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Guru Angad Dev Ji

Gurus

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He was known as Bhai Lehna, (Lehna in Punjabi means “the dues to be collected”) before he took his place on Guru Nanak Dev Ji’s throne as Guru Angad Dev Ji.

He was a man of simple beliefs and religious temperament. He was the leader of a group of followers of the Goddess Durga. Every year Lehna led the devotees on a pilgrimage up the hills to worship Durga. On one pilgrimage, during the early morning he heard a hymn being sung, he was struck by its melody and message. On enquiry he learnt that the hymn was composed by Guru Nanak Dev Ji.

He left his pilgrimage to meet Guru Nanak Dev Ji. At the very first meeting he fell under the spell of Guru Nanak Dev Ji’s words and abandoned the worship of Durga and his business. His companions and worshippers called him a traitor and went on their way.

Bhai Lehna learnt the Sikh way of life, he memorised Guru Nanak Dev Ji’s words and took part in Kirtan, he served the sadh-sangat (holy congregation) with great humility and sincerity. During the day he worked on Guru Nanak Dev Ji’s farm and in the evening served langar in the free-kitchen.

There are many stories of Bhai Lehna’s humility, on one occasion, a family came to Guru Nanak Dev to request the wall of the house had fallen down and if some Sikhs could help build a new one. Guru Nanak Dev Ji asked his sons Sri Chand and Lakhmi Das to help, however they made excuses, since it was dark and raining could it not be left until the morning. Meanwhile Bhai Lehna was already outside re-building the wall. Guru Ji inspected the wall and had it re-built because it was not correct, Bhai Lehna rebuilt the wall 22 times, before Guru Ji had approved it, not once did he complain but with deep humility followed his Guru’s instructions.

When the time came for a successor Guru Nanak Dev Ji tested his Sikhs, the final test was to eat what looked like a dead body which was covered by a sheet,(out of Baba Budha, Bhai Bala and Bhai Lehna) only Bhai Lehna was brave enough to obey his Guru, requesting which end should he start from.

Bhai Lehna loved Guru Nanak so much , he became like Guru Nanak Dev Ji, that’s why Guru Nanak Dev Ji made Bhai Lehna the next Guru and called him Angad (limb from my limb)- you are a part of me, in preference to his own son Sri Chand : showing that nothing in Sikhi is a birth right or inherited. Sri Chand set up his separate sect of Udasis (renunciants).

Guru Angad Dev Ji was Guru for 13 years, he moved to Khadur and continued the mission of Guru Nanak Dev Ji.

- Guru Angad Dev Ji opened more centres and organised a regular system of collecting offerings to meet the increased expenses of Langar as the number of Sikhs increased.
- Guru Ji also collected the hymns of Guru Nanak Dev Ji which had no particular script, Guru Ji used Guru Nanak Dev Ji’s hymns to create a new script called Gurmukhi (from the mouth of the Guru) the written form of the Panjabi language. This was a far-reaching step, it gave the Sikhs a written language distinct from the written language of the Hindus and Muslims (who used Sanskrit and Arabic) the language which only the privileged could understand and use. Guru Ji thus fostered a sense of the Sikhs being a separate people.
- Guru Ji was also very keen on physical fitness, he ordered his followers, to take part in sports and community games after the morning prayers. Every community had a wrestling arena.

Guru Angad Dev Ji was a great man who further consolidated the work of Guru Nanak Dev Ji and is known as the Great Educator of Panjab.