

Gurpurabs and  
Historical Days**2<sup>nd</sup> Feb (21<sup>st</sup> Magh)**

Janam Bhagat Ravidas Ji

**8<sup>th</sup> Feb (27<sup>th</sup> Magh)**Great Holocast (Wadda  
Ghalughara)**11<sup>th</sup> Feb (30<sup>th</sup> Magh)****Birth**

Sahibzada Ajit Singh

**21<sup>st</sup> Feb (10<sup>th</sup> Phagun)**

Saka Nankana Sahib

**21<sup>st</sup> Feb (10<sup>th</sup> Phagun)**

Jaito Da Morcha



Nankana Sahib is a small town, a sub divisional head quarter of the district Shekhupura of west Punjab in Pakistan, Before partition of the Indian sub continent in 1947 it formed a part of India. Situated about hundred kilometers to the west of Lahore, it lies in most fertile verdant plains of the Punjab.

**Saka Nankana Sahib**

In October 1920 A.D., a congregation was held at Dharowal, district Sheikhupura for reform in Gurdwara Nankana Sahib in which the leaders revealed to the gathering of devotees, the misdeeds being committed inside the Gurdwara. Gurdwara Nankana sahib was highly revered as it is the birth place of Guru Nanak Sahib, a city named Nankana Sahib came up around the Gurdwara which is now in Pakistan. At meeting, it was unanimously resolved that the Mahant be asked to mend his ways. When Mahant Narian Dass was asked to reform himself, he started making preparations to oppose the Panth (Sikh community) instead. He did not feel it necessary to pay heed to the suggestions of the Committee. He was the owner of the estate attached to the Gurdwara with an income of one hundred thousand rupees besides the offerings of the Gurdwara.

The Mahant recruited hooligans and rogues as paid employees to oppose the Sikhs. With the help of the British government, he collected guns, pistols and other arms and ammunition from Lahore. He brought and stored fourteen tins of paraffin. He got the Gurdwara gate strengthened and got holes made in it so that bullets could be fired through them. Mr. King, the Commissioner of Lahore was extending every kind of help to the Mahant and had promised him in the future as well.

In the meeting of Prabhandak Committee at Gurdwara Khara Sauda on 17th February, 1921 A.D., was decided that two jathas (squads) one led by Bhai Lachhman Singh and the other by Bhai Kartar Singh alias Jhabbar – (Jhabbar was the name of the village where Kartar Singh came from) should meet at Chanderkot on the 19th February. From there they were to reach Nankana Sahib early in the morning of the 20th February to talk to the Mahant. Seeing the

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preparation of the Mahant, the Parbhandak Committee held a meeting in the office of Akali Patrika (News paper) on the 19th February in which it was resolved that squads should not be taken to Nankana Sahib on 20th February. Bhai Kartar Singh Jhabbar was present in the meeting. He was informed about the new decision and was told to inform Bhai Lachhman Singh and he took the responsibility to do so. Bhai Kartar Singh Jhabbar immediately dispatched Bhai Waryam Singh to Chanderkot so that other squad could be stopped.

Meanwhile in accordance with the original programme, Bhai Lachhman Singh reached Chander Kot on the night of the 19th February with his squad of one hundred and fifty Singhs. He waited for the squad of Bhai Kartar Singh Jhabbar for some time and before the arrival of Bhai Waryama Singh with news to not to led squad to Gurdwara, Bhai Lachhman Singh said to the Singhs of his squad, "When we have started for a good cause, we should not waste time." All members of the squad agreed. Bhai Lachhman Singh got a promise from the squad not to strike and remain peaceful come what may. After that the squad prayed for their success of their noble resolve. When, after, the prayer, the Squad was about to move forward, Bhai Waryam Singh arrived. He showed them the letter about the new decision of the Committee. Bhai Tehal Singh Said, "Dear Khalsa, we have taken our resolve at the prayer (Ardaas) and cannot turn back now. It is imperative for us to move forward." The squad as a whole moved forward following Bhai Tehal Singh.

The Squad arrived at Nankana Sahib on 20<sup>th</sup> February, bathed in the pool and entered the Gurdwara at 6 A.M. Bhai Lachhman Singh sat in 'Taabiya' (Behind Guru Granth Sahib). The Mahant had got the news of the squad's arrival at Chander kot on the 19<sup>th</sup> February evening. He had gathered his men at night and briefed them about their duties. After the squad had sat down, the Mahant signaled his men to carry out the pre-determined plan.

The Mahant's men closed the main gate and started firing from roof tops. Twenty-six Singh's became martyrs to those bullets in the courtyard while another sixty or so sitting inside the Darbar Sahib became targets of bullets. When the Mahant's men saw no one moving, they came down with swords and choppers. Any Singh they found breathing was cut to pieces.

At the sound of the gun-fire, Bhai Dalip Singh and Bhai Waryam Singh who were sitting in the factory of Bhai Uttam Singh, got up and rushed towards the Gurdwara. When the Mahant saw them coming, he shot Bhai Dalip Singh with his pistol while his men cut Bhai Waryam Singh in to pieces. They threw their bodies where other bodies were also burning. When no Singh with hair could be seen upto the railway line, the Mahant asked his men to collect all the dead bodies, pour paraffin and burn them. The body of one alive Singh was tied to a tree and burnt.

At 9.15 a.m., Sardar Uttam Singh conveyed the news by telegram through Sardar Karam Singh Station Master at Nankana Sahib Railway station to the Governor of Punjab, Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, Superintendent of police and Sikh centre's. Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Curry reached at 12:30 P.M. while Commissioner, Mr. King arrived at 9.30 P.M. They arrested twenty Pathans and locked the Gurdwara. City was handed over to Army which cordoned it to restrict any Akali movement to take over Gurdwara. Sardar Kartar Singh Jhabbar arrived with his Squad on 21st February. Commissioner informed him that if he tried to enter city with his squad army will open fire. Kartar Singh Jhabbar and his jatha of twenty two hundred Singhs did not listened to commissioner and in reply Kartar Singh Jhabbar demanded keys of the Gurdwara should be handed over to Sikhs or else be prepared to face the consequences. On hearing this Commissioner Mr. Curry immediately handed over the keys of Gurdwara to Bhai Kartar Singh Jhabbar. At 7.30 P.M. on the 22nd February, the bodies were cremated according to Sikh tradition.

An Urdu newspaper called '**Zamindara**' wrote in its editorial of 23rd February, 1921 "*What more proof of shamelessness of Muslims is required than that they have helped the Mahant. O, Shameless Muslims, isn't the cup of your shamelessness and impudence full as yet? You used your guns and swords against those who went to Nankana Sahib to perform religious duties. You are not fit to be called Muslims. You are worse than infidels.*" Mahant, 20 Pathans and other of his group were sentenced by British. Only Mahant and couple of Pathans got death sentence for this crime of more than 50 murders.

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## Bhagat Ravidas Ji

An important aspect of the universality of Guru Granth Sahib is its inclusion of verses of fifteen Bhagats, or mystics, belonging to different traditions, times and territories. The only yardstick for selection was their belief and practice based on the oneness of God and equality of humanity. Their philosophy of rejecting futile rituals and relying solely on devotional love, or Naam Simran, to merge with the formless, uncreated Creator was similar to that of the Gurus.

One of these Bhagats is Bhagat Ravidas ji, who like some others of the fifteen Bhagats, was born in an untouchable section of the caste-ridden Hindu society.

There is consensus that Bhagat Ravidas was born on Maghushudhi 14 Pooranmashi in Smt. 1456, i.e. February 1399 in Kashi. His parents were in the leather trade, and were very well off. He was barely five days old when Bhagat Ramanand visited his house and blessed the child. When he reached the age of discretion, his father inspired him to join the family business. But Ravidas was imbued with celestial and humane values. The money he received from his father for business, he spent in the welfare of the Saints and needy. His father was extremely perturbed and banished him from the house. By this time, Ravidas was already married. He did not resent, quietly left the house, started living in a make-shift hut with his wife, and set up a small wayside shop of mending shoes.

He did not abandon his love for the God and built a Temple of clay walls and thatched roof. He installed an idol made out of hide in the Temple. His extreme devotion and universal love induced hundreds of people of all castes to join him in worship. This resulted in enviousness among the Brahmin priests who raised the matter in the Court of Muslim Nawab of Kashi. The Nawab was a man of righteousness, and put the matter to a miraculous test. Bhagat Ravidas went into meditation and recited one of his hymns (Gauri Purbi P.346) and requested the Almighty "**Take pity on me that my doubts may be dispelled.**" His prayer was answered, and his adoration acclaimed the triumph in the miraculous test. To express his gratitude he sang his hymn, "Thou art sandal and I am the poor castor-plant, dwelling close to thee. From a mean tree I have become sublime and Thine fragrance, exquisite fragrance, now, abides in me." (GGS 486)

A rich man tried to allure him with the charm of wealth. He gave the Bhagat a philosopher's stone by the touch of which one could change any article into gold. In spite of Bhagat's refusal the rich man left the stone hung under the ceiling. When he came back after one year, the stone was still hanging there. The rich man announced to the world the indisputable godliness of Bhagat Ravidas. This episode is considered to be an ecclesiastic test to judge Bhagat Ravidas's endurance towards the worldly love. But some accounts associate this to the devious manipulation of the Brahmin priests to discredit Ravidas, which, rather, ended in the triumph of the Bhagat.

Ravidas's selfless devotion and casteless love for humanity spread far and wide. Maharani Jhally of Chitaur was a noble woman of benevolence and piety. Her ardency brought her to Benares on a pilgrimage. In spite of the disapproval of the Brahmin priests, she straight-away went to the Temple of Bhagat Ravidas. Ravidas was in his ecclesiastic benediction at the time, and was reciting his hymns (Rag Sorath P.658-59). Maharani was captivated. Eventually she became his disciple and abandoned all her luxurious set up. Her husband, the Maharana, had been instigated against her adopting a cobbler as her Guru. He was full of rage when she returned. He was pacified by listening to some of the hymns of Bhagat Ravidas but still wanted to put the Bhagat through a test to invalidate the allegations of the Brahmins. The Bhagat was invited to Chitaur and requested to participate in an oblation. The Brahmin priests refused to eat while a cobbler was seated in the same column of rows. Bhagat Ravidas voluntarily moved away. But, miraculously every person distributing food looked like Bhagat Ravidas to the Brahmins (Another account states when the Brahmins sat down to eat, they saw Ravidas seated between every two of them). They complained to Maharana. Maharana comprehended the hidden meaning of this marvel, and himself became an ardent devotee. Bhagat Ravidas remained in Chitaur for a long time. It is said that Mira Bai became his disciple as well during that period. As per some accounts he died at a ripe old age of nearly 120 years, in Banaras.

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There are 41 verses of Bhagat Ravidas in Guru Granth Sahib. Most of them are in very clear Hindi. His poetry is brimming with ardent love for God, Universe, Nature, Guru, and the Name. His sarcasm and pique shows his closeness with God.

Here are a few quotes culled from them:

To worship God by offering Him clean and pure things like milk, flowers and water is not possible.

*"The milk has been contaminated by the suckling calf*

*The flower has been defiled by the bumblebee,*

*The fish have polluted the water*

*O mother, from where should I get clean offerings to worship God?"*

*"Let me offer my body and mind in worship*

*By the grace of Guru shall I attain immaculate God." (GGS, p.525)*

**Reality and transitory nature of human life –**

*"In the structure of bones, flesh and veins dwells the soul like a caged bird.*

*O human being, what is mine and what is yours?*

*Our sojourn here is like the perching of a bird on a tree." (GGS, p.659)*

**Driven by greed and pride, we act like puppets –**

*"Look at the way the puppet of clay dances!*

*It sees, hears, speaks and runs around.*

*It gets puffed up with pride if it attains some thing*

*It bursts into tears when wealth is lost." (GGS, p.487)*

**Merchandise of serenity vs. load of poison –**

*"I, a merchant of God, deal in equanimity.*

*I have gathered the wealth of God's name*

*Whereas the world hoards poison." (GGS, p.346)*

**The merchants of Nam Simran attain a blissful state of spirituality where they dwell in freedom from sorrows and stresses:**

*"That place is called the city of no sorrows*

*Pain and anxiety do not enter there." (GGS, p.345)*

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## Shabad Vichaar

ਰਾਗੁ ਗਉੜੀ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਕੇ ਪਦੇ ਗਉੜੀ ਗੁਆਰੇਰੀ  
ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

ਕੂਪੁ ਭਰਿਓ ਜੈਸੇ ਦਾਦਿਰਾ ਕਛੁ ਦੇਸੁ ਬਿਦੇਸੁ ਨ ਬੁਝ ॥ ਐਸੇ ਮੇਰਾ ਮਨੁ ਬਿਖਿਆ ਬਿਮੋਹਿਆ ਕਛੁ ਆਰਾ  
ਪਾਰੁ ਨ ਸੁਝ ॥੧॥ ਸਗਲ ਭਵਨ ਕੇ ਨਾਇਕਾ ਇਕੁ ਛਿਨੁ ਦਰਸੁ ਦਿਖਾਇ ਜੀ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਮਲਿਨ  
ਭਈ ਮਤਿ ਮਾਧਵਾ ਤੇਰੀ ਗਤਿ ਲਖੀ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਕਰਹੁ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਭ੍ਰਮੁ ਚੁਕਈ ਮੈ ਸੁਮਤਿ ਦੇਹੁ ਸਮਝਾਇ  
॥੨॥ ਜੋਗੀਸਰ ਪਾਵਹਿ ਨਹੀ ਤੁਅ ਗੁਣ ਕਥਨੁ ਅਪਾਰ ॥ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਭਗਤਿ ਕੈ ਕਾਰਣੈ ਕਹੁ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਚਮਾਰ  
॥੩॥੧॥

(GGS : 346)

ik-o<sup>N</sup>kaar satgur parsaad.

koop bhari-o jaisay daadiraa kachh days bidays na boojh.  
aisay mayraa man bikhi-aa bimohi-aa kachh aaraa paar na soojh. ||1||  
sagal bhavan kay naa-ikaa ik chhin daras dikhaa-ay jee. ||1|| rahaa-o.  
malin bha-ee mat maaDhvaa tayree gat lakhee na jaa-ay.  
karahu kirpaa bharam chook-ee mai sumat dayh samjhaa-ay. ||2||  
jogeesar paavahi nahee tu-a gun kathan apaar.  
paraym bhagat kai kaarnai kaho ravidas chamaar. ||3||1||

English Meaning:

One Universal Creator God. By The Grace Of The True Guru:

The frog in the deep well knows nothing of its own country or other lands; just so, my mind, infatuated with corruption, understands nothing about this world or the next. ||1|| O Lord of all worlds: reveal to me, even for an instant, the Blessed Vision of Your Darshan. ||1|| Pause || My intellect is polluted; I cannot understand Your state, O Lord. Take pity on me, dispel my doubts, and teach me true wisdom. ||2|| Even the great Yogis cannot describe Your Glorious Virtues; they are beyond words. I am dedicated to Your loving devotional worship, says Ravi Daas the tanner. ||3||1||

From the editors:

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