

TRAVELS OF GURU AMAR DASS JI

Guru Amar Dass Ji selected 23 highly devoted Sikhs who had a deep knowledge of Gurbani and sent them to spread the Divine Message in different parts of the Country. Himself, He did not travel much, and spent most of His time in the central Punjab (Lahore, Amritsar and Gurdaspur) preaching Gurmat. However, He did undertake a single journey to visit a few holy places of Hindus to disseminate the Divine Knowledge just like Guru Nanak Dev Ji did. Guru Nanak Dev Ji had planned to visit either the holy places at the time of some special occasions where a large number of people would gather to take part in the occasion, or some religious leaders who had a large following.

In either case, Guru Nanak Sahib was able to reach a large number of people and enlighten them in a single visit. Guru Amar Dass Ji did just that and visited Kurukshetra and other holy places along the banks of Jamuna and Ganga.

The occasion at the travel period was a dip by the believers in a holy water at the time of Abheech (Abhijit). Abhijit is a time period based on the Vedic (or Lunar) calendar and is a part of one of the 28 different segments of the travel of the moon around the earth. It happens every day during the time that the moon is in the segment of Abheech and lasts for 48 minutes. Any task undertaken during this period is believed to give success to the believer. Also, different days of the Abheech period are required for different types of tasks. For example the Abheech period on a particular day may be perfect for wedding but not for occupancy of a new house or for starting a new business and so on. But some other auspicious occasions are also believed to be associated with Abheech. For example, solar eclipse during this period is believed to be highly auspicious.

The exact dates of Guru Amar Dass Ji's travel are not known, but, He arrived in Kurukshetra during a solar eclipse in the Abheech period. Most likely the travel was undertaken in 1557-8. Lest the people may draw a misleading conclusion that Guru Amar Dass Ji went on a pilgrimage of Hindu holy places thereby creating the impression that pilgrimage is recommended by Guru Sahiban, Guru Ram Dass Ji (the Fourth Master) has clarified the purpose of the visit in a holy Shabad which is enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib in Tukhari Raag. As will be clear from the holy Shabad, the sole purpose of Guru Amar Dass Ji's travel was to

enlighten the people that rituals such as a dip in the so- believed holy waters during the Abheech period have no spiritual significance. Along with other noble qualities, keeping Waheguru in memory always, and selfless service to mankind was the real purpose of human life. Let us pay attention to the beautiful Shabad and learn from it. The Shabad has six stanzas; each stanza will be discussed separately in terms of its meaning.

NAAVAN POORB ABHEECH GUR SATGUR DURS BHUYYA

ਨਾਵਨ ਪੂਰਬ ਅਬੀਚ ਗੁਰ ਸਾਤਗੁਰ ਦੁਰਸ ਬਹੁਯਾ
ਨਾਵਨ ਪੂਰਬ ਅਬੀਚ ਗੁਰ ਸਾਤਗੁਰ ਦੁਰਸ ਬਹੁਯਾ
ਨਾਵਨ ਪੂਰਬ ਅਬੀਚ ਗੁਰ ਸਾਤਗੁਰ ਦੁਰਸ ਬਹੁਯਾ
ਨਾਵਨ ਪੂਰਬ ਅਬੀਚ ਗੁਰ ਸਾਤਗੁਰ ਦੁਰਸ ਬਹੁਯਾ
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ਨਾਵਨ ਪੂਰਬ ਅਬੀਚ ਗੁਰ ਸਾਤਗੁਰ ਦੁਰਸ ਬਹੁਯਾ

§ Tukharl Chhant M:4 (116-7). Naavan poorb abheech Gur Satgur ders bhuyya. Doormut mail hurri agyaan undhayr guyya. Gur ders paaya agyaan guvaaya unter jote purgaasi. Junam mern dookh khin meh binsay Hur paaya Prabh abinaashi. Hur aap kertaiy poorb keeya satgur Kulkhet naavan guyya. Naavan poorb abheech Gur Satgur ders bhuyya.1.

NOTE: The Punjabi grammar is beautiful and very is different from English grammar in many ways. The same word can be spelled in different ways to give different meaning to it. For example the word NANAK can be spelled in four different ways -ਨਾਨਕ, ਨਾਨਕ, ਨਾਨਕ, ਨਾਨਕ and each has a different meaning. It can be spelled like: ਨਾਨਕ, ਨਾਨਕ, ਨਾਨਕ, ਨਾਨਕ. The first one is a male name for a person, the second makes it specific, the Nanak, the third means by Nanak and the fourth one means to Nanak

Phonetically, the first three sound the same even though they carry different meanings. We cannot express them satisfactorily in English. The same word is also spelled slightly differently to make distinction between genders, singular or plural name and its verb.

So, if a similarly sounding word has different meanings, it is because of the spellings, and to understand the meanings better, please, pay attention to the spellings in Punjabi.

Word Meaning: Naavan = bath, dip; Poorb = auspicious occasion; Abheech = favourable time based on the Vedic calendar; Ders = holy-sight (of the Guru); Doormut = unholy or dirty thoughts; Mail = filth; Hurri = dispelled, gotten rid of; Agyaan = ignorance; Undhayr = darkness; Guyya = disappeared; Unter = inside; Jote Purgassi = enlightenment; Khin meh = in a moment; Binsay = destroyed; Abinaashi = eternal; Naavan = at the time of holy dips (see the Punjabi spellings);

Meaning: Oh my friends! a glimpse of the holy-sight of the Guru is the real dip at a holy place during the auspicious occasion of Abeech. Guru's sight is such a holy dip that it completely dispels the dirty thoughts and the darkness of ignorance. When you have a holy-sight of the Guru, you acquire the Divine knowledge and your mind is enlightened. Your suffering due to the birth-death-birth cycle is destroyed in a moment and you realize the eternal Waheguru. Waheguru Himself created the auspicious occasion and Guru Amar Dass Ji went to Kurukshetra at the time of the Abheech dip. A glimpse of the holy-sight of the Guru is the real dip at a holy place.

NOTE: Even though it is a good fortune that one can have a glimpse of the Guru, but the real holy-sight is, when you listen to the Teachings of the Guru and internalize it.

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਮੁਖਿ ਜਪੁ ਸਾਧਨੁ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਮੁਖਿ ਜਪੁ ਸਾਧਨੁ
ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਮੁਖਿ ਜਪੁ ਸਾਧਨੁ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਮੁਖਿ ਜਪੁ ਸਾਧਨੁ
ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਮੁਖਿ ਜਪੁ ਸਾਧਨੁ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਮੁਖਿ ਜਪੁ ਸਾਧਨੁ
ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਮੁਖਿ ਜਪੁ ਸਾਧਨੁ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਮੁਖਿ ਜਪੁ ਸਾਧਨੁ

Maarag panth chulay Gur satgur sung Sikha. Undin bhagat bunni khin khin

nimakh vikha. Hur Hur bhagat bunni Prabh kayri sabh loak vaykhun aaya. Jinn ders Satguru keeya tin Hur aap milaaya. Teeruth oodum Satguru keeya sabh loak oodhran ertha. Maarag panth chulay Gur Satgur sung Sikha.2.

**Word Meaning: Panth = Maarg = path; Sikha = Sikhs, Undin = everyday; Khin Khin = every moment;
Nimakh = moment;
Vikha = step;
Sabh Loak = the whole world;
Jinn = whoever;
Hur = Waheguru;
Teeruth = pilgrimage;
Oodum = make effort;
Oodhran = salvaging;
Ertha = for the purpose of;**

Meaning: Many Sikhs accompanied Guru Amar Dass Ji on His journey. Waheguru's Naam was recited at every step and at every moment on the way, and the whole world came to have a glimpse of the Satguru. Waheguru Himself connected the individual with Him whoever had a glimpse of the Guru. Guru Sahib made the effort to go to the holy place to salvage (enlighten) the world (and not because He believed in the importance of the pilgrimage). Many Sikhs accompanied Guru Sahib on His journey.

ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਹਰਿ ॥ ਨਾਨਕਾਨਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ॥ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ॥ ੧੬੦੦ ॥
ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਹਰਿ ॥ ਨਾਨਕਾਨਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ॥ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ॥ ੧੬੦੦ ॥

ਪ੍ਰਥਮ ਆਏ ਕੁਲਖੇਤ ਗੁਰ ਸਾਤਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰੋਰਬ ਹੋਆ। ਖੁਬਾਰ ਭੁਯੈ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਆਏ ਤਰਾਇ ਲੋਆ। ਧਾਕੁਨ
ਆਏ ਤੇਨ ਲੋਕ ਸੋਰ ਨੁਰ ਮੂਨੀਜੁਨ ਸਬ ਆਯਾ। ਜਿਨ ਪੇਰੀਯਾ ਗੁਰੁ ਸਾਤਗੁਰੁ ਪ੍ਰੋਰਾ ਤਿਨ ਕਾਯ ਕਿਲਵਿਖ
ਨਾਸ ਗੁਵਾਯਾ।

Pruthum aaye Kulkhet Gur Satgur poorb hoa. Khubar bhuyyi sansar aaye traiy loa. Daykhun
aaye teen loak soor nur moonijun sabh aaya. Jinn persiya Guru Satguru poora tin kay kilwikh
naas guvaaya.

Yogi digummbur sanyaasi Khut Dershun
ker guyye gosht dhoa. Prutum aaye Kulkhet Gur Satgur poorb hoa.3.

**Word Meaning: Pruthum = first; Kulkhet = Kurukshetra (a holy place of
Hindus where the war of Mahabharat is believed to have taken place);**

Poorb = auspicious occasion;

Khubar bhuyyi = as the word spread;

Trai Lo = People from all over the world (many, many people);

Soor Nur =

people of godly nature;

Moonijun =

people who have vowed to keep quiet for a certain length of time;

Persiya =

touched (Guru's feet);

Poora = perfect Guru;

Kilwikh = sins;

Naas Guvaaya =

destroyed;

Digummbur =

naked holy men;

Sanyaasi =

who have renounced the world;

Khut Dershun =

holy men belongings to six different philosophical paths;

Gosht =

meeting,

exchange of ideas;

Meaning: Guru Amar Dass Ji's first stop was at Kurukshetra, and it became an auspicious occasion due to His arrival. As the word quickly spread out, people of all beliefs came to see Guru Sahib. The visitors included the people of godly nature, people of general nature and people with very quiet nature. The sins of all those people who touched the Perfect Guru's feet (showed respect) were destroyed right away. People of all faiths including yogis, the naked sadhus, people who had renounced the world and followers of the six philosophies all came to see Guru Sahib. They exchanged ideas (sought clarification on certain Teachings of Gurmat) and got the support (blessings) of Guru Sahib. Guru Sahib's first stop was at Kurukshetra, and it turned out to be an auspicious occasion because of His arrival.

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maarag jo panth chaalay tin Jum jagaati nayrr nah aaya. Sabh Guru Guru jagat bollaiy Gur kay Naaye luyyeyan sabh chootak guyya. Dootiya Jamun quyye Gur Hur Hur japun keeya. 4.

Word Meaning: Dootiya = second (next); Jamun = some city by the bank of River Jamuna (may be Saharan Pur);

Hur Hur Japun =

recitation of Waheguru's Naam;

Jagaati =

tax (toll) collectors;

Bhet =

gifts;

Chooti =

let go without paying tax (also found salvation);

Gur Bachan =

Guru's Word (Teachings);

Jum =

Angel of death;

Nayrr = close;

Chootak Guyya =

passed without any question asked;

Meaning: Next, Guru Sahib arrived at Jamuna and He recited Waheguru's Naam all the time. (Fare or toll tax is collected from all the passengers to take them across the river by boat), however, in Guru Sahib's case, not only the tax collectors did not charge any tax from Guru Sahib, they actually received Him with gifts and all the followers of Guru Sahib were taken across the River for free.

Just as the followers of Guru Sahib were not charged at the River, the same way His Sikhs who follow Guru sahib's Teachings and recite Waheguru's Naam with dedication, the angel of death as tax collector (because everybody has to clear the accounts of his deeds in the world after the death) does not gets even close to the followers of Guru Sahib. All those people who recite Guru's Naam (all those who keep Guru sahib in mind and follow His Teachings) are not held accountable for their deeds by the angel

Next Guru sahib arrived at the banks of Jamuna and He recited Waheguru's Naam all the time.

Triteeya aaye Soorsari the kautak chult bhuyya. Sabh mohee dekh dershun Gur Sant kinaiy aadh daam nah luyya. Aadh daam kicchu puyya nah boaluk jagaateeyan mohan moondan puyyee. Bhuyyi hum kurhe kiya kis paas maangehn sabh bhaag Satgur pichhaiy puyyee. Jagaatiyaan oopaav siyanap ker veechar dittha bhunn boalkaan sabh ootth guyya. Triteeya aaye Soorsari the kautak chult bhuyya. 5.

8 / 11

Oopaaye Siyanap =
wise step;
Dittha = saw, concluded;

Meaning: The River Ganga was the third stop for Guru Ji in the historic city of Haridwar. A highly amazing thing happened there. All the tax collectors were so mesmerized to see Guru Ji that they forgot to charge any toll at all.

Gu ru Sahib's personality had such a magical effect on them that they did not remember to charge even the slightest amount of toll tax not only from Guru Sahib, but even from the accompanying Sikhs and commented, "who should we charge from my friend, because they just walked by with Guru Sahib."

When they failed to collect any toll they did the wise thing and after some thought they locked the boxes and left the booth.

Guru sahib made the third stop at the River Ganga and a highly amazing phenomenon happened there.

NOTE: There is a Gurdwara in Kankhal near Haridwar to commemorate the visit of Guru Amar Dass Ji.

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Mil aaye nagar maha jana Gur Satgur oat guhhi. Gur Satgur Gur Govind pooch Simrit keeta suhee. Simrit Shaster sabhnee suhhi keeta Sook Prehlad Sri Ram ker Gur Govind dhiyaya. Dehi nagar kote punch vutvaaray tin ka thaoun thehu guvaaya. Keertan Puran nit poonn hovay Gur bachan Nanak Hur bhagat luhhi. Mil aaye nagar maha jana Gur Satgur oat guhhi.

Word Meaning: Nagar Maha Jana = the leading men of the city; Oat Guhhi= took shelter;

Gur Govind =

Waheguru;

Keeta Suhee = Found the real meaning of the Simrities (Hindu holy books);

Sook, Prehlad,

Sri Ram = all well-known devotees of God;

Dhiyaya = worshiped;

Dehi Nagar = the human body city;

Punch Vutvaaray =

the five demons (lust, rage, greed, attachment and ego);

thaoun thehu = home, roots;

guvaaya =

destroyed;

Keertan = praise of Waheguru;

Poonn = holy deeds;

Gur Bachan Nanak =

Using the words (of praise for Waheguru) of Guru Nanak sahib;

Hur Bhagat Luhhi

= practised the worship of Waheguru;

Meaning: The leading men of Haridwar came to the shelter of Guru Amar Dass Ji (to seek enlightenment) as a group. They sought clarification of the meanings of the Simrities (Hindu holy books) from Guru Amar Dass Ji about whom they were convinced that he was one with God. They found the real meaning of the Simrities and were convinced that the well-known bhagats like Sook, Prehlad and Sri Ram had worshipped only Waheguru to get salvation. As a result of worshipping Waheguru, they were able to destroy the five demons that rob a man's body city of god qualities.

As a result of their clarification of Simrities from Guru amar Dass Ji, the citizens of Hridwar began to sing the praise of Waheguru using the words (holy Shabads) of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. For the citizens, the real worship of (any deity) was the singing of the praise of Waheguru everyday which was also the real recitation of the Puranas (other holy books of the Hindus) and performance of other holy deeds. The leading men of Haridwar came to the shelter of Guru Amar Dass Ji as a group.