called 'Gurmukhi' - meaning that which is spoken through the mouth of the Guru. Gurmukhi became the medium of writing in which the hymns of the Gurus were expressed and it was also suitable as the language of the people. Although the origins of the Punjabi alphabet are unclear, it is clear that Guru Angad popularized the use of this simplified Gurmukhi script among the Sikhs starting around 1541.

The invention of Gurmukhi helped the early Sikh community to dissociate itself from the Hindu religious tradition. Sanskrit language was used by the Hindu Brahmins, the upper castes and it was the language of the Vedas, the Hindu religious texts. People of lower castes and the untouchables were barred from reading any spiritual literature. This maintained the status of the superiority of the upper castes. Gurmukhi enabled the Sikhs to grow and develop their own unprejudiced spiritual literature. Creating this new script was significant for many reasons. It gave the people who spoke this language and identity of their own, enabling them to express their thoughts without any restrictions. The Guru also saw the need of a script which could faithfully reproduce the hymns of the Gurus keeping its purity and sanctity.

This step by Guru Angad Dev ji helped secure the unhindered development and growth of Sikhism. Guru ji also initiated the writing of Guru Nanak's hymns written out in the new Gurmukhi script.

Physical Fitness

Guru Angad took a keen interest in physical fitness, and encouraged his devotees to be involved in sports after their morning prayers. Guru ji inspired people to lead healthy lives. According to Guru ji, if you are physically fit only then can you pursue higher goals in life. He provided opportunities to underprivileged sections of society to maintain good health. He encouraged all people to be involved in wrestling bouts or Mal Akharas to compete in physical competitions. This was his way of doing away with social taboos of people of lower caste not having physical contact with higher castes. These steps initiated by him laid the foundation for a spiritually, educated and enlightened, healthy Sikh community, without distinctions of caste and creed.

Women's role

The position of women at the time was deplorable. She was looked down upon because she was thought to be inferior to man and was regarded as merely a temptress. She was confined to her home and was not allowed to participate in any public work. Guru Angad Dev ji preached that man and woman were equal before God. He welcomed women to the Sangat, offered them seats side by side with men, and gave them religious rights that had thus far been denied to women by Hindu society.

Guru Angad scarcely worked alone. His wife and partner, Mata Khivi, was a very important woman who contributed significantly to Sikhism. Mata Khivi played a major role in enlarging the women participation in leadership positions in the Guru's court. Mata Khivi was instrumental in creating and maintaining the institution of langar, whereby all devotees of the Guru and all people in general, were invited to come and eat together. This practice started initially with Mata Khivi serving food to the members of the community and the visitors who would come to see Guru Angad, and it came to symbolize the Guru's teachings -- emphasizing the humanity in every single person, and abolishing any artificial distinctions or caste discrimination. She did her job in the skillful and selfless manner characteristic of her, and evoked spontaneous respect among the people. Her role in that capacity was unique and revolutionary because women were usually not seen in the forefront of society. She also made sure that the food being fed was nutritious and wholesome because many who came to see the Guru were often needy and destitute. Mata Khivi would embrace them all and offer love and food. She was, to use the simile of the contemporary minstrel Balwand, like a shady tree to the Guru's disciples and afforded them effectual shade. Her role and praise for her is recorded in the Guru Granth Sahib.

To this day, after every service, visitors to a Sikh gurdwara witness a congregation who join and eat Langar together. As Guru Nanak Dev ji had taught and practiced when he was at Kartarpur, Langar also emphasized that service to fellow man was an important tenet of the Sikh way of life. By now it had become customary for members of the congregation to serve one another.

Guru Angad Dev Ji visited all important places and centres established by Guru Nanak Sahib for preaching Sikhism. He also established hundreds of new Sangats (Sikh religious Institutions), and thus strengthened the base of Sikhism. The period of his Guruship was the most crucial one. The Sikh community being in its infancy, had to face a number of dangers. It would not have been difficult for Hinduism to swallow the newly born Sikhism in due course. Moreover Guru Nanak Sahib's son Sri Chand's Udasi (Hindu) sect community and the activities of Yogis had not yet abated. At this hour of testing of the nascent faith, he lived Guru Nanak Sahib's tenets in true spirit despite manifest signs of drifting Sikhism back towards Hinduism. This enabled Sikhism to further consolidate its own separate religious identity, building upon the strong foundation of distinctive Sikh teachings and practices already laid by Guru Nanak Dev ji.

It is said that Guru Angad Devi ji started to build a new town, at Goindwal near Khadur Sahib, and Guru Amar Das Ji was appointed to supervise its construction. It is also said that the Mughal Emperor Humayun, when defeated by Sher Shah Suri, came to obtain blessings of Guru Angad Dev Ji prior to regaining the throne of Delhi.

1552 (age 48); Guru Angad Dev Ji, by following the example of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, nominated Amar Das Ji as his successor Guru (the Third Nanak) before his death instead of one of his two sons. He presented all the sacred hymns (revealed verses, Gurbani) in a pothi (book), including those that he had previously received from Guru Nanak Dev Ji to Guru Amar Das Ji. He breathed his last on March 29, 1552 at the age of forty-eight.

4. Highlights of the Second Nanak

{1504 - 1552}

Born on:	March 31, 1504
Born at:	Village Sarai Naga (Matte Di Sarai), Punjab
Parents:	Father - Pheru ji Mother - Mata Ramo ji (also Known as Mata Sabhirai, Mansa Devi, Daya Kaur).
Wife:	Mata Khivi ji, married on January 1520
Children:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• two sons (Dasu ji and Datu ji) and• two daughters (Amro ji and Anokhi ji).
Accession to Gurgaddi:	September 7, 1539 (age 35).
Joti Jot:	March 29, 1552 (age 48).
Highlights:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Contributed 63 Shabads and Saloks (revealed verses), now registered in the Guru Granth Sahib■ Through their own life and conduct, Guru Ji demonstrated the principles of Nishkam Sewa (selfless service) to humanity, complete surrender to the Shabad Guru (not a human Guru) and to the will of God, and disapproval of exhibitionism and hypocrisy■ Formalized the present form of the Gurmukhi script■ Maintained and developed the institution of Langar started by Guru Nanak Dev Ji■ Traveled widely and established several new centers for preaching Sikhi■ Started the tradition of Mall Akhara to emphasize physical well being, to go along with spiritual development.

The Third Nanak

Guru Amar Das Ji

5. Early Life of the Third Nanak

1479 AD: Bhai (later, Guru) Amar Das Ji, the Third Nanak, was born at village Basarke Gillan in Amritsar district on May 5, 1479. (Some chronicles mention the month of April 1479). His father Tej Bhan Bhalla and mother Bakht Kaur (also referred to as Sulakhani and Lakhmi Devi) were orthodox Hindus and used to pay annual visits to the Ganges river at Haridwar. Bhai Amar Das Ji was married to Mata Mansa Devi ji and had four children: two daughters; Bibi Dani ji and Bibi Bhani ji (she was later married to Guru Ram Das Ji), and two sons; Mohan ji and Mohri ji.

Like his father, Bhai Amar Das ji carried on the rituals of the Hindu faith with great devotion. It had become part of his daily life to recite Vedic 'Mantras', give charity to Brahmins, worship Hindu Gods & Goddesses, celebrate each religious festival, and discriminate on account of the Hindu caste system.

1521 (age 42): He went for the first time for a holy dip to Haridwar and other Hindu holy places to wash away sins of previous life. After that, he went on pilgrimage to holy Hindu sites every year.

1541 (age 62): On his 21st pilgrimage to Haridwar, Bhai Amar Das ji stayed at the inn of Durga Brahmin. During the stay, one ascetic became friendly with Amar Das ji. This ascetic did not take food prepared by anyone else. He used to cook for himself. However, he started taking food prepared by Bhai Amar Das ji. After staying with Bhai Amar Das ji for few days, the ascetic wanted to leave. Before leaving, he asked Amar Das ji, "Who is your guru (spiritual teacher)?" Bhai Amar Das ji replied, "I have not adopted a guru yet." On hearing this, the ascetic got upset and angry. He said that he did not realize that he had been taking food prepared by one who has no guru. The spiritual effort of his entire life had gone waste. He firmly believed that one must have a guru for spiritual enlightenment and salvation. The ascetic felt greatly disappointed and left the company Bhai Amar Das ji.

6. Becoming a Sikh

The ascetic's critical comments that Bhai Amar Das Ji was still without a guru was haunting him. Bhai Amar Das Ji was desperate to find a worthy guru to get spiritual guidance from, and to answer his doubts on his journey to attain ultimate bliss. As far as he could think, he could not settle for anyone whom he could consider as his guru. He could not sleep the whole night. Coincidentally, the next morning he heard the following hymn being sung in a melodious voice:

Actions are the paper, and the mind is the ink; good and bad are both recorded upon it.

As their past actions drive them, so are mortals driven. There is no end to Your Glorious Virtues, Lord. ||1||

Why do you not keep Him in your consciousness, you mad man?

Forgetting the Lord, your own virtues shall rot away. ||1||Pause||

Maaroo, First Mehla, First House: Page 990

ਕਰਣੀ ਕਾਗਦੁ ਮਨੁ ਮਸਵਾਣੀ ਬੁਰਾ ਭਲਾ ਦੁਇ ਲੇਖ ਪਏ ॥

ਜਿਉ ਜਿਉ ਕਿਰਤੁ ਚਲਾਏ ਤਿਉ ਚਲੀਐ ਤਉ ਗੁਣ ਨਾਹੀ ਅੰਤੁ ਹਰੇ ॥੧॥

ਚਿਤ ਚੇਤਸਿ ਕੀ ਨਹੀ ਬਾਵਰਿਆ ॥ ਹਰਿ ਬਿਸਰਤ ਤੇਰੇ ਗੁਣ ਗਲਿਆ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

ਮਾਰੂ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ਘਰੁ ੧, Page 990

The above Shabad of Guru Nanak Dev Ji was being sung by Bibi Amro Ji, the daughter of Guru Angad Dev Ji. Bibi Amro had been married to the nephew of Amar Das Ji (Bhai Amar Das Ji's brother - Bhai Manak Chand's son called Jasso Ji) a few months earlier. After listening to the whole hymn, Bhai Amar Das Ji decided to adopt the composer of the hymn as his guru. He came to understand Guru Nanak Dev's teaching that the deeds of a man are sheets of paper on which he writes good or bad words with the ink of his mind. In forgetting God, his virtues are destroyed. Actions for the love of wealth become his shackles. How can he be free from those shackles? Five fires -- namely lust, anger, greed, attachment and pride -- are consuming the mind. His sins are acting like charcoal on it. The guru can convert this burned mind, like converting iron into gold, with a mere touch. The guru gives him the Word (in the form of God's revelatory hymns) by which his mind is weaned away from misdeeds. Bhai Amar Das asked Bibi Amro about the hymn he had just heard. She told him, "This hymn was composed by Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Before his passing away (Joti Jyot) , he had entrusted the responsibility of guiding the Sikhs to my father, Guru Angad Dev Ji. He is showing the true path to the people gone astray and his headquarters is at Khadur. Bhai Amar Das Ji took Bibi Amro with him to Khadur. On reaching there, he placed his head at the feet of Guru Angad Dev Ji and requested him, "Please be kind and accept me as your disciple." Guru Angad Dev Ji accepted this request for helping him become aware of the holy Word. Bhai Amar Das Ji was 62 at that time. His old age was no deterrent to his fully accepting the holy Word and becoming a Sikh. From that day on he shunned the pride of his high caste, started serving everyone who came there, and began thinking of everyone as his brother or sister.

7. A Lesson to Forgive

1542 (age 62): Bhai Amar Das ji came to Khadur for the first time at the age of 62. Having accepted Guru Angad Dev ji as Guru, he started living in the Guru's institution. He saw that the devotees who came for audience with the Guru took up service of one kind or the other on their own accord. Some cleaned utensils in the community kitchen, some would bring firewood from the forest, etc. Bhai Amar Das Ji asked the cook Bhai Jodh, and took up the service of bringing water for the Langar (community kitchen). He started taking meals in the Pangat (everyone sitting together for meals) and his earlier illusionary belief in low and high castes and the false pride of being a Khatri (a high Hindu caste) disappeared. Whenever possible, he would clean utensils while listening to or reciting the Guru's hymns.

Bhai Amar Das gave up ordinary worldly relationships and like a Sikh got busy in the service of the Guru's institution. He also took up the responsibility of bringing water from the well for the morning bath of the Guru. In this way, he served the Guru's institution for ten or eleven years.

1552 (age 73): Bhai Amar Das was passing by the village-weaver's house early one morning in the pouring rain with the metallic pitcher of water on his head. In the dark his foot hit a wooden peg in front of the weaver's house and he tripped. At the sound of his fall the weaver called from inside, "Who is there so early in the morning?" The weaver's wife asked him to calm down and said, "Who else but the homeless Amro? Be quiet and go back to sleep." Listening to her words, Bhai Amar Das said, "You are insane. I am not homeless. I am under the shelter of the Guru." Saying this, Bhai Amar Das came to the institution with the water, and helped the Guru to take bath.

On hearing Bhai Amar Das ji's comments, the weaver got scared. He feared that words 'insane' uttered by a holy person may come true. In the morning, the weaver, along with his wife presented themselves before the Guru. The weaver narrated to the Guru all that had taken place early that morning and prayed, "May our mistake be forgiven and my wife may not get insane." The Guru advised Sikhs, "Forgive others and do not speak bad words to others."

8. Guruship is not a Property

552 (*Bhai Amar Das ji 73 & Guru Angad Dev ji 48*): Guru Angad Dev Ji handed over the responsibility of leading the Sikhs to Bhai Amar Das Ji by installing him as Guru on 29th March 1552, and instructed him to shift his headquarters from Khadur to Goindwal. Baba Budha Ji and other Sikhs accompanied Guru Amar Das Ji to Goindwal. Sikh devotees started going to Goindwal for an audience with the Guru. Guru Angad Dev Ji's son, Dasu, declared himself as Guru and stationed himself at Khadur. When nobody turned up for an audience, he got angry with Guru Amar Das Ji. Mata Khivi Ji told her two sons, "Guruship is not a property that can be inherited. It is a big mistake to have enmity with the Guru. At the advice of Mata Khivi Ji, Dasu reconciled, but her advice had no effect on the other son, Datu.

Guru Amar Das Ji started sending his Sikhs from Goindwal to far off places for spreading Sikhi. There he propagated the Sikh faith in a very planned manner. He divided the Sikh Sangat area into 22 preaching centres (Manjis), each under the charge of a devout Sikh. He himself visited and sent Sikh missionaries to different parts of India to spread Sikhism. As a result of this, the number of devotees increased greatly in three to four years. As the number of Sikhs increased, the income of Brahmins as well as their respect among the people decreased. In Sikhi, there is no place for discrimination on the basis of the Hindu caste system.

1556 (*age 77*): Some Brahmins conspired with Datu and said, "We can dethrone Guru Amar Das and make you the Guru." Datu was taken in by the incitement of the Brahmins. He took some Brahmins with him and came to Goindwal in the congregation of Guru Amar Das Ji. When Datu and the Brahmins saw the splendour and attendance of the congregation, their jealousy of the Guru increased further. In a fit of rage, Datu kicked Guru Amar Das in the back, making him fall. Datu himself sat on the Guru's seat. Guru ji took Datu's foot in his hand, pressed it and said, "Datu Ji! I hope your tender foot is not hurt by hitting my old hard bones." Datu replied, "Guruship belongs to me. Leave this village immediately."

Guru ji left Goindwal and went to village Basarke. Sikh devotees followed Guru ji to Basarke. Only Hindu Brahmins and Datu were left at Goindwal. Datu held recitals for three days. Since no Sikh came with the offerings, Datu returned to Khadur in frustration.

9. Brahmins' Greed

1558 (age 79): For the propagation of Sikhism, Guru Amar Das started a tour of Hindu places of pilgrimage. Guru Ramdas gives an account of that tour in 'Raag Tukhari'. The Guru first went to Kurukshetra where he preached the Sikh way of life to thousands of people including 'Yogis' and recluses. Then he acquainted people gathered on the banks of the river Yamuna with the mission and teachings of Guru Nanak. Then he came to the village Kankhal where he told the villagers that lust, anger, greed, attachment and pride are man's major enemies which can only be subdued by following the Guru's teachings. He returned to Goindwal after preaching at Haridwar.

1559 (age 80): On reaching Goindwal, Guru ji saw that the number of devotees coming to the village had increased considerably. However, there was only one common well in the village. To fulfil the increasing demand of water, the Guru started construction of a step-well. The devotees worked with great zeal for the construction of the step-well. Although Bhai Ram Das Ji was the son-in-law of Guru Amar Das Ji, yet he set an example of Sewa by carrying baskets of sand on his head. By the zest of the devotees the construction of the step-well was completed in 1559. Before the inauguration of the step-well, the Guru arranged a Langar (community meal) and everyone who took meals there was given one Rupee as a reward. Many high-caste people sat with others and took their meals in order to get a Rupee. The reward was increased to five Rupees at noon. In order to get five Rupees, the Brahmins of the village also sat in Pangat (sitting together), took meals and went away.

An ascetic named Hari Ram lived at Goindwal, and used to instigate the villagers against the Guru. That ascetic did not come for the meals even on being invited by the Guru. In the afternoon, the Guru increased the reward to one gold coin. Guru Ramdas writes about the ascetic in 'Gauri-Di-Var' that he was taken in by the greed for money. He secretly sent his son to the Langar. Those serving the meals saw him. The boy was young. He told everything which resulted in great disgrace for the ascetic among the villagers. Everyone understood that the ascetic was a hypocrite.

10. Guru ji's Initiatives

Guru ka Langar:

Guru Amar Das ji strengthened the tradition of 'Guru ka Langar' and made it compulsory for the visitor to the Guru, saying 'Pehle Pangat Phir Sangat'. Once the emperor Akbar came to see Guru Sahib and he had to eat coarse rice in the Langar before he could meet Guru Sahib. He was much impressed by this system and expressed his desire to grant some royal property for 'Guru ka Langar', but Guru Sahib declined respectfully. Guru Amar Das Ji persuaded Akbar to waive off toll-tax (pilgrim's tax) for non-Muslims while crossing the Yamuna and Ganga rivers. Guru Amar Das Ji maintained cordial relations with emperor Akbar.

Widow-remarriage

Guru ji preached against Sati (the Hindu practice of a wife committing suicide on her husband's burning funeral pyre), and he advocated widow-remarriage. He also asked the women to discard 'Purdah' (veil). He introduced new birth, marriage and death ceremonies. Thus he created a fence around the infant Sikhism, and thereupon met stiff resistance from the orthodox Hindus and Muslim fundamentalists.

Establishment of Manjis (Seats)

Guru Amar Das ji divided the country into 22 zones to spread Sikhi. Every zone was called a Manji (seat). The Manji of the area became the center for preaching Sikh thought. Some of the persons in charge of Manjis were women. The persons in charge of Manjis were Sikhs of high character. These persons answered questions and clarified doubts of Sikhs regarding Sikh principles. The Manji incharges visited Guru ji twice a year. They sought clarifications from Guru ji regarding Sikhs' questions that they themselves could not address. Thus people were no longer going to Brahmins to seek guidance regarding religious matters. It resulted in less income for Brahmins.

11. Selection of the Most Qualified as Guru

1574 (age 95, Ram Das ji 40 years of age): Before his passing away (Joti Jyot) , Guru Amar Das Ji searched for the most qualified follower to entrust the responsibility of Guruship. Guru Amar Das Ji did not consider either of his sons fit for Guruship. Guru ji had two Sikhs in mind - Bhai Ram Das and Bhai Rama. Both of them were Guru ji's sons-in-law. They used to serve the congregation with body and soul. Guru ji wanted the selection process to be transparent.

One morning, Guru ji asked Bhai Ram Das and Bhai Rama to construct a platform each. Both of them erected the platforms. By the evening, Guru ji inspected both the platforms and said, "Construction is unsatisfactory. Demolish and construct again tomorrow." Next day, Bhai Ram Das and Rama ji reconstructed the platforms. Again, Guru ji rejected them. The process of making and demolishing the platforms went on for seven days. On the eighth day when Guru ji criticized Bhai Rama's platform, Bhai Rama got upset and said that he had constructed the platform according to Guru ji's instructions, and that may be due to old age, Guru ji did not remember his own instructions. Bhai Rama refused to dismantle and reconstruct the platform. Then Guru ji pointed faults in Bhai Ram Das's platform. Bhai Ram Das replied, "Respected Guru ji, be kind to me. Bestow upon me wisdom so that I may construct the platform according to your instructions." When Sikhs heard this response from Bhai Ram Das, they were convinced that Bhai Ram Das ji was the right person to be the next Guru. Later, over time, Guru Ramdas Ji became famous for his piety, devotion, energy and eloquence. Guru Amar Das Ji had found him capable in every respect and worthy of the office of Guruship.

Guru Amar Das Ji, after installing Bhai Ramdas ji as Guru, bowed before him and asked all Sikhs to pay him respect. All those present obeyed the Guru's command. Certainly it was a right step because Bibi Bhani ji and Guru Ram Das Sahib Ji had shown true spirit of service and their keen understanding of the Sikh principles deserved this. This practice shows that Guruship could be transferred to anybody fit for leading the Sikh cause and not to the particular person who belonged to the same family.

Before his passing away, Guru Amar Das ji called the members of his family and Sikhs on September 1, 1574 and said, "No one should cry on my leaving this body of five elements. There is no need to place an earthen lamp on the palm of my hand at the time of my passing away because with the Word of the Guru, the darkness from my mind has vanished. The Hindu rite of Pind (balls of food thrown in water) or feeding the Brahmins for me is unnecessary. The Name of God is the only food for the soul. Do not take my ashes to Haridwar but immerse these in running water at any place. Do not take out a funeral procession. Let the Name of God (Waheguru) be recited after my death."

12. Administrative System of the Third Nanak

Manji System:⁽¹⁾

The **Manji** system, along with the Pirhi system for women (explained below), were innovative systems established by the third Guru, Guru Amar Das Ji, at Goindwal to spread Sikhi throughout Punjab and India under a logical and well planned method of administration. Twenty two devoted Gursikhs, all noble individuals, devout men and women (called sangatia or Masands) were appointed by Guru Amar Das Ji to spread Guru Nanak Dev Ji' s message, provide spiritual guidance, and keep the Sangat (congregation) in touch with Guru Nanak Dev Ji's message. Each Manji (diocese) was also responsible for the offerings of each Sangat (the Dasvand), which they made in recognition of their reverence for the Guru. The Sikhs' offering was used for langar (the community kitchen), and after meeting the expenses of the local chapters, the surplus was to be passed on to the Guru's golak (the community treasury chest) at Goindwal. Goindwal was becoming a very busy place, with ever increasing numbers of Sikhs coming to have the Guru's Darshan. Therefore, the Guru's presence in Goindwal had become necessary, and he appointed Masands to help administer the Sikh community affairs in other parts of India. Guru Ji wanted his disciples to be able to continue their normal routines of life, but by setting up the Masand system he also hoped that they could all be taught equality and the discipline of Sikhi.

The word **Manji** refers to the low wooden cots on which the Sikh congregation leaders would sit and teach the Sikhi doctrines and principles to their sangats and sing Shabads (hymns), followed in chorus by the congregation.

Initially, the following 17 persons were appointed to preach Sikhism through the Manji system:

In the area of Majha (Amritsar, Lahore, Sialkot)

- 1. Manak Chand Jhinwar (water carrier) at Variowal in Amritsar.
- 2. Sada Ram, a blacksmith, near Amritsar.
- 3. Hindal, at Jandiala, near Amritsar.
- 4. Gangu Shah, a banker, at Lahore.
- 5. Mutho-Murari, a devoted couple, at Chunian in Lahore Dist.

In Jalandhar Doab

- 6. Paro Julka, at Jalandar.
- 7. Mahesh Dhir, at Sultanpur Lodi.
- 8. Rang Shah, at Moluphota.

In Kangra Hills

- 9. Sawan Mal, nephew of Guru Amar Das, at Haripur Guler.
- 10. Name not given, at Dharamsala.

Kashmir Hills

- 11. Phirya, at Mirpur.

Malwa (area of Patiala, Ludhiana, Bhatinda)

- 12. Kheira, at Firozpur.
- 13. Mai Das Bairagi, in charge of Ludhiana Distt.
- 14. Mai Bhago at village Wayun, tehsil Kharar, district Rupar.
- 15. Mai Sewan, at village Gardnoh in Patiala District.
- 16. Sachna Shah, in charge of Ambala Distt.

Sind

- 17. Lalu, in charge of some areas in Sindh.
- 18 to 22: Unknown

Pirhi System⁽¹⁾

The **Pirhi** system was established by Guru Amar Das ji to spread the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev ji among the women of the Punjab and India. Even though Guru Nanak Dev ji had called for equality among men and women, the women of India -- whether Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist or Jain -- were largely under the control of men. Women during their menses period, and even those giving birth, were considered ritually unclean and were segregated and were kept out of sight.

In each of these religions, women were often kept behind walls, and were allowed out only in Purda (veil). Muslim women could be divorced with only a few words, or a wife who did not please her husband could be killed in a so-called 'kitchen fire'. Women were blamed for the death of their husbands (their so-called bad karma's doing), and as Hindu woman they were not allowed to marry again. In addition, they were expected to give up any use of color in their clothing or socialize outside of their mother's house where they were often treated as slaves. Guru Nanak Dev ji had considered this behavior, along with the practice of 'Sutee' (a widow killing herself on her dead husband's burning funeral pyre), as an abomination.

Because of men's control of their wives and daughters, a family's honor depended on maintaining the virtue of their women by never being in contact with any males not a part of their immediate family. So to avoid any hint of impropriety, Guru Amar Das ji introduced a system in which women spiritual leaders would guide other women about Sikh doctrines and traditions. Guru Amar Das Ji called this system the Pirhi system. Pirhi, like a small Manji, is a very small wooden stool from which the Pirhis would guide their charges.

The Pirhis were women whose task was to light the flame of the Guru's Word and spread the fragrance of Nam among women. Bibi Bhani, Bibi Dani and Bibi Pal were some of the most revered leaders of the different Pirhis established by Guru Amar Das ji, the Third Nanak.

Both the Manji and the Pirhi systems thus had the same objective -- to spread Sikhi and the practice of equality among all Sikh men and women throughout the Punjab and other parts of India

(1) Source - Sikhi Wiki Encyclopedia of Sikhs

13. Highlights of the Third Nanak

{1479 - 1574}

Born on:	May 5, 1479
Born at:	Village Basarke Gillan in Amritsar district
Parents:	Father - Tej Bhan Bhalla Mother - Bakht Kaur (also referred as Sulakhani and Lakhmi Devi)
Wife:	Mata Mansa Devi
Children:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • two daughters - Bibi Dani ji and Bibi Bhani ji (she was later married to Guru Ram Das Ji), • two sons - Mohan ji and Mohri ji.
Accession to Gurgaddi:	April 16, 1552 (age 73)
Joti Jot:	September 1, 1574 (age 95)
Contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A total of 907 revelatory hymns, that are incorporated in the Guru Granth Sahib Ji. ■ Gift of the prayer Anand Sahib, which is one of the Five Banis recited daily by devout Sikhs. ■ All visitors (from any caste, creed, ranking, social status) to Gurdwaras were asked to first partake in Langar (a free communal meal) before seeing the Guru (<i>First Pangat, then Sangat</i>). When emperor Akbar visited the Guru, he too first ate in the Langar, and then had a meeting with the Guru. ■ Further preached against the Hindu caste system. ■ Guru Ji lifted the status of women and gave them equality with men. He strictly prohibited practices such as Sati (the burning of the wife on her husband's funeral pyre), <i>Parda</i> (veil to cover the face), and encouraged widow-remarriage. ■ Established an administrative system of Manjis for management of the increasing size of the Sikh congregations. ■ Established city of Goindwal on the banks of the River Beas in 1552.

The Fourth Nanak

Guru Ramdas Ji

14. Early Life of the Fourth Nanak

1534 AD: Bhai Ram Das Ji (Jetha ji) was born at Chuna Mandi, Lahore (now in Pakistan), on September 24, 1534. His mother's name was Mata Daya Kaur ji (Anup Kaur ji) and father's name was Baba Hari Das ji Sodhi. Bhai Ram Das ji was a very handsome and promising child. His parents were too poor to meet even the daily needs, and he had to earn his bread by selling boiled grams. His parents died when he was just a 7 year old. His maternal grandmother (mother's mother) took him to her native village Basarke. He spent five years at village Basarke earning his living by selling boiled grams. According to some chronicles, when Guru Amar Das Ji came to village Basarke to condole with the grandmother of Bhai Ramdas Ji at the death of her son-in-law, Guru Ji developed a deep affection for Bhai Ramdas Ji. Along with his grandmother he left for Goindwal Sahib to settle there. There he resumed selling boiled grams and also began to take part in the religious congregation held by Guru Amar Das Ji. He actively participated in the development of Goindwal Sahib.

1552 (age 18): One day Mata Mansha Devi suggested that Guru Amar Das Ji look for a suitable groom for their daughter Bhani. The Guru enquired, what type of groom should he look for? Bhai Ram Das Ji was passing by at that time. Mata Mansha Devi pointed towards him and said, "The groom should be like him ." The Guru said, "He is the only boy who resembles him. There is none else." In this way, considering Bhai Ram Das Ji a suitable groom for Bibi Bhani, they were married in December 1552. They had three sons: Prithi Chand Ji, Mahadev Ji, and Arjan Dev Ji (who later became Guru, the Fifth Nanak). After the marriage, he stayed with his father-in-law and deeply associated himself with the Guru Ghar activities (Sikhi). He commanded full confidence of Guru Amar Das Ji and often accompanied him when the Guru went on long missionary tours to different parts of India.

1558 (age 24): Guru Amar Das Ji returned to Goindwal after preaching Sikhi to the public assembled at Hindu places of pilgrimage. Preaching included the practical way of life, sitting at a common place for taking meals, giving up differences of caste and creed, and sharing common services. Reaching Goindwal, he started construction of a step-well. On hearing the construction of the step-well, the devotees started pouring in to take part in the service. One day some pilgrims from Lahore who were going for a holy dip to Haridwar, stopped at Goindwal. They were surprised to see Bhai Ram Das, the son of a person of the Hindu Khatri caste, carrying a basket of sand on his head and working along with people of low castes, like an ordinary laborer in his in-law's house. They angrily told Guru ji, "You are making your son-in law work like a laborer of low caste. This is not becoming of you." Hearing his relatives talk like this, Bhai Ram Das went to Guru ji and said, "Please do not be angry with them. They are innocent. They do not know what they are saying. They do not know that service is above caste, creed and relationship."

15. Brahmins Question Basics of Sikhi

With the construction of the step-well in 1559 AD., the number of followers of Sikhi increased tremendously. Whereas the devotees had sat for their meals in Pangat upto that time, they now started bathing at one place, which resulted in the further elimination of differences in their minds on account of caste and creed. Whoever saw the Sikhs living at Goindwal, started similar preaching on returning to his village. With this sort of preaching, the fallacy of caste and creed began to be cleared from the minds of the people. They started discarding Brahminical thinking, considering it to be an unnecessary man-made burden. It became difficult for the Brahmins and high caste people to accept that low caste people could think themselves to be their equals.

1566 (age 32): The Mughal king Akbar stayed for some time at Lahore. Taking advantage of his presence, Brahmins and high caste people drafted a complaint against Guru Amar Das Ji and presented it to Akbar. Having read the allegations, Akbar sent word to Guru Amar Das Ji at Goindwal to come to Lahore and respond to those complaints. Upon receipt of the message, Guru Amar Das Ji sent Bhai Ram Das Ji as his representative to emperor Akbar to reply to the charges. In the court at Lahore, Bhai Ram Das Ji replied to the charges.

- The first complaint was, "The Sikhs do not recite the 'Gayatri' mantra which, according to the teaching of the (Hindu) Vedas, is to be recited thrice a day." Bhai Ram Das Ji said, "The doctrine of the Vedas also says that the Sudras (untouchables) cannot recite Gayatri, but the teaching of Guru Nanak is common for all castes and creeds. It tells us to remember God all the time and not merely to read it with mouth only three times a day."
- The second complaint was, "The Sikhs do not visit holy places of Hindus." Bhai Ram Das Ji replied, "The places of pilgrimage are not sacred because of the water, but were considered sacred by the Hindus because of the great and learned men who imparted knowledge to the pilgrims. Now, only Brahmins live at these places who only collect offerings. There is no learned man to impart knowledge."
- The third complaint was, "The Sikhs do not believe in the caste system." Bhai Ram Das Ji replied, "Manu Brahmin had invented the caste system in order to keep the poor oppressed. It was not for the welfare of the people."
- The fourth complaint was, "Sikhs do not worship idols." He replied, "Stone has no life. The God of the Sikhs is ever-alive. He is present everywhere all the time."

Akbar was convinced by the answers of Bhai Ram Das. Akbar decorated him with a robe of honor.

Before leaving, Bhai Ram Das Ji suggested to Akbar, "It would be a great relief if you stop imposition of Jazia and Pilgrimage Tax on the Hindus." Akbar agreed to do so.

16. Laying Foundation of Amritsar

1570 (*age 36*): In June, Guru Amar Das Ji took Bhai Ram Das Ji with him, and assembled together headmen and prominent people of Gumtala, Tung, Sultanwind and Gill-wali. The Guru put before them his proposal for establishing a new town. All of them acceded to the Guru's proposal. They all gave, without any hesitation, the land demanded by the Guru for founding the town. The Guru after making payment for the land according to the measurements, got the deed transferred in his name. Sri Guru Ramdas Ji laid the foundation stone of Chak Ramdas or Ramdas Pur, which is now called Amritsar.

1574 (*age 40*): The new city (Chak Ramdas Pur) flourished soon as it was situated at the centre of domestic and international trade routes. It grew into an important center of trade in Punjab after Lahore. Later, Guru Ram Das Ji himself invited many merchants and artisans from different walks of life and trades. This proved to be step of far-reaching importance. It provided a common place of worship to the Sikhs, and paved the way for the further establishing Sikhism as a distinct religion, just as Guru Nanak Dev Ji had first done many decades earlier. Guru Ram Das Ji also introduced Masand system in place of the Manji system, and this step too played a great role in the further consolidation of Sikhism.

Bhai Ram Das Ji also took up excavation for Santokh Sar pool. The Sikhs serving at the site and daily laborers, perceiving the work to be of long duration, started constructing houses for themselves. Bhai Ram Das Ji started Langar (free kitchen) for the Sikhs and other workers where every needy person could take hearty meals.

Finding Bhai Ram Das Ji competent for the leadership of the Sikhs, Guru Amar Das Ji entrusted him with this responsibility on the 1st September 1574, and ordered him to go to the new town being established along with his family. Devotees followed Guru Ram Das Ji to the newly founded town. People of all trades started settling at this place.

1577 (*age 43*): Guru Ji bought additional five hundred bighas of land from the villagers of Tung so that there may not be any difficulty in the expansion of the town. After the construction of Amritsar pool, the town became famous as Amritsar (pool of nectar).

17. Yoga vs Love of God

While Guru Ram Das Ji was getting the pool constructed at Amritsar, a group of Hindu sants (saints) came to him. Guru ji, respectfully, made them sit and asked them the purpose of their visit. The leader of the saints said. "Respected Guru ji, your Sikhs do not learn 'Ashat Yoga'. One cannot control the mind without knowledge of Yoga. Self-realisation is not attained if the mind is not under control. The mind cannot concentrate on pious deeds unless it attains self-realization. Salvation is not obtained without pious deeds. If your Sikhs do not attain salvation and remain shackled in the bondage of worldly things, what is the use of their becoming your Sikhs ? Please dispel our doubts."

Guru ji replied, "God cannot be realized without compassion. Salvation cannot be attained without realizing God. As such we teach our Sikhs to love God. When the love of God takes root in the mind, one beholds God on all sides in His creation. Thus, Sikhs remain immersed in His love all the time which results in realizing inner self. There is no dearth of His blessings if you love Him, who is the Giver of everything. As such, the desire for worldly things leaves those who love God. All their troubles vanish. Ego is gone by self-realization. Sikhs do not get entangled in love for wealth even while doing their worldly deeds."

Guru ji asked them, "Why do those who have attained self-realization through Yoga, live in the mountains or jungles? Why don't they show the way to get rid of the pains and sufferings to people gone astray?" When the Hindu saints could not find an answer for it, Guru ji recited the following verse:

*"O Yogi, you play on a reed-instrument with your hands and a flute with your mouth.
These are action just for showing off.
Get knowledge from the Guru, sing praises of God and immerse your mind in His thought..
Impart to the people the teaching which make them to be one with Him who is Omnipresent.
I also pay obeisance to that Supreme Being.*

*ਹਥਿ ਕਰਿ ਤੰਤੁ ਵਜਾਵੈ ਜੋਗੀ ਥੇਥਰ ਵਾਜੈ ਬੋਨ ॥
ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਣ ਬੋਲਹੁ ਜੋਗੀ ਇਹੁ ਮਨੁਆ ਹਰਿ ਰੰਗਿ ਭੋਨ ॥੧॥*

(Raag Asa M 4, p 368)

The Yogis doubts were cleared. They thanked Guru ji and moved on satisfied.

18. Passing on the Light

1581 (age 47): Sihari Mall, a cousin of the Guru, came from Lahore to invite Guru Ram Das Ji to attend the wedding of his son. Guru ji asked his sons, one by one, to go to attend the marriage. When the elder two sons refused, he asked his youngest son Arjan Dev Ji. He immediately agreed. When Arjan Dev Ji started for Lahore, Guru ji asked him to stay at Lahore until called.

Bhai Arjan Dev Ji waited a long time for a message asking him to come back. Eventually, Arjan Dev Ji wrote a letter to Guru ji. Upon not getting a response, Arjan Dev ji wrote a second letter, and then, a third one. These letters were carried by a Sikh from Lahore. The first two letters were intercepted by Arjan Dev Ji's eldest brother - Prithi Chand. Prithi Chand never presented these letters to Guru ji. Prithi Chand feared that on reading the letters, Guru ji will call Arjan Dev ji back and pass on the Guruship to him. Arjan Dev Ji instructed the messenger to hand over the third letter directly to Guru ji. On receiving the third letter, Guru ji inquired about the first two letters from Prithi Chand. Prithi Chand denied knowledge of the letters. Prithi Chand's house was searched. Both the letters were discovered. The devotees sitting in the congregation saw that Prithi Chand was deceiving even the Guru.

Guru ji sent five Sikhs along with Baba Budha Ji to bring Arjan Dev Ji back from Lahore. Guru ji entrusted the responsibility of Guruship to Arjan Dev ji on August 28, 1581. Prithi Chand objected, and had bitter arguments with his father Guru Ram Das Ji, who patiently explained to him. But it had no effect on him. Guru Ram Das Ji moved, along with most of his family, to Goindwal. Prithi Chand stayed behind, at Amritsar. Guru Ram Das Ji, the Fourth Nanak, passed away (Joti Jot) on September 1, 1581.

19. Highlights of the Fourth Nanak

{1534 - 1581}

Born on:	September 24, 1534.
Born at:	Chuna Mandi, Lahore (now in Pakistan)
Parents:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Father - Baba Hari Das ji Sodhi • Mother - Mata Daya Kaur ji (Anup Kaur ji)
Brother:	
Wife:	Bibi Bhani (daughter of Guru Amar Das Ji)
Children:	<p>three sons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prithi Chand Ji, • Mahadev Ji, and • Arjan Dev Ji (who later became Guru Arjan Dev Ji)
Accession to Gurgaddi:	September 1, 1574 (age 40)
Joti Jot:	September 1, 1581 (age 47)
Contributions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guru Ram Das Ji further strengthened Sikhi by composing four Lawans, for the Sikh marriage ceremony. • He advised Sikhs to recite them in order to solemnize the marriages of their children. • He introduced a new matrimonial system based on Sikhi instead of the Hindu Vedi system. • The distinct marriage code for the Sikhs distinguished them from the orthodox and traditional Hindu system. • Like his predecessors, he carried forward the tradition of Guru ka Langar. • Superstitions, caste system, and pilgrimages were strongly decried. • He wrote 638 hymns in 30 ragas. These include 246 Padas, 138 Saloks, 31 Ashtpadis and 8 Vars, and are now in the Guru Granth Sahib Ji, the sole Sikh Scripture.

20. Significant World Events

around the period of the Second, Third and Fourth Nanaks are as follows:

1501	The world has a population of around 435 million – about one-fourteenth today's population of 6.4 billion.
1502	Christopher Columbus begins his fourth and last journey to the Caribbean. He still believes that the islands he has found lay off the coast of India.
1506	April 19, In the city of Lisbon, religiously impassioned Christians slaughter nearly 4,000 Portuguese Jews. May 20: Columbus died in Spain.
1510	Portuguese ships are heavily armed with cannon and dominate the Indian Ocean. India these days has a population of around 105 million – about one-twelfth the number of people in Pakistan and India today.
1521	Charles V has been elected as the Holy Roman Emperor, and Pope Leo X allies himself with Charles against Martin Luther.
1526	The printing press is introduced in Stockholm, Sweden.
1526	From Kabul a Muslim tribal leader, Babur, has been making a series of raids through the Khyber Pass into the Indus Valley, seeking plunder. At Panipat he defeated Ibrahim Lodi – an Afghan who has ruled much of India since 1489.
1535	Henry VIII breaks from Catholicism and declares himself head of English Church.
1543	Nicolaus Copernicus is dead. He defied Church doctrine with the publication of his work "On The Revolution of Heavenly Bodies," explaining his theory that the earth and other planets revolve around the sun rather than the sun around the earth.
1543	Michelangelo paints the altar wall of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican, Rome.
1551	In Geneva, Robert Estienne, also known as Robert Stephanus, is the first to print the Bible divided into standard numbered verses.
1558	Queen Mary dies and is succeeded by her half-sister, Elizabeth, the daughter of Henry VIII and his second wife, Anne Boleyn. Elizabeth re-establishes Anglican Protestantism as the state religion.
1568	Akbar is expanding his empire in India, and it will be reported that he has killed more than 30,000 Hindu peasants following his conquest of Chittor.
1579	The population of China reaches 60 million.
1590	Mechanical inventions are on their way to advancing science. A spectacles maker in the Netherlands, experimenting with several lenses in a tube, discovers that nearby objects appear greatly enlarged. The modern microscope is born.

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