

# **The Eighth Nanak**

**GURU HAR KRISHAN JI**

**April 1, 2022**

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

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## Preface

Sri Hemkunt Foundation Inc. was established in 1980 in New York, U.S.A., over four decades ago. 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 Sikh faith is virtually unknown in the west. Ideally, any Sikh would be able to share the values and practices of the path effectively should an occasion arise.

The main Foundation-sponsored event is an annual Symposium. The Symposium encourages participants to critically examine assorted topics and answer a set of questions in a specified time from a podium. 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. 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 U.S.A., 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 inappropriate 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 authoring 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 9–11-year-old age group. An attempt has been made to present Guru Ji's teachings logically. The book uses simple, easy-to-understand language and avoids references to events and places that would not usually 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 Competitions. Detailed information about the yearly International Symposium is available at the website [www.hemkunt2.org](http://www.hemkunt2.org).

Both English and Punjabi 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 needed from the Foundation for using the books.

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

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# 1. Early Life and Guruship

**1656** (birth): Har Krishan Ji (later Guru) was born on July 7, 1656, at Keeratpur. He was the younger son of Guru Har Rai Ji and Mata Krishan Kaur (Sulakhani). His elder brother was Ram Rai. Har Krishan Ji was the grandson of Baba Gurditta and great-grandson of Guru Hargobind Ji, the Sixth Nanak.

	Sons	Sons	Sons
Guru Hargobind Ji (6 <sup>th</sup> Nanak)	Baba Gurditta	Baba Dhir Mal	
		(Guru) Har Rai Ji (7 <sup>th</sup> Nanak)	Baba Ram Rai
			(Guru) <b>Har Krishan Ji</b> (8 <sup>th</sup> Nanak)
	Baba Atal Rai		
	Baba Sooraj Mal		
	Baba Ani Rai		
	(Guru) Teg Bahadar Ji (9 <sup>th</sup> Nanak)	(Guru) Gobind Singh Ji (10 <sup>th</sup> Nanak)	

Har Krishan Ji spent all his life (except the last two weeks) at Keeratpur. Besides studying regular academic subjects, he got an excellent education in Gurmat.

**1661** (age 5): The Seventh Nanak did not pass on the Guruship to his elder son, Ram Rai, who had altered Guru Nanak Ji's *Banee* to please the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb (Chapter 14). At the tender age of five years, Guru Har Krishan Ji was declared the Eighth Nanak by his father Guru Har Rai Ji before the latter's *Joti Jot Samaey* (passing) in 1661 (Chapter 15).

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## 2. Story of Chhajju and the Geeta

**1664** (age 8): There is a well-known story associated with the life of the Eighth Nanak wherein Guru Ji made a seemingly uneducated Sikh explain a verse from the *Geeta*, a Hindu religious text.

The story goes like this; the Eighth Nanak left Keeratpur for Delhi. On the way, he halted at Panjokhra, near Ambala (now in Haryana). Here, he met Lal Chand, the prominent Brahmin priest of the community. The priest knew that Sikhs had rejected idol-worship and ritualism from the time of Guru Nanak. Many Hindus were hostile to the Sikhs and Sikh Gurus. Brahmin priests' income had dwindled as those who became Sikhs had stopped going to Hindu priests for religious guidance.

The story is that Lal Chand used to boast that he knew all the Hindu religious texts. He intentionally went to see Guru Ji when Guru Ji was holding a congregation. Many people were in attendance. He decided to show everyone that the Sikh Guru, being incredibly young (only eight years old), did not know religious texts, such as the Vedas, Puranas, and Geeta.

Lal Chand quoted a verse from the Geeta and asked Guru Ji to explain it. Guru Ji replied that any Sikh in the audience could explain it. Lal Chand could not believe this. He requested Guru Ji if he could pick any person in attendance, and Guru Ji affirmed it. Lal Chand picked Chhajju Ram, an illiterate-looking person of the so-called low caste. Guru Ji pointed a stick toward Chhajju Ram and asked him to explain the verse to Lal Chand.

Lal Chand's plan to prove to everyone that Guru Ji did not know Hindu religious texts had failed. Lal Chand was amazed to hear Chhajju Ram's convincing explanation of the verse. He immediately apologized to Guru Ji. He pleaded with extreme humility that he had realized Guru Ji's unmatched greatness. He begged mercy and deliverance from this

world ocean. Humbly he fell at the Guru's feet. He became the Guru's disciple and traveled with him up to [Kurukshetra](#). Lal Chand became Lal Singh and was one of the Sikhs who fought with Guru Gobind Singh.

Some Brahminic writers have further twisted the story. They say that Guru Ji touched Chhajju's head with a stick, then he was able to explain the verse. They intend to show that Guru Ji had supernatural powers. However, this cannot be true because the Gurus considered miracles and occult powers fruitless because they lead one away from God.

Guru Nanak's teaching on page 14 of Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is: "If I were to become a Siddha, work miracles, summon wealth, and become invisible and visible at will, so that people would hold me in awe - seeing these, I might go astray and forget You God, and Your Name would not enter into my mind." In addition, the Fifth Nanak and the Ninth Nanak preferred to give up their lives than perform miracles.

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### 3. Meeting with Teg Bahadar Ji

**1664** (age 8): The Eighth Nanak reached Delhi on March 20, 1664. He stayed at the *bungalow* (residence) of Raja Jai Singh, now Gurdwara Bangla Sahib. He met Teg Bahadar Ji, his grandfather's brother (see Table in Chapter 17), on March 22, 1664.

Teg Bahadar Ji was on his way back from his missionary tours of Bihar, Bengal, and Assam. He had reached Delhi on March 21, 1664 and knew that the Eighth Nanak was also in Delhi. The next day he went to see the Eighth Nanak. They met after eight years.

Teg Bahadar Ji spent two days with the Eighth Nanak in the bungalow of Raja Jai Singh in Delhi. Both discussed various matters concerning the Sikh Panth. They also discussed Aurangzeb's intention of interfering in the affairs of the Sikhs by siding with Ram Rai.

On March 24, 1664, Teg Bahadar Ji left Delhi to go to his home in Bakala, Punjab.

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## 4. Meeting with Aurangzeb

**1664** (age 8): On March 24, 1664, the Eighth Nanak received an invitation from Aurangzeb to visit him. On March 25, Guru Ji and his trusted followers visited Emperor Aurangzeb's court in the *Lal Qila* (Red Fort) in Delhi, where Aurangzeb lived.

Aurangzeb asked Guru Ji why his father, the Seventh Nanak, had given him the Guruship instead of his older brother Ram Rai. Guru Ji replied that Guruship is not a hereditary office or property that must be granted to the eldest son in the family. The Seventh Nanak had given Guruship to the person he considered most suitable for the responsibility.

Aurangzeb then told the Eighth Nanak that he must have had some miraculous powers since he was selected to be the Guru. He expressed a desire to see some of Guru Ji's miracles. Guru Ji explained that Sikhs do not believe that humans can perform miracles. He said that every human must obey God's Will instead of trying to manipulate the situation. Every person must meditate on Akal Purakh. Commonly, going against the laws of nature is called a miracle. Aurangzeb had no further questions.

Guru Ji then left the *Lal Qila* and went to the *bungalow* of Raja Jai Singh.

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## 5. Afflicted by Smallpox

**1664** (age 8): While the Eighth Nanak was returning from the *Lal Qila*, many people came to pay their respects to him. Currently, Delhi was under the grip of a fast-spreading smallpox epidemic. Many people had caught the contagious disease. Some of the people who met Guru Ji were afflicted by smallpox. Guru Ji was blessing everyone who came to pay their respects. In the process, Guru Ji also got afflicted by smallpox.

When Guru Ji reached the *bungalow*, he had a high fever. Expert physicians were called for his treatment. Despite four days of treatment, the fever did not subside. Guru Ji's condition deteriorated for the worse. He realized that the time had come for him to leave this world. He called the Sikhs around him and told them that the Baba at Bakala would be the next Guru of the Sikhs.

The Eighth Nanak's body was cremated in Delhi at the bank of the river Yamuna. Presently, there is a Gurdwara Bala Sahib in Delhi near this place.

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## 6. Only Gurbani is Amrit

Some Sikhs consider the water from the *Sarovar* (pool) at Gurdwara Bangla Sahib, Delhi, as *Amrit*\* (nectar) with healing and miraculous powers. There is no such concept in Sikhi. Water, from any source, is not considered sacred. Sikh Gurus have rejected the idea of sacred water. According to the Sri Guru Granth Sahib (page 982), only *Gurbani* is *Amrit*. Living according to Gurbani is drinking Amrit:

ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਬਾਣੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਸਾਰੇ ॥  
ਗੁਰੁ ਬਾਣੀ ਕਰੈ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਜਨੁ ਮਾਨੈ ਪਰਤਖਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਿਸਤਾਰੇ ॥੫॥

**Transliteration:** baanee guroo guroo hai baanee vich baanee a(n)mrit saareell gur baanee kahai sevak jan maanai paratakh guroo nisataare||5||

**Metaphoric Message:** Guru's *banee* (wisdom) is the embodiment of Sikh's Guru, and Guru is the *banee*. Within the Guru's *banee*, the ambrosial nectar imparts spirituality is contained. Guru recites *banee*. A Sikh believes and acts according to the Words of the Guru's *banee*. Spirituality emancipates the Sikh's consciousness.

Despite this, some Sikhs mistakenly believe in the concept of holy water. Dr. Harjinder Singh Dilgeer, the Sikh historian, provides the following explanation in his book Sikh History – 1 (pgs. 287-288):

About fifty years ago (in the second half of the twentieth century), a story was concocted by the Nirmala priests (Gurdwara priests trained in Vedic texts) that the water of the pool of this Gurdwara has miraculous powers. They also preached that the Eighth Nanak had been serving water to people inflicted with smallpox, and in the process, he got inflicted. It is inconceivable that ordinary sick people or beggars came to this pool, and the Eighth Nanak served them miraculous water. This pool was inside the bungalow of Raja Jai Singh.

(\*) *the term Amrit is also used for Khandey di Pahul* (More commonly called Amrit ceremony). Still, it is also known as *Khande ki Pahul* (literally, the ceremony of the double-edged sword). *It is used as a mark of respect for the Sikh initiation ceremony, not for the presumed miraculous powers of Amrit.*

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## 7. Highlights of Guru Har Krishan Ji

1656 – 1664 C.E.

Born on:	July 7, 1656
Born at:	Keeratpur
Parents:	Guru Har Rai Ji and Mata Krishan Kaur (Sulakhni Ji)
Brother:	Ram Rai (elder)
Children:	None
Gurgaddi:	1661 (age five years)
Joti Jot:	March 30, 1664 (age eight years)
Bani:	None
Special Contributions	<p>His decision to appoint Teg Bahadar Ji as his successor was farsighted.</p> <p>Boldly dealt with Aurangzeb, Emperor of the Mughal empire.</p> <p>He dealt calmly with Ram Rai, despite the latter getting aggressive and angry for not getting appointed as the Eighth Nanak.</p> <p>He was full of love for humanity. He did not hesitate to touch smallpox-stricken people Instead of being intimidated of getting the disease.</p>

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# Significant World Events

[Around the period of Guru Har Krishan Ji]

1658	Aurangzeb defeated his brother Dara Shikoh, imprisoned his father and his other brother Murad, and crowned himself.
1665	Extensive use of the microscope had begun. Robert Hooke, an English natural philosopher, discovers in cork and live plants what he calls cells.
1667	It has been two years since the first successful blood transfusion – dogs kept alive by blood transfusion from other dogs.
1670	Puritans set up Charles Town (Charleston) on the Carolina colony's Atlantic coast, named for Charles II.

## References

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3. *About Compilation of Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, by Prof. Sahib Singh, Lok Sahit Prakashan, Amritsar.
4. SGPC website, <http://sgpc.net/ten-guru-sahibs/>
5. Google search, world events.
6. *The Sikhs*, by Patwant Singh, Rupa, and Company, New Delhi.
7. *The Sikhs of the Punjab ( Revised Edition)* J.S Grewal, Foundation Books, New Delhi.

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## **Books by Sri Hemkunt Foundation:**

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2. *Second Nanak* (English & Panjabi, for ages 6-8).
3. *Third Nanak* (English & Panjabi, for ages 6-8).
4. *Fourth Nanak* (English & Panjabi, for ages 9-11).
5. *Fifth Nanak* (English & Panjabi, for ages 9-11).
6. *Sixth Nanak* (English & Panjabi, for ages 9-11).
7. *7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Nanaks* (English & Panjabi, for ages 12-14).
8. *The Ninth Nanak* (English & Panjabi, for ages 12-14).
9. *The Tenth Nanak* (English & Panjabi, for ages 12-14).
10. *The Sikhs 1718-1801* (English & Panjabi, for ages 12-14).
11. *Sikhi for Me – Here and Now*, with Bhupinder Singh and Paramjit Singh Sachdeva (English; & Panjabi, *Sikhi Maere Laee—Aethe atae Hunn*, 2025).
12. *The Message of Bhagats in Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, with Bhupinder Singh and Paramjit Singh Sachdeva (English & Panjabi, 2020).