

Guru Amardas ji

1579 - 74

Basic Info

- Born at village Basarke Gillan in Amritsar district on Vaisakh Sudi 14th, (8th Jeth), Samvat 1536 (5th May 1479).
- Father: Tej Bhan Bhalla
- Mother: Bakht Kaur (also reffered as Sulakhani and Lakhmi Devi)
- Spouse: Mata Mansa Devi ji
- Children: two daughters: Bibi Dani ji and Bibi Bhani ji and two sons: Mohan ji and Mohri ji.

Early Life

- Used to pay annual visits to the Ganges river at Haridwar.
- Once, heard some hymns of Guru Nanak Sahib from Bibi Amro Ji, the daughter of Guru Angad Sahib.
- He became too much impressed and immediately went to see Guru Angad Sahib at Khadur Sahib.
- Under the impact of the teachings of Guru Angad Sahib, Guru Amardas Sahib adopted him as his spiritual guide (Guru).
- Started living at Khadur Sahib.
- Used to rise early in the morning, bring water from the Bias River for Guru's bath and fetch wood from the Jungle for 'Guru ka Langar'.

Guruship

- Due to result of his services and devotion to Guru Angad Sahib and his teachings Guru Angad Sahib appointed Guru Amardas Sahib as third Nanak in March 1552 at the age of 73
- Propagated the Sikh faith in a very planned manner
- Divided the Sikh Sangat area into 22 preaching centres. (Manjis)
- Visited and sent Sikh missionaries to different parts of India to spread Sikhism.
- Strengthened the tradition of 'Guru ka Langer' and made it compulsory for the visitor to the Guru saying that 'Pehle Pangat Phir Sangat'

Contributions

- Preached against Sati and advocated widow-remarriage. He asked the women to discard 'Purdah' (veil)
- He introduced new birth, marriage and death ceremonies
- Guru Amardas Sahib constructed Baoli at Goindwal Sahib
- Reproduced more copies of the hymns of Guru Nanak Sahib and Guru Angad Sahib.
- Composed 869 (according to some chronicles these were 709) verses (stanzas) including Anand Sahib, and Guru Arjan Sahib made all the Shabads part of Guru Granth Sahib.

Guru Ramdas

- Guru Amardas Sahib did not consider anyone of his sons fit for Guruship and chose instead his son-in-law (Guru) Ramdas Sahib to succeed him. By choosing Guru Ramdas for Guruship over his own sons, he set an example of Merit over rank
- On Bhadon Sudi 14th, (1st Assu) Samvat 1631, (September 1, 1574) at Goindwal Sahib near District Amritsar, after giving responsibility of Guruship to the Fourth Nanak, Guru Ramdas Sahib.

Sakhi - Guru Amardas Ji and Akbar

Akbar was a famous king of India. He was a kind and good king and respected the Sikh Gurus for their teachings. In the year 1569, Akbar came to the Punjab and wanted to see the Guru. So he sent a message to Guru Amar Das ji that he was coming to visit him. The Sikhs were very happy at the news. Some Sikhs thought that special arrangements should be made to welcome the king. But the Guru said, "Akbar is as much a human being as others are. The Guru's place is open to all. The king and his subjects, the Hindus and the Muslims, the rich and the poor are all equal here. So Akbar will be welcomed like all other visitors to the Guru's place and special arrangements need not be made."

"Caste has no power in the next world; Only the humble are exalted there. It is only the good who are honoured for good acts." (Guru Amar Das in GGS ji – 469)

The king, along with the Rajah of Haripur, arrived in Goindwal where the Guru lived. The Guru and a few Sikhs received them warmly. They were shown round the place. Akbar was interested to know how the Guru's Langar was run. Simple food was served to all in the Guru's Langar. It remained open day and night. Travellers, beggars, and strangers, as well as the followers of the Guru, were all served with food. Whatever was left was thrown to the cattle and birds so that nothing was wasted. The Guru had given an order that all persons coming to visit his place must have their food in the Langar(when hungry). There they were to sit in rows (Pangat) as equals and were to be served simple food in turn.

Sakhi - Guru Amardas Ji and Akbar

Akbar and the Rajah of Haripur took their meals in the Guru's Langar. They sat among the common people in a row and the Sikhs served them food. They enjoyed the simple food and were very happy. Akbar liked the working of the Guru's Langar very much. Before leaving, Akbar said to the Guru, "I like Guru Nanak's religion very much and I respect you for your teachings. I want to make a grant of land for running the Langar. Would you mind it!"

"Dear Akbar," said the Guru, "I am very glad you like the path of Baba Nanak. I am also grateful to you for your offer of a grant of land for the Langar, but I am sorry I cannot accept it because the Guru likes all to work hard to earn (Kirt Karni) and to share their honest earnings (Wand Chakna) with others, by giving something to the Langar from their honest earnings to help others. As such, the Guru's langar is the people's (Sangat's) Langar and it must be run on people's free gifts and not on a royal grant. That is why all share equally in the Guru's Langar and no one is looked upon as an outsider. In the Guru's Langar, each gives as much as we can spare and takes as much as he/she needs. Here, there is no difference between kings and beggars. All sit together; and eat simple food served with loving care." Akbar liked the Guru's idea very much.

ਅਲਿ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਥੁ ਦੇਇ ॥ ਨਨਕ ਰਾਹੁ ਪਛਾਣਹਿ ਸੇਇ ॥੧॥

gh aa l kh aae k ish h hathhah u dh aee n aanak r aa hu pashh aaneh i sae e 1

One who works for what he eats, and gives some of what

he has - O Nanak, he knows the Path. 1 (Guru Granth Sahib ji – 1245)

Source: <http://tuhitu.blogspot.com/2007/01/sakhi-series-34-guru-amar-das-ji-and.html>