

ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ॥

*Ram Das Seroovar Nate
Sabh Utre Pap Kemate*

LIFE OF GURU RAM DAS JI



The Saviour of Contentment

Publishers:

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Academy

Dedication

Guru Ram Das Ji

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A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO **Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Academy**

“Aayoo sunan paren ko Bani”

The mortal has come to this world to hear and utter the Guru’s word.

In 1708, our beloved 10th Master Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, blessed us with an everlasting gift of life - **DHAN SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB JI**.

The alphabet, content and the message of the one Almighty was presented to us directly by our Gurus. Sikhs are truly blessed with an original and authentic source.

Gurbani is our Guru. Reading and understanding His message is our first step towards knowing our Guru.

The Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Academy Trust was specifically set-up to address this need - to develop a systematic modular method for *Gurmat* Studies that helps bring *Gurbani* to everyone. Today, the Academy brings to you a systematic and comprehensive *Gurmat* education syllabus organized in a modular format, tailored to today’s lifestyle.

The Academy’s programs are designed with the aim of developing learned Sikhs who will be able to read and understand *Gurbani*, have pride in their rich heritage and celebrate the greatness of the Sikh religion.

The Academy currently offers the following courses:

- Learn Gurmukhi in 3-months Course
- Gurmukhi Reading Course
- Gurbani Foundation Course
- Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Course

Learn Gurmukhi in 3-months Course

This course is designed for adults. Using speed learning techniques and the phonics method, a beginner with no previous knowledge of the Gurmukhi alphabet is taught to read Sri Japji Sahib over a period of 12 hours. The course is conducted over a period of 12 weekends. This method has been tried and tested and over 1,100 students, with little or no knowledge of Gurmukhi, were able to read Sri Japji Sahib in front of the entire *Sangat* !!!

Gurmukhi Reading Course

This course is presented to students who have successfully completed the Learn Gurmukhi in 3-months and for those who wish to improve their fluency reading in *Gurmukhi*.

Gurbani Foundation Course

Designed for individuals with basic and intermediate knowledge of *Gurmukhi*, this course is to introduce foundation knowledge for the reading of *Gurbani*. This is an interactive course that works on developing confidence and interest of the participant. The focus will be on the pronunciation of alphabets, practice of muharani and understanding Gurmukhi phonics.

With only 12 hours of investment over 6 weeks, the student will be able to read fluently Sri Japji Sahib, Anand Sahib, Kirten Sohila, Dekhni Ongkaar, Vaar (Majh & Ramkali), Bhagat Bani, Sehaskriti and Gatha. In addition, short sakhis from the life of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji will be shared with the students.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji (“SGGS”) Course

This course is designed to give students a comprehensive knowledge on the reading and deeper understanding of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji as well as an in-depth history of the Bhagats and Gurus.

- **SGGS reading** – provide the essential techniques and knowledge in reading Gurbani with proper pronunciations and punctuations. The delivery adopts a collective interactive method to encourage students to read in a group and thereby improve by listening.
- **Understanding Gurbani** – uses a contemplative learning method to enhance the understanding by describing the word, adding on the line-by-line approach and the entire shabad’s conceptual meaning. Includes learning the historical facts to when Gurbani was recited.
- **Sikh History** – adopts inventive (resourceful) method which emphasises the learning of Sikh history including major milestones that helped shape the course of the Sikh religion. The syllabus contains various authentic historical references.

The course is conducted over 4 years, divided into 8 semesters (17 weeks per semester) = 48 months = 128 weeks = 256 hours only

All these courses provide a means for Sikhs to understand their religion, learn about their heritage and most importantly, connect us with Guru Ji, Our Creator.

Currently, over 1,000 students are pursuing this course at the our Academy Centers

A must for every Sikh who wants to know his Guru and HIS divine philosophy that today stands as an example before the world.

The syllabus is prepared by Sikh Scholars based on universally accepted references within the Sikh Diaspora. To-date the entire syllabus has received accreditation from the Sri Akal Takhat, Amritsar, Takht Sri Harmander, Patna Sahib and by the Head Priest of Sri Harmander Sahib, Amritsar.

These courses are now offered in Australia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and United Kingdom in collaboration with local Gurdwaras and Sikh Societies.

Join the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Academy to read Gurbani, understand Gurbani and learn the History of our Gurus. It is the divine route towards a spiritual enlightened life which gives a precise meaning to life by which the reality of truth is understood through our eternal Guru. This will lead us to a blissful, contented, merciful, faithful and meaningful life.

The entire syllabus is prepared based on globally accepted references within Sikh communities across the globe.

Academy Centres*Malaysia*

Currently, over 800 students are attending these courses at the Academy's headquarters in Wisma Tatt Khalsa, Kuala Lumpur and 20 centres all over Malaysia. The age group of the students ranges from as young as 5 to 70-years old. Here you will see families coming together once a week to attend classes, thus encouraging family bonding in accordance to the famous phrase - "*A family that prays together stays together*" (*in this case learns Gurbani together*).

Bangkok, Thailand

December, 2008 saw the Academy branching out to Bangkok, Thailand. We currently have close to 200 students who are currently undertaking the Learn Gurmukhi in 3 months and Gurbani Foundation Course.

Australia

In April 2009, His Excellency Singh Sahib Gyani Gurbachan Singh Ji, the Jathedar of Sri Akaal Takhat Sahib, Amritsar launched the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Academy centres in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Adelaide.

In September 2009, Mr John Brumby, the Victorian Premier launched the commencement of classes in Blackburn Gurdwara, Melbourne.

We currently have four centers with active classes in Melbourne, Brisbane, Gold Coast and Murwillumbah. The other centers are expected to commence classes soon once the logistic matters are sorted.

Do join the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Academy to develop your spiritual interest. Learn to read *Gurbani* and relate it with the history of our Gurus, in order to have a better understanding of *Gurbani*. It is through *Gurbani* that we learn to live a more virtuous life. It is the divine route towards a spiritually enlightened life by which the reality of truth is realized through our eternal Guru. This is the true path to a blissful, contented, merciful and meaningful life.

All you need to bring along is the thirst for knowledge and your commitment to achieve your goal, for Bhai Gurdass Ji says in his *Kabit 111*:

Charan saran gur aek paindaa jaa-i chal

Satgur kot paindaa aagay ho-i layt hai

Walk even one step towards the Feet of the Guru;

And the True Guru will walk millions of steps to welcome you.

To Know Your Guru, Is To Love Your Guru

PREFACE

“Ram Das Serovar Nate Sabh Utre Pap Kemate - Life of Guru Ram Das Ji”

This edition of “Life of Sri Guru Ram Das Ji” aims to provide a detailed narration of life of Sri Guru Ram Das Ji – Our Fourth Guru. The contents are based on the authentic and prominent historical references and evidence, which is truly comprehensive.

Whilst there are many English translations available within the community, these are usually available in the form of summarized ‘sakhis’ or analytical works carried out by renowned scholars. This is a first attempt to provide a detailed narration of Sri Guru Amar Das Ji’s life in simple English language based on the authentic and prominent historical references and evidence, which is truly comprehensive.

It is hoped that by reading this book, readers, especially those who are more literate in English will have a glimpse of the unparalleled and contented life of our Fourth Guru

We would like to stress that this is a modest attempt to contribute to the Sikh community and whilst every effort has been taken to ensure that the quality and accuracy of the information is of the highest standards, there is still room for improvement. In particular, the language can be further improved and we call upon volunteers who are fluent in English to further improve this 1st edition.

We also look forward to your valuable feedback so that we can improve this 1st edition. We are a very young group and thus have a lot to learn and improve. It is only with the Blessings of our beloved Guru Ji and HIS beloved Gursikhs that we will be able to improvise the current work in the service of the Khalsa Panth.

In the service of Khalsa Panth

Editorial Board

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Academy

1. INTRODUCTION¹

1.1 Prologue by Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

Guru Nanak Dev Ji came to this world to get rid of all the bad practices and thoughts of beings and to get them connected to WaheGuru Ji. Guru Ji is beyond matters concerning happiness and sadness. Guru Ji came to this world to preach about Waheguru. Guru Ji helped beings to remove their sorrows and make them aware of salvation. Such were the virtues of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji to whom I bow and salute.

Guru Angad Dev Ji who is beyond maya and attachment, destroyer of sorrow, doubts and superstition. To protect his devotees from attachment and to ensure that they are always in bliss, Guru Ji gave them divine knowledge. Guru Angad Dev Ji's father name was Baba Pheru Mal Ji. Guru is provider of salvation to his devotees. I am putting my concentration on Guru Ji's feet, which is the destroyer of all troubles; with folded hands I salute the true Guru.

Guru Sri Amar Das Ji gives orders in this world and in the world beyond this world; the devtas takes advice from Guru Ji. Guru Ji has saved them from the life and death cycle by giving them Waheguru Naam.

Whichever devotee comes to Sri Guru Ram Das Ji's shelter without any desire, they are saved from the noose of death. Guru Ji is able to do that because Guru Ji is without any lust, anger or hatred. Guru Ji himself is a reflection of divine knowledge and is full of love. Even those who come to Guru Ji with desires, their desires too are fulfilled and their sickness are removed forever. Sri Guru Ram Das Ji is always absorbed in Naam. Chanting the Naam all sins are removed.

As the descendant of Guru Arjan Dev Ji, Guru Ram Das ji is brightly shining like the sun. Guru Ji, the master of salvation and giver of bliss, is able to provide happiness and remove the disease of attachment. On Guru Ji's beautiful feet I place my head.

At one time Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji wore two swords. Guru Ji was able to destroy the brave battalion of his opponent. I am a sacrifice to such a Guru.

If a person was born poor, Guru Har Rai Ji would bless them and made them like kings.

Whoever visited Guru Ji or was touched by Guru Ji, that person would received the gift of divine knowledge. Guru Ji use to hold a stick in his hand. I am a sacrifice to such a Guru, Guru Har Krishen Ji.

¹ Sri Gur Pertap Suraj Granth (Raas 2, Ansu 1) – Churamani Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

Similar to how the swans live by the natural lake, in the same way all the devotees live around Guru Tegh Bhadur Ji. With full concentration place your attentions to Guru Ji's feet and bow to him. Such a Guru, who was so brave in protecting the religion.

Satguru Sri Gobind Singh Ji removed the unfairness and excessive power of the Turks. Guru Ji protected the Hindu religion. Gave salvation to the Sikh devotees. The praise of the Guru is very great.

Gurbani is destroyer of all problems and provider of happiness. The pandits and the intelligent people respects *Gurbani*. Read such a Gurbani that provides ultimate height of intelligence

I place my head on the ground , bowing to all the Guru Sahiban I am about to begin narrating the life story of Sri Guru Ram Das Ji. Hey, the owner of the Universe Waheguru Ji, please remove all my difficulties that I may face.

As how I have read and heard, a very beautiful poem is written about Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Sri Gruru Angad Dev Ji and Guru Amar Das Ji. I have written the life story of the three Gurus to the best I could. Now I am going to start writing the life story of the fourth Guru. To the great saints with folded hands I plead to them that this history of the Guru's gets completed.

1.2 The Sodhi Clan

In Bachittar Natak, Guru Gobind Singh Ji composed a superb poem on the origins of the Sodhi clan. The extract of the poem is summarised as follows;

The ancestors of Sikh Gurus were the rulers of Punjab. They were descendents of the Solar Dynasty of Kshatriyas. Raghu and Aj were not only great rulers, but were also great scholars of this Dynasty. King Aj bestowed his empire and throne on Dasrath, who also became the great archer. He had three wives, the first son was Ram Chander, the second, Bharat, the third Lachhmn, and the fourth Shatrughan. They ruled for a long time. Ram Chander married Sita. From this union two sons were born, Lav and Kush. Sita's sons, Lav and Kush, both became kings. Two cities were raised in Punjab, one by Lav, Lahore, and the other by Kush, Kasur. Both became very famous. Kush and Lav reigned for a long time. Their sons and grandsons also became rulers. It is mentioned that Kush's descendent, Kalket and Lav's decendent, Kalrai had innumerable sons. Kalket possessed peerless strength, and expelled Kalrai from the city of Lahore. He fled to Sanaudh country (south of Delhi), where he married the king's daughter. The son born in his house of that marriage was named Sodhi Rai. The Sodhi clan began from that time. The sons and grandsons, who sprung from Sodhi Rai, were all called Sodhis; the Almighty extended the clan further. They became very distinguished among men and their wealth increased day by day. They exercised independent sway and conquered the kings of many countries. They spread religion every where, caused umbrellas to wave over their heads. Sodi Rai, who had become a king, had two sons, named Jagat Rai and Prithvi Rai. Appointing

Prithvi Rai as Raja, Sodhi Rai took his elder son Jagat Rai and made invasion of Lahore. They remembered the old enmity and wished to avenge themselves by retaking Lahore. They took Lahore after a bloody battle. The surviving members of the Kush family fled to Kanshi (Banaras). There they expounded the Vedas and became the readers of Vedas. Those of the expelled descendents of Kush, who read the Vedas were called Baidies. They carefully attended to their religious duties. Their fame reached their cousin brothers, the Sodhis, ruling in Lahore. The king of Lahore dispatched Baidies a conciliatory letter, to forget enmity that prevailed among them. The king's messenger arrived in Banaras, and explained the contents of the missive to all the Baidies. Upon this all the readers of the Vedas proceeded to Punjab. And on their arrival made obeisance to the King. He caused them to recite the Vedas. While all his bretheren were seated near him in assembly, the Baidi chief recited Sam Ved, the Yujar Ved, then the Rig Ved, making gestures with their hands, and finally the Atharav Ved. The King was pleased and gave them all the possessions. He elected to live in a forest. On giving them his kingdom he assumed the garb of a Rishi. The people tried to restrain him, but he dismissed all regret, and absorbed himself in God's Love.

The Baidi Chief was pleased on obtaining the kingdom and in the joy of his heart blessed the Sodhi King, saying: "When I will come in the Kal Age under the name of Nanak, I will make you worthy of worship in the world, and you shall attain the highest dignity. After hearing the first three Vedas from us you got totally absorbed in love of God, and on hearing the fourth Veda you have given your kingdom. After having assumed three births (in Kal Age), in my fourth I will make you the Guru." (Verse 9, Chapter 4).

The Baidis were pleased on getting the kingdom. Afterwards again quarrels increased in the Baidi Clan, which no one could reconcile. It was the Will of God that sovereignty should pass from their family. Only 20 villages remained to the Baidis, which they began to till. A long time passed in that way until the epoch for the birth of Nanak arrived. Nanak Rai, born in the line of those Baidis, conferred happiness on all his disciples, and assisted them in this world and the next. He established religion in the Kal Age, and showed the way unto all holy men. Sin never touches those, who follow in his footsteps. God removes all sufferings and sins from those who embrace the religion. Pain and hunger never annoys them and they never fall into death's noose. Nanak assumed the body of Angad, and made his religion current in the world. Afterwards Nanak was called Amar Das, as one lamp is lit from another. When the time of fulfilment of the blessing came, then Ram Das Sodhi became the Guru. Amar Das gave him the Guruship according to the ancient blessing. All the succeeding six Gurus after Guru Ram Das Sodhi, were his descendents. The Guruship was passed from Guru Ram Das to his youngest son, Guru Arjan and in this way reached Guru Gobind Singh, who passed on to the Khalsa in Collective Form till Eternity.

From the above account we learn that Guru Nanak and Guru Ram Das and the latter's descendant Gurus were the descendants of Lord Ram Chander's two sons, Kush and Lav respectively, Baidi and Sodhi Clans.

Guru Angad Dev was Trehan, a descendant of Lachhman, brother to Lord Ram Chander and Guru Amar Das was Bhalla, a descendant of Bharat, brother to Ram Chander. As such all the Ten Gurus were the descendants of Raja Dasrath, and belonged to this Dynasty, which is also known as Raghu Vansh or Suraj Bunse or Sun Dynasty. In ang 1401, SGGS, in Swaiyyas of Praise of Guru Ram Das, Bhatt Gayund states, "*Raghubuns tilak sunder Dasrath ghar mun buncheh ja ki sarnung.*" ("Guru Ram Das, was like handsome Sri Ram Chander in the house of Dasrath of Raghu Dynasty; whose Sanctuary the sages seek.").

1.3 Bhai Jetha or Ram Das

There are two different opinions on Guru Ram Das Ji's name before He was inaugurated as the Fourth Guru. It can be observed from Gurbani that Guru Angad Dev Ji's pre-Guruship name is mentioned as Lehna five (5) times in Ramkali Ki Vaar, Rai Balwand Tetha Sate Doom Akhi as Lehna and twelve times (12) in Sewaiye (SGGS -1389 to 1409). Guru Ram Das Ji's name has always appeared as Ram Das for seven (7) times in Gurbani.

The following are a research from historical books;

	Scripture	Writer	Pre-Guruship Name
1.	Sri Gurbertap Suraj Granth (1912)	Churamani Kavi Bhai Santokh Singh Ji	Ram Das Ji
2.	Bansavlinama (1769)	Bhai Kesar Singh Chibbar	Ram Das Ji
3.	Sri Guru Sobha (1711)	Sena Singh	Ram Das Ji
4.	Gur Bilas Patsahi 6 (1718)	Bhagat Singh	Ram Das Ji
5.	Panth Perakash (1880)	Giani Gyan Singh	Jetha Ji
6.	Ast Gur Chamatkar (1952)	Bhai Vir Singh Ji	Ram Das Ji
7.	Poori Hoi Kramat (1981)	Bhai Satbir Singh	Jetha Ji

It can be observed from the above, that Ram Das and Bhai Jetha referred to Guru Ram Das Ji's as pre-Guruship names by historians. It is clear from the list above that all the pre-colonial historians had written Ram Das with exception to Bhai Santokh Singh and Bhai Vir Singh who had written Ram Das even during colonial times.

All the other historians have followed Panth Perakash and written Bhai Jetha as Guru Ram Das Ji's pre-Guruship name.

The conclusion that can be derived from the above is that Guru Ram Das Ji's given name was Ram Das Ji but his nick name was Jetha Ji as he was the eldest child in his family. It is very common in India that the eldest son is called Jetha which means eldest.

2. INTRODUCING RAM DAS JI ²

Kavi Santokh Singh Ji says, I bow in reverence to the lotus feet of Guru Amar Das Ji who is able to change the turmoil river of fire into cool waters and eradicate all pain and sorrows of his devotees.

2.1 Family Background

The people from the Sodhi clan were searching for the means of earning a honest living before they started working in the Court of the Kings, management and trading. Some of them became accountants and some become bankers. They were naturally intelligent and hard working therefore they were successful in all the trades. They were also well known for their tolerance and merciful character.

Some of them were blessed by Almighty with faith and they practised their faith by giving away donations, praise Almighty, uphold truth, perform meditation, etc. The Sodhis were also well known for their fine and fair skin. From such a lineage Baba Gurdial Sodhi³ migrated and settled in Chunna Mandi, Lahore. He was blessed with two (2) sons. The younger son was born in the year 1474 A.D. and he was named Bhai Thakur Das. Bhai Thakur Das was married to Mata Karmo Ji belonging to Neyar Khateri clan⁴. Mata Karmo Ji has earned alot of praises therefore she was also known as Mata Jaswanti Ji. They lived a very divine and spiritual life.

In the year 1495 A.D. this holy couple were blessed with a son who was named Bhai Haridas Ji. Bhai Haridas Ji was a spiritually uplifted child and he grew up a very responsible person. He was married to Mata Anoop Dei⁵ who was also known as Mata Daya Kaur and Mata Khem Kaur. Bhai Haridas Ji was not only by name a servant of the Almighty but in reality he was truly the Almighty's servant. He was a very lovely, contented and committed person. He served the needy selflessly and performed his wee hour prayers and meditation very dedicatedly. He wished to have a son who will enshrine his clan by serving the entire world and return the glory of the Sodhis.

On the banks of River Ravi, Lahore became a very dense and lively town⁶.

² Sri Gur Pertap Suraj Granth (Raas 1, Ansu 41) – Churamani Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

³ Poori Hoi Kramat – Prof. Satbir Singh

⁴ Bansavlinama – Bhai Kesar Singh Chibbar

⁵ Bansavlinama – Bhai Kesar Singh Chibbar

⁶ Gur Parnalia – SGPC Page 247

2.2 Birth

On Thursday, Katak Vedhi 2, 1591 (2nd November 1534 A.D.), (Guru) Ram Das Ji was born. The people of Lahore rejoiced with happiness and there was an abundance of food for everyone. It was literally like a 'river of milk' flowing through the city.

Ram Das Ji had fair complexion, handsome figure, pleasant and smiling face and did not weep or cry in the manner of an ordinary child.

Since birth, Ram Das Ji was bestowed with powers to keep away the curse of death, he grew up to be an intelligent obedient youth.

2.3 Siblings

Guru Ram Das Ji was the eldest and he had a younger brother Bhai Haridyal Ji and sister Bibi Ram Dasi Ji.

2.4 Personality

Ram Das Ji had a very pure personality and developed love for the Almighty. He was a very strong minded person with high spiritual virtues such as contentment, endurance, patience, sacrifice, generosity, charity, tolerance, mercy, etc. Whenever he played with his friends he would talk about the importance of Almighty's meditation and motivated his friends to meditate as well.

2.5 Earning a Living

His father Haridas Ji, one day called Ram Das Ji and said, "Your carefree and playful days are over now. It is time for you to earn a living". "Yes, I shall do as you say father," replied Ram Das, "I am always at your service".

The next morning, his mother boiled some chickpeas, and gave it to her son saying, "Son take these and sell it in the bazaar," The Merciful Guru Ji carried the basket of peas to town. He sighed, his winsome sighs appealed to many, and those close to him.

A holy man called out to Ram Das and asked to be served. Ram Das Ji gave him a fist full of peas, but he wanted more. Ram Das then attempted to give him a second and a third helping, but the man did not accept the food. Overcome with generosity, Ram Das decided to give him all and overturned the contents of the basket.

His father was very angry, seeing Ram Das coming home empty handed. He could not bear to look at his father's red angry eyes. He felt very sad and cried.

2.6 Goindwal

One day he followed the sanggat who were on their way to Goindwal to see Guru Amar Das Ji. The pilgrims stayed for a few days and then returned to Lahore. Ram Das Ji stayed in Goindwal to serve the Guru Ji and the sanggat.

2.7 Marriage

The respectable wife of Guru Amar Das Ji one day told Guru Ji, "Our daughter Bhani ji has matured into a young woman. It is time to find a suitable suitor for her and arrange an engagement ceremony". Guru Ji called a Brahmin who was a match-maker. He spoke to the Brahmin, while sitting near a window, "Hey wise one, plan well and select a right partner for my daughter".

The Brahmin asked immediately, "Dear Prabhu Ji, would you consider someone who looks like him?" The Brahmin beckoned at a youth who stood outside the window. He was Ram Das Ji. Guru Amar Das Ji paused for a while and then said, "I would like to speak with him".

Ram Das Ji entered and greeted Guru Ji with folded hands, and sat near him. Guru Ji asked, "Who is your father? Where do you come from?" Ram Das Ji answered, "My father's name is Haridas and my name is Ram Das and I belong to Khatri caste of Sodhi lineage, we live in Lahore".

Guru Amar Das was pleased to meet Ram Das Ji and decided that he would be the most suitable husband for his daughter. Guru Ji immediately wrote to Ram Das Ji's father and invited the family to Goindwal. They accepted the invitation and agreed to the marriage of their son. A date was set for an engagement ceremony, and very soon afterwards a marriage ceremony was solemnized for the couple⁷. There was great rejoicing and the newly-united families were happy.

Ram Das's parents then returned to Lahore, but Ram Das stayed back to serve Guru Ji. He was very obedient and did everything that the meritorious Guru Ji wanted.

2.8 Children

A few years later in 1604 (1547 A.D.), Prithi Chand, who would unfortunately grow up to be a very coniving and conceited man, was born. He was brought up with a lot of love and attention. A second son, a beautiful baby named Mahadev was born and everyone was very happy.

⁷ 'Both Guru Amardas and his wife agreed that Bhai Jetha - who was later to become Guru Ramdas - was a suitable match for Bhani. They formally made the proposal to him and he was overcome with joy. The wedding took place at Goindwal early in 1553. Guru Ram Das later composed the following hymn of thanksgiving to God: "The Lord has accomplished the work; he has come to wed a holy bride." (SGGS Ang 775)' -Macauliffe: The Sikh Religion, II, p.91

On Tuesday, Vesakh Vadi 7, 1620 (14th April 1563 A.D.), morning, (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji was born. He was like the full moon that lighted up the skies that night.

Most of (Guru) Arjan Dev 's formative years were spent in his maternal home, which was in Goindwal. (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji grew up and married Mata Ganga Ji who was a peace-loving woman, and (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji loved her dearly.

3. RAM DAS JI'S SEWA⁸

Once, Guru Amar Das Ji was sitting in a gathering, and after looking around Guru Ji asked, "Where is Ram Das Ji? I have not seen him". Bhai Belu answered, 'Ram Das Ji could not find the time to come here because he is busy fulfilling the needs of all the people in the gathering (Sanggat). He has seated all the people in lines and serving them food and water. He is trying his best to make them comfortable in every way, even fanning them if they feel hot. Everyone is very pleased with him.'

Guru Amar Das Ji was very pleased to hear this and answered, 'Ram Das Ji is a great person. He is performing service with a sincere heart. He also shows a lot of love and respect for me. He will be blessed with great miraculous powers. Any person who performs selfless service for the Sanggat will receive blessings. Ram Das Ji's lineage will grow. He will be highly respected in this world and also the next world. By serving the Sanggat, he is obtaining more blessings than he will obtain even by serving me. He will obtain a very high position in both the worlds. He will enlighten many people in this world'.

Meanwhile, people intermingled in the congregation. Friendship and love grew among them. The Sikhs treated one another with a lot of respect. The singing of devotional hymns (kirtan) could be heard everywhere. People meditated on the name of Waheguru.

Guru Ji then declared that Vasakhi will be celebrated in this way every year.

⁸ Sri Gur Pertap Suraj Granth (Raas 1, Ansu 41) – Churamani Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

4. RAM DAS JI IN KING AKBAR'S COURT⁹

Guru Amar Das Ji rejected the discrimination by the caste system and initiated a new system. People belonging to all castes were made to sit together and have their meals. No one was discriminated against because of their caste. Everyone was given equal respect. Guru Ji gave charn-amrit and blessings to everyone to become Sikhs. People sat together and meditated on Almighty's Name (Naam). However the Brahmins and Khetri's were not happy to see the equality in human kind, they filed an official complain pertaining to this matter to King Akbar in Delhi. King Akbar issued a notice on Guru Amar Das Ji's name as the defendant and summoned Guru Ji to be present in his court.

When Guru Amar Das Ji received a court summons from the emperor, King Akbar, Guru Ji decided to send a representative on behalf of him to Lahore. Guru Ji appointed Ram Das Ji to act on his behalf as the defendant. Ram Das Ji was an educated and loyal disciple of Guru Ji.

Guru Amar Das called him and said, "My son, Brahmins have been blinded by their conceit. They are very envious of our faith and have hopes of eradicating it. They have taken their complaints to the court of the emperor. You depart immediately to Lahore as our representative and with your peaceful and diplomatic ways defuse the accusations against our faith".

Ram Das Ji stood up and pleaded. "Hey Satguru Ji, you are very virtuous. I am incapable of doing anything other than being committed to your love. How can I debate in the court when I have no knowledge of Gyaithri Mantar, and other ancient scriptures? I am ready to speak up before them even if their numbers are in a few hundreds. How can I bear to hear them slandering you! I need your blessings in this endeavor. Please preserve my dignity!".

Guru Amar Das Ji, the Merciful Guru Ji, upon hearing to Ram Das Ji's humble request said, "Son, you have no cause to fear! When you look at your right arm, you will immediately obtain the right answers to all their queries, regarding all the four Vedas and six Shastres. Gaining an insight into such divine knowledge, Son! You shall have my blessings. Be fearless and speak with conviction. And so shall it be. My son you will become a great scholar! The creators of the shastres, the Brahmins will not be able to question you any further. All the heavenly devtas and demons will honor you!".

Ram Das was relieved to hear Guru Amar Das's assuring speech. He made quick preparation and left for Lahore. He stayed a night in his house, and the next day he went to King Akbar's court.

⁹ Sri Gur Pertap Suraj Granth (Raas 1, Ansu 44) – Churamani Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

4.1 The Hearing in King Akbar's Court

King Akbar summoned all his ministers, including the influential and the wealthy. The Brahmins and pundits were also present. King Akbar began the hearing by asking the plaintiff (Brahmin & Khatri), "Present your case by first reading out your complaints about the Guru? Speak up about the concerning religious issue disputed".

Among those present were some who were envious with the establishment of the Sikh faith. They complained, "Guru Ji and his followers who belongs to Kathri cast have initiated their own faith. They do not follow the teachings of the Vedas, nor do they read the Gyaithri Mantar during prayers, instead they recite something they call 'Gurbani'".

King Akbar looked at Ram Das Ji and asked, "In your religion, Gyaithri Mantar is supposed to be read on all the time, why don't you recite it? What kind of a Hindu-Kathri religious sect are you from?"

Ram Das Ji remembered Guri Ji's timely instructions and glanced at his right arm. By doing so, he became an instant scholar! And guided by Guru Ji's grace he was able to answer Akbar with confidence. "I shall recite the Gyaithri prayers for you and all those who wish to hear. I shall also fulfill your desire by giving you its meanings, but I shall not be answerable to the resulting merits and demerits after my recitation. (According to Hindu believes Gyaithri prayers must be conducted in a sacred place and not among the non-believers).

Ram Das Ji then recited the Gyaithri prayers in an acceptable tune and explained its meanings. With the blessings of Guru Amar Das he was able to perform wonders. He then began to introduce the beliefs of the Sikh faith by beginning on the subject of 'Oangkar'. Listening to his preaching the breeze seemed to seize and stand still. The hard stones turned soft. The astonished listeners were very touched and satisfied by Ram Das's Godly-assisted performance. The proud scholars (Pandits) fell silent. Everyone gazed lovingly at Ram Das Ji and he became an instant celebrity.

4.2 King Akbar's Judgement

King Akbar too was very impressed; he said to the Brahmins and Khatri, "God and a holy man are numbered as two. But there is no difference between the two, as they have merged as one. You all cannot challenge him. He is very precise and true! Your believers are misguided. His believes are based on the Vedas and the Purans. Tell me what other kind of text have you been referring to? Now, you all are speechless. He has already recited the Gyaithri and clarified its meanings. If you are all well versed in it as assumed, then go ahead and ask him questions, otherwise acknowledge his presence and honor him".

Hearing King Akbar's conclusion and judgment the accusing plaintiff group felt dejected and remained silent. The case was dismissed immediately and they then made a hasty retreat to their homes.

5. RAM DAS JI'S LOVE FOR GURU¹⁰

5.1 A Robe for Guru Ji

Ram Das Ji stayed one night at his house in Lahore, and love for Guru Amar Das Ji was enshrined in his mind. The next day he started his journey back to Goindwal; on the way he passed through the Lahore town where he saw a very beautiful piece of cloth. He contemplated in his mind that a robe made from this cloth will be very suitable for Guru Ji as this was the most beautiful cloth that he had ever seen but Ram Das Ji did not have enough money to purchase it. Still he did not want to walk away without purchasing, tailoring and presenting it to Guru Ji. Ram Das Ji stood in front of the shop and within his mind he purchased the piece of cloth, tailored it to Guru Ji's robe and while standing there he presented it to Guru Ji and assisted Guru Ji to wear the robe with his focussed concentration.

At the same time, Guru Amar Das Ji was sitting on his throne in the midst of the congregation in Goindwal, while sitting Guru Ji's body started to move, he raised his arms and as though he was securing the knob of a robe. The Sikhs who were sitting in the congregation were surprised as they could not comprehend any reason for Guru Ji's movements. They humbly asked Guru Ji, "Dear Guru Ji, while sitting on throne, we saw that you were moving your body and we could not comprehend your gestures, please be merciful to explain as we know that your actions are beyond comprehension". Guru Ji said, "Ram Das was assisting me in putting a robe on me which he purchased and tailored while standing in Lahore town". Upon listening to the explanation everyone bowed in reverence before Guru Ji.

5.2 A Mango for Guru Ji

Ram Das Ji continued his journey from Lahore, on the way he passed through a bazaar where he saw unseasonal Mangoes being sold. The Mangoes looked very fresh and delicious and such ripe mangoes were never seen in Amritsar before. Concluding that the mangoes were very rare, he decided to purchase some for Guru Ji as one should never go empty handed to someone greater. He went to the seller and asked, "How much would these mangoes cost?" the seller replied, "One Rupee". Ram Das Ji immediately purchased the mangoes and walked as fast as he could to reach Goindwal as early as he could. On the way back he had to stay a night in a village, early in the morning on the next day he stated walking again hoping to meet Guru Ji as he was thirsty for Guru Ji's darshan'. Soon he reached a village called Bherowal which was adjacent to Goindwal.

¹⁰ Sri Gur Pertap Suraj Granth (Raas 1, Ansu 44) – Churamani Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

Ram Das Ji was holding the mango in his hand all the while to protect it. Due to the hot weather and the heat produced by his hand, the mango cracked and the juice started leaking out. Within his mind he thought that the mango will soon rot and would not reach Guru Ji. Ram Das Ji focussed his concentration on Guru Amar Das Ji and did a prayer very humbly (Ardaas), "Dear Guru Ji, I offer this fruit before you now. This unseasonal mango juice is leaking out and would not reach you therefore please be merciful and fulfil my wishes by consuming this fruit now." After the prayer Ram Das Ji consumed the mango. At the same instant in Goindwal, Guru Amar Das Ji started moving his mouth and he was eating the same mango which was offered by Ram Das Ji. After a while he took out the seed and called Bhai Belu Ji and said, "Secure this seed properly in the drawer, I will need it again once more". Bhai Belu Ji kept the mango seed as instructed by Guru Ji.

5.3 Arriving in Goindwal

After some time Ram Das Ji arrived in Goindwal and from a far distance he was overwhelmed with Guru Ji's presence. His eyes were fixed on Guru Ji's feet just like a bee that sits on a flower and fell at Guru Ji's feet. Guru Ji raised him by holding his arms and honoured him. The embrace between a Guru Ji and Ram Das Ji at that moment depicted enduring and everlasting love.

Guru Ji asked, "Tell me what happened in Akbar's court? How did you respond to them? and how did Akbar find them guilty? With folded hands Ram Das Ji said, "Dear Guru Ji, I could not comprehend what happened in Akbar's court. I never knew Gyaitari mantar earlier but when I looked at my right arm as instructed by you, instantly I obtained complete knowledge and when I uttered 'Ek Oangkar' everyone remained silent, thereafter no one spoke anything." Upon listening, Guru Ji was very pleased and asked, "What did you bring for me, as you have come from a well established town". Ram das Ji clasped his hands together and said, "You know everything, how the robe was presented without paying the cost as that cloth was suitable for you. Then I purchased a off-season mango but when I reached Bherowal it cracked and juice started leaking out, through concentration and faith I offered the mango to you". Guru Ji was very pleased with Ram Das Ji conviction and said, "I have consumed the mango that you have offered me through your concentration. The mango was very sweet and I have preserved the seed". Bhai Belu brought the seed and showed it Ram Das Ji and he was astonished. He immediately prostrated at Guru's feet and recognised Guru Ji as the Almighty himself.

6. A VISIT BY RAM DAS JI'S RELATIVES ¹¹

A group of pilgrims set forth from Lahore to go to the sacred banks of the Gangga River. The party consisted of Ram Das Ji's affluent relatives, neighbours and friends. They decided to stop in Goindwal which was on their way. They spoke among themselves, "Now this is the place where Haridas's son Ram Das stays. Ram Das' brother stayed in Lahore to look after his parents and the property, while Ram Das blatantly stayed away from his house preferring to stay with his in-laws. Let us pay a visit to see how he is faring. Definitely he must be getting the respect that befits a son-in-law. What kind of profitable trade could he be engaged in? What is so attractive about this place that has made him desert the wealth, status and comforts of his home?"

6.1 Meeting Ram Das Ji

The conservative and inquisitive bunch then walked towards the Boali Sahib construction site. Just then by an act of coincidence Ram Das who was carrying a basket of soil on his head came face to face with them. Ram Das Ji's face, body and clothes were stained by the soil and he was unrecognizable. He emptied the basket quickly and walked towards them greeting respectfully, "Ram Ram" and "I touch your feet". The snobbish visitors were shocked beyond belief seeing Ram Das Ji stained with mud and working among the labourer. He looked so deplorable in their narrow-minds.

His appearance angered the elderly relatives. Others found him amusingly funny. Without acknowledging his humble greetings they had only harsh words to say to him. "You are a disgrace to your ancestors. You live in your in-laws house and work like a labourer! You have taken birth in the Sodhi family and dishonoured it by your shameful behaviour. What else could be more demeaning than this? Which Khatri in his right mind will do what you do? While there are other decent jobs that befit your background, you choose to do hard labour. You have not only shamed us but you have degraded yourself in our circle of society."

6.2 Praising Guru Amar Das Ji

After leashing their anger and mocking Ram Das Ji the elite group was startled to see Ram Das looking so passive and cool. He bravely endured all the harsh remarks of his elderly relatives and former colleagues. He paused and smiled at them, and then said, "Sad to say, that you do not understand the Greatness of Guru Amar Das Ji who is the destroyer of pain and sorrows. Just by one intending glance at his devotee he is able to

¹¹ Sri Gur Pertap Suraj Granth (Raas 1, Ansu 51) – Churamani Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

erase his millions of patches of bad-luck. Those who have asked for 'mukti' have been liberated as well. He teaches us to love God and get close to Him through prayer".

Ram Das Ji continued, "The Supreme Being, who the Yogis have been trying to reach throughout the ages, is attainable through this Satguru. Even the very little sewa done by anyone is accounted for. People return home blissful and feel blessed when their desires are fulfilled. Everyone who comes here is very keen to perform any form of sewa for the Guru Ji to evoke his blessings. A person who comes here and does not feel the importance of performing selfless service (niskaam sewa), I consider him to be unfortunate and of low morals. Only a fortunate person is able to serve Guru Ji. No other earthly task can be more meritorious than labouring for you Guru Ji".

6.3 The Annoyed Relatives

Ram Das Ji's relatives and friends were too blinded by conceit and their aristocratic upbringing that they failed to discover the spiritual message that Ram Das Ji was trying to convey. They still argued and laughed at his life-style, believing him to be penniless and deprived. In the evening they were treated to food from Guru Ji's langgar, after which they adjourned to Guru Ji's home with a long list of complaints. Stiff with pride, the ill-mannered upper-class, did not prostrate in reverence before Guru Ji, but instead sat down while saying, "Ram-Ram". Guru Ji welcomed them politely.

An older relative by the name of Manggal spoke very snobbishly and accusingly at Guru Ji, "You have attained the status of a Guru and are old enough to know the protocol of dealing with the high and low caste. The society of the upper-class expects privileged attention from their relatives especially if they are the in-laws. You are the supreme Guru. Does it not occur to you that we belong to the distinguished Khatri class who should be pampered and assigned distinguished jobs. One of our relative, here has not been getting good treatment. We consider this as an insult to our high ranking family. We wish to see him work in a more respectable section."

Just then, Ram Das Ji too joined them. He was happy to see Guru Ji, whose sun-like rays radiated on Ram Das's happy face which seemed to bloom like a lotus flower. Ram Das humbly bowed and greeted Guru Ji. This humble reverence felt as though one bee was collecting nectar from its favourite flowers. Ram Das Ji's devotion to Guru Ji angered and humiliated the pompous relatives who angrily gabbled on, "He too was born in our family. His behaviour is atrocious and shameful. He left home when his father passed away and the unlucky youth has taken refuge in his in-laws house. He mingles with the inferior classes, carrying a shovel in one hand and a soil-laden basket on his head, spilling some of its contents on his face and clothes. Hey Guru Amar Das Ji, you have over looked his upper class status. He has not been allotted a decent job and therefore our family name has been tarnished. Now, we demand you to assign him to a suitable job".

Guru Ji looked at Ram Das Ji who sat among them looking very tranquil and happy. He came forward and crouched before Guru Ji, seemingly like a bee gathering nectar from an exotic flower. Guru Ji felt proud and happy and thought, “The river of my love has meandered into his heart, and its strong currents have carried away his negative inhibitions. He is inspired by my love and has become liberated. He is unaffected by the authoritative behaviour practised by his snobbish clan and believes every human-being to be equal.”

6.4 Honouring Ram Das Ji

Guru Ji then looked and addressed the Lahore visitors, “I consider him fit enough and blessed him with a canopy to shelter the entire universe. You have felt offended because you are not the devotee of the Guru, neither have you cherished any love for the Almighty. If it was not for Ram Das Ji, say if he was not born in your family, then all your ancestors and descendents would have been cast into hell!”

Ram Das Ji, folded his hands and pleaded, “It is your good nature to forgive, Guru Ji, forgive and save the sinners. They are ignorant and helplessly trapped in the net of materialism.” Guru Ji was very touched by Ram Das’s request and was prompted to say, “Hey Ram Das you are great! By performing selfless sewa, you have won my heart. You have taken great pains to serve and understand me.”

Finally the arrogant aristocrats left after realizing their upper-class image did not carry any weight in the sacred place and society of Guru Ji. Ram Das Ji continued serving Guru Ji with renewed love and vigour.

7. GURU'S BLESSING IN GOINDWAL¹²

7.1 Ram Das Ji's Selfless Service (Sewa)

During the digging and construction of Boali Sahib, Ram Das Ji worked very hard in performing his selfless service among the dirt-covered labourers. He maintained a great respect for Guru Ji and did everything within his capacity to please him. The basket of wet earth which he placed on his head, smudged his head and face and stained his clothes, yet undeterred, worked on. Guru Ji was aware of Ram Das's devotion and he too, in return loved, the faithful and virtuous, Ram Das Ji.

7.2 Rama Ji and Ram Das Ji

Guru Amar Das Ji had two daughters Bibi Dhani Ji and Bibi Bhani Ji who were very fortunate (blessed), full of bhagti (meditation) and intelligent. Their husbands were Rama and Ram Das Ji respectively. They loved Guru Ji very much as their father-in-law and their Guru. They both participated in the construction of the Boali Sahib and also encouraged others to participate. In the evenings, Ram Das Ji would collect all the baskets used in transporting soil and place them in one location. The next morning, he would redistribute the baskets to the crowd that came forward for the voluntary service. In the same way, he would also take care of the special tools belonging to the skilled workers. With lots of love and commitment, he would perform selfless service of Guru Ji. In the same way, Rama Ji, also performed sewa selflessly.

They would never procrastinate the sewa and would encourage others to participate. Guru Ji loved his sons-in-law immensely and embraced them in his Heart as his devoted disciples. The crowd of Sikhs observed them and their commitment in performing selfless sewa, they would make assumption based on their observations. Some would say, "Rama Ji is loved more by Guru Ji. He would take over the Guru's throne. He is always abiding Guru Ji's orders and is not lazy to perform sewa." Other Sikhs would say "Ram Das Ji shall be the next Guru, Guru Ji is very happy with him because he is very humble."

They would never expect gratitude from others and continued to perform continuous sewa all day long. Guru Ji was very pleased with them.

Other than the older Sikhs, who knew Guru Ji dearly, the rest of the Sikhs continued to speculate about his two son-in-laws. The older Sikhs would say "They are humble, they love everyone the same, they love Guru Ji and trust him undividedly, they have all positive traits, with which Guru Ji is fully pleased. We see all these traits in Ram Das Ji.

¹² Sri Gur Pertap Suraj Granth (Raas 1, Ansu 56) – Churamani Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

That is why, he will eventually be Guru. We are considering the happiness of Guru Ji, he has always loved Ram Das Ji more.”

7.3 A Question by Sikhs

One day, a big crowd of the Sikhs came for the darshan (sight) of Guru Ji. There were some leaders amongst them who with clasped hands, asked Guru Ji “You are forever full of good traits. You are always with your sewaks. Guru Nanak Dev Ji chose a sewak over his own children as the next Guru. Similarly, Guru Angad Dev Ji chose you (in view of your immense sewa) over his own children. You have also regarded your sewaks similarly. Your two sons-in-law are also your greatest sewaks. Both do sewa immensely and are always drenched in sewa. They perform selfless sewa of the sanggat and they participate actively in the construction of Boali Sahib with full dedication. In every way, they are equal as you cast the same blessings on everyone. We are always speculating, as both appear the same to us. You have blessed both and treat them the same. But sometimes, we have observed that you love Ram Das ji more and he too does a lot of sewa, day and night. Between the two, who is greater and more pleasing to you? How will the Sikhs know of your views and love for the two? Please bless with your response to all this question in order to end all the speculations. Please let us have your views.

At this point, Guru Ji, who knew every thought of his Sikhs, and who always wished to bless happiness to his Sikhs, prepared to provide the answer.

8. A TEST OF ENDURANCE¹³

8.1 Guru's Response

Guru Ji answered "There is a prevailing rule in this world and salvation can only be attained by conforming to this rule (maryada), however, the state of love uplifts a person far beyond the circle of rules. The Almighty dwells within a person who is completely drenched in love and is absorbed in the Almighty, whoever continues to enhance this love consistently. Without love, there is little benefit in simran and sewa, please know this. Let me put them on a test to judge their love. The Almighty is attained only through immense love. I shall now test you, who among this two has more love for the Almighty. Please do not inform them about this, keep this a secret. I shall free you of your speculation as to who will be my successor."

8.2 The First Day

Guru Ji then called Rama and Ram Das Ji to see him and Guru Ji walked along with them to the Boali. Guru Ji held a stick to assist his weak and aged body to walk. Standing at a suitable location, he pointed out to Rama "Please make a place for me to sit." Again, standing at another location, he looked at Ram Das Ji and requested "Please make a place for me to sit here."

He then said, "Please construct the bench like this. I shall sit on the bench constructed by Ram Das Ji in the morning and in the evenings on the bench made by Rama Ji". After explaining the task, Guru Ji left. Both of them started to construct the bench and were occupied with it the whole day. In the evening Guru Ji returned. He first saw the bench which was built by Rama and said "This is not constructed properly; it doesn't look good for sitting. All your efforts have gone to waste. Even the surface of the bench is rough. Quickly demolish this and do not delay. Listen to me carefully. Please construct one with a smooth surface and make sure it is a good bench." Rama was dissatisfied to hear Guru Ji's comments and defended himself "I have built it according to your specifications. Why do you not like it? It is very well made as a sitting piece. Sikhs will be able to do your darshan upfront while you sit here. I am not at fault in this, I have built it according to your instructions. I have strived to build the bench well, just like you specified". Rama continued to insist but Guru Ji kept to his comments. Guru Ji drew a line with his stick and said "Pls reconstruct it in this fashion." Guru Ji then left and proceeded to the other end where Ram Das Ji was waiting.

¹³ Sri Gur Pertap Suraj Granth (Raas 1, Ansu 57) – Churamani Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

Ram Das Ji bowed to Guru Ji's feet and stood. Guru Ji inspected his bench and said "You have failed to understand my instruction. The bench is not fit for my sitting, please demolish it." After listening to Guru Ji, Ram Das quickly demolished the bench and humbly said "Please forgive me for this mistake. I am of little intelligence and that is why I could not understand your instruction. Hey, Guru Ji, please explain to me once again." Again Guru Ji drew a line on the ground with his stick and explained.

"Both of you, please reconstruct the benches".

8.3 The Second Day

The next morning, both Rama and Ram Das Ji, started to build the benches afresh, as instructed by Guru Ji. Using bricks and mud, the two occupied themselves with the task. The next day, Guru Ji, proceeded to Boali in the evening where Rama's bench was built. After inspecting the bench, Guru Ji said "You have not done it well, not like I wanted it to be. Demolish it and reconstruct a new one. Without using your intelligence, you are wasting your effort." Listening to this, Rama thought to himself, "I have corrected myself and constructed this well. I have made the bench exactly as you wanted it. This fits well as a beautiful sitting place. Others seem to praise it. How can I demolish this? How can I construct one which is better than this one? Guru Ji insisted that a new one must be built and said "Use your skill and intelligence to construct the bench."

Moving on to Ram Das Ji, Guru Ji inspected the bench and said "This is not constructed properly as well. I am not pleased with it. Demolish this and build a new one. It seem that you did not understood my instructions". Ram Das Ji thought and said "Your intelligence is way beyond mine. Please bless me. Due to my lack of intelligence, I have again made a mistake, please forgive me this time. Please give me your instructions again and I shall complete it accordingly". Guru explained again with the aid of his stick.

8.4 The Third Day

The next morning, both Rama and Ram Das Ji, started to build the benches afresh, using the best of their intelligence. The third day, Guru Ji, came again. After inspecting Rama's bench, Guru Ji said "Hey Rama, you have not followed my requirements and specifications. I don't like it at all. I have explained to you many times but you have not been able interpret my instruction properly." Listening to this, Rama thought to himself "What is wrong, I dont understand. Guru Ji is old now and he is unable to remember what he had said earlier". After a while Rama said "I have constructed the bench according to your specification and used my best ability to do it". I have made the bench exactly as you wanted it. This fits well as a beautiful sitting place. Others seem to praise it. How can I demolish this? How can I construct one which is better than this one? Guru Ji insisted that a new one must be built and said "Use your intelligence to construct the bench." Rama Ji refused to demolish the bench and build another one.

Guru Ji then approached Ram Das ji and said “Again, this is not well done, I have told you many time, but you cannot understand. It is not done like the one I illustrated to you. You have wasted your effort in construting the bench”.

Ram Dasji felt very bad for himself and lowered himself and grabbed Guru Ji’s feet “I am without any knowledge and always make mistakes. You are ever forgiving and that is why you have repeatedly forgiven me despite my repeated mistakes. I am such a fool. I can only comprehend things based on my limited intelligence. Without you I am nothing. Please tell me how can I construct this properly. I am very weak and am unable to understand your instructions.” He then wrapped a piece of cloth (sign of being a servant) around his neck and said “Hey Prabhu, please forgive me”.

8.5 Conclusion

All the Sikhs who were observing this were very impressed by Ram Das Ji’s humbleness as a true disciple. Guru Ji was also fully pleased and thought that Ram Dasji is fit to be made the next Guru. Guru Ji said “I am pleased with his sewa. He has never thought of himself. Drenched in meditation of love day and night, his mind has been completely purified.” With this, the doubts of the Sikhs were cleared and they then considered Ram Das Ji as the deserving beneficiary of Guruship. Guru Ji then went home and announced “Ram Das Ji is a great person, many will receive salvation in his company. I have nothing to give him as he has attained the greatest status from his sewa”.

9. GURU RAM DAS JI BLESSED WITH THE THRONE ¹⁴

In a jungle where sandalwood trees are found, their fragrance is passed onto all surrounding trees which smell like sandalwood too; in a similar manner Guru Ji reforms all human beings into him.

Goindwal is a place of recitation. It's the greatest place of devotion where beings reside close to Guru Ji. The place where religion, richness, achievement and salvation are obtained. People are blessed with gifts. Whatever comes to Guru Ji's mind is fulfilled.

9.1 Blessings of Age

One day after a bath Guru Ji was sitting down when Bibi Bhani Ji came to visit. Upon seeing his daughter Guru Ji uttered, "Ram Das is going to leave his body soon, tell me what will you do? In a blink of eye, this body, which is perishable, will leave us and we will not be able to stop it".

The wise Bibi Bhani Ji had total faith in Guru Ji words. She thought to herself "whatever Guru Ji is saying has to be true" immediately with folded hands she humbly said, "What else can I do, what a widow is supposed to do, that is what I will do. Whatever you command me to do I shall do".

After listening to her, Guru Ji said, "Hey wise and thoughtful daughter listen, Ram Das Ji's body will maintain and he will do meditation of the Almighty. This is my blessing onto you. Ram Das's life has come to an end today, nothing can be done, please understand. Now I shall give my remaining life to him." After saying this Guru Ji called for Ram Das Ji and made him sit by his side and explained. "Dear Son, your life has come to an end. I know that I will live till the age of 112 years. Now I will give 6 years 11 months and 18 days of my remaining life. Live your life in meditation of the Almighty. There will not be any difference between you and me. We are one now, like the water from a pitcher when poured into the ocean becomes one, the same way you and I are one. Just like in your heart the love for God abides the same way you have become one and convinced me with your love".

9.2 Inauguration of Guru Ram Das Ji

Guru Amar Das Ji looked at Bhai Belu Ji and said, "Go and look for a nice coconut and bring it to me, quickly bring it to me. You will be saved from the Messenger of death

¹⁴ Sri Gur Pertap Suraj Granth (Raas 1, Ansu 67) – Churamani Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

(jamdoots), you will be saved from the desires of the mind, and you will receive all the happiness. Your ego and attachments will vanish. Give Ram Das a bath and dress him in beautiful clothes. Do this quickly while singing the shabads of Gurbani and take the full bliss (anand). Then prepare other materials for my departure. The time to leave my body is nearing”.

Just as commanded by Guru Amar Das Ji, Ram Das Ji was given a bath and he was dressed in new clothes. Guru Amar Das Ji welcomed Ram Das Ji.

It was Bhadron Sudhi 13, 1631 (29th September 1574)¹⁵, Guru Amar Das Ji held Ram Das Ji's hand and made him to sit on the Guruship throne. From Ram Das Ji's forehead a beautiful radiant spiritual light could be seen. It was like the King of Lights had been bestowed on the throne, together with eighteen (18) miraculous powers as the world will recognize Guru Ji as the most powerful. Baba Buddha came forward and placed the mark (tilak) on Guru Ram Das Ji's forehead. Guru Amar Das Ji placed tray with coconut and five (5) paisa on Guru Ram Das Ji's lap and went around Guru Ram Das Ji. Then, he touched his forehead on Guru Ram Das Ji's feet and gave the throne to him and made Guru Ram Das Ji the owner, the King, the master of all the three (3) worlds.

Then Guru Ji told Bhai Belu Ji, “Ask Mohan Ji and everyone else to come here now. Go and give them my order and ask everyone to come quickly.” Bhai Belu Ji quickly instructed other Sikhs to announce Guru Ji's order.

Listening to this order, all the Sikhs started saying that Guru Ji is getting ready to merge into his formless form and has bestowed the Guruship to Guru Ram Das Ji. People started coming to see Guru Ji as instructed. All the Sikhs came before Guru Ji. Both Guru Ji's sons also arrived at the darbar and the darbar was full of sanggat.

9.3 Baba Mohan Ji

Guru Amar Das Ji said to both his sons “Please bow before Guru Ram Das Ji, he has served the house of Guru Nanak with humbleness. He has the gift to tolerate the intolerable. Baba Mohan Ji who was very light hearted (mastana) and was never bothered about anybody said before the entire Sanggat. “I am not going to bow before him. You have given him everything. For a long time he has been taking shelter in our house. It is not right for him to sit on this throne. This treasure belongs to us. Just like how we have so many relatives living with us happily. Ram Das ji is also like them. Then why are you giving him this throne? We are your children and this throne is ours. Thus I will never bow before him. We are the sons of the owner of this throne.”

¹⁵ Three (3) days before Guru Amar Das Ji merged into his formless form (Jyoti-Jot)

9.4 Baba Mohri Ji

Listening to all this, Baba Mohri Ji started to contemplate and started reflecting on the events that had taken place during the similar occasions when Guru Nanak Dev Ji blessed Bhai Lehna Ji his throne and made him Guru Angad Dev Ji. Then Guru Angad Dev Ji also did the same by bestowing the throne to Guru Amar Das Ji. Baba Mohri Ji continued to ponder that only the blessed ones are granted with such honour onto whom the Almighty himself bestows his blessings and their selfless service (sewa) is accepted. Although somebody is jealous about the Guru, they can never harm Guru Ji in anyway, instead the jealous person suffers in pain his entire life. Thus, by obeying Guru Ji's wishes, all greatness is obtained.

After pondering thoroughly, Baba Mohri Ji stood up and he was followed by everyone else. Baba Mohri Ji then fell on Guru Ram Das Ji's feet and everyone said "Dhan, Dhan". Baba Mohri Ji is the first son of a Guru who accepted the inaugurated Guru with so much of respect and love. He is known as the most obedient one.

Baba Sri Chand and Baba Lakhmi Das refused to accept Guru Angad Dev Ji as the Second Guru. Baba Dasu Ji and Baba Datu Ji also refused to accept Guru Amar Das Ji as the Third Guru. Now, during the Fourth Guru's inauguration Baba Mohan Ji also refused to accept Guru Ram Das Ji. Therefore in Sikh History Baba Mohri is the first in obeying the orders of the Father Guru as for him Guru Amar Das Ji was a Guru and the physical form of the Almighty himself. He put aside the claims as a son and yearned for Sikhi.

Everyone (Sangat) prostrated before Guru Ram Das Ji's and sat down. Guru Amar Das Ji then spoke "Dear Mohri, tell us what you know of Guru Ram Das Ji, after me how would you address him, tell me to what you really feel and understand."

Hearing this Baba Mohri Ji folded his hands and said, "My beloved Father (Pita Ji), I have known the first Guru was Guru Nanak Dev Ji, second was Guru Angad Dev Ji and third one is you the knower of all, and the same way the forth form is Guru Ram Das Ji."

Hearing this everyone was happy, Guru Ji was very pleased and blessed Baba Mohri, "Mohri, you are the blessed one and you have realised the truth, you will always remain in my mind, and now there is no secrets and doubts between us anymore. Now onwards your are a Saint, your twenty-one (21) generations will be bestowed". Hearing this Baba Mohri Ji then asked Guru Ji "When Dharamraj (Righteous King) asks for the accounts of deeds performed in this world (Lekha), my generations will be bestowed once my accounts are cleared".

Said Guru Ji, "As long as Guru Nanak is here, your accounts have been deleted by Dharamraj. You will not be subjected to hearing in Dharamraj's court, you will be brought directly to me using a different path as you are the true Sikh and you are blessed. Your generation will grow bigger and they will all be blessed with the Sikh way of life

and they will all love the abode of Guru Nanak and will never put their faith in any other.”

9.5 A Plead from Guru Ram Das Ji

When Guru Ram Das Ji heard all this, his eyes filled with tears and said “Guru Ji please bless me with Sikhi (discipleship) and make Baba Mohri Ji the Guru. I am only your servant but Baba Mohri Ji is your obedient son who is qualified in every manner for the honour. I prefer to meditate at Baba Mohri Ji’s feet.”

Guru Ji was very happy hearing this and said “ These blessings were supposed to be given to you, and now it is the time for me to execute the preordained act to keep and fulfil the word, my generation will not have any doubts and dislike anyone, flourish the love and live as one” All the family got together and Bibi Bhani Ji with folded hands, said “ Dear Pita Ji, you have blessed the family with Guruship and please bless the family so that the sacrifices required in near future to retain the glory of truth and justice is dutifully delivered”. Guru Ji then said, “The Guruship will now onwards stay within the Sodhi clan. However, the future Gurus will have to face many challenges as Maya will now be allowed into the house of Guru Nanak, just as how the river flows, even though we try to stop the flow, it will somehow flow through. When Maya met Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Guru Ji instructed Maya to stay 30km (12 koh) away from the abode of Guru Nanak. Guru Angad Dev Ji kept Maya at a distance of 15km (6 koh). Now she is standing at my doorstep and trying hard to come in. It will only come when there are doubts and misunderstandings”.

Guru Ji then blessed Bibi Bhani Ji and declared Guru Ram Das Ji the next Guru of the jagat (world).

10. GURU AMAR DAS JI'S JYOTI JOT¹⁶

Baba Buddha Ji marked Guru Ram Das Ji's forehead with the 'tilak' of Guruship. Guru Amar Das Ji placed five cents and a coconut (narial) before Guru Ram Das Ji and looked with so much of love. Then he circumambulated (parkarma) around Guru Ram Das Ji with his hands folded followed by Baba Buddha Ji. Baba Mohri Ji then bowed before Guru Ji. All Sikhs then meditated. This way Guru Amar Das Ji gave the throne to Guru Ram Das Ji and now Guru Ji was prepared to merge into his formless form (Jyoti-Jot). Guru Amar Das Ji's eyes were like the flower blossoms and with glowing face gave peaceful advice to all his sikhs to get rid of all their sadness.

It was Bhadron Sudhi Puranmasi, 1631 (1st October 1574). Then in everyone's presence, Guru Ji then lay down on his bed and put a blanket over his head covering his face and merged into His Formless Form (Jothi Jot). His total age was 105 years 4 months and 1 day. Guru Ji completed 21 years, 5 months and 14 days of glorious Guruship.

10.1 Final Rites

In Goindwal, all the ladies got together and sang shabads from Gurbani. Guru Ram Das Ji with Baba Mohri Ji, Baba Buddha Ji and Bhai Belu Ji got together to bathe (ishnaan) Guru Amar Das Ji's body. After giving the bath they placed Guru Ji on a flat bed (biban) and carried it on their shoulders. There were all kinds of instruments played (dhuna) and lots of flowers were put on Guru Ji. Gurbani Kirtan was sung and some Sikhs did 'Chour' over Guru Ji.

Everyone threw the flowers on the bed in which Guru Ji was carried. All of them reached the riverbank. There were thousands of people surrounding the place. Guru Ji then was placed there and on the pyre made of sandalwood. Ghee and lots of fragrance were put on the woods. Guru Ram Das Ji then handed the fire to Baba Mohri to light the pyre from top and all the four directions.

¹⁶ Sri Gur Pertap Suraj Granth (Raas 1, Ansu 68) – Churamani Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

11. GURU RAM DAS JI'S GURUSHIP ¹⁷

Guru Ram Das Ji, the greatest shining star in the clan of Sodhi, is sitting on the throne. One of Guru Ji's greatness was that he is the first Guru who allowed Maya to serve His court. Sitting on the throne, Guru Ji was looking as though in the sky the fourth sun has risen. Guru Ji is full of miracles and is surrounded by his beloved Sikhs.. The scene is similar of that when the beautiful full moon (*puranmasi*) is among the stars.

Sikhs who had come from all over the place looking at Guru Ram Das Ji and are saying "He looks like Sri Guru Amar Das ji , currently in him the light of Guru Nanak Dev ji is residing ." Everybody is looking and bowing at Guru Ji.

After three days everybody found out and all of them reached the place where the cremation of Guru Amar Das Ji was carried out. They all stood in front of the crematorium, and their eyes were filled with tears. They were extending condolences to Baba Mohri Ji. Baba Mohan Ji had his head facing downwards. The remains were collected and were kept in a cloth. Baba Sawan Mal was sent to the Ganga river to rest the remains. All the necessary ceremonies were done with lots of love and respect. All got together and sat around Boali Sahib. Devotees arrived in-groups.

The religious singers who were filled with emotions and love were singing Gurbani (*keertan*). There were many religious congregations held. Daily there was food (*langgar*) prepared and was served to thousands of people. On the tenth day a variety of food was prepared. In Goindwal there was a huge gathering. Everybody met Guru Ram Das Ji. All the *Sadhhus* had gathered there and was having *langgar*.

Those Sikhs who were appointed to preach the word of Guru had also arrived with the *daswand* (ten percent of the income) that they had collected. While giving the *daswand* to Guru Ram Das Ji they also bowed their heads at Guru Ji's feet.

11.1 Guru Ji in Isolation

Guru Amardas Ji himself had chosen his predecessor and nobody could change that. Guru Ram Das ji knew that Baba Mohan Ji was unhappy; He had a very soft heart, who could not see anybody sad. Guru Ji thought to himself "What should I do? These people are not happy to see me"

Seeing all this Guru Ji went home, sat and focussed on²¹ meditation thus attaining a lot of peace. Guru Ji excluded himself and never came out to sit among the Sikhs. Guru Ji developed so much of love for Guru Amar Das Ji that he forgot all about his daily chores. Guru Ji sat in one place and never moved, looking in one direction constantly. Guru Ji

¹⁷ Sri Gur Pertap Suraj Granth (Raas 2, Ansu 1) – Churamani Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

stood at times and at times sleeping. Sometimes Guru Ji used to sit and not move from that place.

Baba Baba Prithvi Chand Chand, Baba Mahadev and (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji use to call for Guru Ji and bow at his feet. To give them courage Guru Ji use to speak to them at times but Guru Ji use to lay or sit in one place.

Guru Ji's behavior became very different, use to be alone most of the time. At times Guru Ji use to be so much in love that he use to utter *Gurbani*. Guru Ji used to compose Gurbani in Rag, and use to sing very sweetly. Whereas outside the Sikhs became restless, they started saying, "Guru Ji is not coming out".

11.2 Sikhs Longing for Darshan

Bhai Sach Nisach, Mank Chand and all the Sikhs from village Dela together with Sawan Mal, Mae Das and Gangobesi, Matho Murari , Feria, Ketara, Kheda, Sueri Pandit, Beni Pandit, Hindal and all the Sikhs who lived in Goindwal gathered in one area. Baba Mohan Ji and Baba Mohri Ji together with their sons were also gathered there.

Baba Budha Ji and other Sikhs sat near Boali Sahib. Everbody was worried and they were saying "Guru Ji is not coming out from his house, what is bothering him? He is not sitting in the *Sanghat*". Everybody encouraged Baba Budha Ji, "Please go and bring Guru Ji".

Baba Budha Ji said, "Please listen to me, Guru Ji's learned son Baba Mohri Ji should be the one to bring Guru Ram Das Ji out. I will accompany him."

Everybody spoke to Baba Mohri Ji and he understood. He together with Baba Budha Ji and some Sikhs went to see Guru Ram Das Ji.

11.3 A Plead before Guru Ji

All of them went in and saw Guru Ram Das Ji. On seeing them approaching Guru Ram Das Ji got up to pay respect and they met each other. Then, Baba Mohri Ji spoke, "Why are you sitting in the house? My father Guru Amar Das Ji respect fully made you sit on his throne. Just as he blessed the Sikhs in the similar manner you should sit among the *Sanghat* and bless them with Naam. Just as Guru Amar Das Ji advised you.

After listening, Guru Ram Das Ji became very emotional, his eyes were filled with tears. He said, "You are Guru Ji's children and Gursikhs, I will always do as all of you wish. It is a great honour to listen to all of you." After saying this Guru Ji came out and sat in the crowd. All the Sikhs got up and bowed and gave salutation to Guru Ji. Everybody was happy to see Guru Ji.

12. THE PRAISE OF SRI GURU RAM DAS JI¹⁸

Guru Ram Das Ji sits on the throne of contentment, the throne that signifies the true name of Almighty (Satnam).

The sincere devotion (worship) of the wealth of Almighty's Name (Naam) and the radiant faces full of knowledge with the wise Sikhs ruled by Guru Ram Das Ji. The purity, humbleness and wise thoughts with good deeds, love and devotion all stay with Guru Ji. Love strength and the beautiful Almighty's Praises (Gurbani) sung are the tunes that erase the fear. The attachment form of enemy, which resided in this physical body, has now been replaced by the presence of Guru Ji as now Guru Ji resides within.

The evils of anger, lust, greed, attachment and ego have been defeated into dusts and Guru Ji has conquered all vices. The anger, ego, jealousy, and lust desire does not exist in the house of Guru Ji. Just as how Raja Ram Chander killed Supankha and Tarika, Guru Ram Das Ji defeated the ego and attachment. Guru Ji also diminishes jealousy and slandering. There are no objections, doubts against anyone; Guru Ji resides peacefully on his throne.

Guru Ji protects and takes good care of his servants (sewaks) as He is the giver and fullfiller of all desires. The SatSanghat obtains Almighty's Name (Waheguru) from Guru Ji before preaching the same to others and spreading the true love all around everywhere. He is the protector of his sewaks and destroys all bad deeds wherever His name is uttered. Maya is always surrounding but Guru Ji is always detached from all the worldly things. Those sewaks who recite Gurbani with full concentration and love, have their desires fulfilled and are blessed with children or wealth.

Guru Ji sits in the Sanghat where all saints are liberated and enjoy the peaceful aura of having the sight (darshan) of Guru Ji. Just as the 'chekor' becomes happy seeing the moon and like the flowers blossom when the sun rises. This way by meeting and seeing Guru Ji all Sikhs become happy and cheerful. Guru Ji is like the light in everyone heart, with his blessing and graces anyone's forehead Guru Ji touches, is turned into gold, as if an iron rubbed against the sand turns into gold.

Just like a sandalwood (chandani) tree smells, all other trees along that grow with the Sandalwood tree, smell similarly. This way all Sikhs who stay with Guru Ji get liberated.

¹⁸ Sri Gur Pertap Suraj Granth (Raas 2, Ansu 2) – Churamani Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

13. DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SIDHAS¹⁹

When the Sidhas got to know that the Forth Guru had been inaugurated, they were curious to know who the Guru Ji was. They immediately made their plans to come and see Guru Ji. Just as the pilgrims go on a pilgrimage, the Sidhas came to see Guru Ji.

They were also curious to know whether the newly appointed Guru Ji who sits on the throne now is as perfect as Guru Nanak himself or not. All of them came and said ‘Adhes’ ‘Adhes’ which means salutation.

Guru Ji invited them with full respect and they sat next to Guru Ji. Guru Ji was happy to meet them. Said the Sidhas “Guru Ji, in your Sanggat your Sikhs do not practise the eight vital practices of Yoga and without Yoga how can one attain the concentration mind and how will they then be able to recognise their real-self (Atma). Without knowing the Atma one is not able to control his thoughts and past events and without knowing this how can one find salvation. Without salvation they will come and go in this world therefore what is great in becoming your disciple? We have this doubt in us, by being Sikh they will not find salvation”.

Hearing the Sidhas Guru Ji then said “We have embraced Almighty’s Name (Satnaam-True Name) which is the support of Yoga within the mind and thought. When a Sikh utters and does the simran day and night he would be engrossed in Prema Bhagti (Passionate Meditation). In the state of such meditation one will not even produce a single thought of any other (worldly material) then Almighty. Although through meditation one obtains powers to perform miraculous acts, whoever is fascinated with such super powers and demonstrates miracles to impress others will find themselves trapped in this state where one expects others to worship him and will not be able to attain Almighty. On the other hand one who is guided by a True Guru will successfully pass through this state and remain in Almighty’s Love. Soon with Almighty’s blessing he shall obtain knowledge and self-realisation. He shall realise that the entire creation is truly Almighty himself just like the rope form of Almighty is seen to be a snake (Maya) in the darkness of ignorance. He realises the mirage as a mere creation of Maya and his mind form of deer does not chase after delusion of Maya. His discrimination thoughts shall be dispelled as he sees all as the Almighty Himself and as he progresses he finds that there is no difference between him and Almighty therefore he sees himself within all. Sikhs are performing such meditation (Prema Bhagti) by remembering Almighty’s Name as all efforts (penance) for salvation are in vain without love. In this age of darkness (Kal-yug) one cannot attain salvation although one may attain the focus of mind with various methods but once the miraculous power is achieved then it becomes even more difficult

¹⁹ Sri Gur Pertap Suraj Granth (Raas 2, Ansu 2) – Churamani Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

to control as every effort will be made to gain popularity and proclaiming to be the most powerful person. However, one with self-realisation has all the miraculous powers standing before him begging to be given the opportunity to perform service. The enlightened person ignores the miraculous powers and continues to enjoy the bliss of Almighty's Name. You may embrace a Yogi's costume and practice Yoga but without love what will you attain? Those who do not control their mind, they are always roaming and engrossed in miraculous powers. Guru Ram Das Ji uttered the following Shabad;

ੴ ; ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥ (੩੬੮-੧)

There is only one Almighty without duality (Eak), life of the entire creation (Ongkaar), true form in all ages and time dimensions (Sat), destroyer of the darkness of ignorance (Gu) and illuminator of knowledge (Ru), Grace (Persad); i.e. Almighty who is the life form of all is obtainable only with the Guru's grace.

ਮਹਲਾ ੪ , ਰਾਗੁ ਆਸਾ ; ਘਰੁ ੬ ਕੇ ੩ ॥ (੩੬੮-੧)

Fourth Mahla, Raag Aasaa, 3 Of Sixth House :

ਹਥਿ ਕਰਿ ਤੰਤੁ ਵਜਾਵੈ ਜੋਗੀ ; ਬੋਥਰ ਵਾਜੈ ਬੇਨ ॥ (੩੬੮-੧, ਆਸਾ, ਮਃ ੪)

You may pluck the strings with your hand, O yogi, but your playing of the harp is in vain.

ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਣ ਬੋਲਹੁ ਜੋਗੀ ; ਇਹੁ ਮਨੁਆ ਹਰਿ ਰੰਗਿ ਭੇਨ ॥੧॥ (੩੬੮-੨, ਆਸਾ, ਮਃ ੪)

Under Guru's Instruction, chant the Glorious Praises of the Almighty, O yogi, and this mind of yours shall be imbued with the Almighty's Love. ||1||

ਜੋਗੀ ; ਹਰਿ ਦੇਹੁ ਮਤੀ ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ॥ (੩੬੮-੨, ਆਸਾ, ਮਃ ੪)

O yogi, give your intellect the Teachings of the Almighty.

ਜੁਗੁ ਜੁਗੁ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ , ਏਕੋ ਵਰਤੈ ; ਤਿਸੁ ਆਗੈ ਹਮ ਆਦੇਸੁ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ (੩੬੮-੨, ਆਸਾ, ਮਃ ੪)

The Almighty, the One Almighty, is pervading throughout all the ages; I humbly bow down to Him. ||1||Pause||

ਗਾਵਹਿ ਰਾਗ , ਭਾਤਿ ਬਹੁ ਬੋਲਹਿ ; ਇਹੁ ਮਨੁਆ ਖੇਲੈ ਖੇਲ ॥ (੩੬੮-੩, ਆਸਾ, ਮਃ ੪)

You sing in so many Ragas and harmonies, and you talk so much, but this mind of yours is only playing a game.

ਜੋਵਹਿ ਕੂਪ , ਸਿੰਚਨ ਕਉ ਬਸੁਧਾ ; ਉਠਿ ਬੈਲ ਗਏ , ਚਰਿ ਬੇਲ ॥੨॥ (੩੬੮-੪, ਆਸਾ, ਮਃ ੪)

You work the well and irrigate the fields, but the oxen have already left to graze in the jungle. ||2||

ਕਾਇਆ ਨਗਰ ਮਹਿ , ਕਰਮ ਹਰਿ ਬੋਵਹੁ ; ਹਰਿ ਜਾਮੈ , ਹਰਿਆ ਖੇਤੁ ॥ (੩੬੮-੪, ਆਸਾ, ਮਃ ੪)

In the field of the body, plant the Almighty 's Name, and the Almighty will sprout there, like a lush green field.

ਮਨੁਆ ਅਸਥਿਰੁ ਬੈਲੁ ਮਨੁ ਜੋਵਹੁ ; ਹਰਿ ਸਿੰਚਹੁ , ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਜੇਤੁ ॥੩॥ (੩੬੮-੫, ਆਸਾ, ਮਃ ੪)

O mortal, hook up your unstable mind like an ox, and irrigate your fields with Almighty's Name, through the Guru's Teachings. ||3||

ਜੋਗੀ ਜੰਗਮ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਸਭ ਤੁਮਰੀ ; ਜੋ ਦੇਹੁ ਮਤੀ ਤਿਤੁ ਚੇਲ ॥ (੩੬੮-੫, ਆਸਾ, ਮਃ ੪)

The yogis, the vagrants, and all the different people of the world are Yours, O Almighty. According to the wisdom which You give them, so do they follow their ways.

ਜਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਅੰਤਰਜਾਮੀ ; ਹਰਿ ਲਾਵਹੁ ਮਨੁਆ ਪੇਲ ॥੪॥੯੧॥ (੩੬੮-੬, ਆਸਾ, ਮਃ ੪)

Guru Nanak says, I am the servant of the Almighty who is the knower of all herats, please strengthen my concentration of my mind to You. ||4||9||61||

When the Sidhas heard this shabad, they treated Guru Ji as the true form of Guru Nanak Dev Ji Himself. They immediately humbled themselves and fell at Guru Ji's feet. Before leaving they saluted in reverence before Guru Ji, all the Sikhs sitting around Guru Ji were surprised. They came to Guru Ji and asked "Dear Guru Ji, we would like know more about the Saints who were here in your presence, please be kind to tell us".

Guru Ji answered "These were very learned Sidhas (Yogis) who had come to assess me, they have attained miraculous power through meditation but they have not attained oneness with the Almighty because of their passion for these super powers". The congregation was amazed with Guru Ji's statement as they were under the impression that the Sidhas were liberated, they were very curious to know how a normal person attained salvation. Knowing their curiosity Guru Ji said, "Sikhs are very fortunate that the Almighty Himself manifested as the Guru to bless salvation". Upon listening to Guru Ji's words the entire congregation bowed their heads and said "Dear Guru Ji, You are truly the Master of the world, you are the King of happiness".

14. RESURRECTION OF A TEPA²⁰

Guru Ram Das Ji remained in the state of love at all times. His eyes were always filled with tears and his heart deep in meditation. Sikhs who had come into his sanctuary were blessed with Almighty's Name (Waheguru). The crowd increased daily and they were embracing Sikhism as their faith. Wherever the Sikh resides whether in a village or in a town they were reciting Guru's Mantra (Waheguru). Millions of them embraced Sikhism and renounced superstitious practices. They were making their human birth fruitful by having faith and accepting Guru's greatness.

However there were some people who were unhappy to see the growing glory of Guru Ji. Just like the 'Jewaha' burns in rain when all other are creation is enjoying and the beautiful moonlight tortures a separated person. There was one Tapa (one who performs penance to attain super powers) who always heaved arguments by creating doubts in his followers' minds. One day he came to Guru Ji in the presence of the congregation. He came before Guru Ji and bowed his head before Guru Ji. Guru Ji greeted him respectfully and made him to sit close to his throne. Guru Ji asked humbly, "Dear Tapa Ji, is there any specific reason for your visit today, please be kind to explain?" The Tapa said, "I have roamed around the whole world and met the Saints of various faiths. I have also read through all the religious scriptures and performed pilgrimage by visiting many shrines and taken holy baths. Your Sikhs are very egoistic, as they do not believe in the Vedic practices and the caste system. Leaving all the profound practices, they only recognise you and worship you. They recite the hymns (Gurbani) uttered by you and the Gurus before you. They chant the Gurmantar (Waheguru) while focussing on you. However, they are ignorant of the greatness of holy shrines and refuse to adopt the practices of the profound religions. So how will your Sikhs attain salvation by making this birth fruitful without performing religious rituals?"

Upon listening to the Tapa, Guru Ji ask, "What is the greatness of performing such rituals with love and faith at the shrines and what is the fruit obtained in the end?" The Tapa replied, "The returns of such rituals are great as the sins are washed away by taking the holy bath and one goes to heaven. In heaven one obtains various joys and one who read the scriptures (Vedas) shall go directly to Almighty's place". Guru Ji replied, "Firstly one strongly believes in the joy in heaven and in order to obtain the joy in heaven one strives through many difficulties in securing a place in heaven. The true Saints acknowledge the heavenly joy as false and why should go through various difficulties just to fulfil the desire for this joy (the joy in heaven is merely the returns of the good deeds performed during the lifetime and once the account comes to a balance one is subjected again to the cycle of birth and death). Why do you perceive the heavenly joy as permanent? Why

²⁰ Sri Gur Pertap Suraj Granth (Raas 2, Ansu 3) – Churamani Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

don't you perform desireless deeds by serving the True Congregation (Satsanggat)? You have not discovered nor understood the truth, which is your real-self (Atma). The joys of a King are not equivalent to the joys of an ordinary resident. You have spent your entire life without embracing a Guru without whom you will never be able to develop faith. True Congregation is a mobile Shrine, which you have never participated to obtain the Almighty's love. You have retained false pride within all your life and without a Perfect Guru there is no cure for this pride'.

The Tapa said, 'How is it possible that the greatness of shrines is inferior to True Congregation as everyone believes in the shrines and even the Purana's (scriptures) describe the greatness? Please explain to me how True Congregation is greater?' Guru Ram Das Ji uttered the following hymn (Shabad, Gurbani);

ਮਲਾਰ , ਮਹਲਾ ੪ ॥ (੧੨੬੩-੫)

Malaar, Fourth Mahl:

ਗੰਗਾ ਜਮੁਨਾ ਗੋਦਾਵਰੀ ਸਰਸੁਤੀ ; ਤੇ ਕਰਹਿ ਉਦਮੁ ; ਧੂਰਿ ਸਾਧੂ ਕੀ ਤਾਈ ॥ (੧੨੬੩-੫, ਮਲਾਰ, ਮਃ ੪)

The Ganges, the Jamunaa, the Godaavari and the Saraswati - these rivers strive for the dust of the feet of the Holy.

ਕਿਲਵਿਖ ਮੈਲੁ ਭਰੇ ਪਰੇ ਹਮਰੈ ਵਿਚਿ ; ਹਮਰੀ ਮੈਲੁ , ਸਾਧੂ ਕੀ ਧੂਰਿ ਗਵਾਈ ॥੧॥ (੧੨੬੩-੬, ਮਲਾਰ, ਮਃ ੪)

Overflowing with their filthy sins, the mortals take cleansing baths in them; the rivers' pollution is washed away by the dust of the feet of the Holy. ||1||

ਤੀਰਥਿ ਅਠਸਠਿ ; ਮਜਨੁ ਨਾਈ ॥ (੧੨੬੩-੭, ਮਲਾਰ, ਮਃ ੪)

Instead of bathing at the sixty-eight sacred shrines of pilgrimage, take your cleansing bath in the Name.

ਸਤਸੰਗਤਿ ਕੀ ਧੂਰਿ ਪਰੀ ਉਡਿ ਨੇੜੀ ; ਸਭ ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਮੈਲੁ ਗਵਾਈ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ (੧੨੬੩-੮, ਮਲਾਰ, ਮਃ ੪)

When the dust of the feet of the Sat Sanggat rises up into the eyes, all filthy evil-mindedness is removed. ||1||Pause||

ਜਾਹਰਨਵੀ , ਤਪੈ ਭਾਗੀਰਥਿ ਆਈ ; ਕੇਦਾਰੁ ਥਾਪਿਓ , ਮਹਸਾਈ ॥ (੧੨੬੩-੯, ਮਲਾਰ, ਮਃ ੪)

Bhaageerat'h the penitent brought the Ganges down, and Shiva established Kaydaar.

ਕਾਂਸੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਸਨੁ ਚਰਾਵਤ ਗਾਊ ; ਮਿਲਿ ਹਰਿ ਜਨ ਸੋਭਾ ਪਾਈ ॥੨॥ (੧੨੬੩-੧੦, ਮਲਾਰ, ਮਃ ੪)

Krishna grazed cows in Kaashi; through the humble servant of Almighty, these places became famous. ||2||

ਜਿਤਨੇ ਤੀਰਥ ਦੇਵੀ ਥਾਪੇ , ਸਭਿ ਤਿਤਨੇ ਲੋਚਹਿ ; ਧੂਰਿ ਸਾਧੂ ਕੀ ਤਾਈ ॥ (੧੨੬੩-੧੧, ਮਲਾਰ, ਮਃ ੪)

And all the sacred shrines of pilgrimage established by the gods, long for the dust of the feet of the Holy.

ਹਰਿ ਕਾ ਸੰਤੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਗੁਰ ਸਾਧੂ ; ਲੈ ਤਿਸ ਕੀ ਧੂਰਿ ਮੁਖਿ ਲਾਈ ॥੩॥ (੧੨੬੩-੧੦, ਮਲਾਰ, ਮਃ ੪)

Meeting with the Lord's Saint, the Holy Guru, I apply the dust of His feet to my face. ||3||

ਜਿਤਨੀ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਤੁਮਰੀ ਮੇਰੇ ਸੁਆਮੀ ; ਸਭ ਤਿਤਨੀ ਲੋਚੈ , ਧੂਰਿ ਸਾਧੂ ਕੀ ਤਾਈ ॥ (੧੨੬੩-੧੦, ਮਲਾਰ, ਮਃ ੪)

And all the creatures of Your Universe, O my Master, long for the dust of the feet of the Holy.

ਨਾਨਕ , ਲਿਲਾਟਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਜਿਸੁ ਲਿਖਿਆ ; ਤਿਸੁ ਸਾਧੂ ਧੂਰਿ ਦੇ , ਹਰਿ ਪਾਰਿ ਲੰਘਾਈ ॥੪॥੨॥ (1263-11, ਮਲਾਰ, ਮਃ 4)

Guru Nanak says, one who has such destiny inscribed on his forehead, is blessed with the dust of the feet of the Holy; Almighty carries him across. ||4||2||

The Tapa heard the above Shabad from Guru Ram Das Ji together with the meaning, his heart was the home of love and he was immersed in the deep ocean of bliss. The Tapa's heart was filled with faith and he started to utter Guru Ji's praise and Guru Ji blessed him by which the Tapa's evil-mind vanished. Tapa said, "I am very fortunate to meet you by which all my doubts and attachments have been eradicated. (Upon whoever you are pleased) You bless spiritual enlightenment in an instant. My mind was engrossed in ego and did not realise your greatness. I have over-spoken before you but you are merciful even to the oppressors. Those would be the greatest fools and losers who will abandon such a guide like you. Now I have realised the greatness of Saints and True Congregation by which spiritual knowledge of real-self is obtained." The Tapa abandons his ego and became a Sikh. He sat in True Congregation (SatSanggat) and listened to Gurbani. Sometimes he would stay in Guru Ji's presence and once a while he would go else where but he remained focussed at Guru Ji's feet.

15. THE MAYA AND SELFLESS SERVICE²¹

15.1 The Maya

During Guru Amar Das Ji's Guruship, Guru Ji accepted donations which were utilised on that particular day and any extra was rejected. The Guru's kitchen would continue to prepare food daily from early morning up to midnight.

The Maya was begging on the Guru's door for the opportunity to perform sewa (voluntary service) since Guru Nanak Dev Ji's guruship. Now, the great warrior Guru Ram Das Ji allowed Maya to serve the House of Guru Nanak but he remained untouched with the influence of Maya just like the lotus flower which remains untouched by the water although it exists in water. Guru Ji's elder son, Baba Prithi Chand was fascinated with the wealth and managed all the finance for the Guru's house as a treasurer. Baba Mahadev stayed in isolation as he lived away from all worldly attachments while (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji remained immersed in meditation and was never involved in any financial affair. (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji stayed in obedience to Mata Bhani Ji and in reverence to his father Guru Ram Das Ji. Everyone thought that he was still young therefore he did not understand the worldly affairs yet, but Guru Ram Das Ji knew that (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji will manifest as the most supreme among the Sodhi's with perfect virtues. But others thought that Baba Prithi Chand will be the next Guru as he was very much involved in the day to day management and stayed close to Guru Ram Das Ji.

15.2 The Importance of Sewa

One day a lot of Sikhs gathered to listen to Guru's hymns (Gurbani), a large congregation hall was organised and all the Sikhs were looking at Guru Ji and listening to his sermon. Guru Ji said, "Those who regard themselves as my Sikhs and wished to be liberated should perform service voluntarily (Niskaam Sewa) without any expectation. A Sikh should never be egoistic and allow such thoughts to develop within. In the previous ages (Sat-yug, Threta-yug & Duapur-yug) people performed extreme penance by torturing their physical body to be desireless in order to purify their mind, memory, intellect and self-existence (Antahkaran) only then they obtained bliss. In this age (Kal-yug) such extreme penance is not proper and now one should serve the True Congregation, which rewards ten times more than penance. Penance takes a long time to achieve the state of bliss while in desireless service one is able to attain bliss in a very short time and one obtains enormous strength in the end. The ones who perform service (sewa) with strong faith shall be released from the birth and death cycle. One should be humble and should utter kind words in order to obtain bliss. With selfless service one would be able to perform

²¹ Sri Gur Pertap Suraj Granth (Raas 2, Ansu 3) – Churamani Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

meditation with which enlightenment (state of knowledge) can be attained. With enlightenment one can be liberated. Therefore, the root of all attainment is selfless service and the one who performs service is the best human being to me. According to one's affordability one should prepare food and serve humbly to the Sikhs, serve them water, wash their feet, fan them, massage their feet, speak politely, donate clothes, offer fruit & flowers, wash their clothes and lay a carpet on their path. If a new beautiful house is constructed, invite Sikhs to inaugurate serve them politely and humbly and refrain from pride."

Guru Ji continued by narrating a true story on the benefits of performing selfless service, "There was once a person who served birds with seeds and water by placing it on a lifted platform. Birds would come to his house and they were very pleased with him. One day two swans came to his house but refused to eat or drink the offered water and seeds, and observing this the man got worried. Someone told him that swans consumed milk and pearls. He then brought real pearls, which the swans ate with enthusiasm and drank the milk by separating the water content within the milk (swans separate water content with their beak). The swans were very pleased with him and spitted out two diamonds then flew away. He sold the diamonds and gained a lot of wealth. He built a beautiful house and served a lot more birds. Once a big group of swans came to the his house he offered them countless pearls and milk. All the swans were overwhelmed and gave him countless diamonds. He became rich as a king by serving birds. Therefore if one serves Saints (or True Congregation) he shall be blessed with great returns as they are the bestowers of treasures and miraculous powers and in the end one obtains salvation. My Sikhs are equivalent to swans and one who serves them shall be rewarded greatly. There is nothing that one cannot obtain by serving the Sikhs."

Guru Ram Das Ji uttered the greatness of selfless service (sewa); by listening to Guru Ji's sermons, the Sikhs were spiritually uplifted.

15.3 Sri Amritsar

When King Akbar came to visit Guru Amar Das Ji in Goindwal Sahib, he pleaded before Guru Ji and offered the ownership of many villages. These villages were blessed to Guru Ram Das Ji together with the Guruship.

Guru Amar Das Ji during his Guruship instructed the digging of a pool and establishment of a town named Guru Ka Chak (now known as Sri Amritsar). When the residents of these villages heard that their village ownership has been transferred to Guru Amar Das Ji, they were very pleased and came to visit Guru Ji with various gifts.

One day, Guru Amar Das Ji was sitting on his throne and there were thousands of Sikhs around him, Guru Ji called (Guru) Ram Das Ji and handed over all the gifts which came from the villagers and announced that (Guru) Ram Das Ji is the owner of all villages. (Guru) Ram Das Ji appointed Baba Budha Ji as the person in-charge to look after the

villages and the welfare of the villagers The villagers were honoured and they left for their respective villages.

16. ESTABLISHMENT OF SRI AMRITSAR²²

After the completion of Boali Sahib, Guru Amar Das Ji wanted to establish a sacred shrine which would be the greatest in the whole world. There is a very holy place which has been hidden since Sat-yug.

When Almighty created this world, the residents prayed, “Dear Almighty, we are suffering without a King, please bless us with a great King”. A King by the name of Chup was born who ruled the world very fairly and everyone was very happy under his empire. After him, Ikhwak (also known as Ikswak) became the King, he was a very truthful King and he treated the people like his children. Once King Ikhwak organised a grand prayer and invited all the Saints and noble people, he offered free food for years during this prayer. All the Saints prayed for the well-being of the King and Ikhwak asked for a boon that the place where prayers were performed to represent the greatest shrine which will cure all suffering and people would benefit for a better life. He asked for Almighty’s presence at all times in that place and the pilgrims will attain salvation. Upon listening they prayed before Almighty and a voice was heard, “Dear King, you are a great devotee. You have requested a boon for the benefit of mankind; I am very pleased with you. This place will be the greatest shrine but for millions of years this place will remain unknown. After five (5) thousand years in Kal-yug, I shall manifest as Guru Nanak. I will create a new faith in which meditation will be supreme. Yoga, Yag (fist) and Taap (Penance) are the practices of Sat-yug, Threta-yug and Duapur-yug respectively. In order to perform these practices one needs to have a long life (for Yoga), enormous wealth (Yag) and physical strength (Taap) but in Kal-yug humans will have a short life, limited wealth, less mental and physical strength. I shall introduce new practices, which will be suitable for all. I shall travel all around the globe and preach the appropriate practices with meditation and divine knowledge. When I manifest in my third form as Guru Amar Das Ji, I will identify this place (where the prayer was done) and start the digging of a sacred pool in my fourth form as Guru Ram Das Ji. As Guru Arjan Dev Ji (the fifth form), I shall construct the pool with proper finishes and construct Harmandir above the sacred pool. This place shall be the most magnificent in the entire world there shall be non-equivalent to it. The greatness of Almighty’s Name will be elevated and my presence will be obvious at all times. When I adopt my sixth form as Guru Hargobind Sahib, I shall construct Akaal Bunga (now known as Sri Akaal Takhat Sahib) on the place which will be my eternal throne.’ This was the message given by Almighty to King Ikhwak²³.

²² Sri Gur Pertap Suraj Granth (Raas 2, Ansu 11) – Churamani Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

²³ In Ayudhya, Khetri of Sun Dynasty used to rule, Raja Ikswak had 100 sons. The name of eldest son was Kukshi, Ram Chander was from his lineage.

The grandeur of King Ikhwak became greater and the Khetri clan ruled the world. After Raja Ikhwak there were many Kings who then were branched into two, Bedi and Sodhi.

Guru Amar Das Ji contemplated the history and wished that Guru Ram Das Ji would settle in Guru Ka Chak (Sri Amritsar) together with his family. Whereby Guru Amar Das Ji's family will continue to stay in Goindwal. Knowing that the time has come for the greatest shrine to be revealed before the world, Guru Amar Das Ji planned for Guru Ram Das Ji to construct a new township around the shrine.

Note: Although Kavi Santokh Singh Ji has written the ancient history of Sri Harmandir Sahib the greatness of this shrine is more than enough that Guru Nanak Dev during his Udisis came here with Bhai Bala Ji and Bhai Mardana Ji and sat on the bank of a natural pool, Guru Ji instructed Bhai Mardana Ji to play Rebab and sing Almighty's Praises (Kirten). The tune and Gurbani was so sweet that Bhai Bala Ji and Bhai Mardana's eyes were closed in deep meditation and when they open their eyes Guru Nanak Dev Ji was not there. They were surprised and after looking around for sometime they stood in prayer requesting Guru Ji to manifest. After the prayer (Ardaas) they found Guru Ji standing before them, upon their request Guru Ji told them that he was immersed in deep meditation that his form merged with the water, which was contained in the pool. Guru Angad Dev Ji also visited this place and Guru Amar Das Ji instructed the digging of the pool. Guru Ram Das Ji and Guru Arjan Dev Ji constructed the sacred pool and Harmandir before establishing the practice for continuous recitation Gurbani and Almighty's Name. Therefore whether this place was the site where prayer and boon was blessed in Say-yug or not does not matter because the physical form of Almighty himself has created this place which is good enough to mark the greatness.

17. CONSTRUCTION OF AMRITSAR AND SANTOKH SAR²⁴

Guru Amar Das Ji told (Guru) Ram Das Ji to establish a new township similar to Khadur Sahib established by Guru Angad Dev Ji and Goindwal Sahib by him. Upon listening, (Guru) Ram Das Ji said, 'Dear Guru Ji, your words are command for me which cannot be questioned. All that you do is for the best; I am merely an innocent being who is ignorant and you are the ocean of virtues. I am not able to analyse and decide on the exact and most suitable location. This is my humble request as a Sikh and it is all up to you as I am only interested in serving you selflessly. Please be merciful on this meek being and explain in detail the task for this servant to execute as I am not able to perform on my own.'

Guru Amar Das Ji said, 'the place is before the village Tung and further away from Gilwali village. It is on the west of Sultan Village, go and establish a new town there. You may take all the money required from Baba Budha Ji. After completing the construction of houses, proceed to the east and dig a large pool. Your son shall continue to complete the entire shrine'.

Guru Amar Das Ji gave his personal horse which was given by Bhai Paro and told (Guru) Ram Das Ji, "Dear Ram Das Ji, this horse is amazing and does not allow anyone else to ride other than you and me. Let this horse serve as well and invite the wise Baba Budha Ji to follow.' (Guru) Ram Das Ji left Goindwal Sahib with Baba Budha Ji and a few other Sikhs to the place identified by Guru Amar Das Ji. Kerah Persad was prepared in large quantity and an Ardaas was done and the Persad was distributed before the commencement of work. A timber stick was made to mark the border on the four sides of the site identified for constructing the houses. The town was named 'Guru Ka Chak'. New kilns were built to burn the bricks. Based on the construction method identified by Baba Budha Ji, (Guru) Ram Das Ji implemented the construction of houses. After the completion of the housing project, (Guru) Ram Das Ji along with Baba Budha Ji proceeded to the east to start with the digging of the sacred pool (Amrit Seroval) now known as Santokh Sar. In accordance to the direction and marks illustrated by Guru Amar Das Ji, the search commenced for the exact location. (Guru) Ram Das Ji then proceed to the North and saw a mass of berry trees surrounding a slightly sunken area with shallow pond water. (Guru) Ram Das Ji sat below one of the berry trees and saw the entire area for the construction of sacred pool (sarovar). Baba Budha Ji walked around the four corners of the area to reassure the location was correct and concurred with (Guru) Ram Das Ji.

(Guru) Ram Das Ji and Baba Budha went back to the housing area in the evening and came back the next morning. A large quantity of flour, sugar and ghee was ordered and

²⁴ Sri Gur Pertap Suraj Granth (Raas 2, Ansu 12) – Churamani Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

Kerah Persad was prepared. An Ardaas was done by uttering the names of the three Guru's (Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Guru Angad Dev Ji & Guru Amar Das Ji) under the same tree where (Guru) Ram Das Ji sat the day before. (Guru) Ram Das Ji did the groundbreaking ceremony of the sacred pool (sarovar). The workers were assigned to their respective tasks, some cleared the site, some dug, some transported the soil and some prepared food for the workers. In a short time substantial area was dug and (Guru) Ram Das Ji missed Guru Amar Das Ji therefore he came back to Goindwal Sahib. (Guru) Ram Das Ji briefed Guru Ji on the progress of the sacred pool (Sarovar) and described the completed houses.

18. SRI AMRITSAR SAROWAR'S SEWA²⁵

Guru Ram Das ji stayed with Guru Amar Das Ji. Then one day, Guru Amar Das Ji said, "Now you are to do another service (sewa). You should first return to the housing area that you have completed and then continue to dig the sacred pool (Sarovar) from the four corners and complete it. This sacred pool (Sarovar) is to be named Santokhsar. Then, on the other side, where the land is low and the soil is soft, there a second pool (Sarovar) is to be constructed. This second pool (Sarovar) is to be named as Amritsar (Pool of Nectar). You should proceed immediately and start the digging process. In future, this pool (Sarovar) will be built with concrete and bricks'.

18.1 Guru Ka Chak

Listening to the orders from Guru Amar Das Ji, (Guru) Ram Das ji immediately proceeded to 'Guru Ka Chak' now known as Amritsar, although (Guru) Ram Das Ji wished to stay and serve Guru Amar Das Ji but he couldn't go against the Guru's orders. He stayed one night in one of the houses constructed earlier and early next morning, (Guru) Ram Das Ji, started his journey towards north. Baba Buddha ji also accompanied him and they together headed towards the destination indicated by Guru Amar Das Ji.

Upon reaching the place, (Guru) Ram Das Ji noticed that there were many berry trees and there was a puddle of very clean water. Inspecting the place from all four corners carefully, (Guru) Ram Das Ji was sure that this is the location as described by Guru Amar Das Ji. (Guru) Ram Das Ji reassured by seeking Baba Buddha Ji's advice and after looking around the place, they both concluded with conviction that was the location. (Guru) Ram Das ji then put some marking in this place and headed back to his village. (Guru) Ram Das ji instructed some Sikhs to prepare Kera Persad and instructed the construction workers to commence the work immediately.

18.2 Ground Breaking Ceremony

Early next morning, after (Guru) Ram Das Ji completed his daily morning routine, accompanied by a group of workers, he headed towards the same place. (Guru) Ram Das Ji stood with folded hands, humbly prayed (Ardaas) by uttering Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Guru Angad Dev Ji and Guru Amar Das Ji's name and bowed his head.

Then (Guru) Ram Das Ji took a spade from Baba Buddha ji and after remembering the entire Gurus, (Guru) Ram Das Ji initiated the digging of Amritsar. Then (Guru) Ram Das Ji distributed the Kera Persad to all the Sikhs there. Soon, everybody started to dig

²⁵ Sri Gur Pertap Suraj Granth (Raas 2, Ansu 13) – Churamani Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

the pool (serovar). Some sikhs were doing the sewa of carrying buckets of soil on their head and throwing it outside the area. Some were digging and helping others to carry the buckets of soil. Many Sikhs and other construction workers did this sewa with full devotion.

18.3 Commencement of Sewa

(Guru) Ram Das Ji ordered sewadars to dig the pool from where Dukh Bhanjani tree is located. (Guru) Ram Das Ji himself sat nearby and instructed the sewadars and watched the sikhs throwing the soil out of the serowar. This way, the whole daytime passed in sewa of digging. When the sun set, then everybody would go back to the village. When the sun rose, (Guru) Ram Das Ji would himself lead the sewadars to the serowar site and monitor the sewa.

Many months passed by in the same routine and the digging continued. The area around Dukh Bhanjani tree had been dug to quite a depth and a big hole had been formed. Then one day, Guru Amar Das ji called upon (Guru) Ram Das Ji to come back to Goindwal. Upon receiving the call, the digging was stopped and (Guru) Ram Das Ji quickly reached Goindwal.

18.4 Back to Goindwal Sahib

On reaching Goindwal, (Guru) Ram Das Ji with both his hand together, prostrated before Guru Amardas ji and then sat before Guru Ji with his hands clasped. Guru Ji asked 'tell me how you found the place and what have you done'.

(Guru) Ram Das Ji then answered, "Dear Guru Ji, we found a site with very soft soil which was located at the north of Guru Ka Chak. We immediately dug the ground and discovered the water table to be high as when we dug just a little the water started flowing out. There is a tree there that has a very thick shade (Dukh Bhanjani). That is where we started to dig the serowar. I initiated the first dig after remembering Guru Nanak Dev ji, Guru Angad Dev ji and Guru Amar Das ji. Then we uttered Almighty's Name (Naam Simran) who eradicates all hardships and bestows permanent happiness. Then the Kera Persad was distributed to the Sanggat present. Baba Buddha Ji and I and other wise Sikhs together supervised the sewa of digging and transporting the soil out. Guru Ji, this sewa will take a long time to complete. To date we have only managed to dig a small area'.

Upon listening, Guru Amar Das Ji praised (Guru) Ram Das Ji and said that 'Guru Ka Chak is a great place and the most supreme place that I always wanted to develop. Before this, this place was very highly populated and the town was very active. Since long time it has been deserted. But now, this place will grow into a large town again. Guru Angad Dev ji was pleasing and created the town Goindwal Sahib by asking me to reside here. A deserted place has become a town'.

Looking at (Guru) Ram Das Ji, Guru Amar Das Ji then said 'Now this new place will be known after your name (Ram Das Pur). This town will become a great and famous place for pilgrimage'. Hearing this, (Guru) Ram Das Ji was overjoyed with the blessings received from Guru Ji.

18.5 Guru Amar Das Ji

Guru Amar Das Ji kept (Guru) Ram Das Ji with him at all times. All the duties of Guruship were shouldered by (Guru) Ram Das Ji. Thus, the progress in Guru Ka Chak slowed down.

Guru Amar Das Ji was 105 years old but he continued his daily routine and performed meditation. While performing meditation, Guru Ji would stand. When Guru Ji got tired, he would hold the peck (kili) on the wall (this peck can be seen in Goindwal Sahib till today). He would sit only for a very short time in the whole day, as he preferred to stand while performing his meditation. Guru Ji gave sermons to Sikhs and cured the illness of his servants. He was well aware of the sincerity and self-less service (sewa) of each and every Sikh and showered them with great blessings. Sikhs residing whether far or near, visited Guru Ji in large groups and obtained Guru Ji's blessing.

Sikhs stayed around Guru Ji to offer their selfless service (sewa) with concentration of mind and practising Guru Ji's commands. This way, the hearts of the Sikhs became very pure and thus, they would receive the gift of Almighty's knowledge and salvation.

18.6 Preaching the Truth

Similar to the Moghul King, when the King is pleased he selects the person to be one of his 22 ministers to execute his orders in their respective territory, in the same way Guru Amar Das Ji when pleased with his Sikhs, bestowed the happiness of 2 worlds and bestowed them the seat (manji) as an authority to preach the Sikh way of life.

By giving this seat of authority (Manji) to do parchar, Guru Ji appointed and transferred these Sikh Preachers (Percharak) to different districts. In their respective district, these Sikhs lived a household life. A Sikh who is appointed as a Masand (representative of the Guru) would receive command (Hukam) from Guru Ji and he would organise the local Sikhs to offer their selfless service for mankind without any discrimination. Ultimately, by obeying Guru Ji's instruction and performing desireless service these sikhs would attain salvation and lots of happiness in this world. This way, by creating the twenty-two (22) seats of authority, the message from the house of Guru Nanak was delivered effectively and left a permanent effect on people.

One day, looking at (Guru) Ram Das Ji, who has such an amazing intellect in understanding divine knowledge, Guru Ji decided that (Guru) Ram Das Ji is the most appropriate candidate to sit on Almighty's Throne, the Guruship. There were none like him. Looking at him as a great devotee who obeyed orders of the Guru and who had successfully passed all the assessments with a steadfast mind (unwavering) and with conviction followed the command of the Guru.

However, Guru Amar Das Ji knew that (Guru) Ram Das Ji's life was coming to an end and one day spoke to Bibi Bhani and said "Ram Das Ji's life span is over and he will die soon. You will become a widow. There is no way out of this, so what do we do?" Listening to this, Bibi Bhani at that very moment started removing all the symbols of marriage that she was wearing and placed them all at the feet of her father, Guru Amar Das Ji and said, "Your words are forever true. Your utterance of this fact will definitely come true".

Looking at Bibi Bhaniji's steadfast conviction on Guru's words, Guru Amar Das Ji was very pleased and said "As how I have described, the order of Almighty is such. My full age is supposed to be 112 years and I have a balance of 6 years 11 months 20 days. I am giving my remaining years to (Guru) Ram Das Ji. Go, you will always be in bliss." This way, Guru Amar Das Ji bestowed the Guruship to Guru Ram Das Ji and surrendered the entire Sangat at Guru Ram Das Ji's feet. Guru Ram Dasji was placed on the Guruship throne and Guru Amardas Ji wanted to leave for Sachkhand. Seeing Bibi Bhani Ji, Guru Amar Das Ji then said "You have most conviction in your devotion, thus please ask for anything from me." Bibi Bhani Ji was very happy with Guru Ji's words and said 'Dear Satguru Ji, you have always fulfilled all my needs and I treat myself as most fortunate to have received these blessing from you and you have made me so happy with your words. Since you are so merciful to grant me with this gift of my choice, i have something that is bothering me, so please destroy my dukh.' She then explained that Guru Angad Dev Ji received the throne of Guruship from Guru Nanak Dev Ji and you in turn also received the Guruship throne from Guru Angad Dev Ji, now please bless me with this gift to my house. Never allow the Guruship to go out from my generations to come. May it always shine in the house of the Sodhis. Please grant me with this greatest gift'.

Listening to his convicted and devoted daughter's plea, Guru Amar Das Ji's eyes and sight became full of showering bliss. Then Guru Ji said ' Bhani, your sons, grandsons and your super-conscious husband will be a Perfect Guru and you will become famous in the world as the only woman whose husband, son, grandson, great-grandson and great great-grandson will the Guru. Your wish will surely be fulfilled.' Upon uttering this, Guru Amar Das Ji merged into his formless form and made Guru Ram Das Ji the Guru for the world.

19. LIVING IN GURU KA CHAK ²⁶

After completing the final rites of Guru Amar Das Ji in Goindwal Sahib, Guru Ram Das ji was sitting in deep thoughts and pondered, 'The person who I was totally in love with, He has merged with His formless form. Without having His sight (darshan), it is very difficult to survive just like a lotus flower without the sun does not blossom'. Guru Ji then immersed in deep meditation.

After a while, Guru Ji contemplated that the duty assigned by Guru Amar Das Ji should be executed immediately. Guru Ji then instructed the Sikhs, 'Dear Sikhs, lets proceed to Majha province immediately'. Guru Ji then looked at Baba Mohri ji and Baba Mohan and said 'Dear Respected Brothers, this is the order given to me by Guru Amar Das Ji. Kindly convey this message to your other family members to participate in the constructing the Pool of Nectar (Amrit Serowar).'

Preparations were made and everybody proceeded to Guru Ka Chak (Amritsar). Guru Ji got onto the horse that was given by Bhai Paro. The horse was very swift and galloped in a very majestic manner. The horse was moving as if the legs of the horse were not touching the ground, i.e very fast and swiftly. The horse had a charter that it could sense the rider's thoughts. In accordance to the rider, the horse would pick up those vibes and move accordingly. In a very short time, the horse reached its destination. Everybody was very amazed with the horse. Guru Ji immediately started the sewa of digging the Amrit Serowar. The Sikhs were throwing the dug soil out by placing it on their head, which gave them satisfaction as they obtained Guru Ji's blessings. Guru Ji emphasised that selfless service rendered for constructing the Amrit Serowar was very beneficial. By doing this sewa, ones desires are fulfilled. In this way, a few months passed while doing the sewa, Guru Ji's glory magnified.

²⁶ Sri Gur Pertap Suraj Granth (Raas 2, Ansu 14) – Churamani Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

20. VISITING LAHORE ²⁷

20.1 Visit by Sodhi Clan

People started praising Guru Ji by saying that Guru Ji was very merciful as he fulfilled all worldly desires as well as spiritual quest. Everybody started praising Guru Ji. Lots of money started pouring in for sewa. The Sodhi clan who were staying at Lahore were very proud of Guru Ji after listening to his glory. Thousands of people, with folded hands used would stand before Guru Ji for blessings. The needy obtained their worldly needs from Guru Ji. One day, a group of people belonging to the Sodhi clan came to visit Guru Ji. They came to Guru Ka Chak. Guru Ji received them with utmost respect. They stayed with Guru Ji for a while. One day, they said to Guru Ji 'In Lahore, we have a house in Chuna Mandi. Since your father passed away, you have not visited this house. It is about the time that you should come back to Lahore and take care of your house which belonged to your lineage. Come and stay with your own clan and meet all the elders. You may stay there for a few days and after that you may proceed as you wish'. Guru Ram Das Ji agreed to their plea.

20.2 Guru Ji in Lahore

Taking all the Sodhis along, they reached Lahore. Guru Ji stayed in his house in Lahore. Guru Ka Langgar was made in a large quantity with immense amount of raw grains. At amritwela, everybody woke up and sang and listened to Asa Dhi Vaar. Looking at this blissful life style, people with lots of love started to enjoy the bliss and walked the path of Sikhi. In Lahore, Sikhi became very famous. The Mantra of Almighty's Name (Satnam – Waheguru) was being preached by which people's sadness or difficulties were converted into happiness. For the benefit of the mankind, Guru Ji upgraded his residence into a Dharamsala (The place where religion principal are preached and practised to serve mankind). In order to provide the continuous supply of water, Guru Ji constructed a well within the new Dharamsala compound. People visited Guru Ji in large groups and everybody use to say that Guru Ji had been very kind to donate his house and construct the Dharamsala.

People from all faiths, races and creed came to this dharamsala to adopt the Guru's way of life and some embraced Sikhi by drinking the Nectar (Charan Pahul) blessed by Guru Ji. The Sikhs would say 'Dhan (Great) Dhan (Great) Guru Ram Das Ji'. Guru Ji would give the boon of salvation to His Sikhs. The Sikh religion spread all around Lahore. Sikhs made offerings to Guru Ji to be shared among the needy ones.

²⁷ Sri Gur Pertap Suraj Granth (Raas 2, Ansu 14) – Churamani Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

Guru Ji started the life style of waking up early in the morning and singing the praises of Almighty (Waheguru).

20.3 Visit to Goindwal Sahib

A few months passed in this manner in Lahore, one day Guru Ji expressed his desire to go back to Goindwal Sahib. A few sikhs were assigned to remain in the Dharamsala and perform all the duties in serving the people of Lahore. Guru Ji along with other Sikhs proceeded to Goindwal Sahib. Guru Ji had not met his in-law family and relatives for a long time now. Baba Mohan Ji and Baba Mohri Ji met Guru Ji and Guru Ji inquired about the well being of the rest. Baba Mahadev Ji and (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji also came to meet Guru Ji and bowed in reverence at their father's feet. Then the rest of the family also came to meet Guru Ji. The Sanggat came from far abroad bringing along various gifts, especially on Gurburab day, a lot of Sanggat came. On this day, the Sanggat's offerings were so extensive that it would be in heaps. The people who came before Guru Ji would pray for their happiness. In return, Guru Ji blessed them with his sermons to remember the Creator Almighty (Waheguru) and continue to repeat HIS name consistently.

21. DAILY ROUTINE ²⁸

Guru Ji would wake up at midnight, and take His bath with clean cold water. Then Guru Ji would sit in Semadhi and concentrate on the Almighty. Guru Ji would sit in one posture throughout the semadhi. Upon sunrise, Guru Ji's lotus like eyelids, filled with love and blessings, would bloom open. Guru Ji would apply a saffron tilak on His forehead and with full grace would then sit on His throne. The loving sikhs then came to meet Guru Ji.

Then the Sikhs would come and sing Almighty's Praises (Kirtan) with Rebab on an elevated platform in Guru Ji's court and the other Sikhs would sit and listen to the Kirtan. Before ending the morning session, Guru Ji would address the congregation. Once the food was ready the person in-charge would come before Guru Ji and request Guru Ji to initiate the langgar (free kitchen). Guru Ji and all other visitors would proceed to the langgar (dinning) hall immediately and all will sit on the floor. Guru Ji, as the symbol of equality sat along with all others including the beggars on the floor. A lot of Sanggat came and took food (langgar) too. Everybody was seated equally and the same food was given to all without any discrimination. After having langgar, Guru Ji would rinse his mouth and only then proceed to His house. Then Guru Ji would rest for a while and then, Guru Ji would wake up, get ready and proceed to the throne again. The congregation would commence with the utterance of discourses (Katha), which was full of devotion and knowledge. After katha, Kirtan began again, sung in many raags, listening to which, attachment, jealousy and sins of the listeners dispersed. The fortunate, got closer to Guru Ji and started to enjoy the bliss of Kirtan and were totally drenched in love for Almighty (Waheguru). Guru Ji sat in stillness, not paying any attention to anybody talk nor did Guru Ji talk to anybody during kirtan. When a very loveable Sikh would come, then Guru Ji would give him a sermon. Other than that, He would remain silent. In the evening Guru Ji would go back to His house and be alone. Guru Ji was drenched in love and nobody was near Him.

Tears always flowed from Guru Ji eyes. The Sikhs were very obedient and would stay in Guru Ji's service at all times, they would only rest after Guru Ji returned to his chamber to rest. This was the daily routine of Guru Ji.

²⁸ Sri Gur Pertap Suraj Granth (Raas 2, Ansu 14) – Churamani Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

22. GURU JI'S SIKHS²⁹

22.1 Bhai Hindal Ji

There was a Sikh by the name of Hindal. He served Guru Ji consistently and repeated Almighty's Name (Waheguru) as instructed by Guru Ji. He avoided meeting anybody else and neither did he allowed emotions to overly love or hate anyone. He never spoke to anybody or listen to anybody. He remained in bliss. He swept the floor for the Guru's kitchen (langgar). Other than Guru Ji, he knew nobody else.

He was untouchable by the five (5) vices, lust, anger, greed, attachment and pride. He was always connected to the Almighty's Name. He did selfless and desireless (Niskaam) service (sewa). One day, Guru Ji was walking slowly towards the river. Guru Ji took a bath and headed back towards the village. Then Guru Ji went into the Langgar hall. All the sewadars who were doing sewa in the langgar hall, noticed Guru Ji's presence there. Bhai Hindal was kneading dough for making breads (roti) then, with both his hands. When he realised Guru Ji was in the langgar hall, he quickly bowed his head with both his hand towards his back so that the hands would not get smeared with ground soil and kept his forehead on Guru Ji's beautiful feet. Observing Bhai Hindal's love Guru Ji said, 'Your love for me has won me over, you have bowed in a new style. Almighty's blessings will always be on you and you have obtained salvation by breaking all the worldly attachments. Your service is now completed and you may fulfil your wishes without any doubt'.

Upon listening to Guru Ji's words, in an instant Bhai Hindal was elevated to the highest spiritual level and all his doubts vanished. Just like a beggar who is inaugurated as a king. Guru Ji lifted Bhai Hindal's forehead from his feet with his hands and blessed him with his personal shawl, which Bhai Hindal kept on his head. Bhai Hindal was united with Almighty as he could see Almighty within all including within himself, he was one with Almighty. Guru Ji blessed him with the most supreme spiritual state and was empowered with the ability to use all miraculous powers. Bhai Hindal Ji was astonished with Guru Ji's ability and mercy on a meek being like him. With both hand folded he stood up and uttered Guru Ji's praises, 'Your ways cannot be described as You have the ability to bless the three worlds in an instant to glorify your servant. There is no other greater house of mercy than You. You are great and great liberator, No one has the ability to describe your greatness because there is none greater than You.' Guru Ji said, 'Dear Wise one, you may return to your village and preach to others to recite the Almighty's Name and Gurbani.' Bhai Hindal left for his village immediately and occasionally he would return to meet

²⁹ Sri Gur Pertap Suraj Granth (Raas 2, Ansu 14) – Churamani Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

Guru Ji. This is how Bhai Hindal Ji received blessings from Guru Ji after serving selflessly in Guru Ji's House.

Onto whoever Guru Ji's sight lands, that fortunate person escapes from all the pains in life and liberates others. Bhai Hindal Ji's story stands as an example.

22.2 Bhai Gurdas Ji

One day the merciful Guru Ram Das Ji was sitting and Bhai Gurdas Ji came fervently with folded hands, he came close to Guru Ji and said, 'Dear Guru Ji, please bless me with your great discipleship (Sikhi)'. Observing his perfect faith, Guru Ji spoke to elevate Bhai Gurdas Ji's greatness, 'Remember the True Waheguru's Name by which you shall obtain total peace. You may now proceed to Agra and preach the true way of life with love. In future you will recite hymns which will entice the minds of the true Guru's disciples.'

Upon receiving instruction from Guru Ji, Bhai Gurdas Ji bowed in reverence at Guru Ji's feet and left for Agra.

23. BABA SRI CHAND ³⁰

23.1 Visit by Baba Sri Chand Ji

Guru Ram Das Ji decided to leave Goindwal and return to Guru Ka Chak (Amritsar), Baba Mohan Ji and Baba Mohri Ji came to escort Guru Ji.

One day Baba Sri Chand Ji contemplated within his mind, ‘Guru Ram Das Ji has been inaugurated as the fourth Guru and how much love would he have for me?’ Baba Sri Chand Ji immediately instructed his disciple Bhai Gudria to make arrangement for him to visit Guru Ram Das Ji. Bhai Gudria carried Baba Sri Chand on his shoulders whenever he travelled. The news reached Guru Ram Das Ji and he was very pleased that Guru Nanak Dev Ji’s elder prince is blessing him with his sight by coming to visit him. Guru Ji immediately walked barefooted to receive Baba Sri Chand and Guru Ji with folded hands bowed at Baba Sri Chand’s feet. Guru Ji humbly requested him to come into the house and offered a horse and five hundred rupees as an appreciation gift. Guru Ji served Baba Sri Chand Ji himself with utmost respect and love. About three hours before sunset Sikhs with “rehab” came and sang Almighty’s Praises, Guru Ji vacated his seat for Baba Sri Chand and he sat on the ground close to Baba Ji’s feet. Baba Sri Chand Ji spoke to appraise Guru Ji’s love, ‘Why have you grown your beard so long?’ Upon listening to Baba Ji’s words, Guru Ji humbly held Baba Sri Chand Ji’s feet and with the other hand his beard and started rubbing it on Baba Ji’s feet. While wiping Baba Ji’s feet Guru Ji said, ‘This is why I have raised my beard to clean the feet of Saints like you.’ Baba Sri Chand Ji was impressed with Guru Ji’s humbleness and said, ‘Guru Angad was made the Guru because of his selfless service and you are the ocean of love. Your greatness is the greatest which cannot be described. Whoever takes a dip in your pool (Amrit Sarovar) will have all the sins washed away; even the sinners will be liberated.’ Baba Sri Chand Ji left to Sri Kartarpur after blessing such vows to the Pool of Nectar. Guru Ram Das is the Almighty’s himself who came to liberate the sinners.

Brief History of Baba Sri Chand

Baba Sri Chand was born in 1494 as the elder son of Guru Nanak, the First Sikh Guru. As a child, he was of contemplative nature, and he became the first person to whom Guru Nanak prescribed the life of an Udasi. In contrast to ascetics who leave the world in order to meditate, an Udasi is a renunciate who lives in the world, maintaining everyday life as well as practicing meditation.

³⁰ Sri Gur Pertap Suraj Granth (Raas 2, Ansu 14) – Churamani Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

Baba Siri Chand was a renunciate-self-denying, celibate, and dedicated to meditation-but he was also a farmer. His father asked him not to leave the world but to take responsibility for the community farm at Kartarpur while he, Guru Nanak, was away. When Guru Nanak returned from his travels, the whole village happily told him that they had learned from Baba Siri Chand how to combine hard work on the farm and meditation.

Baba Siri Chand had an extensive and dedicated following. When the Emperor Jehangir asked Mian Mir, his own darvesh (Muslim term for a powerful, truthful, God-intoxicated holy person), "Who is the greatest darvesh today?" Mian Mir replied, "At this time the elder son of Guru Nanak is the king of the darveshes."

Baba Siri Chand lived to the great age of 149, and his guidance was revered by the first six Sikh Gurus. Although his followers numbered in the millions, he encouraged them to be devotees of Guru Nanak rather than of himself. He never married but he took responsibility for raising his brother's son, Dharm Chand, and then arranged the boy's marriage.

When Baba Siri Chand left the visible world in 1643, he left with his body intact.

24. LAVAA

There was a poor Sikh who had a grown up daughter. The Sikh began to search for a suitable groom for his daughter. Fortunately, he managed to identify a boy who was in his adolescent age. The marriage proposal was discussed and agreed among the parents. Thereafter, the engagement and marriage date was fixed.

A few days before the marriage, the Sikh invited the pandit who used to solemnize marriages. He requested the pandit to solemnize the marriage in accordance to the code of conduct. Upon listening to the Sikh, the pandit said "I will solemnize the marriage in good manner but you will have to pay me a fee of 50 rupees". The Sikh with his folded hands said humbly, "I am very poor, I cannot afford to pay you 50 rupees but I can only pay you 25 rupees". the pandit did not agree eventhough the poor Sikh persuaded him for several times.

The Sikh went around asking for someone who can solominize his daughter's wedding within his budget. Upon listening to him, a Sikh suggested that he should go to Guru Ka Chak (Amritsar) and make a humble request before Guru Ram Das Ji. The poor Sikh was very happy to hear this suggestion and without any hesitation he proceeded immediately to Guru Ka Chak (Amritsar).

He presented himself with folded hands and pleaded humbly, "Dear Guru Ji, you are the honour of the honourless, please be merciful on your poor Sikh. I have come to you after listening to your praises, please help me with my task". Guru Ji asked, "Dear Sikh please tell me about your task and the difficulties faced in accomplishing it". The Sikh explained the event that took place while he was arranging for his daughter's wedding.

Guru Ji said "Don't worry; everything will be solominized in Guru Nanak's house without any conditions or demands. You may bring along the bride and groom at any time and I will solominize the wedding personally". Upon hearing to this, the Sikh went back home and told the good news to his family and relatives. On the wedding day, both families of the bride and groom came to Amritsar and the Sikh humbly requested Guru Ji to solominize the wedding.

Guru Ji made the bride and groom to sit before him and composed Gurbani in Suhi Raag. After composing the first Pauri (stanza), the groom lead the bride in performing the circumambulation (Perkarma) around Guru Ji while the same Pauri was sang by the raagis. This was repeated for four times.

Thus, Guru Ji uttered four Pauris of Gurbani called Lavaa. Hence, the Sikh Code of Conduct for Anand Karaj was initiated.

25. BHAI SANGHARI MAL FROM LAHORE³¹

25.1 Code of Conduct

A Guru is not subjected to Deeds (Karam), as He is the manifestation of Almighty Himself. He has manifested not to repay or earn the returns of previous deeds but to help and liberate the beings in the entire universe. He performs all the deeds for the benefit of others, as He does not have any desire. In order to maintain a healthy and progressive community a proper living style need to be established by which a being is able to benefit from this birth.

One day, while Guru Ji was sitting with his scholars and wise Sikhs a question was raised pertaining to the code of conduct of a Sikh. Guru Ji replied, "Dear Sikh, you are all my beloved Sikhs and as you have obtained this precious human birth. In order to take advantage of this birth, you must remember Waheguru (Almighty) at all times, even a single breath should not be wasted without His remembrance. By remembering Almighty all the sins attached to the mind for million of births will be washed away in an instant and you will be liberated from the reincarnation cycle whereby you will not be subjected to birth and death. The mind will remain clean from evil desires and you will be able to serve selflessly and desirelessly by which Guru's blessings are obtained.' Guru Ji then uttered the following Shabad (Gurbani) and said, 'Listen to this Shabad and apply it in your daily life, get rid of all doubts and remember Waheguru.'

ਮਃ ੪ ॥ (੩੦੫-੧੬)

Fourth Mahla:

ਗੁਰ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਜੋ ਸਿਖੁ ਅਖਾਏ ; ਸੁ ਭਲਕੇ ਉਠਿ , ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਵੈ ॥ (੩੦੫-੧੬, ਗਉੜੀ, ਮਃ ੪)

One who calls himself a Sikh of the Guru, the True Guru, shall rise in the early morning hours and meditate on the Almighty's Name.

ਉਦਮੁ ਕਰੇ , ਭਲਕੇ ਪਰਭਾਤੀ ; ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਕਰੇ , ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਸਰਿ ਨਾਵੈ ॥ (੩੦੫-੧੭, ਗਉੜੀ, ਮਃ ੪)

Upon arising early in the morning, he is to bathe, and cleanse himself in the pool of nectar.

ਉਪਦੇਸਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਜਪੁ ਜਾਪੈ ; ਸਭਿ ਕਿਲਵਿਖ ਪਾਪ ਦੋਖ ਲਹਿ ਜਾਵੈ ॥ (੩੦੫-੧੮, ਗਉੜੀ, ਮਃ ੪)

Following the Instructions of the Guru, he is to chant the Name of the Almighty. All sins, misdeeds and negativity shall be erased.

³¹ Sri Gur Pertap Suraj Granth (Raas 2, Ansu 15) – Churamani Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

ਫਿਰਿ ਚੜੈ ਦਿਵਸੁ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਗਾਵੈ ; ਬਹਦਿਆ ਉਠਦਿਆ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਵੈ ॥ (੩੦੫-੧੮, ਗਉੜੀ, ਮਃ ੪)

Then, at the rising of the sun, he is to sing Gurbani; whether sitting down or standing up, he is to meditate on the Lord's Name.

ਜੋ ਸਾਸਿ ਗਿਰਾਸਿ ਧਿਆਏ ਮੇਰਾ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ; ਸੋ ਗੁਰਸਿਖੁ , ਗੁਰੂ ਮਨਿ ਭਾਵੈ ॥ (੩੦੫-੧੯, ਗਉੜੀ, ਮਃ ੪)

One who meditates on my Almighty, with every breath and every morsel of food - that GurSikh becomes pleasing to the Guru's Mind.

ਜਿਸ ਨੋ ਦਇਆਲੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੇਰਾ ਸੁਆਮੀ ; ਤਿਸੁ ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ਸੁਣਾਵੈ ॥ (੩੦੬-੧, ਗਉੜੀ, ਮਃ ੪)

That person, unto whom my Lord and Master is kind and compassionate - upon that GurSikh, the Guru's Teachings are bestowed.

ਜਨੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ , ਧੂੜਿ ਮੰਗੈ ਤਿਸੁ ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਕੀ ; ਜੋ ਆਪਿ ਜਪੈ , ਅਵਰਹ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਾਵੈ ॥੨॥ (੩੦੬-੨, ਗਉੜੀ, ਮਃ ੪)

Servant Nanak begs for the dust of the feet of that GurSikh, who himself chants Almighty's Name (Naam), and inspires others to chant it. ||2||

Upon listening to the Shabad from Guru Ji, the most fortunate Sikhs' hearts turned into gold with Guru Ji's jewel sermons. The jewel of Shabad shines in the True Congregation (Satsanggat), the participants heart are equivalent to a pool which is filled with the pure water of Guru Ji's sermons. Those who earn truthful living are equivalent to the lotus flower which stays on water surface but remains above the water facing the Sun. Similarly although a Sikh lives a family life the focus remains on the Almighty. Guru's Shabad (Gurbani) is a Paras (touchstone) which turns eight types of materials into gold, in the the similar manner upon listening to Guru's Shabad the mind is cleaned from all the filth of sins and made to be pure which is united with Almighty. Guru's Shabad is similar to the clouds filled with blessings and whoever listens with a focussed mind he/she shall obtain the ability to perform all types of miracles. However, there are only a few who develop faith and thirst within the Darshan (glimpse) of Guru ji and are blessed with bliss and all worldly happiness. Doubts, attachments and all the causes of sadness are erased.

25.2 Bhai Sanhari Mal Ji

Guru Ji's uncle (Taya Ji) who lived in Lahore had a son named Sanhari Mal. They were from the 'Sodhi' family. One day he came to visit Guru ji in Goindwal and bought along some sweets for Guru Ji. He folded his hands and humbly requested before Guru Ji. Guru Ji upon seeing him got up and went to Sanhari Mal and touched his feet. Sanhari Mal then said to Guru Ji, "Dear Guru Ji, please don't do this, you are not only my brother now but have attained the greatest state in the entire Universe (Guruship) from Guru Amar Das Ji's, thousands of people respect and pray to you. I am just a normal person who does not even remember the Almighty".

Guru Ram Das Ji then said, “Dear Sanhari Mal Ji you are my father’s elder brother’s son therefore you are my elder brother, thus you deserved to be respected”. Both Guru Ji and Sanhari Mal met each other with so much of love and spoke highly of each other. Then Guru Ji asked Sanhari Mal the purpose of his visit, Sanhari Mal respectfully said, “You are the most respected person and your name is praised by the whole world. I am here to invite you to my son’s wedding. I have the desires in my heart that the wedding must be done with your blessings.”

Guru Ji arranged for a nice place for Sanhari Mal to stay the night there. Guru Ji then started contemplating about the invitation and decided that it was inappropriate for him to go at this time as there were a lot of people visiting him. Guru Ji then went to sleep. The next morning Guru Ji went and sat next to Sanhari Mal. Sanhari Mal folded his hands and told Guru Ji, “Please go and get ready now, this was the reason why I did not send anyone else to invite you, I left all my work behind. Please think of my love and give your nephew your love. By your coming, our house will be blessed. Treat my son as yours, become our protector and give us your blessings”.

Upon listening, Guru Ji with a lot of love said, “Dear beloved brother, there are lots of people from all over the world who come to see me and they go after meeting me. I must not disappoint the beloved Sikhs of Guru Amar Das Ji who travel hundreds of miles to come here therefore it will not be appropriate for me to leave this place. Thousands of people come everyday and if I go for the wedding, all of them will come along and then how will you manage the wedding?”

Sanhari Mal agreed with Guru Ji and requested Guru Ji to send his son to solemnise the wedding.

Guru Ji then called his eldest son, Baba Prithvi Chand and instructed him “Please go along with your uncle to Lahore for his son’s wedding. You will meet all our relatives belonging to the Sodhi clan and stay there for a few days. You may come back after the wedding”.

Baba Prithvi Chand did not agree to Guru Ji’s instruction, as he did not want any of his brothers to take over his duties while he was away. He was also worried that all the wealth that he was managing will be taken over by others along with the Guruship throne. Baba Prithvi Chand then bowed to Sanhari Mal and received his blessings. After keeping silent for some time, he then said to Guru Ji, “Dear Father, as you are well aware that I am the only one who is managing the income and expenditure here including purchasing of the groceries for Guru’s Kitchen (Langgar), therefore how can I go?” Guru Ji said, “Assign someone else to perform your duties and you must attend the wedding.”

Baba Prithvi Chand then said, “Dear Father, it is your nature that you do not take any interest in managing the worldly affairs therefore it is not appropriate for me to leave everything behind. Further more it will be very difficult to travel in this weather and I do not want to participate in the Baraat (Junj – the group from man side who goes to the girl’s place) as I don’t agree with their proceedings”.

Upon hearing his elder son’s refusal, Guru Ji who was knower of all hearts understood his son’s true intentions and did not say anything. Guru Ji then called upon his younger sons, Baba Mahadev and (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji.

26. (GURU) ARJAN DEV JI WENT TO LAHORE WITH BHAI SANHARI ³²

26.1 Baba Mahadev

Baba Mahadev and (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji came and bowed in reverence before Guru Ji. They also greeted Sanhari Mal and in return he blessed them. Guru Ji said to Baba Mahadev, "Go to Lahore with your uncle and attend your cousin brother's wedding and also meet all our relatives there". Baba Mahadev was an ascetic who had no attachments with the worldly materials said, "Which relatives? Whose relatives? Why should I go? In reality I am Atma therefore I have no relatives nor want to establish any worldly. None of the relatives are going to stay along afterlife. Everyone only thinks about themselves and the wealth therefore they don't get close to the poor and always attempt to be close with those who are rich. I don't feel like going there as I will only get tired unnecessarily travelling." After saying this, he kept quiet.

26.2 (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji

Guru Ji then looked at (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji whose nature was very polite and calm. (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji never looked at his father face to face in utmost respect and stood before Guru Ji with folded hands.

Guru Ji looked at (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji and said, "Dear son, go along with your uncle and attend the wedding of your cousin brother. Join our relatives and celebrate the wedding. Stay along with them for one month and then proceed to the *dharamsala*. Manage the day-to-day program and motivate them to recite Almighty's Name. You shall only return upon receiving a letter from me". Upon listening to Guru Ji – His father, (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji said, while folding hands, "Dear Father, You are very are generous to assign me to joyful occasion and an opportunity to serve the community. I am ever willing to be in front to sacrifice my life at your single order without an iota of doubt. I wouldn't even bother about my life and get there as soon as possible." After saying this, the calm natured (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji, prepared himself to follow his uncle. Before leaving he went to his mother, Mata Bhanni Ji and told her about His plan to go to Lahore. Bibi Bhanni ji gave him love and blessings and told Him to sit beside her.

She kissed His forehead and said "My Dear Son! Listen, you must always be obedient and act on your father's orders, this is for your own good. Always perform the service of Guru's house selflessly, punctually and obediently. Prithvi Chand has an ego character and doesn't listen to his father's orders. Mahadev, a reserved person, doesn't understand anything. I have very high hopes on you. O my son! You are the only one who will be the

³² Sri Gur Pertap Suraj Granth (Raas 2, Ansu 16) – Churamani Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

next guru. O son! Guru Nanak Dev Ji earlier gave the Guruship (*Gurta-gaddi*) to His servant (*sewak*), Guru Angad Dev Ji and my father (Guru Amar Das Ji) got it, by observing and recognising their selfless service (*sewa*) and obedience. I have taken every attempt to advise Prithvi Chand but he doesn't listen and has a lot of ego. Therefore serve your father as a true servant." Mata Bhani had tears in her eyes and said, "My Dear son! Please go and may Waheguru be with you at all times." He listened to his mother's advice carefully and politely bowed His head to take blessings. He received blessings from His mother and came out of the house. Then He greeted His father and went ahead with His uncle. He also took blessings from his elder brothers and left for Lahore.

26.3 In Lahore

They reached Lahore town as they walked. Sanhari Mal had made all the arrangements for his son's wedding. (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji went there and met all the people. He impressed everyone there. Guru Ji stayed in Sanhari Mal's place till the completion of all the marriage ceremonies. After that, He went back to the *dharamsala*, which used to be his ancestors' house, there all the people who lived in Lahore and nearby areas visited him. There was a large gathering during the early morning and evening as all the participants of the true congregation experienced peace and bliss. However, (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji's mind was always focussed on His father's *charan* (feet) as He waited for the arrival of the letter.

The entire day and night passed in Guru Ram Das Ji's remembrance. (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji preached about the kindness of a Guru to all the sanggat. The love increased and He became very eager to meet Guru Ji. He was no more interested in eating, drinking or sleeping anymore. (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji had never disobeyed any orders given to him by His Father but separation from Guru Ram Das Ji was not easy to endure. Months passed without news from Guru Ram Das Ji.

26.4 Baba Prithvi Chand

Baba Prithvi Chand was with Guru Ji at all times and began to think highly of himself. He thought to himself – "I will become the Guru after my father and will get all the wealth, respect and happiness that I want. I am very fortunate to have all the greatness inherited from my family where all the people will touch our feet." Prithvi Chand took advantage of his position to hide all the money for himself and his heart was always filled with pride. The Sikhs and the Masands (Guru's Representatives) respected him as the son of the Guru and a pious person. The Masands who were assigned to different districts and region handed over the collection from the Sikhs to him.

Guru Ji continued to bless everyone and fulfil his or her wishes. Although Guru Ji knew Prithvi Chand's abusive character He never said anything against him neither did he say anything good about him. Guru Ji knew it was not appropriate to appoint Prithvi Chand as the next Guru. Just like water never stays contained at the peak and flows to the lowest

point and stays contained as a pool similarly, although Guru showers His blessings equally on all the blessings stays contained within the most humble ones.

Prithiye, stayed with Guru Ji and yet never realised His greatness. Just as someone stays close to a pilgrimage shrine and develops ego that the place is only precious because of his presence.

26.5 Baba Mahadev

Baba Mahadev was a reserved person. He stayed isolated indulged in his own world and remained quiet. Occasionally, he walked to meet Guru Ji. Guru Ram Das Ji the perfect Guru knew everything.

26.6 (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji

At the same time, (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji lived in Lahore but Guru Ji never called him. He had a lot of love for Guru Ji and it kept on increasing just like rivers get filled when it rains. He remembered Guru Ji with each of his breath and thought. He would always talk to himself, "When will I be able to see my beloved Guru Ji and obtain the bliss." He sang His praises in Raag and had a lot of love for Guru Ji in his heart. Tears would start to flow as a result of the pain of separation, sometimes he would get goosebumps and his heart beat anxiously. Due to the pain of separation his body turned yellow and would start aching. Whenever he went into the ocean of separation, he would ponder, "Guru Ji has forgotten me and does not remember me. I can't even go there on my own, as that will be against my Guru's command. I am only allowed to return upon receiving a formal letter." Just like a bird, which is captured in a cage, similarly he did not disobey the command. He took very deep breaths at all time and thought "I have been separated from the house". Sometimes his voice broke when he sang, because he could not see his beloved father. Sometimes in congregation (sangat) when he sang the praises of Guru Ji, there would be tears in his eyes. He continued to stay in Lahore and remembered Guru Ram Das Ji consistently. However, at times his passion to be with Guru Ji becomes uncontrollable and he would cry and his heart becomes extremely anxious. He knew of the importance of a Guru to stay contented and obtain happiness.

27. SERMON FOR THE SIKHS ³³

A Sikh by the name of Tiratha of Sebarwal clan came to see Guru Ji. With the craving for salvation in the heart, he sat near Guru Ji and said, “Dear Guru Ji, I have come to you. Please guide me as to how I shall attain salvation. By listening to your sermons, we wash away our sins and attain peace in our hearts”. Guru Ji replied, “There is no other good deed (pun) which can match the truth. Truth is the form that represents God. Those who dwell on truth will secure happiness in both worlds. They are even revered by the deities. The True Guru (Satguru) is also a friend of all truthful people. Where the truth may hurt others, telling a lie is justified.” Guru Ji then continued by narrating a story to explain the point that he was making.

A sadhu lived in the King’s palace. He spent several months there. One day, the King’s son got married and was fast asleep in his room with his wife. But his wife could not sleep until it was late at night. There was a sword placed under her pillow and she held the sword. After removing the sword from its sheath, she began to swing the sword and unexpectedly the sword slipped through her hand and landed on the stomach of her newly married husband. The sword was extremely sharp and because of the momentum it cut through his stomach and he died immediately. She was terrified and started to ponder as how she could escape from the blame of killing her own husband.

The next morning, when the King discovered his dead son’s body, the newly married bride started crying aloud and said “The so-called Saint who is staying in this palace, came over here last night and tried to overpower me and when my husband tried to stop him he killed him with these sword”. The King was very saddened and started to shed tears. He ordered his guards to arrest the innocent Saint and imprison him. The Saint was tortured badly during the interrogation.

After numerous consultation with his ministers, the King thought to himself “By killing the Saint, my son will not come back. The King then ordered to release the Saint after severing (cutting) the Saint’s hand. The Saint was very sad and contemplated over the incident, “Justice prevails in the House of God but I did not do any sin. Why did I get such a punishment? I have been treated unjustly by God”. Thinking of this, he became distressed. Looking at his condition, someone told him, “There is a Brahmin in Kanshi who has knowledge of one’s previous life. He reads the scriptures that explains about philosophy of Karam (Deeds) and is able to predict the cause of pains and joys obtained in this lifetime. You should go and seek clarification from him”

The Saint was impressed with the suggestion and immediately proceeded to Kanshi. When he reached the Brahmin’s house, the Saint asked the Brahmin’s wife “Where is the

³³ Sri Gur Pertap Suraj Granth (Raas 2, Ansu 17) – Churamani Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

Brahmin?” She was irritated by the question. She screamed foul at her husband and said some unkind things to the Saint as well. The Saint was shocked with her reaction and thought, “What kind of a wife is this? I have heard that the Brahmin is such a great person.”

While he was waiting at the door, the Brahmin came and he related his sorrows to the Brahmin. He also told him of his episode with his wife and asked, “She is continuously speaking foul language.” The pandit sat down and said, “Listen first to the reason why you are here. In your last life, you were a Brahmin. One day, you were sitting on a riverbank after having your bath. In one hand you had a container in which beads are placed. You had lifted it and were in the midst of rotating the beads. At that point, a terrified cow passed by you and overtook you. Following it was a mean butcher who said to you “A cow went past this way, right?” You kept quite and said nothing but by lifting up your hand you directed the butcher towards the cow. The butcher then captured the poor cow and killed it. Due to his good deeds in earlier lives, the butcher was reborn as the King’s son in his next life. At the same time, the cow took the form of the daughter of the King. To settle the previous life grudge, the cow that was a princess was married to the butcher who was the King’s son. She took the revenge by killing her husband accidentally as both of them were ignorant about their previous life but such was predetermined in the house of God. Terrified of the consequences, she blamed you for the death. And as for you, the King has severed the hand that you used to direct the butcher towards the cow. God never does injustice. One has to pay for ones bad karam”.

The Brahmin continued, “Now, I will tell you about my wife. I was a crow in my last life and my wife was a donkey. She had a very big wound on her back. I used to peck at the wound all the time and she would suffer in pain. One day while I was pecking her wound, my beak was trapped in one of her bones. I was not able to remove my beak from the bone. Due to the excruciating pain, the donkey walked into the Ganga River. As the pain worsened, the donkey moved further and deeper into the river. I tried my best to remove my beak but all my efforts were in vain and as I continued to remove my beak, she moved further into deep waters. As a result, both of us was drifted in the deep waters and drowned. As we had died in the Ganga River, we were both born into Brahmin families in our present life and were consequently married to each other. Because I had caused so much pain to her in our earlier life, she now tortures me with her harsh words. I am paying for my earlier karam”.

The Saint was relieved to hear this and he said “Without deeds (Karam), one will not go through sorrows and happiness”.

Guru Ji said “Although the Brahmin told the truth by directing the butcher towards the escaped cow, he had to go through this pain because he caused the suffering to the cow. The same hand with which he provided the directions in his earlier life, had to be severed in this life. The truth, which will cause trouble and pain to another being, will definately, bring the consequences. The wise ones would never utter such a truth. However, in all

other situations, one should always tell the truth. There is no other sin, which is as bad as a lie. One should never utter a lie. A lie that saves one from death or a grave trouble, then in such a situation, the lie shall be equivalent to the truth. If it saves or brings good to another being, then one should tell the required lie.” After listening to Guru Ji, Tirath lead his life accordingly. He continued living a truthful life.

27.1 Bhai Bishan Das, Manik Chand & Puro

Bishan Das, Manik Chand and Puro, were three devotees of the Guru who came before Guru Ji and with their hands clasped in prayer, said “Please save us from the cycle of birth and death. Provide us with some advice so that we may swim across this dreadful worldly ocean together with our families.” Guru Ji said, “Perform selfless service (Niskaam Sewa) together with your spouse and children. Consider yourselves and your family as the servants of Almighty (Waheguru). Also, surrender everything to the Guru and do not claim anything to be your property. Then, the Guru himself becomes responsible to protect your families and to deliver appropriate clothes and food for your families and eventually provides salvation’. The three then took the advice, practiced it and finally obtained salvation while living a household life.

27.2 Bhai Padareth, Taru & Bharu

Padareth, Taru and Bharu came to see Guru Ji and listen to the discourses delivered during the congregation session. Listening to Guru Ji, they were terrified and asked “We are so engrossed in our own family affairs and never get the opportunity to learn Gurbani (Guru’s Hymn). We have never participated in the true congregation (SatSanggat). Dear Guru Ji, how will we attain salvation? We have spent our entire life by totally dedicating it to household affairs, please liberate us.” Guru Ram Das Ji then replied “Almighty prepares and ensures that all the being have the necessary means for consumption even before they are born. That is why you must now sit in the house of the Guru and be absorbed in humility and faith, and continue to recite Almighty’s Name within your minds. The Almighty will take care of you, your family, relatives and friends if you have faith in Him. Therefore, you must analyse and evaluate the purpose of your life and your achievements.”

After listening to Guru Ji, they called their sons and said “You are adults now. Please take care of your earnings, which shall match your requirements and manage all your household affairs yourselves. And from the said earnings, please contribute ten percent (daswand) for charity as well. Perform selfless service (sewa) of the needy and Sikhs who come to our house. We shall now stay in Guru Ji’s house for the rest of our lives. We shall now perform selfless service by whatever means – lifting pails of water, fanning, collecting firewood, washing dishes, cleaning, etc. We will seek Guru Ji’s blessings by participating in true congregation and attain salvation.” They were elevated in spiritual state and attained salvation by abandoning worldly attachment.

28. SERMONS TO SIKHS ³⁴

28.1 Bhai Mahanand & Bhai Bidhi Chand

Bhai Mahanand together with Bhai Bidhi Chand met Guru Ji and bowed their heads. With folded hands they stood before Guru Ji and said, “Please remove our duality and the fear of birth and death. Due to our sins we have gone through many cycles of birth and death, now we have come in your refuge, please help us”.

After listening to them Guru Ji said, “When you are able to recognize your real-self (Atma) only then you will be saved from this cycle of birth and death”.

With folded hands both of them replied, “We know ourselves as the sons of *Khatri*, and we belong to the Khatri clan. We only know, first we were toddlers and now we are adults, beyond this we don’t know anything else. We believe we are this body.”

Then Guru Ji explained, “Your parents gave birth to you, gave you a name and you naturally belong to the clan based on your family lineage. As you grew up, you then got married. But your real-self existed even before this physical body was made and before your soul came into this body. The main reason for your soul’s migration into this physical body is your outstanding deeds (Karam) and you are here now to receive the returns of your deeds (Karam). Based on your good and bad deeds you shall attain happiness and sadness. After leaving this body you will remain as a soul and migrate into another body. Whatever is performed during this lifetime is recorded and you shall be accountable for the deeds (Karam), fruits of which you have to sow. You were there even before and after you got this physical body. Consider this body as temporary (false). Once you are old you will leave this body, then you will obtain another body. This physical form is similar to the garments, which you wore over our real-self (Atma). The real-self (Atma) cannot be killed nor does it die naturally. Neither can it be drowned or burnt. The body is false but the real-self (Atma) is the truth. The body goes through so much of pain but your real-self always remains at bliss. Convince your mind that this is the truth.”

After listening, both pleaded, “How can we realise the truth? How do we break away from the ego of this body and get attached to our real-self (Atma)?”

Guru Ji then said, “With full concentration participate in the true congregation (*satSanggat*), listen to discourses (Katha) and perform selfless service (Niskaam Sewa). Listen and make every attempt to understand *Gurbani* with love. Using *Gurbani* as the yardstick weigh yourself and never be swayed by happiness or by sadness. If you practice such a lifestyle, you will be able to take control of yourself.”

³⁴ Sri Gur Pertap Suraj Granth (Raas 2, Ansu 18) – Churamani Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

Beginning from that day they did as advised by Guru Ji, after sometime they obtained the divine knowledge and they were saved from attachment. At the end of their lives they were united with Almighty.

28.2 More Sikhs

Dharam Das Khosla, Dugar Das Tekiara, Depa, Jetha, Sensaru, Bula and Tirtha were all together seven Sikhs. All seven came to see Guru Ji. They bowed and with folded hands sat close to Guru Ji and said, "We have come to your refuge, please bless us salvation."

After listening to them Guru Ram Das Ji said, "Firstly get rid of your ego and jealousy, and be humble. Don't gossip and get rid of your bad habits. If needy persons come to your house, invite them and serve them selflessly. (With lots of love) Give them food and clothes. Listen to me carefully and don't make any mistakes. Whenever you come across a person who is unable to complete a job due to unavailability of money, all of you must get together and say a prayer for him. Collect money from everyone and get his job completed, than all of you will attain happiness. Wherever a group of Sikhs are together and Almighty's praises are being sung (Kirten) and discussed (Katha), you must be there day and night. If you can afford it, then you should build hostels and home for the needy, migrant and poor and provide them with food too. Donate to the poor and remember the Almighty. There is no greater deed than doing this. In this world you shall obtain happiness and in the next world you will be one with the Almighty. Take a bath in the wee hours of morning and read *Gurbani* with love."

They all listened to Guru Ji and started walking on Guru Ji's path. They immersed in Guru Ji's love and all were in bliss.

28.3 Japa, Neiya, Tulsā and Vhura

Japa, Neiya (also known as Gheneia), Tulsā and Vhura, four Sikhs who had lots of faith, came to meet Guru Ram Das Ji. They bowed to Guru Ji and with folded hands pleaded, "Dear Guru Ji, please be kind and bless us as we are your servants. We live a household life, please bless us with the Sikh way of life and remove attachments from our hearts."

Guru Ram Das Ji while blessing said, "Just as you work day and night to get your chores done, with love read and listen to Guru's Hymns (*Gurbani*). Understand *Gurbani* and repeatedly ponder on the meanings of *Gurbani* in your mind while performing all your daily chores. Get up in the wee hours (Amritvela) of the morning to perform your daily prayers and you shall receive great blessings. Read *Gurbani*, get together with other Sikhs discuss the meanings of *Gurbani*. At dawn start your day by carrying out the worldly chores, by practising this way of life the physical sickness will go away. With full concentration focus on the Almighty and immerse in his love. Utter *Satnam Waheguru*, repeatedly with which the great disease of ego will disappear. Utter the Almighty's Name (*Naam*), while performing chores with your hand, sitting, sleeping and while moving

around. All the time think of Satguru. Just like a lady who carries a pitcher on her head; without holding the pitcher she moves around her hands but her mind is always focussed on the pitcher so that it doesn't fall or sway. Similarly, while doing your daily chores your mind must always be focussed on Naam. By doing that you will attain lots of happiness and Guru Ji will be with you till the end."

All the Sikhs started following the advice given by Guru Ram Das Ji. Till their end they all uttered Naam and with that they became close to Guru Ji.

29. SRI GURU ARJAN DEV JI'S LETTERS³⁵

(Guru) Arjan Dev Ji lived the life just as Guru Ram Das Ji lived it. Guru Arjan Dev ji stayed in Lahore for quite some time now. All the Sikhs who stayed with Guru Ji were very afraid and scared of Baba Prithvi Chand. They obeyed everything that Baba Prithvi Chand asked them to do. Baba Prithvi Chand never thought of (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji.

All the Sikhs only praised and obeyed Baba Prithvi Chand. Guru Ram Das Ji on the other hand never asked anyone to go and invite (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji back from Lahore. Guru Ji understood that he had given orders to (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji to stay in Lahore till he was asked to return. In this manner, Guru Ji appraised (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji's determination.

Guru Arjan Dev Ji longed to have the darshan (sight) of Guru Ram Das Ji as if the 'chatrik' bird thirsts for the drop of rain. (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji was very impatient and day-by-day his love increased for Guru Ji.

29.1 The First Letter

Guru Arjan Dev ji praised and thought of His Father, Guru ji with so much of love and uttered a hymn (Pauri of a Shabad). Guru Ji wrote it on a piece of paper what he felt from the bottom of his heart.

ਮਾਝ , ਮਹਲਾ ੫ ; ਚਉਪਦੇ , ਘਰੁ ੧ ॥ (੯੬-੧੪)

Maajh, Fifth Guru, Chau-Padas, First House:

ਮੇਰਾ ਮਨੁ ਲੋਚੈ ; ਗੁਰ ਦਰਸਨ ਤਾਈ ॥ (੯੬-੧੫, ਮਾਝ, ਮਃ ੫)

My mind longs for the Blessed Vision of the Guru's Darshan.

ਬਿਲਪ ਕਰੇ ; ਚਾਤ੍ਰਕ ਕੀ ਨਿਆਈ ॥ (੯੬-੧੫, ਮਾਝ, ਮਃ ੫)

It cries out like the thirsty song-bird.

ਤ੍ਰਿਖਾ ਨ ਉਤਰੈ , ਸਾਂਤਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ; ਬਿਨੁ ਦਰਸਨ ਸੰਤ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਜੀਉ ॥੧॥ (੯੬-੧੫, ਮਾਝ, ਮਃ ੫)

My thirst is not quenched, and I can find no peace, without the Blessed Vision of the Beloved Saint. ||1||

ਹਉ ਘੋਲੀ ਜੀਉ ਘੋਲਿ , ਘੁਮਾਈ ; ਗੁਰ ਦਰਸਨ ਸੰਤ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਜੀਉ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ (੯੬-੧੬, ਮਾਝ, ਮਃ ੫)

I am a sacrifice, my soul is a sacrifice, to the Blessed Vision of the Beloved Saint Guru. ||1||Pause||

³⁵ Sri Gur Pertap Suraj Granth (Raas 2, Ansu 19) – Churamani Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

After writing this Shabad, Guru Ji gave this to a Sikh and told him “This letter that I have given you, please deliver and present it humbly before Guru Ji. When Guru Ji had read the letter, listen to His response and then you shall come back to Lahore” The Sikh took Guru Ji’s letter, left Lahore and proceeded to Amritsar. After a day’s traveling, the Sikh reached where Guru Ji resided. With so much of hope and love to meet Guru Ji the Sikh went forward. Baba Prithvi Chand who was sitting on the stairs asked the Sikh “Where do you come from?” Who gave you this letter and sent you here?” The Sikh replied politely “I have come from Lahore, this letter is sent by your younger brother, I have come here to present it to Guru Ji. When Guru Ji has read it, I will deliver Guru Ji’s reply accordingly to your brother in Lahore.” Baba Prithvi Chand immediately spoke “Give me the letter and I will pass it to Guru Ji. Guru Ji has no time to meet anyone now. Go back to your village.” Baba Prithvi Chand opened and read the Shabad. He thought that this was very similar to Gurbani and it is written perfectly just like the Gurbani uttered by the four Gurus’. (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji had shown lots of love to meet Guru Ji. If Guru Ji read this letter then he may issue instruction to (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji to come back and inaugurate him as the next Guru. I should not give this letter, thinking this in his mind he kept the letter in his pocket.

Baba Prithvi Chand did not give the letter to Guru Ji, he hid it from all. The Sikh messenger spent the night there and the next morning he went forward to meet Guru Ji, Baba Prithvi Chand saw the Sikh and called him and said “ Satguru Ji had read your letter and he is very happy, inform (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji that everyone is fine and very happy here. Guru Ji wants (Guru) Arjan Dev ji to stay in Lahore and serve the local people with divine knowledge. Now you go back, there is no work for you here” said Baba Prithvi Chand to the Sikh. The Sikh then left for Lahore.

Upon reaching Lahore the Sikh went to (Guru) Arjan Dev ji folded his hands and said “I met Baba Prithvi Chand at the doorstep of Guru Ji’s darbar, he took the letter to Guru Ji, Guru Ji has read the letter and everyone is fine and very happy.” (Guru) Arjan Dev then thought that by staying far, perhaps Guru Ji’s love towards me have decreased now compared to those who are staying there with Him. Guru Ji has read the letter but did not reply. Does this mean that he does not love me? How could Guru Ji the Antarbani (the knower of all hearts) not recognize my love for him? I thirst for his sight (darshan) day and night, my eyes filled with tears thinking of him, when will he call me back and bless me?

29.2 The Second Letter

(Guru) Arjan Dev Ji thought that how lucky are those who stay with Guru Ji, those who make his darshan everyday, by hearing Guru Ji’s words which will fulfill their hearts’ desires. He felt so unlucky for not enjoying the darshan of Guru Ji for quite some time already. (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji then wrote another shabad (padh) and read.

ਤੇਰਾ ਮੁਖੁ ਸੁਹਾਵਾ ਜੀਉ ; ਸਹਜ ਧੁਨਿ ਬਾਣੀ ॥ (੯੬-੧੭, ਮਾਝ, ਮਃ ੫)

Your Face is so beautiful, and the Sound of Your Words imparts intuitive wisdom.

ਚਿਰੁ ਹੋਆ ; ਦੇਖੇ ਸਾਰਿੰਗਪਾਣੀ ॥ (੯੬-੧੭, ਮਾਝ, ਮਃ ੫)

It is so long since this rainbird has had even a glimpse of water.

ਧੰਨੁ ਸੁ ਦੇਸੁ , ਜਹਾ ਤੂੰ ਵਸਿਆ ; ਮੇਰੇ ਸਜਣ ਮੀਤ ਮੁਰਾਰੇ ਜੀਉ ॥੨॥ (੯੬-੧੮, ਮਾਝ, ਮਃ ੫)

Blessed is that land where You dwell, O my Friend and Intimate Divine Guru. ||2||

ਹਉ ਘੋਲੀ ਹਉ ਘੋਲਿ , ਘੁਮਾਈ ; ਗੁਰ ਸਜਣ ਮੀਤ ਮੁਰਾਰੇ ਜੀਉ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ (੯੬-੧੮, ਮਾਝ, ਮਃ ੫)

I am a sacrifice; I am forever a sacrifice, to my Friend and Intimate Divine Guru. ||1||Pause||

Guru Ji sent the Sikh again to Amritsar, The Sikh reached at Guru Ji's door, but Guru Ji had returned to His house and Baba Prithvi Chand came out of the house and saw the same Sikh. Seeing the Sikh Baba Prithvi Chand knew that his younger brother had sent another letter. The Sikh then took out and gave the letter to Baba Prithvi Chand. Baba Prithvi Chand opened the letter and read, he was so sad to know how much love (Guru) Arjan Dev ji had for Guru Ji. He thought to himself that his younger brother has started to write Gurbani and this can make him close to Guru Ji. He writes Gurbani just like Guru Ji. If Guru Ji sees this, he will love him.

Baba Prithvi Chand made the necessary arrangement for the sikh to stay a night there and told him that he will pass the letter to Guru Ji. The next day he told the Sikh that Guru Ji had read the letter and Guru Ji is very happy, please go back to Lahore and inform (Guru) Arjan Dev ji to continue serving the local people persistently. The Sikh then left for Lahore.

Baba Prithvi Chand now started calculating the balance period of Guru Ram Das Ji's Guruship, as he was well aware that Guru Amar Das Ji blessed Guru Ram Das Ji with extended age of 6 years, 11 months and 20 days along with the Guruship throne. He was seriously contemplating on how to stop his younger brother's message from reaching Guru Ji as 6 years and few months had passed and the time was coming closer for the inauguration of the Fifth Guru. He did not have any love and care for Guru Ji other then taking over the throne for the wealth and respect. All he wanted was Guru Ji's attention and love. He really hoped that his younger brother (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji will not come back. He wished to be the next Guru and everyone had to obey his instruction including (Guru) Arjan Dev ji. Baba Prithvi Chand had all this thoughts in his mind.

29.3 The Third Letter

The Sikh reached Lahore and told everything to (Guru) Arjan Dev ji and said "I do not know if Baba Prithvi Chand Ji had given the letter to Guru Ji, I do not know whether he

is telling the truth. I think I know him now. He did not even let me see Guru Ji and immediately asked me to go back.

Guru Arjan Dev Ji then wrote the 3rd shabad;

ਇਕ ਘੜੀ ਨ ਮਿਲਤੇ ; ਤਾ ਕਲਿਜੁਗੁ ਹੋਤਾ ॥ (੯੬-੧੯, ਮਾਝ, ਮਃ ੫)

When I could not be with You for just one moment, the Dark Age of Kali Yuga dawned for me.

ਹੁਣਿ ਕਦਿ ਮਿਲੀਐ ; ਪ੍ਰਿਅ ਤੁਧੁ ਭਗਵੰਤਾ ॥ (੯੬-੧੯, ਮਾਝ, ਮਃ ੫)

When will I meet You, O my Beloved Almighty?

ਮੋਹਿ ਰੈਣਿ ਨ ਵਿਹਾਵੈ , ਨੀਦ ਨ ਆਵੈ ; ਬਿਨੁ ਦੇਖੇ ਗੁਰ ਦਰਬਾਰੇ ਜੀਉ ॥੩॥ (੯੭-੧, ਮਾਝ, ਮਃ ੫)

I cannot endure the night, and sleep does not come, without the Sight of the Beloved Guru's Court. ||3||

ਹਉ ਘੋਲੀ , ਜੀਉ ਘੋਲਿ ਘੁਮਾਈ ; ਤਿਸੁ ਸਚੇ ਗੁਰ ਦਰਬਾਰੇ ਜੀਉ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ (੯੭-੧, ਮਾਝ, ਮਃ ੫)

I am a sacrifice; my soul is a sacrifice, to that True Court of the Beloved Guru. ||1||Pause||

Now (Guru) Arjan Dev ji sent the Sikh again and said “Go and meet Guru Ji personally when Guru Ji sits in the Sanggat, and do not give this letter to Baba Prithvi Chand. Do bandna for me and place your head on Guru Ji’s feet”

30. (GURU) ARJAN DEV JI FROM LAHORE³⁶

30.1 A Humble Prayer

(Guru) Arjan Dev Ji bowed his head while remembering Guru Ram Das ji and gave the letter to the Sikh messenger. (Guru) Arjan Dev ji focussed his concentration on Guru Ji's feet and bowed before Guru Ji and said "I have a great yearning for you Guru Ji, why have you not been merciful unto me? Dear Guru Ji, you are always merciful to the poor, dear bestower of blessings and giver of happiness; I don't feel like eating or drinking anything during the day and at night, I can't sleep. You have forsaken me because I am useless and without any abilities. I am always thirsty for your glimpse even if it is only for a split second.

Guru Ram Das Ji knew the yearnings and love of (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji. Guru Ji was appraising his youngest son on his ability to stay within the command (Hukam), obey undoubtfully the will as uttered by a Guru.

30.2 Reaching to Guru Ji

The Sikh with the letter from Lahore left with the thoughts of when he could meet Guru Ji and on the way to Amritsar he started planning on how to meet Guru Ji without having to go through Baba Prithvi Chand. The Sikh planned his arrival by stopping over at an adjacent village for the day and when it was 3 hours before dusk, the Sikh headed towards Amritsar. He preceded very carefully to avoid being seen by Baba Prithvi Chand. The Sikh headed towards the darbar where Guru Ji was seated. He folded his hands and bowed his head before Guru Ji. Then he gave his salutation to Guru Ji from the Sanggat of Lahore. Then he took out (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji's letter and placed it before Guru Ji and delivered the message and plea on behalf of (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji. After listening to the Sikh, Guru Ji took the letter and opened it.

As Guru Ram Das Ji was reading the letter, He acknowledged (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji's love and thirst for His glimpse. (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji does not have peace of mind in this yearning condition. He is so much in love and he is extremely sad due to the separation. After reading the letter and understanding (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji's pain of separation, Guru Ram Das ji's eyes had tears and He could not even speak. Guru Ji knew that from my three (3) sons, the understanding and characteristics required for Gursikhi was earned by (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji. He will be able to sit on the throne of Guruship. He will be able to tolerate what is intolerable. He does not have any ego. Now, I will not allow him to go anywhere else. The poetry in his letter is so beautiful. He will narrate Gurbani for the salvation of mankind. Although the separation was intolerable for him he still obeyed

³⁶ Sri Gur Pertap Suraj Granth (Raas 2, Ansu 20) – Churamani Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

my orders and stayed in Lahore. He did not go against my will. Guru Ram Das ji, then called upon Baba Budha Ji and said, “Dear Bhai Budha, Arjan my son has wrote a letter which is filled with utmost love in every word. He has delivered this letter through a Sikh, who I have thoroughly read through. He has written it in a beautiful poem. It has been a long time since he was assigned to go Lahore and I did not even ask for him. Now he is yearning to come back, please go to Lahore to bring (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji back with love.”

30.3 Baba Budha to Lahore

The next morning Baba Budha Ji started his journey to Lahore and stopped over for the night at a midway town. The next day, Baba Budha reached Lahore and proceeded to the Dharamsala where (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji stayed. Upon learning that Baba Budha Ji was coming, (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji accompanied by several Sikhs walked barefooted to receive Baba Budha Ji. (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji bowed before Baba Budha Ji in reverence and met each other with lots of love. Baba Budha then told (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji that he had come to fetch him and go along with him to Amritsar. These words were like nectar that (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji drank with his ears and his state of bliss was beyond description. It was like the tree in heaven (Kelapthar) is obtained at home. The night in Lahore was the most blissful one for (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji. The next day (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji met Bhai Sanhari Mal and the other relatives to wish them farewell. The Sikhs in Lahore were very sad that (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji was leaving Lahore and they gathered in a big group to get his glimpse. Looking at the Sikhs in Lahore (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji said, “May Almighty bless all of you with happiness. Please do come to the “pool of nectar” at Amritsar and enjoy Guru Ji’s glimpse and remain in bliss.” (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji together with Baba Buddha Ji and other Sikhs travelled continuously for nine (9) hours before reaching Amritsar.

30.4 Reunion of True Love

Upon arriving in Amritsar, (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji bowed his head and he was overjoyed to meet his beloved father. His eyes were full of tears, which then started to flow down his cheeks. As the group was approaching nearer to Guru Ji’s court, (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji saw Guru Ram Das Ji from a distance and fixed his eyes on Guru Ji. (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji walked slowly towards Guru Ji and he held Guru Ji’s feet tightly with both hands. With the utmost love for Guru Ji, tears were flowing down from his eyes, which washed Guru Ji’s feet. Recognising his son’s love, Guru Ram Das Ji held his arm and raised him before hugging him. Guru Ji then said, “Dear Son, you have retained the honour of the Sodhi clan and now you are ready to carry the responsibility of a Guru. You shall be the epitome of patience to serve the entire world.”

Guru Ji then asked a Sikh to bring the letter sent by (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji, which reached Guru Ji (the third letter). Guru Ji read through the letter again and said, “Listen Son, since you were assigned to Lahore, you have only sent one letter. Why didn’t you send more

letters since you were there for a long time? The recent letter, which I have received, has a stanza number of three (3)? If this is the first stanza then it should be denoted as one (1)?” Guru Ji asked this question in his court, which was filled with Sikhs and devotees. (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji with folded hand said humbly, “Dear Guru Ji, although it is not appropriate to speak before you as you are the knower of all hearts and there is nothing which is hidden from you, however obeying your orders I shall attempt to narrate the incident that took place. Actually there were two (2) letters delivered earlier to you containing the first two stanzas of this Hymn (Shabad). The third stanza has reached you therefore the number three is denoted as the third stanza.” Upon listening to his son, Guru Ji said, “The two (2) letters did not reach me. Through whom did you deliver the letters? Who received the letters and hid them from me? Are the letters lost on the way here? Fortunately the Sikh who delivered the letters was sitting close to Guru Ji, he folded his hands and said, “Dear Guru Ji, I am the one who delivered the letters and your eldest son (Baba Prithvi Chand) who received the letters from me. He took the letters from me and went to his house. I was left outside and then he came out to tell me to deliver a message to from Guru Ji that everything is fine here. He did not allow me to have your glimpse and ask me to leave immediately. Therefore I was not aware that the letters did not reach you.”

Upon listening to Baba Prithvi Chand’s false statements and Guru Ji wished to expose Baba Prithvi Chand’s true character. Guru Ji asked, “Where is Prithvi Chand now? Oh Sikhs, please call him here immediately.” One Sikh who was sitting in the court said, “Due to the hot season, he is taking a bath at the well.” Guru Ji said, “Go and call him without any delay.” The Sikh ran to the well where Baba Prithvi Chand was having a bath assisted by many servants. Some were pouring water on his body, some were rubbing soap and some were waiting with his clothes and shoes. Some were even standing there praising him. The Sikh approached Baba Prithvi Chand and said, “The True Guru has called upon you, please come immediately without any delay to the Guru’s darbar (court).” Upon listening to Guru Ji’s orders from the Sikh he immediately dressed himself and with enthusiasm he walked towards the Guru Ji’s darbar escorted by a group of Sikhs.

31. LETTERS OBTAINED FROM PRITHVI CHAND ³⁷

(Guru) Arjan Dev sat close to his father. Baba Prithvi Chand from a distance was gazing upon (Guru) Arjan with a lot of jealousy. Baba Prithvi Chand said to himself, "Arjan Dev is sitting too close to Guru Ji, he has no respect for Guru Ji. The way he is sitting seems as though he is claiming to be of the same level. He is trying to show off to the people and is seeking for respect." With so much of anger he came towards his father and bowed. At that time he sat far away from his father. Respecting Baba Prithvi Chand as his elder brother (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji with his folded hands greeted Prithvi Chand. Prithvi Chand accepted the greetings.

31.1 Guru Ji's Patience

Guru Ji looked at his elder son and said, "Hey learned Prithvi Chand listen, before this there were two letters sent by (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji, they were written in poetry form. A Sikh gave the letters to you. The letters must be with you. Why didn't you show it to me? Why did you hide them from me? Bring the letters to me now."

After listening to Guru Ji, Baba Prithvi Chand said harshly, "When the letters were sent, how should I know whom they were for? I was not aware. Why should I hide them? What can I do with those letters? I am not going to convert them into a kite and fly it." Guru Ram Das Ji then said calmly, "Try to remember, you must have kept them somewhere, find and bring the letters to me. You complete all your chores well, usually you never forget. Don't lie, you have those letters with you."

31.2 Baba Prithvi Chands Anger

Listening to Guru Ji said, Prithvi Chand became very angry, then in a loud tone he said, "Why should I hide the letters, they are not worth millions that I should hide them. Maybe the Sikh lost the letters, being afraid; he is putting the blame on me. Guru Ji, if you are so eager to read the poems, why don't you ask (Guru) Arjan Dev to rewrite, he is just sitting beside you. Well he does not have any other chores to do that will cause any hindrance.

Baba Prithvi Chand spoke very rudely. As the knower of all, Guru Ji whispered in the ears of the person who was sitting close to him, "Quickly go to Prithvi Chand's house now and tell his wife that Prithvi Chand has taken a bath he needs his pajamas as he wants to go and visit his father." Taking instructions from Guru Ji the Sikh proceeded to Prithvi Chands's house. Guru Ji repeated again, "Prithvi if the letters are of no concern to you then why don't you hand them over. Why are you so stubborn? Try to remember where you placed the letters. Guru Ji repeated this three times but Prithvi kept on

³⁷ Sri Gur Pertap Suraj Granth (Raas 2, Ansu 21) – Churamani Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

denying. With anger Prithvi spoke, "You think I am lying, I promise to you that I have not seen the letters." Baba Prithvi Chand was ignorant about the greatness of his father. Upon reaching Prithvi Chand's house the Sikh asked for the pajamas. Being unaware of the incident Prithvi Chand's wife Karmo instructed the servants to get the pajamas. The Sikh took the pajamas and hid it in his clothes. As soon as the Sikh reached the Darbar Sahib (Guru's Court) he gave Guru Ji the pajamas in which the letters were kept. Guru Ji then called Mahadev. There were many learned people in the darbar. Some were looking at Guru Ji's face and some were studying the expression of Prithvi Chand. Guru Ji said, "Try to understand what I am saying, hand over the letter. If you give now you will not lose anything, by refusing you will not gain anything. Sometime small issues cause big problems. Why are you doing this without pondering the consequences?" Baba Prithvi Chand still did not understand. He kept on defending his fraud by speaking arrogantly, "by keeping those letters with me which kingdom will I conquer, what can I attain from it?" After listening to him Guru Ji uttered, "you are not worth any praise, you are of no use".

31.3 Letters Obtained

Guru Ji then said, "Son, look at this pajamas carefully, do they belong to you". Prithvi Chand looked at them and said, "Yes they're mine, who brought them from my house?" Guru Ji then while looking at Baba Budha Ji and other Sikhs said, "Search the pajamas pockets. Now with your hands pull out the letters." Prithvi Chand tried to explain, "I did not put the letters there, where did they come from?" Guru Ji again asked him to pull out the letters from the pajamas pocket. Being embarrassed and fed up he put his hands into the pockets, there were a lot of papers. He took all the papers out and handed them over to Guru Ji. Seeing the two letter the Sanggat was very surprised. Holding the letters in his hand Guru Ji said, "The elder is very stubborn and useless. I disown you and your children. You have embarrassed yourself."

Listening to Guru Ji, Baba Budha Ji said, "Look at him, he dares to speak lies before his father, he never knew the greatness of his father and attempted to hide these letters. He never had faith in his father instead always thought himself to be of the same level as the Guru." The Sanggat became very surprised. "Why did he do it?" When Baba Prithvi Chand realized that every one knew his lie, he felt embarrassed and never uttered a single word. He sat quietly with his head down and tolerated everybody's comment.

It was known to all that (Guru) Arjan was the real diamond and Baba Prithvi Chand the false one. Guru Ram Das Ji then took both the letters and read them with lots of love. The letter was full of love and the poem was worded very beautifully. Reading the letters Guru Ji was very happy. Guru Ji handed over the letter to Baba Budha Ji and told him, "read these letters and see how perfectly they are written." Baba Budha Ji read the letters to all. After listening to the letters everyone was in so much bliss and said, "Dhan Dhan (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji". Baba Prithvi Chand became unhappy listening to the praises, but he

could not do anything. He wanted the Guruship throne through evil means but never served his father selflessly as a Sikh. Being arrogant he never listened to his father. He was very intelligent in carrying out the worldly duties but to attain the Guruship he did not have any good qualities.

31.4 Selection of the Fifth Guru

Guru Ji said to Baba Budha Ji, "You are the beloved of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, you have also served Guru Angad Dev Ji and Guru Amar Das Ji. Has (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji reached the level of tolerating the intolerable. If you feel right, after me may I give the Guruship to (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji. There is nobody like him. I want to do this with your agreement, tell me truthfully what you think." Listening to this Baba Budha Ji said loudly, "I have seen all the qualities of a Guru in (Guru) Arjan Dev Ji, he is of that level. Who can be a greater servant (sewak) than him, who lives in your will without an iota of doubt? For two years he suffered so much pain being away from you, now he has come with love to have your darshan.

32. (GURU) ARJAN DEV BECAME GURU ³⁸

Upon listening to Baba Budha Ji's agreement Guru Ram Das Ji asked for a coconut and five-paisa coin. All the Sikhs were called to the Darbar Sahib (Guru's Court) and crowds were surrounding Guru Ji from all directions. Guru Ram Das Ji stood up and while holding the coconut and five paisa coin, He walked around Guru Arjan Dev Ji three (3) times and bowed till His forehead touched Guru Arjan Dev Ji's feet. Then with Guru Ram Das Ji's permission, Baba Budha Ji got up and inaugurated Guru Arjan Dev Ji as the Fifth Guru Nanak by placing the tilak (mark made of sandal wood) on Guru Arjan Dev Ji's forehead.

Guru Ram Das Ji then made an announcement, "Dear Sikhs, you are my most beloved, Guru Arjan Dev Ji has been inaugurated as the Fifth Guru. He is the saviour of both the worlds and the liberator from all pains. He will accomplish great tasks for the benefit of the entire world without any discrimination of caste and creed. Raise everyone and prostrate before him." Upon listening to Guru Ram Das Ji everyone who was present came forward with folded hands and prostrated before Guru Arjan Dev Ji.

Mata Bhani Ji was very delighted to hear that her youngest son has been inaugurated as the Fifth Guru.

32.1 Composing the Fourth Shabad

Guru Ram Das Ji then said to Guru Arjan Dev Ji, "Please compose the fourth stanza of the shabad in order to complete the shabad, by reading which millions shall fill their lives with happiness." Baba Budha Ji with folded hands said, "It is very appropriate to complete the shabad for benefit of all." Guru Arjan Dev Ji then composed the fourth pauri of the shabad.

Guru Ram Das Ji was very pleased and said, "You have instantly composed perfectly and during your Guruship, you will compose enormous hymns which will be the one of the greatest composition ever composed. You have composed in utmost humbleness therefore whosoever read and contemplates shall get rid of his/her ego and evel desires."

Guru Arjan Dev Ji with folded hands, in utmost humbleness bowed before Guru Ram Das Ji and said, "You are the cause of all causes and the one who does everything. I am always in your command." As soon as the inauguration ceremony was over everyone bowed before Guru Arjan Dev Ji and started to leave the Darbar Sahib.

³⁸ Sri Gur Pertap Suraj Granth (Raas 2, Ansu 22) – Churamani Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

32.2 Baba Prithvi Chand's Anger

Baba Prithi Chand saw Baba Budha Ji and angrily said "Listen Budhe! I know you now. All these while I have highly respected you knowing you as great as Guru Nanak but now I have no respect for you at all. Although you knew very well that I was the one who has served my father by assisting him all this time and more over I am the eldest son who deserves to be the next Guru but you never considered these facts. You are already old therefore your intellect strength has weakened. My father was just a Guru for the namesake but I was the one who was managing everything. Without due consideration you stood quickly and placed the tilak of Guruship on my younger brother's forehead. What will you do when I proclaim myself as the next Guru? Where will your honour be then? Never before has a younger son replaced the father in the presence of the elder son. As a wise man, it was your duty to advise my father when he was angry with me. It was my birthright to be inaugurated as the next Guru. Now I have understood your actions. I will proclaim my right."

Upon listening to Baba Prithvi Chand's unpleasant words, Baba Budha Ji said, "Why are you angry? How will Guru Ji select you as the Guru without being pleased with you? If you were qualified, definitely Guru Ji would have assessed you accordingly. Guruship will only be blessed to the most humble one and no one can proclaim the Guruship by claiming it legally. You have failed to obey your father's orders therefore you were not selected as the next Guru. You are very fortunate to be the son of a Guru. Please abandon your anger and you shall obtain all happiness. Do not question your father's decision as he is the owner of the entire universe." Baba Budha Ji did not say anything after that.

Baba Prithvi Chand could not control his anger; he went to Guru Ram Das Ji and said, "What have you done? You have given my rightful Guruship to the youngest. No one has done such a thing before. You have done injustice to me. What have I done wrong? You shall see now what I will do to obtain the Guruship forcefully. I have a lot of wealth with me now and I shall use this wealth to gain the support of the present rulers. Now I will torture both of you (Guru Ram Das Ji & Guru Arjan Dev Ji). Now you shall have no choice but to inaugurate me as the Guru." In this manner Baba Prithvi Chand spoke very rudely to his father. In reply Guru Ram Das Ji uttered the following shabad;

ਸਾਰੰਗ , ਮਹਲਾ ੪ ; ਘਰੁ ੩ , ਦੁਪਦਾ (1200-10)

Saarang, Fourth Mahl, Third House, Du-Padas:

ੴ ; ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥ (1200-10)

One Universal Creator God. By The Grace Of The True Guru:

ਕਾਹੇ ਪੂਤ ; ਝਗਰਤਹੁ ਸੰਗਿ ਬਾਪ ॥ (1200-11, ਸਾਰੰਗ, ਮ: 4)

O son, why do you argue with your father?

ਜਿਨ ਕੇ ਜਣੇ , ਬਡੀਰੇ ਤੁਮਹਉ ; ਤਿਨ ਸਿਉ ਝਗਰਤ , ਪਾਪ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ (1200-11, ਸਾਰੰਗ, ਮ: 4)

It is a sin to argue with the one who fathered you and raised you. ||1||Pause||

ਜਿਸੁ ਧਨ ਕਾ ਤੁਮ ਗਰਬੁ ਕਰਤਹਉ ; ਸੋ ਧਨੁ ਕਿਸਹਿ ਨ ਆਪ ॥ (1200-12, ਸਾਰੰਗ, ਮਃ 4)

That wealth, which you are so proud of - that wealth does not belong to anyone.

ਖਿਨ ਮਹਿ ਛੋਡਿ ਜਾਇ ਬਿਖਿਆ ਰਸੁ ; ਤਉ ਲਾਗੈ ਪਛੁਤਾਪ ॥੧॥ (1200-12, ਸਾਰੰਗ, ਮਃ 4)

In an instant, you shall have to leave behind all your corrupt pleasures; you shall be left to regret and repent. ||1||

ਜੋ ਤੁਮਰੇ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਹੋਤੇ ਸੁਆਮੀ ; ਹਰਿ ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਜਾਪਹੁ ਜਾਪ ॥ (1200-13, ਸਾਰੰਗ, ਮਃ 4)

He is God, your Lord and Master - chant the Chant of that Almighty.

ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ਕਰਤ ਨਾਨਕ ਜਨ ਤੁਮ ਕਉ ; ਜਉ ਸੁਨਹੁ , ਤਉ ਜਾਇ ਸੰਤਾਪ ॥੨॥੧॥੭॥ (1200-13, ਸਾਰੰਗ, ਮਃ 4)

Servant Nanak spreads the Teachings; if you listen to it, you shall be rid of your pain.

||2||1||7||

Guru Ji said, "Dear Son, listen, do not be proud of worldly wealth. You shall regret your actions in the end. You are not ashamed to argue with you father. Remember Waheguru at all times as only this will help remove all pains and the disease of greed will never come again.

Baba Prithvi Chand became very irritated and said in a loud voice, "After taking the rightful Guruship from me and giving it my younger brother and now you are telling me to sit quietly and recite Waheguru after dishonouring me before everyone. Now you want me to become the servant of my younger brother." Upon listening to Baba Prithvi Chand, Guru Ji knew that his elder son will not refrain himself from the envy. Guru Ji uttered another Shabad;

ਸੂਹੀ , ਮਹਲਾ ੪ ॥ (733-12)

Suhi, Fourth Mahl:

ਤਿਨੀ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਆਰਾਧਿਆ ; ਜਿਨ ਕਉ ਧੁਰਿ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਲਿਖਤੁ ਲਿਲਾਰਾ ॥ (733-13, ਸੂਹੀ, ਮਃ 4)

They alone worship and adore the Almighty deep within, who are blessed with such pre-ordained destiny from the very beginning of time.

ਤਿਨ ਕੀ ਬਖੀਲੀ ਕੋਈ ਕਿਆ ਕਰੇ ; ਜਿਨ ਕਾ ਅੰਗੁ ਕਰੇ ਮੇਰਾ ਹਰਿ ਕਰਤਾਰਾ ॥੧॥ (733-13, ਸੂਹੀ, ਮਃ 4)

What can anyone do to undermine them? My Creator Almighty is on their side. ||1||

ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਧਿਆਇ ਮਨ ਮੇਰੇ , ਮਨ ਧਿਆਇ ਹਰਿ ;

ਜਨਮ ਜਨਮ ਕੇ ਸਭਿ ਦੂਖ ਨਿਵਾਰਣਹਾਰਾ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ (733-14, ਸੂਹੀ, ਮਃ 4)

So meditate on the Almighty, Har, Har, O my mind. Meditate on the Almighty, O mind; He is the Eliminator of all the pains of reincarnation. ||1||Pause||

ਪੁਰਿ ਭਗਤ ਜਨਾ ਕਉ ਬਖਸਿਆ ; ਹਰਿ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਭਗਤਿ ਭੰਡਾਰਾ ॥ (733-15, ਸੁਹੀ, ਮਃ 4)

In the very beginning, the Almighty blessed His devotees with the Ambrosial Nectar, the treasure of devotion.

ਮੂਰਖੁ ਹੋਵੈ , ਸੁ ਉਨ ਕੀ ਰੀਸ ਕਰੇ ; ਤਿਸੁ ਹਲਤਿ ਪਲਤਿ ਮੁਹੁ ਕਾਰਾ ॥੨॥ (733-16, ਸੁਹੀ, ਮਃ 4)

Anyone who tries to compete with them is a fool; his face shall be blackened here and hereafter. ||2||

ਸੇ ਭਗਤ , ਸੇ ਸੇਵਕਾ ; ਜਿਨਾ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਪਿਆਰਾ ॥ (733-16, ਸੁਹੀ, ਮਃ 4)

They alone are devotees, and they alone are selfless servants, who love the Almighty's Name.

ਤਿਨ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਤੇ ਹਰਿ ਪਾਈਐ ; ਸਿਰਿ ਨਿੰਦਕ ਕੈ ਪਵੈ ਛਾਰਾ ॥੩॥ (733-17, ਸੁਹੀ, ਮਃ 4)

By their selfless service, they find the Almighty, while ashes fall on the heads of the slanderers. ||3||

ਜਿਸੁ ਘਰਿ ਵਿਰਤੀ , ਸੋਈ ਜਾਣੈ ; ਜਗਤ ਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਪੂਛਿ , ਕਰਹੁ ਬੀਚਾਰਾ ॥ (733-17, ਸੁਹੀ, ਮਃ 4)

He alone knows this, who experiences it within the home of his own self. Ask Guru Nanak, the Guru of the world, and reflect upon it.

ਚਹੁ ਪੀੜੀ ਆਇ ਜੁਗਾਇ , ਬਖੀਲੀ ਕਿਨੈ ਨ ਪਾਇਓ ; ਹਰਿ ਸੇਵਕ ਭਾਇ ਨਿਸਤਾਰਾ ॥੪॥੨॥੯॥ (733-18, ਸੁਹੀ, ਮਃ 4)

Throughout the four generations of the Gurus, from the beginning of time and throughout the ages, no one has ever found the Almighty by back-biting and undermining. Only by serving the Almighty with love, is one emancipated. ||4||2||9||

Guru Ji uttered sermons that the ones who are blessed from the beginning are able to concentrate on Almighty's Name. Almighty himself who is the ultimate creator of the entire universe always supports Guru Arjan Dev Ji. Who can ever harm such person who is protected by Almighty himself? The ones are fools who try to alter the reality and try to imitate the great souls. Such ones' faces will be blackened in two worlds. Bhagat and servant are those who love Almighty's Name, slanderers shall gain nothing. Only dust shall rest on the head of such ones. The ones who are focussed in Almighty only those know the greatness of a True Guru (Satguru). Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Guru Angad Ji and Guru Amar Das Ji the root of happiness. The Guruship of Guru Arjan Dev Ji shall prevail forever and shall never come to your hands as your intellect is overpowered by your ego. You have acknowledged yourself as the greatest and the Guru as incapable. You have lied by hiding the letters and spoken lies, even after numerous reminders. Although I knew the truth, I still gave you the opportunity to correct yourself but instead of correcting yourself you have spoken as though the Guru is incapable of making the decision. Without humbleness one can never perform service (sewa) as the root of selfless sewa is undoubtful faith. Love is like a grape fruit, which is, strengthened by peel of selfless sewa.

33. SRI GURU RAM DAS JI LEAVING FOR GOINDWAL ³⁹

33.1 Baba Prithvi Chands Rudeness

Hearing Guru Ji's words, Baba Prithvi Chand became very egoistic and full of anger. He spoke very rudely to Guru Ji. He said "What a way to value someone's sewa, he Guru Arjan Dev who stayed in Lahore for 2 years and did not think of his father or either he thought of home. He did not even want to find out or care about the wealth and offerings that comes and goes. All the responsibilities, he doesn't know anything. He happily stayed there, what has he done there? I am the one who did everything. Thousands of Sanggat comes and goes. Some give offerings and some ask for things. I kept everyone happy. I took care of the welfare of the representatives (masands) assigned to various regions, I did the free kitchen service (langgar sewa). No one bothered to know about all the work and I am the one who took care of everything."

He spoke very rudely to Guru Ji, his words was very hurting. Even the composer of Suraj Perakash Granth, Bhai Santokh Singh Ji could not write such words used by Baba Prithvi Chand. The blissful Guru Ram Das Ji did not curse his son due to his spiritual state. Guru Ji just told him "wake up and please do not stay here and do not come in front of me anymore, you and your mind are attached only to wealth". Baba Prithvi Chand hearing this said "if you are leaving me then you also should not come in front of me anymore, you have left me and I leave you too. I will seek for revenge and I may find peace then. I will create trouble for both of you, father and son".

With so much of stupidity and full of emotion Baba Prithvi Chand left that place. While going off Baba Prithvi Chand still talked loudly and said things to Guru Ji.

33.2 Guru Ji Leaves to Goindwal Sahib

Guru Ji then said, "My arguments with him are useless and all this may create more misunderstandings, this evil minded person will not stop." The days for Guru Ji to merge with His formless form (Jothi-Jot) had come. Guru Ji said, "Just as Guru Amar Das Ji's words (bachan), as how it was described it happened. If Baba Prithvi Chand is not on my side then I should just leave, as he is going to create a lot of problems, and there would be no solution here. I should go to Goindwal, Guru Amar Das Ji's son Baba Mohan and Mohri Ji are there and they are very wise. They will give support to Guru Arjan Dev Ji".

Guru Ji then called his wife Mata Bhani Ji and told everything. Said Guru Ji "let's go to Goindwal, lets go and meet your family and Baba Buddha Ji. Get prepared we shall leave in the morning." The next morning Guru Ji asked Mata Bhani Ji and Guru Arjan Dev ji to leave first and send some Sikhs with them. After some time Guru Ji and some Sikhs left

³⁹ Sri Gur Pertap Suraj Granth (Raas 2, Ansu 23) – Churamani Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

Amritsar, leaving Baba Prithvi Chand Ji behind. No one informed Baba Prithvi Chand about anything.

33.3 In Goindwal Sahib

Guru Arjan Dev ji was presented the throne in the month of Bhadro Sudhi Ekam. Tilak was put on Guru Ji's forehead. When Baba Mohri Ji got to know that Guru Ram Das ji is in Goindwal, he came to meet Guru Ji and when he met Guru Ji both were very happy to meet each other. Later Baba Mohri Ji invited Guru Ji to his house; Guru Ji then met the whole family. Meeting the family Mata Bhani Ji was sad thinking of Guru Ram Das Ji who was going to leave His physical form soon and the arguments created by Baba Prithvi Chand.

Mata Bhani Ji said, "The words uttered by Guru Amar Das Ji is turning into reality, it was my request for the Guruship to remain in the family. But there are arguments within the family disputing the decision of the Guru by my the elder son." Mata Bhani Ji said in a very sad voice to her relatives and all the ladies gave her encouragement and listened to her.

Baba Mohan Ji came to Guru Ji followed by a lot of other Sikhs, all came and sat next to Guru Ji. Baba Buddha was also there. All of them heard the news about the arguments created by Baba Prithvi Chand. Guru Ji said, "Baba Prithvi Chand is silly and fighting with all, we have come here and now Guru Arjan Dev Ji will sit on my throne and I would like to merge into my formless form."

Hearing this both Baba Mohan Ji and Baba Mohri became very sad and said, "He is not wise, we have noticed earlier as how much he was attached to wealth."

Everyone there started talking about the incident. Everyone then went back home and all had their meal (langgar) and went to bed. Guru Ji stayed in Lahore for quite some time now therefore all was very happy meeting Guru Ji after long time. All the elders in the family gave their blessings to Guru Arjan Dev Ji.

33.4 Guru Ram Das Ji's Sermons

Baba Buddha Ji and some Sikhs talked to Guru Ji all night long, no one slept, and all knew Guru Ji was going to merge in his formless form. After midnight, Guru Ji then called Bibi Bhani Ji and all other Sikhs and all sat next to Guru Ji.

Guru Ji then took his bath in the Baoli Sahib and then the singing Almighty's praises (Kirten) started by Asa Dhi Vaar and other shabads. All sat in the true congregation (sadh Sangat) and enjoyed the melodies and inspiring kirtan while Guru Ji sat in semadhi (meditation).

All the other people came after hearing about Guru Ji; Asa Dhi Vaar was completed by dawn. Guru Ji folded his hands bowed and said "My dear Sikhs, listen, you are all the

beloved Sikhs of Guru Nanak, do remember Waheguru at all times and get liberated, my days have arrived and I shall merge into my formless form. Guru Nanak Dev ji, Guru Angad Dev Ji, Guru Amar Das Ji and the fourth-physical form was mine. The fifth Guru, is Guru Arjan Dev Ji, think of this five Gurus as one form although the physical form changes. The Guru will always be with you in this world as well as the next world and He will carry the weight of all. Whoever thinks of harming a Guru will be entangled in pains throughout the entire life and after.”

Then Guru Ji spoke to Baba Mohan and Baba Mohri Ji, “You are the most wise ones in understanding the principals of the Guru and have always obeyed your father’s orders. Think of Guru Arjan Dev ji as me. Give him the support and be with him. Remember him always and do not forget him.” Hearing this Baba Mohri Ji hold Guru Arjan Dev Ji’s hand and put on his head and said “When Guru Amar Das Ji ordered me, I have obeyed all. You are Guru Ram Das Ji, the most respected and now whoever that you place on the throne to take care of the world, we shall all praise him just as how we all have praised you, I have this faith”

Guru Ram Das Ji said “Dear Mohri Ji , you are great.” Guru Ji then looked at Guru Arjan Dev ji and said “The Pool of Nectar (Amrit Sarovar) is my body, please continue and complete the construction full heartedly, this sarovar will become very famous in the world and this sarovar will liberate and visitors will be blessed with all happiness without any discrimination. This was the advice given to me by Guru Amar Das Ji and this advice is the cause of happiness for all of us. Construct steps in the pool of nectar at all four sides and keep it clean at all times. The pool should be clean so that it may look like a mirror from the sky. This is how the house of Almighty should look like. Keep this advice in your mind and please give priority to the construction of this place” Guru Arjan Dev ji hearing this folded his hands “the doer and all is within your command, I will always make sure and be involved in the construction, till my last breath I shall perform this service, with your blessing I shall keep serving the world, please give me the support and always bless me.”

Guru Ram Das Ji was so happy to hear this and said “You will be very suitable for all this service (sewa).” After saying this Guru Ji prepared himself to merge with his formless form.

34. MERGING OF GURU RAM DAS JI⁴⁰

34.1 Mata Bhani Ji

Knowing her husband, Guru Ram Das Ji's preparation to merge with his formless form, Mata Bhani Ji with folded hands came to Guru Ji and said humbly, "Dear donor of happiness and capable of all, only those with your blessings are able to know you. You are protector in this world and next world as well. You are able to perform as you wish, please allow me to follow you as I won't be able to live without you in this world. This world is filled with attachment, envy, sadness and happiness. Our elder son is creating arguments and I am very sad. I have lived in bliss in your company for my entire life." Upon listening to his wife, Guru Ji said, "Dear Praiseful and fortunate one, there is no other woman as great as you. Your father, Guru Amar Das Ji was very pleased with your selfless sewa (service), I as your husband has always been very pleased with you and now your wise son, Guru Arjan Dev Ji who has proved to be the most qualified person is the next Guru. Your birth is fruitful and you have completed all the tasks but you have to live to complete your predetermined breaths in accordance to your fate (Pralbad). Then you shall merge into my form, the attachments, envy, sadness and happiness shall not affect you at all."

34.2 Merging into Formless Form

Guru Ji then looked at Baba Budha Ji, Bhai Gurdas Ji and Guru Arjan Dev Ji and lay down on a bed and covered his body with a white blanket. While being observed by everyone around Him, He merged into His formless form. The sky was enlightened and the entire world was applauding "Great Guru Ram Das Ji."

Everyone rushed to have the glimpse of Guru Ram Das Ji while praising Guru Ji. The wise Sikhs were contemplating Guru Ji's virtues and remembering Guru Ji's sermons not to be sad upon his merger in his formless form. Guru Ji told everyone to sing Almighty's Praises and recite Almighty's Name.

34.3 The Final Rites

Mata Bhani Ji was sitting next to Guru Ji's body together with her brothers, Baba Mohan Ji and Baba Mohri Ji. Baba Budha Ji then stood up and said, "Let us now perform the greatest service by performing the last rites of Guru Ji's body. We need to prepare all the materials to cremate Guru Ji's body at the bank of Bias River where Guru Amar Das Ji's body was cremated." Upon listening to Baba Mohri Ji stood up and took along a group of Sikhs with him to organise the necessary task.

⁴⁰ Sri Gur Pertap Suraj Granth (Raas 2, Ansu 24) – Churamani Kavi Santokh Singh Ji

Guru Ji's body was then bathed by Baba Mohri Ji, Baba Budha Ji and Guru Arjan Dev Ji with the assistance of some Sikhs. Guru Ram Das Ji's hair was washed with yogurt and the body was cleaned with clean water. New clothes were prepared for Guru Ji, which were put on his body carefully. A beautifully decorated platform was brought to carry Guru Ji's body, which was filled with flowers. Guru Ji's body was carried and placed on the platform and a beautiful blanket was placed on Guru Ji's body. Sikhs were showering flowers on Guru Ji's body while uttering "Great Great Greatest Guru Ram Das Ji." Guru Arjan Dev Ji carried the platform from the front and the other prominent Sikhs carried from all the other three sides. All the way towards the cremation place flowers were being presented to Guru Ram Das Ji. Chhor was also being swung above Guru Ji's body. Almighty's praises were being sung.

Upon arrival at the cremation place of Guru Amar Das Ji at the bank of River Bias, everyone's eyes were filled with tears. A pyre of sandalwood was prepared and Guru Ji's body was respectfully placed on the pyre and Guru Arjan Dev Ji lighted the pyre.

Baba Budha Ji reminded everyone not to mourn as Guru Ji ordered not to cry and remember Almighty's praises by which salvation is obtained. Everyone was talking about Guru Ram Das Ji, that His physical form was totally for the benefit of the world just like the clouds which shower rain without any condition nor reason and after showering the rain the clouds disappear. In the same manner Guru Ji served His entire life selflessly for others. On the third day Guru Ji's remains were collected and scattered them in the River Bias.

Dhan Dhan Guru Ram Das Ji

35. SUMMARY

FATHER	Baba Hardas Ji
MOTHER	Mata Dya Kaur Ji (also known as Mata Khem Kaur Ji)
GRANDFATHER	Baba Thakur Das
GRANDMOTHER	Mata Karmo Ji (Mata Jaswanti Ji)
GREAT GRANDFATHER	Baba Gurdial Sodhi
FATHER-IN-LAW	Sri Guru Amar Das Ji
MOTHER-IN-LAW	Mata Ramo Ji
LINEAGE	Sodhi of Khatri caste
DATE OF BIRTH	Thursday, Ketak Vadi 2, 1591(B) – 2 nd November 1534 A.D
PLACE OF BIRTH	Chuna Mandi, Lahore
WEDDING	Thursday, 5 th Magar 1602 Bikermi (19 th January 1545A.D.) at Goindwal Sahib
MEHAL (WIFE)	Mata Bhani Ji Born : Sunday, Jeth 13, 1591 (March 1534 A.D.) Jothi Joth : Chet 23, 1655 (April 1598 A.D.) Total Age : 64 years 1 month
CHILDREN	Baba Prithi Chand Ji (1558), Baba Mahadev Ji (1561), Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji (1563)
GURUSHIP	29 th September 1574 A.D. at Goindwaal Sahib (3 days before Guru Amardas Ji, Jothi Joth) Bhadron Sudhi 13, 1631 (Bikermi)
AGE AT GURUSHIP	40 Years 1 month 26 days
TOTAL AGE	47 years 16 day
TIME AT GUR GADHI	6 years 11 months 20 days
LIFE SPAN	
REGIMES	Emperor Akbar (1542-1605 A.D.)
CONTRIBUTION IN GURBANI	679 compositions in 29 different rags
JOTHI-JOT DAY	Bhadron Sudhi 3, 1638 (19 th September 1581)
JOTHI JOT PLACE	Goindwal Sahib

ESTABLISHMENT OF GURDWARAS

Parkash Asthan Sri Guru Ram Das Ji – Located in Chuna Mandi, Lahore. Guru Ram Das was born in this place.

Gudwara Diwan Khana- This Gurdwara is situated near Chuni Mandi chowk, close to the birth place of Guru Ram Das ji. The Guru's ancestors belonged to Lahore. At the time of the marriage of one of the sons his elder brother, Sahari Mal, the Guru asked his son (Guru) Arjan Dev to attend the ceremony, as he himself was unable to attend the same. Guru Arjan Dev was instructed to stay there till he was not called back. When he was not summoned for a long time, (Guru) Arjan Dev wrote three letters to Guru-father expressing his desire for 'Guru's glance'. Two of the letters were held back by Prithi Chand but the third reached the Guru, where in mention of the two previous letters was made. Guru Ram Das called his son Arjan Dev, back to Amritsar.

Dharamsala Sri Guru Ram Das Ji :- This place, related to the lifetime of Guru Ram Das Ji, is situated in Gurdwara Diwan Khana, Chuni Mandi. The ancestors of Guru Ram Das transacted their trade at this place. Guru Arjan Dev stayed here when he came to attend the marriage of his cousin, Bhai Sahari Mal's son. This dharamashala was attached to Gurdwara Diwan Khanna, later on.

Gurdwara Bibi Bhani da Khuh - It is a holy water well in the name of Bibi Bhani Ji the daughter of Guru Amar Das and the wife of Guru Ram Das (fourth guru of the Sikhs) and the mother of Guru Arjan Dev. This religio-historic well was dug by Guru Arjan Dev Ji in memory of his mother at the place where Mata Bibi Bhani Ji used to serve food, water, and medicine to needy and visiting pilgrims.

Guriai Asthan Guru Ram Das- marks the spot where Guru Ram Das was anointed Guru. A brass plate donated by a descendant of Guru Amar Das in 1920 has etched on it the scene of the ceremony in which Bhai Gurdas is holding a whisk over the head of Guru Ram Das, Baba Buddha is putting the saffron mark on his forehead and Guru Amar Das is standing behind Baba Buddha, while Baba Mohari is touching the feet of Guru Ram Das and Baba Mohan is sitting in meditation on a deerskin. Next to them are figures of 22 prominent Sikhs on whom Guru Amar Das is said to have bestowed manjis, the insignia of appointment as preachers in their respective districts.

Khuh Guru Ram Das Ji and Jyoti Jot Asthan Bhai Gurdas Ji- is the sign for a separate Gurdwara, to the west of Sri Chubara Sahib, commemorating Bhai Gurdas, who passed away here, and Guru Ram Das, the khuh or well sunk by whom is still preserved in the compound in front.

Jyoti Jot Asthan Patshahi 3 & 4- a small marbled pavilion next to Guriai Asthan, was built on the site of the room in which Guru Amar Das merged into his formless form on 1st

**ESTABLISHMENT OF
GURDWARAS (Cont'd)**

October 1574. Guru Ram Das also merged into his formless form in that room exactly 6 year 11 months and 18 days later.

36. VARAN BHAI GURDASS

Bhai Gurdass Ji uttered four Pauri's in Vaar 24, depicting the principals and events from Guru Ram Das Ji's life.

36.1 Guru Ram Das Ji (Vaar 24, Pauri 14)

ਰਾਗ ਦੋਖ ਨਿਰਦੋਖੁ ਹੈ ਰਾਜੁ ਜੋਗ ਵਰਤੈ ਵਰਤਾਰਾ॥
 ਮਨਸਾ ਵਾਚਾ ਕਰਮਣਾ ਮਰਮੁ ਨ ਜਾਪੈ ਅਪਰ ਅਪਾਰਾ॥
 ਦਾਤਾ ਭੁਗਤਾ ਦੈਆ ਦਾਨਿ ਦੇਵਸਥਲੁ ਸਤਿਸੰਗੁ ਉਧਾਰਾ॥
 ਸਹਜ ਸਮਾਧਿ ਅਗਾਧਿ ਬੋਧਿ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਸਚਾ ਸਵਾਰਣਹਾਰਾ॥
 ਗੁਰੁ ਅਮਰਹੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਰਾਮਦਾਸੁ ਜੋਤੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਜਗਾਇ ਜੁਹਾਰਾ॥
 ਸਬਦ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਗੁਰ ਸਿਖੁ ਹੋਇ ਅਨਹਦ ਬਾਣੀ ਨਿਝਰਧਾਰਾ॥
 ਤਖਤੁ ਬਖਤੁ ਪਰਗਟੁ ਪਾਹਾਰਾ ॥੧੪॥

raag dokh niradokhu hai raaju jog varatai varataaraa.

manasaa vaachaa karamanaa maramu n jaapai apar apaaraa.

daataa bhugataa daiaa daani dayvasadalu satisangu udhaaraa.

sahaj samaadhi agaadhi bodhi satiguru sachaa savaaranahaaraa.

guru amarahu guru raamadaasu jotee joti jagaai juhaaraa.

sabad surati gur sikhu hoi anahad baanee nijhar dhaaraa.

takhatu bakhatu paragatu paahaaraa ॥14॥

PAURI 14 (Guru Ram Das)

Away from attachment and jealousies he has adopted rajyoga (The supreme yoga).

None can know the mystery of his mind, speech and actions.

He is bestower (unattached) enjoyer, and he has created holy congregation which is equal to the abode of gods.

He remains absorbed in innate poise; the master of unfathomable intellect, and being the true Guru he sets every one's disordered life in order.

From the flame of Guru Amar Das the flame of Guru Ram Das has been lighted. I salute him.

Becoming disciple of Gum and merging consciousness into, word he has quaffed the eternally flowing current of the unstruck melody. Sitting on the throne of Guru, he has manifested in the world.

36.2 Guru Ram Das Ji (Vaar 24, Pauri 15)

ਪੀਉ ਦਾਦੇ ਜੇਵੇਹਾ ਪੜਦਾਦੇ ਪਰਵਾਨੁ ਪੜੋਤਾ॥
 ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਜਾਗਿ ਜਗਾਇਦਾ ਕਲਿਜੁਗ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਕੋੜ ਸੋਤਾ॥
 ਦੀਨ ਦੁਨੀ ਦਾ ਥੰਮ੍ਹ ਹੁਇ ਭਾਰੁ ਅਥਰਬਣ ਥੰਮ੍ਹਿ ਖਲੋਤਾ॥
 ਭਉਜਲੁ ਭਉ ਨ ਵਿਆਪਈ ਗੁਰ ਬੋਹਿਬ ਚੜਿ ਖਾਇ ਨ ਗੋਤਾ॥
 ਅਵਗੁਣ ਲੈ ਗੁਣ ਵਿਕਣੈ ਗੁਰ ਹਟ ਨਾਲੈ ਵਣਜ ਸਓਤਾ॥
 ਮਿਲਿਆ ਮੂਲਿ ਨ ਵਿਛੁੜੈ ਰਤਨ ਪਦਾਰਥ ਹਾਰੁ ਪਰੋਤਾ॥
 ਮੈਲਾ ਕਦੇ ਨ ਹੋਵਈ ਗੁਰ ਸਰਵਰਿ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਜਲ ਧੋਤਾ॥
 ਬਾਬਾਨੈ ਕੁਲਿ ਕਵਲੁ ਅਛੋਤਾ ॥੧੫॥

peeo daaday jayvayhaa parhadaaday paravaanu parhotaa.

guramati jaagi jagaaidaa kalijug andari kaurhaa sotaa.

deen dunee daa danmu hui bhaaru adaraban danmhi khalotaa.

bhaujalu bhau n viaapae gur bohid charhi khaai n gotaa.

avagun/ai gun vikanai gur hat naalai vanaj saaotaa.

miliaa mooli n vichhurhai ratan padaarad haaru parotaa.

mailaa kaday n hovaee gur saravari niramal jal dhotaa.

baabanai kuli kavalu achhotaa ॥15॥

Grand father Guru Nanak, the grand son (Guru Ram Das) has become great Like (spiritual) father Guru AmarDas, grand father Guru Angad and accepted (by Sanggat).

Having been awakened by Guru's instruction, he in turn awakens the dark age (Kaliyug) from deep slumber.

For dharma and the world he stands like a supporting pillar.

Whosoever has mounted the vessel of the Guru, is not scared of the world world ocean; and he is not to drown in it

Here virtues are sold for evils - such is the profitable shop of the Guru.

Once visited none gets separated from him who has put on the garland of the pearls of virtues.

Washed himself in the pure water of the tank of the Guru's love, one never gets soiled again.

In the family of great grand father (Guru Nanak) he (Guru Ram Das) stands like a detached lotus.

36.3 Guru Ram Das Ji (Vaar 24, Pauri 16)

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਮੇਲਾ ਸਚ ਦਾ ਸਚਿ ਮਿਲੈ ਸਚਿਆਰ ਸੰਜੋਗੀ॥
 ਘਰਬਾਰੀ ਪਰਵਾਰ ਵਿਚਿ ਭੋਗ ਭੁਗਤਿ ਰਾਜੇ ਰਸੁ ਭੋਗੀ॥
 ਆਸਾ ਵਿਚਿ ਨਿਰਾਸ ਹੁਇ ਜੋਗ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਜੋਗੀਸਰੁ ਜੋਗੀ॥
 ਦੇਦਾ ਰਹੈ ਨ ਮੰਗੀਐ ਮਰੈ ਨ ਹੋਇ ਵਿਜੋਗ ਵਿਜੋਗੀ॥
 ਆਧਿ ਬਿਆਧਿ ਉਪਾਧਿ ਹੈ ਵਾਇ ਪਿਤ ਕਛੁ ਰੋਗ ਅਰੋਗੀ॥
 ਦੁਖੁ ਸੁਖੁ ਸਮਸਰਿ ਗੁਰਮਤੀ ਸੰਪੈ ਹਰਖ ਨ ਅਪਦਾ ਸੋਗੀ॥
 ਦੇਹ ਬਿਦੇਹੀ ਲੋਗ ਅਲੋਗੀ ॥੧੬॥

guramukhi maylaa sach daa sachi milai sachiaar sanjogee.
gharabaaree paravaar vichi bhog bhugati raajay rasu bhogee.
aasaa vichi niraas hui jog jugati jogeesaru jogee.
dayndaa rahai n mangeeai marai n hoi vijog vijogee.
aadhi biaadhi upaadhi hai vaai pit kadhu rog arogee.
dukhu sukhu samasari guramatee sanpai harakh n apadaa sogee.
dayh bidayhee/og alogee ॥16॥

Gurmukh longs for the glimpse of truth and the truth is obtained only by providentially meeting an adopter of the truth.

Living in the family, the gurmukh like a dutiful householder enjoys all materials and like kings tastes all delights.

He remains detached amidst all hopes and, knowing the technique of yoga, is known as the king of yogis.

He always bestows and begs nothing. Neither he dies nor he suffers the pangs of the separation from the Almighty.

He is not troubled by pains and maladies and he remains free from the diseases of air, cough and heat.

He accepts sufferings and joys alike; wisdom of the Guru is his wealth and he is uninfluenced by joy and sorrows.

Being embodied he is yet beyond the body and while living in the world he is beyond the world.

36.4 Guru Ram Das Ji (Vaar 24, Pauri 17)

ਸਭਨਾ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਇਕੁ ਹੈ ਦੂਜੀ ਜਾਇ ਨ ਹੋਇ ਨ ਹੋਗੀ॥
 ਸਹਜ ਸਰੋਵਰਿ ਪਰਮਹੰਸੁ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਮੋਤੀ ਮਾਣਕ ਚੋਗੀ॥
 ਖੀਰ ਨੀਰ ਜਿਉ ਕੂੜੁ ਸਚੁ ਤਜਣੁ ਭਜਣੁ ਗੁਰ ਗਿਆਨ ਅਧੋਗੀ॥
 ਇਕ ਮਨਿ ਇਕੁ ਅਰਾਧਨਾ ਪਰਿਹਰਿ ਦੂਜਾ ਭਾਉ ਦਰੋਗੀ॥
 ਸਬਦਸੁਰਤਿ ਲਿਵ ਸਾਧਸੰਗਿ ਸਹਜਿ ਸਮਾਧਿ ਅਗਾਧਿ ਘਰੋਗੀ॥
 ਜੰਮਣੁ ਮਰਣਹੁ ਬਾਹਰੇ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰ ਪਰਮਪਰ ਜੋਗੀ॥
 ਰਾਮਦਾਸ ਗੁਰ ਅਮਰ ਸਮੋਗੀ ॥੧੭॥

sabhanaa saahibu iku hai dooji jaai n hoi n hogee.

sahaj sarovari paramahansu guramati motee maanak chogee.

kheer neer jiu koorhu sachu tajanu bhajanu gur giaan adhogee.

ik mani iku araadhanaa parihari doojaa bhaau darogee.

sabad surati/iv saadhasangi sahaji samaadhee agaadhi gharogee.

janmanu maranahu baaharay paraupakaar paramapar jogee.

raamadaas gur amar samogee ॥17॥

The master of all is one; any body else has neither existed nor ever shall be in future.

The creatures living in the tank of equipoise of the wisdom of Guru are known as param halls (swans of highest order) and they pick up only rubies and pearls i.e. they always adopt goodness in their life.

Becoming authorised of the knowledge of the Guru, they separate falsehood from truth as &visas are supposed to separate water from milk.

Repudiating the sense of duality they adore the one Almighty with single mindedness.

Although house holders, they, merging their consciousness in Word, in the holy congregation remain established in effortless concentration

Such perfect yogis are benevolent and free from transmigration.

Among such persons is Guru Ram Das who is fully absorbed in Guru Amar Das i.e. he is his constituent.