

Life Story of

GURU NANAK



HEMKUNT

LIFE STORY OF GURU NANAK

Retold by
Prof. Kartar Singh



Hemkunt

© Hemkunt Press 1984
Seventh Impression 1998
Eighth Revised Edition 2003
Ninth Impression 2008
ISBN 81-7010-162-X

Published by :



Hemkunt Press

A-78 Naraina Industrial Area Phase-I, New Delhi-110028

Tel. : 4141-2083, 2579-5079

Fax : 91-11-4540-4165

E-mail : hemkunt@ndf.vsnl.net.in

Website : www.hemkuntpublishers.com

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Birth and early Childhood

Guru Nanak, founder of the Sikh religion, was born in the morning of 15th of April, 1469. But his birth anniversary has, for long, been observed on the occasion of the full moon in the month of October-November. His birth place was a small village called "Talwandi Rai Bhoi". As it was the birth place of Guru Nanak, it later came to be called Nankana Sahib. It is situated about 80 kilometres west of Lahore, in Pakistan.

Guru Nanak's father was Kalian Das Bedi. He was more popularly known as Mehta Kalu. He was working as a *patwari* – an agent in the estate of Rai Bular in Talwandi.

The Guru's mother was Mata Tripta. His elder sister, Bibi Nanki, was born in 1464 A.D. She got this name as she took birth in her *naanke* home, the home of her maternal grandparents. Guru Nanak, born five years later, was given that name because he was Bibi Nanki's brother.

In accordance with the general practice among the Hindus, Mehta Kalu sent for his family priest or astrologer, Pandit Hardial, and asked him to draw up the baby's *janampatri* or horoscope. Before proceeding with his work of drawing up the horoscope, he wanted to have a look at the child. After some hesitation on Mata Tripta's part, his request was granted. The infant was brought to him. On seeing him, Hardial bowed before him and touched his feet. He then congratulated Mehta Kalu and said, "Fortunate, very fortunate indeed, you are, to have this child as your son. He will be a great person. He will be loved and respected, nay worshipped, by Hindus and Muslims alike. His name and fame will spread over

many lands.”

Mehta Kalu and Mata Tripta felt very happy to hear all this.

Mehta Kalu was a man of the world. He wanted his son to acquire wealth, fame, and power, that he should be a successful worldly man.

The infant Nanak was a most unusual child; he never cried, not even when he was hungry. There was a radiant smile on his face all the time. All who saw him felt drawn towards him. As he lay in his cradle, his eyes sparkled with joy.

As years went by, he grew up not like other children of his age. He did not waste his time and energy in idle, meaningless talk or gossip. He liked simple food and simple tidy dress. He was good and kind. He enjoyed doing good to others and helping those who needed help. He loved all who came in touch with him. He loved the poor more than others. He helped them as much as he could. He gave them whatever he could manage to get hold of in the house. Above all, he gave them his sympathy and love. This made him feel happy. He never boasted or let any pride enter his heart. He was always sweet and humble.

He was very healthy and active. He liked to run about and play with other children of his age. He had quite a number of playmates. All of them were fond of him. They regarded him as their leader, and obeyed him most readily in all matters. He never quarrelled with anyone. If he found some of his friends fighting, he would make them stop fighting and be friends again.

He was also fond of his playmates. He used to take them to his house quite often. Mata Tripta was a kind-hearted and generous lady. She loved her son's playmates and would bring out a plate full of sweets and Guru Nanak himself gave the sweets to his companions.

He took great pleasure in serving others in this way. "Such acts", he used to say, "please the God who loves us all".

There was a pond of clear water near their house. It was surrounded by a green grassy plot. He was very fond of this place. Sometimes he would go near the pond, all alone, and sit there for hours, with half-shut eyes, thinking of God all the time.

Rai Bular often used to watch Guru Nanak thus engaged in divine meditation. He soon came to love and cherish Guru Nanak. Later, he built a room on the spot in memory of the Guru's divine meditation. He also changed the pond into a tank.

Long afterwards, the tank was enlarged by a devotee of the Guru. A beautiful gurdwara was built at that place and is now called *Bal Lila* or the Child's Playground.

Soon, another trait of his personality became visible. Whenever a beggar, a needy man, a *sadhu* or a *fakir* called at the door, he would run into the house, take hold of whatever article of food or clothing he could get at, deliver it into the hands of the beggar.

Education

When Guru Nanak was seven years of age, his father decided to send him to school. He asked his family priest and astrologer, Hardial, to select a favourable day for the commencement of the boy's education. On the day selected by Hardial, Mehta Kalu took his son to Pandit Gopal, who ran a small school. He offered Pandit Gopal sweets and five rupees, and requested him to accept the boy as his pupil.

The Pandit received the child with pleasure. He wrote the Hindi alphabet on a *patti* or wooden tablet, and asked his new pupil to repeat each letter after him. Then he told him to write each letter a number of times on the tablet. The Guru learnt to read and write the alphabet in no time, as though he had known it already.

The teacher also gave him lessons in arithmetic and accounting. The Guru was quick here too to learn what he was taught.

All this puzzled the Pandit a good deal. It convinced him that his new pupil was an extraordinary person, intelligent far beyond his age.

One day, Guru Nanak took his seat a little apart from his school-mates. He became busy in writing something on the wooden tablet. The teacher, filled with wonder watched him as he sat apart, thoughtful and calm, writing on the tablet. He found the Guru humming to himself a soft, sweet, low tune as he wrote. At last the teacher saw that the Guru had finished writing and was looking at his work in mute satisfaction and joy. The teacher rose from his seat, went up to where his unusual pupil sat, and said, "Nanak, you have been writing something. I would like to see it. May I?"

The Guru rose and gave his wooden tablet to his teacher. The

teacher was amazed beyond all measure. He found that the writing was not what he had expected. It was not what his pupils were supposed to write at that stage. On the *patti* he found, not disconnected, independent words and figures, but sentences and stanzas. It was a poem. He began to read it. It was a special type of poem — the lines of which begin with the successive letters of the alphabet.



But what an amazing poem it was written by a child of a little over seven! It was a hearty and illuminating discourse on God, man and the universe; on man's duty towards his Creator and fellow creatures.

Pandit Gopal went through the *patti*, again and again. His admiration and amazement increased after every reading. He applied the wooden tablet to his forehead and gave it back to Guru Nanak. He was not only astonished, but was also convinced that his pupil was an *avtar*, an incarnation of God. He humbly bowed before him and took him to his father.

Mehta Kalu was surprised to see his son and his teacher coming to him so early. He thought, "Nanak must have misbehaved or stayed away from school without leave. So, the Pandit has come to complain against him."

On coming near, the Pandit said, "Mehtaji, this son of yours is an *avtar*, an incarnation of God. He is not an ordinary mortal. He will be a great teacher of mankind."

Mehta Kalu smiled in a way to indicate that he did not believe what he had been told. He was a man of the world. He wanted his son to be wise in the ways of the world, and to learn how to acquire riches and power. So he said, "You are paying your pupil a great compliment. But I want him to be instructed by you, all the same. I would request you to continue to instruct him."

"Instruct him!" exclaimed the Pandit. "He knows all that there is to be known. Rather I have learnt much from him. He has opened my eyes. I regard him as my teacher. I bow to him." Saying this, the Pandit took his leave, leaving Mehta Kalu filled with amazement and disbelief.

So, Guru Nanak stopped going to Pandit Gopal's school. He had

learnt all that the school teacher could teach him, i.e. arithmetic and keeping of accounts, besides reading and writing Hindi. He was free, once more, to do what he liked. Sometimes he would run, jump and play with children of his age; but, more often, he would sit at home, lost in deep thought. At other times, he would visit *sadhus* and *fakirs* in the neighbouring forests, and have talks with them.

Naturally, his father did not like all this. He felt very uneasy. The family priest and astrologer, Pandit Hardial, advised Mehta Kalu to send his son to a Sanskrit scholar in order to learn Sanskrit. "He has a religious bent of mind. Put him to school with a Sanskrit scholar. Let him learn and study the *vedas* and *shastras* and become a scholar of repute."

The Mehta readily accepted the proposal. Accordingly, Guru Nanak was taken to a Sanskrit scholar named Brijnath. Here, too, the child was as quick at learning as before. In a short time he learnt from Brijnath as much as he could teach. At the same time, he taught the Sanskrit scholar what was most essential for a man of religion to learn. Having done this, he again took to his former favourite ways of meditation at home and association with *sadhus* and *fakirs*. In those days bands of *sadhus* and *fakirs* frequented the forests around Talwandi. The Guru met them and had talks with them on the subject of religion. He heard their learned discourses on the *vedas* and the *shastras*. He learnt much from them, no doubt, but he learnt far more by his undisturbed meditation on his Creator.

Mehta Kalu was, of course, not pleased at the ways of his only son. He felt that the society of *fakirs* and *sadhus* was not likely to advance his son's worldly interests. He wanted his son to be a successful man of the world. He consulted Rai Bular. The latter

suggested that Guru Nanak should be sent to learn Persian. He promised that if he learnt that language, in which all state documents and accounts were written, he would put him in charge of his office, and later, appoint him a *patwari* in succession to his father.

The father accepted this suggestion. Guru Nanak was now sent to Maulvi Kutb-ud-Din of Talwandi to learn Persian. This was done in 1539 A.D., when he was thirteen years of age. There, too, he astonished his teacher by the quickness with which he learnt all that the Maulvi taught him. The teacher soon realised that his pupil was greater than him. After learning from Maulvi Kutb-ud-Din as much as he wanted, Guru Nanak taught his teacher about God and His ways, and made the teacher his pupil. Then he gave up going to his school. There are numerous Persian words and some verses of the Guru found in Guru Granth Sahib, and it may be accepted as a fact that he became a good Persian scholar.

Having finished his Persian education, Guru Nanak was once more free to enjoy God and nature and the society of religious men.

The Sacred Thread

When Guru Nanak attained the age of nine years, it was necessary, according to the custom of his family, to invest him with the sacred thread or *janju*. A day was fixed for the ceremony. Mehta Kalu made great preparations for its performance. He made elaborate arrangements for the entertainment of his guests, relatives, friends and others whom he invited. There was a great gathering at his house on the appointed day. A carpet was spread on a raised platform. Hardial, the family priest, drew a circle round it, and took his seat on it, with all the articles for the ceremony arranged before him.

He then asked Mehta Kalu to bring the child, for whom a seat was provided facing the priest. Guru Nanak came and took his seat. Hardial began the ceremony by chanting *mantras* from the *vedas* to appease the stars. Then he blessed the boy by reciting *vedic mantras*. Then he blessed the sacred thread in the same way.

When all the preparatory rites had been duly performed, Hardial lifted his hand holding the sacred thread, in order to put it round Guru Nanak's neck. The Guru caught the priest's uplifted hand, and asked, "What are you doing? What is this cotton thread? Why is it worn? What advantage will it confer on me?"

The priest replied, "This sacred thread, *janju*, is the basis of the Hindu religion. By wearing it, you will be admitted to the position of the twice-born or high caste. It will be a symbol of your having attained spiritual birth. Without it a man is only a *shudra* or low caste. By putting it on, you will obtain honour and greatness in this world and happiness in the next. The thread has been endowed

with the power of *vedic mantras*. It will give you spiritual power. It will strengthen your spirit or soul. So, come, be a good child, and let me put it round your neck."

But the Guru was not satisfied. He said, "If the thread is to be a symbol of spiritual birth, it should be something befitting the nature of the spirit or soul. The soul is deathless. But this thread may break, get soiled, burnt or lost. Then the wearer has to put on a new one. When the man dies, the thread remains with the body. It does not accompany him or his soul in the journey after death. He goes there threadless. I would gladly put on a thread that does not break, get soiled, lost or burnt, and that accompanies the soul on its journey to the next world. Such a thread will befit the soul. If you have one of that type, come on, put it round my neck."

The priest was perplexed. He said, "The great *rishis* of old ordained the wearing of this thread. All high-caste Hindus must wear it. If this thread does not satisfy you, what sort of thread would you have? And from where I can get one?" "That I can tell you", said Guru Nanak. "A lasting sacred thread for the soul can be made by practising, in day-to-day life, the noble, lofty ideals of religion and morality. Let mercy be the cotton, contentment the thread, purity the knots, and truth the needed twist. Blend these virtues together in your every-day life. Thereby your soul will be invested with a truly sacred thread. That thread will never get old, dirty, burnt, or lost and will never break. A man who has acquired such a thread, will win honour and greatness in this world, and happiness in the life to come; for it will accompany the soul, will not be left and burnt with the body."

The priest said, "I agree, dear child, that we should all live noble, virtuous lives. But we must also respect the custom begun by

our great *rishis*. A Hindu without the sacred thread is a man without religion. I am sure you won't refuse to be a man of religion. So come, put on this thread."

Guru Nanak said, "What religion does your thread give to its wearer? Around me I see that men who wear the thread are committing the foulest deeds. They rob and kill, lie and deceive, give free rein to their lust and greed, and commit countless sins and crimes against their fellow-creatures. Their souls are polluted to the core. Is this the religion that your thread gives to men? What a religion! I would have none of it, Pandit ji. Moreover, what of the womenfolk? They are not invested with the thread. Don't they need religion? You tell me that a twice-born or high-caste man without the sacred thread is a *shudra*. All high-caste women are threadless. Are they all *shudras*? Yet you live with them as sons, husbands, and brothers! I fail to understand your logic. I refuse to be invested with your sacred thread."

Hardial was rendered speechless. The audience was hushed into silence. All present felt how true was all that the divine child had said. They wondered at the boldness of this child of nine years, who had openly revolted against this Hindu ritual which had come down from ancient times.

The Miracles

Like all fathers, Mehta Kalu was anxious to lead his son along the path which he himself had followed and found profitable. He did not like that his son should be an idler, given to unworldliness. He was sad that his son had refused to qualify himself for earning a living. At last he thought, "Nanak loves to spend his days in the fields and the forest. He enjoys being out of doors. He cares much for animals; enjoys feeding them and making friends with them. Why not send him to herd buffaloes in the forest? He will be free to roam and muse, and will be engaged in some useful work."

So thinking, he said to his son, "You seem to be very fond of cows, buffaloes, and their calves. You also love to pass your time in the forest. Why not take out the cattle to graze?"

The Guru readily agreed to obey his father. So, from the next day he began to take out the cattle to graze in the forest and brought them home in the evening.

For some time things went on all right. One day the Guru took out the herd as usual. He sat under a tree, and soon passed into deep meditation. He became unaware of things around him. Of the world he saw nothing, heard nothing, and thought nothing. His cattle grazed as they pleased. They strayed into a neighbouring field, and feasted on the green crop. Just as they had their fill, the owner of the field appeared on the scene. He saw that his crop has been ruined. He drove out the cattle from his field. He came in a rage to the place where Guru Nanak was sitting, lost in meditation. He shook him by the shoulder, and said, "Wake up, you sluggard! See what your cattle have done! They have ruined my crop."

The Guru looked up with eyes full of compassion, and said, "Don't be enraged, good man! Have patience, God will bless the field. Your field will give you a greater return than you have ever had so far."

The owner was not satisfied. He said, "You cannot deceive me with words. I am going to Rai Bular to lodge a complaint. I will make your father pay me the full value of the crop."

He was in great rage. Shouting and complaining, he hurried to the village, taking the divine child with him. As the Guru started towards the village with the owner, he fixed his eyes, full of love and compassion, on the ruined crop. In an instant, the field was blessed by God. It became all green with rich crop.

The owner did not look at his field. He went straight to Rai Bular, told him of his loss, and implored him to compensate him.

Guru Nanak, thereupon, said to Rai Bular, "Before pronouncing judgement, do please examine the crop which is alleged to have been destroyed. God is merciful. He sustains all. How could a few bites by His dumb creatures be the cause of this man's ruin? I am sure He has blessed the field and it is all green with a rich crop."

Rai Bular ordered one of his men to accompany the owner to the field and estimate the loss. The two soon arrived at the field. Their astonishment knew no bounds when they found the field all green with the growing crop. Not a blade had been eaten or trampled upon.

Rai Bular's servant said angrily to the owner of the field, "Have you no eyes? Why did you tell such a big lie? Your crop is intact."

The owner could not believe his eyes. He touched the crop with his hand, bent his head, and said, "What can I say? My eyes did not deceive me. I did not tell a lie. The crop was eaten up by Mehta

Kalu's cattle. Now it is perfectly all right. A miracle has happened. That is all I can say."

They went back. Rai Bular's man informed him that all was well with the crop. The owner confirmed that statement. Rai Bular had heard many strange stories about Guru Nanak. He had heard of his discourses with his teachers. He had heard what wise things he had said on the occasion. He was now confirmed in his belief that the Mehta's son was a man of God. He said, "Nanak loves God, he always keeps thinking of Him. God loves him. He has shown His love for him. It is He who has made the crop green and all right again. I bow my head before this man of God."

A gurdwara was later built on the field. It is called Kiara Sahib or the sacred field.

On another occasion, Rai Bular saw another astonishing scene. He was returning from a village. From a distance he saw Guru Nanak lying asleep in the pasture ground, he saw that a large cobra was holding its wide hood over the Guru's head. It was thus protecting that man of God against the sun. Rai Bular thought that the youthful saint had been bitten and was dead, as he was lying absolutely motionless. He approached the spot hurriedly. As he reached near, the cobra folded its hood and slid away. He saw that Guru Nanak was fast asleep and the sun's rays were falling upon his face. The cobra had shaded his face from the sun. Rai Bular was filled with wonder and joy. He jumped down from his horse. Guru Nanak got up and greeted Rai Bular with a smile. Rai Bular touched the Guru's feet, embraced him, and kissed his forehead. From that day he began to hold Guru Nanak in great respect. He believed him to be a messenger of God.



Marriage and After

Guru Nanak's ways of life were a source of great anxiety to his parents. All their efforts to persuade him to become worldly-minded, to act and behave like normal children, had failed. Even a physician, who had been called to examine the Guru, had failed to cure him of the strange malady which seemed to have made him what he was. His much worried parents decided to get him married and thus bind him to the ties of the world. They hoped that a good, beautiful, and loving wife would be able to draw him away from his unusual ways, and make him a responsible householder. They consulted their daughter and her husband. They readily concurred with the parents. Accordingly, the Guru was engaged to Mata Sulakhni, daughter of Baba Mul Chand of Batala in the present district of Gurdaspur. The engagement took place in April, 1485 A.D. The Guru was then sixteen years of age. The marriage took place in May, 1487 A.D. He was then eighteen years old. At the place where the marriage party was lodged, a sample of the mud wall of those days is still preserved.

Guru Nanak now proceeded to become a good and successful householder. He began to assist his father in looking after the cultivation of his land and the realization of the owner's share from the tenants. He also began to run a grocer's shop. He thus became engaged in earning a livelihood, one of the essential duties of a householder.

Needless to say that the Guru's parents and other relatives were greatly pleased to find him engaged in a profitable occupation. Mehta Kalu decided to extend his son's business activities. He

planned to make him a trader. So, one day he said to him, "I wish you to become a trader. I have thought of a plan. To begin with, I shall give you a handsome sum. With it you should make a good bargain and earn a handsome profit. What is your opinion, Nanak, my dear?" "I shall be most glad to obey you, dear father." "That is like a good boy," said Mehta Kalu. He took out twenty rupees which he gave to his son. "Take this money," he said, "Go to the market, and buy from there articles that can be sold at a profit here. When, after a few trips, you get experienced, you can go to farther places and engage in larger bargains. Go, take Bala with you. You must come back before sunset."

It has to be stated here that the sum given to the Guru was not at all a small one. In purchasing power, twenty rupees of those days were equal to a few thousand rupees of today.

The Guru accompanied by Bala, started towards Chuharkhana, a town about thirty kilometres from Talwandi. He, however, left the public road, and took a short cut through parts which were not frequently visited by the ordinary people. As they were proceeding on their way, they noticed a grove of tall, green, shady trees. The Guru directed his steps towards the grove. In that grove they found a company of *sadhus*. These men of religion wore no clothes except loinclothes. They were weak and lean. The Guru approached their leader, Santren, who occupied a central place. He bowed before the *sadhu*, sat near him, and began to talk to him. He learnt that the *sadhus* had no meal for five days, Their vows forbade them to go and beg for food. They were given to roaming about and keeping away from inhabited places. As for food, they relied on God. They were content to eat when and whatever He was pleased to send. "God in His mercy", said Santren, "provides for us as He provides for all."

Guru Nanak was deeply impressed by their faith and trust in God. He said to himself, "There can be no better and more profitable bargain than that of feeding such hungry devotees of God." He took out the money from his pocket and placed it before the leader of the *sadhus*.

"My boy," said *sadhu* Santren, "take away this money which your father has given you for some other purpose. We have vowed never to touch money. Don't worry about us. God, whom we seek and serve, and in whom we trust, will send us food when it pleases Him to do so. We can wait till then."

The Guru took back the money. He and his companion went to the nearest bazar, purchased as much food items as could be had for the sum, and took them to the *sadhus*. The *sadhus* broke their five days fast. They blessed the youth whom God had sent to feed them. The place where the hungry men of God were fed by Guru Nanak is the site of a gurdwara called *Sachcha Sauda* which means good bargain. It is now in Pakistan.

Having invested his capital in a bargain which appeared to him to be the best and most profitable, the Guru started homeward along with Bala. By sunset they reached near Talwandi. The Guru now thought of his father. He said to himself, "Father loves money. He will not like my good bargain. He might get angry with me. I should keep away from him for some time. I should let his anger cool a bit before meeting him."

Near the village there was a big, tall shady tree. Its branches touched the ground all round it. Thus it formed a sort of tent. Guru Nanak decided to pass the night under that tree. The Guru told Bala to go home. The tree is still there. It is called *Tambu Sahib* or the sacred tent. There is also a gurdwara at that place. It is also called

Tambu Sahib.

Next morning Mehta Kalu came to know of Bala's return. He was perplexed about the non-appearance of his own son. He summoned Bala and asked him, "Where is Nanak?" Bala told him the whole story. Mehta Kalu's anger knew no bounds. He commanded Bala to take him to the place where Guru Nanak had stopped the previous evening.

Bala led him to the place where he had left the Guru. They found him seated calmly under the branches of the tree, lost in meditation. Mehta Kalu dragged him from under the hanging branches. He said angrily, "What are you doing here? What have you done with the money which I gave you? You have wasted it."

The Guru opened his eyes and looked at his father's face; but said nothing. Mehta Kalu grew still more angry, and began to slap him, right and left. The Guru bore the slaps of his angry father quietly and without any effort to avoid them. Guru Nanak's cheeks became red because of the hard slaps.

Bibi Nanki, who was then on a visit to Talwandi, had followed her father. She was soon at the spot and placed herself between her father and her brother. Thus she made her father stop beating her dear brother. After that the three returned home.

At Sultanpur

As said above, Rai Bular was, by now, an ardent admirer and disciple of Guru Nanak. He learnt of the fresh trouble between Mehta Kalu and the Guru. The news made him very sad. It set him thinking how to put an end to such quarrels between the father and the son. He was convinced that so long as Guru Nanak lived with his father, there could be no end to such troubles. It was necessary that he should go somewhere else. But where?

He was thus on the look out for a suitable place where the Guru should be persuaded to go. Soon, Diwan Jai Ram, Bibi Nanki's husband, came to Talwandi on his yearly visit at the close of the spring harvest. He heard about the complaints of his father-in-law against Guru Nanak. He also met Rai Bular, who told him about the treatment which the Guru got from his father. They put their heads together. It was decided that Diwan Jai Ram should find a job for Guru Nanak at Sultanpur, and then send for him. Mehta Kalu agreed readily. Guru Nanak gave his consent to go when called.

Soon after returning to Sultanpur, Diwan Jai Ram succeeded in his mission and called Guru Nanak. A few days after his arrival at Sultanpur, he took him to the Governor, Nawab Daulat Khan Lodhi. He introduced the Guru as an educated, honest, diligent and dependable young man. The Nawab agreed to employ him. He put him in charge of his *modikhana* or the state's granary.

The post of the *modi* or store-keeper was a great responsibility. It required honesty, diligence, and integrity. The state collected all its dues in kind, that is, in the form of grain. The grain thus collected was stored in a granary called *modikhana*. From there it was issued

out to the Nawab's household, army, police, etc. All payments were made in grain. The surplus was sold to the people.

The *modi* had to keep an account of all these transactions. He had to weigh as it came in. He had to weigh it when it was given out. He had to make proper entries in his registers. He had also to keep an account of the money got by selling the grain. The money had to be deposited in the Nawab's treasury.

Guru Nanak performed his duties efficiently and to the satisfaction of all concerned. The Nawab's servants and the common people began to like and honour him. They praised him highly to the Nawab, who was much pleased with his new servant. Out of the provisions which Guru Nanak was allowed, he used only a small portion for his own needs, the rest he gave away to the poor.

It is recorded that, while weighing out provisions, when he reached the number thirteen, something strange would happen to him. In the official Persian language "Thirteen" was called *tera*, which in Punjabi stood for thine. He would then pause, close his eyes, and go on repeating, in his sweet, melodious voice, "*Tera ban Tera*", I am Thine, O Thine. If the person receiving the grain happened to be a poor customer, Guru Nanak would go on weighing it out to him for a number of times and count each time as *tera* or thirteen. A gurdwara named Hatt Sahib stands at the spot used by the Guru for dealing out grain to the people. The stone weights used by him, eleven in number and of various sizes, are preserved at the said gurdwara.

For some time the Guru stayed at his sister's house. Then he got a separate house nearby and requested his parents to send his wife. The two began to live as an ideal couple. In due course, two sons were born to them. Baba Siri Chand in August 1494 A.D., and

Baba Lakhmi Das in March 1497 A.D. A gurdwara called Guru ka Bagh stands at the place where Mata Sulakhni and the Guru lived, and where their two sons were born.

While performing so well the duties of his office, the Guru did not forget or neglect his divine duties. He was in tune with the Lord now just as before. He kept his mind fixed on God. Every morning he got up early, about three hours before sunrise. Then he would go to the nearby stream called Bein. After taking his bath in the stream, he sat near its bank and fixed his mind on God. He also sang songs in His praise. This continued till dawn. Then, as dawn broke, Bhai Mardana joined him. They sang together the sacred songs which the Guru had composed. Many men and women came to listen to their songs. Then he went to discharge the duties of his office. A gurdwara called Bér Sahib marks the place where the Guru used to place his clothes when bathing in the stream. The *ber* or berry tree of the Guru's time still exists there.

The Guru had called Mardana from Talwandi. The latter was of the tribe of *Dums* or *Mirasis*, who are hereditary musicians. He had been the Guru's companion at Talwandi. When the Guru sang his divine songs, Mardana used to accompany him on his *rabab* or rebeck. At Sultanpur also, he began to perform the same duty.

Other friends and admirers also came from Talwandi. Guru Nanak introduced them to the Nawab and procured them employment. They all got a living by the Guru's favour and were happy. They adored him.

As said above, the Guru had become very popular with all. He was held in high esteem by the Nawab. Some bad people did not like this. They became jealous of the Guru. Some of them went to the Nawab and said, "Your *modi* is dishonest and careless. He is not

dispensing the contents of your granary correctly. It will soon become empty. He will then run away.”

The Nawab, thereafter, started getting the Guru's accounts thoroughly checked, but every time some balance was found due to the divine storekeeper. At one time, when the report against him was very serious, Guru Nanak was kept confined in a room, while his accounts were being checked. The room is now the site of a gurdwara called *Kothri Sahib* or the sacred cell. Thus every time the evil persons were put to shame and the Nawab's esteem for the Guru increased.

At Sultanpur, Guru Nanak showed how a man of religion should live and act; be in this world and yet be detached; be a householder and a *sanyasi* at the same time. He wanted the people to live and act like him. He used to tell them, a man of religion, a truly religious man, should do three things:

“First, he should earn his living with honest labour. He should not lead an idle life, should not beg or be a burden on others.

“Secondly, he should share his earnings with others.

“Thirdly, he should always remember and meditate on God. He should ask others to do likewise.

“Such are the three main golden rules of my religion. Live and act in accordance with them. You will become truly religious. You will be happy, truly happy, here and hereafter.”

Humanity is My Family

For about twelve years the Guru served as the Nawab's *modi*. By then he began to feel that his first mission had been completed. He felt that humanity at large was calling him to be its saviour. He now thought that the time to respond to that call had come. Early one morning he went, as usual, to bathe at the stream. An attendant sat near his clothes. He plunged into the stream. He did not come up for quite a long time. The servant waited in great anxiety. He then looked into and along the stream, but Guru Nanak was nowhere to be seen. At last he sadly concluded that his master must have been drowned. He went and informed Diwan Jai Ram of what had happened. The news rapidly spread in the town. The Nawab also heard it. People flocked to the stream. Of course, Bibi Nanki and her husband were among them. The Nawab also reached the spot. Divers were told to dive and search for the body. They failed. Everyone returned to the city in deep sorrow.

Actually the Guru had gone to a lonely spot in the forest, on the other side of the stream. In that solitude he planned his programme for the task he wanted to undertake. Lost thus in thought, he felt to be in unison with the spirit pervading the whole universe. He then felt that he stood before the throne of the Creator; that he received His orders about what he was to do.

He remained in that state for three days. Then he came back from the forest. He went to his home and gave away all he had to the poor. Then he became silent. A big crowd assembled. Nawab Daulat Khan also came. He enquired from the Guru what had happened to him, but received no reply.

The Guru then walked to a lonely spot in the jungle outside the town. There he got deeply absorbed in meditation. A number of men and women came to see him. He spoke to none. They passed all sorts of remarks about him but he did not reply. Bibi Nanki and Mata Sulakhni, the Guru's wife, then came to the place where he was busy in meditation. They appealed to him to return home. Bibi Nanki appealed to him to think of his family and not leave them.

The Guru replied, "My dear sister, humanity is henceforth my family. In serving humanity I shall serve you too. Bless my resolve and bid me a loving farewell."



All Men are Brothers

The Guru was left alone in the jungle. For the whole of that day and the following night he was absorbed in deep meditation. He neither moved nor spoke. On the following day he came to himself, woke from his *samadhi*. The first words which he uttered were, "There is no Hindu, no Musalman." He repeated them aloud, again and again.

These words were heard by some passersby and were soon on everybody's lips. The *kazi* was shocked to hear them. He said, "The Muslims are at the height of power. They rule the country. Their religion is spreading everywhere. How can a Hindu dare to say when Muslims are ruling that there is no Musalman in the land? The man must be dealt with severely."

The *kazi* passed on these words to the Nawab and said that the Guru had cast a slur on the whole Muslim community. He added, "He may say what he likes about his own religion and community, but he has no right to talk lightly of Islam and Muslims. He must be summoned and taken to task."

Accordingly, a messenger was deputed to bring the Guru to the Nawab's court. The Guru refused to obey the summons. He said, "I have no longer any concern with the Nawab, I am not in his service now. I am now a servant of Him who is the sovereign of the whole universe."

The messenger returned and reported what the Guru had said. The *kazi* got very angry and said, "I will bring the man to your presence." He went with a band of his men to the spot where the Guru was. On seeing that loving servant of God, the *kazi* lost all his

anger, and became humble. He saluted the Guru and said respectfully, "Nanak, come with me. The Nawab requests you, in the name of your God, to favour him with a visit. He is eager to be enlightened about the religion by you. I hope you will not disappoint him."

Guru Nanak could not refuse a call made in the name of God. He rose and went into the Nawab's court. The latter had already become an admirer of the Guru. He rose to receive him and gave him a seat next to him. He then directed the *kazi* to ask the Guru the questions he wanted to be answered. The *kazi* said, "What do you mean by saying, 'There is no Hindu, no Musalman'? About the Hindus I shall not say anything. But, by the grace of Allah, there are hundreds of Muslims in this very town. There are millions of them in the country. What you say is absolutely wrong."

The Nawab added, "Dear Nanak, I too feel puzzled by your words. I agree with our *kazi* that there are millions of the Prophet's followers in our country. Here is our *kazi*, for example, who is a true Musalman. I am also a humble follower of the Prophet."

"Nawab Sahib", said the Guru, "it is very difficult to be a Musalman." The *kazi* looked at him with eyes full of anger and said, "What do you mean? We understand our religion quite well and follow it. We are Musalmans, followers of the great Prophet."

Guru Nanak replied, "I agree that you and millions of others call themselves Musalmans. All the same, I maintain that there is no Musalman. You so-called Musalmans or Muslims have forgotten the precepts and principles of your religion. The Hindus have done the same. I repeat there is no Hindu, no Musalman. Moreover, all Hindus and Musalmans are children of the same Father. They are brothers. They should live together like brothers, like members of

a good family. But they are not doing so. A true Muslim, as of course a true Hindu, should lead his life in accordance with the rules and principles of his religion. He should not do, say or think anything that may displease God. He should do such acts as may please Him.

"Some of such acts which please God are: to be kind and merciful to all His children; to do no harm to any one; to be just, humble and truthful; to clean one's heart of pride, anger, greed and jealousy; not to take by force or deceit what belongs to another by right; to have no fear of birth or death; to be firm in one's faith and ever think of God; to earn a living by honest labour; to share one's earnings with the needy and the poor; and to persuade others to live and act in this manner. When a person does all this, and not before that, he deserves to be called a Musalman. Now look around my friends and tell me honestly how many people do and act as above. How many of them deserve to be called Musalmans."

The *kazi* was confused. After a while he said, "But what are you? Are you a Hindu or a Muslim?"

"Neither this nor that," said the Guru. "I am a lover of God and a servant of man. To me all religions are different paths leading to Him and His abode."

By now it was the time for the afternoon *namaz* or Muslim prayer. The Nawab said to the Guru, "If all religions are the same to you, will you please join us in offering prayers to the common Father of all? Will you accompany us to the mosque for that purpose?"

"With pleasure", replied the Guru, "If you or the *kazi* lead the prayer."

The Nawab and the *kazi* rose to go to the mosque. The Guru accompanied them.

The news that Guru Nanak had gone to the mosque to offer *namaz* spread in the city like wild fire. It was rumoured that he was going to embrace Islam. Local Hindus, including his sister and brother-in-law, rushed to the mosque. All of them halted at its gate.

In the mosque the *kazi* stood up at the head of the gathering and began the *namaz*. He recited aloud the sacred Arabic text. As he did this, he bowed, bent and knelt as required. All others also performed the same bodily movements. But the Guru kept standing all the time, and took no part in the prayers. The *kazi* was filled with rage to see this. The Guru added fuel to the fire of the *kazi's* anger by laughing at him. The *kazi's* anger knew no bounds; but he went on with the *namaz*.

When the *namaz* was over, the *kazi* complained to the Nawab against the Guru. He said, "This man has insulted the whole assembly and the Muhammedan religion. He deserves the heaviest punishment."

The Nawab was a mild, generous-hearted man. He approached the Guru and said, "You promised to join us in our prayers. But you did not do so. And then you laughed at the *kazi*, when he was engaged in prayers, why?"

The Guru replied, "Yes, I did promise. I would certainly have joined you if you had been actually engaged in praying. You were not praying at all. Take the case of your *kazi*. He was, no doubt, reciting the sacred Arabic text with his tongue. His body was performing the required movements of bending, bowing, and kneeling. But he himself was not here. He was thinking of his mare which had just foaled. He was afraid that the filly might fall in the well which is in his courtyard. He was busy in trying to keep the filly away from the well. I could not join him in all that. It amused me to

see him thus engaged, his body here, busy in prayers, his mind at home, running after the filly. So I laughed. How people deceive themselves and the world and try to deceive the All-knowing God!"

The *kazi* bowed his head. The Guru read his mind. What he had said was true. Then, taking courage, he said, "But here was the Nawab. He is a devout Musalman. You could have joined him at prayers."

The Guru replied, "The Nawab, too, was not engaged in prayers. He was far away, very far away. His thoughts were not rising up to God, as they should during the prayers. He was absorbed in thoughts of horses which his agents are purchasing in Kabul."

The Nawab bowed and said that the Guru was right. All who were in the mosque were struck dumb with amazement. The Guru then raised his voice and said, "O dear children of God, I will tell you how to pray. When we say our prayers, our mind and heart must be really busy in the prayers. We should not let them run about after things of the world. Only such prayers are useful. God hears them. We become better, happier, and more at peace with our fellow-beings."

Exalts the Lowly

Soon after the above incident in the mosque at Sultanpur, the Guru entered on his mission as a teacher of the world. He resolved to go on missionary tours. He was about thirty three years of age then. He took Bhai Mardana, his rebeck-player and devoted follower, with him. He was very fond of music. Most of his messages to the people were in the form of sacred songs. They were sung to his audiences, either by himself or by Bhai Mardana, to the accompaniment of a six-stringed rebeck called *rabab*. The *rabab*, by the way, was the Guru's invention.

First he spent some time in Punjab. He went from place to place, conveying his message to the people, and converting Hindus and Muslims to his views. He established *manjis* or missionary centres in all the places where he went.

The Guru and his companion travelled by short stages, going from village to village. In every place, the Guru taught people how to live and act as truly religious men. He sang to them his sacred songs and explained his three golden rules of religion.

Crossing the river Beas, he came to the place where now stands the town of Goindwal. From there he proceeded to the place where we now have the sacred tank and the Golden Temple of Amritsar. The *ber* tree under which he rested, still exists beside the sacred tank. It is called *Dukh-bhanjni Ber*.

After a short stay under the *ber* tree, he started westward again. He wanted to go to Talwandi and inform his parents of his intended tours. He travelled from village to village, meeting people, both Hindus and Muslims.

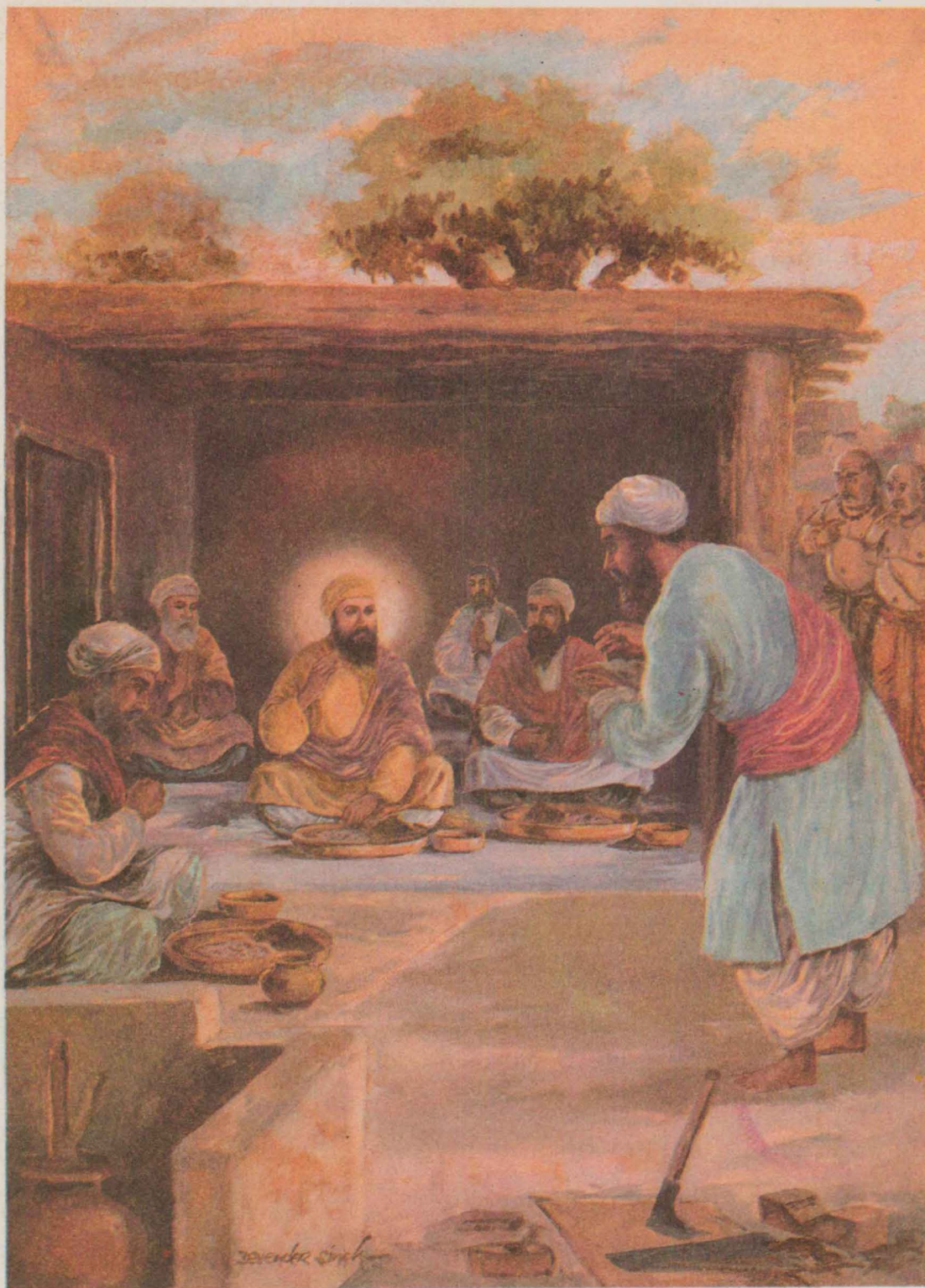
In due course he reached Lahore where he stayed for a few days. A gurdwara stands at the place where he stayed. From Lahore he and his companion reached Talwandi.

His aged parents were surprised to see their son dressed as a *sadhu* in ochre-coloured clothes. They pleaded with him to take off the *sadhu*'s dress, live with them, and support them in their old age. But the Guru said that he had to obey God's call, and serve and console lakhs of poor, oppressed people and their aged parents. Bidding farewell to his parents and others, he started on his first *udasi* towards the east. He wanted to visit the holy places of the Hindus.

Passing through Chuharkhana, the Guru and Bhai Mardana reached Saidpur, now called Eminabad, in the district of Gujranwala, Pakistan. He went to the house of a carpenter, named Lalo. This Lalo was a God fearing person, who lived by the sweat of his brow, and took pleasure in serving *sadhus* and needy wayfarers.

Bhai Lalo, as said above, was a carpenter. In those days carpenters were regarded as low caste Hindus or *shudras*. The high caste people kept away from them. None of them would even think of living or dining with a low caste man like Lalo.

Guru Nanak was a high-caste *khatri*. But he had no pride of caste. He loved people of all castes, and regarded them as dear brothers. He was particularly fond of good men like Bhai Lalo. He knocked at the door. Bhai Lalo got up and opened the door. He was delighted to see two *sadhus* at his door. He bowed and welcomed them most heartily. He seated the Guru on a little cot or *charpai*, covered with a clean sheet. He seated Bhai Mardana on a straw mat spread beside the Guru's cot. He gave them fresh, cool water to drink. Then he began to cook food for his holy guests.



Soon the food was ready. It consisted of coarse bread, made of barley flour, and *saag* (a green leafy vegetable, boiled and salted).

Bhai Lalo placed the food before his guests. At the sight of the coarse barley bread, Bhai Mardana felt a little uneasy. He said to himself, "I fear this coarse bread will be too hard. I shall not be able to chew and swallow it. My stomach may not be able to digest it. What a host the Guru has chosen!"

He then looked at the Guru. He found that he was eating the food with great relish, and enjoying it. The Guru noticed Bhai Mardana's hesitation and sensed his thoughts. He said, "Eat it, you will find it tasty; tastier than any that you have ever eaten." Bhai Mardana obediently put a morsel in his mouth. To his wonder the food was nice, soft, and sweet. It really tasted better than any type of food he had ever taken before. He took his fill and felt refreshed.

The Guru stayed with Bhai Lalo for a few days. During the day he used to go to a shady place outside the town. The ground there was hard and rough, with plenty of small coarse stones called *rore*. The place itself was called *rori*. There the Guru used to pray and meditate. Bhai Mardana would sing the Guru's sacred hymns or *shabads* to the accompaniment of his *rabab*. The place became later the site of a gurdwara called *Rori Sahib*.

Soon people, both Hindus and Muslims, began to gather around the Guru. They enjoyed the sacred songs or *shabads* sung so sweetly by Bhai Mardana. The Guru taught them how to live and act as truly religious men. He became more and more popular, day by day. Many Hindus and Muslims accepted him as their religious teacher or Guru. They became his Sikhs. Bhai Lalo was appointed to the first *manji* or centre, which was to spread Sikhism in the northern Punjab.

Humbles the Haughty

As the Guru's popularity grew, his stay at Bhai Lalo's house became the talk of the whole town. The high caste people, brahmins and *khattris*, did not like the Guru's act. They said, "This *sadhu* is a *khatri*, a high caste Hindu. He has a low caste Muslim as his companion and personal servant. He lives and dines with a low caste Hindu, a *shudra*. He is doing something which no high caste Hindu should do."

Some learned Brahmins came to advise and correct him. They told him that he was doing something forbidden by the *vedas* and *shastras*. They urged him to give up living and dining with the low caste carpenter. They said to him, "You are doing what no high caste Hindu like you should do." The Guru replied, "Your ideas about castes are absolutely wrong. In my view, one who does good, noble deeds is a high caste man; one who does low, evil deeds is a low caste man. In my view, therefore, Bhai Lalo is truly a high caste man, far better and higher than all of you who treat him with contempt. You say that I am a high caste Hindu but it is not so. I don't believe in caste system. I have no caste. I am not a Hindu. I have a religion of my own. All men are equal. All are children of the same Father." They had no answer to this. Their own faith was rudely shaken.

Eminabad belonged to a Muslim *faujdar* or military officer, named Zalim Khan. Malik Bhago, a Khatri by caste, was his manager. This man was greedy, cruel, haughty, and corrupt. One day he decided to give a grand sacrificial feast. He wanted that all religious and holy men, all Brahmins and *sadhus* of that place, should partake

of the feast. He learnt that a saintly man was staying at Bhai Lalo's house. He immediately sent a servant to invite the Guru. The Guru refused to accept the invitation. This made Malik Bhago feel angry and disappointed. He believed that the yag or sacrificial feast would be incomplete unless all the holy men in that place graced his house. He sent his man again to bring the Guru. Thereupon the Guru agreed to go to Malik Bhago's house.

The Guru reached Malik Bhago's house. The Malik looked angrily at him and said, "You are a strange man. You are *khatri*, a high caste Hindu, yet you eat the food cooked by a low caste carpenter, a *shudra*—an untouchable."

The Guru replied, "I have no caste, I don't believe in the caste system. Bhai Lalo is good religious man. He is not a *shudra* or an untouchable. Your thinking is wrong."

Malik Bhago said, "If to you all men are equal as children of the same one God, why did you refuse to come to my house and take food here?"

The Guru replied, "I like the food cooked by Bhai Lalo. I do not like the food given by you." "But why?" said the Malik angrily. "Do you really want to know?" said the Guru. "Yes," said Malik Bhago. "All right," said the Guru. "Get me some food cooked at your house for your guests." The Guru also asked for some food to be brought from Bhai Lalo's house.

In the meantime, a big crowd had gathered round the Guru. Bhai Lalo brought a piece of bread made of barley flour. Malik Bhago's men brought a dish of rich food from his kitchen. The Guru took a piece of Bhai Lalo's bread in his right hand. He held some food brought from Bhago's house in his left hand. Lifting his arms, he pressed the two pieces. Drops of milk came out from Bhai Lalo's

coarse barley-bread. Drops of blood came out from Malik Bhago's rich food.

The Guru then said, "Now you have seen why I refused to eat your food. You have seen the difference between Bhai Lalo's food and yours. Bhai Lalo is a God fearing man. He earns his bread with honest labour. He shares his earnings with others. Such a person's food is pure; it is sweet like milk and honey. But you are different. Others work for you. You take away a lion's share of what they produce. You do not let them have enough to eat. So what you eat is full of their blood. How could I agree to eat your food full of poor people's blood?"

The Guru's words went deep into the haughty Malik's heart. He fell at the Guru's feet and said, "Tell me, O holy man of God, how can I get pardon for my sins."

The Guru replied, "Do honest work to earn your living. Be good and kind to all. Do not take away from others what is theirs by right. Give up pride and greed. Always remember God. Believe that He is ever watching you and knows what you think and feel. Love all men as your brothers. That is the way to win God's forgiveness and love."

Malik Bhago again fell at the Guru's feet and promised to live and act as advised by the Guru.

Reclaims a Dreaded Robber

The Guru and Bhai Mardana continued their travels. They travelled by short stages and went from village to village. In every village they spent at least one night. In every such place the Guru explained to the people the three golden rules of his religion. He taught them the lessons of love, honest labour, service, and worship of God. Bhai Mardana sang the Guru's sacred songs which gave light and delight to the listeners.

Once, during these travels, the Guru and his companion arrived near a place named Tulamba. It is now in the district of Multan, in Pakistan. At some distance from Tulamba, there was the habitation of a notorious robber or *thug* named Sajjan. His dwelling was a large spacious building. It was by the side of a road. At one corner of the building he had built a mosque. At the other end there was a Hindu temple. He had also built there a *serai* or rest house for travellers. They were given food and lodging free of cost. At the gate of his building, two servants stood ready to welcome and admit guests. All travellers were welcomed at the house of Sajjan. His men gave them good food to eat, and comfortable beds to sleep on. When the travellers fell asleep, they were killed. Their bodies were thrown into a well. All their belongings were taken by Sajjan. A very large number of unsuspecting travellers had been killed and robbed in this way. But this fact was not known to the people. They regarded him as a good, generous person, who took delight in serving weary travellers by providing them free food and lodging.

Guru Nanak had heard much about Sajjan's hospitality and free service. But he had made a correct judgement about that man's

life, character and actions. He decided to reform him, to change him into a good and God fearing man, a true *sajjan* or friend of the people.

Thus determined, the Guru, accompanied by Bhai Mardana, went to Sajjan's habitation. They were welcomed by Sajjan's men at the gate. They were taken to a cosy, well-furnished room. Soon Sajjan also came there. He was dressed in spotless white, like a pious man. In his left hand he had a rosary like a Hindu hermit. In his right hand he held a staff or thick stick in the fashion of a Muslim *fakir*. As he saw his two newly arrived guests, he was very happy because from the Guru's appearance, he had concluded that he was quite rich and must have with him cash and some valuable gems and all that would be his before daybreak.

After greeting the Guru most humbly and respectfully, Sajjan seated himself at the Guru's feet. The Guru asked him his name. He replied, "My name is Sajjan, a friend and humble servant of all. The Hindus call me Sajjan Mal. The Musalmans call me Sajjan Shah. But I am neither a Hindu nor a Musalman. Rather, I am both."

Sajjan's servants brought food for the two guests. The Guru declined to have anything. Sajjan and his men vainly tried their best to persuade the Guru to take some food or drink. Mardana, of course, could not eat or drink anything without his Master's permission. That permission he did not get.

Although cosy beds had been prepared for them in the room but Guru sat on the floor. Bhai Mardana did likewise. Sajjan begged him with folded hands to grace the bed and take rest for the night. The Guru smiled and said, "No friend, cosy, soft beds are not for *fakirs*. I am very comfortable as and where I am. The time for rest

for me has not yet come. You go and rest.”

Sajjan bowed and went away. He got together his men and began to devise ways and means of acquiring the Guru's precious possessions. It was decided to kill him and his companion by squeezing their throats in the small hours of the morning. After this decision, Sajjan retired to his bedroom. He tried to sleep but sleep would not come. He lay awake, lost in thought and worry. He suddenly heard sweet music coming from the Guru's room. It charmed him out of his bed. He quietly stole to the door of the room from where the music came. He peeped into the room. He saw that the Guru was sitting on the floor with his eyes closed. There was sparkle of innumerable gems on his forehead. Mardana was playing the *rabab* or rebeck and singing a sacred song. The sweet soft music, the message of the song, and the look on the Guru's face drew him. He went in quietly, bowed and took his seat near the door.

After a time Bhai Mardana stopped singing. The music on the rebeck continued, however. The Guru then lifted his sweet melodious voice and began to sing a song he composed just for the occasion. It described the tricks of deceivers and criminals like Sajjan, who posed to be pious and charitable in order to practise their wicked deeds.

Sajjan heard the sacred song, silent and spellbound. He felt that the Guru had read his mind and heart; that he knew what sort of life he was leading.

The Guru then turned to his pious looking host and said, “My friend, are you really a *sajjan* or friend? You welcome people to your place. But what happens to them afterwards? Sajjan, you may deceive people; but you cannot deceive God. He watches and knows all your deeds. You are gathering wealth and riches by killing

and robbing people. When you die, all this wealth will remain here. The sins which you commit for it will go with you, a heavy burden for your soul to carry. You will be punished for them. None will come to your help then. Take heed, my Sajjan, misguided friend. It is never too late to mend. There is still time to win God's forgiveness and love. Will you try, dear Sajjan?"

Sajjan burst into tears. He fell at the Guru's feet, and said, "I will obey you. I will do all that you tell me to do. Tell me how I may wash away my sins and earn God's forgiveness, pleasure and love."

The Guru told him to stand up and listen. He said, "Confess all your evil deeds. Be sorry for them from the bottom of your heart. Pray to God for His forgiveness and love. Give away all your wealth to the poor. Begin to live and act like a good and honest man. Be a true *sajjan* or friend of all. Help all who need your help. God will be pleased with you. He will forgive you and bestow His pleasure on you. I shall pray for you."

Sajjan again fell at the Guru's feet. He promised to live and act as advised. He gave away his wealth to the poor. He became the Guru's disciple. The criminal's den became a *dharamsala*, a temple for God's worship. It was the first *dharamsala* or Sikh gurdwara established by the Guru. Sajjan began to preach Sikh religion. He began to work as a missionary to preach the Guru's gospel in the south and west.

Tour to the East

The Guru thus spent some time in Punjab, travelling by short stages and visiting numerous places. Everywhere he taught the people the main principles of his religion and established a *manji* or a missionary centre.

Having done all this, he decided to proceed on long and extensive missionary tours to places outside Punjab. These tours are called *udasis*. They were four in number. The first one was to the east, the second to the south, the third to the north, and the fourth to the west.

During the first tour, which was towards the east, he visited important centres of the Hindu religion. His plan was to contact and address large multitudes of people in every such place. Hence he attended the holy places on festive occasions or fairs. His method of approach was dramatic. In order to make himself conspicuous and draw the people's attention, he wore a peculiar dress. Then, on reaching among the assembled pilgrims, he proceeded to do something most unusual and extraordinary, something which the pilgrims regarded an insult to their religion, and make them raise loud roars and protests. As the angry pilgrims gathered round him, he quickly convinced them of their errors, and made them realize the right way to worship and please God.

During his first tour, he wore a strange dress which was a mixture of Hindu and Muhammedan religious costumes. He put on a long ochre coloured gown, with a white waist band. On his head he carried the conical cap of Musalman *kalandars* or reculse. He wore a garland of bones, round his neck. He had a pair of shoes of different designs

on his feet. He had a saffron mark imprinted on his forehead in the style of Hindus. This was an early indication of his desire to found a religion which would be acceptable to both Hindus and Muhammedans, but which would not conform to either faith. With a dress of this strange type and his odd appearance, there was no need for him to advertise his arrival.

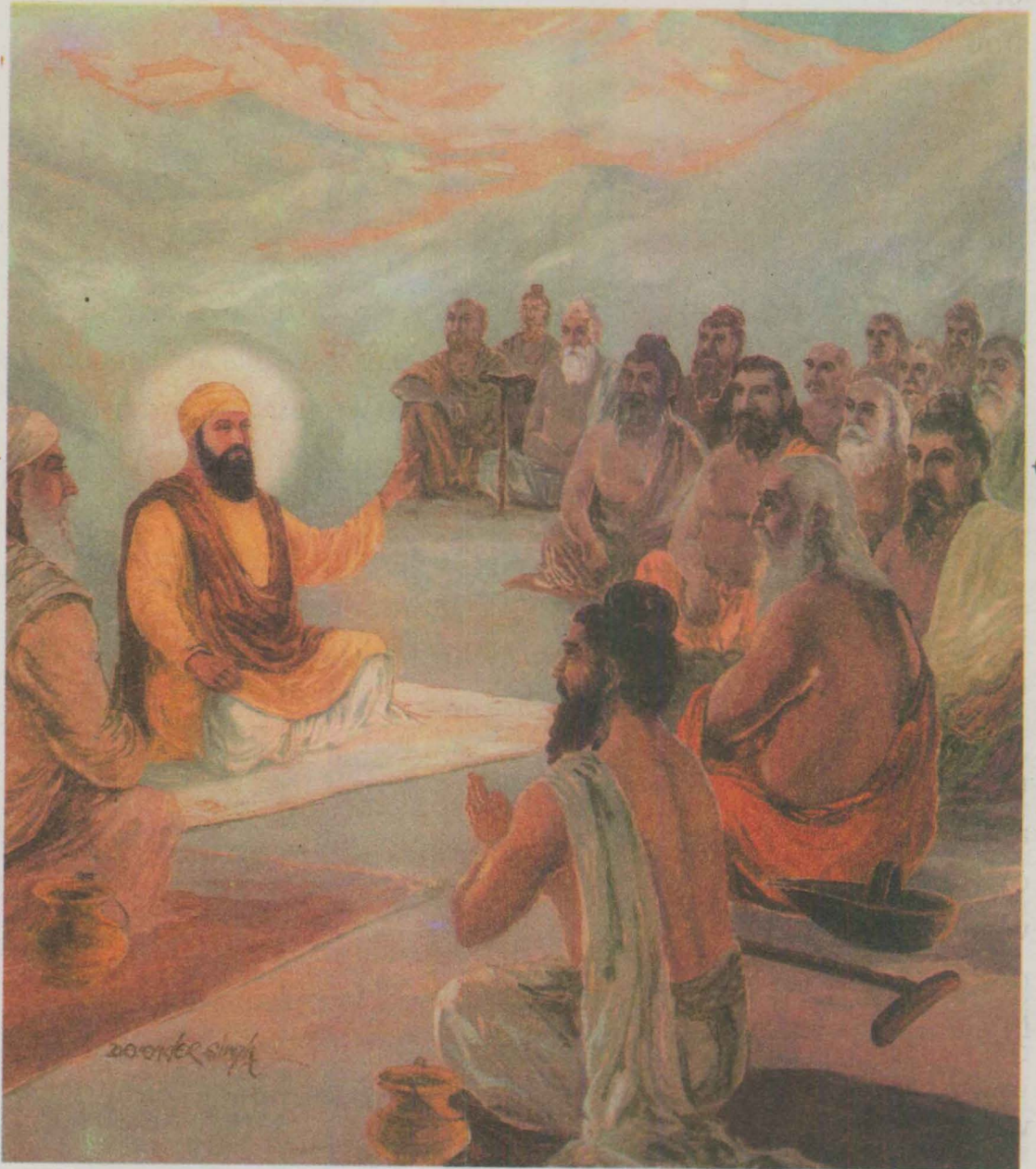
Kurukshetra

Thus dressed and accompanied by Bhai Mardana, the Guru started on his tour to the east. Soon he heard that a Hindu religious fair was to be held at Kurukshetra on the occasion of solar eclipse. Thousands of people were coming there in order to bathe in the sacred tank. He decided to visit that place with the object of preaching to the assembled pilgrims. Accordingly he went there and took his seat near the tank. The pilgrims were busy in bathing, praying and giving alms to Brahmins. They hoped, thereby, to wash away their sins and to rescue the sun god from the clutches of his enemies; for they had been taught by the priests that the solar-eclipse was caused by two demons, Rahu and Ketu, who had taken the sun in their grip. The Guru watched these simple minded, misguided people with amusement and sympathy. He asked Bhai Mardana to play the rebeck. He himself sang one of his soul stirring songs. Very few cared to listen; for they were all busy in washing off their sins and rescuing the sun god.

At that time a queen and her son came along. The young prince had been hunting in the neighbourhood and had killed a deer. They presented the deer to the Guru. He accepted it and began to cook it. This horrified the pilgrims and the priests. They rushed towards him to give him a thrashing. They said that he was

doing something forbidden by Hindu religion, was doing so at a holy place, and at a time when the sun god was in the grip of his enemies. The Brahmins expressed their horror at his behaviour.

The Guru remained calm, cool and smiling. He sang a sacred song intended to remove their wrong notions about flesh and its



use. He told them, "Your objections against flesh are based on wrong beliefs. While you roar and quarrel about flesh, you don't know what flesh is, how it differs from vegetables, and in what lies sin and evil. Man is like all other animals in having a body of flesh. In flesh we are conceived, from flesh we are born; we are all vessels of flesh. Hence flesh in itself is not fit to be hated and avoided. Your notions about it are all wrong."

"You consider it a sin to eat the flesh of animals like the deer, but you think it no sin to suck people's blood, to snatch and steal other people's rights and belongings, to commit adultery and a thousand other black and evil deeds. But why talk to people who have no proper understanding, who eat things that ought not to be eaten, and abstain from what ought to be eaten? They lack divine knowledge and wrangle about things which are of no consequence or importance. You believe that those who take meat are sinners and will go to hell. You accept gifts and offerings from those very sinners, and believe that by abstaining from meat, you will save yourselves from going to hell where your benefactors are doomed to go. Don't you see how wrong it would be that givers should go to hell and receivers to heaven?"

"Moreover, you cannot avoid the use of flesh as long as you use water, which is the source of all life. Corn, sugar-cane, cotton, and all vegetables are produced from water; water assists the growth of vegetables and on vegetables animals are fed. There is life in vegetables. In nature living beings feed on living beings. God has so designed and willed it. Hence there is nothing unnatural or ungodly in eating flesh."

"As for the eclipse, it is a simple natural occurrence. No demon whatsoever has anything to do with it. No gifts to Brahmins, no dips

in the sacred waters, no prayers, in fact, nothing that man can do, can be of any avail here. The eclipse will soon go as it came. Give up these senseless acts. Think of God. Worship Him by meditating on Him and serving His children. Earn your living with the sweat of your brows, share your honest earnings with the needy and the poor. You will win His pleasure and become acceptable to Him."

They who had come to stone and thrash the Guru, became his disciples. They established a *dharamsala* in which God's name could be recited and the weak and weary could find food and shelter.

Delhi

After a short stay at Kurukshetra, the Guru again resumed his tour. As usual, he travelled by short stages, halted for a day or two at every village, and preached his religion to the people there. The listeners in all such places accepted him as their Guru or divine teacher, and became his disciples or Sikhs. They learnt the sacred songs composed and sung by him.

Travelling thus, the Guru and Bhai Mardana reached Delhi. Sikander Lodhi was the emperor at that time. He was a ferocious and a cruel man. He was oppressing his Hindu subjects and forcing them to choose between Islam and death. All men of religion who preached peace, goodwill and toleration were picked out by him and put through great torture. At the time of the Guru's visit to Delhi, a vast number of people were in prison for no other fault than that of being Hindus and refusing to become Muslims. They had to work at hand mills and grind corn. Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana were, likewise, arrested and put in prison. Like other prisoners, they were set to work at hand mills and given corn to grind.

By nature, the Guru was always happy and at peace in every

situation in which he was placed. To him all happened as willed by God. It was one of his cardinal principles to accept with joy whatever was ordained by Him. So he began to do the labour without showing or feeling any uneasiness. But he saw around him half-starved, innocent, weak men, who, under the fear of the jailor's lashes, were doing work which was too much for them. The sight touched the Guru's heart. He asked Bhai Mardana to play the rebeck and began to sing his sweet, soul-stirring sacred songs. All the prisoners forgot their mills and ills. The jailor and his warders forgot their duty of enforcing labour. All stood spellbound as they listened to the divine music. The Emperor was informed about this and he also came and joined the crowd of listeners.

The Guru sang of the supreme Lord and His infinite mercy and grace; he sang of man's duty to the Father of all and to his fellow creatures; he sang of the great Judge who was ever watching and recording every man's thoughts and acts; he sang what was to happen to man in the life to come, where all had to reap what they had sown in this life.

The Emperor's heart was deeply touched by the divine song. He was filled with remorse for what he had done. He threw open the prison gates and freed all captives. He bowed to the Guru and begged forgiveness for his wrong acts. The Guru said, "Forgiveness can be obtained by sincere repentance and honest efforts to undo the wrongs done to God's creatures. As an emperor, it is your duty to be just and kind to all your subjects, Hindus and Muslims alike. To be happy and at peace in this life, and to be free from pain and suffering in the life to come, you should be a just and merciful ruler." Sikander Lodhi promised to abide by the Guru's advice.

Hardwar

The Guru alongwith Bhai Mardana again resumed his tour. Travelling as usual, by short slow stages, he visited many villages and towns. In every place, he halted for a night and preached his religion to all those who came in touch with him. Travelling thus, he reached Hardwar.

A religious fair was, at that time, being held at Hardwar. Thousands of Hindus had gathered there for the purpose of washing away their sins by a dip in the sacred waters of the Ganga. The Guru saw that while standing in the river, they were throwing with their right hands, handfuls of water towards the sun, then rising in the east. They believed that the water would reach their dead ancestors.

The Guru did not believe in such things. He believed that what they did was wrong. As usual, he decided to make them see their error by acting in a dramatic manner. He stepped into the river. Putting his hands together so as to form a cup, he began to throw water to the west. This act of his was very strange indeed. Nobody had done such a thing ever before.

People began to gather round him. Soon he was surrounded by a large crowd. They were greatly astonished and amused by what he was doing. They began to laugh and shout at him. He paid no heed to them, but went on throwing water to the west. Then one of them held him by the arm and said, "Who are you? What are you doing? Why are you throwing water to the west?"

The Guru said, calmly and in all seriousness, "Have patience, brothers. I shall answer all your questions to your satisfaction. But first let me know why you throw water to the east."

"Don't you know this?" shouted many of them at him. "We are throwing water towards the rising sun purposely. The sun god will make this water reach our dead forefathers. They need it very much. It will quench their thirst and give them relief and satisfaction. That will bestow happiness on us."

The Guru said, "I did not know this. But where do your dead ancestors live? How far off is that place from here?"

A learned man among them replied, "They are in the other world, millions of miles away from here."

"Are you sure?" said the Guru. "Will the water thrown by you reach your dead ancestors, living in some other world millions of miles away? Will it quench their thirst?"

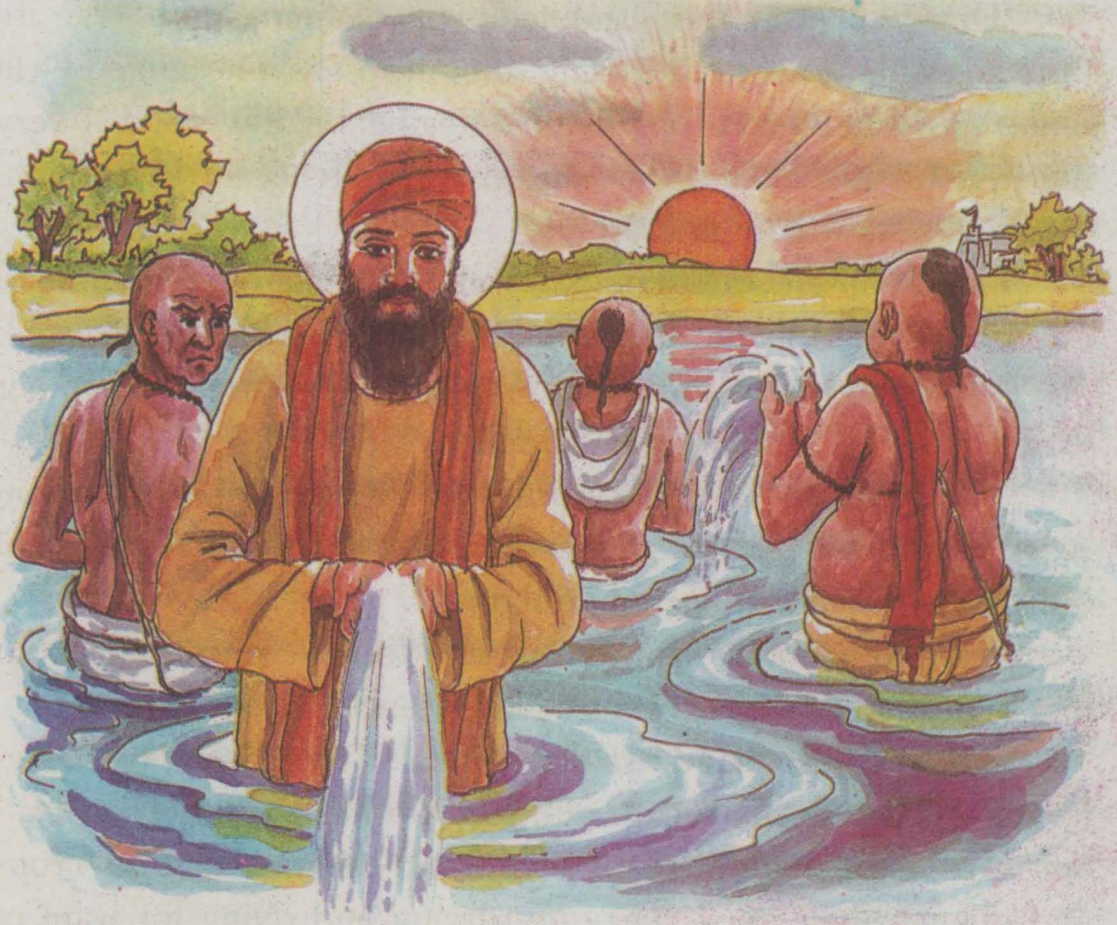
"Yes," replied the learned man. "We have no doubt about that. Our sacred books give us that assurance."

"Thanks, dear friend," said the Guru. "That is very good news for me. While you may go on with your work and satisfy your dead ancestors, let me complete my own work. Let me water my crops and quench their thirst. They are drying and dying for want of water. I am here, and there is none there to water them. We can sit together and talk after that."

Saying this, he began to throw water to the west more rapidly and more eagerly than before. The crowd gathered round him began to laugh, and to shout still more loudly. They said, "Where are your crops? Where are your fields?"

"In Punjab," said the Guru. "They are only a few hundred miles from here. They need water. I felt sad to think that, during my absence, they might dry up and die for want of water."

He was about to begin his work again. But they shouted, "How simple you are! The water thrown by you falls back into the



sacred river. Don't you see that? How can it reach your fields in Punjab?"

"How wonderfully wise you are!" said the Guru. "Your dead ancestors are, as you say, millions of miles away from here. They are not even on this earth but in another world. The water thrown by you also falls back into the river. Is it not so? But you say that it will, all the same, reach your dead forefathers. My fields are on this very earth. They are only a few hundred miles from here. Why should not the water thrown by me reach those fields? If the water

thrown by you can reach your dead ancestors, the water thrown by me can and must surely reach my fields."

The people had nothing more to say. They felt that the Guru was right. They realized their error. They begged him to give them more good advice. He explained to them the three main rules or principles of his religion. He told them that they should learn to live as good, honest, truthful, and God fearing men; they should earn their living by the sweat of their brows; they should share their honest earnings with the needy and the poor; they should, at all time, think of God as watching all their acts and knowing all their thoughts; and they should prevail upon others to take to the same path. If all lived thus, there would be no need for anyone to perform any such vain ceremonials such as offering water to the ancestors in that way. Then, after a pause, he said, "What you give to the poor and needy out of your honest earnings, in the name of your ancestors, will reach and benefit them. It will also go with you to the next world when you go from here."

The people bowed their heads. They became his disciples. They promised to live and act as advised by him.

The Guru stayed in Hardwar for a few days at a place which is now called Nanak Wara.

The Brahmins and *sadhus* who watched the Guru, were deeply shocked to see that he did not observe the rules of ceremonial purity prescribed in their sacred books. He prepared and took his food without having a proper cooking-square. He also took the food offered to him by the common people, no matter to what caste they belonged. The Brahmins and *sadhus* came to him and scolded him for ignoring the rules of purity laid down in the old books.

"What purity?" asked the Guru. "What rules? My body is

cleaner than your bodies. It is not covered with dust and ashes, as those of some among you are. My clothes are cleaner than yours and those of the people whom you consider pure. The people who bring me food are also clean. How then do I break the rules of real purity? Give up, my friends, these false ideas of ceremonial purity. Purify your minds and hearts, rid them of evil and sin, and keep your bodies neat and clean. Then none in the world will defile you. No human touch will then pollute your body or your food."

The Brahmins and *sadhus* bowed and begged for further instruction. He blessed them with the light to live a true life of the spirit, a life spent in constant worship of God and in the love and service of His children.

Having completed his mission at Hardwar, the Guru started on his journey once again. As usual, he travelled by short stages, delivering to the people on the way his message of love, honest labour, service, and devotion. In due course he reached Banaras, also called Kashi and now renamed Varanasi.

The Guru and Mardana sat down in a public square of the city. The place is now marked with a gurdwara called Guru-ka-Bagh. There he had a long discussion with Pandit Chatur Das, the most learned Brahmin of that place. The pandit was made to realize that God resided in every human heart and could be adored in the form of the Holy Name.

Chatur Das became a Sikh of the Guru and began to work as the Guru's missionary. He did much to spread Sikhism in the locality.

From Banaras the Guru travelled to Gaya and thence to Patna. In these cities, as well in the numerous places on the way, large numbers of people came into his fold and began to live and worship as advocated by Guru Nanak.

A Charmer Charmed

The Guru moved on further into Bihar and Bengal. In due course, he reached the territory of Kamrup in Assam. The women of that region were extremely beautiful and famous for their skill in magic and charm. It was ruled by a queen named Nur Shah. They lived in a palace at Dhanpur. The Guru and his companion arrived in that town. They halted under a tree, a little away from that town. Bhai Mardana felt hungry. He begged the Guru's permission to see the town and get some food. The Guru said, "You may go, but you must be careful how to behave. Take care not to fall into the snares of the women of the place. All the time, think of God and proceed with care."

As said above, Nur Shah was the chief among the women of that place. She had acquired great powers by cultivating her will power. By her will power she could master the wills of those who came near her. Under her spell they acted, felt, and suffered according to her suggestions. They danced to her tune. Many *sadhus*, *fakirs*, and men of repute had fallen into this beautiful woman's net and lived as her slaves.

Mardana went to Nur Shah's palace. A number of beautiful women met him at the gate, bade him welcome, and took him to their queen. She welcomed him to a rich feast. Then she looked into his eyes with a steady gaze. Mardana shivered a bit. For some minutes he was able to resist her influence; for he remembered his Guru and God. But, gradually, her strong will power mastered him. His senses felt clouded. He felt sleepy. He fell on his knees and kissed the ground she stood on. He obeyed her signs and suggestions

like a tame lamb. He would cry like a babe, or laugh and clap like a fool. He was reduced to a state of mind in which he considered himself to be a lamb and began to behave as such. He was so overpowered, that by obeying Nur Shah's wishes, he cried, bleated, and stood on all fours, as lambs do. Thus ensnared, he forgot all about his Master, Guru Nanak.

The Guru sat outside the town, meditating on God. When Mardana did not return for long, the Guru directed his mind's eye to the place where his companion had gone. He saw the latter caught in Nur Shah's snare. He decided to release his companion and also to rescue that charmer from her evil practices. He got up, said "*Sat Kartar*", and started towards her palace. Crossing the threshold, he stood near the gate. Her maids, all charmingly beautiful, gathered around him. They welcomed and invited him to come in. They tried their art on him, to charm and enslave him, but to no avail. He remained unmoved and unshaken. He fixed his eyes on them. They trembled. They lost all power to move and act. They stood motionless like statues of stone.

Nur Shah was then in her room. She felt drawn from there by some strange, invisible force. She came out in the courtyard. She saw the Guru standing near the gate. His face was glowing with divine light. She saw her maids standing fixed and motionless, like so many statues of stone, with lowered looks and bowed necks. What she saw sent a shiver through her body. She had designed to conquer the Guru; but, at the sight of his divine face, all her power of will seemed to have left her. Still, for a while she tried to use all her arts to overpower the Guru, to work her magic on him. But all was in vain. He remained unconquered. She then turned towards her maids. She tried to wake them up. But she failed.

Nur Shah was puzzled. She concluded that the Guru was a more powerful magician than she. The would-be conqueror was conquered. She bowed before him. She placed a pile of jewels in front of him and prayed, "O great magician, take all this wealth. Accept me as your slave. Teach me your magic, and release my maids."

The Guru told her to take away her jewels. She thereupon realized that she has failed to tempt or subdue him with her beauty, magic, and wealth. She fell at his feet and said, "O Master, I admit defeat. I pray for mercy and light. Kindly release my maids. Henceforth, we shall live and act as you may be pleased to order us."

The Guru looked at the maids, uttered "*Sat Kartar*", and said "Wake up, girls, return to your normal condition." They woke at once and were back to their normal selves. They fell at his feet and prayed for mercy. The Guru said, "You and your queen are now humbled. You will have mercy." Then the Guru turned to Nur Shah and said, "It is not good to indulge in practical jokes with servants of God. Return my man to me."

Nur Shah bowed, went in where Mardana was, and bade him rise and follow her. He obeyed. On reaching the courtyard, he saw his Master. He knelt before him, kissed his feet, and said, "O Master, where have I been? What happened to me? I think I have been bleating, howling, crying and going on all fours. These women had turned me into a lamb. How good of you to have come to my rescue, to release me from their grip, and make me a man again! How sorry I am for having once again acted like a fool! I should have stayed with you. I go wrong too often, but you are kind, merciful, and forgiving."

The Guru bade Bhai Mardana rise and play the rebeck. He

then sang a song specially composed for the occasion and addressed to Nur Shah and her maids. They realized how they had been wasting away their lives in evil deeds. They realized that they had been making a wrong use of their powers of body and mind. They swore to mend their ways, to lead good, useful, and virtuous lives, not to use their beauty for indulgence in sensual pleasure, but to utilize it for leading purposeful, domestic lives, as dutiful and loving wives, mothers, and neighbours.

Nur Shah was filled with deep remorse. She repented her sins and follies. The Guru instructed her in the principles of his faith. She released all whom she had enslaved with her magic. She distributed all her wealth among the poor, and began to lead a life of love, service, and devotion. She became a preacher of the Guru's faith. A gurdwara was later constructed at the spot where Nur Shah had been won and installed as a preacher of Sikhism.

Back in Punjab

From Assam the Guru returned by the great river Brahmaputra. By proceeding along the coast, he came to Cuttack, where there is a gurdwara, named *Datan Sahib*, which commemorates the Guru's visit.

The Guru continued to travel on. After some time he reached Puri. There he visited the temple of Jagannath, and held a discussion with its priests regarding the right method of offering worship to God. They liked his method and became his followers.

Many people became his disciples also. They heard his stirring, soul-awakening, sacred songs. They listened to his divine discourses with the utmost faith and attention. He stayed there for some time. He established a centre of Sikh mission there. His disciples built a temple of God at the place where he had stayed. They assembled there, every morning and evening, and sang his sacred songs. He lived in their hearts and guided their steps.

After a short stay at Puri, the Guru decided to return to Punjab. He reached Sultanpur Lodhi after an absence of about twelve years. Needless to say that he was given a most hearty welcome by the devout people of the town. Too great for words was the joy for his sister Nanki. They all begged him not to leave them again. He knew their love for him; he was keenly conscious of his duty towards them. He, too, loved them for he had a human heart. But a greater duty towards the widespread family of mankind was still calling him. So he could not stay for long at home with his family.

After staying for some time at Sultanpur, Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana started towards Talwandi. When they arrived near

Talwandi, they halted in the forest about three miles from the village. Mardana desired to meet his people. The Guru permitted him to do so and added, "Go also to my parent's house; inform them that I am all right; but don't tell anyone where I am now."

Mardana first went to his house, and after meeting his people, proceeded to Mehta Kalu's house. The Guru's mother was deeply moved to see her son's companion. She asked him, "Where is my son? Where have you left him?"

Remembering the Guru's last orders, Mardana said nothing except that her son was quite well and they need not worry. Then he took his leave. The Guru's mother said to herself, "Mardana did not answer my questions. He did not tell me where my son is. He has gone away suddenly. Most probably, he has behaved in this strange way because he must have been asked to do so by Nanak. He is surely going back to him."

Thinking thus, she took a set of new clothes for her son, followed Mardana, and overtook him in no time.

Mardana and the Guru's mother soon reached the spot where the Guru was. On seeing her, he stood up and touched her feet. She kissed his forehead, took him in her embrace, and began to sob saying, "Son! Blessed is the ground which your feet touch, and blessed are the people whom you meet and talk to. How happy I am to see you again. How I earnestly desire you to give up your wanderings, live with the family and turn your attention to earning a livelihood."

The Guru was deeply moved at her words. He told Mardana to play the rebeck. Then he sang a sacred song in which he said, "To persons who are in the habit of taking a drug, nothing is so dear as their favourite stimulant; to a fish, nothing is so dear and essential

as water. Similarly, to those who are sincerely fond of God, nothing seems to be so dear as He. Nothing can make me give Him up. I am His, all in all, I have to be in His service, to do what He bids me do, and go where He bids me go. The whole world is my home; all its people make up my family."

The fond mother then asked him to take off the *fakir's* dress which he wore, and put on the new clothes which she had brought for him. But the Guru said that he was quite happy and comfortable in his present dress.

Soon his father also arrived. The Guru bowed to him and touched his feet. Mehta Kalu affectionately hugged his son, shedding tears of joy all the time. He asked him to come and stay with them in the new house he had built, even if only for a short period of time.

The Guru replied, "The pleasure that I get by uttering His Name cannot come to me even if I live in a palace. To be ever attached to His feet gives me more joy than family life can give. I go where He bids me to go. To obey Him is the highest bliss for me."

He further added that he has no desire for the joys and pleasures of the world. He loved to enjoy God's blissful company, and to make others enjoy the same supreme bliss. He has come to visit them; for he had promised to do so; otherwise, his work was not yet complete; his travels were not yet ended; the divine call was still ringing in his ears. He can not stay back for long. But he promised that he would visit them again.

They had to bow before the high resolve of their son. In obedience to their wishes, he stayed with them for a few days. Then he set forth again on his travels alongwith Mardana as he was always with him.

Hamza Gaus of Sialkot

After leaving Talwandi, Guru Nanak and Mardana set out on their travels again. This time they proceeded towards the west. Travelling in his customary way, visiting and halting at village after village, the Guru reached Sultanpur Lodhi. There his sister, Bibi Nanki, was so happy to see her brother at her door. She rushed out to meet and welcome him. The news of his arrival spread in the town in no time. All his disciples and admirers, including the Nawab, were extremely happy to see him. He met and talked to them with kindness and love. He repeated to them his message of the Beloved Lord.

After a short stay at Sultanpur, he started on his travels again. He proceeded westwards. After crossing the river Beas, he visited Vairoval, Jalalabad, and other nearby places. After some time he reached a village called Kiri Pathaana. The Pathaan residents of the place, who were all Muslims, heard his sacred songs with great attention, and became his disciples.

The Guru continued his journey. He visited Batala in the Gurdaspur district. From there he proceeded a second time to Saidpur (Eminabad) where he again visited Bhai Lalo. The latter told the Guru some of the cruel deeds of Pathaans who ruled the country. The Guru was deeply moved to hear what Bhai Lalo had to say. Then he said, "Bhai Lalo, our land has suffered numerous woes. More are coming. The Pathaan tyrants will go. Babar will soon be here to conquer India. His invasion will cause untold loss and sufferings to the people. This city of yours is also doomed to destruction. But His will has to prevail."

When the Guru was staying with Bhai Lalo, the inhabitants of Sialkot came face to face with a terrible situation. It happened thus. In that city there lived a Muslim *pir* (holymen) named Hamza Gaus. He had many followers and was held in high esteem by the people. In the same city there was a Hindu *khatri* who had no child. He approached the Muslim *pir* and begged him to pray for him so that he be blessed with a son. He added, if he is blessed with more than one son, he will offer the first-born to him. The *pir* promised to pray as requested.

By the grace of God, he was blessed with three sons. He had not forgotten his promise about the first-born. But his fatherly love stood against the fulfilment of that promise. He took the eldest son to the *pir* and said, "I have brought my first born son to formally hand over to you as per my promise. He now belongs to you. Now please set his price. I will pay that, and buy him from you; because such is the practice in such cases." But the *pir* wanted to have the boy and nothing else. The *khatri* offered him a large sum of money. He was ready to give weight for weight in silver or even gold. But the *pir* would have none of it. The *khatri* took back the child to his home.

The *pir* was beside himself with rage. He vowed vengeance not only against the Hindus, but on the whole city which harboured such a promise-breaker. So he shut himself in a small room which had a dome over it. He directed his disciples not to disturb him, not to let him be disturbed on any account. He would, he said, come out himself when his objective had been achieved. He wanted to remain shut up in that room for forty days. During that time he would concentrate his mental powers to destroy the city.

The news of the *pir*'s resolve soon spread in the city. The people, who believed that the *pir* did really possess powers to destroy

the city, were in great fear and despair. A deputation of chosen people went to the *pir's* cell and requested for his forgiveness. But the *pir* remained unmoved.

Guru Nanak at that time was Bhai Lalo's guest. He got ready to depart at once. He said, "The people of Sialkot are in great distress. They need my help!" Passing through Pasrur, he reached the city of his destination. He sat outside by the side of an old graveyard under a *ber* tree. The dome of *pir's* cell was visible from there. Soon he sent Mardana to the door of the *pir's* cell. He was to tell the guards at the door that a devotee of the Father of all had arrived, and wanted to have a talk with the *pir*. Mardana did as desired. But they said that they could not act against the *pir's* orders not to disturb him. Mardana returned to the Guru and informed him of what he had been told. He was sent again. He was told to appeal in the name of God and on behalf of the people of the city who were in great panic. If all such appeals failed, he was to tell the watchman at the door that their *pir's chila* or penance would be broken by the will of God exactly at noon that very day. Mardana went and said all this. But the *pir's* disciples did not yield. All the same, Mardana's words did alarm them a good deal.

Gradually, news spread in the city that a strangely dressed man of God had arrived; that he had tried to get an opportunity to talk with the *pir*, in order to persuade him to give up his resolve; and that, having failed to get such an opportunity, he had foretold that the *pir* would fail to do any harm because his *chila* would break by God's will. A large crowd gathered around the Guru. He sat with his eyes half-shut and directed at the dome under which sat the *pir*. Mardana was playing the rebeck and singing the Guru's sacred songs.

The people sat in great suspense, fear, and expectation. The sun slowly climbed up the sky. Exactly at noon, a loud sound was heard from the direction of the dome. It seemed that a strong building had suddenly cracked as if by a bolt of thunder. It was found that the dome under which the *pir* sat had cracked. Bright rays of the mid-day sun had entered the room and fallen on the *pir's* head. The loud sound of the crack, and the beam of rays which had suddenly fallen on him in the dark, had shaken him. He thought that the roof was about to fall on him. He got up, opened the door, and rushed out of the cell in great panic.

The *pir's chila* was thus broken. The people felt relieved. They bowed to the Guru and thanked him for what he had done for them. Soon, the *pir* himself came to the Guru in great humility. The Guru told him that it had been wrong on his part to have thought of punishing the whole city because of his grievance against one citizen. The *pir* complained that the *khatri* had broken his promise and deserved punishment. The people of the city were also at fault because they had not forced him to keep his word. In fact, he added, the people of that place were liars and deserved no mercy.

The Guru said, "But sinners and wrong-doers should be reformed and brought on to the right path. They should not be destroyed. God is Love. Those who profess to be His devotees should love and serve His children. Moreover, I cannot believe that all people here are liars."

The Guru then said to Mardana, "Go to the market-place of the city and purchase for me a paisa worth of what is true and paisa worth of what is false." Accordingly, Mardana went round the shops, asking for what he wanted. All laughed at his strange demand.

Nobody understood what he meant till he reached the shop of Mula Karar. The latter wrote on a slip of paper, "Death is true and life is false." Mardana returned with the paper to the Guru.

On getting the slip of paper, the Guru said to the *pir*, "You see, here we have one who is spiritually alive, who knows what is true and what is false. Surely, he is not a liar. So your anger against the whole city was wrong."

The *pir* was convinced of his error. He bowed before the Guru and vowed to live, thenceforth, as a torch-bearer of the loving and merciful God. The *ber* tree, under which the Guru sat, still exists and is called Baba's Ber. A gurdwara stands at the site in memory of the event. The domed cell of the *pir*, with its cracked top, stands within sight of the gurdwara.



Duni Chand of Lahore

The Guru continued his wanderings. He went from village to village, instructing people as he went along. Travelling thus by short stages, and conveying his message to the people in every place, he reached near Lahore. He sat on the bank of the river Ravi. Mardana played the rebeck and sang the Guru's sacred songs. Sometimes the Guru himself would lift his sweet melodious voice, and sing of God and man's duty towards Him and His creatures.

Gradually people began to assemble round him in order to hear him sing and talk. Among such people came a rich man named Duni Chand. He was deeply impressed by the Guru's words. He begged the Guru to visit and bless his house. The Guru smiled and said, "Brother, servants of God, like me, are better away from rich and luxurious houses."

But Duni Chand begged again and again. The fact was that he was performing his father's *sharadh* ceremony. He had feasted a large number of Brahmins and *sadhus*. He wanted to feast the Guru as well. So the Guru agreed to accompany Duni Chand to his house. He had decided to bestow on that worldly rich man a higher kind of wealth of which he had none, the wealth of the spiritual life.

Observing the crowd of Brahmins and others who were being fed, the Guru asked Duni Chand what was going on. He replied that he was performing his father's *sharadh* ceremony. "What is it for?" asked the Guru. "To feed my dead father's spirit," replied Duni Chand. "Have you satisfied his hunger?" Asked the Guru.

"I think so," replied Duni Chand. "The head Brahmin has

assured me that the spirit of my father has got enough to last him for a whole year.”

“And did you believe him?” asked the Guru, with a meaningful smile on his lips. “What a simple man you are! How could the food eaten by these Brahmins have reached your father? For your information your father is dying of hunger. He has been reborn as a wolf and goes about hungry.”

“Is that so?” said Duni Chand, in great surprise and sadness. “Can't I do anything for him? Where is he?”

The Guru said, “The said wolf, at this time, lies under a bush near a mulberry tree, about six miles away. You may verify yourself, if you like. Carry some food with you. Go into the forest on the river bank. You will see a wolf under a mulberry. Don't fear. Go near him and give him some food. It will satisfy his hunger. Then your father's spirit will be released from the wolf's body.”

Duni Chand did as directed. He found a hungry wolf under a bush. He gave him the food that he had carried with him. The wolf ate it and then breathed its last.

Duni Chand returned to his house. He bowed at the Guru's feet and prayed to be enlightened. Thereupon, the Guru gave him a needle and said, “Will you do me a little favour? Take this needle and keep it in a safe place. Give it back to me when I ask for it in the next world.”

Duni Chand was in a state of mental confusion. The meeting with his father's spirit in a wolf's body had upset him greatly. He was not in a fit condition to think or reason. He took the needle and gave it to his wife, saying, “Our holy guest wants us to keep it for him. He says he will get it back from us in the next world. Keep it in a safe place. We should be careful lest we lose it.”

His wife was a pious and thoughtful woman. She said, "The holy man wants us to do what we cannot do at all. How can we take this needle with us to the other world? All material things will remain here, and our spirits will go to the other world. We should return the needle to him and tell him that we cannot take it with us to the other world."

Duni Chand and his wife went to the Guru, placed the needle before him, and said, "Holy Sir, we cannot take it with us to the other world."

The Guru smiled and said, "So now you are sure that you cannot take even a needle with you to the next world. Have you ever thought of the life to come and your needs in that life? Won't you like to carry some of your wealth with you there?"

Duni Chand and his wife bowed their heads and said, "We don't know what to say. Kindly enlighten us. Tell us what we shall need in the life to come, and how we can manage to carry it there."

The Guru replied, "Distribute your wealth to the needy and the poor. Earn your living with the sweat of your brows, share your earnings with your needy neighbours. Love and serve all as your brothers and sisters. Meditate on God, keep Him in mind always, and pray for His grace. This wealth of God's Name, of noble and lofty thoughts, of pious noble acts of love and service, will help you in the life to come."

Thus were Duni Chand and his wife blessed. They became the Guru's disciples. They distributed their wealth among the poor, converted their house into a *dharamsala*—place of love, charity, service, worship, and devotion. They took great delight in providing for the spiritual and bodily needs of all who came to them.

At Kartarpur

After a short stay at Lahore, Guru Nanak began his travels once more. This time he directed his steps towards his native village, Talwandi. As usual, he travelled by short stages. He halted at every village on the way, delivered his message to the people, and gained many converts. In due course, he arrived at his destination. His aged parents were glad to meet him. His disciples and admirers assembled to hear him every day. His parents were blessed with spiritual insight. They accepted him as their spiritual guide and saviour.

Soon Guru Nanak started again on his tour. Travelling in his usual manner, he arrived near the river Ravi. He selected for his stay a beautiful spot on the right bank, not far from Batala. Seated there, he busied himself in meditating on God and singing his sweet divine songs. People came to meet him. They were delighted to hear his soul-inspiring songs and discourses. They accepted him as their spiritual guide and became his disciples.

The Guru's fame soon spread in that locality. Hindus and Muslims, of all classes and castes, and *sadhus* and *fakirs*, flocked to him. Inspired by his songs and discourses, they gave up their mutual hatred and jealousy, and began to live together like brothers.

Karori Mal or Karoria, who was the owner of the area, heard of the saintly visitor. But he became annoyed with the daily growing popularity of the Guru. He decided to go and tell the Guru to move away from his land. Mounting his horse, and taking with him a strong party of foot-men, he started on his mission. He had not gone far when his horse stumbled and fell headlong on the ground. He

however, suffered no serious injury, but his followers took him back home.

He rested for a couple of days, and then set out again, determined to drive away the Guru. He had not yet gone far from the gate of his house, when he felt that he could not see clearly; his eye-sight had gone. The horse came to a halt and refused to move. He got down from the horse and went back home. He was filled with wonder at what had happened. His followers said to him, "He is a holy man, a lover and servant of God. You were going to him with the intention of expelling him. So God did not allow you to proceed."

"Yes," said he, "that seems to be the case. I shall go and show him all respect." Saying this, he mounted his horse again. But as he proceeded, he lost his sight again. He was puzzled all the more. His followers advised him to go on foot. They said, "Make your heart free from pride and anger, and humbly beg his forgiveness before starting."

Karoria accepted their advice. He humbly prayed that he might be forgiven and started barefoot to meet the Guru. Soon he reached the place where the Guru was. He saw the latter seated calmly, surrounded by a large number of devotees. The sweet music that was being played filled Karoria with indescribable peace.

He fell at the Guru's feet. His whole being got filled with joy that he had never known before. The Guru affectionately asked him to take a seat near him. A great change took place in his heart. A desire to serve the Guru awoke in him. He bowed, touched the Guru's feet, and said, "O true teacher! I am blessed at the very sight of you. I feel sure that I have been forgiven. Kindly permit me to dedicate all this land to you. Allow me to build here a village for you and your disciples to live in."

The Guru smiled and said, "Let it be as you please. The land is of *Kartar* (God the Creator), and you are blessed for dedicating it to divine service. We shall name the village, Kartarpur, the seat of *Kartar*, the Creator." Duni Chand also built a *dharamsala* and a house for the Guru. Here the Guru stayed for some time. He put off the extraordinary dress which he had put on during his wanderings. He began to wear the usual dress of the people around him.

In a short time, the place grew in importance. Hearing of the Guru's settlement at Kartarpur, people came from far and near to pay their homage. Houses and *dharamsalas* were built, and the village grew in size, importance and population. His family also moved to the village. Kartarpur became the seat of the Guru. Amid singing of hymns, morning and evening, and discourses by the Guru, the congregation grew larger and larger. The free kitchen fed all who came. In the Guru's *langar* (free kitchen) no distinction of caste, creed or sex was observed. All sat and dined together as members of one family.

The Guru started a small farm which he cultivated and ploughed it himself. Of course, his disciples also worked there. He held that the right way to live is to work and to live by the produce of one's own labour. He produced not only what was enough for himself and his family, but much more. He gave the surplus to the free kitchen.

In his own person he set the example of leading a simple householder's life, and realizing the true spirit of religion—devoted to God and the service of fellow-men, combining simple life with lofty thoughts, free from outer shams and hypocrisies which keep the mind away from truth. By his own example he showed that salvation could be obtained by righteous living even amidst gaiety and laughter.

Tour to the South— Kauda Reformed

As already retold, returning from his first *udasi* or tour, Guru Nanak had founded Kartarpur, and that his family had come and settled there. For some time he lived there a householder's life among his family and devotees. At the same time, he carried on his duties as the divine teacher of humanity. After some time, he decided to resume his travels in order to convey his message to people in far-off places. This tour was to be to the south.

Mardana was ordered to stay at Kartarpur and sing the sacred songs to the disciples there. Taking with him two *jat* Sikhs, named Saido and Siho, he started towards the south. His dress was extraordinary this time, too. He wore wooden sandals on his feet; twisted a rope round his head, arms and legs; took a *fakir's* staff or stick in his hand; and put on a round mark and a line on his forehead.

Travelling from place to place by short stages, he reached Sirsa in the modern district of Hissar in Haryana. There he met a group of Muslim *fakirs*. He held discussions with them and removed a number of their misconceptions regarding life and religion.

From Sirsa the Guru proceeded towards Bikaner, and visited some of its important places. Bikaner was then a stronghold of Jains. Many of them met him and held discussions with him. He made them realize that some of their beliefs and practices were wholly wrong. He told them the meaning of true religion. He taught them the main principles of his religion, and set them to lead a life of useful activity in the midst of their fellow-men and neighbours.

From Bikaner Guru Nanak moved on to Ajmer. That place was then a stronghold of *yogis* and of sufi Muslim *fakirs*. He held discussions with the leading men of both. He told them the right way to win God's pleasure. He told the *yogis* how to practise true yoga and to the *sufi* Muslims he taught how to live in keeping with the basic principles of Islam.

From Ajmer the Guru moved further south. Passing through places like Jaisalmer, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur and Indore, he crossed the river Narmada. Thus he entered Maharashtra. He continued his missionary tour further south. He visited all important places on the way. In every place he delivered his divine message to the people, and brought them on to the right path.

The land which he was passing through was covered with hills and forests. It was inhabited by *Bheels*. These people had originally lived in the rich fertile plains of north India. From there they had been driven out by the Aryans who had come from the north-west. No wonder then, that they disliked and hated Aryan people. Most of them were wild, fierce, and given to eating human flesh. Whenever any one of the hated Aryan fell into their hands, they would kill him and eat his flesh.

Guru Nanak was well aware of all this. He knew what might happen to him while travelling in that region. But he did not feel afraid. No personal dangers could prevent him from doing what he thought was his duty. He was determined to meet and reform those people. He went from village to village, meeting the people with complete composure and self-confidence, and delivering to them his message of love and kindness of God and the brotherhood of man. He was eminently successful in his mission.

In some places, groups of *Bheels* wanted to attack him. That

was, of course, expected of them. Guru Nanak received them with his glorious, charming, and disarming smile. The divine light that lit his saintly countenance calmed and conquered them. He talked to them with sympathy and love. He told them of God, of their duty to Him and His children. They listened to him with respectful attention. They bowed and became his disciples. They vowed to live lives of useful labour and follow the path shown by him.

The Guru came to know that the chief or head of these man-eaters was one named Kauda. He decided to meet and reform him. If he succeeded there, Kauda would reform others of his tribe.

Thus determined, Guru Nanak started towards Kauda's place. As usual, he travelled by short stages. In this way, he and his two companions arrived at Kauda's place. Kauda was delighted to see three men coming. He used to go out far and wide to catch men for food. That day three of them had come to him of their own free will. That was lucky, indeed. He would have sufficient meat for many days.

He had a large and deep cauldron full of oil. He lit fire under it in order to boil the oil. He wanted to fry the victims in the boiling oil. After sometime he tested the oil to see how hot it had become. It was as cool as before. The fire had lost the power to heat the oil. He was astonished. He could not understand what had happened to the fire. He decided to roast one of them direct on the fire. He would keep the other two safely bound. He would roast and eat them later.

By now the Guru and his two companions had come very near to him. The Guru was in front. Kauda caught hold of him, in order to lift him and throw him into the fire. The Guru smiled and said, "*Sat Kartar*". Kauda was puzzled still more. He had caught and

eaten many people before. None of them had behaved in this manner. But he said to himself, "That is no reason for me to behave differently. Into the fire he goes!"

So saying he threw the Guru into the blazing fire. The latter stood up in the fire. He was smiling and looking at Kauda with eyes full of mirth and kindness. Saido and Siho were saying aloud, "*Sat Kartar, Sat Kartar.*"

Kauda was struck dumb. He began to tremble. The Guru stepped out of the fire. Kauda made no effort to push him back. The Guru took his seat on the ground near the fire. He began to sing a sacred song. Kauda stood listening. His head was bowed. His hands were folded before him.

The Guru sang of the merciful Father of mankind, of His love and care for all His creatures, and of man's duty towards Him and his fellow beings. After a time, the song ceased. The Guru looked at Kauda with a kind smile. Kauda had been won. He fell at the Guru's feet. The Guru said, "Rise, brother Kauda." Kauda obeyed. He rose, and stood with his head bowed and hands folded. The Guru continued, "Give up your cruel, inhuman way of life. Be kind and merciful. Help and serve all who need your help and service. Always remember God, the Creator and Father of all. Repeat His name. Always pray for His help and guidance. Earn your bread with honest work. Share your earnings with others. Do all this and persuade others to do the same."

Kauda bowed still lower and promised to live and act as advised by the Guru. The Guru stayed with him for a few days and taught him the right way to win peace and happiness here and hereafter. Then, entrusting his new disciple with the duty of reforming others of his tribe, the Guru resumed his journey. From a killer and eater

of men Kauda became a friend, servant and teacher of all his fellow-beings.

The Guru continued to travel southwards. He visited numerous places in the Deccan, where he delivered his message to the people and gained a large number of converts. Travelling thus, he reached the southern end of India. From there he crossed over to Sri Lanka and reached Jaffna, where Raja Shivnabh was yearning to see him. The Raja built a *dharamsala* for the Guru's stay. People began to gather to that place in order to listen to his soul inspiring songs of the Lord. They became his disciples. Raja Shivnabh was, of course, the most devoted of them all. He was entrusted with the duty of preaching the Guru's principles of life and worship in the country.

After a short stay there the Guru bade farewell to his disciples. He then undertook a tour of the whole island. As usual, he travelled from village to village. Wherever he went, he was listened to with the utmost attention. The people embraced his faith and began to recite and sing the hymns as sung by him. Gurdwaras were erected almost in all places visited by the Guru. One such gurdwara or Sikh temple still exists in Colombo.



Return from the South

The Guru spent about a year in Sri Lanka. Then, taking a ship at Japapatan (Jaffna), he crossed over to the mainland. In his customary method of travelling by short stages, he made an extensive tour of that region. Everywhere he was heard with attention and devotion. He gained many converts. He established a *dharamsala* in every place. In each such centre, he entrusted the work of preaching his principles of life and worship to the most devoted of the disciples there. Many of these *dharamsalas* exist to this day.

At a distance of about a hundred and sixty kilometers from Bijapur, there was a dense forest called Kajli Ban. The Guru learnt that in that forest there was a big, well known *yogi ashram* or home of *yogis*. These people commanded great influence in the region. By shows of miracles and display of self-torture, they had made themselves objects of awe and worship. People were forced to make big offerings to the *yogis'* shrine. They were thus a type of oppressors, living on the labour and earnings of others.

Guru Nanak resolved to free the people from the *yogis'* oppression, and to teach the *yogis* the right way to practise religion and to worship God. So determined, he directed his steps towards the *yogis'* shrine. Reaching there, he took his seat near the main gate. He passed the night under the starry sky. At the break of day, people from the neighbourhood came to the shrine as usual, to make their offerings to the *yogis* and obtain their blessings. Reaching near the gate, they saw the Guru and his two companions. He was singing his hymns in a sweet melodious voice. The visitors to the shrine gathered round the three strangers, and sat listening to the

divine music. They forgot all about their customary visit to the *yogis'* shrine.

Soon, the *yogis* learnt of the strangely dressed stranger who had drawn their devotees to himself. They determined to meet him and make him go away. Accordingly, a group of leading *yogis* went to the Guru. Their chief, named Bharthari, was at their head. They held a discussion with the Guru but were silenced by his talk on divine things. They bowed and accepted him their guide and teacher.

A gurdwara was erected at the spot, in order to keep alive the memory of the Guru's visit, and to spread his teachings in that locality.

Leaving Kajli Ban, the Guru started northwards, along the west coast of the Deccan. He visited Nasik, Kathiawar, Junagarh, Dwarka, Somnath, and several other places. He established *manjis* or missionary centres at all places that he visited. A *dharamsala* marked every such centre. *Dharamsalas* or Sikh temples still exist in several places in the south, such as Rameshwaram, Salur, Bhaker, and Shivkanji in Madras. Old temples, with hand-written copies of the Holy Granth in some of them, are still found at Burhanpur, Surat, Mumbai, Amraoli, and Nirmal.

Travelling through Jind and Bahawalpur and crossing the river Satluj, he visited Thujabad. Thence he went to the place called Uch. There he had a religious discussion with Pir Ahmad Hassan Jalal Din. The Pir became a disciple of the Guru. All his followers did the same. In due course, the Guru returned to his birth place. After a short stay there, he visited Sultanpur. After staying there with his sister for a short time, he returned to Kartarpur, where he had left his family.

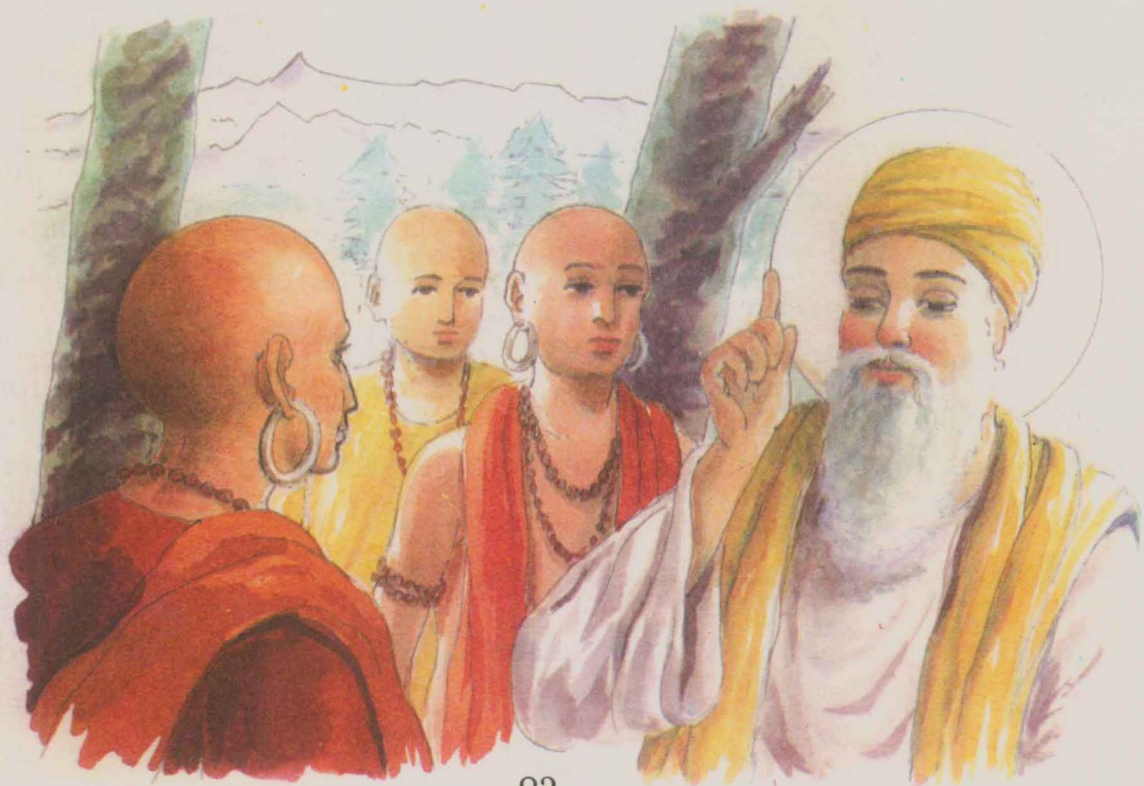
Tour to the North— Gorakhmata becomes Nanakmata

After a short stay at Kartarpur, Guru Nanak started on his third *udasi* or tour. This time he directed his steps to the north which was the home of *yogis*. He wore a strange dress which was mainly composed of leather and animal skins. On his forehead he had a saffron mark or *tilak*.

As usual, the Guru travelled by short stages. He visited and halted at village after village. In each one of them, he met the people and delivered to them his message of work, service, love, prayer, and worship. On the one hand, he met learned religious men, Brahmins, *yogis*, *pirs*, and *fakirs*—who led idle lives and were a burden on householders, held discussions with them, and convinced them that their way of life was far from being truly religious, nay, it was sinful. He made them change their mode of life and follow the path which he advocated. On the other hand, he met men who held positions of authority—chiefs, officials and *chaudharis*, who misused their power and oppressed the people. He convinced them of the wrong which they were committing against the people, and of the great harm which they were doing to themselves; for they would have to reap what they were sowing.

Travelling through the hilly tracts of the lower Himalayas, and visiting many places on the way, he arrived at Gorakhmata. It was a centre of *yogis* of the Gorakh order. He wanted to bring them to the right path, to make them give up leading idle, inactive, and retired lives, and led them on to a life of work, devotion, love, and service.

The *yogis* of Gorakhmata questioned him about his faith. His replies made them admire and respect him. They invited him to become a *yogi* and adopt their way of life and dress. The Guru replied, "Religion does not consist in this or that form of dress, in a *yogi's* staff, or in ashes rubbed over the body. It does not consist in mere words. Religion does not consist of wandering in tombs, cemeteries, places of cremation, or in sitting lost in meditation. It does not consist in wandering to foreign lands or in bathing in sacred places. He who looks on all men as equal is religious. True religion should teach a man how to live in the world with honour, how to remain pure amid the impurities of the world, how to make the best use of the human life. Why throw away this precious life? Come out of your self imposed retirements; give up your idle, inactive life, totally careless of what happens to your fellow beings?"



Come, step forth into the arena of life, be heroes and saviours, instead of being cowards, run-aways, and refugees. Therein lies the true essence of religion. That is the fit and proper field, duty and work for a true man of religion.”

The *yogis* were completely defeated. They acknowledged the truth of the Guru's words. He stayed with them for some time, giving them lessons on true religion. Then he resumed his travels. The place became a centre of Sikh mission. It came to be named Nanakmata.

One of the *yogis*, named Machhandranath, felt especially drawn towards the Guru. When the Guru left the *yogis'* centre, this *yogi* accompanied him. He desired to enjoy, for some time more, the soul inspiring songs and discourses of the Guru, and to draw inspiration from his saintly company. The Guru travelled, as usual, halting and preaching at all the places on the way. One of these halts was in the midst of a jungle of soap-nut trees. Mardana felt hungry and desired something to eat and satisfy his hunger. They were then sitting under a soap-nut tree. The Guru pointed to the tree's branch which was just above their heads, and asked Mardana to pluck the fruit from the branch of soap-nut tree and take his fill. The nuts were sweet.

The soap-nut tree still exists. The branch under which the Guru had sat bears sweet soap-nuts while the rest of the tree bear bitter ones. No other soap-nut tree anywhere in the world bears sweet nuts. The tree still exists and a gurdwara called Reetha Sahib is built at the spot. It is 40 km from Nanakmata.

To Martand and Mansarovar

The Guru continued to travel northwards. He travelled by short stages, delivering his message of work, love, service and prayer to the people in every place. In due course he reached Kashmir via Jammu. After visiting Anantnag and other nearby places, he reached the springs of Martand near Mattan. He took his seat on a platform on the bank of a lower lake of the springs. The quiet, beautiful place exercised a charm on him. Seated there, he lost himself in thinking and singing of the Creator of this natural beauty. He stayed there for three weeks. Shepherds, who grazed their flocks in the neighbourhood, heard his divine songs. They felt drawn towards the heavenly singer. They came to him, offered him milk, sat round him, and listened to his songs and talk. They learnt some hymns and then went about singing them while tending their flocks in the rich valleys of Kashmir.

After about three weeks stay at Martand, the Guru started on a tour of Kashmir. He halted for about two weeks at Srinagar. Thereafter, passing again through Mattan, he went further north into the Himalayas. Scaling several lofty mountains and crossing Nepal and some portion of the western Tibet, he came to Kailash mountain and the Mansarovar lake. There he met many *sidhs* or *yogi* hermits living in caves. They were astonished to see him; for it was impossible for ordinary men of the plains to reach there. How had he managed to scale such difficult heights, and endure all the difficulties of the journey to reach that place?

So the first question which they put to Guru Nanak was, "What power has brought you here, to such an inhospitable place?"

The Guru replied, "I fixed my mind on the Almighty Lord of the universe. I prayed to Him and put my trust in Him. That has brought me here."

"What is your name," asked the *sidhs*, "and what is your creed or religion?" "Nanak is my name," replied the Guru. "My creed is that of love for God and His creatures. I meditate on Him and regard myself as a humble servant and seeker of Him." They then said, "How are things going on with the people living in the plains below?"

The Guru replied, "Hard, very hard indeed. Falsehood prevails throughout and the truth is invisible. I have set forth in search of truth. The earth is groaning under the load of sin and sufferings. There is none in the world to mend the situation and end the agony. People like you who could have done something effective, have fled from there. You have deserted the poor people to their miserable lot. You have retired to the mountains and are busy in rubbing ashes on your bodies. For want of proper guides the world is sunk in ignorance. In my view you are neglecting your duty towards God and your fellow-beings. True religion should teach and urge you to work, serve, pray, and worship. You have become mere idlers, a burden on the world which you should have tried to serve, save, and improve. You can make a far better use of your life, and help the world better by living among the people. Instead of wearing empty forms and doing hard penances, you should exert yourselves in the service of mankind. Your love of miracles leads you astray. It has no connection with religion. Meditate on God, remember Him every moment of your life, serve mankind by engaging in useful, constructive activities of public welfare, and lead the people to a better, cleaner, and nobler life. Don't be lost in thoughts

and efforts to attain salvation only for yourselves. Help others on that path as well."

After that, the *sidhs* tried their best to defeat him by arguments and impress him by a show of miracles but they failed. Then they asked him to perform a miracle. He replied, "I have no concern with such shows."

The *sidhs* were silenced. Their pride was humbled. Their defeat here, followed by another at Achal Batala, completely broke the spell of their power over the people. They felt relieved. They began to respect and adore the Guru. He is still held in great esteem there. In the four cave-temples which stand round the Mansarovar lake, images of Guru Nanak are worshipped along with other images. These temples are objects of pilgrimage for monks from Tibet and *sadhus* from India.

The talks which the Guru had with the *sidhs* at Mansrovar lake, and later on at Achal Batala, were afterwards versified by him in his *Sidh Gosht*. From the Mansarovar the Guru resumed his journey. Passing through Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, and Tibet, he entered China. He went at least as far as Nanking. He established a *dharamsala* there. Since then, a large number of Chinese have been worshipping him. Several Chinese pilgrims are sometimes seen at Amritsar, worshipping at the "Waheguru's Temple", as they call *Darbar Sahib* or the Golden Temple over there.

From China the Guru returned to Tibet. He went as far as Lhasa. From there he returned to Kartarpur after crossing over the mountains, via Srinagar, Jammu and Sialkot.

Tour to the West— Visit to Mecca

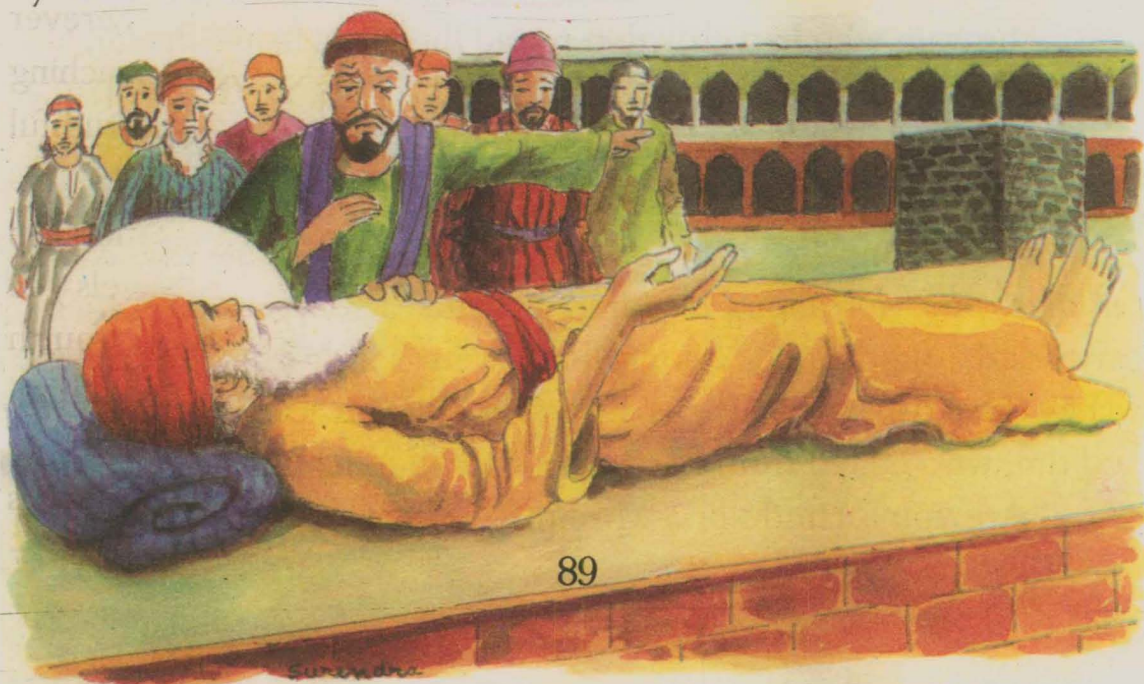
The call of humanity and God, which Guru Nanak had heard in his youth at Sultanpur, was still ringing in his ears. He had undertaken and completed three tours already. He had been to the east as far as Burma, to the south as far as Sri Lanka, and to the north as far as Tibet and China. He had visited important centres of the Hindu and Muslim religions. He had met the learned men of various sects, and led them on to the path of love, service, and devotion. To everyone he met, he imparted the lesson that none could become truly religious simply by declaring that he believed in this or that religion or religious teacher. Such declarations alone could not help man in his journey through this life or through the one to come hereafter. It was right thoughts, right feelings, right motives and intentions, and right conduct that could help man in his career. Creeds were things of this world alone. It was character that accompanied man in his journey beyond the grave. So, wherever he went, he reformed men's character. The main stress of his teaching was, "Truth is greater than everything else, but higher still is truthful living."

He had made extensive tours and had conveyed his message to numberless persons. But he had not had his fill of his travels yet. Hence, after a short stay at Kartarpur, he started again on his fourth tour. This time he went to the west and Bhai Mardana was with him. He put on the blue dress worn by *hajis* or Muslim pilgrims to Mecca, took a *fakir's* staff in his hand and a collection of his hymns

under his arm in place of the holy Koran carried by Muslim *hajis*. To complete the guise, he carried with him a jug (*lota*) for washing hands, face, etc. and a carpet on which to say his prayers. Thus dressed, he looked a typical *haji*.

In those days Surat was the port for ships going to Mecca. The Guru started in that direction. He travelled by short stages, as was his usual practice. At each place of halt, he held talks with the residents and made converts to his religion. On the way, whenever he met children, he would join them in their sports and merry-making. In due course, he reached Surat. Taking ship from there, he reached the Arabian coast. From there he marched towards Mecca.

Reaching the holy Muslim city, the Guru went and sat in the great mosque. He found the pilgrims engaged in their devotions. At night, he lay down to sleep with his feet towards the Kaaba. A loud uproar rose at once among the pilgrims and keepers of the holy place. One of them, named Jiwan, kicked him and said in anger, "Who are you, O infidel? Why have you, O sinner, turned your feet towards the house of God?"



In a calm, sweet voice the Guru said, "Brother, don't be so upset and angry. I am tired and in sore need of rest. Please turn my feet in a direction in which God is not?"

Hearing this, Jiwan, in great anger, seized the Guru's feet, and dragged them in the opposite direction. After that, as he lifted his eyes, he was wonderstruck at what he saw. The Kaaba was seen to be standing in the direction in which the Guru's feet had been turned. Jiwan took up the feet again, and dragged them in another direction. The Kaaba was seen to follow. It was seen standing in that direction with the Guru's feet turned towards it. Round and round were the Guru's feet dragged, and round and round was the Kaaba seen to turn.

Jiwan was filled with awe and astonishment. "Don't you see," said the Guru to him, "that God dwells in all directions? Open your heart to Him, my brother. See Him in every place and in every direction. Don't forget what your Prophet says in the Koran, that, 'Allah is in the east and the west. So whichever side you turn, there is the face of Allah.' "What you have seen now has shown to you the truth of these words of his. Be true to your faith."

The *hajis* who had crowded round the Guru heard the Guru's words with wide open mouths. They realized the truth of what he had said. They quietly and meekly left the place, and let the Guru rest as he pleased.

By morning, the Guru became the talk of the whole city. *Kazis, mullas, pirs, and faqirs* of different lands, who were then there, crowded round him. Among them were some from India, too. They wanted to have religious discussion with him. Makhdum Rukan-din, who hailed from India, was chosen to lead the discussion.

"Are you a Hindu or a Muslim?" was the first question.

"Neither", replied the Guru "I am but a servant of God and a lover of man."

The next question was, "Who is better and holier in your opinion, a Hindu or a Muhammedan?"

"Neither," replied the Guru, "on the mere ground of belonging to this or that religious community, without good acts, the followers of both religions will suffer. Neither shall obtain entrance into God's court. Both are jealous of each other. They hate and abuse each other. In their hearts there is no room for God, who is all love. The Hindus insist on saying Ram, and the Muslims on repeating Rahim, but they know not the one God. Satan has led them both along his own flowery way. They worship not God but the Devil."

Long and serious was the discussion. The *kazis*, *mullas*, *pirs*, and *faqirs*, all tried their utmost to defeat the Guru. But they failed in their attempts. All were forced to acknowledge his greatness. They bowed before him, and sought his instruction. Soon the whole city became loud in praising him. The 'Hindu *pir*', as he was called, had conquered all with his sweet humility and all-embracing love.

From Mecca the Guru moved on to Medina. There, too, the Muhammedan priests held discussions with him. They, too, had to bow to him. All who heard the Guru's talk and sacred songs, became his disciples. From there he travelled northwards and visited Egypt and other nearby provinces of Africa. Returning from there, he went still further northwards as far as Turkey in Europe. He met the *Sultan* of Turkey who was extremely greedy and cruel. The Guru's talk had a great effect on the *Sultan*. He gave away his hoarded wealth to the needy, and ceased to be cruel to his people.

At Baghdad

Retracing his steps southwards, he arrived at Baghdad. This place was another powerful centre of Islam. The mere presence of a "Hindu infidel" in such a place regarded by the "faithful" as a blot on their religious zeal. The Guru knew this, but he was not at all afraid. He was used to fearlessly going among powerful bigots, and curing them of their wrong notions about religion. We have seen how he had brought home to the people of Mecca, the fact that they were wrong in regarding the Kaaba as the house of God : that God dwelt in no particular place; that he was everywhere and in everyone. At Baghdad, too, he was to do something of the same type and importance.

A little outside the city, he noticed a graveyard with some well-kept tombs. He selected this place for his stay. Early next morning, he bade Bhai Mardana play the rebeck. For a time, he sat with eyes closed, quietly enjoying the sweet music. Then he began to sing a sacred song. In the deep quiet of the early morning, his voice was heard up to a long distance. In that centre of Islam, music had never been heard before. It was considered to be something forbidden by the holy law of Islam. All who heard it were struck with amazement. "Who can he be," They asked, "who has the courage to break the law of Islam in this centre and stronghold of Islam?" They gathered round the divine singer. They sat spellbound, listening and enjoying the music.

The song ceased after some time. The Guru then stood up in his place, placing a finger in each ear, as the Muhammedans do when about to shout the call to prayer, he lifted his voice, and

shouted a call to prayer. But it was a bit different from the one shouted by Muslims. He omitted the words "*Muhammed ar rasul Allah*" and in their place, used Arabic words of a similar sound to express his own ideas. All who heard it were filled with astonishment. Here was another offence against Islam committed by the Guru in that great centre of Islam.

A loud uproar rose in the city. "Who is he," said the astonished Muslims of Baghdad, "that dares to break the holy law? He has been singing near the holy tombs of great *fakirs*. Now he has altered the words of the Muslims' call to prayer. This *kafir* (infidel) must be severely punished for this double offence."

As said above, many persons had gathered round the Guru. They sat listening attentively. He then began to recite the *Japji Sahib*. They heard him quietly. They were particularly struck by those lines in it which declared that there were millions and millions of nether or lower as well as upper worlds; that they are countless and men grew weary in their attempts to search for them. That was another offence. Here the holy Koran was being declared to be wrong; for in the Koran it was said that there are only seven lower and seven upper worlds.

Thus the Guru had committed three offences. When the matter was reported to the religious head or *Mufti* of the place, he sent a body of his men to summon the offender into his presence. The Guru refused to obey the summons. He invited the *Mufti* to come to him, and hear him sing in praise of God and of man's duty towards Him and His children.

The *Mufti* was beside himself with rage on being told what the Guru had said. He declared that, under the law of Islam, the offender deserved to be stoned to death by the faithful. He ordered his men

to go and carry out this order.

At his bidding, a large crowd took up stones, and marched to the place where the Guru and Mardana were engaged in singing in praise of the merciful and loving Father of all mankind. On seeing them, Mardana felt a bit scared. But the Guru bade him to be of good cheer, have no fear, and see the ways of the Lord. "What fears need they feel," he said, "who have handed themselves over to the will of the fearless and fear-banishing Lord?"

When the crowd drew near, the Guru began to sing a holy song. As they heard the word of God sung by a messenger of His, they lost all their anger and their will to hurt him. They came to a halt at a little distance and stood there, silent and motionless. They threw away the stones. They felt drawn towards the strange singer of God's greatness and glory.

When the *Mufti* was informed of all this, he decided to see the Guru. He took his young son with him. As they approached the graveyard, they heard the charming musical voice of the Guru. He was singing a divine song just composed by him in the language of Baghdad. Soon the *Mufti* and his son arrived near the Guru. They bowed to him and sat before him.

After a time, the *Mufti* started a discussion with the Guru regarding the offences committed by the latter. The Guru was able to convince the *Mufti* that he had done nothing against the true spirit of Islam, that the *Mufti*'s own ideas were faulty, and sprang from a misunderstanding of the true meaning and functions of religion even as set forth in the holy Koran.

But the *Mufti* questioned the Guru's statement that there were millions and millions of nether and upper regions. "According to the Koran", he added, "there are seven nether regions and just as

many upper regions. How can it be believed that the holy Koran is wrong and you are right?"

The Guru replied, "I assure you that what I have said is the actual truth. There are, in fact, countless lower and upper regions. If you purify your heart and mind, and fix your feelings and thoughts on the supreme Lord, you will realize the truth of what I say."

The youthful son of the *Mufti* had heard the whole discussion most attentively. He said to the Guru, "Can't you, O true *fakir* of Allah, enable another person to have a glimpse of the countless regions? I wish very much to have such a glimpse?"

"All right," said the Guru "Give me your hand. Now, shut your eyes and think of God, the Maker and Master of those regions?"

The youth did as desired. He felt himself to be flying up along with the Guru at a great speed. Up and up they went into the space above. In the limitless space which was all round them, he saw millions over millions of suns, stars and other heavenly bodies. Soon, the youth's eyes got dazzled by having gazed too long at the bright stars. He felt as if he had been flying up and down for years. So he begged the Guru to take him back to his father. He had seen enough to convince him of what the Guru had said about the nether and upper regions or worlds. The Guru agreed to turn back. A little after, on Guru's bidding, the *Mufti's* son opened his eyes. He found himself seated beside his father in the graveyard of Baghdad. He described to his father his strange experiences. He gave him the sweet food which he had brought from one of the regions visited by him. He told his father that he had been flying up and down for some years. The father replied, "No son! You have closed your eyes for a few minutes only. You have been here all the time. But this sweet food, I admit, tells a different tale. There is also a change

in your looks. That change tells me that you fully believe what you say. I wish that I too could have a similar experience."

The Guru assured him that the knowledge divine was within his reach. He added, "You have only to have a firm faith and make it firmer and firmer. If you purify your mind and heart, and let your spirit fly to the feet of the Lord, you will realize the truth of all that I say or have said."

The *Mufti* fell at the Guru's feet. He felt that his inner eyes had been opened. He was a changed man. All those who had gathered there had listened most attentively all that had passed between the Guru and the *Mufti*. They, too bowed before the Guru. He blessed them and made them spiritually alive.

Thus was conquered that stronghold of Islam. On the spot where the Guru sat at Baghdad, later on a platform was erected by one of the Guru's disciples. It was enclosed in a spacious building. The building with the platform exists to this day. It was seen by the Sikh soldiers who visited the city during the first world war.

On the wall behind the platform, there is found an inscription in a language which is a mixture of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. Its translation would be, 'In memory of the Guru, that is the divine Master Baba Nanak Fakir of Allah, this building has been erected anew, with the help of seven saints..... year 927 *Hijri*.'

The year 927 *Hijri* corresponds to 1520 - 21 A.D. It means the Guru visited the place in the year 1520 A.D.

The Guru stayed in Baghdad for about four months. During this period he converted to his faith all the *pirs* and *fakirs*, and the common people who came to see him. He also met its ruler, and persuaded him to be just and kind.

It is recorded that when Guru Nanak visited Baghdad, all the

wells in the city had saltish water. At the people's request for a well of fresh water, the Guru pointed at a place and said, "Dig here." The well thus dug was found to contain fresh, salt-free water. This well is near the platform referred to above. Up to now, this well is the only one there with water that is not saline but fresh and sweet.

Leaving Baghdad, the Guru visited Baku, Tuhan, Asfhan, and other places in Iran. Then he went into Turkistan. There he visited Bukhara, Tashkent, Kashgar, Yarkand, Samarkand, and several other places. Then he entered Afghanistan. A Sikh temple at Kabul preserves the memory of the Guru's visit to that place. Another gurdwara at the springs of Askara, about fifteen kilometres from Kabul, is also associated with the Guru's name.

Panja Sahib

From Afganistan, the Guru returned to India. Passing through Peshawar, he crossed the river Indus and entered Punjab. In due course, he reached Hasan Abdal, then a great centre of Islam, about 50 kilometres from Rawalpindi, now in Pakistan. He halted near the base of a hill. He wanted to bring to the right path a proud and misguided Muslim *fakir* living on the top of that hill. His name was Baba Hassan Abdal Wali Kandhari. He had made for himself there a house and a temple by the side of a spring. The water of the spring flowed into a tank and from there overflowed to the plains below. That was the only source of water-supply for the people living nearby.

Wali Kandhari had heard of Guru Nanak. He was quick to learn that the Guru had become very popular among the people there. Some of the Wali's own disciples spoke to him very highly of the Guru's spiritual greatness. All this filled him with jealousy and anger. He vowed to punish the people by cutting off their water supply. Accordingly, he closed the outlet through which the spring water used to flow down the hill. Soon the whole town and its neighbourhood were without water. Groups of people went to him and begged him to let the spring-water flow down as before. But he paid no heed to their appeals. His stony heart did not soften in the least. Pointing to the Guru below, he said, "Go to him whom you have begun to prefer over me."

Guru Nanak's heart was deeply touched. He wanted to cure the Wali of pride, and to provide relief to the people. But he wanted to do this in the normal human way. He did not like to perform any miracles, unless no other course was left open to him.

Mardana was feeling awfully thirsty. The Guru told him to go up the hill and request the Wali for some water to quench his thirst. "At the same time," said the Guru, "appeal to him, in Allah's name, to let the water flow down as before, and end the people's misery." Mardana obeyed. But the Wali refused to allow Mardana have even a drop of water. Instead, he said haughtily, "Go to him who has sent you. If he really does possess the powers which the people think he has, let him start another spring. If he has no such powers, tell him to give up deceiving the people, come to me in person, and beg to be forgiven."

Mardana went down the hill and told the Guru how he had fared. The Guru sent him again, saying, "Speak to him with respect and humility. Appeal to him on behalf of yourself and the people here, and in the name of Great Father above." Mardana obeyed, but fared no better. He did not get even a drop to drink. He returned to the Guru. The latter sent him once more. But the Wali refused to bend. Three times had Mardana gone to him, and each time he had come back thirsty and sad. It was useless to make any further appeals. It was rather the time to humble the haughty Wali, and to teach him to behave better.

The Guru, saying "*Sat Kartar*", lifted a small stone near which he was sitting, and bade Mardana dig there to a little depth. Mardana did as bidden. At once a stream of cool, clear, fresh water came out from the place and washed the Guru's feet. At the same time, the Wali's spring ceased flowing. The new spring yielded more water than the old one on the top of the hill. The people were thus released from the Wali's tyranny. They were provided with an abundant supply of cool, clear water to satisfy all their needs.

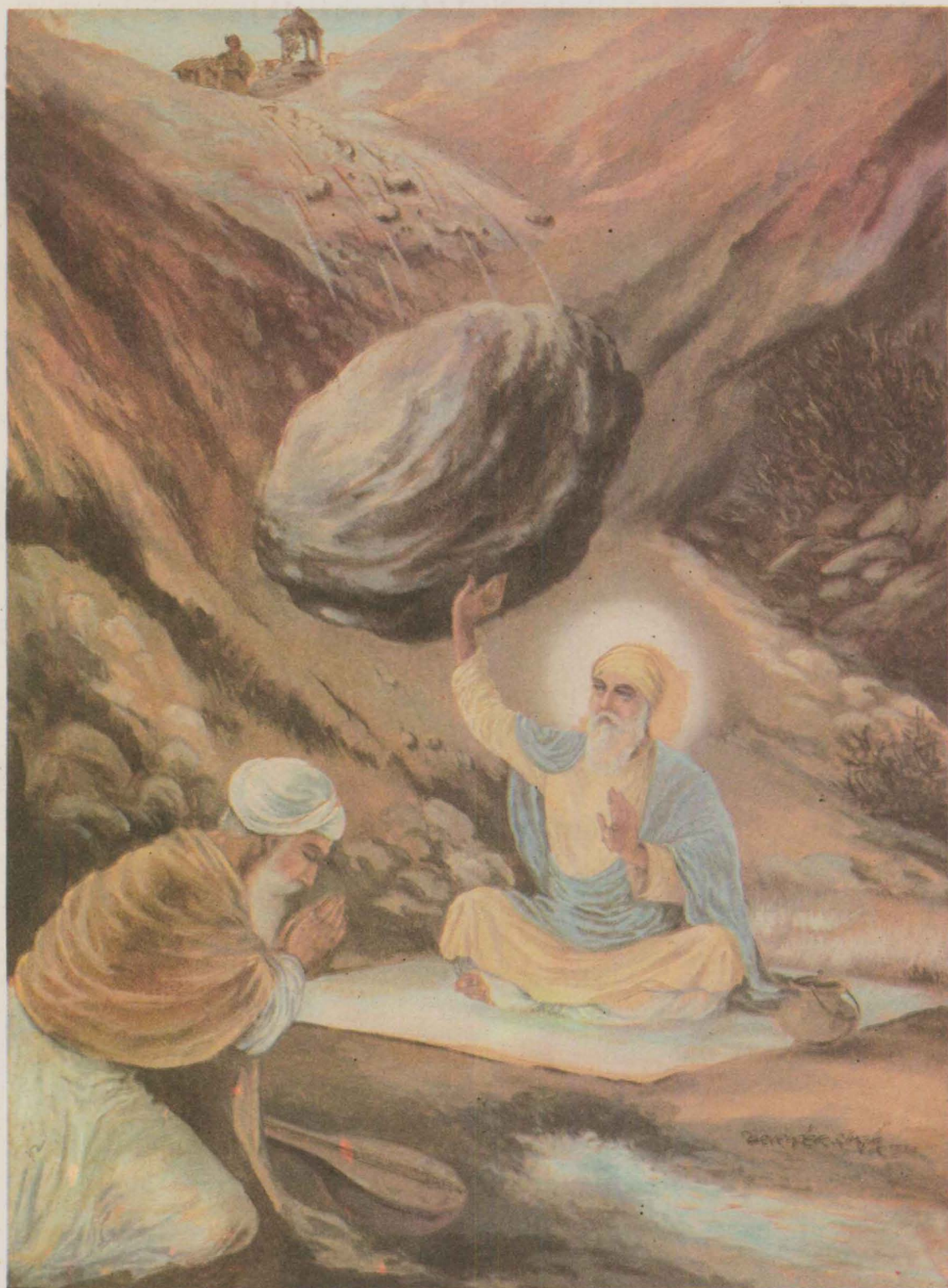
The Wali saw that his spring had stopped flowing. He saw that his tank was getting drained. It had begun to get empty. He got up

and saw the water flowing at the Guru's feet. His rage knew no bounds. There was big stone lying near him. He rolled it down, so that it might fall on the Guru and crush him to death.

The Guru was, at that moment, washing his hands and face. Mardana saw the huge stone coming down. He warned the Guru, so that he might move away to safety. The Guru did not move. When the stone came near, he raised his hand to stop it. It struck his hand and was stopped. An imprint of the Guru's open hand or *panja* was made on the stone. It exists even to this day and on the spot where the Guru sat, stands a beautiful gurdwara called Panja Sahib, the holy hand-print.

Wali Kandhari's pride was humbled. He came down to meet and pay respects to the Guru. He bowed at the Guru's feet and begged forgiveness for his folly. The Guru made him sit beside him and said, "Brother, don't forget that God, the common father of us all, is love. He, in whose heart there is no room for love, can never know God. Hence he can never know true joy or lasting peace. If you remember this and act accordingly, you will always try to serve and be of use to your fellow men; for they are all His children. Then you will mix with the people, be one of them, share their joy and sorrow. Doing this, you will be really religious and worship God in the right way; for true worship consists in love, service, devotion, noble thoughts, humane feelings, kindly acts, and devout hearty prayers."

Wali Kandhari's heart and mind were purified. He opened a new page in his life. He vowed to live, love, serve, and worship as advised by the Guru. After a short stay at Hasan Abdal, the Guru started homewards. This happened in 1521 A.D.



Babar's Invasion

Several years before, while staying with Bhai Lalo at Saidpur, Guru Nanak had made prophecy. He had said that in 1578 *Vikrami* (1521 A.D.), Babar would attack India; he would destroy Saidpur, and cause immense loss and suffering to its inhabitants. That year had come. Saidpur, the home of Bhai Lalo and numerous other dear ones, was soon to be attacked, plundered, and destroyed. The Guru could not, of course avert the city's doom. He decided, however, to be there when that dark doom was to befall. He would share the people's sufferings, and try to save them from getting plunged into dejection and despair.

So, leaving Hasan Abdal, he hastened towards, and soon reached Saidpur. Babar had not been heard of there as yet. But he came soon. It was his third invasion of India. After conquering Bhera and Sialkot, he fell on Saidpur. The Pathan rulers of the place decided to resist the invader. But they were defeated and put to the sword.

Then started the plunder of the city. All men were murdered in cold blood. Women were dragged by the hair in the dusty streets, beaten, ill-treated, and forced to surrender their jewellery and valuable property. Women and children were captured. All men who had escaped being killed were made prisoners. They were forced to carry the plundered valuables to the invaders' camp.

Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana were, as said above, at Saidpur when Babar attacked that city. Both of them were also taken prisoners. The Guru was given a load to carry. Bhai Mardana was told to take care of the horse of one of the commanders named Mir Khan.

The Guru's heart was filled with sadness. He was sad not because of what he had to suffer. He was sad to see the miserable state of his countrymen. They were unhappy and in despair. He wanted to make them a little less unhappy. So he told Mardana to play the rebeck, as "the Word of God had come". "Forget about the horse", he said. "It will follow us of its own accord." Mardana did as bidden. Music on the rebeck began. People were amazed to hear it. "Who is he," they said, "that has the heart to play the rebeck and produce music in such company?" They looked at the rebeck player and the Guru. They were wonder-struck to see that the load on the Guru's head had risen a foot above his head. It was being borne by some invisible force or the air itself. Mir Khan's horse followed Mardana as if it had known and loved him for years. The Guru then lifted his voice and sang a song in which he described the people's misery and complained to God for having allowed all this to happen.

The music and the song were heard far and near by the suffering crowd. They forgot their distress. They became a little less unhappy. They turned their minds and thoughts on God. They forgot their sorrow. They wiped and dried their tears. They became calm. They thanked the Guru for his sweet holy song. Mir Khan happened to pass that way. He saw his horse following Mardana, who was playing sweet music on his rebeck. He saw that the Guru's load was raised about a foot above his head and was being carried by some unseen force. He heard the Guru's song. He could not understand what the Guru sang, but he saw what effect the music and the song had produced on the Guru's fellow-prisoners. He shook his head in wonder at the sight of a man who could sing under such circumstances and with such wonderful effect.

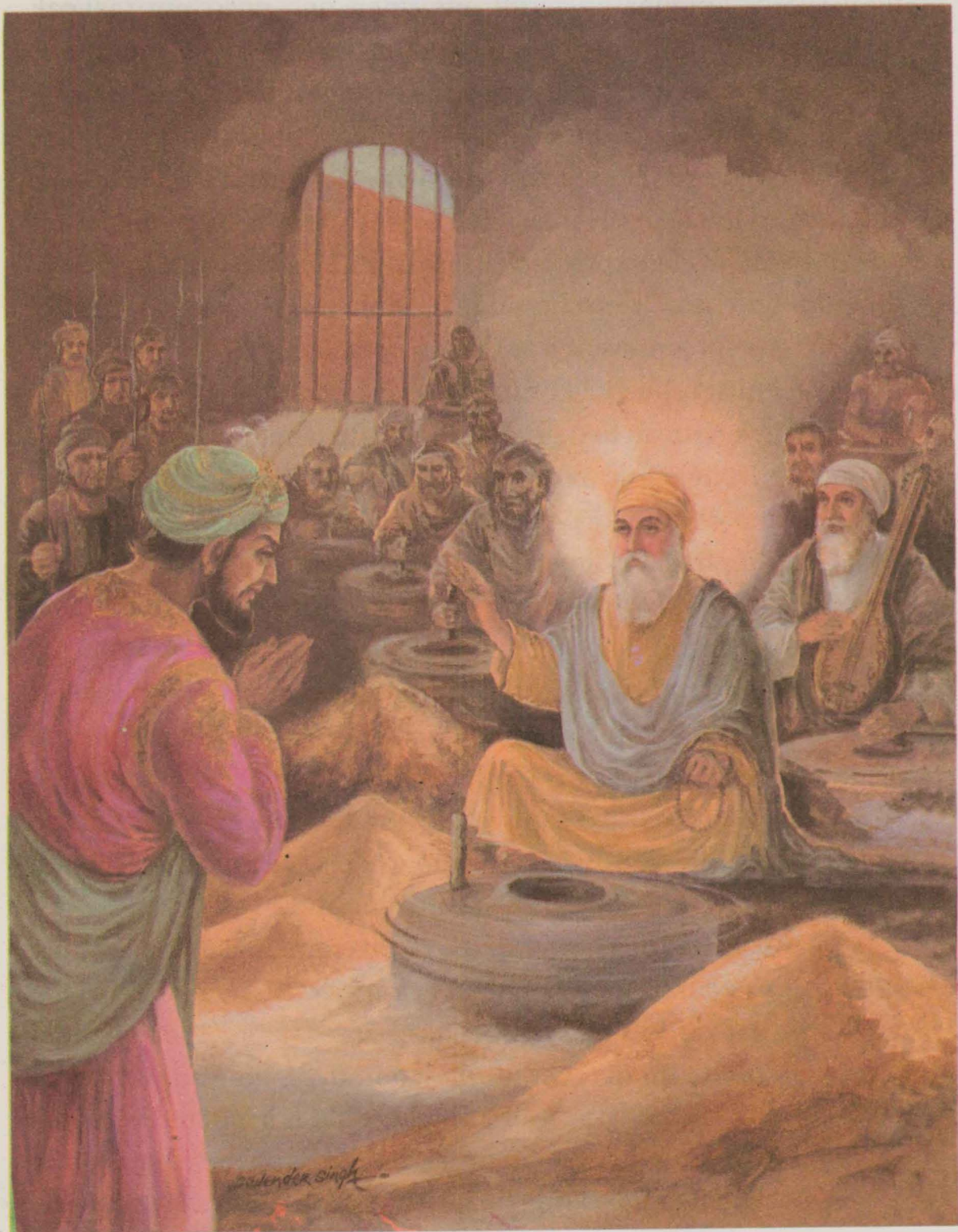
At last they reached at the invader's camp. All the prisoners

were ordered to grind corn for the victorious army. Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana, each got a handmill and a quantity of corn to grind. The Guru saw how men and women, who had lived a luxurious life, were performing menial labour to save their life. The sight touched his heart. He began to sing again. The prisoners forgot their sorrow. They forgot their handmills. With folded hands and half-closed eyes, they sat listening to the Guru's sweet holy songs of God. The handmills went on working of their own accord!

Mir Khan and others saw this strange thing. They were filled with wonder. They ran to Babar and told him what they had seen. Babar went to the prison. He saw Mardana playing on the rebeck. He found the Guru sitting with closed eyes, singing in a sweet voice. All other prisoners were sitting with hands folded and eyes half-closed. They were listening the sacred song. All handmills were working of their own accord.

He also stood listening. Of course, he did not understand what the song meant. Still he liked it. The Guru stopped singing after some time. He opened his eyes. Babar said to him, "What were you singing, O holy *fakir*?"

The Guru replied, "I was calling upon God to see what you have done to His sons and daughters. You have killed innocent men, women, and children. Your men have dishonoured innumerable helpless girls and women. You have looted their homes. Now you are forcing them to do hard work for you, work of a type that they have never done before. They are not soldiers, they did not fight against you. They did you no harm. Why should you be so cruel to them? God is the father of all. He is your father as well as theirs. I am calling upon Him to see what you, one of His children, have done and are doing to His other children here. If a powerful



man strikes another powerful one, then one need not feel any sorrow or pain. But when a powerful one strikes a weak and poor, one expects the God to intervene, and protect the poor and weak."

Guru Nanak's words went deep into Babar's heart. He felt ashamed and sad. He felt sorry for what he had done. He bowed and saluted the *fakir* of Allah. He declared, I see God in the face of this holy *fakir*. He expressed his deep regrets for what had been done to the Guru. Then he said, "O holy man, what can I do for you. Do accept a present from me. What shall it be?"

The Guru replied, "For myself I need nothing which you can give. But if you mean to make an offering to a man of God, then set all these prisoners free and return their looted property to them."

Babar gave immediate orders accordingly. The prisoners were told, "You are free. Go and take with you whatever you can recover of your property." But they insisted that the Guru, who had set them free, was to accompany them. Babar had intended to keep the Guru with him in order to benefit from his company and advice. He accepted the people's demand. But he requested the Guru to see him again. "If it pleases God," said the Guru, "I shall certainly do so." He and the freed captives left for the city. The handmill or *chakki* which the Guru was given to grind corn is preserved in a gurdwara called Chakki Sahib in Eminabad.

Again on entering Saidpur, the Guru learnt that there were yet others of his countrymen in Babar's captivity. Many people of the neighbouring villages had not been released. Babar's soldiers had kept with them many beautiful women of Saidpur and the neighbouring villages. The Guru's heart could not find rest or peace until he had them released. So he started towards the camp again.

Reaching near the camp, he raised his voice into a song calling

upon God to witness what was happening to His weak, innocent children. In the song he accused Him of taking sides, of showing favour to the invader and his country, and letting loose His anger on India and her people.

Babar heard the Guru's song. He could not understand what it meant. But the mournful music expressing deep sorrow went deep into his heart. He felt that the singer was giving expression to the great pain and sadness with which his heart was loaded. Babar went out to meet the singer. He recognised him at once. It was he who had got the prisoners released. He met the Guru and invited him to visit his tent. The Guru agreed. Seating the Guru respectfully by his side, Babar requested him to sing the song again, and then explain what it meant. The Guru did so. When explaining the meaning or sense of the song, he expressed his deep sorrow at the slaughter of innocent people carried out by his soldiers. Babar was deeply affected and felt bad. He tried to win the pleasure of this fearless man of God. He praised him. He begged him to stay with him, and sing to him his sweet, inspiring songs of God. The Guru agreed to stay for three days. During these days, he sang many soul-stirring songs to Babar and his soldiers.

On the third day, Guru Nanak decided to go round the camp to see what was happening there. He saw his countrymen engaged in hard labour. The sight went deep into his heart. He became unconscious. Babar became nervous. He stood beside the Guru, and asked the people who were near, to let him know what had happened. He was told that the sight of the captives doing hard labour had produced this effect on the Guru. Babar became alarmed. He thought that the '*fakir of Allah*' was about to die. He asked the people to join him in a prayer for his recovery.

After some time, the Guru opened his eyes and was all right again. His face was brighter than ever. Babar saw this and said, "O *fakir* of Allah, pray for me; grant me your blessings."

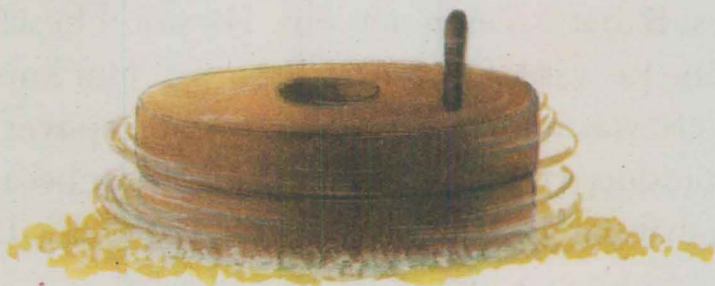
The Guru replied, "If you desire to win God's pleasure, release all who are still prisoners in your camp, both men and women." Babar could not refuse. He issued immediate orders. All captives were released.

Babar then said to the Guru. "O holy man of God, pray for me that my empire in India may last from generation to generation." The Guru replied, "Your empire will last for a long time." The emperor then asked the Guru to give him advice and instructions suitable to his position as an emperor.

The Guru said, "If you desire to establish an empire in India, be one of the people of India. Make this country your home. Treat your Hindu and Muslim subjects alike. Let your rule be a rule of justice and kindness. Deal mercifully with those whom you defeat in battles. Give up wine, gambling, and other ignoble habits of body and mind. Worship God in true spirit."

Needless to say that Babar did value and follow all this henceforth in his life; and history bears abundant testimony to this.

As promised by him, the Guru stayed three days in Babar's camp. Then he left it in order to resume his travels for the uplift of his fellow beings.



Settles at Kartarpur

After leaving Saidpur, the Guru started towards his home at Kartarpur. Travelling as usual by short stages, and delivering his message to the people in all places visited by him, he reached Kartarpur in the year 1522 A.D.

As we know, his wife and sons, as well as his parents, were living there since the foundation of that town. He now started living among his family and friends and spent nearly eight years at a stretch with them. He put off the extraordinary dress which he had put on when going on his tours. He dressed himself in clothes ordinarily used by householders. A turban on his head and a long loose shirt, a cloth round his waist, and a sheet over his shoulders. In adopting this dress, he broke another prevailing tradition. This required that, when once a man had given up his family life and put on a *sadhu's* dress, he could not re-adopt his family life or normal householder's dress. If he did so, he was held in low esteem. The Guru wanted to show that truly religious men were free to choose any manner of life or dress that they liked. As long as a person was true to the principles of religion, it did not matter at all, what dress he wore and what occupation he followed.

Hearing of the Guru's return to Kartarpur, men and women began to come to him from far and near to pay their homage, and to hear him talk and sing of God.

All along, he had been telling the people, "A man of religion should follow three golden rules. He should do three things. One, he should not lead an idle life, but should earn his living with honest labour. Secondly, he should share his earning with others. That is,

he should help the weak, give food to the hungry, and give clothes to the poor. Thirdly, he should, at all times remember God and persuade others to do likewise. He was now showing to all how such life of religion had to be actually lived. He lived among his family, friends, and disciples; busied himself in looking to their comfort and welfare like a good and dutiful householder. But he also remembered God in every moment of his life.

He toiled in the fields as a farmer, he did manual service in his free kitchen for all; but he also as the Guru or Teacher of mankind, gave divine discourses, and sang sacred songs. He sowed and looked after wheat and other crops in the fields in order to provide for his disciples' bodily needs. At the same time, he sowed the seed of *Naam*, the sacred song, in the hearts, minds, and souls of all who called him their own, and thus helped them to be close to God.

A large number of his disciples, whom he had named 'Sikhs', gathered round him at Kartarpur. He started a regular devotional service. His daily programme started about four hours before sunrise. He got up at that early hour. After taking his bath, he fixed his mind on God. He recited and sang sacred hymns. His Sikhs also followed the same daily programme. At daybreak, he went to the place where his Sikhs had gathered to listen to his talks on life and religion.

After that, he spent his time as a good man of the world should do. He worked in his fields regularly every day like a good, active farmer. In the fields he raised crops for the use of his large family, because all who had gathered at Kartarpur were members of his family. He also worked in his *langar* or free kitchen. His *langar* was open to all who needed food. But there was no place in it for idlers, or people who did not do any work. All who lived there had to do some work.

In the Guru's *langar*, people of all castes and creeds were treated alike. All took food together and they sat side by side, mixed together, like brothers and sisters. They lived and worked like members of one good family. Guru Nanak was the chiefman or head of that family.

Guru Nanak's family at Kartarpur was a mixed family. In it were people who had been Hindus and those who had been Muslims before they joined it. There were those who had belonged to low castes and others who had belonged to high castes. There were also those who had been treated as *achhoots* or untouchables. Here, in his family, all were equal. They formed a brotherhood of saints and workers. All worked for each, each worked for all.

In the evening, all members of the Guru's large family, that is, his Sikhs, gathered at the *dharamsala* for the evening service. After the recitation of *Rehras* or the evening prayer, hymns were sung by all together. That was followed by the singing of *Aarti*. *Kirtan Sohila* was recited just before going to bed at night.

Achal Batala and Multan

Years passed in this way. The Guru had no intention or plans to undertake long journeys any more. He had been on the move, with short intervals of rest, for more than twenty years. But he did not become altogether a homebound man. He made short local tours, whenever he felt the urge within him. On one occasion, however, he travelled much longer and farther off from Kartarpur. That was in the year 1529 A.D. He heard that, on the occasion of that year's Shivratri fair to be held at Achal Batala, the *sidhs* or *yogis* were to assemble in unusually large numbers. Because of the Guru's teachings, they had lost much of their influence and status among people. They wanted to re-establish themselves. They hoped to win back their lost influence by showing their own powers to the people, and by persuading them to give up paying heed to the Guru and his teachings.

On the other hand, Guru Nanak resolved to break their influence once for all, by meeting and defeating them at Achal Batala. He was then in his sixties. He started from Kartarpur on his fifth and last tour. As we shall see, it turned out to be longer than he had intended it to be. This time his dress was the usual dress of a householder.

The *sidhs* had assembled there in unusually large numbers. By showing their great feats of *yogic* powers and miracles, they were attracting the people, and impressing them with their greatness. They wanted the people to feel that if they ignored the *sidhs*, they would invite trouble. They did not know that the great one, who had proved superior to them at the Mansarovar Lake and in the

Kajli Ban, was coming to meet and defeat them once more.

Dressed as an ordinary householder, Guru Nanak went there, and sat a little apart from the crowd. Mardana was told to play the rebeck. After a time, the Guru began to sing a divine song. All who heard the song gathered round him to listen. Soon, he was surrounded by a large crowd of listeners. The *sidhs* were left almost alone. This filled them with anger and jealousy. They felt that it was time for them to act. They resolved to meet and defeat him in an argument and, in that way, lower him in the people's view.

Thus determined, they went to the place where the Guru was discoursing to the people. Their leader, Bhangarnath, started the attack. He said, "Why have you given up the life and dress of a *sadhu*? It seems the attractions and pleasures of the world have proved too strong for you. Now you come to preach to the people that they should learn from your experience, and enjoy worldly life. You are misleading the people."

The Guru said calmly, "Brother, you don't know what religion truly means, you consider domestic or householder's life to be low and unworthy of you. You despise the householders. But, all the same, you go about begging for food and clothes at the doors of those very people. In my opinion, those who labour to earn their living, and share their earnings with others, are far superior to the people like you. They are more religious. My religion bids me lead a life of work, love, service, and devotion in the midst of my countrymen. This is what I have been teaching mankind throughout my life."

The *sidhs* continued their questions and discussions for as long as they could. But the Guru proved to be more than a match for them. They were forced into silence. The gist of the discussion which

the Guru held with the Sidhs here and earlier at the Mansarovar Lake, was later versified by him in his *sidh Gosht*. At the conclusion of the discussions, the *sidhs* acknowledged him as their divine teacher. They became his disciples. Many of them gave up their manner of life and dress. They began to live and act as directed by the Guru.

The power of the *sidhs* was completely broken. They lost their influence with the people. Their number began to decrease rapidly. On the spot where the Guru sat and held discussions with *sidhs*, stands a gurdwara in memory of the Guru's victory over the famous and mighty order.

From Achal Batala the Guru proceeded to Multan. He had learnt that a large number of Muhammedan *fakirs* were oppressing and misleading the people there. As usual at each place of his halt, he preached to the people his way of life and religion. On reaching Multan, he visited the shrines of Bhagat Prehlad and Shams Tabrez. He preached his message of work, service, love, and devotion to the people there. Then he took his seat near the tomb of Pir Baha-ud-Din. He was soon surrounded by people who were eager to hear him. His name was on everybody's lips. The *fakirs* were perturbed. If the Guru, they thought, decided to settle there for good, they would be ruined.

So they got together in order to plan what was to be done; how the newcomer was to be sent away. They could not muster courage to meet him and tell him to go away. They thought of a novel plan of conveying their wish to him. They sent to him a cup of milk too full to contain another drop. This was meant to inform him that the city was already completely full of *fakirs* and hermits. There was no room for him there, just as there was no room in the cup for another drop of milk. They hoped that the newcomer would take the hint and go away.

Mardana requested the Guru to accept the milk. He thought that it had been sent by the *fakirs* as an offering and a token of their welcome to the Guru. But the Guru thought otherwise. He smiled and shook his head. He gently placed a little jasmine flower on the surface of the milk in the cup. Then, he told the man who had brought it to take it back to those who had sent him with it. The Guru meant to tell the *fakirs* that just as in the cup, full to brim, there was sufficient room for a jasmine flower, similarly, there was sufficient room for him in Multan and the hearts of Multanis. Like the flower over the milk, he would remain above them all; he would not displace anyone, would not be a burden on anyone; but he would shed all round the sweet smell which dwelt in his personality.

A short time after that, some of the more noted *fakirs* and *sadhus* came to have religious discussion with him. They hoped to defeat him and make him leave the place. But they themselves had to suffer defeat. They bowed to him and acknowledged him their māster. He instructed them in the chief principles of his faith. They, as well as all their followers, fell at his feet and joined the holy fellowship which he had founded. In other words, they became his Sikhs.

Since then, the *Sufi fakirs* have accepted him as their guide and teacher. In his own time, he was able to inspire some Muslim *fakirs* with deep respect for him. One such *fakir* was Pir Baha-ud-Din. He had thousands of Muslim followers. One morning he suddenly turned his back towards Mecca, and began to bow in the direction of Kartarpur. His followers were astonished to see this. They asked him why he had done this. The *pir* said, "I see the light of Allah (God) in this direction, my friends. I bow to Him wherever and in whatever direction He be."

Baba Budha

As already said, while living at Kartarpur, Guru Nanak used to undertake short tours of the regions near by. During one such tour in 1517 A.D., the Guru was one day sitting under a tree near the village Ramdas in Amritsar district. A boy came that way, grazing a herd of cows. The Guru saw in this boy something which was to make him some day one of his most respected and renowned disciples. He called the boy. Seating him near him, he asked his name, "My name is Bura," replied the boy. "I am a *jat* and my birth place is Kathunangal but now I am living at Ramdas." The Guru then asked him to go and look after his cows. The boy remained sitting and said, "But Master, do tell me why you had called me." The Guru replied, "My purpose in calling you has been fulfilled. You may go now."

Bura went away but the Guru made a great impact on his mind. He began to feel that the Guru was going to bring about a great change in him and in his entire life. Most of that night he kept thinking of the Guru. Early next morning he felt great urge to meet the Guru again. He started from his home with some fresh butter and milk. These articles were to be his humble offering to the Guru. Reaching in the Guru's presence, he placed them before the Guru, and said, "Please, accept this humble offering and be kind enough to grant me deliverance from birth and death." The Guru said, "You are a mere child, not even in your teens. At your age boys sleep till late in the morning and pass their days in play. Go and make merry. Such serious thoughts are not for boys of your age. But how such thoughts came in your mind, dear child?"

“O Master,” Bura replied, “Sometime back a band of Pathans passed by our village. They forcibly cut away all our crops, ripe and unripe. We were helpless. We saw ourselves being plundered in broad daylight, but could do nothing to stop the plunder. Since then I have been troubled by this thought. All of us could not save our crops from the Pathans. Who can save us from death, which is far more powerful than they? Who knows on whom, young or old, and when the hand of death may fall next? I might be the next victim. I might be forced to quit life in the unripe state of childhood. Again, one day my mother asked me to light a fire. I found that little sticks caught the fire before the thick ones did. So, I thought any day my turn can come, though I am so young as yet. Hence I decided to prepare myself for that event and the journey to the next world.”

Hearing this, the Guru said, “You carry an old head on your boyish shoulders. You talk like an old man. All right, my *budha balak*, my old child, listen to what I say and keep it ever in your heart and soul. God is far more powerful than death. Moreover, death has to act under His orders. If you become an accepted servant of His, the hand of death will not touch you. So, ever think of God, love him, and serve Him with all your heart. Let your body be busy in doing your duty, and in lovingly serving your fellowmen, and let your heart, mind, and soul always fixed on God. Think of God, every moment of your life. Then you need have no fears.”

Thus, Bura became *Bhai Budha*. He stayed with the Guru, listening joyfully his songs of the Lord, and doing all sorts of service for the Guru and his *sangat*. In a short time, he came to be one of the most devoted and respected Sikhs of the Guru. So well was the Guru pleased with him, that a little before his own death, he

appointed him to perform the sacred ceremony of applying saffron *tilak*, the mark of Guruship, on the forehead of his successor. This honourable privilege he continued to enjoy till his death in 1631 A.D., at the age of one hundred and twenty five. He had, by then, put the sacred saffron mark on the foreheads of five successors of Guru Nanak, from Guru Angad to Guru Hargobind. In 1604 A.D. he was made the first *granthi* of the Golden Temple (Sri Darbar Sahib), Amritsar. He had the privilege of teaching Gurmukhi to Guru Hargobind and giving him training in horsemanship and the use of arms.

It was at Kartarpur that Bhai Mardana, Guru Nanak's rebeck-player, musician and companion in most of his journeys, breathed his last. Just before his death, the Guru asked him how he desired his body to be disposed of. He was a Muhammedan by birth, but a Sikh by faith. So he was asked whether his body should be buried in the Muhammedan fashion, or cremated in the Sikh fashion. Mardana replied, "When, with your grace, my soul, goes to the feet of the Father, what matters it to me how the body is disposed of? You may treat it as you like. Bless me that my soul may find peace at the Supreme Lord's feet."

The Guru blessed his departing Sikh and ordered that his body should be cremated. This happened in 1534 A.D. Mardana's son, Shahzada, took his place as the rebeck-player and musician in the Guru's darbar.

Baba Laihna

While passing the last days of his earthly life at Kartarpur, Guru Nanak found the great one who was to succeed him as the second Guru of the Sikhs as Guru Angad. His name was Baba Laihna.

Baba Laihna, born on March 31, 1504 A.D. was the son of Pheru Mal Khatri. The latter was petty trader living at a place called Khadur, near Tarn Taran, district Amritsar. At the age of fifteen, he was married to Mata Khivi of village Sanghar, near Khadur.

Baba Laihna was a devout worshipper of goddess Durga. He was accepted by his fellow worshippers of the locality as their leader. Every year he used to lead a procession of Durga-worshippers to Jawala Mukhi, in the lower Himalayas, a place which was sacred to the goddess. But a great change was destined soon to come in his beliefs, practice, and life.

At that time, there lived at Khadur a Sikh named Bhai Jodha. It was his daily practice to rise three hours before daybreak and recite the *Japji* and *Asa-di-Var*. One fine morning, as Baba Laihna was going for a bath, he heard Bhai Jodha singing to himself Guru Nanak's sacred songs or hymns. He was drawn towards him and stood listening most attentively. When Bhai Jodha stopped singing, Baba Laihna asked him whose song it was which he had been singing. He was told, "It is the Word of God brought down on earth for us by Guru Nanak, now dwelling at Kartarpur on the Ravi's bank."

Baba Laihna's heart was, at once, filled with a longing to see the Guru. This longing became stronger when he heard all that

Bhai Jodha said about the Guru. He requested Bhai Jodha to teach him the charming song that he had been singing. Bhai Jodha most readily taught him Guru Nanak's Word of God. Baba Laihna learnt the divine songs in no time. He went about singing them; for he found great pleasure in doing so.

Soon a strong desire grew in him to see the person whose songs of the Lord had charmed his soul. In the year 1532 A.D., when the time came for the Durga-worshippers' annual visit to Jawala Mukhi, he persuaded his fellow-worshippers to go by the way of Kartarpur. When the company of the pilgrims halted near that sacred village, Baba Laihna went to see the Guru. He went on horseback. On the way, at a little distance from the village, he met an old man, making a round of his fields. Baba Laihna requested him to tell him the way leading to Guru Nanak's abode. The old man replied with a loving smile, "Come brother, I shall lead you to that place." The old man walked on in front, while Baba Laihna followed him on horseback. Near the main gate of the *dharamsala* or the Guru's temple of God, the old man requested the stranger to tie the horse's rope to a peg, and enter the building. He would find Guru Nanak in the building. Saying this, the old man walked into the *dharamsala*.

Baba Laihna tied the horse as suggested, and entered the *dharamsala*. He met with a Sikh crossing his way. Baba Laihna was directed by him to the room where the Guru was to be found. He went as directed and entered the room. What he saw filled him with confusion and a sense of having done something wrong. He found that the Guru was no other than the old man who had led him to that place. Baba Laihna said to himself. "I rode on horseback, while the Guru walked on foot. I have thus shown disrespect to him,

though unknowingly." The Guru guessed what was passing in his visitor's mind. He smiled and said, "Don't worry, my brother. You came here as a guest and a stranger. I only did my duty towards a guest who does not know the place." Baba Laihna could say nothing. He simply folded his hands and lowered his head.

The Guru seated the visitor near him and asked his name. "My name is Laihna," said the visitor, "I am a resident of Khadur." Now, the word "Laihna", in Punjabi, means "debt due to one from another". Keeping that sense of the word "laihna" in view, the Guru said, "You have come at last for your *laihna*, that is due from me to you. I have been waiting for you, brother."

The Guru then talked to him, softly and sweetly, of God and of man's duty towards Him and His creatures. He was deeply impressed by the Guru's words. He threw away the tinkling bells that he wore on his wrists and ankles for his dance before the goddess. He felt that he had no need of the goddess now. He told his companions, his fellow-worshippers of Durga, to go on without him. He had found his Master, who was far superior to their goddess. He would stay with him and serve him to the end of his life.

Guru Nanak said, "Brother, you are welcome to stay with me. We two have jointly to serve God and His people." He then advised Baba Laihna, "Go, see your people at home, bid farewell to them, and then join me in the work which is also to be your work," Baba Laihna went as advised. After only a day's stay at Khadur, he returned to Kartarpur. He had seen how all Sikhs worked joyfully at the Guru's holy colony. He resolved that he would also make a beginning. So he took a heavy load of a bag of salt on his head, and walked all the way from his home to Kartarpur. When the old, loving mother of the Sikhs, Guru Nanak's wife, Mata

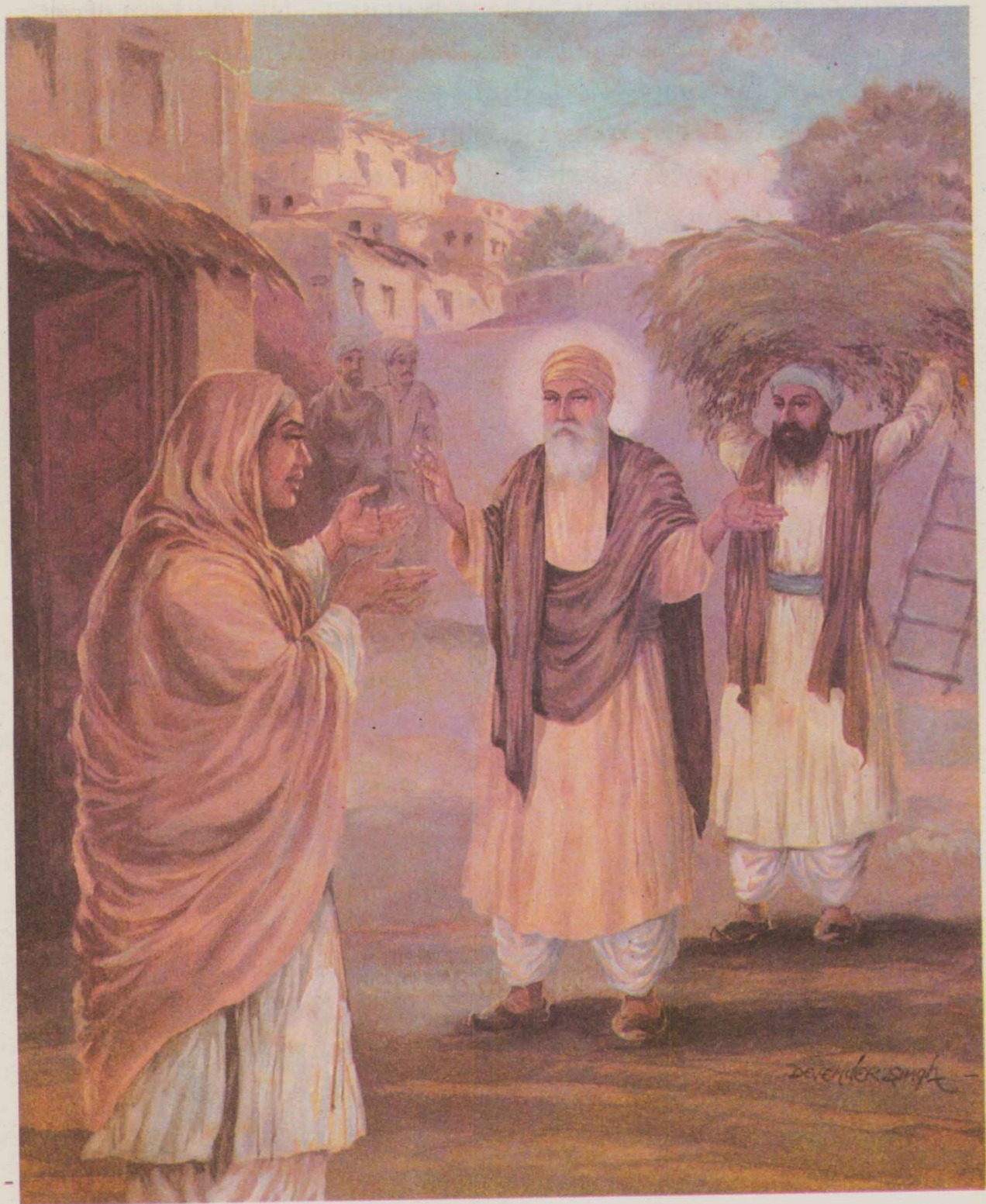
Sulakhni, saw this well dressed man bringing in a heavy load of salt on his head from such a long distance, she was deeply moved. She welcomed him as a mother would to her dear, dutiful son.

He learnt that the Guru was then in the fields, engaged in his labour of love for his Sikhs. He followed him there. He found the Guru and his Sikhs weeding a paddy field. Baba Laihna bowed before the Guru and began to do what others were doing. The work was sure to soil and stain with mud his rich dress; but to him service was now dearer than everything else. After a short time, the Guru asked him to give up weeding, and take a bundle of weeds and grass to the cattle-shed. Baba Laihna obeyed most readily. Accordingly, a heavy load of wet grass and weeds dripping with mud, was placed on his head. His load stained his costly dress with mud. But he had no thoughts to spare for his clothes. Mata Sulakhni saw him bringing in a second load that day and also saw his mud-stained dress.

In the evening, the Guru returned home from the fields. The old, loving mother of the Sikhs pointed towards Baba Laihna, and said to her husband, "What a strange welcome you have given to this young man! He brought a heavy load of salt all the way from Khadur. Then he worked in the fields. After that, you put on his head another heavy load of wet, mud-dripping grass. See, how his clothes have become stained with mud."

"You are mistaken, dear lady," said the Guru. "He did not bear loads of salt or grass. He bore the burden of suffering humanity. These are not mud-stains. They are sacred saffron spots which mark him out as the chosen one of the Lord. He has been marked out as the saviour of suffering souls."

For over seven years, from 1532 to 1539 A.D. Baba Laihna



served the Guru and his Sikhs at Kartarpur. His life became a practical lesson in Sikhism. He asked no questions, made no remarks or replies; but simply worked in silence to carry out the Guru's orders and obey his wishes. His faith in and love for the Guru were perfect and complete. He had fully realized that before expecting to be accepted by the Master, the Sikh has to place his all at the service and disposal of the Guru and God. He was following the path of complete dedication.

Return to the Eternal Home

Guru Nanak had set before himself the task of creating and organizing a nation. Such task could not be accomplished in a lifetime. It needed a series or succession of supreme Gurus or Prophets. Guru Nanak was fully conscious of this need. His work had to be carried on by his successors. So he had to exercise great care in selecting his own successor. The practice started by him continued till the tenth Guru put an end to any such further selection, when he declared that, after him, the Guruship was to vest for ever in Guru Granth Sahib.

In order to select his successor, Guru Nanak subjected his sons and prominent Sikhs to a series of tests. In all these, Baba Laihna proved to be the most fit and worthy. All others failed to come up to the standard set by Guru Nanak.

One day, in order to put his followers to a final test, the Guru assumed a terrible guise or external appearance. He put on dirty, torn clothes, held an open knife in his hand, took some hunting dogs with him, and proceeded into the forest. Many of his close followers thought that something had gone wrong with the Guru's mind. They fled in terror. However, many Sikhs followed him, but they soon found the path covered with copper coins. A number of the Sikhs took up as many of them as they could carry, and returned to their homes. The Guru proceeded on along with those who were left. Soon, they found silver coins scattered on the ground. Several Sikhs gathered as many of the silver coins as they could carry and went back, rich and happy. As the rest of the party went further, they found the ground covered with gold coins. Most of the

remaining Sikhs took up as many gold-coins as they could carry and went back. Two Sikhs beside Baba Laihna now remained with the Guru.

Proceeding a little further, they came to a funeral pyre. By its side lay a corpse or dead body, covered with a white sheet, and giving out a strong bad smell. The Guru, with his eyes red and fixed, said, "Whoever wishes to accompany me should eat some of this corpse." The two Sikhs were struck with wonder and terror. They felt their bodies to be trembling. They ran away. Baba Laihna alone remained with the Guru. He at once knelt down beside the corpse, and asked the Guru whether he should eat the head or the feet to begin with. He was told to begin at the waist. Laihna lifted the white sheet with which the corpse was covered, in order to begin to eat the dead body. The Guru stopped him, saying "That will do. I now know how many of those who profess to be my Sikhs have the strength to follow the path. You have passed the test. You have fully understood me and my secret. You are in my own image, produced as it were, from my *ang* or body. You are my *angad*, the flesh of my flesh and the bone of my bone, a part of my own body; and Angad shall, henceforth, be your name so that the world may learn to regard you as my other self, myself in another body. You have proved your fitness to be my successor, to carry on the work started by me."

Sometime later, Guru Nanak decided to formally appoint Angad his successor. He seated the latter on the *Guru-gaddi*, the Guru's seat, placed five coins and a coconut before him and said to Baba Budha, "This is my successor. Put the *tilak* on his forehead in token of his appointment to the Guruship." Baba Budha did as desired. Guru Nanak then bowed before his successor and ordered his

followers to obey and serve Baba Angad, who was his image, his very self in mind and spirit. This happened on 4 June, 1539. The Guru then told Baba Angad to go to Khadur. The latter obeyed, although he longed to remain in attendance on the Guru to the end.

On 22 September, 1539, Guru Nanak returned to his eternal home, the abode of the Lord, from where he had come in response to the call of suffering humanity. He had been in the world of mortals for seventy years, five months, and three days.

Glossary

Avtar	— in Hindu mythology descent of a released soul to earth in bodily form.
Brahmin	— Hindu priestly caste of first order
Chaudhary	— chieftain
Chilla	— period usually of 40 days of meditation & prayer
Dharamsala	— a religious place
Fakir	— a Muslim religious ascetic
Granthi	— Sikh priest of a gurdwara
Jat	— a farmer
Kazi	— a Muslim Judge, Magistrate, interpreter of Islamic law
Khatri	— Hindu warrior or ruling caste of second order
Koran	— holy book of the Muslims
Kothri	— a small room without any window
Mantra	— meditative sounds and/or words
Maulvi	— a Muslim priest
Mulla	— a Muslim priest learned in Muslim religious texts
Muni	— hermit, holyman
Naam	— God, to recite and meditate on God
Namaz	— holy prayer of Muslims
Nawab	— distinguished Muslim title
Ochre	— pale brownish yellow colour
Pathan	— Pashto speaking people of North West Pakistan and Afghanistan
Patti	— a wooden tablet to write on
Rabab	— six-stringed musical instrument
Rishi	— a Hindu sage profoundly wise man
Sadhu	— a Hindu ascetic
Samadhi	— state of concentration induced by meditation
Sanyasi	— a Hindu meditant who exercises his mind in religious contemplation
Sat Kartar	— True Creator
Shabad	— a hymn from Guru Granth Sahib
Sharadh	— Hindu custom of feeding Brahmins believing it will go to their dead ancestors
Shastras	— ancient sacred writings of Hindus
Shudra	— lowest of the four Hindu castes, a menial, an untouchable
Sufi	— a Muslim sect of ascetics and mystics
Sultan	— a Muslim sovereign
Udasi	— long missionary tour
Vedas	— ancient scriptures of Hindus
Vaish	— one of the four Hindu Castes, third in order, comprising agriculture and commercial classes
Yogi	— a person proficient in yoga