



Guru Nanak Sahib

Guru Nanak Sahib, the first Guru of Sikhs was born in 1469 at Nankana Sahib (Pakistan). During that time the country was passing through overwhelming crisis and forces of evil were dominating the thoughts and actions of people. Religion had become a matter of rituals, ceremonies and meaningless customs. It was in this Dark Age that Guru Nanak was sent by the Akal Purkh (God) for the uplift of the depressed, the downtrodden and the demoralised and to show them the true path of life.

Guru Nanak showed distinctive signs of divinity right from his childhood. He used to think of God and sing His songs. When Nanak was asked to wear the traditional sacred thread, he asked the family priest Hardyal about the real meaning and significance of the said rituals. When the priest could not give any convincing answer, Nanak refused to wear it and said, "He wants the thread of mercy, temperateness, righteous zeal and continence. Such a thread will not break, nor get soiled, nor can be burnt or lost."

The incident, in which he fed the hungry people showing a true business, reflects his concern for the poor and needy right from his young age. He did not believe in the house purification ceremony after the birth of a child and said that Akal Purkh ordains birth and death. Men come and go in this world by His will. He worked as a store incharge of Nawab Dault Khan (Sultanpur). He was scrupulously honest and devoted himself to his duties with efficiency and became very popular in a short time.

After his communion with the Almighty he said, "There is no Hindu, there is no Muslim. The true religion was in living a true inner life". He undertook four missionary tours along with Bhai Mardana on foot to various parts of India, Ceylon, Burma, Tibet, China, Mecca, etc. Guru Nanak's teachings were always given in the form of a practical action, which indicated the worthlessness of traditional myths that had crept in the society at that time. For example - Water being offered to deceased people in heaven, charity going to deceased through Brahmins, etc. His loveable ways and playful sense of humour, his persuasive words and simplicity springing from his heart and his all-embracing love went straight to the hearts of listeners.

He visited holy places, holy persons and preached to every one what was best for them. Guru Nanak began his work by exposing superstitions and meaningless rituals. His discourse with the Yogis in the name of "Sidh Gosht" is incorporated in the "Guru Granth Sahib" to serve as a Guide for the future. He also collected Sheikh Farid's Shlokas which are now included in the holy Granth. He was a fearless personality true to his conviction and stood by it even during adverse situations. He advised Babar to rule the people with mercy and justice. Guru nursed and consoled a poor leper and bestowed upon him both physical and spiritual strength. He reformed the worst criminals like Sajjan, Kauda through his powerful reasoning and convincing power into good citizens and put them on the path of doing useful and constructive work.

After his missionary tour of about 30 years he settled at Kartarpur in 1521. He engaged himself in agriculture to give practical demonstration of his teachings that every one should earn one's livelihood through honest means. Every early morning and evening recitation of Gurbani and Kirtan was performed followed by Guru-ka-Langar (community kitchen). He installed Guru Angad Sahib (Bhai Lehna) as his successor.

The prime factors comprising Sikhism in its true spirit are the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of man, earning one's living by one's own labour and sharing it with the needy, fighting against superstitions in the name of religion, suppression in the name of government and equality of men and women before God. The message of Guru Nanak in form of his Gurbani and of the subsequent Gurus of Sikhs will remain as a living guide for upliftment of the mankind.

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