

# Guru Arjan Dev

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# 1. Education and Marriage

The fifth Guru of the Sikhs, Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji was born on April 15<sup>th</sup>, 1563 AD in the village Goindwal, District Amritsar, in Punjab. He was the youngest child of his father, 4<sup>th</sup> Guru Sri Guru Raam Daas ji and mother, Bibi Bhaani ji. Bibi Bhaani ji was the younger daughter of 3<sup>rd</sup> Guru Sri Guru Amar Daas ji, and the only woman in Sikh history to have the honor of being a Guru's daughter, a Guru's wife and a Guru's mother. Guru Raam Daas ji along with Bibi Bhaani ji had taken service at Guru's institution after their marriage and had made Goindwal as their residing place. In this way, besides getting love and care from his grandfather, Guru Arjan Dev ji also gained the recitals of the sacred hymns.

Guru Amar Daas ji paid great attention to (Guru) Arjan Dev's education. He learned Gurmukhi script from Baba Budha ji. His uncle, Mohri imparted the knowledge of Arithmetic and the Village Priest taught him Devnagri (Hindi language). A Muslim Priest, (village Maulvi) taught him Persian and Pandit Beni of village imparted him with knowledge of Sanskrit. (Guru) Arjan Dev became a great evaluator of music who classified the hymns of Guru Granth Sahib according to Raags, musical modes. He composed hymns in accordance with Raags. He was an excellent Horse-rider and archer.

Sahib stands in memory of the Guru's visit. On his departure, the Guru left the following personal item of his clothing: Guru Arjan Dev was married to Mata Ganga ji on 19 June 1589 at the age of 29. Mata ji was the daughter of Bhai Krishan Chand of the village of Mau, 10 km west of Phillaur in the state of Punjab, India. Now famous historical town of Doaba (Bilga). It is where the fifth Sikh Guru, Guru Arjan Dev Ji arrived the day before the wedding. He stayed in this village for two days to take rest while going to village Mau Sahib for wedding ceremony.

The village now is famous the memory of Guru Arjan Dev and Mata Ganga ji wedding. The holy clothes of Guru Arjan Dev ji are kept here. Presently, it is called Gurdwara BILGA. Guru ji's chola, pyjama, Batva, Dushala, Simrana Mala and Chandan ki chawanki are kept at this gurdwara.

Every year on the occasion of marriage of Guru Arjan Dev and Mata Ganga ji, a great fair is held here over 3 days. On the last day of these celebration, the holy clothes of Guru Sahib are shown to general public before the closing ceremony of Diwan.

## 2. A Lesson in Obedience

One day in the year 1581 (when Arjan Dev ji was 18 years old), Guru Raam Daas ji's cousin, Sihari Mal from Lahore came to invite the Guru to attend marriage ceremony for his son. At that time, Guru Raam Daas ji was busy with the construction of Amritsar, and thought of sending one of his sons to attend the marriage instead. He asked his eldest son - Prithi Chand to go and attend the marriage. Prithi Chand knew that, the time for Guru Raam Daas ji to merge into the Supreme Being was near. Prithi Chand was afraid that he might be deprived of the succession to the leadership of the Sikhs if he was away at Lahore at that time. So he replied, "Dear father, you know that I look after the dealings with devotees. This supervision will become difficult if I go."

After negative response of Prithi Chand, Guru Raam Daas ji asked his second son - Mahan Dev, who was of saintly nature. Mahan Dev replied, "Reverend father! I have nothing to do with the customs and rituals of this world. What would I gain by attending the marriage?" On hearing the refusal of the elder sons, Guru Raam Daas ji asked (Guru) Arjan Dev if he would go to Lahore. With due respect, he accepted Guru Raam Daas ji's instructions to go to Lahore. Guru Raam Daas ji asked (Guru) Arjan Dev to "remain in Lahore until I call you."

As ordered by his father, (Guru) Arjan Dev started holding daily congregation for public, after the marriage ceremony was over. In his spare time, he would meet with holy men including Saint Mian Mir, and exchange his views with them. After waiting for several months for call to return, (Guru) Arjan Dev wrote a letter for audience of Guru Raam Daas. The letter fell into Prithi Chand's hands. Upon not getting any reply, he wrote a second letter, which was also intercepted by Prithi Chand. (Guru) Arjan wrote a third letter and gave it to a Sikh and instructed him to hand it over to only Guru Raam Daas ji. When Guru Raam Daas ji got the third letter, he asked Prithi Chand for the previous two letters. Prithi Chand denied of receiving the two letters. The letters were recovered from Prithi Chand's house.

Guru Raam Daas ji immediately sent Sikhs to Lahore and requested (Guru) Arjan Dev to return. Guru Ram Das felt that the time of departure from the world was coming near. He decided that his youngest son, Arjan Dev, alone was fit for the Guruship. He made his decision known to his Sikhs. They agreed with him. Then he called together his principal Sikhs. He sent for five paise and a coconut. He came down from his seat. He seated Sri Arjan on it in the presence of assembled Sikhs. He placed the coconut and the five paise before him. He asked Baba Budha to put the tilak or mark of Guruship on Arjan Dev's forehead. He then bowed before Arjan Dev and said, 'Sri Arjan Dev is the Guru now. As one lamp is lighted from another, so has the Guru's light or spirit passed onto him. Thus Guru Nanak's light and spirit have come to dwell in him. He is the fifth Guru Nanak.' This happened on August 28th, 1581 AD. After four days, on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1581 AD, Guru Raam Daas merged into the Supreme Being.

### 3. Acceptance as True Guru

Prithia - the eldest son of Guru Ram Das, thought that it was his right to become the Guru after his father. But his father had given the Guruship to Arjan Dev - the youngest son. Prithia became mad with anger. He spoke to Guru Ram Das in harsh, angry words. He said to Guru Ram Das, 'You have denied me my right to become Guru. You are favoring the youngest son. I will remove him and would declare myself the Guru.'

Guru Ram Das suggested Prithia that it was not right for a son to fight with his father. He desired him to accept his decision like a good son. But Prithia continued to speak in harsh language. He said again and again, 'You have done me a great wrong. I will undo what you have done. I will drive him away. I will become the Guru in his place. I don't accept your unjust decision.'

On the following day, Guru Ram Das set out for Goindwal. He took Guru Arjan with him. There he bade farewell to his dear ones and departed from this world.

Soon after that Guru Arjan returned to Guru-ka-Chak (presently known as Amritsar). There he began to carry out his duties as the fifth Guru of the Sikhs.

Prithia declared himself to be the Guru. He sent out his men to make it known that he was the Guru. Many Sikhs were deceived by his men. When the Sikhs came to Amritsar with their offerings, Prithia's men took them to him. Thus all offerings went to Prithia. Guru Arjan was left with no income. Still he managed to run the Guru's kitchen with whatever little he had. He remained calm and busy in repeating God's name. He took no steps against Prithia. He had full faith in God. He believed that truth would succeed and falsehood would fail.

Prithia played another trick. While he took the offerings from the visiting Sikhs, he sent them to the Guru's langar for food. The Guru did not mind this. He provided the best possible food for all in the langar. But it was not as good as it used to be in former days. He and his wife had often to live on minimum food. Sometimes it was a little coarse food, only once a day. But they were happy and at peace all the time.

This went on for some time. Then Bhai Gurdas came from Agra. He was a cousin of Bibi Bhani, Guru Arjan Dev's mother. He was wise and learned. He was sad to see what was happening. He was very sad to see poor quality of food taken by the Guru ji and his wife.

He made up his mind to do something about it. He called together principal Sikhs like Baba Budha. He discussed the matter with them. Baba Budha met with visiting Sikhs at a place called Pipli Sahib. He explained them about the tricks being played by Prithia. Other prominent Sikhs went out in all directions. They informed the Sikhs of all places of what was happening at Amritsar. Sikhs understood what was going on. They presented offerings to guru ji. The Guru's langar became well-provided. Soon the truth became known far and wide. All Sikhs accepted Guru Arjan as the true Guru.

## 4. Harmandar Sahib

The foundation stone of the historic building was laid by a non-Sikh. The Guru gave the task of initiating the building to a Muslim Saint Hazrat Mian Mir ji of Lahore in December 1588. The Guru had been asked by the previous Guru to find the Holiest man in India to lay the stone for the Gurdwara. Guru Arjan in choosing his friend Hazrat Mian Mir ji to lay the stone showed the world the true message of religion, promoting Interfaith dialogue and interaction.

During the 1400 hundreds, the site had a small lake, which was surrounded by a wooded area. Travellers and holy people used the site for meditation and rest. These visitors recognised it for its special sense of tranquillity and its pure and sweet water. Historical records show that Gautama Buddha stayed for some time at this ancient lake even recommending it as a place for Sadhus and Rishis to meditate.

Although, there is no 'paper trail' to prove the claim, it is thought that the land was gifted to the Guru Ram Das's daughter as a present for her wedding to Guru Arjan.

The lake was enlarged and a small community was established during the leadership of the fourth Sikh Guru (Guru Ram Das, 1574-1581). It was during the leadership of the fifth Guru (Guru Arjan, 1581-1606), that Harmandar Sahib was built. It was completed in 1601.

The development of the Harmandar Sahib and Amritsar have gone hand in hand; the city was formerly known as Ramdasapur, and on construction of Harmandar Sahib became known as Amritsar. Guru Ram Das ji encouraged traders and businessmen to settle in the city with the development of the Guru Ka Bazaar and the market at Chowk Passian. During the times of the fifth and sixth Gurus, plans were made and implemented to expand the city; wells and baolis were constructed to supply water to the ever growing groups of pilgrims. The garden, Guru Ka Bagh was laid out to the south-

east of the Harmandar. The area surrounding the temple was developed into markets, gardens, homes and residential palaces. Guru Arjan Dev ji also lived in one of these newly constructed houses.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the great Sikh Maharaja of the only Sikh state to never be ruled by the British during his lifetime was, besides one of the greatest generals of military history, one of the few rulers of India to serve his Kingdom and its subjects of, various religions, with an eye to the equality of all. He was also a great patron of the arts. During his lifetime he had strived to bring all Sikhs under the rule of one great Khalsa Kingdom. When he gained control of Amritsar he used much of the wealth the Punjab produced to rebuild many Gurdwaras associated with the days of the Gurus as well as having many more constructed.

He was, along with his grandson, Nau Nihal Singh, very generous in his patronage of the Gurdwara at Tarn Taran, but the Harmandar Sahib held that same special place in his heart, that it holds for all Sikhs. Here he contributed tons of gold to cover the exterior walls of the Gurdwara's two upper floor's ornately fashioned metal panels. The beautiful dome, shaped like an inverted lotus, which sits above the curved bangaldar roof of its Shish Mahal, alone was covered in 220 lbs. of the precious metal.

*(The SGPC in March 2005 has prohibited Sikhs from referring to the Sri Harmandar Sahib as Golden Temple.)*

## 5. Bhai Manjh

The real name of Bhai Manjh was Tiratha. He was known by his last name - Manjh. He was a landlord of village Kangmai, district Hoshiarpur. He was a follower of Sakhi Sarvar. He had constructed Pirkhanas—places for worship, in the nearby villages to propagate his faith.

Once Bhai Manjh set out to make a pilgrimage to Nigaha Pir. His friends and admirers also accompanied him. While returning home he met a Sikh reciting hymns of Guru Nanak. Bhai Manjh was impressed to hear the melodious hymns. Bhai Manjh expressed his desire to meet Guru ji. The Sikh said that at that time Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Nanak was guiding the Sikhs and he was residing in the city of Amritsar.

Bhai Manjh took leave of his followers and friends and reached Amritsar. On meeting Guru Arjan Dev, Bhai Manjh said, "My Lord! I want to become your Sikh, please accept me." Hearing these words the Guru smiled and said, "You are a devotee of Sakhi Sarvar. It is very easy to become a disciple of Sakhi Sarvar. But it is very difficult to become a true Sikh. A true Sikh subdues five passions of evil and becomes as humble as the dust of the feet." Hearing the advice of the Guru, Bhai Manjh said, "My Lord! I am ready to get rid of these five evil passions." Guru said, "Brother Manjh, you can not have two opposite beliefs. A pot can be filled with either water or oil but not both at the same time." These eloquent words of the Guru pierced into the heart of Bhai Manjh. He understood the reality and the truth. On the same day he returned to his village. He broke the Pir Houses constructed in his house. He did not care about his friends and followers. He resigned as chief of the village. He distributed his land among the poor. He and his wife reached Amritsar.

Bhai Manjh presented himself in service of Guru Arjan Dev. He assumed the responsibility of cutting wood in the forest and bringing it to the community kitchen. One day, while Bhai Manjh was returning from the forest with a bundle of firewood on his head, there was a thunderstorm. It was so severe that one could not find his way. Swept by the wind, Bhai Manjh fell into a well. Even in the well, Bhai Manjh did not let the bundle of wood fall from his head to keep it dry for use in the kitchen. He kept his mind occupied in reciting the Guru's word.

Volunteers in the kitchen realized that it is already dark and Bhai Manjh has not returned yet. They set out towards the forest in his search, calling him loudly. When they reached the well, they heard his voice from the well. The Sikhs hung a rope in the well and said, "Brother Manjh ! Please catch hold of the rope and climb up.' Bhai Manjh replied, "Please pull up this bundle of dry wood first. I will come next." By the time Bhai Manjh came out, Guru Arjan Dev also reached the well. The Guru said, "Bhai Manjh, I am very pleased with your service. Ask for something." Bhai Manjh replied, "Respected Guru ji, You have already bestowed spiritual bliss. There is no need of anything else." Guru Arjan Dev ji appointed him as preacher and asked him to return to his village to propagate sikhism.

## 6. Construction of Tarn Taran

In the year 1590, Guru Arjan Dev reached village Khara from Khanpur while on his mission of showing the right path to the misguided public. He was fascinated by the scenery of the place. Cool breeze and a pool were enhancing the charm. He thought of building a city at that place. He bought the land. Baba Budha performed the prayer and Guru Arjan Dev himself laid the foundation stone of the city on 15th of April.

In that land, where there was a pool of water for the trees, Guru Arjan Dev started construction of a big pool. The name Tarn Taran, since appropriated by the town itself, originally belonged to the sarovar. It literally means, 'the boat that takes one across (the ocean of existence)'. Tarana in Sanskrit is a raft or a boat. According to Sikh tradition, the water of the old pond was found to possess medicinal properties, especially efficacious for curing leprosy. For this reason the sarovar was known as Dukh Nivaran.

Guru Arjan Dev also started construction of a leper's home near the pool. A large quantity of bricks was required for this purpose. He got kilns laid to bake bricks for this particular purpose. Amir Deen, son of Noordin came to know that the bricks being baked for the construction of pool of Tarn Taran were very good. he forcibly took away those bricks from the kilns for the construction of Noordin inn. This resulted in stoppage of work of lining of pool of Tarn Taran. In 1766, Sardar Budh Singh and Sardar Jassa Singh Ramgarhia dismantled the foundations of Noordin inn and brought the bricks to Tarn Taran and paved the surroundings of the pool.

## 7. Satta and Balwand

Satta and Balwand, father and son, were musicians at the Guru's institution. Once Satta requested Guru Arjan Dev, "The marriage of my daughter is to be solemnized. May I be given some help?" The Guru said, "You can have all that is offered by devotees today." At the end of the recital, all that was offered was given to them. They were not pleased even after getting all the money because on that day the offering was below average.

When Prithi Chand came to know of this happening, he called Satta and Balwand him and said, "You are simpletons. Guru Arjan Dev had forbidden the devotees from giving offerings because he had promised to give all of it to you. You know that all the devotees come to listen to your recitation. If you stop your recitals, the devotees will stop going to him. He gets offerings only because of your recitation."

Satta and Balwand did not realise that Prithi Chand wants to use them to harm Guru Arjan Dev. Accepting Prithi Chand's suggestion, they did not reach Guru's institution the next morning for recital. Guru Arjan Dev sent Sikhs to their house to come. Both of them refused and used derogatory words about Guru's institution. Guru Arjan Dev said, "They have got spoiled. Let no one bring them before me. The Sikh who comes to me to plead for their forgiveness, will get his face blackened, mounted on a donkey and paraded in the streets." Guru Arjan Dev himself started the recital with musical instrument and devotees joined the Guru in the recital. Thus the Guru blessed devotees with the gift of musical recital of Guru's word.

When Satta and Balwand heard that the Guru himself was performing the duty of a devotional singer and the number of devotees had also been

increasing day by day, they repented. They wanted to get exoneration from the Guru. But no Sikh was ready to meet with them. When they went out, the people turned their faces towards the other side. They were completely isolated from the surrounding world.

At last someone advised them to go to Bhai Ladha of Lahore, who was the only man who could help them. They met Bhai Ladha. Hearing their story Bhai Ladha said, "You have done a great mistake by maligning the house of Guru Nanak. I am ready to help you but the Guru has laid down a very strict condition. He had said that one who would help you, had to face consequences of riding a donkey with blackened face. When Satta and Balwand requested him again and again, Bhai ladha blackened his face himself and riding on a donkey drove towards Amritsar. Satta and Balwand were also accompanying him. He reached the house of the Guru riding on a donkey. They knocked the door of the Guru. When the Guru came outside he recognized Bhai Ladha. He asked Bhai Ladha to dismount. Bhai Ladha dismounting the donkey befell at the feet of the Guru. The Guru said, "Bhai Ladha, it is true you are a great well-wisher of the poor, but these men had slandered the house of Guru Nanak. A slanderer of the house of Guru Nanak can't be pardoned. But if they want to be pardoned then they should praise the house of Guru Nanak with the same tongue, which has maligned it." Satta and Balwand agreed to do this. They wrote 'Sata ate Balwand Di Vaar' in Raag Ramkali. This Vaar was included in the Guru Granth Sahib and it can be found at pages 966 to 968.

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## 8. Popularity of Sikh Gurus

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Following of Baba Nanak had begun to gain popularity under the illuminating and guiding light of Guru Arjan Dev. The Guru's message of peace and harmony in such tragic times when the Mughals were inflicting barbarous action on the masses rang a chord with public. Both Hindus and Muslims were impressed with the Guru's message. Guru Arjan Dev Ji's popularity increased orthodox Muslims' hatred for Guru ji.

During Guru Arjan Dev Ji's time, Sikh population grew enormously. Large number of people started coming to the Guru's sangats in the newly constructed Harmandar Sahib.

A vast number of the Punjabi tribes converted to Sikhism, mainly from Hinduism and a few also from Islam. Due to the purity of the Guru's message and his enormous popularity, even Muslim pirs became followers of Guru Arjan Dev Ji. Even Hindu saints, yogis and sidhas became Sikhs and adherents of the Guru. For the first time, the young Sikh religion became the prominent popular religion of Punjab.

Guru ji founded many villages, towns and cities and constructed numerous wells in the Punjab region. Peace and prosperity was once again returning to this region. Although the masses living in Punjab were happy with this development, the Mughal leaders in Delhi were annoyed.

Guru Ram Das had introduced the institution of Masands (representative of Gurus at far off places) along with the principle of Dasvand (a Tenth of an individual's income payable for the Guru's Langar - Common Kitchen) and for other acts of benevolence on behalf of the poor.

In 1598, the Guru interceded on behalf of the local peasantry with Emperor Akbar to get the excessive land tax reduced. These initiatives of the Guru gave him a new status. It was at this time that the Guru came to be called

by the Sikhs as Sacha Patshah (True Emperor). The Guru had come to guide, govern and influence the lives of the Sikhs both in the temporal and the spiritual matters. Mughal Emperor Akbar had already been convinced of the piety of the Sikh Gurus. During one of his campaigns he came to Goindwal and partook of the Langar. Akbar sat on the floor and ate the simple food of the Amar Das's Langar. In the langar he took a seat among men of other castes before he was able to meet with Guru Amar Das.

A Muslim Pir, the Saint, Mian Mir of Lahore had great affinity with the Gurus. Opinion and words of the Pir were immensely revered by Akbar. On one occasion, allegations against Guru Arjan by a few impostors (Prithi Chand and his son Meharban) and some jealous Brahmin priests were dropped based on Mian Mir's recommendations.

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## 9. Adi Granth Sahib

Guru Nanak Dev kept a written record of the Word as and when these were revealed to him. This record is known as the Pothi (the Book). It explains the ultimate truth and the way of realising it. He also recorded in that book the hymns of the saints which he collected during his long journeys. The Book was handed over to the next Guru when the leadership of the faith was transferred to the successor.

Guru Arjan Dev received the Book when he became the Guru. Guru Arjan Dev decided to compile and edit the Book in a specific manner so that nobody may be able to alter it. One reason for this was that in those days Prithi Chand and Meharban had compiled their own books in which they had written ballads in the praise of saints and prophets and started misleading the Sikhs. Teachings in Meharban's book were not consistent with Sikh philosophy.

Guru Arjan Dev assigned the duty of scribing to Bhai Gurdas. In the original book, hymns were written as revealed. Guru Arjan Dev ji arranged the hymns in accordance with musical modes. It took three years to prepare this Granth. When the word of preparation of the Granth spread, many holy men came to Guru Arjan Dev at Amritsar to get their hymns included in it. The Guru included only those hymns which were consistent with the standard of the True Word'.

Compilation of the Holy Book is the most valuable achievement of Guru Arjan Dev Ji. Compilation of the Holy Book, the present Guru Granth Sahib has four characteristics.

1. Editing makes it impossible for anyone to alter it. It preserves the original treasures.

2. More than half of the Guru Granth Sahib consists of Guru Arjan Dev ji's own holy renderings.
3. The Granth Sahib throws considerable light on the contemporary political and social life. The physical being and spiritual awareness are fused into one.
4. Guru Arjan Dev ji included celestial utterances of Sheikh Farid and Bhagat Kabir, Bhagat Ravi Das, Dhanna Namdev, Ramanand, Jai Dev, Trilochan, Beni, Pipa and Surdas. All of whom belong to different times, beliefs, sects, and castes from high to low.

After compilation, the Granth was formally installed in the Harmandir Sahib on 30th August, 1604 A.D. This Granth became the touchstone of the True Word. Baba Budha was appointed the first granthi (one who reads and interprets the Granth). That Granth had nine hundred and seventy-four leaves at that time.

## 10. Jahangir and Guru Arjan

Under Guru Arjan, the Sikh religion became very popular. It was making rapid progress. More and more people of all castes were becoming Sikhs. Even Muslims accepted Guru Arjan as their guide and religious teacher, or their Guru. Muslim priests (*Qazis and Mullahs*) -did not like this. They wanted all non-Muslims to convert to Islam. But just the opposite was happening. Guru Arjan was standing in their way. Muslim priests began to conspire against Guru Arjan.

The first three Mughal emperors (*Babur, Humayun and Akbar*) were kind and just to people of every religion. They even made friends with Sikh Gurus. Then Akbar's son - Jahangir became the emperor. His policy and views were different. He wanted to spread Islam.

Muslim priests met with Jahangir. They spoke against the Guru. They urged him to stop the spread of Sikhism. They advised that if it is not done soon, few Muslims will be left in the country. The only way to do this is to put an end to Guru Arjan's life. The Emperor promised to act accordingly.

At this time, Jahangir's son - Khusrau - rose against him. He wanted to become the emperor replacing his father. He fought against Jahangir. He lost the battle. He ran towards Lahore. Jahangir went after him. He wanted to catch and punish him. He knew that many people had helped the rebel prince. As he went along, he made enquiries to find out such people. He punished as many of them as he could catch.

On his way to Lahore, he passed by Goindwal and Tarn Taran. He made a halt at Goindwal. All along, he went on making enquiries to find out Khusrau's helpers. He asked people, 'Did anybody help Khusrau?' He made the enquiry at Goindwal, too. Nobody said a word against the Guru. The Guru had a number of enemies like Chandu, Prithia, some Brahmins and Qazis. If the Guru had helped Khusrau, they would certainly have said so to Jahangir.

Jahangir reached Lahore. After some time he got ready to return to Delhi. The enemies of Guru Arjan decided to act. They made up a false story against him. They met Jahangir. They said to him, 'Khusrau met Guru Arjan at Goindwal. He asked for help from the Guru. The Guru prayed for his success against Your Majesty. He also gave him a large sum of money.'

On hearing this, Jahangir became angry. He had already made up his mind to put an end to Guru Arjan's life. He had made up his mind based on Muslim priests' advice. He found a good excuse to punish Guru ji. Jahangir did not make any enquiry. He did not try to find out the truth. He had no intention to do so. The fact is, no such report had been made to him at Goindwal or at any other place.

He acted at once. He said to his men, 'Go to Amritsar, arrest the Guru, and bring him to Delhi.' He ordered his officers to put Guru ji to death with torture.

He gave these orders and left for Delhi. His men went to Amritsar, arrested Guru Arjan Dev, took him to Lahore and handed him over to the Emperor's officers.

## 11. Merger with God

Jahangir's officers at Lahore were to carry out his orders regarding Guru Arjan. They began to make plans for torturing the Guru. Chandu, an enemy of the Guru, was one of those officers. He said to them, I shall carry out the Emperor's orders. Hand over the Guru to me. I shall kill him with torture.' The officers agreed at once. Chandu took the Guru to his palace in Lahore.

The Guru ji told Chandu, 'I bear no enmity or ill-will against anyone. All happens as God wills. I am prepared to accept His Will. You may do what you like.'

Chandu began to torture the Guru. On the first day, the Guru was not given anything to eat or drink. He was not allowed to sleep. He bore all this most calmly. He kept meditating, repeating His Name, and reciting Holy hymns.

On the following day, Chandu made the Guru sit in a big copper vessel. He filled the vessel with water. He ordered his men to light a fire under the copper vessel. The water began to boil. It scalded Guru's body. But the Guru sat calmly and quietly. He felt no pain. He gave out no cry. He did not even sigh. He felt no anger against those who were torturing him. He went on praying to God. He prayed for strength to bear everything with calmness and courage. He went on repeating His Name. He went on repeating, 'All is happening, O Lord, according to Thy Will. Thy Will is ever sweet to me.' The boiling water made the Guru's flesh soft and painful. Blisters appeared all over his body.

On the third day, Chandu ordered his men 'to make sand red hot in iron pans. Seat the Guru on red hot sand. Pour the red-hot sand on his head and body.' This was done. The persons engaged in torturing him were wet with sweat. They felt most uncomfortable because of the heat. It was the hottest summer month. But the Guru kept calm and quiet. He felt no pain. He uttered no cry. He did not sigh. He felt no anger against those who

tortured him. He kept thinking of God. He kept repeating His Name. He kept repeating, 'Thy Will to me is ever sweet, O Lord!'

Hazrat Mian Mir was a great Muslim saint of Lahore. He was a friend of the Guru. He was greatly respected by all Muslims. Even Emperor Jahangir had great respect for him. Hazrat Mian Mir heard of what was happening to Guru Arjan. He got angry on hearing this news. He went to see the Guru. On seeing the Guru being tortured, Hazrat Mian Mir cried out in grief and pain. He said to the Guru, 'May I appeal to the Emperor for your release? May I ask him to punish these who are hurting you?'

The Guru replied, 'No brother, all is happening in accordance with God's Will. Men who stand for Truth have often to suffer. Their sufferings give strength to the cause of Truth. Go, brother. Pray for me. Pray for the success of my cause. Pray for victory to Truth.'

On the fourth day, the Guru was made to sit on an iron plate. It was heated from below. The iron plate became red hot. The Guru's flesh began to roast. Burning red-hot sand was poured on his body. The Guru sat calm and quiet. He seemed to feel no pain. He did not sigh. He uttered no cry. He felt no anger against the torturers. He sat with his mind fixed on God. He kept repeating His Name. He kept repeating, 'Thy Will is ever sweet to me, O Lord!'

On the fifth day, the Guru was taken to the river Ravi. He was thrown into the running river. His body was too weak to stand up against the fast-flowing water. His body got washed away. He merged with God.

The place where Guru Arjan merged with God, stands a beautiful gurdwara. It is called Dera Sahib. Presently, it is in Pakistan. For Sikhs, it is a sacred place. Sikhs used to visit it in large numbers every day. Every year, a big gathering, called Jor Mela, was held there on the day on which the Guru left for his Eternal Abode. But now, Sikhs are not free to visit that sacred place. Sikhs pray every day to be able to freely visit the sacred place.

## 12. Highlights of Guru Arjan Dev ji {1563 - 1606}

**Born on:** April 15, 1563 A.D.

**Born at:** Goindval in Dist. Amritsar

**Born to**

- **Father** – Guru Ram Das
- **Mother** – Mata Bhani

**Other Kith and Kin**

- **Guru ke Mahal**
  - Bibi Ganga Devi
- **Sahibzada**
  - Harigobind

**Accession to Gurugaddi:** September 1, 1581 A.D. at Goindval.

**Bani**

Total number of hymns 2312 in 30 Ragas, e.g. Sri Rag, Asa, Basantu, Majh, Gujari, Gauri and Suhi etc. Guru Sahib recited his Bani during the years 1581-1604 A.D.

**His Message**

In his Sukhmani, recited in Rag Gauri during the years 1601-1604 A.D; he describes the essence of true life, the union of Soul with the Supreme Being and great importance of the Guru and the saintly people in one's life.

**Special Contribution**

- He compiled the Granth Sahib in theyear 1604 A.D; now revered as Guru Granth Sahib by the Sikhs.
- He enjoined the Sikhs to contribute one tenth of their righteous earnings, called Dasvandh, for community purposes. This measure was undertaken to strengthen the Sikh Movement, economically.
- He was the first martyr who laid the foundation of great Sikh tradition of Martyrdom.

### **Cities Founded and Construction Work:**

- He completed the construction of tanks of Santokhasar in 1588.
- Starred the construction of Harmandar Sahib in 1588 A.D.
- Started the work of digging of a tank at a place, now known as Taran Taran Sahib in the year 1590 A.D.
- He founded a city named Kartarpur in Dist. Jalandhar in 1594 A.D. and
- Sri Harigobindpur on the banks of river Bias.

### **Contemporary Rulers**

- Emperor Akbar (r. 1556-1605 A.D.)
- Emperor Jahangir (r. 1605-1626 A.D.)

### **Succession to Gurugaddi**

Guru Sahib nominated his son, Harigobind as the sixth Guru of the Sikhs.

**Joti-Jot Samae:** May 30, 1606 A.D. at Lahore, Pakistan.

*Add world events around 1563 -1606*