

Guru Ram Das

The fourth of Sikhism's ten Gurus, Guru Ram Das was born on September 24, 1534, and passed away on September 1, 1581. He was born on September 24, 1534, to a Lahore-based family. He was given the name Jetha at birth, and after becoming an orphan at seven, he lived in a village with his maternal grandmother. When Bhai Jetha was twelve, his grandmother and he relocated to Goindval, where they ran into Guru Amar Das. After that, the young man embraced Guru Amar Das as his mentor and began to assist him. Guru Amar Das's daughter wed Bhai Jetha, who thus became a family member. Similar to the first two Sikhism gurus, Guru Amar Das chose Bhai Jetha as his successor rather than one of his own sons and gave him the new name Ram Das, which means "servant of god".

About Guru Ram Das

In 1574, Guru Ram Das assumed the role of Sikhism's fourth guru and held it until 1581, when he passed away physically. He moved his formal base to the region known as Guru-ka-Chak as a result of enmity from Amar Das's sons. The name of this newly established town, Ramdaspur, later changed to Amritsar, the holiest city in the Sikh religion. In the Sikh tradition, he is also known for enlarging the manji organisation to accommodate administrative positions and donation collecting to theologically and financially support the Sikh movement. The fifth through tenth Sikh Gurus were the direct descendants of Ram Das, unlike the first four Gurus who were not connected by descent. He appointed his own son as his successor.

Early Life of Guru Ram Das

In Chuna Mandi, Lahore, on September 24, 1534, Guru Ram Das was born into a Sodhi Khatri family. His mother Daya Kaur and father Hari Das both passed away when he was seven years old. His granny was his primary caregiver. He wed Bibi Bhani, Amar Das's younger daughter. Prithi Chand, Mahadev, and Guru Arjan were their three sons. Ram Das represented Guru Amar Das in the Mughal court before he became the Guru.

Death and Succession

On September 1st, 1581, Guru Ram Das passed away in the Punjabi town of Goindval. Ram Das picked Arjan, the youngest of his three sons, to succeed him as the fifth Sikh Guru. The selection of the successor resulted in disagreements and internal strife among the Sikhs. In the Sikh narrative, Prithi Chand, the oldest son of Ram Das, is remembered as strongly opposing Arjan, founding a sect of the Sikh society known as Minas (literally, "scoundrels"), and allegedly attempting to assassinate young Hargobind. The Sikh group, however, offered a rival account that contradicted this account of Hargobind's life and depicted the elder son of Ram Das as being dedicated to his younger brother Arjan in alternative competing scriptures authored by the Prithi Chand. The conflicting writings do admit differences of opinion and mention Prithi Chand as the Sahib Guru following Guru Arjan Dev's martyrdom while denying Guru Hargobind's succession as the grandson of Ram Das.

Influence of Guru Ramdas

Amritsar

According to Sikh tradition, Guru Ram Das is credited with creating the sacred city of Amritsar. Regarding the territory where Ram Das settled, there are two different stories. According to one based on a Gazetteer entry, the land was bought from the owners of the village of Tung for 700 rupees with donations from Sikhs. The location, known as Guru Da Chakk, was reportedly chosen by Guru Amar Das after he had ordered Ram Das to find a property to create a new town with a man-made pool as its focal point. Following his coronation in 1574 and despite the harsh opposition he encountered from Amar Das's sons, Ram Das constructed the town that bears his name, "Ramdaspur".

He began by finishing the pool and constructing his brand-new official Guru centre and residence adjacent to it. He extended an invitation to traders and craftspeople from different regions of India to relocate to the new town with him. During Arjan's reign, the town grew as a result of gifts and volunteer labour. After his son constructed the gurdwara Harmandir Sahib and installed the Sikhism scripture within the new temple in 1604, the settlement expanded to become the city of Amritsar, and the pool area expanded to become a temple complex. Mahima Prakash Vartak, a semi-historical Sikh hagiography tract most likely written in 1741, is the earliest known source discussing the lives of all ten Gurus. It describes the construction activity between 1574 and 1604.

Scripture Hymns

Ten percent of the hymns of the Guru Granth Sahib, or 638 hymns, were written by Ram Das. He was a well-known poet who wrote his works in 30 old Indian ragas from long ago. These address a variety of subjects:

"One who calls himself to be a disciple of the Guru should rise before dawn and meditate on the Lord's Name. During the early hours, he should rise and bathe, cleansing his soul in a tank of nectar [water], while he repeats the Name the Guru has spoken to him. By this procedure, he truly washes away the sins of his soul." - **Guru Granth Sahib 305, by G. S. Mansukhani**

"The Name of God fills my heart with joy. My great fortune is to meditate on God's name. The miracle of God's name is attained through the perfect Guru, but only a rare soul walks in the light of the Guru's wisdom." - **Guru Granth Sahib 94, by G. S. Mansukhani**

"O man! The poison of pride is killing you, blinding you to God. Your body, the colour of gold, has been scarred and discoloured by selfishness. Illusions of grandeur turn black, but the ego-maniac is attached to them." - **Guru Granth Sahib 776, by G. S. Mansukhani**

His songs are still sung every day in Sikhism's Harimandir Sahib (Golden Temple).

Wedding Hymn

The composition for Anand and Laavan in Suhi mode is credited to Ram Das and Amar Das in various ways. The bride and groom perform a four-clockwise circumambulation of the Sikh text as part of the process of formally wed in Sikh culture. This was only sometimes employed, and by the late 18th century, it had stopped. However, according to contradictory stories, somewhere in the 19th or 20th century, the Ram Das composition and the Anand Karaj ceremony were revived and took the place of the Hindu custom of circumambulating the fire. The Ram Das composition became one of the pillars of the Anand Marriage Act of 1909, which was passed during the British colonial era. Ram Das wrote the

wedding hymn for his own daughter's nuptials. The first line of Ram Das' Laavan hymn speaks about the responsibilities of the householder's life, including remembering the Divine Name and accepting the Guru's message as a guide. The second stanza and circle serve as a reminder that the solitary One is present everywhere and inside oneself. The Divine Love is discussed in the third. The fourth informs us that joining the two results in joining the person with the Infinite.

Masand System

Ram Das added the Masand institution to the manji system of a religious organisation, which Guru Amar Das had already established. The Masand were members of the Sikh community who lived far from the Guru but served to direct the relationships between those congregations and to raise money for gurdwara construction and Sikh activities. In the decades that followed, this institutional group is renowned for having aided in the expansion of Sikhism, but in the era of the later Gurus, it gained a bad reputation for corruption and for having improperly funded competing Sikh movements during periods of succession conflict.

Guru Granth Sahib

The Guru Granth Sahib, the main holy text of Sikhism, is regarded by Sikhs as the ultimate, supreme, and everlasting guru in the tradition of the ten human gurus of the faith. The first iteration of it, the Adi Granth, was put together by Guru Arjan, the fifth guru (1564 –1606). Its compilation was finished on August 29 and was first set up on September 1 within the Golden Temple in Amritsar. Baba Buddha was chosen to serve as the Golden Temple's first Granthi. Soon after, Ramkali Ki Vaar was introduced by Guru Hargobind. Later, Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh guru, recognised the Adi Granth as his successor and added hymns of Guru Tegh Bahadur. This second version, also known as the Guru Granth Sahib or the Adi Granth, came to be known.

The text is composed of 5,894 line compositions (shabads) and 1,430 angas (pages), and it is set to an antiquated rhythmic north Indian classical music. The scripture is broken down into 31 primary ragas, with each Granth raga being further divided into sections based on length and author. The ragas in which the hymns are read determine how they are grouped most prominently in the scripture. The Guru Granth Sahib was translated into other languages, including Lahnda (Western Punjabi), Braj Bhasha, Kauravi, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Marathi, and Persian, and it was written in the Gurmukhi script. The generic title Sant Bhasha is frequently used for copies in various languages.

Six Sikh gurus, Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjan, and Guru Tegh Bahadur, are primarily credited with writing the Guru Granth Sahib. It also includes the customs and wisdom of fourteen saints (sants) associated with the Hindu Bhakti movement, including Sheikh Farid, Ramananda, Kabir, and Namdev. The Guru Granth Sahib describes a society without any form of oppression, based on divine freedom, mercy, love, and justice. The Granth respects and accepts the texts of Islam and Hinduism, but it makes no moral concessions to either of these faiths. It is situated in a Sikh temple (temple). A Sikh usually bows before one when they enter one of these temples. In Sikhism, the Granth is considered as the supreme spiritual authority and an eternal Gurbani.

Meaning and Role in Sikhism

The Adi Granth was given the honorary title of "Guru of the Sikhs" by Guru Gobind Singh in 1708. An eyewitness to the occurrence, Narbud Singh, a bard at the court of the Rajput kings who were connected to gurus, wrote it in a Bhatt Vahi (a bard's scroll). Since that time, Sikhs have recognised the Guru Granth Sahib, the holy book, as their ever-living guru, the incarnation of the ten Sikh Gurus, and the highest authority on religion and spirituality. It is crucial in directing the Sikh way of life. The writings of the Sikh gurus contained in the Guru Granth Sahib cannot be changed or altered by anyone.

Included are phrases, vocabulary, sentence construction, grammar, and meanings. This custom was established by Guru Har Rai. As an embassy to the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb in Delhi, he dispatched his eldest son Ram Rai. The Sikh text *Asa ki Var* contains a line that reads, "the clay from a Musalman's burial gets kneaded into potter's lump," which Aurangzeb, a pious Muslim king, considered to be an insult to Islam. Ram Rai made an effort to win the emperor's favour by claiming that the text had been incorrectly copied. Ram Rai then rewrote it, replacing "Musalman" with "Beiman" (faithless, evil), which was accepted by Aurangzeb. Guru Har Rai expelled his son from his presence and appointed his younger son as his successor due to his willingness to change a single word.

Sikhism

Sikhism, sometimes called Sikhi or Sikh Dharma, is an Indian religion that first appeared in the Punjab region of the Indian subcontinent towards the end of the 15th century CE. Sikhi is derived from the word Sikh, which means "disciple," "seeker," or "learner." With roughly 25 – 30 million devotees (also known as Sikhs) as of the early 21st century, it is the largest major organised religion that has only recently been established and ranks fifth in the world. The religious teachings of Guru Nanak (1469 – 1539), the faith's founding guru, and the nine Sikh gurus who followed him led to the development of Sikhism. The Sikh text *Guru Granth Sahib* was designated as the tenth guru by Gobind Singh (1666 – 1708), ending the line of human gurus and designating it as the last eternally living guru and a source of religious inspiration for Sikhs. According to Guru Nanak, the ideal man "establishes unity with God, learns His Will, and acts out His Will," and that living an "active, creative, and practical life" of "truthfulness, faithfulness, self-control, and purity" is more important than metaphysical truth. The sixth Sikh Guru, Guru Hargobind (1606 – 1644), created the idea of the Miri ('political'/'temporal') and Piri ('spiritual') realms existing side by side.

Sikhism places a strong emphasis on Simran (meditation and remembering of the teachings of the Gurus), which can be internalised through Naam Japna ('concentration on His name') or externalised musically through kirtan as a way to experience God's presence. It instructs adherents on how to change the "Five Thieves" (i.e. lust, rage, greed, attachment, and ego). In times of religious persecution, the faith grew and changed, attracting adherents from both Islam and Hinduism. The teachings of Guru Nanak and his successors form the cornerstone of Sikhism. Sikh ethics place a strong emphasis on the harmony between moral behaviour in daily life and spiritual growth. Sikhism is a monotheistic religion with pantheistic aspects that promotes faith in the concept of Ik Onkar, or One Universal God. Waheguru ('wonderful Teacher') is said to be nirankar ('formless'), akal ('timeless'), karta purakh ('the creator'), and agam agochar ('incomprehensible and invisible') in Sikhism.