

**Second - Third - Fourth**

# **Nanak**

**Guru ANGAD - Guru AMARDAS - Guru RAMDAS**

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**By the  
Dedicated Sewadars  
of  
Sri Hemkunt Foundation**

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## Preface

Sri Hemkunt Foundation Inc. was established in 1980, over four decades ago in New York, USA. The Foundation's primary objectives are to help children and youth ages 6-25 years old raised in the Western Hemisphere learn Sikhi, develop public speaking skills, and feel proud of being a Sikh.

We do this through educational books on the Sikh Gurus' lives, Sikh history, and Sikh philosophy; and by providing youth opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge of Sikhi and skillfully communicate their understanding to others.

The main Foundation-sponsored event is an annual Symposium. Participants compete in five age groups: 6-8 years, 9-11 years, 12-14 years, 15-17 years, and 18-25 years. For each group, an age-appropriate book is prescribed. The Symposium encourages participants to critically examine various topics and answer a set of questions in specified time from a podium. Participants are graded for content and oratory skills.

Every year, there is a three-tier competition. In the first tier, nearly 2,500 children and youth participate in local competitions in the USA, U.K., and Kenya. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> tier, about 400 participants compete. These are the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> position holders in the local competitions. The final and international level is the 3<sup>rd</sup> tier, where nearly 125 participants compete. These are the 1<sup>st</sup> position holders of the 2<sup>nd</sup> tier competition.

For many years, the Foundation had used books published in India, the U.K., etc. However, the Foundation received valid criticism from parents, participants, and judges almost every year that some of the books used for the Symposium competition were unsatisfactory. The English vocabulary, sentence structure, and context were not appropriate for the Western participants and audience. Many of the stories and Sakhees inappropriately highlighted "miraculous" aspects rather than logic and common sense.

To remedy this situation, a few years ago, the Foundation decided to venture into writing the books itself so that suitable books are used for the Symposium and annual competition. Dedicated Sewadars of the Foundation

volunteered for this Seva.

The current book is meant for the 6-8-year-old age group. An attempt has been made to present Guru ji's teachings in a logical manner. The book uses simple, easy-to-understand language and avoids references to events and places that would not normally be familiar to the intended Western school-age participants. It is crucial to ensure that the students' focus is on key concepts and messages within the book. The teachers and parents are expected to be fully involved in helping students understand the depth of the material, rather than remembering only historical facts. The Foundation aims to use this book for the annual Symposium - Speech Competition. Detailed information regarding the yearly International Symposium is available at the website [www.hemkunt2.org](http://www.hemkunt2.org).

Both English and Panjabi versions of the books have been posted on our website. Sunday Schools run by Gurdwaras are welcome to use these books for free, and no permission is required from the Foundation for using the books.

Any suggestions and comments for improving the book are always welcome.

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# **The Second Nanak**

**Guru Angad Ji**

# 1. Early Life of the Second Nanak

**1504 (birth):** The Second Nanak, Guru Angad Ji, was born on March 31, 1504, in a village named Matte-Di-Sarai, near Muktsar in a region called Panjab. The name he was given at birth was Lehna. His father's name was Baba Pheru ji, and his mother's maiden name was Ramo, but she was called Daya Kaur after her marriage. Baba Narayan Das Trehan was his grandfather. Their family home was at Matte-di-Sarai. Baba Pheru Ji owned a small retail shop in this village.

**1523 (age 19):** Bhai Lehna married a lady called Khivi and had two sons (Dasu and Datu) and two daughters (Amro and Anokhi). Baba Pheru Ji's extended family was forced to leave their ancestral village when it was invaded by the Mughal army and Baloch militias who had come with Babar. The invaders would steal and destroy the property of the people who lived in the villages. Baba Pheru Ji, along with his family, moved to Khadur village beside the River Beas, near Tarn Taran, a small town about 15 miles from the city of Amritsar.

**1524 (age 20):** Bhai Lehna started helping his father manage the family's store. While dwelling in Khadur, Bhai Lehna and his father organized a yearly pilgrimage of devout Hindus to Jawalamukhi in the lower Himalayan mountains, sacred to those devoted to Durga.

**1526 (age 22):** After his father passed away, Bhai Lehna continued to lead the group of devotees on the yearly pilgrimage. For the next six years, he led the group traveling from Khadur along the river Ravee, close by a village named Kartarpur. Guru Nanak Ji had established Kartarpur in 1521.

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## 2. Captivated by Guru Nanak Ji

**1532 (age 28):** Guru Nanak ji had established Kartarpur in 1521 and continued living there in his last days. He encouraged everyone to live a spiritual life through his example while being a householder and an ordinary farmer. Guru Nanak Ji often traveled to neighboring areas to teach other people about the new Sikh way of life, a path without rituals—involving a genuine, honest, and sincere devotion to the one God for all of creation, a loving Creator.

Guru Nanak Ji had followers in many places, including Khadur. One of them was Bhai Jodha, who lived in Khadur. One day, Bhai Lehna heard Bhai Jodha singing the hymn “Asa di Var, Pauri 21” composed by Guru Nanak Ji. This verse deeply moved Bhai Lehna. Bhai Jodha was reciting the following:

ਜਿਤੁ ਸੇਵਿਐ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਈਐ ਸੋ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸਦਾ ਸਮੁਲੀਐ॥  
ਜਿਤੁ ਕੀਤਾ ਪਾਈਐ ਆਪਣਾ ਸਾ ਘਾਲ ਬੁਰੀ ਕਿਉ ਘਾਲੀਐ॥  
ਮੰਦਾ ਮਲਿ ਨ ਕੀਚਈ ਦੇ ਲੰਮੀ ਨਦਰਿ ਨਿਹਾਲੀਐ॥  
ਜਿਉ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨਾਲਿ ਨ ਹਾਰੀਐ ਤੇਵੇਹਾ ਪਾਸਾ ਢਾਲੀਐ॥  
ਕਿਛੁ ਲਾਹੇ ਉਪਰਿ ਘਾਲੀਐ॥੨੧॥

ਆਸਾ ਦੀ ਵਾਰ

jit seviaai sukh paieeaaai so saahib sadhaa sam(h)aaleeaaai ||jit keetaa paieeaaai  
aapanaa saa ghaal buree kiau ghaaleeaaai ||ma(n)dhaa mool na keechiee dhe  
la(n)mee nadhar nihaaleeaaai ||jiau saahib naal na haareeaaai tevehaa paasaa  
ddaaleeaaai ||kichh laahe upar ghaaleeaaai||21||

SGGS, p.474

**Translation:** Serving Him, peace is obtained; meditate and dwell upon that God forever. As one must reap the fruits of one’s own actions, one should not do such evil deeds that result in bad outcomes. Do not do any evil even unconsciously. One should look ahead with foresight for the results of one’s actions. Do such deeds with which you do not lose with God. Do such deeds in this life which shall bring you profit. ||21||

It could have been the first time Bhai Lehna had heard the praises of God so clearly expressed in his language – Panjabi. He understood the verse, and its message touched his soul. He attained peace. He requested Bhai Jodha to sing some more hymns, and Bhai Jodha gladly sang some more verses. Upon asking about the author of the hymns, Bhai Jodha explained that these hymns were created by Guru Nanak Ji, who was living in Kartarpur. Bhai

Lehna's desire to meet Guru Nanak Ji grew, and he decided to pass through Kartarpur to glimpse Guru Nanak during the yearly pilgrimage to the shrine.

Bhai Lehna was taking his family and the group of pilgrims to Jawalamukhi. He talked them into taking a break on their journey at Kartarpur, telling them that they could perform two religious acts on the one pilgrimage. They could visit Guru Nanak, whom some believed to be the beloved of God, and whose inspiring company was sought by many people. Then afterward, they would travel on to pay respects to the goddess Durga at the Jawalamukh shrine in the Himalayan mountains.

After telling his groups of devotees, he rode his horse towards the village of Kartarpur for a glimpse of Guru Nanak. On his way, he met a person who was walking from his fields towards the village. Bhai Lehna asked him the directions to the Dharamsala (a Sikh center of religious learning, which later came to be known as a Gurdwara), where Guru Nanak Ji held his spiritual teaching. This person asked Bhai Lehna to follow him, as he was going there as well. When they reached the door of the Dharamsala, the person suggested to Bhai Lehna to fasten his horse and go through the door.

Upon entering the room, Bhai Lehna saw that the person who had shown him the way was sitting on the seat of the Guru. Bhai Lehna bowed in respect and sat on one side, deeply regretting that he rode his horse while Guru Ji had walked on foot.

Bhai Lehna was fascinated by Guru Nanak's simple clothing and humility. He may have imagined Guru Ji living in a big mansion, sitting on a fancy, extra-soft pillow, wearing clothes and a head covering decorated with jewels, and perhaps even a necklace of rare stones. Such an image of the Guru would have been similar to Bhai Lehna's idea of a Hindu deity.

However, in Guru Nanak, he saw nothing of that sort. He only saw the simplicity of a man doing hard work in the fields with his own hands. Guru Ji's style of living was simple and humble, and he lacked pride and ego. Guru Nanak Ji's depth of wisdom and grace made the biggest impression.

While he was still absorbed in thinking about all of this, Guru Nanak Ji asked his name. Bhai Lehna replied that his name was Lehna, and he was leading

a group of his villagers on a pilgrimage to the shrine of goddess Durga. Guru Ji told him that it was better to directly serve God – instead of gods and goddess - deities who had to ask God to fulfill the wishes of devotees. Guru Ji also explained the real purpose of life and that everyone should seek to live a truthful life. He explained the importance of remembering the One God who has created everyone and everything. Bhai Lehna attended the evening service with the congregation. He then stayed overnight and participated in the morning service as well.

Upon hearing and experiencing the words of wisdom from Guru Ji, he felt like they changed his way of thinking. Bhai Lehna told the Pilgrims that he had obtained peace of mind while listening to the Guru’s discourses. He was convinced that he had found his purpose and did not have to look or go any further. Bhai Lehna came to Kartarpur to pay a casual visit and was transfixed for life. He dedicated himself to the service of Guru Nanak Ji, became his [Sikh](#) (student disciple), and began to live at Kartarpur.

On the fourth day of his stay, Guru Nanak Ji suggested that Bhai Lehna go back home, inform his family, and come back to Kartarpur if he wished to. Bowing to the Guru, Bhai Lehna returned to Khadur, and he entrusted the work of his store to his eldest son Dasu. After some days, Bhai Lehna, accompanied by his wife, Mata Khivi, returned to Kartarpur to live and study with Guru Nanak Ji.

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### 3. Transformed by Guru Nanak Ji

**1532-39 (age 28-35):** According to Hindu teachings, members of the religion were divided into four castes based on their birth<sup>(1)</sup>. Those at the lowest of this 4-level caste system were called Shudras (untouchables). They were not considered worthy of respect, and they were not even allowed to enter a temple, let alone worship. Bhai Lehna was a so-called upper caste Hindu and probably had the same feeling towards Shudras. However, Guru Nanak believed that all humans were created by One God and were equal. During his communications with Bhai Lehna, he took many steps to see that Bhai Lehna learned to love and respect everyone equally, without any difference.

Guru Nanak Ji stood for a casteless and classless society in which no one was superior. Equality for everyone was set in place from the beginning of the Sikh way of life. In comparison, we still see today the world divided by class, color, and background.

People of the three Hindu upper-caste – Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas in order– did not respect the lower caste group (Shudras). The latter were always to perform lowly jobs to make a living. Ironically, these lowly jobs were assigned by the upper caste groups to the lower caste. For seven years (1532-39), Guru Nanak Ji gave many so-called lowly jobs to Bhai Lehna, which according to the Hindu religion, should have been performed only by those belonging to the lower caste. He did this to help Bhai Lehna understand the difficult jobs done by Shudras and develop feelings of empathy and respect for them.

Guru Nanak Ji also put Bhai Lehna thru many tests to evaluate his devotion to the Sikh way of life. Guru Ji was convinced of Bhai Lehna's understanding and practice of basic Sikh beliefs through these tests. He also put some other followers, including the Guru's two sons, through similar tests. Over a period of time, it became clear to Guru Nanak Ji and everyone around him that Bhai Lehna was the only one deserving to be the next Guru. Bhai Lehna had rid himself of ego, and Guru Ji was grateful for that.

Stories of the following “tests” are recorded in Sikh history:

1. One day, upon reaching Kartarpur, Bhai Lehna went to the fields where Guru Ji was working. Guru Nanak Ji was removing weeds from the rice fields. He got some bundles made of stems of rice plants. He then asked Bhai Lehna to carry three bundles to his (Guru Ji's) home, and he placed them on Bhai Lehna's head. The plant stems were to be used as feed for cattle. Muddy slush was dripping out of the bundles, and Bhai Lehna's new silk clothes got dirty. Carrying muddy slush on his head might have been the first time that Bhai Lehna was asked to do the work of a low caste person. He might have expected such lowly work to be given only to the Shudra caste. Nevertheless, he did not hesitate at all and respectfully followed Guru Nanak Ji's instructions.
2. One day, Guru Ji went out to an open well to take a bath. While returning, his bath mug fell into a pool of filthy water. Per Hindu religious teachings, only Shudras step into such filthy water. Guru Ji could have asked a Shudra around him to retrieve the mug. However, he instructed Bhai Lehna to do it. Bhai Lehna unhesitatingly obeyed. He stepped into the filthy water and retrieved the mug.
3. One morning, when Guru Ji opened the front door of the Dharamsala, he found a dead rat. According to Hindu tradition, dead animals were always handled by Shudras. Nevertheless, Guru Ji asked Bhai Lehna to pick up and throw out the dead rat. Immediately upon hearing the command, Bhai Lehna picked up and threw the rat out without any hesitation.
4. One winter night Guru Nanak Ji instructed Bhai Lehna to go to the river Ravee and wash the dirty laundry. The river water was frigidly cold, being the winter season. Washermen (Shudras) routinely performed this difficult work to make a living. A person of an upper caste had no idea of the hardship involved. Guru Ji wanted Bhai Lehna to experience it to develop empathy and understanding for the poor and oppressed.
5. One day, Guru Ji dressed very differently from his usual clothes, carried a big stick in his hand, and ran towards the forest. Many people witnessed this unusual state of affairs, were curious, and followed Guru Ji. After a short while, Guru Ji threw some candies from his bag.

Some people stopped to collect the candies. Then, after some time, Guru Ji threw some coins. Some of the people who were still following him stopped to collect the coins. Next, Guru Ji started hitting anyone who was still following him. Everyone except Bhai Lehna stopped following Guru Nanak Ji. Guru Ji asked Bhai Lehna why he was not going away when all others had left him. Bhai Lehna replied that he had no one except him (Guru Ji) to go to. Others had their homes and shelters to go back to. No harsh treatment by Guru Ji could dampen Bhai Lehna's love and devotion towards him.

Guru Nanak Ji thoroughly tested Bhai Lehna's commitment, humility, and understanding of Sikh principles, including if he treated everyone respectfully and equally. Over the seven years, he had been with Guru Nanak Ji at Kartarpur, Guru Ji's presence and teachings completely transformed Bhai Lehna. He had learned and willingly practiced the principles of the new Sikh way of life being built during his lifetime, which included *seva* and dealing with others with humility, integrity, kindness, and truth.

Guru Nanak Ji saw a transformation in Bhai Lehna. It became clear to Guru Nanak Ji that Bhai Lehna had understood clearly and internalized all of Guru Ji's teachings. He had become fully capable of teaching and sharing the principles of Sikhi.

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*(1) All ten Gurus (Guru Nanak thru Guru Gobind Singh Ji) emphasized, taught, and practiced a casteless, classless community and society. Their message was that there is only one God, and every human being (male and female) is created equal. Unfortunately, Sikhs even now are far from that ideal in their attitudes and behavior. Many Sikhs use their last name to identify themselves with their family. Some of these family names are associated with the place they came from or their ancestors' caste before becoming Sikhs. Some Sikhs still try to find a marriage match for their sons or daughters within their "caste." Some Gurdwaras have even been established in the name of various sub-castes. These practices are not in accordance with Sikhi.*

## 4. Bhai Lehna Selected as Second Nanak

**1539** (*Guru Nanak Ji 70-years-old and Bhai Lehna 35-years-old*): Bhai Lehna was actively involved in every aspect of Guru Nanak Ji's life at Kartarpur. He would participate in all kinds of *seva*, *keertan*, and *katha* (teaching and discussing Gurbani). He also helped organize the *langar* (communal kitchen) program and the hosting and lodging of visitors. Guru Ji had already tested him in various ways and had found him fully capable of continuing the teaching, spreading, and practice of Sikhi.

Guru Nanak Ji was confident that the new way of life he had created could now be led and further practiced, organized, and expanded by Bhai Lehna. Bhai Lehna had spent seven years in the service of Guru Nanak Ji at Kartarpur. He was sure that there was no difference between the two of them. Guru Ji was aware of Bhai Lehna's spiritual abilities. Bhai Lehna had become inseparable and almost the same as (Ang) of Guru Nanak.

Hence, Guru Nanak Ji personally selected and appointed Bhai Lehna as his spiritual successor, as the Second Nanak, on September 7, 1539. To signify to Sikh followers that they should not distinguish between him, Guru Nanak Ji, and his successor Guru, the Second Nanak, he gave Bhai Lehna a new name, Angad, meaning part of him.

Guru Nanak Ji then handed over his *pothi* (book) containing all his Gurbani compositions (*baanees*) to Guru Angad Ji. This book also had compositions of Baba Farid, Bhagat Namdev, Kabir, Ravidas, and others, which Guru Nanak Ji had collected during his lengthy missionary travels (*udasis*). The *pothi* was the same book that the *Qazis* (Muslim religious leaders) had referred to when Guru Nanak Ji had visited Mecca. The *Qazis* had asked Guru Ji that, as per his *pothi* (meaning the book of compositions that he carried with him to Mecca), who is superior – Hindu or Muslim? Guru Nanak Ji had replied that everyone's deeds determine their spiritual merit.

Guru Nanak Ji departed from this earth *joti jot samaey* on September 22, 1539. After that, Guru Angad Ji left Kartarpur and moved to Khadur (near Goindwal). He established a new base and religious center for the Sikh

community. Guru Angad Ji diligently carried forward the teachings of Guru Nanak Ji in both letter and spirit. Soon, he became well known for his wisdom. Even religious persons like yogis and *sants* of different paths visited him in Khadur and held detailed discussions on the Sikh way of life.

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## 5. A Sikh is Bold and Fearless

**1540 (age 36):** An interesting historical event is associated with the Gurmat school established by the Second Nanak for teaching Sikhi<sup>(2)</sup>.

Humayun, the Mughal emperor, had lost his battle against Sher Shah Suri. To save his life, he fled towards the part of Iran bordering Afghanistan, known as Khurasan. He had crossed the river Beas at Goindwal. Some of his well-wishers suggested that he visit Guru Angad Ji, the Second Nanak, at Khadur, only a few miles away.

When Humayun reached Khadur, the Second Nanak was busy teaching children under the shade of a tree. Guru Ji continued teaching instead of interrupting the class. He intended to have a dialogue with the visitor after the class was over. Humayun felt insulted for not getting the immediate attention that he thought he deserved as the ruler. To frighten Guru Ji, he drew his sword and threateningly waved it in the air. Seeing this, Guru Ji smiled and remarked that the sword should have been used on the battlefield and not to frighten or impress unarmed religious people. Humayun realized his mistake and was sorry for his action.

Guru Ji had conveyed a vital lesson to Sikhs. He had shown by example that they also should be bold, brave, and clear-headed. They should fear no one and respect a person only for their qualities and not for their wealth, political status, or power. The Second Nanak had demonstrated the concept of *Nirbhau*.

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*(2) During the Mughal empire, the official language was Persian. Opening schools and teaching local languages was discouraged, even forbidden. It was difficult for non-Muslims to get educated. The Second Nanak was courageous to set up a school and teach the local Panjabi language spoken by the public.*

## 6. Establishment of Goindwal

**1546** (*age 42*): During the Second Nanak's time, the area where the city of Goindwal is presently situated was the ancestral property of a person named Goinda. He wanted to establish a city in the memory of his ancestors. However, his relatives were jealous of this and did not let him build the city. The land was on the riverbank and the highway connecting Lahore and Delhi. Guru Ji considered it an appropriate location for establishing a new Sikh center. When Goinda came to the Second Nanak for help, Guru Ji agreed to help build the town.

Guru Ji assigned the work of establishing the new town to Bhai Amardas (who later became the Third Nanak). Bhai Amardas, as he was known at the time, had joined the Second Nanak's congregation in the year 1541. As instructed by Guru Ji, Bhai Amardas performed seva in the langar program. Guru Ji further suggested that Bhai Amardas bring his relatives from Basarke to the new town once it had been established. Bhai Amardas followed Guru Ji's instructions. In so doing, he also brought Bhai Jetha (who later became the Fourth Nanak). Bhai Jetha was an orphan and a distant relative of Bhai Amardas, and he was only 12 years old at the time.

The new town was named Goindwal. It thrived and continues to be a crucial Sikh center, and it proved vital in the spread of Sikhi in the region.

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## 7. Rituals Do Not Please God

There is a story of a Tapa associated with the life of the Second Nanak. Tap is a practice or penance, and it is a Hindu religious ritual. Some parts of this story may not be historically accurate, but it has a relevant message for everyone, even now.

The story goes that before Guru Angad Ji moved to Khadur, a Tapa lived in the area. This person was fooling innocent people by boasting of his miraculous powers and black magic. People were either scared that he might bring them harm or were falsely hopeful that he might bless them with wealth. They used to bring him food and money.

When Guru Ji moved there and started teaching how to live a virtuous life, people became aware of the Tapa's cunning tricks. They stopped visiting Tapa, and his source of donations dried up, so he got upset.

There was no rain that year in the area and crops also dried up. The Tapa started scaring people that the Rain god was upset because Guru Ji was doing everything contrary to Hindu scriptures. He argued that Guru Ji treated Brahmins and Shudras as equal. Instead of being a hermit, he preferred the life of a householder. The Tapa added that such actions of Guru Ji were bound to cause disaster. He suggested that they ask Guru Ji to either bring rain or leave the village. He promised to perform rituals to please the Rain god and bring rain once Guru Ji had left the village.

Guru Ji left the village to expose the Tapa's mischief. The Tapa recited verses from Hindu religious texts and performed rituals but failed to bring rain. People understood that it was a trick. They dragged the Tapa thru the fields, and he was badly hurt. People begged Guru Ji to return to the village. Guru Ji came back and explained that rituals do not please God. He advised them not to be misled by rituals. He also told them that instead of punishing the Tapa, they should have pointed out his mistakes and forgiven him.

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## 8. Importance of Virtuous Qualities

This story is about a rich man that was associated with the teachings of the Second Nanak. This story may not be precisely accurate, but it has a valuable message.

The story goes that when the Second Nanak visited Harike village, many people came to see Guru Ji and listen to his spiritual teaching. Amongst them was a wealthy man that owned 72 villages and considered himself a local chief. He saw the Second Nanak sitting on a wooden platform while listeners were seated on a carpet. The rich man did not join the people, and he went straight to the platform and established himself next to Guru Ji.

Guru Ji started his teachings on Gurbani (*katha*). It mesmerized the rich man. He had never before heard such words of wisdom. From the Second Nanak's enlightened message, he realized that not wealth but virtuous qualities such as humility, respect, kindness, politeness, understanding, and generosity made a person great.

He also realized that people had been pretending to show him respect, but this was only for his wealth and not for him as a person. He readily understood that a person earns respect only for his virtuous qualities and behavior. He got down from the platform and sat with the people on the carpet.

Guru Ji's discourse taught that the richness of the mind and spirit is vastly superior to worldly wealth. The rich man started developing the virtuous qualities that he had learned from Guru Ji. His attitude and behavior towards others changed drastically. Soon, people were talking of his virtues, and he had earned their genuine respect.

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## 9. Always Accept God's Will

This is a story of Bhai Jeeva associated with the life of the Second Nanak. Bhai Jeeva used to perform *seva* in the *langar*, the communal kitchen. Once, because of a severe storm, he was unable to prepare food in the *langar*. He was upset and complained about it to Guru Ji. He was expecting a blessing from Guru Ji such that in the future, a storm would not interfere in preparing food for the *sangat*, the local Sikh congregation.

Guru Ji explained to him that one should always accept the Will of God (*hukam rajai chalna*). The seeking and giving of so-called blessings from religious persons (*sants*), in order to interfere with God's Will (*Hukam*), is wrong. Guru Ji suggested that the relationship between a human being and God should be viewed as a relationship between a lover and a beloved. To receive true love, the lover (human being) should understand the beloved's (God's) nature and behave accordingly.

If someone behaves contrary to this – and does not accept God's Will – they cannot become a spiritually enlightened person. There is nothing to be gained by going on pilgrimages, engaging in empty rituals, studying religious texts just for arguing with others or making donations only to show how spiritual one may be. Instead, everyone should seek to understand God's will and always accept it willingly. God is our well-wisher and is merciful. God's *Hukam* (command) is for the benefit of all His creation. One should accept God's will under all circumstances.

Page 474 of Sri Guru Granth Sahib - the following verse of the Second Nanak explains this message.

ਏਹ ਕਿਨੇਹੀ ਆਸਕੀ ਦੂਜੈ ਲਗੈ ਜਾਇ ॥  
ਨਾਨਕ ਆਸਕੁ ਕਾਂਢੀਐ ਸਦ ਹੀ ਰਹੈ ਸਮਾਇ ॥  
ਚੰਗੈ ਚੰਗਾ ਕਰਿ ਮੰਨੇ ਮੰਦੈ ਮੰਦਾ ਹੋਇ ॥  
ਆਸਕੁ ਏਹੁ ਨ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿ ਲੇਖੈ ਵਰਤੈ ਸੋਇ ॥੧॥

ਸਲੋਕੁ ਮਹਲਾ ੨

eh kinehee aasakee dhoojai lagai jai ||naanak aasak kaa(n)ddeeaai sadh hee  
rahai samai ||cha(n)gai cha(n)gaa kar ma(n)ne ma(n)dhai ma(n)dhaa hoi ||aasak  
eh na aakheeaai j lekhai varatai soi ||1||

SGGS p. 474

**Translation:** What sort of love is this, which clings to duality? O Nanak, he alone is called a lover, who remains forever immersed in absorption and always accepts God's Will. But one who feels good only when he considers that a good has been done for him and feels bad when he thinks something has gone bad – do not call him a lover. He trades in love only for selfish reasons.

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## 10. The Second Nanak's Important Contributions

The appointment as his successor of Guru Angad Ji by Guru Nanak Ji, the founder of the Sikh religion, was an event of far-reaching importance in the evolution of Sikhi. Religious practices started by Guru Nanak Ji were continued and reinforced by Guru Angad Ji and Mata Khivi Ji, wife of Guru Angad Ji. The Second Nanak embodied the spirit of his great predecessor and built the infant faith through his energy and global vision for the continued development of a new religion.

As the Second Nanak, he made several major contributions to strengthen and expand Sikhi. His gifts in four key areas are listed below:

**Gurmukhi Script and Education:** A very simple and basic Panjabi alphabet and script existed at the time of Guru Nanak Ji. At that time, the Panjabi language was written in the Landa or Mahajani script. This script had no symbols for the vowel sounds, which the reader had to imagine figuring out the writing correctly.

Therefore, there was the need for a script that could reproduce the sounds of the compositions that Guru Nanak Ji was writing in the *pothi* (book) that he later handed over to the Second Nanak. The Second Nanak further refined the Gurmukhi script in 1541 to better align it with locally spoken Panjabi. The true meaning and message of both Guru Jis' compositions (*baanee*) could then not be changed or misunderstood by any reader to suit their purpose. This complete script with phonetic symbols became known as the Gurmukhi script.

Guru Nanak Ji had used the earlier version of the Gurmukhi script for recording his compositions. The improved Gurmukhi script accurately conveyed the sounds of Guru Nanak Ji's and the Second Nanak's compositions. It admirably served its intended purpose. Over the years, it has helped maintain the purity of all our Gurus' *baanees* as initially composed.

The Second Nanak used this Gurmukhi script to help educate children, adults and general public, the poor and oppressed. By providing education and the means of communication to common folk, he made sure that they would no longer be dependent on the religious or political establishment to pursue their own economic, educational, or spiritual goals. This development was his way of empowering people to achieve their personal goals in life.

The development of the Gurmukhi script also helped the early Sikh community disassociate themselves from the widespread religious tradition. During that time, the Sanskrit language was used almost solely by Brahmins since it was the language of the Vedas, the Hindu religious texts. People of the so-called lower caste and the untouchables were banned from reading any spiritual literature. This control of the language had helped the Brahmins maintain the status of the superiority of the upper castes. The development and increased use of Gurmukhi by the educated Panjabis challenged this unfair behavior. It also enabled the Sikhs to create, share, and expand their impartial and accessible spiritual writings – as they did not have to depend on Sanskrit texts and vocabulary.

Creating this new Gurmukhi script was thus revolutionary for many reasons. It gave the people who spoke the Panjabi language an identity, enabling them to express their thoughts without any language limits. The Second Nanak was also able to more easily distribute to the general public the valid message of Guru Nanak Ji's and his own (the Second Nanak's) compositions, written in the new Gurmukhi script.

**Physical Fitness:** The Second Nanak also inspired people to lead healthy lives. He told them that physical fitness helps them take up higher goals in life. He took a great interest in physical fitness and encouraged his followers to participate in sports after their morning prayers. He urged people to compete in physical competitions to be involved in wrestling bouts (*mal akharas*). The focus on physical fitness was his way of doing away with social taboos of “lower” caste people who were not allowed physical contact with those from higher castes. Thus, he built upon the foundation laid by Guru Nanak Ji and helped develop a spiritually enlightened, educated, and healthy Sikh community without discrimination of caste.

**Women's role and status:** During the time of Guru Nanak Ji and the Second Nanak, the status of women in India was shameful. A woman was considered inferior to a man, regarded as a source of temptation, and confined to her home. Women were not allowed to participate in public life. Guru Nanak Ji had preached that man and woman were equal before God. He had welcomed women to the Sangat, had offered them seats side by side with men, and had given them religious rights that had thus far been denied to women by the society. By word and deed, the Second Nanak reinforced Guru Nanak Ji's emphasis on gender equality.

In this, as in other aspects of his life, the Second Nanak did not work alone. His wife and partner, Mata Khivi Ji, assumed the role of a vital woman leader in the Sikh community who contributed significantly to the practice of Sikhi. She played a major role in enlarging the participation of women in leadership positions in the community. She was instrumental in maintaining the institution of *langar*, where all were invited to come and eat together.

Initially, Mata Khivi Ji personally served food to the community members and visitors who would come to see Guru Ji. Her action symbolized Sikh teachings, emphasizing humanity in every person and eliminating any distinctions or caste discrimination. Mata Khivi Ji did her *langar* service in a skillful and selfless manner and evoked respect among the people. Women were usually not seen in any leadership positions during those times. Her role in that capacity was unique and revolutionary.

Mata Khivi Ji also made sure that the food being served in *langar* was wholesome. Often, many people who came to see Guru Ji were destitute. Mata Khivi Ji would open-heartedly and lovingly offer everyone tasty and nutritious food. She was described by the contemporary minstrel Balwand as a big shady tree affording much-needed comforting shade to everyone. Her role and praise for her by name is recorded in Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

To this day, after every service, visitors to a Sikh gurdwara witness congregations that participate in *langar* together. As Guru Nanak Ji had taught and practiced at Kartarpur, and as the Second Nanak reinforced at Khadur, *langar* emphasized that service to fellow humans was an important

tenet of the Sikh way of life. Soon, the practice caught on, and it became a tradition for congregation members to serve others.

**Missionary Tours:** The Second Nanak visited the key places and religious centers established by Guru Nanak Ji for preaching Sikhi. He also found new Sangats (Sikh communities) in Punjab and thus strengthened the public's understanding and practice of Sikhi. He also helped develop the new town at Goindwal, near Khadur. He appointed Bhai Amardas (later, Guru) to supervise its construction.

The period of his Guruship was a crucial one. The Sikh community, being in its infancy, faced several challenges. The Hindu community in the region wanted to abolish the newly established Sikh religion. Moreover, Guru Nanak Ji's son Sri Chand's Udasi sect (which practiced seclusion instead of the life of a householder) and other Yogis (who performed religious rituals of various kinds) had not yet ended.

Guru Nanak ji established crystal clear tenets of Sikhi. Nevertheless, the danger was that the Sikhs (not Sikhi) could drift back to Hindu practices if followers of the new religion did not fully understand and practice the teachings of the first and second Nanaks. At this hour of severe testing of the blossoming faith, the Second Nanak lived Guru Nanak's tenets of Sikhi in their true spirit. The consistent practicing of the Sikh tenants enabled Sikhi to fuse its own separate religious identity further, building upon the strong foundation of Sikh teachings and practices that Guru Nanak Ji first taught.

**Appointing the Third Nanak: 1552** (age 48): Before his death, the Second Nanak appointed Bhai Amardas as his replacement Guru, the Third Nanak, instead of one of his two sons. To protect and preserve the compositions and teachings of Guru Nanak Ji, he included his own compositions in the *pothi* (book) he had received when he became the Second Nanak. He presented the updated *pothi* (book) to his successor Guru and asked him to set up a Sikh center at Goindwal. Guru Angad ji, the Second Nanak, breathed his last (*joti jot samaye*) on March 29, 1552.

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## 11. Evidence that Guru Nanak Ji Gave his *Pothi* to the Second Nanak

Professor Sahib Singh, the highly respected scholar of Sikhi, has dealt with this topic convincingly in his many books, including “*Gur Itihaas, Patshahi 2-9*”, published by Singh Brothers, Amritsar. He clearly concludes that Guru Nanak Ji recorded his compositions, collected Bhagats' compositions, and preserved them in a *pothi* (book). He then personally handed over this *pothi* to Guru Angad Ji when he appointed the latter as the Second Nanak. A summary of the discussion on this topic is given below.

We know that Bhai Lehna (before he became Guru Angad Ji) lived with Guru Nanak Ji in Kartarpur for seven years (1532–1539). Bhai Lehna followed Guru Nanak's every command with the utmost respect and was always in his company. Hence Bhai Lehna had firsthand knowledge of Guru Nanak Ji's teachings and all the Sikhi-related religious practices he taught.

It is essential to mention that the famous story that Guru Angad Ji asked someone named Bhai Bala to write about Guru Nanak Ji's life story “*Janamsakhi*” is fictitious. Professor Sahib Singh's book “About Compilation of Sri Guru Granth Sahib” shows conclusively that Bhai Bala was a fictional character. The so-called “*Bhai Bala Janamsakhi*” was actually written by someone else during the last years of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, i.e., more than 150 years after Guru Angad Ji's demise in 1552 (Professor Sahib Singh's conclusion “About Compilation of Sri Guru Granth Sahib” p. 193).

Guru Nanak Ji lived for 18 years (1521–1539) at Kartarpur. He also built a Dharamsala at Kartarpur, where people met twice a day (morning and evening) as a congregation. It is hard to believe that the assembly used to take place for 18 years with only verbal compositions.

Guru Nanak Ji would undoubtedly have used his own hand-written, carefully preserved compositions of *baanee* to teach Sikhi to his many followers. It would not be correct to say that Guru Arjan Ji or some other Guru Ji collected Guru Nanak's *baanee* from Sikhs as it was scattered all over.

As noted in Chapter 4, Guru Nanak Ji had recorded all his compositions in a *pothi* (book), along with some compositions of Bhagats that he had personally collected during his extensive missionary travels. This *pothi*, with all of the *baanee*, was handed over personally by Guru Nanak Ji to Guru Angad Ji when he appointed him as the Second Nanak.

Guru Angad ji then used the *baanee* in this *pothi* to spread the teachings and *baanee* of Guru Nanak Ji to the growing community of Sikhs. He also closely aligned some of his compositions with the *baanee* of Guru Nanak Ji. Convincing evidence for this conclusion is given in the next chapter.

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## 12. Similarities of the *Baanees* of Guru Nanak Ji and the Second Nanak

Professor Sahib Singh has dealt with this topic in detail in his book “About Compilation of Sri Guru Granth Sahib,” published by Lok Sahit Prakashan, Amritsar. He compares the compositions of Guru Nanak Ji and the Second Nanak. The many similarities of their thoughts and words show conclusively that the Second Nanak undoubtedly had Guru Nanak Ji’s compositions with him. Some examples are given below:

**Legend:** *Guru Nanak ji’s Baanee* (in Italics); and the Second Nanak’s Baanee (Normal Font)

1	<i>Bhukhia bhukh na utrai jeh banaa purian bhaar.</i> <i>By possessing wealth of the world, one’s hunger is not removed.</i>	Jap ji
	Bhukhia bhukh na utrai, gali bhukh na jaye. Nanak bhukha ta rajai, jeh gun keh guni samaye. The hunger of man is not satiated merely by talking. Nanak says: the hunger of man can be satiated only if he praises the God and merges in Him.	Majh ki Var
2	<i>Amrit vela sach nao, vadaei vichar. Karmi aavai kapra, nadri mokh doar.</i> <i>Nanak evai jaaneeyai, sabh aapai saciyaar.</i> <i>Meditate in the praise of the Glorification of the Greatness of the True Name of the God in the ambrosial morning. This boon is attained through His Grace, and the deliverance is also through His Benediction.</i>	Jap ji
	Doha sirain aapai khasam, vekhai kar viopai. Nanak evain janiai, sabh kich tisai rajai. He, the God Himself is the judge at both ends, and He Himself decides. Nanak says: know this that all is in His Will.	Majh ki Var
3	<i>Chaakar lagai chaakri, je chalai khasmai bhai.</i> <i>Hurmat tis nu agli o vajoh bhi doona khaaye.</i> <i>If a servant dedicates himself to the service of the God and walks in His Will, he gets immense honor and more than his due.</i>	Asa di Var
	Chaakar lagai chhakri, naalai gaarab vaad. Galaan karai ghanerian, khasam na paaye saad. If a servant serves the master but in vain and disputatious; he talks much and does not get approval of the God.	Asa di Var
4	<i>Sabhi salaah, jinni dhiaya ik man,</i> <i>Seyee poorai saah, vikhtai oopar larh mooey...</i> <i>Sabhai vela vakhat sabh, jo athi bhaao hoey.</i>	Majh ki Var

	<p><i>They who praise the God in the early morning, with the single-minded devotion, they alone are the kings. They at the right time have grappled (with themselves)...</i></p> <p><i>If one fears (in love) the God, day and night, then all times are sacred for His Worship.</i></p>	
	<p>Sayee poorai sah, jinni poora paaiya. Athi vepervah, raithian iktai rang... Chouthai pahar sabha kai, sutian oopjai chaoo.</p> <p>They alone are the true kings, who have attained to the Perfect God. Day and night, they are in ecstasy, imbued with the love of the One alone... In the fourth watch of the early morning, they are awakened and in their mind wells up joy.</p>	Majh ki Var
5	<p><i>Pehal basantai aagman, pehla molio sohe.</i> <i>Jit mauiyai sabh mauiyai, tisai na maudio koye.</i> <i>The spring brought bloom first, but God was in Bloom earlier still. He, through Whom everyone blossoms, needs no one else for Him to flower.</i></p>	Suhi ki Var
	<p>Pehal basantai aagman, tis ka karo vichar. Nanak so salahiai, jeh sabsai de adhar. He, who first brought the Spring, reflect your mind on Him. Nanak ways: Praise Him, Who brings sustenance to all.</p>	Suhi ki Var
6	<p><i>Jin kiya tin dekhye, kya kahiyai re bhai.</i> <i>Aapnai janai karai aap, jin vaarhi hai laayee.</i> <i>He, Who created, He sustains, O Brother, what one can say about it. He knows everything and He alone is the doer, Who created all this Expanse.</i></p>	Tilang Melha 1
	<p>Aapnai janai aap, aapai aanai ras. The God alone knows and does, and does it right.</p>	Maru ki Var

The above comparison shows that he was highly familiar with Guru Nanak's *Baanee*. There is a remarkable similarity in the message. Even the choice of almost similar words to express them further supports this conclusion. He also further detailed some of the basic principles of Sikhi first taught and shared by Guru Nanak Ji.

The similarities noted above are possible only if the Second Nanak had Guru Nanak Ji's *baanee* in his possession and was deeply inspired by these compositions. He would without a doubt have regularly recited the Guru Nanak Ji's *baanee* himself. He would have relied on it for conveying the message of Sikhi to the general public during his entire period of Guruship (1539-1552) as the Second Nanak.

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## 13. Highlights of the Second Nanak

1504 – 1552

Born on:	March 31, 1504
Born at:	Village Sarai Naga (Matte Di Sarai), Punjab
Parents:	Father - Baba Pheru Ji Mother - Mata Ramo Ji
Wife:	Mata Khivi Ji, married on January 1520
Children:	Two sons - Dasu and Datu Two daughters - Amro and Anokhi
Accession to <i>Gurgaddi</i> :	September 7, 1539 (age 35)
<i>Gurgaddi</i> to next Guru:	January 22, 1552 (age 48)
Died on: <i>(Joti Jot)</i>	March 29, 1552 (age 48)
Highlights:	<p>Through his own life and conduct, Guru Angad Ji demonstrated the principles of <i>nishkam seva</i> (selfless service) to humanity, complete surrender to the <i>Shabad Guru</i> and the will of God, and disapproval of extravagant and dishonest behavior.</p> <p>Guru Angad Ji:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contributed 63 Shabads and Saloks (revealed verses), now recorded in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib.</li> <li>▪ Formalized the present form of the Gurmukhi script.</li> <li>▪ Maintained and developed the institution of <i>langar</i> started by Guru Nanak Ji.</li> <li>▪ Traveled widely and established several new centers for teaching, practicing, and promoting Sikhi.</li> <li>▪ Started the tradition of Mall Akhara to emphasize physical well-being to go along with spiritual development.</li> </ul>

# **The Third Nanak**

**Guru Amardas Ji**

## 14. Early Life of the Third Nanak

**1479 (birth):** Guru Amardas Ji, the Third Nanak, was born in village Basarke, five miles from Amritsar, on May 5, 1479. (Some chronicles say April 1479). His father was Baba Tej Bhan Bhalla, and mother was Mata Sulakhani Devi. Baba Tej Bhan owned some land. He made his living by farming. He also owned and operated a grocery store. Bhai Amardas, as he was known at the time, had four brothers.

**1503 (age 24):** Bhai Amardas married Mata Mansa Devi and had four children – two daughters, Dani and Bhani (she later married Bhai Jetha), and two sons, Mohan and Mohri.

**1521 (age 42):** Bhai Amardas was a religious person. Like his father, he performed rituals of the Hindu faith with great devotion. It had become part of his daily life to recite *Vedic Mantars*, give charity to Brahmins, worship Hindu gods and goddesses, celebrate religious festivals, and practice the caste system. In 1521, he went for the first time for a holy dip to Haridwar and other holy places for pilgrimage to wash away sins. After that, he went on pilgrimage to Hindu religious sites every year.

**1541 (age 62):** On his 21st pilgrimage to Haridwar, Bhai Amardas halted at the inn of a Brahmin. During the stay, one ascetic (a so-called holy man) became friendly with Bhai Amardas. Because of Bhai Amardas's gentle nature, the ascetic spent many hours with him and had long conversations. The two stayed together for a few days. When he was leaving, the ascetic asked Bhai Amardas the name of his guru (spiritual teacher). Bhai Amardas replied that he had not yet found the right guru. Upon hearing this, the ascetic got upset and angry. He regretted having spent time with someone who had no guru. He believed he had wasted his time in the company of Bhai Amardas. The ascetic strongly believed that one could not achieve spiritual enlightenment and salvation without a guru. He left Bhai Amardas's company disappointed. The incident left a lasting impression on Bhai Amardas.

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## 15. Becoming a Sikh

**1541 (age 62):** The ascetic's insulting comment about Bhai Amardas not having a guru still haunted him. Bhai Amardas was desperate to find a worthy guru for spiritual guidance and to attain enlightenment. He could not think of anyone whom he could accept as his guru. One night, he could not sleep at all. The very next morning, he heard the following hymn being sung in a melodious voice:

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 ਘਰੂ ੧, ਅੰਗ ੯੯੦

Karṇī kāgaḍ man masvāṇī burā bhalā due lekḥ pae.

Jio jio kiraṭ ḥalāe ṭio ḥalīai tao guṇ nāhī antḥ hare. ||1||

Chitḥ chetas kī nahī bāvriā. Har bisraṭ ṭere guṇ galiā. ||1|| rahāo SGGs, p. 990

*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||*

The above Shabad of Guru Nanak Ji was being sung by Bibi Amro, the daughter of the Second Nanak, Guru Angad Ji. Bibi Amro had married the nephew of Bhai Amardas a few months earlier. She was 15 years old. Having been raised in the Guru Angad Ji's household, she had developed a keen interest in reciting the compositions of Guru Nanak Ji and her father (the Second Nanak). Even after marriage, she had maintained a devout spiritual practice of getting up early in the morning and reciting *baanee*.

Bhai Amardas understood the hymn as it was composed in his mother tongue, Panjabi. The hymn explained that one's deeds were like sheets of paper on which one wrote good and bad actions with the ink of one's mind (thoughts). If someone forgot God, their virtues were destroyed. He asked Bibi Amro about the hymn he had just heard. She explained that the hymn was composed by Guru Nanak Ji. Before he passed, Guru Nanak Ji had entrusted the responsibility of guiding the Sikhs to her father, the

Second Nanak, Guru Angad Ji, who was now showing the Sikh path to anyone who had gone astray.

When Bhai Amardas inquired further about *baanee*, he came to understand its other verses as well. He learned that actions for the love of wealth became one's shackles. How could one be free from those shackles? Five vices – lust, anger, greed, attachment, and pride – consumed the mind. Sins acted like charcoal on it. The vices (metaphorically) covered the virtues and became more powerful than the virtues. The Guru's *baanee* – the Word of God, in the form of God's revelatory hymns – transformed and weaned the mind away from vices.

Bhai Amardas knew of the Second Nanak, Guru Angad Ji, as a relative. Bhai Amardas had joined the marriage party of his nephew to Khadur, the headquarters of Sikhism at that time. He took Bibi Amro with him to Khadur. On reaching there, he sought out the Second Nanak, Guru Angad Ji. He earnestly requested him to kindly accept him as a follower of Sikhi. The Second Nanak had developed a large following of Sikhs by then. Bhai Amardas was 62 years old at that time. Age had not deterred him from accepting the Guru's Word and becoming a Sikh. He decided to spend more time at Khadur. Bhai Amardas attended discourses on *baanee* in the *Sangat*. He had conversations with the Second Nanak to learn the teachings of the new Sikh religion instead of following the rituals he was raised in. Bhai Amardas adopted the Second Nanak as his Guru (spiritual guide). He resided at Khadur Sahib. He would rise early in the morning, bring water from a well for Guru Ji's bath, and fetch wood from the forest for *langar*. Bhai Amardas tirelessly served the Guru's institutions.

Bhai Amardas would take meals in the *pangat* (everyone sitting together for meals). By doing this, his earlier belief in the so-called low and high castes, and the false pride of being a Khatri (a high caste), disappeared. He would spend time in the company of Guru Ji, listening to and understanding *baanee*. He developed a passion for the poetry of *baanee*, and at the age of 73, became an accomplished poet composing spiritual hymns.

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## 16. From Selfless Seva to Guruship

**1552** (age 73): Be it summer, winter, rain, or shine, Bhai Amardas never skipped bringing water for Guru Ji's morning bath. He had started this *seva* when he was 62. He continued this service for 11 years. Because of his age, he must have stumbled many times on the way. He had to listen to insulting remarks from ignorant people who wondered why an old man was doing this service. Bhai Amardas was always engrossed in Guru Ji's *seva*. He never paid any attention to such comments.

One such incident is recorded in Sikh history. One early morning during winter, Bhai Amardas tripped against a wooden peg in front of a village weaver's house while he was trying to balance the metallic pitcher of water on his head. It awakened the weaver and his wife. The weaver loudly asked who was outside making noise so early in the morning. The weaver's wife asked him to calm down and said that it could not be anyone other than Amroo, the homeless. She asked her husband to ignore the noise and go back to sleep. Bhai Amardas heard all this, and as usual, paid no attention to it and continued to get water to Guru Ji for his bath. Soon, talk of the incident reached Guru Ji. He must have previously heard that people were insulting and criticizing Bhai Amardas. Guru Ji was greatly impressed by Bhai Amardas's peaceful manner, ability to stay calm ignoring offensive comments, dedication to service, and profound knowledge and understanding of *baanee*. Guru Ji became convinced that Bhai Amardas was the best successor to spread Guru Nanak Ji's teachings.

The Second Nanak, Guru Angad Ji, handed over the responsibility of leading the Sikhs to Bhai Amardas Ji by installing him as Guru in March 1552. The installation resulted from Bhai Amardas Ji's services and devotion to the Second Nanak and his teachings. Guru Angad Ji instructed Bhai Amardas Ji to shift his headquarters from Khadur to Goindwal. Baba Buddha Ji and other prominent Sikhs accompanied Guru Amardas Ji to Goindwal.

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## 17. Brahmins' Complain to Emperor Akbar

**1557 (age 78):** Datu, Guru Angad Ji's son, had aspired to be the next Guru. However, the Second Nanak had deemed Bhai Amardas Ji the most qualified person to lead the Sikhs as the Third Nanak. He had passed on the Guruship to Bhai Amardas Ji, which angered Datu.

Brahmins were also upset with Sikh Gurus (Guru Nanak Ji to Guru Amardas Ji ), as Sikhs had become aware of and spoke of the Brahmins' claims and rituals. Brahmins could not tolerate that Sikhs treated the so-called low caste and upper castes as equals, even to the extent of eating meals together. Moreover, the Brahmin priests' source of income was much less as Sikhs would go to the Guru for spiritual understanding instead of them.

Some Brahmins incited Datu to make a complaint to Emperor Akbar about Guru Amardas Ji. Guru Ji appointed 23-year-old Bhai Jetha, as he was known, to go to Emperor Akbar to answer the alleged charges from Datu. Bhai Jetha's explanation of Guru Nanak Ji's message of God's love for humanity greatly impressed the Emperor. Akbar dismissed all complaints of the Brahmins.

The Third Nanak, Guru Amardas Ji, instructed Bhai Jetha to also impress Akbar with the need to address hardships imposed by the ruler on the ordinary person. Bhai Jetha successfully convinced Akbar to issue a royal decree to end the practice of *sati* (the Hindu religious practice of forcing a widow to burn herself alive on her husband's funeral pyre). Bhai Jetha also secured relief from a state tax imposed on non-Muslims visiting their sacred places of pilgrimage.

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## 18. First *Pangat* then *Sangat*

Guru Nanak Ji had started the practice of *langar* (community kitchen) where everyone, regardless of caste or class, would sit together and share a meal. It was a revolutionary concept. The Hindu religion had divided Indian society into four castes. It was against the religion for a low caste person to sit with one belonging to the upper caste and eat food together.

The Second Nanak had continued the practice of *langar*, and the Third Nanak strengthened the *langar* program even further. He instructed that no one could join the *sangat* (congregation) unless they first sat in the *pangat* (sitting together to have food at *langar*). This instruction reinforced the message given to the congregation to treat everyone as an equal, irrespective of their caste.

Many people were slow in giving up the centuries-old concept of caste distinctions. Some upper-caste Hindus, including Brahmins, had started attending the Guru's congregation because of his spiritual message of One God. However, they were still hesitant to have food sitting with a so-called low caste person.

History records one specific incident. A Brahmin named Mae Das was reluctant to sit in the *Pangat* to partake food sitting next to low caste persons. However, he mustered the moral strength to accept Guru Ji's instruction, realizing that he had to develop a love for fellow humans (irrespective of their caste) before joining the *sangat* to benefit from the Guru's words of wisdom. By listening to and accepting Guru Ji's message of the brotherhood of all humans and the fatherhood of God, he became a *Gurmukh* (a Guru-oriented, virtuous person). The Third Nanak later appointed him to head one of the 22 religious centers to spread the message of Guru Nanak Ji. In 1560, Akbar visited Guru Ji at Goindwal. He, too, sat in the *sangat* and enjoyed the *langar*. He was incredibly impressed that everyone was treated equally with love and respect, irrespective of social or economic status.

Sadly, the sanctity of the 'Pangat' is being gradually eroded in present day

community. Young and able-bodied Sikhs visiting the Gurudwara prefer to sit on the chairs and tables (provided for infirm or disabled) and partake of langar in a cafeteria style. We should refrain from this ill practice and educate a wider audience as well. We should respect the thought behind this concept and practice Guru's teaching on this aspect.

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## 19. Pilgrimage not Acceptable

**1559 (age 80):** The Third Nanak, Guru Amardas Ji, made a concerted effort to uplift the down-trodden segments of society by treating them as equal to those of the upper castes. Some persons belonging to the so-called upper castes were looking for ways to fight the change. One method used by them was to harass Sikhs fetching water from the common well. Miscreants would throw rocks at the earthen pitchers of Sikhs. As usual, Guru Ji asked Sikhs to stay calm. However, he suggested that Sikhs use metallic pitchers. Even these were targeted and damaged.

To solve the problem of everyday mischief, Guru Ji decided to construct a step-well (*baoli*) to meet the Sikh community's need for clean water. Sikhs developed a keen interest in the project, and it was undertaken collectively by the whole community for their common good. They worked with great zeal on the construction, and Sikhs started coming from afar to help. However, later on, the project got wrongly characterized as a holy pilgrimage.

Because of the low groundwater level in the area, the step-well required 84 steps to get to the water level. Some ignorant persons started falsely linking the 84 steps to the belief in 84 lakh cycles of rebirth prevalent in the Hindu religion. They did not understand that in Sikhism, no ritual leads to spiritual liberation, and only a liberated Sikh frees themselves from the bondage of personal vices. The *baoli* had been built simply to fulfill the community's need for clean water and not for pilgrimage or to follow superstitious or ritualistic beliefs.

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## 20. Establishment of Guru-ka-Chakk (Amritsar)

**1564** (*age 85*): During the Third Nanak's time, Goindwal was a prominent center of Sikhism. It was established in 1546 by Bhai Amardas Ji at the direction of the Second Nanak, Guru Angad Ji. Gradually, the Sikh population grew and expanded there.

The Third Nanak, Guru Amardas Ji, involved Bhai Jetha in the planning and developing of yet another Sikh center, Guru-ka-Chakk, presently, Amritsar. Guru Ji asked to him to search for someplace other than Goindwal for the residence of Sikhs. Guru Ji further instructed Bhai Jetha to build a great city and cause it to be inhabited. First step was to dig a tank to fulfil the need of clean water for the residents of the new town.

Bhai Jetha searched and found an open uninhabited tract of the country some twenty-five miles from Goindwal. He built a house for his residence and employed a crowd of laborers to dig the earth to construct a water tank. After some time, when a portion of the work was accomplished, and several people had built huts for themselves on the new site, Bhai Jetha, suffering from the pain of separation from Guru Ji, returned to Goindwal to report the extent of the work he had performed. Bhai Jetha remained for some time at Goindwal to help manage the Sikh center there.

When Ramdas ji became the Fourth Nanak in the year 1574, Guru Amardas ji directed him to move to Guru-ka-Chakk and resume establishment of the new Sikh center. During the period of the Fourth Nanak, the new center became known as Amritsar.

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## 21. Selecting the Most Qualified as Guru

**1574 (age 95):** In the year 1541, at the age of 62, Bhai Amardas had moved from Basarke to Khadur to be in the service of the Second Nanak. Bhai Jetha was only seven years old at that time, and his father had already passed away. Coincidentally, the same year Bhai Jetha's maternal grandmother brought the young boy from Lahore to her home in Basarke. Bhai Amardas developed a liking for the young boy and took him under his wing. Bhai Jetha spent 32 years in the company of the Second Nanak and Bhai Amardas. He grew up learning Sikhi in the company of Gurus. Bhai Jetha not only became proficient in understanding Sikhi principles, but he was also obedient, soft-spoken, intelligent, and always eager to do *seva*.

Bhai Jetha, at the age of 23, had successfully represented Guru Ji before the Mughal Emperor Akbar to address Brahmins' complaints.

Because of his advancing age, Guru Amardas Ji started thinking of entrusting the responsibility of Guruship to the most qualified Sikh. He did not consider either of his sons fit for Guruship. Guru Ji had two Sikhs in mind – Bhai Jetha (40 years old) and Bhai Rama. Both were Guru Ji's sons-in-laws and used to serving the *Sangat* wholeheartedly. Guru Ji wanted the selection process for appointing the next Guru to be transparent and merit based.

One morning, Guru Ji asked Bhai Jetha and Bhai Rama to each construct a brick platform. Both erected the platforms. In the evening, Guru Ji inspected the platforms and declared the construction to be unsatisfactory. Guru Ji instructed that the platforms be demolished and reconstructed. The next day, Bhai Jetha and Bhai Rama reconstructed the platforms. Again, Guru Ji rejected them. This scenario was repeated on the third day. Bhai Rama got frustrated. He told Guru Ji that he had indeed followed Guru Ji's instructions faithfully. He said that perhaps because of old age, Guru Ji did not remember his own instructions. He refused to demolish and reconstruct the platform. Bhai Jetha, however, humbly acted on the instructions. He demolished the platform and rebuilt it with total sincerity. The process of making and demolishing the platforms went on for seven days. On the seventh day, Guru Ji again found faults with the platform Bhai Jetha had built.

Bhai Jetha begged Guru Ji to kindly excuse his stupidity of not being able to follow his instructions. He requested Guru Ji to bless him with the wisdom to follow his instructions. When Guru Ji heard this response from Bhai Jetha, he was convinced that Bhai Jetha had liberated himself from the vice of ego.

Bhai Jetha had passed the test of accepting Guru's command unhesitatingly and without questioning it. Bhai Jetha had also already demonstrated a deep understanding and commitment to Sikhi principles and practices. Guru Amardas Ji was convinced that Bhai Jetha was now capable and worthy of the responsibility of Guruship. He installed Bhai Jetha Ji as Guru Ramdas Ji, the Fourth Nanak. This process was a continuance of Guru Nanak Ji's practice of selecting the most deserving Sikh as the next Guru.

After installing Guru Ramdas Ji as the Fourth Nanak, The Third Nanak, Guru Amardas Ji bowed before him as a mark of respect and asked that all Sikhs do the same. All those present obeyed the Guru's command. The Third Nanak, Guru Amardas Ji, then handed over to Guru Ramdas Ji the entire compilation of *Baane* that he had received from Guru Angad Ji. The compilation of *baanee* included all the hymns composed by Guru Nanak Ji, Guru Angad Ji, and the entire collection of compositions of Bhagats that Guru Nanak Ji had personally collected during his missionary travels throughout India. Guru Amardas Ji also handed over to Guru Ramdas Ji all the hymns he had himself composed and recorded in the *Pothi*.

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## 22. Accepting Death as God's Call (*Sadd*)

**1574** (*age 95*): Before the Third Nanak, Guru Amardas Ji *joti jot samaey*, he assembled the members of his family and Sikh followers and instructed them not to perform any ritual prescribed by the Hindu religion (Appendix 1). He directed everyone not to cry when the time came for him to leave his earthly body comprised of the five elements. He further instructed them not to place a lit earthen lamp on the palm of his hand at the time of his passing. He explained that the enlightenment provided by the *baanee*, the Word of the Guru, had already removed the darkness of ignorance from his mind.

He instructed that the Hindu rite of *Pind* (balls of food ritualistically thrown into water) or feeding of Brahmins was also inappropriate and should not be done. He said that the *Naam*, the Name of God, was the only food (metaphorically) required for the soul. He forbade the Sikhs from taking his ashes to Haridwar and said they should instead immerse them in nearby running water. He instructed everyone to recite only *baanee* and the Name of God (*Waheguru*) after his death.

His instructions regarding the customs to be followed upon a Sikh's death are recorded in SGGS as *Sadd* (The Call) on page 923.

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## 23. The Third Nanak's Initiatives

**Guru ka *langar*:** The Third Nanak strengthened the tradition of *langar* and made it obligatory for the visitor to the Guru, saying *Pehle Pangat Phir Sangat*, first partake the food together, then join the congregation. Guru ka *langar* aimed to end the presumed sense of superiority or inferiority because of birth into a so-called high or low caste or class. The realization of equality started with taking food together as equals. It was meant to be followed by every aspect of life. In the prevailing period it was inconceivable of a high caste person to be sharing a meal with one from a lower caste. This false barrier needed to be broken down.

Once, the Mughal Emperor Akbar came to meet with Guru Ji. He, too, had to eat food in the *langar* sitting in the *Pangat* before seeing Guru Ji. This system greatly impressed Akbar, and he expressed his desire to grant some royal property for *langar*. Guru Ji respectfully declined the offer. He explained that *langar* should be supported collectively by the offerings of ordinary persons. Guru Ji maintained cordial relations with Emperor Akbar.

**Widow-remarriage:** Guru Ji preached against *sati*; the Hindu practice of a wife forced to die on her husband's burning funeral pyre. Guru Ji also advocated widow-remarriage and the opportunity to start her life afresh. He argued that a woman was not a man's property but a free and equal member of society. He also asked the women to discard the custom of *Purda*, the veil across the face, which was prevalent in Hindu and Muslim communities.

**Establishment of *Manjis* (Seats):** Guru Amardas Ji divided the areas where Sikhs resided into 22 zones (dioceses) to spread Sikhi. Every zone was called a *Manji* (seat). The *Manji* became the center for preaching Sikh thought. The persons in charge of *Manjis* were Sikhs of high character; of those, some *Manjis in charge* were women. These persons answered questions and clarified the doubts of Sikhs regarding Sikh principles. The *Manjis* in charge visited Guru Ji twice a year. They sought clarifications from Guru Ji regarding Sikhs' questions that they could not answer. Thus, people were no longer going to Brahmin priests to seek religious guidance. It also made it easier to spread Guru Ji's message to far-off places and established

a system for the Sangat to send their offerings to the Guru. The whole Sikh community became a big extended family.

**Sikh Code of Conduct:** Guru Ji formalized traditional practices to inspire the spirit of, and pride in, the new religious Sikh identity. He introduced new ceremonies for marking life's stage of life observances – birth, marriage, and death. He instructed that every religious occasion should be accompanied by reciting Gurus' *baanee*. The Third Nanak continued to teach the practices created by Guru Nanak Ji and the Second Nanak, treating every person with respect and love as God's creation. He did this despite stiff resistance from orthodox Hindus and Muslims. He began formalizing a "Sikh Code of Conduct," which was essential to develop further to ensure that Sikhs did not return to Muslim or Hindu rituals.

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## 24. Administrative System

**Manji System:** The *Manji* and *Peehri* systems for women were innovative systems established by the Third Nanak, Guru Amardas Ji. The word *Manji* refers to the low wooden cots on which the Sikh congregation leader would sit and explain Sikh doctrines and principles to their *sangats* and sing *shabads* (hymns), followed in chorus by the congregation.

The *Manji* system helped establish a logical and well-planned method of administration to spread Sikhi throughout Punjab and India. Twenty-two devoted Gursikhs, all devout men and women, were appointed by Guru Amardas Ji to spread Gurus' message, provide spiritual guidance, and keep the *sangat* (congregation) in touch with Guru Ji.

Each *Manji* (diocese) was also responsible for collecting the offerings (*dasvandh*) of the *sangat* made in gratitude for the Sikh teachings and maintaining and expanding Sikh community affairs. The Sikhs' offerings were used for programs such as *langar* (free communal meal with nourishing food) and expenses of the local chapters. The surplus was passed on to the *golak* (the community treasury) at Goindwal.

Goindwal was becoming a busy place, with ever-increasing numbers of Sikhs coming to hear Guru Ji's teachings. Hence, the Guru's presence in Goindwal had become necessary. The appointment of *Manjis* helped administer the Sikh community's affairs in other parts of the region. Guru Ji wanted his Sikhs to lead a householder's life and setting up the *Manji* system ensured that they had support for a spiritual practice and lifestyle.

Devout Sikhs, men, and women were appointed to teach Sikhi through the *Manji* system in the following regions: Majha (Amritsar, Lahore, and Sialkot districts), Jalandhar Doab, Kangra hills, Kashmir hills, Malwa (Patiala, Ludhiana, and Bhatinda districts), and Sind. Some of these areas are now in current-day Pakistan or states like Himachal Pradesh and Jammu Kashmir.

**Peehri System:** Guru Amardas Ji established the *Peehri* system to spread the teachings of Gurus', especially among women. *Peehri* is a small wooden stool from which a person would guide the *sangat*. Even though Guru Nanak

Ji had called for equality of women and men, the women of the region – whether Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, or Jain – were for the most part dominated by men.

During their menstruation period and even those giving birth, women were considered ritually unclean. They were segregated and kept out of sight. Women were often kept behind walls in each religion and were allowed out only in *Purda* (veiled). Muslim women could be divorced by the husband, uttering only a few words. Hindu women were blamed for their husbands' death, supposedly due to the wives' so-called bad karma. Hindu widows were not allowed to remarry and were expected to give up color in their clothing and socializing outside their mother's house. In their husband's house, women were often treated almost as domestic servants. Gurus' had considered this behavior, along with the practice of *sati*, as an abomination.

In the society of that time and region, because men dominated their wives and daughters, a family's honor depended on maintaining the virtue of their women by never coming in contact with any male who was not a part of the immediate family. So, to avoid any impression of impropriety, Guru Amardas Ji introduced a system in which women spiritual leaders would guide other women about Sikh doctrines and traditions. Guru Nanak truly initiated the beginning of women's liberation, preached against inequality which centuries later still prevails in many cultures. All Gurus followed and propagated it to higher levels.

The task of the women in charge of *Peehris* was to enlighten other women with the Gurus' Word and to spread the spirit of *Naam*. Bibi Bhani, Bibi Dani, and Bibi Pal were some of the most revered leaders of the different *peehris* established by Guru Amardas Ji, the Third Nanak.

Both the *Manji* and the *Peehri* systems had the same objective – to teach and share Sikhi and the practice of equality among all Sikh men and women throughout the region.

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## 25. Highlights of the Third Nanak

1479 - 1574

Born on:	May 5, 1479
Born in:	Village Basarke Gillan in Amritsar district
Parents:	Father – Baba Tej Bhan Bhalla Mother – Mata Bakht Kaur (also known as Sulakhani and Lakhmi Devi)
Wife:	Mata Mansa Devi
Children:	Two daughters - Dani and Bhani (married to Guru Ramdas Ji) Two sons - Mohan and Mohri
<i>Gurgaddi:</i>	April 16, 1552 (age 73)
<i>Joti Jot:</i>	September 1, 1574 (age 95)
Contributions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A total of 907 hymns were incorporated in the Guru Granth Sahib Ji.</li> <li>■ The gift of the prayer Anand Sahib, which is one of the Five <i>baanees</i> recited daily by devout Sikhs.</li> <li>■ All visitors (from any caste, creed, ranking, social status) to Gurdwaras were asked to first partake in <i>langar</i> (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 <i>langar</i> and then had a meeting with the Guru.</li> <li>■ He further preached against the caste system.</li> <li>■ Guru Ji uplifted the status of women and preached equality with men. He strictly prohibited practices such as <i>Sati</i> (the burning of a wife on her husband's funeral pyre), <i>Parda</i> (veil to cover the face), and encouraged widow-remarriage.</li> <li>■ He established an administrative system of <i>Manjis</i> and <i>Peehris</i> for spreading the message of Gurus' and managing the increasing Sikh programs and congregations all over the region.</li> <li>■ He established the city of Goindwal on the banks of the River Beas.</li> </ul>

# Death Ceremonies

## Hindu Religion:

A complex set of rules and rituals had been devised in the Hindu religion. Here is a brief summary.

Upon death, the person is removed from the bed and is laid down on the floor. A hand-made lamp made of flour is placed on the palm of the dead body. As much as one can afford, some money is placed near the lamp as a donation for the priest. The explanation is that the spirit must go through dark alleys to the next world and needs light to find the path. Before the funeral, round balls made of flour are distributed to the public. The priest takes some water in his mouth and spits it out. These are considered meals for the departed spirit in the next world.

It is assumed that the deceased person's spirit wanders around the house for 13 days and is reluctant to move on. For 13 days, elder relatives come and stay overnight to support the dead person's relatives.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> day, the priest performs a religious ceremony to push the spirit to move to the other world. It is considered that the journey takes 365 days to accomplish.

After 365 days, on the day of the death, a special ceremony called *Vareena* is performed. Utensils and clothes are provided to the priest with the intent of sending them to the deceased. After that, every year on the day of the passing, clothes are given to the priest, expecting these will reach the deceased in the next world.

*(The above is an abstract of details provided by Professor Sahib Singh on pages 92-94 in his book, "Gur Itihas, Patshahi 2 -9", Published by Singh Brothers).*

## Sikh Religion:

Refer to Page 46 Sikh Rehat Maryada published by SGPC.

<http://www.sgpc.net/rehat-maryada.php>

# **The Fourth Nanak**

**Guru Ramdas Ji**

## 26. Early Life of the Fourth Nanak

**1534 (birth):** Ramdas Ji was born at Chuna Mandi, Lahore (now in Pakistan), on September 24, 1534. Because he was the firstborn and the eldest, he became known as Bhai Jetha. His mother's name was Mata Daya Kaur and father's name was Baba Hari Das.

Bhai Jetha's mother passed away when he was very young, and his father died when he was just seven. Upon his father's death, his maternal grandmother took young Bhai Jetha to her home in Basarke. The family was poor. Young Bhai Jetha sold boiled grams to meet his daily needs. He was a handsome and promising child. According to some chronicles, Bhai Amardas Ji, at age 62 (later Guru), came from Khadur to Basarke to express condolences to the grandmother at the death of her son-in-law. Bhai Amardas Ji developed keen affection for young Bhai Jetha. Bhai Jetha stayed with his grandmother at Basarke for five years.

**1546 (age 12):** At the Second Nanak, Guru Angad Ji's instructions, Bhai Amardas had founded a Sikh center at Goindwal. Bhai Amardas brought his relatives to the new center. He also brought the grandmother and young Bhai Jetha from Basarke to Goindwal. There, Bhai Jetha resumed selling boiled grams and also started attending the religious congregations held by Bhai Amardas. Bhai Jetha used to accompany Bhai Amardas from Goindwal to Khadur to visit the Second Nanak, Guru Angad Ji. It is worth noting that Basarke, Khadur, and Goindwal are not far apart.

**1552 (age 18):** Bhai Amardas became the Third Nanak in 1552. One day Mata Mansha Devi suggested that he look for a suitable groom for their daughter Bhani. Bhai Jetha's personality, wisdom, ethical qualities, and love for *Seva* had already impressed the Third Nanak. Guru Ji was convinced that Bhai Jetha was the most suitable groom for his daughter. Bhai Jetha and Bibi Bhani got married in December 1552. They had three sons: Prithi Chand (1558), Mahadev (1560), and Arjan (1563, who later became Guru, the Fifth Nanak). After the marriage, he stayed with his father-in-law and deeply immersed himself in *Gurughar* activities (Sikhi). He commanded the complete confidence of Guru Amardas Ji. He often accompanied Guru Ji on long missionary tours to different parts of the region.

**1558 (age 24):** The Third Nanak, Guru Amardas Ji, returned to Goindwal after preaching Sikhi to the public assembled at various places of Hindu pilgrimage. This preaching included guidance about the Sikh way of life, including taking meals together irrespective of caste, treating persons of different creeds as equals, and sharing common services.

Upon reaching Goindwal, Guru Ji started the construction of a step-well (*baoli*, see Chapter 19). When devotees heard about the structure of the step-well, many started coming to Goindwal to take part in the *seva*. One day some pilgrims from Lahore who were going for a holy dip to Hardwar (a Hindu pilgrimage place) stopped by Goindwal. They were surprised to see Bhai Jetha, the son of a person of the Hindu Khatri caste, carrying a basket full of the dug-up earth on his head and working alongside people of the so-called low caste (Shudra) as an ordinary laborer. They angrily asked Guru Ji why he was making his son-in-law work like a low-caste laborer.

Upon hearing this, Bhai Jetha requested Guru Amardas Ji to pardon their ignorance. They did not know that for Sikhs, *seva* was highly valued, irrespective of caste, creed, or personal relationships.

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## 27. Explaining Sikh Beliefs

**1559 (age 25):** With the construction of the *baoli* (step-well), the number of followers of Sikhi coming to Goindwal increased significantly. Guru Amardas Ji had previously instructed *Pehle Pangat Pache Sangat*. These actions further eliminated discriminatory thoughts in people's minds on account of caste and creed. Whoever saw Sikhs living cordially at Goindwal started similar practices on returning to their villages. People understood the fallacy of caste and realized that caste distinctions were unfair and unjustified. However, some Brahmins and high caste people could not tolerate that so-called low-caste people considered themselves equal to higher caste people.

**1566 (age 32):** Some Brahmins and high caste people complained to the Mughal Emperor Akbar against the Third Nanak, Guru Amardas Ji. Akbar summoned Guru Ji to come from Goindwal to Lahore to respond to the alleged complaints. Guru Ji sent Bhai Jetha as his representative to Emperor Akbar to reply to the charges.

Bhai Jetha convincingly explained many aspects of the Sikh religion, started by Guru Nanak Ji and subsequent Gurus. He said that Sikhi practices are distinct from those of the Hindu faith. Bhai Jetha highlighted differences in such beliefs and practices as reciting *mantars*, worshiping idols, going on pilgrimage to holy places, and believing in and practicing the caste system.

Bhai Jetha also explained that Hindus recite the *Gayatri* mantrar three times a day according to the teaching of the *Vedas*, a religious text. *Vedas* prohibit *Shudras* (so-called low caste) from reciting *Gayatri*. In contrast, the teachings of Guru Nanak Ji are the same for all humans, despite the so-called castes. Sikhs remember God and engage in virtuous deeds all the time, and they did not merely say some holy mantrar a few times every day.

Bhai Jetha further explained that Hindus believe that visiting holy places for pilgrimage and dipping in the water gets one spiritually clean. As per Sikhi, the mind can only be cleansed of evil thoughts by listening to God's Name, the Gurus' words of wisdom, and performing virtuous deeds.

In addition, Bhai Jetha highlighted the discriminatory practices based on the caste system. Persons of so-called high caste oppress those belonging to the so-called low caste. Sikhs do not believe in the caste system, and Sikhs treat everyone as equal, created by the one God. Also, Bhai Jetha explained that Sikhs do not worship idols made of stones. The God of the Sikhs, the one universal creator, is ever alive and is present everywhere all the time.

Bhai Jetha had intelligently represented Guru Amardas Ji and explained the Sikh beliefs and practices. He had satisfied and impressed Emperor Akbar by his answers, and Akbar decorated Bhai Jetha with a robe of honor.

Even though Brahmins had lodged a complaint to Emperor Akbar against Guru Amardas Ji, Guru Ji still had the Hindus' well-being in mind. At Guru Amardas Ji's direction, Bhai Jetha suggested that Akbar stop the *Jizya* (religious tax imposed on non-Muslims) and the Pilgrimage tax (a tax for visiting Hindu sacred places). Because of his high regard for the Third Nanak's teachings, as explained by Bhai Jetha, Emperor Akbar agreed and eliminated both taxes.

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## 28. Laying the Foundation of Amritsar

**1564 (age 30):** In 1552-53, the Third Nanak, Guru Amardas Ji, had involved Bhai Jetha (18-19 years old) in the development of a new Sikh center at Goindwal. As a result, Bhai Jetha had gained considerable experience in the development of a new township.

In 1564, the Third Nanak entrusted Bhai Jetha with the planning and establishing of a new Sikh center, Guru-ka-Chakk (presently, Amritsar). At Guru Amardas Ji's direction, Bhai Jetha met with prominent persons of the affected villages, bought the land for 700 rupees (Akbari currency), and secured the land deed.

The first Sikh center, established by Guru Nanak Ji at Kartarpur, was on a riverbank. The Sikh center established by the Third Nanak, Guru Amardas Ji, at Goindwal, was also on a riverbank. Hence, at these two Sikh centers, there was plenty of water available for the daily needs of the Sangat. However, the new Sikh center being planned at Amritsar was not near a water source. Guru Amardas Ji had already gotten a *baoli* constructed at Goindwal (in the year 1559) to meet the needs of water for the Sangat. Bhai Jetha, who was 25 years old at that time, had performed the physical *seva* of digging and carrying the dug-up earth on his head.

It was natural that Bhai Jetha first planned for a reliable source of water for the new Sikh center. He laid the foundation of the new town by starting the digging of a *sarovar* (tank) at the site of the present Santokhsar *sarovar*. However, before the digging could be completed, Guru Amardas Ji (age 85) called him back to Goindwal to help manage the Sikh center there. Bhai Jetha returned to Amritsar after ten years and resumed construction of the tank.

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## 29. Bhai Jetha Selected as the Fourth Nanak

**1574 (age 40):** Bhai Jetha had become an orphan at the age of seven and had earned his living at a young age by selling boiled grams. However, he was fortunate to spend 28 years of his life (since the age of 12) in the company of Guru Amardas Ji. Bhai Jetha was also fortunate to have visited the Second Nanak, along with Amardas Ji. By 1574, it had become clear to everyone, including the Third Nanak, that Bhai Jetha had become proficient in Sikhi principles, was well mannered, of a loving nature, and always keen to serve the Sangat.

Upon realizing that his life was coming to an end and having concluded that Bhai Jetha was the best suited to lead the Sikh community, the Third Nanak, Guru Amardas Ji (age 95), selected Bhai Jetha as the Fourth Nanak. He made Bhai Jetha sit on a raised platform in the congregation and bowed his head before the Fourth Nanak.

Bhai Jetha's childhood and life before coming in contact with Amardas Ji had been miserable. However, *Waheguru* had bestowed the highest honor on him even though he was born destitute. Guru Ramdas Ji's hymn below) captures the sentiments of the occasion.

ਜੇ ਹਮਰੀ ਬਿਧਿ ਹੋਤੀ ਮੇਰੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਾ ਸਾ ਬਿਧਿ ਤੁਮ ਹਰਿ ਜਾਣਹੁ ਆਪੇ ॥  
ਹਮ ਰੁਲਤੇ ਫਿਰਤੇ ਕੋਈ ਬਾਤ ਨ ਪੂਛਤਾ ਗੁਰ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਸੰਗਿ ਕੀਰੇ ਹਮ ਥਾਪੇ ॥  
ਧੰਨੁ ਧੰਨੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਜਨ ਕੇਰਾ ਜਿਤੁ ਮਿਲਿਐ ਚੁਕੇ ਸਭਿ ਸੋਗ ਸੰਤਾਪੇ ॥੪॥੫॥੧੧॥੪੯॥

**Transliteration:** jo hammered bidh hotee mere satiguraa saa bidh tum har jaanahu aape ||ham rulate firate koiee baat na poochhataa gur satigur sa(n)g keere ham thaape ||dha(n)n dha(n)n guroo naanak jan keraa jit miliaai chooke sabh sog sa(n)taape ||4||5||11||49|| SGGS, pg. 167

**Metaphorical meaning:** O my True Guru, before coming to you, I was worthless, no one cared for me at all. In the company of the Guru, my consciousness has been raised and I am in an exalted state. All my sorrows and troubles have come to an end.

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## 30. Development of Amritsar

**1574 (age 40):** Upon appointing Guru Ramdas Ji as the Fourth Nanak, Guru Amardas Ji suggested that he go with his family to establish the new town. Guru Ramdas Ji, the Fourth Nanak, resumed developing the new Sikh center at Amritsar.

This time, instead of resuming digging of the *santokhsar sarovar*, he commenced digging of a larger Amritsar *sarovar* (pool). Guru Ramdas Ji was extremely busy managing the massive project involving thousands of workers, planning for their food and stay. Guru Ji managed the project in addition to conducting daily spiritual discourses for the *sangat*. Whenever Guru Ji got the opportunity, he would join the workers and carry baskets on his head full of the dug-up earth or lime, used instead of cement in those days.

Eventually, the *santokhsar sarovar* was also completed. Soon, the new city flourished, as it was situated at the center of domestic and international trade routes. It grew into an important center of trade in Punjab, almost as big as Lahore. Guru Ramdas Ji invited many merchants and artisans from different walks of life and trades to come and settle in Amritsar.

Amritsar proved to be a step of far-reaching importance. It provided a commonplace of worship to the Sikhs, and it paved the way for further establishing Sikhi as a distinct religion. Guru Ramdas Ji also introduced the *Masand* system by refining the *Manji* system introduced by the Third Nanak. This step, too, played a significant role in further consolidating the Sikh community.

Sikhs serving at the sites of the two *sarovars* and other daily laborers, perceiving the work to go on for a long time, started constructing houses for themselves. People of all trades started settling at this place. Guru Ramdas Ji served *langar* (free kitchen) for the Sikhs and other workers so that every needy person could have hearty meals.

**1577 (age 43):** The piece of land bought in 1564 appeared to be insufficient to meet the needs of the growing population. Guru Ramdas Ji purchased an additional 300 acres of land from the villagers of Tung for

the expansion of the town. After constructing the pool at Amritsar, the town became famous as Amritsar (pool of nectar).

When the town of Amritsar was being established, Guru Ramdas Ji's youngest son Arjan (later Guru Arjan Ji), who was 15 years old at that time, took a keen interest in the project. Arjan actively participated in the construction and even performed the physical labor of carrying baskets full of the dug-up earth. Later, Guru Arjan Ji used this experience and knowledge to establish new towns – like Chheharta, Kartarpur, and Gobindpur (presently known as Hargobindpur) – in other areas in Punjab.

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## 31. Emphasis on Love of God

**1577 (age 43):** While Guru Ramdas Ji was getting the pool constructed at Amritsar, a group of Hindu ascetics came to see him. Guru Ji welcomed them and inquired about the purpose of the visit. During their conversation, the group leader respectfully asked Guru Ji that since Sikhs did not learn the Vedic *Ashat Yoga*, how could they control the mind? The ascetic said that self-realization could only be attained if the mind was under control. Only upon self-realization, the mind could concentrate on God. Therefore, without the Hindu practice of Yoga, Sikhs would not be able to attain salvation.

Guru Ji replied that one needs compassion to realize God and attain salvation. Sikhs learned to love God and behold God everywhere in His creation. He said that Sikhs remained immersed in God's love all the time. One gets the wisdom of knowing and practicing Godly qualities by loving Him, the Giver of everything. The desire for worldly things leaves those who love God. So, Sikhs stay detached even while performing their worldly affairs. For achieving salvation, they did not need to perform any kind of Yoga.

Guru Nanak Ji and all subsequent Gurus had taught that there is one omnipresent God. One can realize Him by remembering God all the time and performing virtuous deeds. The Gurus' teachings are evident from the Fourth Nanak's hymn, see below.

ਹਥਿ ਕਰਿ ਤੰਤੁ ਵਜਾਵੈ ਜੋਗੀ ਥੋਥਰ ਵਾਜੈ ਬੇਨ ॥  
ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਣ ਬੋਲਹੁ ਜੋਗੀ ਇਹੁ ਮਨੂਆ ਹਰਿ ਰੰਗਿ ਭੇਨ ॥੧॥  
ਜੋਗੀ ਹਰਿ ਦੇਹੁ ਮਤੀ ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ॥  
ਜੁਗੁ ਜੁਗੁ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਏਕੋ ਵਰਤੈ ਤਿਸੁ ਆਗੈ ਹਮ ਆਦੇਸੁ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

**Transliteration:** hath kar ta(n)t vajaavai jogee thothar vaajai ben ||gurmat har gun bolahu jogee ih manooaa har ra(n)g bhen ||1||jogee har dheh matee upadhes ||jug jug har har eko varatai tis aagai ham aadhes ||1|| rahaau || SGGs, pg. 368

**Metaphorical meaning:** O Yogi, instead of simply playing string instruments and uttering God's name you should get wisdom from the Guru, educate your mind and remember God all the time. Thus, O Yogi, your mind shall be imbued with the God's Love who is Omnipresent. I humbly bow down to Him.

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## 32. Masand System

The Third Nanak, Guru Amardas Ji, had established 22 *Manjis* (diocese) and 52 *Peehris* (sub-centers) to manage Sikhs spread over a vast area. The Fourth Nanak, Guru Ramdas Ji, refined the *Manji* system by appointing a permanent representative called *Masand* (literally, one who holds an administrative position) for a specific geographical area. *Masands* were the link between members of the *Sangat* who lived too far to come often to meet Guru Ji. They were responsible for missionary activities and collecting *dasvandh* (tithing) from the devotees and passing it on to the *golak* (the community treasury) to support community activities. A *Masand* (a permanent representative) was to pass on the responsibility to the deserving person within the family.

Only those Sikhs that had the spirit of *seva*, were reliable, honest, sincere, and were proficient in Sikh philosophy were selected as *Masands*. They were not delegated special powers and could not demand respect or status from the Sikhs. With the establishment of the *Masand* institution, Amritsar became a prominent center for gaining spiritual enlightenment from the Gurus' teachings and the headquarters of the Sikh community.

The *Masand* system worked well until the Guruship of the Ninth Nanak, Guru Teg Bahadar Ji.

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## 33. Sikh Marriage Ceremony – *Laavan*

The Fourth Nanak composed hymns in a total of 30 Raags, including the 19 Raags in which Guru Nanak Ji had previously composed his hymns. In Raag Soohi, Guru Ramdas Ji wrote four *shabads* (hymns) explaining four stages of one's spiritual marriage with God.

He used these four *Shabads* – which are now used for the Sikh marriage ceremony, called *Laavan* – to metaphorically depict a bride's (or a soul's) journey to meet her beloved husband (God). This metaphor also conveyed that coming close to God is the ultimate goal of human existence. The four *Shabads* of the *Laavan* are on pages 773-774 of Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

The religious ceremony of *Laavan* begins with a person's quest for God-realization, and it concludes with the attainment of this ideal. Guru Ji composed *Laavan* describing the spiritual journey of the human soul. Later on, it was used to solemnize the Sikh marriage ceremony in a Gurdwara. During the ceremony, the couple getting married circumambulates the Sri Guru Granth Sahib four times, as the Granthis sing each of the four *shabads* of *Laavan*.

Guru Nanak Ji had already sought to free the public from being exploited during ceremonies related to birth and wearing the *Janeu* (sacred thread worn only by the so-called higher caste males). The Third Nanak had sought to help free the public from ceremonies relating to death by composing *Sadd* and providing instructions to be followed on this occasion. The Fourth Nanak, Guru Ramdas Ji, introduced a new matrimonial system based upon Sikh teachings and values instead of Hindu's Vedic system. This distinct marriage code for the Sikhs separated and protected them from the orthodox and traditional Hindu, various sects, and other faiths systems.

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## 34. Selecting the Next Guru

Guru Nanak Ji, Guru Angad Ji (the Second Nanak), and Guru Amardas Ji (the Third Nanak) did not select their sons to be the next Guru. The Fourth Nanak, Guru Ramdas Ji, was the first Guru to appoint his son, Arjan, as the next Guru.

Guru Ramdas Ji's three sons had grown up in the environment of Sikhi since birth. During the construction of the new Sikh center at Amritsar, his sons actively supported their father. The eldest, Prithi Chand, grew up to be a skilled manager of the physical construction and administrative aspects of building the new Sikh center and providing services to the Sangat. However, he lacked the spiritual aspects of life. The middle son, Mahadev, had become a recluse ascetic.

Only Guru Ramdas Ji's youngest son, Arjan, had developed excellent spiritual and worldly qualities. He was always in the service of *Sangat*, remembered God at all times, recited *baanee*, learned *Raags*, and associated with relatives, including attending marriages and other social events. Overall, he had grown up with a great personality and leadership qualities, and a deep understanding of every aspect of Sikhi. He had the virtuous qualities and high moral values to lead the Sikh community.

It had become clear to everyone that Arjan Sahib would be the right choice to be the next Guru. Prithi Chand tried his best to get the honor, claiming it as Guru Ji's eldest son. Nevertheless, Guru Ramdas Ji knew very well that his youngest son was the most suitable for this responsibility. He selected Arjan Sahib as the next Guru, the Fifth Nanak. Guru Arjan Ji was 18 years old when he became Guru.

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## **35. *Joti Jot Samana***

**1581 (age 47):** The Fourth Nanak, Guru Ramdas Ji, served as Guru for only seven years. However, he had dedicated much of his life to serving the *panth* (Sikh community), starting even before becoming Guru. He had dedicated 35 years (since age 12) of his 47 years of life in the service of the Panth.

Guru Ramdas Ji entrusted the responsibility of Guruship to his son Guru Arjan Ji on August 28, 1581. Because Prithi Chand had objected to this and had bitter arguments with his father, Guru Ramdas Ji decided to move, along with most of his family, to Goindwal. His eldest son Prithi Chand stayed behind at Amritsar.

Guru Ramdas Ji, the Fourth Nanak, passed away *joti jot samaey* on September 1, 1581.

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# 36. Highlights of the Fourth Nanak

1534 - 1581

Born on:	September 24, 1534
Born at:	Chuna Mandi, Lahore (now in Pakistan)
Parents:	Father - Baba Hari Das Sodhi Mother - Mata Daya Kaur (Anup Kaur)
Wife:	Bibi Bhani (daughter of Guru Amardas ji Ji)
Children:	Three sons: Prithi Chand, Mahadev, and Arjan (later, Guru Arjan Ji, the Fifth Nanak)
<i>Gurgaddi:</i>	September 1, 1574 (age 40)
<i>Joti Jot:</i>	September 1, 1581 (age 47)
Contributions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ He composed hymns in 30 Raags, including the 17 Raags in which Guru Nanak Dev Ji had composed his hymns (<i>Shabads</i>).</li> <li>▪ He wrote 638 hymns, these include 246 Padei 138 Saloks, 31 Ashtpadis and 8 Vars (183 <i>Pauris</i>), 28 <i>Chant</i>, and 8 <i>Shabads</i> with specific titles that are a part of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib.</li> <li>▪ He strengthened Sikhi by composing the four <i>Laavans</i>, institutionalizing the Sikh marriage ceremony.</li> <li>▪ The fourth Nanak planned and laid the foundation stone of Chak Ramdas or Ramdas Pur. Providing a common place of worship and spiritual rejuvenation for all Sikhs and paved the way and a sacred place for the future guidelines for Sikhism as a world religion.</li> <li>▪ Guru Ramdas Ji introduced Masand system as an organizational structure of Sikh society, in place of Manji system.</li> <li>▪ He continued on and expanded the tradition of <i>langar</i>.</li> <li>▪ Guru Ji strongly denounced superstitions, the caste system, and pilgrimages to holy places.</li> </ul>

## 37. Significant World Events

Around the period of the Second, Third, and Fourth Nanaks

1501	The world has a population of around 435 million – about one-eighteenth of today's population of 7.8 billion, as of March 2020.
1502	Christopher Columbus begins his fourth and last journey to the Caribbean. He still believed that the islands he had found laid off the coast of India.
1510	Portuguese ships are heavily armed with cannons and dominate the Indian Ocean. India these days has a population of around 105 million. India today has a population of about 1.6 billion.
1521	Charles V was elected as the Holy Roman Emperor. Pope Leo X allied himself with Charles against Martin Luther.
1526	The printing press was introduced in Stockholm, Sweden.
1526	From Kabul, a Muslim tribal leader, Babar, 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 the Church of England.
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.

1551	In Geneva, Robert Estienne, also known as Robert Stephanus, was 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 of England.
1568	The population of China reaches 60 million, and it is 1.4 billion as of August 2021. Akbar expanded his empire in India. He killed more than 30,000 Hindu peasants following his conquest of Chittor.
1579	The British navigator Sir Francis Drake passes through Maluku and transit in Ternate on his circumnavigation of the world.
1600	Elizabeth I grants a charter to the British East India Company beginning the English advance in Asia.

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