

GURU NANAK DEV JI

August 7, 2018

INDEX

#	Title	Page
1	Worldly Education & Praise of God	3
2	Thread of Virtuous Qualities (Janeu)	4
3	Illness of Mind	5
4	No Hindu, No Muslim	6
5	True Prayer	7
6	Prayer with Mind	8
7	Bhai Mardana	9
8	Taking Money to the Next World	10
9	Money does not go with You	11
10	Food as Milk or Blood	12
11	Delivering Water to Ancestors?	13
12	Three Lessons	14
13	Truthful Living	15
14	Idol Worship?	16
15	Washing Sins with Charity?	17
16	Getting rid of ego with Truth	18
17	God is in all Directions	19
18	To be a Kind Ruler	20
19	Mind & Body	21
20	Bhai Lehna to Guru Angad	22
21	Highlights	23

1. Worldly Education & Praise of God

Guru Nanak Dev ji was born on 15th April 1469. ⁽¹⁾ He was born in Rai Bhoi di Talwandi, Sheikhpura, Pakistan. Presently, it is known as Nankana Sahib in his memory. His father, Mehta Kalyan Das, (*popularly known as Mehta Kalu*), oversaw village land records and revenue. Mehta Kalu was an honest and hardworking man. Rai Bular, a kind person, was the owner of that village, who liked and trusted him. When Guru Nanak was seven, his father sent him to Gopal Das, the village teacher to learn Hindi and Sanskrit. He was a keen and a quick learner. In a short time, he learned all that the teacher had to offer. Guru Nanak soon gave up the village school altogether. During this time, he would play with his friends or wander about in the forest or sit under a tree for hours meditating on God. While taking leave from Gopal Das, it was apparent that Guru Nanak was very philosophical in his thoughts from young age and said, "Every man has to die. No one can live forever. After death every person must give an account of life. One is punished for evil deeds and rewarded for good deeds. What you teach can be of no use at that time. You should teach how to love others and remember God."

Guru ji's father decided to send him to an Islamic religious teacher, Maulvi Qutbuddin when he was thirteen to learn Persian. Very quickly, Guru Nanak learned everything Qutbuddin had to offer. One day Guru Nanak asked him, "What are the meanings of Persian alphabets?" No one had asked him this question before. He could not think of an answer. He asked Nanak to tell him what these letters stood for. Guru Nanak explained meanings of Persian alphabets in praise of God, a vehicle to be a good, honest, and truthful person and to love and serve others.

(1). *some chronicles state that Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji was born on 20th October 1469.*

2. Thread of Virtuous Qualities (Janeu)

When Guru Nanak was nine, the family priest - Pandit Hardial was invited to put sacred thread (*Janeu*) on him. It is a Hindu tradition for boys to wear this thread once they reach a certain age. ⁽²⁾ Guru Nanak stopped the Pandit as soon as he raised his arm to facilitate wearing of the thread and asked, "Dear Pandit, what is the purpose of putting this thread around my neck? How does it make me a better person?"

Pandit Hardial replied, "O Nanak, one gets spiritual birth by wearing it. Only higher caste Hindus can wear it. It will make you a better person. You will get the right to participate in the religious rituals. You will not go to heaven unless you wear it."

Guru Nanak then asked, "If one gets spiritual birth by wearing it, the thread should be put around the soul. What is the use of wearing it if the wearer continues to tell lies, manipulate, and do other lowly deeds after wearing it. The sacred thread should be such that it makes the wearer compassionate, content, celibate and truthful in his dealings. Dear Pandit, if you have a thread of this type, I am ready to wear it. This type of thread will not be broken, nor soiled or burned when the body is cremated. That True Thread will always remain with the soul even when the body is burned."

Pandit Hardial, in a bid to make Guru Nanak understand, added, "This ritual has been performed over thousands of years. Ancient Hindu religion has prescribed it. Nobody has refused to wear it before you." To expose the Brahmins' greed for material offerings as a motive for this ritual, Guru Nanak recited:

*Daia kapah santokh sut jat gandhi sat vat. eh janeu ji ka hai t pande ghat.
na eh tutai n mal lagai na eh jalai na jai. dhan su manas nanka jo gal chale pai. SGGS 471*

*Make compassion the cotton, contentment the thread, modesty the knot and truth the twist.
This is the sacred thread of the soul, if you have it, then go ahead and put it on me.*

Pandit Hardial understood the hymn and was convinced that Guru Nanak would not wear the sacred thread. He also understood that instead **one should wear the thread of virtuous qualities.**

(2) *The tradition of wearing Janeu was prescribed by Manu, the originator of Hindu caste. system. As per hindu Shashtars Brahmin wears silk thread, Khatri's wear cotton thread, Vaish jute thread. Shudar and women are not allowed to wear janeu.*

3. Illness of Mind

After completing his education with Maulvi Qutubuddin, Guru Nanak met saints and hermits and indulged himself in deep conversation about the very existence of life. Other times, he would stay home immersed in his own thoughts. If anyone came to the house, he behaved like a stranger. His parents became concerned at Guru Nanak's behavior and were worried about his health.

Mehta Kalu called Haridas, the village physician, to treat Guru Nanak. Haridas took Guru Nanak's arm to feel the pulse. Guru Nanak pulled away his arm from the physician and said, "Dear physician why did you hold my arm?" The physician replied, "I want to feel your pulse to diagnose the problem. I can prescribe proper treatment so that you get better."

Guru Nanak said to the physician, "My body is not sick. The illness is in my mind, deep inside me. A physician, who first recognizes the problem and then prescribes the medicine to treat both body and mind is a wise physician. I shall deem yourself to be an accomplished physician if you treat your own illness before treating mine.

The physician, on hearing that he himself was ill, was very upset. He asked, "Nanak, what illness do I have? I am quite healthy and fit. Tell me which illness I suffer from?" Guru Nanak replied, "You are sick with illness of birth and death. Medicines cannot cure this cycle of birth and death. Only the physician who does not take birth or die can cure it."

The physician was surprised when he heard the deep wisdom and saw that Guru Nanak had a deep and pure love for God. Haridas only knew to cure illnesses of the physical body. Guru Nanak's parents asked, "What is wrong with Nanak? Will he be alright?" The physician replied, "He is healthier than anyone of us and no need to worry about him. He belongs to God." His parents still didn't understand their child. But the physician was pleased and charmed to meet such a wise and pure child.

4. No Hindu, No Muslim

In 1504, one day Nawab Daulat Khan of Sultanpur Lodhi, heard that Nanak, son of Mehta Kalu, was meditating in a graveyard. He took his head Qazi (Islamic magistrate) along with him to see Nanak. They were amazed to see Nanak totally engrossed in meditation that he didn't realize anyone's presence. When Nawab and his Qazi went closer they heard him say, "There is no Hindu, no Muslim." They were shocked to hear this. Guru Nanak was 35 years old at the time.

Qazi asked the Guru, "Why do you say, there is no Muslim. I know of many Muslims in this town. Surely, there are many Muslims in the world. Similarly, there are many who call themselves Hindus in the world"

Guru Nanak replied, "It is true there are many who call themselves Muslim and many call themselves Hindu. But each has forgotten the essence of their respective religion. **Both, Muslims, and Hindus are created by the same God. A true Muslim or a true Hindu should not do anything to displease God.** Some of the acts to please God are:

to be kind and merciful to all His children; do no harm to anyone; be just, humble and truthful; avoid anger, greed and pride; ever to think of God; earn living by honest labor; and share one's earnings with poor and needy.

Now, tell me how many people follow these. Who can be called a true Muslim or a true Hindu?"

Qazi had no answer. Nawab asked for Guru ji's forgiveness. **He understood that there is only one God. He creates all. All are equal and must live together peacefully as brothers and sisters.**

5. True Prayer

Nawab and Qazi were convinced of Guru ji's message that there is only one God. One day while leaving for the mosque for the Namaz (Muslim prayer) they requested Guru ji for his company and prayers. They were sure that Guru ji will not refuse. What could be wrong in saying prayer as there is no distinction between Hindu and Muslim.

Guru Nanak readily agreed as he went with them to the mosque. Whilst all devotees were kneeling to perform the prayer, Guru Nanak stood still. After the prayer was over, Nawab asked Guru Nanak, 'Why did you not say the prayer? Why did you keep standing silently when we were performing the prayer?' Guru Nanak replied, "Dear Nawab, whom should have I joined in the prayer?" Nawab said, "You had agreed to say prayer with us. But you have not done so."

Guru ji said, "Yes, I had agreed to say the prayer with you. It is correct that you were saying the prayer. Yes, you recited the Namaz, but your mind was somewhere else. How could I join you?"

Nawab said, "I was right here, before your eyes. I was busy saying the prayer". Guru ji said, "No. Your body was here. But, your mind was in Kandhar purchasing horses." The Nawab said, "Nanak, if my mind was not in the prayer, you should have joined the Qazi." Guru Nanak said, "Dear Nawab, the Qazi was worrying about the newly born colt at home. Before coming here, he forgot to tie it properly." Hearing this the Qazi said, "Dear Nawab, Nanak is correct. My mare had given birth to a calf this morning. While performing the prayer, I was worrying that the colt might fall into the ditch and might not be able to get out on its own."

Guru Nanak said, "Dear Qazi, **only the prayer which is performed with the mind fully concentrated, is accepted at the door of the Lord. Prayers performed only with the body does one no good.**"

6. Honest Working

In the year 1504, when Guru Nanak was 35 years of age, Rai Bular suggested to Mehta Kalu, "Send Nanak to his sister Nanaki at Sultanpur Lodhi. Her husband, Jai Ram, is the minister looking after the estate of Daulat Khan, the governor of Sultanpur. Bhai Jai Ram will get him appointed to a suitable position in the service of Daulat Khan."

Incidentally, Daulat Khan was looking for an honest and hardworking storekeeper for his ModiKhana. ModiKhana was the official big grocery store. Those days, the landowners paid the land tax with a portion of their crops. All these land-taxes were deposited in the ModiKhana. The storekeeper was responsible to send grain for the army kitchen. It was also the duty of the store-keeper to sell the surplus and deposit the money in the government treasury. As such, the work of the store-keeper was of great responsibility which people often neglected and misused. The existing store-keeper was dishonest and cheating customers. There were many complaints against him.

When the Nawab came to know that Guru Nanak was proficient in accounting and Persian, he readily appointed him as the storekeeper. Guru Nanak was very fair and kind to everyone. All who came to Modikhana were satisfied, pleased, and felt they were treated equally. If a poor person came to the store, Guru Nanak would pay for his goods from his own salary. Everyone who came to ModiKhana had a pleasant experience. Above all Nawab Daulat Khan was pleased with Guru Nanak for his honest work.

When someone came and asked Guru Nanak, "Nanak, we see you are supplying the poor and filling their bags with your own salary from Modikhana, yet how is it that there is no loss?" Guru Nanak would reply, "The Lord, who has given me the job as storekeeper has also created these poor people. I perform this work treating it as His own then how can there be a loss?"

Upon taking over the responsibilities at Modikhana, Guru Nanak invited Bhai Mardana to join him. It became their daily routine to rise early in the morning, bathe in the Veiyeen river, sing the praises of the true Lord and then come to work in the ModiKhana. Guru Nanak showed everyone how a religious man should live and behave.

7. Bhai Mardana

Bhai Mardana remained with Guru Nanak for the next forty-seven years until his worldly journey ended. The bitter cold of the hills, the heat of the deserts, the danger of wild animals in the jungles, the hunger and thirst in the lifeless wilderness, or the memory of a comfort home did not deter him from accompanying Guru Nanak. Guru ji balanced his five vices of lust, anger, greed, attachment, and pride with the five virtues of truth, contentment, patience, compassion and faith. He was given the honor to be Guru Nanak's brother.

Bhai Mardana was nine years older than Guru Nanak. His father was a Mirasi Muslim by caste. Mirasis were professional musicians. They also entertained public at social events like marriages etc. At times, their compositions were humorous in nature. They could not read or write but memorized everything. Travelling was full of hardships and physically tiring. So they sang hymns and played instruments to entertain themselves. Bhai Mardana was also a Mirasi. He had an additional ability to play the Rabab - a popular stringed musical instrument.

At the age of 38, in August 1507, after leaving his work as a storekeeper, Guru Nanak, heard God's call to dedicate himself to the service of humanity. He took Bhai Mardana as his companion for his long journeys. To convey his message to people who were going astray, they started on foot from Sultanpur to Lahore. On their way, both slept wherever they were by nightfall. Bhai Mardana played the Rabab while Guru Nanak sang hymns in praise of God.

8. Taking Money to the Next World

One day, Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana reached Lahore. As usual, Guru ji sang God's praise with his melodious voice. People used to come, listen to the kirtan and enjoy the eternal bliss of the moment. One day, Duni Chand, a rich merchant came to listen to his kirtan. He became very fond of it and invited Guru ji to his beautiful house. Guru ji declined saying he would prefer to stay in the open and enjoy the nature.

Duni Chand insisted and begged Guru ji to come to his house. Guru ji agreed. Upon reaching Duni Chand's house, Guru ji saw a big mansion with seven flags on the rooftop. Duni Chand received Guru ji with great respect and let him rest on a comfortable sofa. He offered delicacies to eat. After some time, Guru ji asked what the seven flags on rooftop indicated.

Duni Chand replied, "Each flag means I have one crore rupees (ten million). I have gathered seven crore rupees. Guru ji said, "This means, you are very rich. But tell me honestly, are you happy and satisfied?"

Duni Chand replied, "To be honest with you, I want more. Some people are richer than me. I want to be the richest man in Lahore. I am not happy and satisfied with what I have."

Guru ji asked, "If you become the richest man in Lahore, you may like to become the richest man in the whole country and then may be the richest man in the world. Will that make you happy?" Duni Chand was not sure of what would make him truly happy. He asked Guru ji if he can do anything for him. Guru ji took out a needle and said, "Keep this needle. I will take it from you in the next world".

Duni Chand was confused. He did not know what to do. He said, "I cannot possibly take it to the next world after my death."

Guru ji smiled and said, "If you cannot take this small needle with you to the next world, how can you take these seven crore rupees to the next world? You are not using this wealth for any purpose. You are simply storing it in a safe place. This wealth is of no use in this world."

Duni Chand became even more confused. He did not know what to do with all the wealth.

Guru ji suggested, "Give it to the poor. Feed the hungry. Clothe the naked. Help the needy. Treat every person as created by the same one God. It will give you peace of mind. You will feel happy and content."

Duni Chand became Guru ji's disciple and followed Guru ji's advice thereafter.

9. Money does not go with You

One day Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana reached the kingdom of Karu, ruled by a very cruel king. He had an obsession to collect gold and silver. If he learned that someone in his kingdom had some gold or silver, he would get it, even by force. He had filled forty boxes with gold and silver.

One day he asked his minister, "Does anyone in our kingdom possess gold or silver about which I do not know?" The minister said, "I shall inquire about it and let you know by tomorrow."

Next day, the minister sent a beautiful slave girl to the market for sale. The sale price was fixed as one silver coin. A merchant's son asked his widowed mother to buy the slave girl to do all the housework. The mother replied that they did not have a silver coin in the house, but his father was buried with a silver coin in his mouth. The son dug open the grave, took out the coin and bought the slave girl. When the king learned about it, he had all the graves dug up and recovered all the silver coins for himself.

Guru Nanak went to King's palace and told the gatekeeper he wished to see the king. When the King appeared at the door, he saw Guru Nanak counting pieces of broken earthen pots. The King asked in great wonder, "O holy man, what use are these pieces to you?" Guru Nanak replied, "We want to take these to the next world." The King said, "How can you take these pieces to the next world?" Guru Nanak replied, "In the same way as the wealth collected by you." King realized his great obsession for gold and silver was of no use and asked for advice. Guru Nanak continued, "O Karu, whatever you see with the eyes will perish one day. Only the good deeds performed in this life go with you. Horses, forces, and the kingdom will remain here when death overtakes you. You came to this world alone and empty handed and would leave this world the same way. You have seen with your own eyes that the dead, who had been buried with a silver coin in their mouths could not take even that single coin with them. How will this wealth, collected with sins and cruelty, go with you? However, the sins and cruelty committed will surely go with you."

10. Food as Milk or Blood

Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana reached Aimanabad, Pakistan. There were many rich people in the town. Guru ji did not visit the house of any rich man. Instead, he went to the house of a poor man - Bhai Lalo, who was a carpenter. He was looked upon as a low caste Hindu - *Shudra*. Higher caste Hindus - Brahmins and Khattris - kept away and avoided Shudras. They would not accept food or drink from lower caste men like Bhai Lalo.

Bhai Lalo earned his living by honest labor. He was good, and kind hearted. He loved God. He helped and served others.

Guru Nanak was a Khatri by caste. "Khatri" is considered a higher caste. But he had no pride of caste. He did not think or act like other high caste men. He loved people of all castes. He believed, the one God created all. Therefore, all were equal.

Bhai Lalo received Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana with respect. It was time to eat. Bhai Lalo could afford only coarse bread and 'saag' (Spinach). After eating, Bhai Mardana asked Guru Nanak, "How is this food so delicious? What could be the reason?" Guru Nanak replied, "It is made from honest living."

One day Malik Bhago, a high government official of the city, announced a gala feast. He invited Guru Nanak to the feast. Guru Nanak declined the invitation saying, "We are fakirs. What have we to do with the feast?" Upon receiving a second request from Malik Bhago, Guru Nanak took Bhai Lalo with him and went to Malik Bhago's residence. Malik Bhago said to Guru Nanak in great anger, "You are disrespecting higher castes by eating food in the house of a low caste carpenter. I invited you to this feast which offers delicacies. Why are you refusing it?"

Despite Guru Nanak claiming he was ordinary man with no supernatural abilities, rumors had circulated with regards to his divine powers. One of the rumors is that Guru Nanak squeezed the roti from Bhago's feast and poured out streams of red blood as everyone looked horrified. Guru Nanak explained that food prepared from earnings of dishonest work was bitter like blood.

The rumor also says that Guru Nanak then squeezed the roti from Bhai Lalo's house with his other hand and poured out milk. Guru Nanak explained that simple food prepared with honest and hard work was pious like the nurturing, wholesome milk.

11. Delivering Water to Ancestors?

Guru Nanak reached Haridwar, an important religious place of Hindus. He saw thousands of men and women bathing in the river. He also took off his clothes, handed them to Bhai Mardana and descended into the river.

People in the river were throwing water with their hands towards the East. Guru Nanak faced opposite direction and started throwing water towards the West. Everyone was surprised at seeing Guru Nanak throwing water towards the West. One of them took courage and asked Guru Nanak, "Brother, are you a Hindu or a Muslim? Don't you know that water must be thrown towards the East?" Guru Nanak asked, "Brother, why do you throw water towards the East?" He replied, "Our ancestors live in the house of gods which is towards the East? They are thirsty. We give them water."

Guru Nanak inquired, "How far from Haridwar do your ancestors live?" He replied, "They live even beyond the Sun, millions of miles away." Guru Nanak said, "Does this water thrown by you reach them?" He replied, "Brahmins tell us that the water thrown by us does reach them. Their thirst is quenched by our water. If we do not give them water, they stay thirsty."

Hearing this reply, Guru Nanak resumed throwing water towards the West. The man again asked Guru Nanak, "Why do you throw water towards the West when the ancestors live in the East." Guru Nanak replied, "My fields in Punjab are drying due to lack of rain. I am watering them."

The man said, "How can this water thrown by you reach Punjab?" Guru Nanak replied, "If water thrown by you can reach your ancestors millions of miles away, why can't it reach a place only two hundred miles away?" Some of the listeners understood what Guru Nanak was saying. They realized the water could not possibly reach their ancestors. They stopped throwing water towards the East.

The ritual of offering water to the rising Sun may have started for good reasons. Anyone who wakes up early, cannot be lazy. People, who are active, are less likely to get sick and be poor. But the greedy Brahmins used these rituals to control the other castes.

12. Three Lessons

On his journey to Assam, one day Guru Nanak reached village of Dhaka. A well-known landlord named Bhoomiya lived there. He robbed the travelers in the daytime and peoples house at night. He would serve free food to travelers, provided them free lodging. Bhoomiya demanded everyone in the village send all the travelers to him and threatened to harm anyone who did not follow his instructions. Obeying his order, villagers sent Guru Nanak to his house. Bhoomiya prepared the food and brought it to Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana. Before eating, Guru Nanak asked, "Brother, how do you make your living?" As per Bhoomiya, it was an act of kindness to give charity even if the money had been made by stealing or robbing others. Bhoomiya thought this to be a service to mankind. He believed that stolen wealth became legitimate by the blessings of others. He told Guru Nanak the truth about what he was doing.

Guru Nanak said, "We cannot eat your food unless you promise to give up this evil work." Bhoomiya said, "Stealing is my hereditary profession. I cannot give it up." Guru Nanak said, "You may not stop stealing if you wish but agree to three things;

1. **Do not rob the poor.**
2. **Always speak the truth.**
3. **Do not deceive or steal from the person of whose salt you have tasted.**⁽³⁾

Upon Bhoomiya agreeing to the conditions, Guru Nanak accepted the food. As promised, Bhoomiya gave up breaking into the houses of poor and stopped robbing them. After some time, Bhoomiya felt an urge to steal. One night, Bhoomiya dressed as a prince, rode a horse and went the palace to steal from the king. The security guard asked, "Who are you?" Bhoomiya spoke the truth, "A thief." The guard took it as a joke and allowed him to move on. Bhoomiya went inside the palace and collected precious articles. By the time he was ready to leave, he became hungry. He saw a gold plate containing some sweet delicacies. As soon as he placed it in his mouth, he tasted salt. He left all precious things behind and returned home. Next day, the king realized that someone had tried to steal from him. He began interrogating innocent people by brutally beating them. When Bhoomiya saw poor being beaten, he presented himself before the king and said, "I am the one who had tried to steal from you. Please punish me and leave the poor alone." King was surprised and asked, "Why did you not take away anything?" Bhoomiya narrated three promises he had made to Guru Nanak.

King said, "I am very pleased with you for speaking the truth. I pardon your crime. I appoint a truthful person like you as my minister." *One must always speak the truth and be at peace with himself always.*

(3) *In the past, it was a convention that if one has taken someone's salt, he/she must be loyal to him/her at any cost.*

13. Truthful Living

Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana left Pakpattan and reached the city of Tulamba in Multan, Pakistan. By the side of the road, they saw a very big and beautiful house. Sajjan, whose real name was Sheikh, had constructed that lodge for the comfort of travelers. Every traveler was provided with a free room for the night with free food. Facilities were provided to both Hindus and Muslims. Sheikh had constructed a temple for the Hindus on one side and a mosque on the other side.

Sheikh would dress like a saint during the day and engaged himself reciting God's name with his rosary. Everyone called him Sajjan- (the virtuous man and friend). Sajjan had plenty of land which was tilled by laborers. However, his income was derived from notorious and evil means. He would kill the travelers during the night, throw their bodies into a well and keep their belongings.

Sajjan assumed that Guru Nanak was a wealthy man. He served food to Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana to gain their trust. Guru Nanak could sense the evil plot going on in his mind. After dinner, Sajjan requested Guru Nanak, "O holy man, come and sleep in comfort inside. It is too late in the night." Guru Nanak said, "Sajjan, we shall sing a hymn in the praise of the Lord and then sleep." Guru Nanak began the recitation of the hymn.

*ujal kiaha chilkana ghotim kalari mas.
dhotia juth n utarai je sau dhova tis.*

SGGS 729

*Bronze is bright and shiny, but when it is rubbed, its blackness appears.
Washing it, its impurity is not removed, even if it is washed a hundred times.*

When Sajjan heard the hymn in its entirety, he understood the meaning and suspected that Guru Nanak had come to know of his dirty secrets. *"A utensil made from bronze looks bright outside but when it is rubbed it makes the fingers black. Even if it is washed, that bronze will not be free from blackness. Decorate empty houses outside as you wish but when they are demolished, they will be empty inside. Human bodies are like houses. The bodies which are devoid of virtues are of no avail. The white clad holy men, who rob those who believe and trust them, are like storks at places of pilgrimage, who eat frogs. They cannot be called devotees. A man's shrewdness, wisdom and service are useless unless he gives up bad deeds. To become virtuous, one needs the help of the Lord."*

When the recital of the hymn was over, Sajjan fell at Guru Nanak's feet to beg forgiveness. At the bidding of Guru Nanak, he distributed all his accumulated wealth amongst the poor. He began to earn his livelihood truthfully and became a true Sajjan.

14. Idol Worship?

Guru Nanak's journey brought him to Jagannath in Orissa, on the day of full moon. A religious fair was held at that place of worship. At that holy place, an eighty-four feet high statue of Krishna called 'Jagannath' was taken out in a procession, mounted on a chariot every year. Brahmins had spread a false notion that whoever dies under the wheels of the chariot, would attain salvation. Many gave away their home, wealth, and placed their bodies under the wheels.

In the fair, Guru Nanak saw a Brahmin who was sitting cross legged, with eyes closed and a rosary in his hand before an idol. Guru Nanak asked him, "O holy man, who are you meditating on? The idol is in front of you, but you have your eyes closed." He replied, "I can see what is going on in the three worlds when I close my eyes" and again closed his eyes. Guru Nanak picked the idol and placed it behind him. When the Brahmin opened his eyes, he did not see the idol. He was infuriated.

Guru Nanak said, "O holy man, there is no need to be upset. Close your eyes and see where your idol is, just as surely as you can see the three worlds." The Brahmin said, "I was making my living with the help of the idol. When I close my eyes, I saw nothing, let alone the three worlds." Guru Nanak said, "It is a mistake to think that the idol provides for you. It is God who provides for you. The idol can neither give you food nor take it away. The worship of idols, bathing at holy places and other rituals are of no use. Meditate upon only one God who is the only true provider. Discard your false dependence on the idol". The Brahmin said, "How would I eat if I do not tell lies?" Guru Nanak explained that the God is the provider of all. He will provide for him as well. He should have faith in God.

The Brahmin, acting upon Guru Nanak's advice, threw away the idol and began to sing praises of God. People began to offer money before the Brahmin. Everyone who passed by, offered something on seeing money lying before the Brahmin. Brahmin began to survive without the idol by singing praises of the Lord. He came to understand that there is no need for falsehood. God, who has created all, provides for them.

15. Washing Sins with Charity?

Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana reached the holy city of Kurukshetra on the day of solar eclipse. People had gathered in large numbers for a holy dip in the Brahma Sarovar (holy pond). People waited for the eclipse to begin. Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana sat in an open spot. As soon as the eclipse began, groups of beggars started asking for charity. The rich and wealthy were charitable and bathed in the pond. According to popular Hindu belief, by bathing and giving generously at the time of the eclipse, one would be bestowed with God's blessings and one's sins would be pardoned. People were giving charity to Brahmins with open hearts.

Guru Nanak was sitting and watching this spectacle when Jagat Rai, the prince of Hansi state, placed a deer before him and requested, "Holy man, I have nothing to donate at this auspicious time except this deer which I hunted. Please accept this." At Guru Nanak's instructions, Bhai Mardana lit a fire and cooked the deer.

When Brahmins saw the smoke, they came running to Guru Nanak and said, "No one can light a fire at this auspicious time. It is a great sin to do such a thing. Nothing can be cooked. Only charitable contributions can be given and received at this time." Nanu Brahmin asked, "What are you cooking?" Bhai Mardana replied, "It's a deer." Nanu became very angry on hearing this.

Guru Nanak reasoned with Nanu "It is not a sin to cook to satisfy one's hunger. It is a sin to deceive innocent people by telling lies. Tell me how one's sins can be washed away by giving charity to persons like you who do not know what meat is". Guru Nanak recited the following Shabad.

*mas mas kar murakh jhagare gian dhian nahi janai.
kaun mas kaun sag kahavai kis mah pap samane.*

SGGS 1289

The fools argue about flesh and meat, but they know nothing about meditation and spiritual wisdom. What is called meat, and what is called green vegetables? What leads to sin? ----- Women, men, kings, and emperors originate from meat. If you see them going to hell, then do not accept charitable gifts from them. The giver goes to hell, while the receiver goes to heaven - look at this injustice.

Hearing these words from Guru Nanak, all those who were upset became quiet. Guru Nanak further told them, "God is not under any threat. The movements of planets cause an Eclipse. Nobody's sins are washed away by bathing in this pond and giving charitable causes. Only by remembering God and keeping him in mind can one become spiritual."

16. Getting rid of ego with Truth

Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana reached the high peaks of the Shivalik hills where saints and yogis were meditating after renouncing the world. Saints and yogis believed that desire for worldly objects stops if one lives away from civilization. By overcoming the desire to possess material wealth, one can achieve salvation. They lived celibate lives. The belief was, by getting married, one would be entangled by one's family in the worldly affairs and material possessions.

It was difficult to reach those snow-clad mountains. There was always the danger of wild animals and predators. Around the time, a family of four had been devoured by raging wolves. The yogis were surprised to see Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana. They asked, "How have you managed to come here? One can reach these mountains only with supernatural powers." Guru Nanak replied, "We have reached here with the power of the Truth."

Among those yogis was Bharthari, a disciple of Gorakh, who had renounced his kingdom and performed yoga to meditate. He did not grasp the meaning of what Guru Nanak had said. If one does not live a truthful life, one may not understand the Truths. He advised Guru Nanak, "You should also pierce your ears like me and wear earrings, shave your head, discard your clothes, smear your body with ash and adopt Gorakh as your spiritual guide to attain salvation."

Guru Nanak replied, "You have renounced your kingdom, left your home but have not been able to get rid of your ego. External display is of no use. You have not realized the Truth and not understood it yet." Bharthari offered a bowl of marijuana drink to Guru Nanak and said, "Nanak, drink it so that you may be free from hunger and thirst. Your mind may concentrate, and all the woes of the world be forgotten." Guru Nanak replied, "One who believes in the Truth, does not require this drug. One is always mesmerized by the Name which destroys pains and sorrows of the world."

Sanghar Nath, another yogi, asked, "How did you get rid of lust? How did you give up the love of worldly objects? How did you master anger and why does pride not bother you?" Guru Nanak replied, "When I gained the knowledge of Truth, I overcame lust. When I started singing praises of God, the excessive desire for worldly materials left me, my mind attained peace and anger vanished. The company of holy men subdued my greed. The fear of death left me when I perceived the Lord is always with me."

Guru Nanak realized that yogis would be able to clearly understand the Truth. Guru Nanak realized that yogis would be able to clearly understand the Truth.

17. God is in all Directions

Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana reached Mecca (a Muslim holy place of worship). On the way they met other pilgrims going to Mecca as well. Conversation of pilgrims was not related to God but routine worldly issues. Guru Nanak said, "Bhai Mardana, if anyone goes on a pilgrimage it is essential that the conversation be in praise of God. It is not right for pilgrims to go on talking of other superfluous things. If that happens, all efforts are waste."

Singing praises of God Guru Nanak and Mardana reached Mecca. They dressed in the usual blue attire of pilgrims and Guru Nanak carried the book of his verses with him. In such a garb they entered the mosque of Mecca. They spent the whole day singing praises of God and went to sleep at night. Early in the morning, Jiwan, a Mullah (Islamic Teacher) was passing by. He caught sight of Guru Nanak's feet which were stretched towards the Kaaba - the house of God. He became very upset. He kicked Guru Nanak in the back and said, "O you infidel, don't you know that you have stretched your feet towards the house of God? It is against our practice." Guru Nanak politely replied, "Dear Mullah, I am tired. Please drag my feet in a direction where God is not." Jiwan was a learned person. He knew Quran very well. He knew from the teachings of Quran that God is in all directions. Up on hearing Guru Nanak Dev ji's response, he realized Guru ji's message that God is in all directions.

It is rumored that when the Mullah turned the Guru's feet to the left, the Kaaba itself moved to the left. When he moved the Guru's feet to the right, the Kaaba moved to the right in tandem. Despite these rumors, the spiritual message is far more powerful than the supernatural occurrence.

Jiwan and Guru Nanak met each other as if they had known each other for a lifetime. To clear the doubts of others, Jiwan asked Guru Nanak, "Who is superior in the court of the Lord - a Hindu or a Muslim?" Guru Nanak replied, "Only good deeds are acceptable at His door. In His court there is no place either for a Hindu or a Muslim without good deeds." Pilgrims asked many more such questions to Guru Nanak. Guru Nanak clarified everyone's doubts. **Guru Nanak impressed on all that God exists in all directions and in the hearts of all humans.**

18. To be a Kind Ruler

While returning from Mecca, Guru Nanak learned at Kabul that Babur was preparing to attack India. Before his invasion, Guru Nanak reached Aimanabad. There he stayed with Bhai Lalo whom he had appointed to spread his mission. To inform the people of the city about the coming invasion, Guru ji recited a hymn-

*jaisi mai avai khasam ki bani taisara kari gian ve lalo.
pap ki janjh lai kabalahu dhaia jori mangai dan ve lalo. SGGS 722*

*As the Word of the Forgiving Lord comes to me, so do I express it, O Lalo.
Bringing the marriage party of sin, Babur has invaded from Kaabul, demanding our land as his wedding gift, O Lalo.*

In the year 1520, Babur reached Aimanabad. Local rulers made no military preparations to face Babur but paid some Mullahs (Islamic Teachers) to read verses from the holy Quran (Islamic Religious Book). Babur easily defeated the local rulers. The victorious troops plundered the city as they pleased. Nobody was there to stop them. Babur's army slaughtered thousands of innocent civilians. Men, women, and children who escaped death, were taken prisoners. They were given stone-mills to grind wheat for the army. Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana were also taken prisoners and were made to grind wheat.

Prisoners were in deep sorrow and crying when Guru Nanak entered the prison camp. They cried for their relatives who had been killed in front of their eyes, for their houses destroyed and for being forced to grind flour every day. Guru Nanak recited a hymn which provided them peace and solace. They realized they were compounding their terrible situation by forgetting God. Women who once had long hair, fully decorated as symbol of being married and who used to sit on sofas in palaces, had their hair cut, were made to sit on the ground milling flour for hours at end. Their beauty had become their worst enemy.

Babur's general, Mir Khan reported to Babur how all the prisoners were at peace and calm when Guru Nanak recited his hymns. Babur was curious and visited the prison to see for himself. He ordered that Guru Nanak be released. Guru Nanak said, "O king, I cannot go outside alone. I shall go only if all the prisoners are released as well." Babur acceded and released all prisoners at Guru Nanak's request.

Babur was pleased with Guru Nanak and said, "Holy man, what can I do for you?" Guru Nanak replied, "Be a just and kind ruler. Look after the welfare of the public. Be merciful to those you defeat. Respect holy men. Above all, always remember God." Babur agreed to act as advised by Guru ji.

19. Mind & Body

One day Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana reached a village in Dipalpur, Montgomery, Pakistan. It was raining and getting darker. Bhai Mardana requested Guru Nanak, "If you permit, I may go and ask if somebody agrees to give us shelter for the night. Had it not been raining, we would have spent the night in the jungle as usual."

Taking permission, Bhai Mardana inquired from the people of the village. Nobody gave them shelter. Everyone refused saying, "Had both of you been Hindus, some Hindu would have kept you or if both of you were Muslims, a Muslim would have given you a place to stay but who will keep one Hindu and one Muslim in his house?"

While returning, Bhai Mardana caught sight of a faint light in a hut. Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana approached, not knowing a leper was living there. To protect themselves, the leper's relatives banished him as he was suffering from an incurable and infectious disease. However, the relatives would bring him food and water.

Seeing Guru Nanak entering his hut, the leper said, "Do not come near me. Keep away from me. I am a leper. You will get infected." Guru Nanak did not pay heed and entered the hut. Bhai Mardana followed him inside. Seeing the leper in great distress, Guru Nanak recited a hymn which the leper understood.

*jiu tapat hai baro bar. tap tap khapai bahut bekar.
jai tan bani visar jai. jiu paka rogi villai.*

SGGS 661

*My soul burns, repeatedly. Burning and burning, it is ruined, and it falls into evil.
That body, which forgets the World of Guru's Bani, cries out in pain, like a chronic patient.*

The leper was filled with hope believing that his disease was curable. He rose from his bed and kept listening to Guru Nanak's teachings well into the night. He tried having only positive thoughts by meditating on God. Gradually, he became better. Soon, he was able to go for a morning bath in the nearby river. After taking a bath he felt he had no disease. He visited his house to meet the relatives. Everyone was surprised to see him. They asked, "How did you get well?" He narrated the whole story. Everyone in the village started meditating and having only positive thoughts. Whole village became healthy and happy.

20. Bhai Lehna to Guru Angad

In later years Guru Nanak Dev ji settled down in Kartarpur city (now in Pakistan) which was founded by him in 1522 and spent rest of his life there (1522-1539). There was daily Kirtan and the institution of Langar (free kitchen) was introduced.

Guru Nanak showed everyone how a man of religion should live and act. He was over 60 years of age. His daily routine began three hours before sunrise. After taking a bath, he meditated on God. He recited sacred hymns. At daybreak, he would explain religion and life to his followers.

Guru Nanak also worked in his fields regularly, as a good active farmer. He also worked in the langar (free kitchen) which was open to all who needed food. In the langar, people of all castes - high, low or untouchables ate their food together sitting side by side.

When Guru Nanak was seventy, he had a plan to continue the task of showing people the way out of darkness. To carry on this responsibility, Guru Nanak devised many tests. Guru Nanak gave equal opportunity to Sikhs and his own sons. But only Bhai Lehna successfully passed all the tests, so Guru Nanak renamed him Angad (part of his own body) and transferred the leadership of Sikhs to him and served him till the end.

On September 7, 1539 A.D., Guru Nanak told the congregation that his journey in this world was ending. Guru Nanak added there is no difference between him and Guru Angad. On 22nd September 1539, giving this message to the congregation, Guru Nanak lied down and covered himself with a sheet and breathed his last. The news spread like fire all over the city. His house was filled with followers. Guru Nanak's followers were not only Hindus but also Muslims. But for Guru Nanak, no one was a Hindu or a Muslim. All were the creations of one God. All respected him as a guide who showed the true path. The Hindus wanted to cremate the body of Guru Nanak as one of their own. On the other hand, Muslims said, "Guru Nanak was our spiritual guide. We shall bury his body according to our custom and construct a tomb over it." This shows how much both Hindus and Muslims revered Guru Nanak. True respect to Guru Nanak is to practice what Guru Nanak had taught and live in harmony with everyone.

21. Highlights of Guru Nanak Dev ji {1469 - 1539}

Born on:	April 15, 1469
Born at:	Rai-Bhoi-di Talwandi, Shekhupura, Pakistan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Father -- Mehta Kalyan Das • Mother -- Mata Tripta Ji • Wife -- Mata Sulakhni ji • Children -- Sri Chand & Lakhmi Das • Sister -- Bebe Nanki (<i>elder</i>)
Gurgaddi:	1469 (by birth)
Joti Jot:	September 22, 1539, Kartarpur, Pakistan
Bani:	He was a born poet. He wrote 974 hymns comprising Japji Sahib, Asa-Di- Var, Bara-Mah, Sidh-Gosht, Onkar (Dakhani) and these were included in Sri Guru Granth Sahib by Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji. He was also a perfect musician. He with the company of Bhai Mardana composed many tunes in various Indian classical Ragas.
Four long journeys:	<p>Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji visited different religious places preaching Sikhism. He went to Kurukshetra, Haridwar, Joshimath, Ratha Sahib, Gorakh Matta (Nanak Matta), Ayodhya, Prayag, Varanasi, Gaya, Patna, Dhubri and Gauhati in Assam, Dacca, Puri, Cuttack, Rameshwaram, Ceylon, Bidar, Baroach, Somnath, Dwarka, Junagarh, Ujjain, Ajmer, Mathura, Pakpattan, Talwandi, Lahore, Sultanpur, Bilaspur, Rawalsar, Jawalaji, Spiti Vally, Tibet, Ladakh, Kargil, Amarnath, Srinagar and Baramula.</p> <p>Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji also paid visit to Muslim holy places. In this regard he traveled to Mecca, Medina, Baghdad via Multan, Peshawar Sakhar, Son Miani, Hinglaj etc. Some accounts say that Guru Sahib reached Mecca by sea-route. Guru Sahib also visited Syria, Turkey, and Tehran (the present capital of Iran). From Tehran Guru Sahib set out on the caravan route and covered Kabul, Kandahar, and Jalalabad.</p> <p>In all he undertook four long journeys called "Udasis".</p>
Special Contributions	The real aim of the tours was awakening the people to realize the truth about God and to introduce Sikhism. He established a network of preaching centers of Sikhism which were called "Manjis". For each He appointed an able and committed follower as its head (preacher

of Sikhism). The basic tenets of Sikhism were willfully accepted by the people from all occupations. The seeds of Sikhism were sown all over India and abroad in a well-planned manner.

As a social reformer Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji upheld the cause of women, downtrodden and the poor. He attacked the citadel of caste system of Hindus and theocracy of Muslim rulers. He was a reformer as well as a revolutionary. God had endowed him with a contemplative mind and pious disposition. Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji called him 'the image of God, nay, God Himself'.

Some **significant world events** around the period of Guru Nanak dev Ji are as follows:

1401	Timor conquered Damascus and reconquered Baghdad.
1421	In Austria, Jews are imprisoned and expelled.
1448	The Russian Orthodox Church becomes independent of the Patriarch of Constantinople.
1456-59	The Ottoman Turks overrun Athens, begin a stay that will last 400 years, and they turn the Parthenon into a mosque.
1480	Leonardo da Vinci of Florence, age 28, of invents the parachute.
1482	Cairo is one of the largest and wealthiest of cities and is much admired by western travelers.
1492	Christopher Columbus with his crew set sail in his three famous ships from Spain to discover sea route to India. But landed not in Asia as he assumed but on one of the Bahama islands.
1498	Vasco da Gama, a Portuguese discovers the sea route to India.
1500	In England, Henry VIII becomes the king.
1501	The world has a population of around 435 million – about one-sixteenth today's population of 7.2 billion.
1506	May 20: Columbus dies in Spain.
1521	The Ottomans continue to expand. Their sultan, Selim, has died and his son Suleiman (Sulayman) succeeds him and captures Belgrade.

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. He has found opposition forces weak, and at Panipat (about fifty miles north of Delhi, he routs the forces of the Sultan Ibrahim Lodi – an Afghan who had ruled much of India since 1489.
1535	Henry VIII breaks from Catholicism and declares himself head of English Church
1540	Babur's eldest son, Humayun, has been ruling India, but the empire he inherited has barely been held together by force. Humayun is dislodged from power by Islamic nobles allied with Afghans.
1542	Ivan, to be known as The Terrible, is twelve-years-old. He entertains himself by dropping dogs from the roof of a Kremlin wall battlement.
1553	Ivan (The Terrible) now of age and no longer under the regency of his mother, takes the title Tsar Ivan IV.
1553	Henry's successor, Queen Mary, re-establishes Roman Catholicism as England's state religion.

References:

- Bed Time Stories 2, Santokh Singh Jagdev, *Sikh Missionary Resource Center, England.*
- Stories from Sikh History 1, Kartar Singh et al, *Hemkunt Press, New Delhi, India.*
- SGPC website, Ten Gurus
- Google search, world events.
