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Guru Ramdas Ji

Gurus

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Known as Bhai Jetha (before he became Guru Ramdas Ji), he was only 7 years old when both his parents died. He was taken in by his grandmother and wasn't lucky enough to go to school and worked hard selling Indian sweets. Fortunately Guru Amardas Ji adopted Bhai Jetha, who learnt Gurmukhi and would do seva for Guru Ji and the Sadh-Sangat (holy congregation) in the early morning and then work in langar for the rest of the day.

He actively helped Guru Amardas Ji in his works including the founding of the city of Goindwal and the construction of the deep well (Baoli Sahib) as a welfare project. Guru Amardas Ji was impressed by Bhai Jetha's devotion and service that he had his daughter Bibi Bhani married to Bhai Jetha Ji.

Guru Amardas decided to set up a new township to serve as a centre for the Sikhs, the deputised Bhai Jetha Ji who selected a large piece of land which was purchased. His first task was the provision of a water supply, so Bhai Jetha Ji planned and constructed a huge tank, this was the beginning of a town called Ramdaspur later to be known as Amritsar. At this time Guru Amardas Ji was getting old and decided to test his two sons in laws (Bhai Jetha and Bhai Rama) whom he thought suitable for succession. Guru Amardas Ji requested both to build a platform from which he would address the Sadh Sangat. Both Bhai Rama and Bhai Jetha built the platforms but Guru Ji rejected both as unsuitable. Bhai Rama Ji and Bhai Jetha Ji rebuilt the platforms a second and third time but with the same results. Guru Ji continued rejecting the platforms until Bhai Rama Ji refused to build anymore. Bhai Jetha built and rebuilt the platform 7 times and each time falling at Guru Amardas Ji's feet asking for forgiveness and pleading ignorance of Guru Ji's exact requirement. Guru Amardas Ji hugged Bhai Jetha and said "The Light of Guru Nanak Dev Ji is in you", Bhai Jetha was then renamed Guru Ramdas Ji (God's Servant) and became the fourth Guru King.

Guru Ramdas Ji emphasised seva and charity, he was a self-made man, who came to Guru Angad Dev Ji as a helpless orphan, but due to his devotion and humility was elevated to the position of Guru. His life is a beacon to the Sikhs that anyone of them can gain spiritual stature by discipline and selfless service.

In keeping with the policy of Guru Amardas Ji, Guru Ramdas Ji continued organising the Sikhs into a self-conscious coherent community outside Hinduism by initiating a number of social reforms.

- Like his predecessors Guru Ji forbade practise of sati and purdah (veiling).
- Guru Ji composed the Lavan (Wedding Song) and initiated a new type of simple and dignified marriage known as Anand Karaj (Ceremony of Bliss). Along with other hymns for birth and death, Guru Ji further established the Sikh religion as a distinct way of life.
- Guru Ji emphasised Nam Yoga (repetition and meditation on God) and Sahaj Yoga (path of ease i.e. natural, i.e. that through family life with devotion) salvation could be achieved.
- He also gave a definition of a Sikh:

*He who calls himself a Sikh of the True Guru,
Shall rise early in the morning and meditate on the Name of God,
Shall take a bath to cleanse the mind of evil in the Nectar pool of God's Name,
Shall labour during the day, Shall hear the words of the Guru and respect the Name of God,
For then will his sins be forgiven and his sorrow and suffering cease,
With the advance of the day he shall sing the hymns of the Guru and keep God in his mind in all that he does,
He who remembers the Name of God with every breath and with every morsel that he eats,
He is the True Sikh, him the Guru loves,
He to whom the Lord is Gracious, listens to the teachings of the Guru and becomes his disciple.*