

Guru Angad Dev

His Life and Teachings



THE LIFE & TEACHINGS OF

**GURU
ANGAD DEV**

SHABNAM GUPTA

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EARLY LIFE

Bhai Lehna, who was to become Guru Angad Dev later, was born on March 31, 1504, to a trader named Pheru Mal and his wife Daya Kaur, in the village of Harike, Punjab. His mother was a devotee of Goddess Durga, and it was under her influence that he too started worshipping this Goddess.

When he came of age, he was married to a lady named Khivi, a native of Matte di Sarai, which was incidentally his father's ancestral town. It was to this same town that Angad's father moved back after some time. Here, Khivi gave birth to three children—a daughter, Amro, and two sons named Dasu and Datu.

When their village was sacked by the Mughals and Baloches, Angad and his family had to move to Khadur, a small town near Tarn Taran in Amritsar district. However, soon after this, his father expired and the responsibility of the entire family came on his shoulders.



As he was a pious devotee of Goddess Durga, he used to conduct pilgrimage tours to Jwalamukhi, a holy place from where a volcanic flame is supposed to represent Goddess Durga.

One day, early in the morning when Lehna was meditating deeply, he happened to hear a very beautiful hymn. It was so captivating that he was unable to concentrate on his meditation. He strained his ears to hear it clearly. As he listened to those beautiful words, he felt a strange emotion unlike any he had experienced before. The devotional hymn had moved him so deeply, that he began to feel restless. The verse he heard, sounded like this:

“There is but one God/His name is Truth/
He is the creator/He hears none/Nor does He
nurse ill-will for anyone/He is immortal/
neither is He born nor does He die/He is self-
existent/He is reached by the Guru’s favour.”

When Lehna could not stay still any longer, he got up and went to see who was singing this verse. He was surprised to see that it was his neighbour, Bhai Jodha. He immediately went over to his house to ask whose hymns it was that he was singing. Bhai Jodha told him about Guru Nanak who lived

in Kartarpur, and when Lehna wanted to know more, he even told him about some of his teachings. The more Lehna learnt about Guru Nanak, the more he wanted to meet him. There was something about the Guru's teachings which touched him deeply. He even told his family and a few of his friends about his desire to meet the Guru, but they were completely against it. They told him that their whole family worshipped Goddess Durga and it would not be right to worship anyone else, especially since, they were heading towards Jwalamukhi to pay their respects to Goddess Durga.

Lehna felt really distressed at not being able to visit Guru Nanak, since he was the leader of the group visiting Goddess Durga's temple. He was so restless that he could not sleep at night. He longed to see the Guru and hear his golden words, but he knew he would be doing wrong to abandon the group midway. He tried to console himself by saying that he would go and see the Guru the day after their return to Khadur.

Though the thought comforted him a little, he was still very depressed. So spellbound was he by the divine words of Guru Nanak's hymns that he could not think of anything else. He would often pray to Guru Nanak

hoping that the Guru would hear his prayers. He went around with the other pilgrims, but his heart was somewhere else. One night, he made his decision. He decided to leave the party quietly since he knew that they would do their best to dissuade him. And so, that very night, he mounted his horse and left for Kartarpur.

So great was his joy when he finally reached the outskirts of Kartarpur, that he felt as though he had been born again. He was elated at finally being so close to his Guru. He felt rejuvenated by just entering the city where Guru Nanak lived. He looked forward to meeting his Guru eagerly.

While he was proceeding to Kartarpur he met a tall, strong and cheerful old man. When Bhai Lehna asked him the way to Guru Nanak's place, the old man gently replied, "You can come with me, as I am going that way myself."

Bhai Lehna readily agreed, and followed the old man on his horse. On reaching the place the old man told him to go inside, and meet the Guru. When Lehna entered the house he was surprised to see the same person seated on the Guru's throne. He felt very ashamed as he had ridden his horse while the Guru had walked the entire



distance. He asked Guru Nanak to forgive him, and only when the Guru told him that he had done nothing wrong, and that it was the host's duty to serve his guests, was Lehna pacified.

On hearing Guru Nanak's discourse, Bhai Lehna threw away the bells which he had procured to dance before the flame Goddess Jwalamukhi. After this, he was a changed man. He started living at Kartarpur and decided to henceforth, dedicate himself to the service of Guru Nanak.

UNDER GURU NANAK DEV

Bhai Lehna began living at Kartarpur. Soon he succeeded in attaching himself to Nanak's personal staff.

A very interesting anecdote about his early days with Nanak shows how by his hard work and humility, he succeeded in making himself indispensable to Guru Nanak.

One day, Guru Nanak had collected three bundles of grass for his cows and buffaloes. But since the grass was wet and dripping with mud, his disciples and sons refused to carry the bundles. When Bhai Lehna reached there, and was informed of his Guru's wish, he picked up the bundles and placed them on his head. On the way, the mud dripping from the wet grass soiled his new clothes. When they reached home the Guru's wife, Mata Sulakhani, on seeing Bhai Lehna's state asked Guru Nanak if it was proper of him to have asked a new disciple to carry these muddy bundles. The Guru replied that God



put bundles on the head of the man who was fit to carry them. His wife, not understanding the hidden meaning, pointed towards his clothes which were soiled with mud. The Guru replied, "This is not mud, it is the saffron of God's court."

When Mata Sulakhani turned to look at his dress again, she was dumbfounded. Instead of the muddy smudges, there were saffron spots spread all over Bhai Lehna's robe. What had seemed so dirty and wet, a little while ago, now looked like a holy dress with saffron colour all over it. When she looked questioningly towards Guru Nanak, he smiled at her and explained that the three bundles he had asked his sons to carry were no ordinary bundles. They represented the spiritual, the temporal and the stewardship of the Sikhs. But his sons had haughtily refused to carry those bundles for fear of spoiling their clothes. They had disobeyed him for purely selfish reasons, while Bhai Lehna had carried the bundles without any hesitation at all. Guru Nanak then told Mata Sulakhani that Bhai Lehna alone, could take on the responsibility of the guruship.

Guru Nanak would often put his sons and all his devotees to some test or another every now and then. Though he was sure that Bhai

Lehna deserved to be the next Guru, he wanted the others to see for themselves why he had made that choice. Personally, he was very fond of Bhai Lehna and knew that he possessed all the qualities he had wanted in a son. But he was also aware that his family would react very negatively to his decision to make Bhai Lehna the next Guru. And so, he gave them ample opportunity to see why he preferred Bhai Lehna to his sons.

On one occasion, Guru Nanak woke up in the middle of the night to send for his sons and Bhai Lehna. He then picked up a few of his soiled clothes and asked his sons to wash them. He told them that his clothes were dirty and that he needed them for his prayers the next morning.

Hearing this, both his sons expressed their displeasure and irritation at being woken up in the middle of the night for such a trivial task. They advised him to wear something else in the morning, instead of troubling them over something so unimportant. But the Guru insisted that they be washed just then. At this, his sons got irritated and made an excuse that there was no water in the house. One of them said that even if they did wash it the clothes would never dry by morning. But the Guru would not hear a word of it. He

persisted with his demands, but his sons shrugged saying that they would send it to the washerman the next morning. That was the last word on the matter.

The Guru then approached Bhai Lehna and asked him to wash the clothes. Bhai Lehna immediately picked up the clothes and, without another word, made his way to the river. Guru Nanak smiled while his sons shook their heads and went back to sleep. The next morning, Bhai Lehna presented the clothes, all nicely washed, dried and well ironed, to the Guru who wore it to the morning prayers. He blessed Bhai Lehna for his devotion, while his sons looked on in a disinterested manner.

On another occasion, Guru Nanak asked his sons to repair a wall of his house which had collapsed. The sons refused saying that it was not their job to build or repair walls. Lehna, who was standing nearby, offered to do it. He started building the wall. When he was half way through, the Guru told him that it was not straight. He demolished it and began building it again. Again the Guru showed his dissatisfaction, and Lehna started building it again for the third time. This carried on for some time. Each time Lehna started from scratch. When the Guru's sons



tried to discourage him, he replied, "A servant must do his master's work. It is for the master to decide what work he should assign to his servant."

Gradually, Bhai Lehna became a personal attendant of the Guru, and did all his tasks with a great deal of zeal and dedication. This earned him his Guru's love, and the envy of other disciples.

The Guru slowly began a systematic trial of his followers' devotion. And, on every occasion, Lehna proved to be a true devotee and a worthy disciple of the Guru. However, the Guru's sons grew jealous of him, and started showing their dislike openly.

Probably, the Guru sensed it and that is why he asked Lehna to return for some time to his family in Khadur. Having spent three years with the Guru he felt a little sad at leaving. But Guru Nanak consoled him saying, "I myself lived in Khadur once in the house of Satbharai. My bed is still there. Thou shalt behold me in Khadur as if thou wert near me."

When he arrived home, almost everybody went to pay homage to him.

The Guru came to visit Bhai Lehna at Khadur. He and his wife welcomed the Guru and served him well. The Guru gave his



discourses here, and left him spiritually wiser.

After the Guru departed for Kartarpur, Lehna regularly recited the prayers taught to him. Soon his hopes, desires and worldly love vanished, and he began to centre his attention and devotion on God.

Knowing Bhai Lehna's devotion to him, the Guru paid him a visit again.

FROM LEHNA TO ANGAD

It was during this visit that Guru Nanak addressed him, and said, "Between thee and me there is no difference... Thou art verily 'Angad'—a part or *ang* of my body. I congratulate thee."

Saying this the Guru embraced him, and took him to Kartarpur. Another reason which can be attributed for the name 'Angad' is perhaps the Angad of *Ramayan*, who was a trusted follower and devotee of Lord Rama. Nanak had declared that at his death his soul would migrate into the body of Angad.

Although the Guru was well aware of Angad's worth and devotion, he used to take regular trials of his devotion mainly to convince his sons and followers that Angad alone was worthy of succeeding him. Anecdotes of his trials abound. The Guru tested his obeisance in everyday life.

For instance, one day when the Guru was washing his hair, the cup he used slipped

from his hand and fell into a deep sink. The Guru asked his sons to bring it to him quickly. They replied that the sink was deep and full of dirty water, but they would ask a servant to get it. Upon this, the Guru asked Angad to get him his cup. It is believed that when Angad put his hands in the water, the cup rose to the surface on its own. It is then that Guru Nanak is supposed to have told his wife, "Sri Chand and Lakshmi Das are thy sons; Lehna, who obeys me, is my son."

Every morning, Guru Nanak used to go to the river Ravi for his bath. Lehna would go with him and guard his clothes, while the Guru took his bath. It so happened that on one chilly winter morning three other disciples, who were seeking Guru Nanak's favour, also accompanied them to the river. While the Guru was bathing there was a hail storm, and unable to bear the chill the three disciples returned home. Lehna waited for the Guru to step out of the river. When the Guru asked him why he had continued to stay while the other three had gone home, Lehna humbly replied, "A servant must never desert his master. So how could I do that?"

Such instances assured Guru Nanak more and more, that no one but Angad deserved to be the new Guru. He knew that only his



devotee could carry his light forward by becoming the spiritual leader of the Sikh community. Angad had the necessary qualities of humility, devotion, sacrifice and service. Guru Nanak was really pleased that Angad lived as per his teachings and that he believed so strongly in the Sikh principles of oneness of God and brotherhood. He also wanted to humble the pride of his sons and other men who scoffed at his choice.

One day, Guru Nanak and his devotees were walking. They came across something that looked like a corpse wrapped up in a cloth. The Guru then turned to his Sikhs, and asked, "Who is prepared to eat this."

All those present were shocked at this suggestion and their faces expressed utmost disgust. At this point Angad came forward and asked his Guru's permission to eat it. When Guru Nanak nodded, Angad stepped forward and without any hesitation bent down. But when he lifted the cloth he was pleasantly surprised to see that under it was nothing but sacred food. All the Sikhs were equally surprised and his sons kept wishing that they had agreed to carry out their father's orders. Angad, on the other hand, seeing the sacred food before him, picked up the tray and offered it, first to the

Guru, and then to the assembly of Sikhs. And after they had all eaten, he sat down to eat the left overs. Seeing this, Guru Nanak was most touched. He could not wait any longer to announce that he had chosen Angad as the next Guru.

He then turned to Angad, and said that he was blessed with the sacred food only because he had the quality of sharing good things with others. He then told his Sikhs that if all the wealthy people used their wealth for themselves alone, it was like a corpse; if they decided to share it with others, then it became sacred food. He then embraced Angad before everyone present and told his devotee that he alone knew the secret of sharing.

Now, everyone knew that Angad was chosen as the new Guru of the Sikhs. They were all happy since they loved and admired Angad too. Only the day of anointing was to be decided. Everyone except the Guru's two sons were happy at the choice of Angad being the next Guru.

NOMINATION TO GURUSHIP

On September 7, 1539, the Guru assembled the Sikhs, seated Angad on his throne, placed a coconut and five paise before him and made him his successor. The Guru then ordered his people to obey, and serve Angad with the same devotion with which they had served him, since he was a living image of the Guru himself. He had displayed the three cardinal principles of complete and unshakable devotion and obedience to the Guru; dignity of labour; and love for humanity.

The Guru said, "Guruship is a position which depends on self-sacrifice, and Angad has exhibited this virtue in the highest degree. His sincere devotion, and extreme humility have won him this honour."

Despite hearing the Guru's reasons, his sons were displeased at being superseded by Angad. However, after appointing him his successor the Guru directed Angad to return to Khadur. A short time after this, Guru Nanak departed from this life.



Guru Angad was aware that Guru Nanak had asked him to shift to Kartarpur because he wanted to avert a conflict between him and his two sons, Lakshmi Chand and Sri Chand. After the Guru had appointed Angad as his successor, there had been some dissent in the Guru's family. Although he moved to Kartarpur as per Guru Nanak's instructions, Guru Angad still felt lost without him and missed him a lot. But he knew that he had a huge responsibility and so he immersed himself in the service of the Sikhs.

The Guru-ka-langar was soon started, and his wife helped him in cooking food for the people. Gradually, the small group of Sikhs in Khadur began helping in the langar and so it was well-maintained. Guru Angad also helped the poor and the needy in every way he could. In no time, the Sikh community began to grow under the spiritual guidance of Guru Angad. The people lived in harmony and brotherhood.

Guru Angad religiously passed on the teachings of Guru Nanak and spread his light far and wide. More and more people came to hear him and to become his followers. However involved he was in his work, Guru Angad always found time for his meditation.

One day, as he was walking about restlessly, thinking of Guru Nanak, he met a

Jat girl. She immediately recognised the Guru and ran to touch his feet and seek his blessings. She told the Guru that her name was Nihali and that she used to make cowdung cakes for fuel. She begged Guru Angad to let her do just anything for him, to show her respect for him. So touched was he by her devotion that he asked her to lend him a room if it was possible. He wanted a small, unknown place where he could hide from the world for a few days. Nihali was more than honoured to be of any service to the Guru, and she immediately vacated her room for him. And at the Guru's request, she made it a point to give him milk twice a day, while he shut himself in the room and reflected on Guru Nanak's teachings.

Meanwhile, the Sikh community was really worried and restless. At first they thought that the Guru must have gone somewhere on some urgent work, but as months passed without any news of him or from him, they feared that something was wrong. They looked everywhere for him, but he was nowhere to be seen. They decided to go to Bhai Budha and seek his help in finding the whereabouts of the Guru. A group of Sikhs left Khadur immediately for Bhai Budha's house. Bhai Budha who had been gifted with the power of insight, immediately saw where the Guru was. He led the Sikhs to

Nihali's small hut in Khadur where they found Guru Angad deep in mediation. All the Sikhs were amazed when they saw that Guru Angad who stood before them was the mirror image of Guru Nanak.

When the Sikhs fell on his feet and begged him to come back with him, Guru Angad was hesitant. He turned to Bhai Budha who had been very close to Guru Nanak, and told him that he could not bear the separation from his Guru whom he loved so much. He also said that he would rather be burnt alive than be separated from Guru Nanak. But Bhai Budha explained that Guru Nanak had never really left them. In fact, he reminded Guru Angad that he was a part of Guru Nanak, as said by the Guru himself. He then told Guru Angad that the Sikhs needed him and it would not be proper to leave them uncared for since Guru Nanak had entrusted them all to his care. Hearing all this, Guru Angad realised his responsibility and agreed to come back with them.

Within no time, he had established a daily routine for himself and made all the Sikhs follow the same. He would wake up at dawn everyday and meditate for sometime. He would then recite the *Japji* with all his Sikhs gathered together. These were followed by devotional hymns in which every Sikh

participated. He would then supervise the free kitchen and looked into the other matters of the Sikh community. He also had great healing powers because of which crowds of people from all over thronged outside his house.

People would also come to Guru Angad for personal and professional guidance, irrespective of their caste, creed or religion. One such person was Malu Shah, who was an orderly in the Mughal army. He was a religious and moral man. He found it very difficult to work with other soldiers in the Mughal army as they were amoral. Malu Shah wanted Guru Angad's advice on whether he should stay on with them despite their bad habits, or quit the army on moral grounds. Guru Angad realised the predicament of this man. He told him that as long as he remained faithful to his values and morals, he need not worry about others. The Guru also advised him to stay on since he believed that one should always serve the master faithfully, irrespective of all other considerations, especially in adversity. Malu Shah's moral conflict was resolved and his mind was put to rest, thanks to the Guru.

AT KHADUR

To avoid the impending conflict with Guru Nanak's sons, Angad Dev went to Khadur, where he stayed in the house of a devotee.

Very close to his village lived a man called Shiv Nath. He was popularly known as Tapa. He was very jealous of Guru Angad Dev's popularity, since he wanted his villagers to acknowledge him as their Guru.

One year, a severe drought hit the village. There was no rain, and the fields could not be ploughed. They started dying up. When the villagers could bear it no longer, they went to Tapa for advice. Tapa told the villagers that the Rain God was angry with them as they had stopped worshipping him. Instead, they had started worshipping an ordinary man, referring to Guru Angad Dev. He told the villagers to go to Angad Dev, and ask him to pray to the Rain God. And if his prayers failed to bring rain, then they should turn him out of the village.



The simple and superstitious villagers went to Angad Dev, and did as directed. When the Guru explained to them that no one except God could cause the rain, the people were very angry. However, Angad Dev left Khadur on his own.

At that time Amardas, who was to become the third Guru of the Sikhs, arrived at Khadur. He was very unhappy with what Tapa had done. He told the villagers that Tapa had fooled them. He also told them that wherever Tapa walked in the fields before the sun set, it would rain in those places.

The villagers then dragged Tapa from field to field. He was so exhausted by the afternoon that he fainted, and since there was no water to revive him, he consequently died.

When Guru Angad heard of Tapa's death, he reprimanded Amardas. Amardas threw himself at the Guru's feet, and humbly sought his pardon.



GURU ANGAD DEV

By now even the villagers had realised their folly. They requested Amardas to go to Guru Angad and plead with him on their behalf, to return to Khadur. At Amardas's sincere request Guru Angad agreed to come back to Khadur, and he also brought the rains with him.

When this was announced, huge crowds came to cheer him and make him various offerings. Guru Angad Dev started giving discourses, singing of hymns and a free kitchen (langar) for pilgrims and wayfarers, just as it used to be in Guru Nanak's time.

As Guru Angad's fame reached far and wide, people started coming from far-off places to be cured by him. This was especially so with lepers who came to be healed by the Guru's ministrations, and on being cured returned singing the Guru's hymns.

Guru Angad Dev had addressed himself to the task of consolidating the Sikhs and their



faith. But the task was not an easy one. The most serious challenge was posed by Sri Chand, the eldest son of Guru Nanak. He was not ambitious, but there were a handful of followers who believed that he was the rightful heir to the Guru's throne. That is how under Sri Chand a separate sect was founded, thereby causing a schism among the followers of Nanak.

Notwithstanding these problems, the Guru started his work of consolidation and propagation of the Sikh faith. He taught Guru Nanak's teachings by setting up his own example. He lived his Guru's tenets by regulating his life around discipline and service.

He emphasised the qualities of humility, forgiveness and selfless service among his Sikhs, since these were the principal tenets of Sikh religion. He could not tolerate arrogance, and always believed that pride comes before a fall. God had his own ways of punishing or humbling a proud man. One such proud Sikh was Manu who used to work in Guru's kitchen. He was a good cook and the Guru used to really enjoy the food cooked by him. This made him so vain that he would refuse to serve anyone but the Guru.

One day, a group of Sikhs arrived at the langar, at what seemed to Manu a really odd time. When they asked to be served, he refused saying that he served no one but the Guru. When Guru Angad heard this he was very angry at Manu and told him to go and burn himself on a pyre. Manu was in a fix but he had no choice but to obey the Guru's orders. He went to the jungle and began collecting wood for the pyre, while criticising the Guru at the same time. At this point, a robber happened to pass by and asked Manu why he was making the pyre. When Manu narrated the whole incident the robber was so moved that he decided to sacrifice his life for Manu's. He handed over his pot full of ornaments and precious stones to Manu, and sat on the pyre himself. Unable to believe his good fortune, Manu rushed to town to sell the booty. But he had just reached the market, when he was arrested by the police for robbery, and later put to death.

The headman of the Khahira Jats in Khadur was also a very proud man who would flaunt his wealth, and showed no respect for Guru Angad or the Sikh religion. He would often scoff at the Sikhs and the teachings of Guru Angad. What's more, his young son had taken after his father.

However, his health soon began to fail and he got attacks of epilepsy. His condition worsened and before long, he was completely bed-ridden. Seeing this, his father panicked and took him to the local ascetic to cure him. The 'tapa' tried various remedies but nothing could cure the ailing boy. His condition soon deteriorated to such an extent that he was expected to die. At this point, someone suggested that he be taken to Guru Angad, who was reputed to have great healing powers. Though the headman had never believed in Guru Angad, he decided to take his son to the Guru as a last resort.

When the Guru saw the boy, he told him to abstain completely from liquor and to regularly repeat God's name. He also asked him to serve holy men and take their blessings. The boy followed Guru Angad's instructions carefully and within no time his health improved, and he got better. However, after he had completely recovered he stopped following the Guru's instruction. Both the father and son resumed drinking.

Once while sitting on the terrace, he got an attack of epilepsy, lost control, fell over the parapet and died. The father again went to Guru Angad and begged him to revive his only son. But the Guru merely shrugged this

time and said that it was all God's doing and his will alone.

Though Guru Angad disliked pride in a person, he was also very forgiving by nature. He forgave those who did something wrong but later realised their mistake. This is what happened with his two main musicians—Satta and Balwand. These two were Guru Angad's particular favourites, and they had the privilege of being the lead singers every morning, during the prayer. All this attention made them very proud and arrogant. Gradually, they even began to believe that it was only because of their talent and efforts that Guru Angad had become so popular. They used to brag and boast, and even speak ill of the Guru.

When Manyu Sikha complained to the Guru that they did not enjoy the morning prayers because of the proud musicians, Guru Angad asked them to leave his service. He also told his devotees that they were to have nothing to do with those two proud men. He had also announced that whoever spoke about the two men in his presence would have his face blackened, then be mounted on a donkey and taken around town.

When Satta and Balwand heard of Guru's verdict, they scoffed and boasted that if they

did not sing and play at the prayers, nobody would come to the Guru anymore. They began holding musical sessions in their own houses, and were convinced that everyone would now gather at their place to listen to their music. But they were in for a shock when they saw that no one came to them. And they were even more shocked to find Guru Angad's Sikhs singing hymns on their own very well. They now realised their mistake and wanted someone to speak to Guru Angad on their behalf. None of the Sikhs in Kartarpur agreed to speak for them. They felt really dejected.

Finally, they decided to go to Bhai Ladha, a very loyal Sikh whom the Guru really liked and respected. Bhai Ladha, who was well-aware of the fault of these two men, wanted to give them one more chance. Being a true Sikh, his heart was merciful and all-forgiving. He was also aware of Guru's declaration. So, he had his face blackened, and then mounting on a donkey, he rode all over the town before presenting himself to the Guru and speaking on behalf of the two men. Guru Angad was so touched by Bhai Ladha's selfless act that he immediately forgave the two men and accepted them back into the Sikh community.

In fact, it was Guru's patience, devotion and humility that won him more and more devotees everyday. He preached that humility was the highest virtue of all, he was also the epitome of humility himself. This is what made many a proud man humble. One such person was a yogi named Daya Nath, who felt that no other philosophy surpassed that of Yoga.

A few years ago a senior yogi of Batala had been defeated by Guru Nanak in a religious debate, but Daya Nath would not accept the superiority of any other philosophy. He sought Guru Nanak's successor, and on meeting Guru Angad challenged him to a debate. He claimed that a man could become pure only if he practised certain rituals, certain exercises and above all, if he practised meditation. But Guru Angad believed that such things did not matter too much as long as he lived a clean and healthy life. He explained to Daya Nath that Guru Nanak had always said that religious life and everyday life were in no way different. He had taught that a man could reach God through humility and virtue. He told Daya Nath that love and consideration for all living beings brought man close to God, and this is what

Guru Nanak had always emphasised. Daya Nath had by now realised the wisdom and truth of Guru Angad's words, and also why the Sikhs were so devoted to their Gurus and their teachings. But he was too proud to admit it.

Being senior in age, he asked Guru Angad if he could do anything for him. At this, Guru Angad humbly asked Daya Nath to bless him. The yogi thought that this Guru was definitely a real man of God as he was asking an ordinary yogi like him to bless him. He realised that it was humility which made him such a successful spiritual leader. He also realised that it was this virtue of humility that he lacked so much. He then fell at the Guru's feet and asked his forgiveness. Guru Angad than blessed him, and Daya Nath returned to Batala, a humble and a much wiser man.

WORKS OF GURU ANGAD DEV

First of all, Guru Angad Dev turned his attention to the collection of Guru Nanak's hymns, which were mostly written in a language called *Lande Mahajni*, and some of them which had not been written at all, but were sung regularly. Guru Angad knew Lande Mahajni. He modified the language by giving its alphabets a better shape, and a new order. The new script came to be called *Gurmukhi* or from the mouth of the Guru. It was in this script that Guru Angad wrote down the hymns of Guru Nanak, penned down his own compositions, and gave lessons to the villagers.

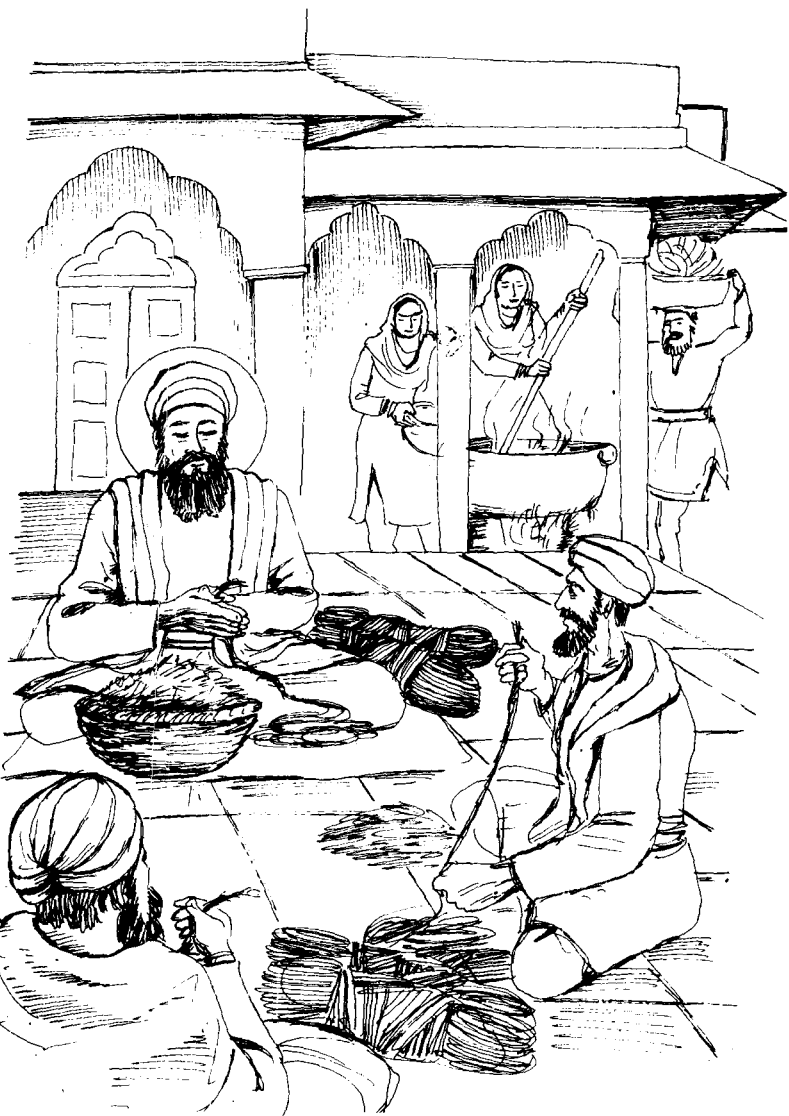
By compiling Guru Nanak's hymns, Guru Angad not only saved them for the forthcoming generation, but also negated the possibility of misinterpretation. It provided the basis of the essential Sikh doctrine that there is no essential difference between the Guru and his *shabad* or *bani* (word). Guru

Angad Dev assigned a very high place to the shabad by making it a pathway to salvation. However, by limiting his sermons to only one language he was unable to draw followers from outside Punjab.

Guru Angad followed the tradition of free kitchen (langar) set up by Guru Nanak. However, he was more involved than even Guru Nanak. He served the meals to the visitors who were often poor and of other castes, and even sat down to eat with them. Thus, he broke the shackles of the caste system which were so binding in that age. The persons incharge of the kitchen were supposed to be polite and sweet.

To perpetuate the principle of dignity of labour and self dependence, the Guru's wife, Mata Khivi, worked in the kitchen with the other workers. The Guru himself earned his living by twisting coarse grass called *myrj* into strings used for making cots. The offerings of the langar were served to people sitting in a line. This helped in erasing social and economical inequality of caste and creed, and also provided a medium of social integration.

Guru Angad is said to have established a new town, Goindwal, near Khadur. There is



an interesting story about how this town came into existence.

One of Guru Angad's disciples, named Gobind, also known as Gondu, was fighting a case with his relatives. He used to often pray to Guru Angad and had vowed that if he won the case he would establish a new township on the shores of the river Beas, to show his gratitude. He won the case and as promised, sought the Guru's blessings and began to work on the township. However, the masons were astonished to see that whatever they put up during the day, would be destroyed by night. At first, they thought that there was some fault in the material they used, but within a few days, they came to the conclusion that it was the work of the evil spirits that was believed to haunt the place.

They went straight to Gobind and narrated the unusual happenings to him. Gobind in turn went to Guru Angad to seek his help with the holy work. The Guru promised to help him. He knew that there were no spirits, but that certain trouble makers in Khadur were responsible. He then sent for his disciple, Amardas, and asked him to stay near the construction site and personally supervise the work there.

Amardas did as he was told, and within no time the township was complete, without any further mischief. Guru Angad then named the town 'Goindwal' after his founder devotee Gondu, and blessed the city.

Guru Angad, however, did not leave his ancestral house at Khadur. But he did not want to disappoint Gondu either. And so, he asked Amardas, who he knew would soon succeed him as the next Guru, to go to Goindwal and establish himself there.

Amardas, who considered Guru Angad's orders as the last word, left for Goindwal immediately with his family. But so strong was his will to serve Guru Angad that he would get up early in the morning everyday, and carry water for his Guru's bath, all the way to Khadur. He would attend to his Guru's needs all day and in the evenings, he would return to Goindwal.



HUMAYUN AND GURU ANGAD

Guru Angad's meeting with Emperor Humayun forms a very interesting part of the Guru's biography.

It is said that Emperor Humayun, after his final defeat at Kanauj came to Khadur to seek the blessings of the Guru.

When Humayun reached there the Guru was in meditation, and consequently the emperor had to keep waiting for a long time. He took it as an insult and was about to draw out his sword, when the Guru saw him.

He remarked that he should have used that sword against Sher Shah Suri, who was his rival, rather than against a man of God. He reprimanded the emperor saying that he had fled from the battlefield like a coward, and now he was posing as a hero in front of an innocent, religious man.

Humayun was really ashamed of his conduct and begged the Guru's forgiveness.

The Guru then blessed and assured him that he would get back his kingdom after sometime.



PREPARING FOR A SUCCESSOR

The Guru's sons, Dasu and Datu, were always in service of Guru Angad Dev, but he was more satisfied with his disciple Amardas's, service. Thus, continuing the tradition of Guru Nanak, he also named a disciple, other than his sons, as his successor.

One day, Guru Angad said that his life was drawing to a close and that he must depart soon. He was also confident of Amardas's piety and devotion. So, like his own Guru, he too sent for a coconut and five paise coin. He placed these before him while Bhai Budha put the *tilak* of guruship on his forehead. Thus, Guru Amardas was duly and solemnly appointed as Guru Angad Dev's successor.

On March 28, 1552, Guru Angad gave a feast to his disciples, and once again preached all the principles and tenets of Sikh religion. On the following day he rose before dawn, bathed and changed into new clothes for his



final departure. He then ordered Guru Amardas to live in the town of Goindwal, and spread the Sikh religion to the best of his ability. He then passed away peacefully after having been a Guru for twelve-and-a-half years.

Guru Amardas consoled the followers present on this sad occasion by saying, "Guru Angad is imperishable and immortal. It is a law of the body to be born and to die, but the soul is different... And so, the man who possesseth divine knowledge hath no apprehension of further transmigration."



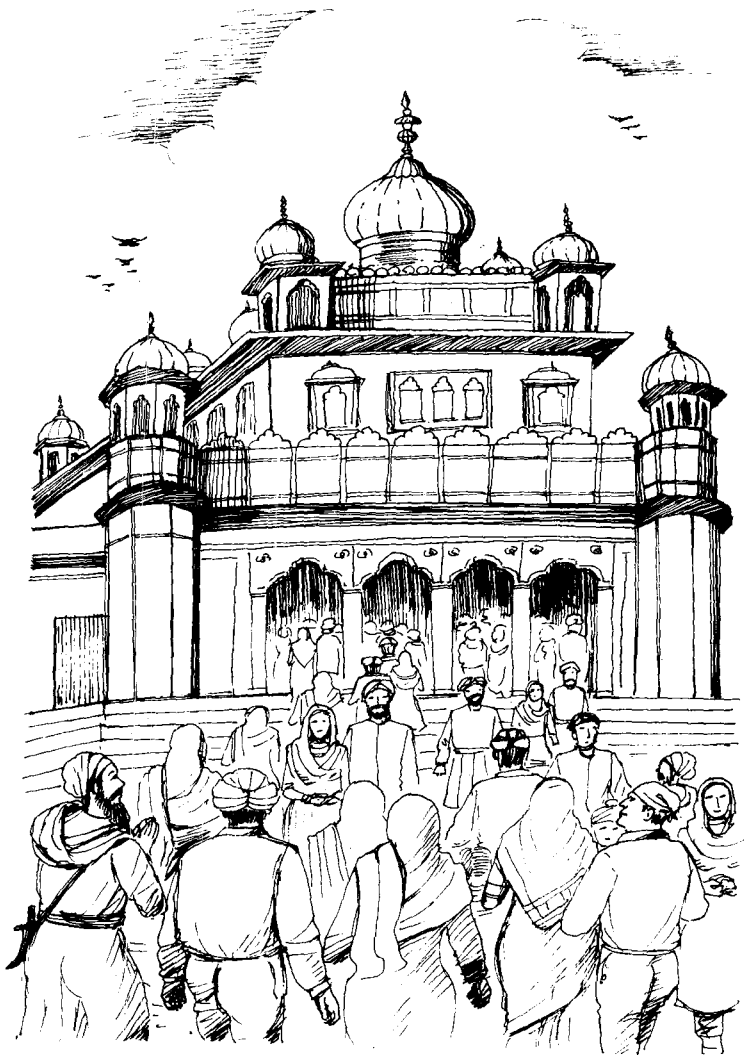
SHRINES OF GURU ANGAD DEV

Khadur Sahib is a small village in Amritsar district where Guru Angad had spent his early years. Later when he became a Guru, he made Khadur Sahib his headquarters for propagating the tenets of Sikh religion, and giving his sermons. A spacious gurdwara had been built at the site where the Guru was cremated. Thousands of devotees visit this sacred shrine everyday to pay homage to their Guru.

Mal Akhara - This is a beautiful building with domes and a big hall. It has been made for those devotees who go to visit the sacred site where Guru Angad had simplified the Gurmukhi script.

On the outskirts of this village, there is another gurdwara with a large compound and a mango grove where Guru Angad used to meditate.

Today, the followers of Sikh religion regard Guru Angad Dev as a person of fine



character, piety and devotion. He was an intense preacher with a keen sensitivity. He could perceive the problems of the people and solved them to the best of his ability. He had a very balanced view towards the propagation of the Sikh religion. His modification of the Gurmukhi script shows that he was a learned man.

Guru Angad guided the Sikh movement when it was still in its infancy and fraught with dangers and uncertainty. But under his wise guidance, this movement took on an unparalleled momentum, and soon became a part of the nation's religious set up. The Sikh religion was clarified, and its hymns recorded for the benefit of the masses. He really and truly carried on the tradition started by Guru Nanak, and was truly his worthy successor.

Titles in this series:

Guru Nanak Dev
Guru Angad Dev
Guru Amardas
Guru Ram Das
Guru Arjan Dev
Guru Hargobind
Guru Har Rai
Guru Harkrishan
Guru Tegh Bahadur
Guru Gobind Singh