

# GURU NANAK

12<sup>th</sup> April 2025



Nankana Sahib

*by*  
dedicated Sewadars  
*of*  
Sri Hemkunt Foundation Inc.

## Introductory Note

This book covers some of the events in Guru Nanak’s life mentioned in popular story books (particularly the ‘Janamsakhis’). In doing so, it seeks to correct misunderstandings about some of these events that often go unnoticed because we are unaware of the sources of the Janamsakhis and the motivations of those who wrote them.

Invariably, the texts regarding Gurus’ life have been written based on the literature created by Nirmalas. These were the group of people who controlled the Sikh institutions including Gurdwaras from 1765-1925 CE. They were Benaras educated individuals trained in Vedic texts. They created Sikhi texts presenting Sikh Gurus with miraculous powers just like Hindu gods. They created fictional Sakhees with even the primary message contrary to the message of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. They even went to the extent of installing idols of Hindu deities in the *parkarma* of the Darbar Sahib, Amritsar. Eventually, they were removed from the control of Gurdwara during 1920-1925 CE.

Some examples of the how this book seeks to correct the erroneous concepts introduced in the Janamsakhis are given below. They illustrate the importance of avoiding the errors that have crept into our understanding of Guru Nanak’s life and teachings because we have accepted some of the Janamsakhis without critically examining how much they cleverly distort the authentic messages of our Gurus.

<b>Guru Nanak</b>	Old Sikhi texts address the first Sikh Guru as “Nanak” or “Guru Nanak”. Much later, the appendage “Dev” was introduced, apparently to bring the name closer to a Hindu name. In this book, the founder of Sikhism is addressed as Guru Nanak or Guru ji, and not as Guru Nanak Dev.
<b>Mehta Kalyan Das</b>	Guru Nanak’s father was a respected official in the local administration of the village in which Guru ji grew up. Janamsakhis degrade him by addressing him as Kalu. This book avoids distorting his name in this way.
<b>Historical Reference</b>	Wherever, the historical authenticity of the supposed events mentioned in a ‘Janamsakhi’ is suspect, a disclaimer has been added at the beginning of the chapter in which the Sakhee is discussed.
<b>Message of Sakhees</b>	The spiritual message of Sakhees has been clarified, where needed, to make it consistent with the message of Banee in Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

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# Preface

Sri Hemkunt Foundation Inc. was established four decades ago (in 1980) in New York, USA. The primary objectives of the Foundation are to help children and youth (6-25 years old) growing up in the Western hemisphere learn Sikhi, develop public speaking skills, and be proud of being a Sikh.

We do this through educational books on the Gurus lives, Sikh history, and Sikh philosophy; and by providing our youth opportunities for demonstrating their knowledge of Sikhi and skillfully communicating this 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 a specified time from a podium.

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

For many years, the Foundation had used books published in India, U. K., etc. However, almost every year the Foundation received valid criticism from parents, participants, and judges that some of the books used for the competition (Symposium) were not satisfactory. The English

vocabulary, sentence structure, and context were not appropriate for the Western 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 Sewa.

The current book is meant for the 6-8 years age group. An attempt has been made to present Guru jee’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-going audience. The Foundation uses this book for the annual Symposium (Speech Competition). Detailed information regarding the annual International Symposium is available at the website [www.hemkunt2.org](http://www.hemkunt2.org).

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

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# 1. Worldly Education

**1469 (Birth):** Guru Nanak Dev ji was born on 15<sup>th</sup> April 1469. <sup>(1)</sup> He was born in Rai Bhoi di Talwandi, Sheikhpura, (now in) Pakistan. Presently, it is known as Nankana Sahib in his memory. His father, Mehta Kalyan Das oversaw village land records and revenue. Mehta Kalyan Das was an honest and hardworking man. Rai Bular, a kind person, was the owner of that village, who liked and trusted him.

**1476 (Age 7):** When Guru Nanak was seven, his father sent him to Gopal Das, the village teacher to learn Hindi and Landa <sup>(2)</sup>. He was very intelligent. He was a keen and a quick learner. In a short time, he learned all that the teacher had to offer. At the recommendation of Gopal Das, he was sent to Pandit Brij Nath to learn Sanskrit and scriptures. During this time, he would play with his friends or wander about in the forest or sit under a tree for hours meditating on God. While taking leave from Gopal Das, it was apparent that Guru Nanak was philosophical in his thoughts from young age. Nanak used to reflect on topics e.g. every person must die. No one can live forever. What is the purpose of life? One is punished for evil deeds and rewarded for good deeds in this life. One should inculcate Divine Virtues (Appendix 1) and learn to love others in this life.

**1482 (Age 13):** Guru ji's father decided to send him to an Islamic religious teacher, Maulvi Qutbuddin when he was thirteen to learn Persian. Very quickly, Guru Nanak learned everything Qutbuddin had to offer. One day Guru Nanak asked him, "What are the meanings of Persian alphabets?" No one had asked him this question before. He could not think of an answer. He asked Nanak to tell him what these letters stood for. Guru Nanak explained the meanings of Persian alphabets as a vehicle to be a good, honest, and truthful person and to love and serve others.

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(1). Some chronicles mistakenly state that Guru Nanak ji was born on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1469. SGPC website also mentions Guru Nanak's birth date as 15<sup>th</sup> April 1469.

(2). The *Laṅḍā* scripts, from the term *laṅḍā* meaning "without a tail", is a Punjabi word used to refer to writing systems used in Punjab and adjoining areas.

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## 2. Thread of Virtuous Qualities (Janeu)

**1478 (Age 9):** When Guru Nanak was nine, the family priest - Pandit Hardial - was invited to put sacred thread (*Janeu*) on him. It is a Hindu tradition for boys to wear this thread once they reach a certain age.<sup>(3)</sup> Guru Nanak stopped the Pandit as soon as he raised his arm to facilitate wearing of the thread and asked, "Dear Pandit, what is the purpose of putting this thread around my neck? How does it make me a better person?"

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

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

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

*Daia kapah santokh sut jat gandhi sat vat. eh janeu ji ka hai t pande ghat.  
na eh tutai n mal lagai na eh jalai na jai. dhan su manas nanka jo gal chale pai. SGGS 471  
Make compassion the cotton, contentment the thread, modesty the knot and truth the  
twist. This is the sacred thread of the soul, if you have it, then go ahead and put it on me.*

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

(3) *The tradition of wearing Janeu is described in a book called "Laws of Manu", which gives details of the ancient rites and laws of Hindu society, including the caste system. As per Hindu Shashtars, Brahmin wear silk thread, Khatri's wear cotton thread, and Vaish wear jute thread. Persons from the Shudhar caste and women are not allowed to wear janeu.*

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### 3. Illness of Mind

After completing his education with Maulvi Qutbuddin, Guru Nanak met saints and hermits and engaged in deep conversation about the very purpose of life. Other times, he would stay home immersed in his own thoughts. His parents became concerned about Guru Nanak's behavior.

Mehta Kalyan Das called Haridas, the village physician, to treat Guru Nanak. Haridas took Guru Nanak's arm to feel the pulse. Guru Nanak pulled away his arm from the physician and asked why he was holding Nanak's arm. The physician explained that he wanted to feel Nanak's pulse to diagnose the problem to prescribe proper treatment.

Guru Nanak explained to the physician that his body was not sick. The illness was in his mind, deep inside him. Guru Nanak further added that a physician, who first recognizes the problem and then prescribes the medicine to treat both body and mind is a wise physician.

The physician, on hearing that he himself was ill, was very upset. He asked Nanak what illness he had? Haridas added that he was quite healthy and fit. Haridas again asked what his illness was. Guru Nanak replied that the worry of cycle of death and rebirth bothers him.

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

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## 4. No Hindu, No Muslim

**1504 (Age 35):** One day Nawab Daulat Khan of Sultanpur Lodhi heard that Nanak, son of Mehta Kalyan Das, was meditating in a graveyard. He took his head Qazi (Islamic magistrate) along with him to see Nanak. They were amazed to see Nanak so totally engrossed in meditation that he did not realize anyone's presence. When Nawab and his Qazi went closer, they heard him say, "There is no Hindu, no Muslim." They were shocked to hear this.

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

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

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

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

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

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## 5. Honest Working

**1504 (Age 35):** Rai Bular suggested to Mehta Kalyan Das, “Send Nanak to his sister Nanaki at Sultanpur Lodhi. Her husband, Jai Ram, is the minister looking after the estate of Daulat Khan, the governor of Sultanpur. Bhai Jai Ram will get him appointed to a suitable position in the service of Daulat Khan.

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

When the Nawab came to know that Guru Nanak was proficient in accounting and Persian, he readily appointed him as the storekeeper. Guru Nanak was fair and kind to everyone. All who came to Modikhana were satisfied, pleased, and felt they were treated equally with respect. If a poor person came to the store, Guru Nanak would pay for his goods from his own salary. Therefore, there was no loss of revenue to Modikhana. Everyone who came to Modikhana had a pleasant experience. Above all Nawab Daulat Khan was pleased with Guru Nanak for his honest work.

Upon taking over the responsibilities at Modikhana, Guru Nanak invited Bhai Mardana to join him. It became their daily routine to rise early in the morning, bathe in the Bein river, reflect on the Divine Virtues of the Creator in a melodious voice, and then come to work in the Modikhana. Guru Nanak showed everyone how a spiritual person should live and behave.

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## 6. True Prayer

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

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

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

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

Guru Nanak said, "Dear Qazi, **only the prayer, which is performed with the mind fully concentrated helps one get rid of vices and inculcate spiritual qualities. Prayers performed only with the body do no good.**"

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## 7. Bhai Mardana

**1507 (Age 38):** Bhai Mardana remained with Guru Nanak for forty-seven years until his worldly journey ended. The bitter cold of the hills, the heat of the deserts, the danger of wild animals in the jungles, the hunger and thirst in the lifeless wilderness, or the memory of a comfortable home did not deter him from accompanying Guru Nanak. He was given the honor to be called Guru Nanak's brother.

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

At the age of 38, in August 1507, after leaving his work as a storekeeper, Guru Nanak, heard Creator's call to dedicate himself to the service of humanity. He took Bhai Mardana as his companion for his long journeys. To convey his message to people who were engaged in rituals but were not spiritual, they started on foot to go from Sultanpur to Lahore. On their way, both slept wherever they were by nightfall. Bhai Mardana played the Rabab while Guru Nanak sang hymns enumerating Divine Virtues of the Creator.

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## 8. Taking Money to the Next World

This story may not be historically accurate but has a good lesson.

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

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

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

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

Guru ji asked, "If you become the richest man in Lahore, you may like to become the richest man in the whole country and then may be the richest man in the world. Will that make you happy?" Duni Chand was not sure of what would make him truly happy. He asked Guru ji if he could do anything for his happiness.

Guru ji took out a needle and said, "Keep this needle. I will take it from you in the next world". Duni Chand was confused. He did not know what to do. He said, "I cannot possibly take it to the next world after my death." Guru ji smiled and explained that he has used the phrase "next world" as a metaphor. The purpose of wealth is to make one's own life and that of others comfortable. Guru ji added that Duni Chand was simply storing it in a safe place. This wealth is of no use to anyone.

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

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

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

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## 9. Money does not go with You

This story may not be historically accurate but has a good message.

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

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

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

Guru Nanak went to the King's palace and told the gatekeeper he wished to see the king. When the King appeared, he saw Guru Nanak counting pieces of broken earthen pots. The King asked in great wonder, "O holy man, what use are these pieces to you?" Guru Nanak replied, "We want to take these to the next world." The King said, "How can you take these pieces to the next world?" Guru Nanak replied, "In the same way as the wealth collected by you." King realized his great obsession with gold and silver was of no use and asked for advice. Guru Nanak continued, "I have used the phrase 'next world' as a metaphor. Only the good deeds performed in this life can help you lead a blissful life. You have seen with your own eyes that the dead, who had been buried with a silver coin in their mouth, were of no use once they were dead. However, the sins and cruelty committed will surely will certainly make your present life miserable."

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## 10. Food as Milk or Blood

Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana reached Aminabad, (now in) Pakistan. There were many rich people in the town. Guru ji did not visit the house of any rich man. Instead, he went to the house of a poor man - Bhai Lalo - who was a carpenter. He was looked upon as a low caste Hindu - *Shudra*. Higher caste Hindus - Brahmins and Khatri - kept away and avoided Shudras. They would not accept food or drink from lower caste men like Bhai Lalo. Bhai Lalo earned his living by honest labor of carpentry. He was good, and kindhearted. He helped and served others.

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

Bhai Lalo received Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana with respect. It was time to eat. Bhai Lalo could afford only coarse bread and 'saag' (Spinach). After eating, Bhai Mardana asked Guru Nanak why the food was so delicious. Guru Nanak explained that it was made from honest living.

One day Malik Bhago, a high government official of the city, announced a gala feast. He invited Guru Nanak to the feast. Guru Nanak declined the invitation since he preferred simple food earned through honest means. Upon receiving a second request from Malik Bhago, Guru Nanak took Bhai Lalo with him and went to Malik Bhago's residence. Malik Bhago angry with Guru Nanak for disrespecting invitation from someone belonging to a higher caste but accepting of a low caste carpenter. Malik Bhago asked the reason for refusing his invitation.

Guru Nanak did not claim that he had supernatural abilities. Guru Nanak held the roti from Bhago's feast and explained that food prepared from dishonest work was impious like blood.

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

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# 11. Delivering Water to Ancestors?

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

People in the river were throwing water with their hands towards the East. Guru Nanak faced the opposite direction and started throwing water towards the West. Everyone was surprised at seeing Guru Nanak throwing water towards the West. One of them took courage and asked Guru Nanak whether he was a Hindu or a Muslim. The man then asked if Guru Nanak did not know that water must be thrown towards the East. Guru Nanak asked the reason for throwing water towards the East. The man that since ancestors lived in another world which is towards the East and were thirsty. One must give them water to quench their thirst.

Guru Nanak inquired as to how far from Haridwar did their ancestors live. The man replied that ancestors lived even beyond the Sun, millions of miles away. Guru Nanak asked curiously whether water thrown by them could reach ancestors. Man replied that Brahmins did tell them that indeed water thrown by them reached the ancestors and quenched their thirst.

Hearing this reply, Guru Nanak resumed throwing water towards the West. The man again asked Guru Nanak why was he throwing water towards the West while the ancestors lived in the East. Guru Nanak politely replied that his fields in Punjab need watering due to lack of rain.

The man wondered how the water could reach Punjab. Guru Nanak in turn asked if water thrown by him could reach their ancestors millions of miles away, why couldn't it reach a place only two hundred miles away. Some of the listeners understood the message Guru Nanak was trying to convey. They stopped throwing water towards the East.

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

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## 12. Three Lessons

The story may not be historically accurate but has good lessons.

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

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

1. ***Do not rob the poor.***
2. ***Always speak the truth.***
3. ***Do not deceive or steal from the person whose salt you have tasted.*** <sup>(4)</sup>

Upon Bhoomiya agreeing to the conditions, Guru Nanak accepted the food. As promised, Bhoomiya gave up breaking into the houses of the poor and stopped robbing them. After some time, Bhoomiya felt an urge to steal. One night, Bhoomiya dressed as a prince, rode a horse and went to the palace to steal from the king. The security guard asked, "Who are you?" Bhoomiya spoke the truth, "I am a thief." The guard took it as a joke and allowed him to move on. Bhoomiya went inside the palace and collected precious articles. By the time he was ready to leave, he became hungry. He saw a gold plate containing some delicacies. As soon as he placed it in his mouth, he tasted salt. He left all precious things behind and returned home. Next day, the king realized that someone had tried to steal from him. He began interrogating innocent people by brutally beating them. When Bhoomiya saw the poor being beaten, he presented himself before the king and said, "I am the one who had tried to steal from you. Please punish me and leave

the poor alone." The King was surprised and asked, 'Why did you not take away anything?' Bhoomiya narrated the three promises he had made to Guru Nanak.

The King said, "I am pleased with you for speaking the truth. I pardon your crime. Admiring your honesty, I appoint you as my minister."

Moral of the story: ***One must always speak the truth and always be at peace with himself.***

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

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## 13. Truthful Living

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

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

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

*ujal kiahā chilkānā ghotim kalari mas.*

*dhotia juth n utarai je sau dhova tis.*

*SGGS, p. 729*

*Bronze is bright and shiny, but when it is rubbed, its blackness appears.*

*Washing it, its impurity is not removed, even if it is washed a hundred times.*

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

When the recital of the hymn was over, Sajjan fell at Guru Nanak's feet to

beg forgiveness. At the bidding of Guru Nanak, he distributed all his accumulated wealth amongst the poor. He was able to get rid of vices and inculcated Divine Virtues. He thus became a true Sajjan.

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## 14. Idol Worship?

The story may not be historically accurate but has a good message.

Guru Nanak's journey brought him to Jagannath in Odisha (a state located in Eastern India) on the day of full moon. A religious fair was held at that place of worship. The Jagannath Temple is *a Hindu temple dedicated to the god Jagannath*, a form of Vishnu in Hinduism and two of his siblings, Balaram and Subhadra. Every year, an eighty-four feet high statue of (god) Krishna called 'Jagannath' was taken out in a procession, mounted on a chariot. Brahmins had spread a false notion that whoever dies under the wheels of the chariot would attain salvation. Many gave away their home, wealth, and placed their bodies under the wheels.

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

Guru Nanak said, "O holy man, there is no need to be upset. Close your eyes and see where your idol is, just as surely as you can see the three worlds." The Brahmin said to himself, "I was making my living with the help of the idol. When I closed my eyes, I saw nothing, let alone the three worlds." Guru Nanak said, "It is a mistake to think that the idol provides for you. It is God who provides for you. The idol can neither give you food nor take it away. The worship of idols, bathing at holy places, and other rituals are of no use. Meditate only upon the one God who is the only true provider. Discard your false dependence on the idol". The Brahmin said, "How would I eat if I do not tell lies?" Guru Nanak explained that God is the provider of all. God has blessed you with a strong body, hands and feet etc. You should earn a living by honest work instead of a sort of begging.

The Brahmin, acting upon Guru Nanak's advice, threw away the idol and began to earn his living with honest means, felt satisfied and at peace with himself.

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## 15. Washing Sins with Charity?

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

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

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

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

*mas mas kar murakh jhagare gian dhian nahi janai.*

*kaun mas kaun sag kahavai kis mah pap samane.*

*SGGS 1289*

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

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

## 16. Getting rid of Ego with Truth

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

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

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

Guru Nanak replied, "You have renounced your kingdom, left your home but have not been able to get rid of your ego. External display is of no use."

Charpat, another yogi, asked, "How did you get rid of lust? How did you give up the love of worldly objects? How did you master anger, and why does pride not bother you?"

Guru Nanak replied, "With Truthful living, I overcame lust; by inculcating Divine Virtues, the excessive desire for worldly materials left me and my mind attained peace and anger vanished. The fear of death left me when I understood that it was certain though not knowing when it would happen."

Guru Nanak explained reason for inculcating Divine Virtues to attain blissful living. This place became known as Nanakmatta from Gorakhmatta.

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## 17. God is in all Directions

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

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

It is rumored that when the Mullah turned the Guru's feet to the left, the Kaaba itself moved to the left. When he moved the Guru's feet to the right, the Kaaba moved to the right in tandem. Of course, this did not actually happen. These rumors had tried to convey Guru Nanak's spiritual message that God is everywhere.

Jiwan and Guru Nanak had met each other as if they had known each other for a lifetime. To help clear the doubts of others, Jiwan asked Guru Nanak, 'Who is superior in the court of the Lord - a Hindu or a Muslim?' Guru Nanak replied, "Only good deeds make one respectable." Pilgrims asked many more such questions to Guru Nanak. Guru Nanak clarified everyone's doubts. **Guru Nanak impressed on all that God exists in all directions and in the hearts of all humans.**

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## 18. Be a Kind Ruler

**1520 (Age 51):** While returning from Mecca, Guru Nanak learned at Kabul (in Afghanistan) that Babur was preparing to attack India. Before his invasion, Guru Nanak reached Aminabad. There he stayed with Bhai Lalo whom he had earlier appointed to spread his mission. To inform the people of the source of his spiritual insight and to warn the city about the coming invasion, Guru ji recited:

*jaisi mai avai khasam ki bani taisara kari gian ve lalo.*

*pap ki janjh lai kabalahu dhaia jori mangai dan ve lalo. SGGS, p. 722*

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

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

Prisoners were in deep sorrow and were crying when Guru Nanak entered the prison camp. They cried for their relatives who had been killed in front of their eyes, for their houses destroyed, and for being forced to grind flour every day. Women who once had long hair, had their hair cut, were made to sit on the ground milling flour for hours at end. Their beauty had become their worst enemy. Guru Nanak recited a hymn which provided them peace and solace.

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

Babur was pleased with Guru Nanak and said, "Holy man, what can I do for you?" Guru Nanak replied, "Be a just and kind ruler. Look after the welfare of the public. Be merciful to those you defeat. Above all, always remember every human being is created by the same Creator.

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## 19. Mind & Body

The story may not be historically accurate but has a good message.

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

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

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

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

*jiu tapat hai baro bar. tap tap khapai bahut bekar.*

*jai tan bani visar jai. jiu paka rogi villai.*

*SGGS, p. 661*

*My soul burns, repeatedly. Burning and burning, it is ruined, and it falls into evil.*

*That body, which forgets the World of Guru's Bani, cries out in pain, like a chronic patient.*

The leper was filled with hope, believing that his disease was curable. He rose from his bed and kept listening to Guru Nanak's teachings well into the night. He tried having only positive thoughts by reflecting on Divine Virtues. It is rumored that gradually, he became better. He visited his house to meet the relatives. Everyone was surprised to see him. He narrated what Guru Nanak had said to him, and how it had changed him spiritually. Everyone in the village started focusing on Divine Virtues and having only positive thoughts. The whole village became healthy and happy.

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## 20. Bhai Lehna to Guru Angad

**1522 - 1539 (Age 54 - 70):** Guru Nanak settled down in Kartarpur city (now in Pakistan) which was founded by him in 1522. He spent the rest of his life there. Daily Divine Virtues were sung and practiced. The institution of *Langar* (free kitchen) was introduced.

Guru Nanak exemplified how a spiritual person should live and conduct themselves. At over 54 years of age, he led a life rooted in honest work and the constant practice of Divine Virtues. He earned his livelihood through honest work, often working in the fields as a farmer, setting a practical example for his followers. Guru Nanak also took part in the langar which was open to anyone in need of food. People of all castes, whether considered high, low, or even untouchable—sat and ate together, breaking social barriers and promoting equality.

When Guru Nanak was seventy, he had a plan to continue the task of showing people the way out of spiritual darkness. To carry on this responsibility, Guru Nanak looked for a successor. He was convinced that Bhai Lehna, who had been with him for seven years (1532-1539) was the right person. By emulating Guru Nanak's way of life and his Divine Virtues, Bhai Lehna had completely transformed himself into Guru Nanak's image. Guru Nanak renamed him Angad (meaning part of his own body). Guru Nanak formally transferred the leadership of Sikhs to him to continue his mission of educating people to live this life with spiritual bliss.

On 7<sup>th</sup> September 1539, CE Guru Nanak told the congregation that his journey in this world was coming to an end. Guru Nanak added that Guru Angad will continue to guide the Sangat on the spiritual journey initiated by him. On 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1539, giving this message to the congregation, Guru Nanak breathed his last. The news spread like wildfire all over the city. His house was filled with his family and followers.

Guru Nanak's followers were known as "Nanak Panthis," who respected him as the spiritual guide. It is said that Sikhs and Hindus wanted to cremate the body. On the other hand, Muslims followers wanted to bury him and construct a tomb over it. This shows how much all his followers revered Guru Nanak.

**We show true respect for Guru Nanak by learning from and practicing what he taught, and by living in harmony with everyone.**

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## Appendix 1

# Divine Virtues

The message of *Shabad* is our Guru. We must understand the message and implement it in our daily life. Every message in SGGS guides us to become spiritual.

Guru Nanak explains the attributes of *Akal Purakh* (God) in the very first line of SGGS. He says that besides being the Ultimate Reality (*Sat Naam*), the Creator (*Karta Purakh*) is also Fearless (*Nirbhau*), and has No Enmity (*Nirvair*) towards any part of His Creation. These are some of the Creator's (Divine) Virtues.

Many virtues are mentioned in SGGS. Some of these are **fearlessness (*nirbhau*)**, **no enmity (*nirvair*)**, **humility or lack of ego (*nimarta*)**, **contentment (*sahaj, santokh*)**, **compassion (*dya*)**, **forgiveness (*khima*)**, **kindness (*mehr*)**, **patience (*dheeraj*)**, and **service (*sewa*)**.

By inculcating (developing) Divine Virtues, we can become God-like or Godly (*gurmukh, sachiar*). We are expected to inculcate these virtues in our mind and conscience. Gurbani asks us to make these virtues an integral part of our inner spirituality, i.e 'internalize' them—so that we may think, speak, and act accordingly.

To 'internalize' virtues, we must first carefully listen to the messages of Gurbani and then develop (or inculcate) the virtues within ourselves. We need to understand, believe, and accept the spiritual meanings of Gurbani verses in our mind and conscience. By 'internalizing' the virtues through this deliberate internal process, we become capable of living our life in accordance with the messages of *Shabad* Guru given in SGGS, i.e., in accordance with the teachings of 'Sikhi spirituality.'

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## 21. Highlights of Guru Nanak (1469 – 1539 CE)

<b>Born on:</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> April 1469.
<b>Born at:</b>	<p>Rai-Bhoi-di Talwandi, Shekhupura, Pakistan. It is presently known as Nankana Sahib.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Father</b> -- Mehta Kalyan Das ji</li> <li>• <b>Mother</b> -- Mata Tripta ji</li> <li>• <b>Wife</b> -- Mata Sulakhni ji</li> <li>• <b>Children</b> -- Sri Chand &amp; Lakhmi Das</li> <li>• <b>Sister</b> -- Bebe Nanki (elder)</li> </ul>
<b>Gurgaddi:</b>	1469 (by birth}
<b>Joti Jot:</b>	22 <sup>nd</sup> September 1539, Kartarpur, (now in) Pakistan
<b>Bani:</b>	<p>He was a born poet. He wrote 974 hymns comprising Patti Likhi, Japji Sahib, Asa-Di- Var, Bara-Mah, Sidh-Gosht, Onkar (Dakhani). These were later included in Sri Guru Granth Sahib by Guru Arjan. He was also an accomplished musician. He, with the company of Bhai Mardana, composed many tunes in various Indian classical Ragas.</p>
<b>Four long journeys:</b>	<p>Guru Nanak visited different Hindu religious places preaching Sikhism. He went to Kurukshetra, Haridwar, Joshimath, Retha Sahib, Gorakh Matta (Nanak Matta), Ayodhya, Prayag, Varanasi, Gaya, Patna, Dhubri and Dhubri in Assam, Dacca, Puri, Cuttack, Rameshwaram, Sri Lanka, Bidar, Baroach, Somnath, Dwarka, Junagarh, Ujjain, Ajmer, Mathura, Pakpattan, Talwandi, Lahore, Sultanpur, Bilaspur, Rawalsar, Jawalaji, Spiti Vally, Tibet, Ladakh, Kargil, Amarnath, Srinagar and Baramula.</p> <p>Guru Nanak also visited Muslim holy places. He traveled to Mecca, Medina, Baghdad while returning, Peshawar, Sukkar, Son Miani, Hinglaj etc. Some accounts say that Guru</p>

	<p>Sahib reached Mecca by sea-route. Guru Sahib also visited Tehran (the present capital of Iran). From Tehran, Guru Sahib set out on the caravan route and covered Kabul, Kandahar, and Jalalabad.</p> <p>In all, he undertook four long journeys called "Missionary Journeys".</p>
<p><b>Special Contributions</b></p>	<p>The real aim of the tours was to awaken the people to realize Divine Virtues and live the present life with spiritual bliss. He established a network of preaching centers of Sikhism which were called "Manjis". For each He appointed an able and committed follower as its head (preacher of Sikhism). The basic tenets of Sikhism were accepted by the people from all occupations. The seeds of Sikhism were sown all over India and abroad in a well-planned manner.</p> <p>As a social reformer Guru Nanak upheld the cause of women, the downtrodden and the poor. He attacked the citadel of caste system of Hindus and theocracy of Muslim rulers. He was a reformer, as well as a revolutionary. God had endowed him with a contemplative mind and a pious disposition.</p>

## 22. Significant World Events

around the period of Guru Nanak are as follows:

1401	Timor conquered Damascus and reconquered Baghdad.
1421	In Austria, Jews are imprisoned and expelled.
1448	The Russian Orthodox Church becomes independent of the Patriarch of Constantinople.
1456-59	The Ottoman Turks overrun Athens, begin a stay that will last 400 years, and they turn the Parthenon into a mosque.
1480	Leonardo da Vinci of Florence, age 28, invents the parachute.
1482	Cairo is one of the largest and wealthiest cities and is much admired by western travelers.
1492	Christopher Columbus with his crew set sail in his three famous ships from Spain to discover sea route to India. But landed not in Asia as he assumed but on one of the Bahama islands.
1498	Vasco da Gama, a Portuguese discovers the sea route to India.
1500	In England, Henry VIII becomes the king.
1501	The world has a population of around 435 million – about one-sixteenth today's population of 7.2 billion.
1506	May 20: Columbus dies in Spain.
1521	The Ottomans continue to expand. Their sultan, Selim, has died and his son Suleiman (Sulayman) succeeds him and captures Belgrade.
1526	The printing press is introduced in Stockholm, Sweden.
1526	From Kabul a Muslim tribal leader, Babur, has been making a series of raids through the Khyber Pass into the Indus Valley, seeking plunder. He has

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

## 23. References:

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

## Books by Sri Hemkunt Foundation:

1. *Guru Nanak Dev ji* (English & Panjabi, for ages 6-8)
2. *The Second – Fourth Nanaks* (English & Panjabi, for ages 6-8).
3. *The Fifth Nanak* (English & Panjabi, for ages 6-8).
4. *The Sixth – Eighth Nanaks* (English & Panjabi, for ages 9-11)
5. *The Ninth Nanak* (English & Panjabi, for ages 9-11)
6. *The Tenth Nanak* (English & Panjabi, for ages 9-11)
7. *The Sikhs 1718-1801* (English & Panjabi, for ages 12-14)
8. *Bhagats In Sri Guru Granth Sahib* (English & Panjabi, for ages 15-17)
9. *Sikhi for Me, Now and Here* (English & Panjabi, for ages 15-17)

## Back Cover

This book on the life and messages of Guru Nanak is meant for 6-8 years old children. It presents 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-going audience.

The English vocabulary, sentence structure, and context have been made appropriate for a Western audience. Stories and Sakhees mistakenly associated with Guru ji in some other books on his life and teachings, or stories that inappropriately highlight "miraculous" aspects rather than logic and common sense, have been avoided.

The Hemkunt Foundation uses this and other books for children and youth for its annual international symposiums. 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 a specified time from a podium.

Of course, the book can be used for other purposes as well, such as in Gurmat Schools for young people, and by parents helping their children learn about Sikhi. Detailed information regarding the Hemkunt Foundation's annual Symposium is available at its website [www.hemkunt2.org](http://www.hemkunt2.org).