

became popular as Guru Ram Das Ji.

Contribution towards development of Sikh Religion

Guru Ram Das Ji remained on the Gurgaddi from 1574 A.D. to 1581 A.D. During this short period, he made significant contributions towards the development, promotion, expansion and organization of Sikh Panth.

1. **Foundation of Ramdaspur (Amritsar):** The greatest contribution of Guru Ram Das Ji towards the Sikh religion was in laying down the foundation of Ramdaspur or Amritsar. In 1577 A.D., he initiated the work of digging the Amrit Sarovar (pool) under the supervision of Baba Buddha Ji. He directed the Sikhs to come and settle in Ramdaspur. Following his directions 52 traders also came to settle here. Gradually, a market developed there which came to be known as Guru Ka Bazaar. Ramdaspur also came to be known as Chakk Guru and Chak Guru Ram Das. Later it was named Amritsar.



Construction of Chak Guru Ramdas

2. **Beginning of the Masand System:** Guru Ram Dass ji initiated the Masand System. They represented the house of Guru to local Sikh Sangat. They used to resolve common problems of the Sikh Sangat and associated them with the house of Guru ji.
3. **Composition of Bani :** Guru Ram Dass ji completed as important task of composition of Bani. He composed his Bani in the 30 ragas. This bani includes among others 8 vaars and ghorian etc. In addition he composed a specific Bani called 'laavan' in the Raga Suhi which is recited at the occasion of Anand Karaj (a Sikh wedding) Guru Ram Das ji added the above Bani into the 'pothi' which was received by him from Guru Amar Das ji.
4. **Anointment of Successor:** Of all his three sons, Guru Ram Das Ji considered Guru Arjun Dev Ji fit to succeed him because Prithi Chand was greedy and mischievous while Maha Dev had not interest in worldly affairs. Hence, he anointed Guru Arjun Dev Ji as his successor. On September 1, 1581 Guru Ram Das Ji breathed his last.



'Guru ka Bazar'

In this way, Guru Angad Dev Ji, Guru Amar Das Ji and Guru Ram Das Ji not only preached Guru Nanak Devji's teachings but also they all continued the works initiated by Guru Nanak Devji. While introducing the different social and religious rituals, life style, they established distinct identity of the Sikhism and helped to develop an independent religion of Sikhs.



POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Guru Angad Dev Ji- Ascended the Gurgaddi from September 2, 1539 A.D. to March 29, 1552 A.D. Founded the City of Goindwal in 1546 A.D.
- Guru Amardas Ji- Ascended the Gurgaddi in March 1552 A.D. Completed the Construction of Baoli in Goindwal in March 1559 A.D. In 1574, he breathed his last
- Guru Ram Das Ji- Ascended the Gurgaddi from 1574 A.D to 1581 A.D. in September 1, 1581, he breathed his last

EXERCISE

1. Objective type Questions



A. Multiple Choice Questions-

- Which Guru ji started the construction work of the Baoli at Goindwal?
 - Guru Angad Dev ji
 - Guru Amar Das ji
 - Guru Ram Das ji
 - Guru Nanak Dev Ji
- What was the total number of Manjidadars?
 - 20
 - 21
 - 22
 - 23
- To which Guru Sahib did Mughal Emperor Akbar came to meet at Goindwal Sahib?
 - Guru Nanak Dev Ji
 - Guru Angad Dev Ji
 - Guru Amar Das Ji
 - Guru Ram Das Ji
- Where did Bhai Lehna ji go to see Guru Nanak Dev ji ?
 - Shri Amritsar Sahib
 - Kartapur
 - Goindwal
 - Lahore

- To which of his sons did Guru Ram Das ji entrust the Gurgaddi ?
 - Prithichand
 - Mahadev
 - Arjundev
 - None of these

B.. Fill in the blanks

- Shri Guru Angad Dev Ji wrotein Gurumukhi script.
-used to visit Haridwar for taking dip in the holy Ganga.
-constructed Baoli at Goindwal Sahib.
- Shri Guru Ram Das ji established..... city.
- The Bani 'Laavan' is the famous composition of Guru.

C. Match the following

A

Baba Buddha Ji
Masand System
Bhai Lehna Ji
Manji System

B

Amrit Sarovar
Shri Guru Ram Das ji
Shri Guru Angad Dev ji
Shri Guru Amar Das ji

Differentiate between the following

1. Sangat and Pangat

II. Very Short Answer Type Questions

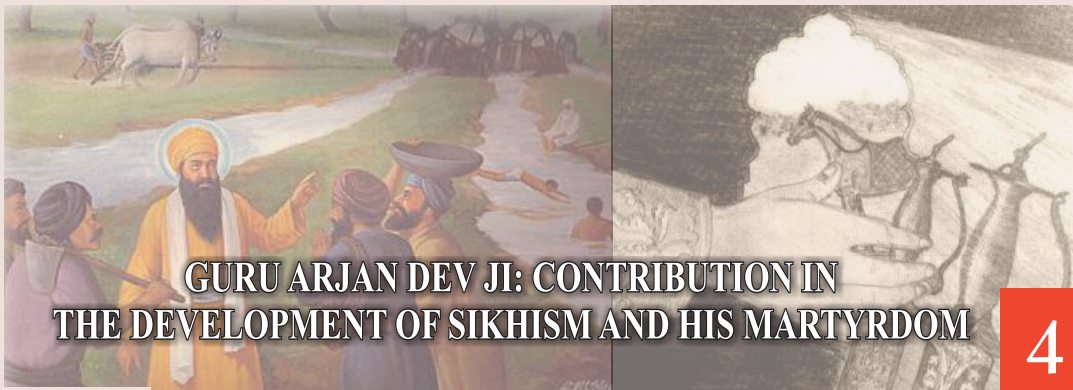
1. What was the earlier name of Guru Angad Dev ji?
2. What do you mean by 'Gurmukhi'?
3. Who was known as a Manjidar?
4. What was the old name of Amritsar?
5. What was the real name of Guru Ram Das ji?
6. What do you understand by Masand System?

III. Short Answer Type Questions

1. Write a note of Manji system.
2. What was the contribution of Guru Angad Dev Ji in the development of Gurumukhi script?
3. Write a short note on the social reforms of Guru Amar Das ji.
4. Write a note on the founding of Amritsar.

IV. Long Answer Type Questions

1. Shri Guru Angad Dev Ji contributed significantly towards the development of Sikhism. Discuss.
2. What is the contribution of Guru Amar Das ji in the development of Sikh religion?
3. What is the contribution of Shri Guru Ram Das Ji towards the development of Sikhism?
4. How did Sikhism flourish with the establishment of the new cities and the new traditions by the Gurus?



Guru Arjan Dev Ji

In 1581 AD Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji became the fifth Guru of the Sikhs. Guru Arjan Devji preached Sikh religion for 25 long years. The steps taken by him for the development of Sikhism and gave a new thought and a new direction. By constructing Sri Harmandir Sahib, Sri Guru Arjan Devji made Amritsar a great spiritual centre for the Sikhs and with the compilation of Adi Granth Sahib ji gave the Sikh religion an independent identity of its own. His martyrdom instilled in the Sikhs a feeling of sacrifice in the name of religion. Lets learn about the great contribution of Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji towards Sikh religion and his great sacrifice .

Early Life

Sri Guru Arjan Devji was born on April 15, 1563 AD at Goindwal. He was the third and the youngest son of Sri Guru Ram Das ji and Bibi Bhani. Right from his childhood Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji was an extremely intelligent child with a religious bent of mind. Sri Guru Arjan Devji learned Gurmukhi letters from Baba Buddha Ji and besides that he learnt Persian and Sanskrit also. He gained spiritual knowledge and learnt the Gurbani from Sri Guru



Amar Das ji and Sri Guru Ram Das ji. Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji was married to Ganga—daughter of Krishan Chand, of village Meo (Phillaur) – in 1579 A.D. In 1595 he was blessed with a son who became famous as the sixth Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Hargobind Ji. Guru Ram Dasji had three sons – Prithi Chand, Maha Dev and Arjan Dev Ji. Prithi was the eldest. He was greedy and shrewd. In the Sikh tradition he was called as 'Meena' (a mean person). Mahadev was not at all

interested in worldly affairs. While Guru Arjan Devji was humble and obedient.

Before his death in 1581, seeing the devotion and dedication, Guru Ram Dasji chose his youngest son, Arjan, as the successor.

Development of Sikhism under Guru Arjan Devji (1581A.D.-1606A.D.)

Despite all the hardships and opposition Guru Arjan Devji worked tirelessly for the growth and spread of Sikh religion during his 25 years.

1. Foundation of Sri Harmandir Sahib in Amritsar – Sri Guru Ram Dasji started the work of the two tanks Amritsar and Santokhsar, but the work was completed by Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji.

Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji started the construction of the Harmandir Sahib in the centre of the Amritsar Sarovar. In 1588 the foundation stone of the Harmandir Sahib was laid by the Muslim Sufi Saint of Lahore named Mian Mir. In 1604 AD, the Guru Granth Sahib ji was installed in Sri Harmandir Sahib and Baba Buddhaji was appointed as the first Granthi (Priest).

2. Compilation of the Adi Granth Sahib ji: By the time of Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji, Sikh religion had spread far and wide. Sikh Gurus had composed large number of hymns. Guru Arjan Devji composed 2218 Shabads in 30 Ragas. Some people tried to compose their own hymns in the name of the Gurus. In order to preserve the original hymns of Gurus (Gurbani) and to provide the knowledge of Gurbani in its authentic form, Guru Arjan Devji decided to compile 'Adi Granth Sahib'. By the

compilation of Adi Granth Sahib Ji, Guru ji provided a different religious scriptures (Adi Granth Sahib ji) to the Sikh community.

The compilation work was done by the Guru ji along with Bhai Gurdas ji sitting on banks of Ramsar, to the south-east of Amritsar. He himself dictated it to Bhai Gurdas ji, The Adi Granth Sahib ji contains the hymns, shabads and shalokas of the Gurus. It also includes the 'Bani' of Hindu saints, sufi saints, Bhattas and Gursikhs. The Granth was completed in 1604 A.D. and it was ceremonised as Prakash Utsav in 1604 A.D. for the first time in Sri Harmandir Sahib. Baba Buddha ji was appointed the first 'Granthi' (Priest).

Activity



Sri Harmandir Sahib is also known as the 'Golden Temple'. Discuss its historical background with the help of your teacher. teacher about the features showing foundation and history



Sai Mia Meer Ji who laid down the foundation stone of Shri Harminder Sahib



Sri Harmadir Sahib



Compilation of the Sri Adi Granth Sahib



The installation of the Adi Granth Sahib

3. **Construction of Chheharta:** Finding scarcity of water in Wadali the Guru ji got dug a well which was worked by six Persian wheels (Rahatt). The place came to be known as Chheharta.

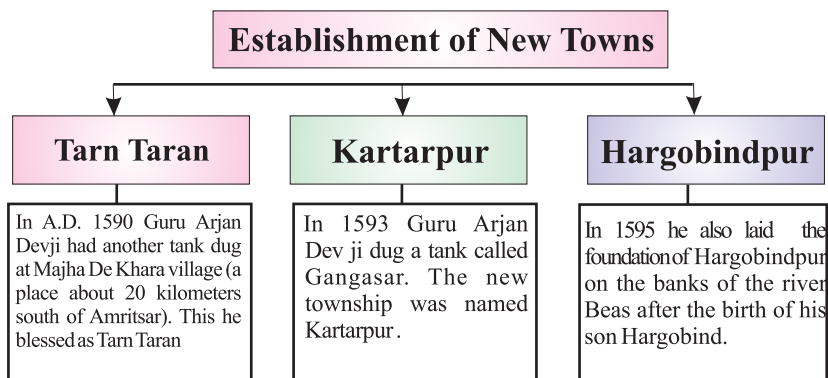
4. **Development of Masand System:** Sri Guru Ram Das ji had initiated the masand system. Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji further developed the Masand system. Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji called upon the Masands to collect offerings from the Sikhs at the rate of one-tenth of their income. It was called Daswandh. Guru ji appointed very responsible Sikhs and Masands. Besides collection of the offerings, Masands used to propagate the teachings of the Gurus and perform many other important functions.

5. **Construction of a Baoli in Lahore** – During his visit to Lahore, in 1599A.D. Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji got a baoli constructed in Dabbi Bazaar, which solved the problem of scarcity of water in the area.

The Construction of Chheharta



After sometime Masand system developed many ills. Masand turned egoistic and greedy. So Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji banned Masand system.



6. **Nomination of his Successor** – Before his martyrdom in 1606A.D., Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji nominated his son Guru Hargobind Ji as his successor and as the sixth Guru of the Sikhs. Guru ji also motivated Guru Hargobind ji to fight against tyranny.

Martyrdom of Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji

Akbar was very liberal towards all the religions. After his death, his son Jahangir became the Mughal Emperor. He was a bigot Muslim. He was unhappy with the growing popularity of Sikh religion and Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji. It was a golden opportunity for the enemies of Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji to



Mughal Emperor Jahangir

settle the score. At that time, Jahangir's son Khusro rebelled against him. Jahangir got Guru ji brutally martyred charging him of helping the rebellious Khusrau.

Causes of Sri Guru Arjan Devji's Martyrdom

- 1. Expansion of Sikhism** - The organizational activities of Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji like the construction of Sri Harmandir Sahib, Tarn Taran, Kartarpur, Hargobindpur and the compilation of Adi Granth Sahib ji led to the rapid spread of Sikh religion. A peaceful Sikh brotherhood had slowly developed under the Guru who was their leader and known as 'Sacha Patshah'. Due to 'Daswandh System' the income of 'Dharmsal' was considerably increasing. Therefore, Jahangir felt political insecurity with the rising popularity of Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji.
- 2. Enmity of Prithi Chand (Prithia)** – Prithi Chand (Prithia) was the eldest brother of Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji. He was very selfish, cunning and greedy. Because of this Sri Guru Ram Das Ji did not select him as his successor but he considered himself as the real successor of Guruship. Due to failure in attaining Guruship, he turned an enemy of Guru Ji and he started conspiring against Guru ji to attain Guruship.



Do You Know?

Having failed in his various attempts to attain Guruship Prithia (Prithi Chand) started a new sect known as 'Meena Sect'. Prithia's son Mehrbaan, was a great scholar he was the successor of the Meena Sect after his father. He composed the 'JanamSakhi' of Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji, which is considered an important work.

He started extracting the money from the Masands and preached his own compositions as Gurubani. His various attempts to kill Sri Guru Hargobind Ji were failed. With the assistance of Mughal officials he began to conspire against Guru ji.

- 3. Opposition of the Naqshbandis:** In those days Sirhind was the stronghold of the Naqshbandi order. Their leader Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi was not happy with the growing popularity and power of Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji and had complained to the Mughal Emperor Akbar that the non-muslims should not be given any concessions. But Akbar was very liberal and he did not pay any heed to their complaints. Later on they

instigated the Mughal Emperor Jahangir against the Guru ji.

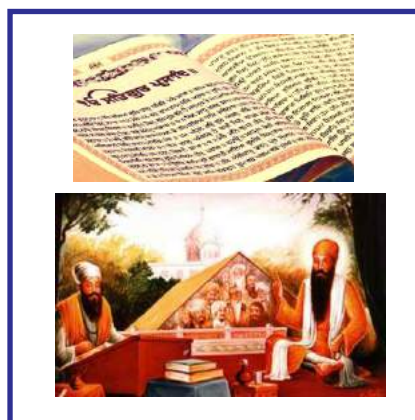
- 4. Opposition of Chandu Shah**- Chandu Shah, was an important officer of the Lahore province. His daughter's marriage was fixed with Guru ji's son Hargobind ji but due to Chandu Shah's ego, Guru ji rejected the offer of marriage of Chandu Shah's daughter with his son, Sri Hargobind ji on the request of the Sikhs. He thus instigated the Mughal

Emperor Jahangir against the Guru ji which became one of the causes of the Guru ji's martyrdom.

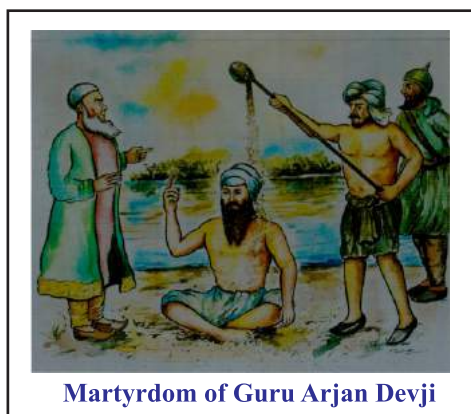
5. Religious Intolerance of Jahangir – Jahangir was a staunch Muslim and he was concerned about growing popularity and the following of Guru ji. The new emperor disapproved of the growing popularity of Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji and the propaganda of Sikhism and he wanted to stop the spread of Sikhism.

6. Immediate Cause – Prince Khusrau rebelled against his father Jahangir. He came to Guru ji for his blessings. Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji received Prince Khusrau, as in the case of any visitor of high position. Guru ji welcomed Prince Khusrau and offered Langar to him. But the opponents of Guru ji provoked Jahangir and told him that Guru ji not only gave shelter to khusrau but also helped him financially. Jahangir ordered the arrest of Guru ji for helping Khasrau.

7. Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Devji – As per the orders of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir Guruji was imprisoned on 24th May, 1606 A.D. and brought to Lahore. Jahangir ordered his execution and also directed that the Guru ji's family be handed over to Murtaza Khan. In



There are 1430 pages (organs) of Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Guru Granth contains the Bani (hymns) of six Gurus, 15 saints, 11 Bhattas, 4 Sikhs. It includes 974 hymns of Guru Nanak Devji, 63 hymns of Guru Angad Devji, 907 hymns of Guru Amardasji, 679 hymns of Guru Ram Dasji, 2218 hymns and 116 Shabads of Guru Arjan Devji, 116 Shabads and 2 Shalokas of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji. The Bani of Kabir (weaver), Farid (Sufi Saint), Ravidas (Cobbler), Surdas (Brahmin), Namdev (Dyer), Jaidev (Brahmin), Trilochan (Vaish), Dhanna (Peasant), Pipa (Masons), Sain (Barber), Sadna (Bucther), Parmanand, Ramanand etc. also included in the Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. They all belonged to different castes and religion. It includes hymns of Bal, Dal, Nal, Sal, Ganga Das, Mathura, Bheekha, Kirt, Harbans (Bhattas) and compositions of Guru Sikhs Mardana, Satta, Balwand and Sundar.



Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Devji

addition to this, Guru ji's property was confiscated. Guru ji was mercilessly tortured and finally on 30th May, 1606 A.D. he attained martyrdom.

According to Sikh tradition, Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji referred to as 'Shaheedan da Sartaj' (supreme among martyrs).

Impact of the Martyrdom of Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji:

Guru ji fearlessly opposed the tyranny of political forces and completely changed the nature and character of Sikh religion. His martyrdom increased the faith of people in the Sikh religion.

1. **Adoption of New Policy by Sixth Guru** – The martyrdom of Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji brought a transformation in the Sikhs. Sixth Guru, Sri Guru Hargobind Ji was deeply influenced with this incident. Guru Ji felt that political force is needed for the protection of religion. Therefore, Sri Guru Hargobind ji wore two swords and declared that they signified Miri and Piri. One symbolized temporal power and the other spiritual power respectively. Gradually, they began to increase their military strength. For this purpose in 1606 A.D. Akal Takht Sahib was got constructed in front of Sri Harimandir Sahib at Amritsar. Now, Sikhs began to keep the weapon along with them and they started offering horses and weapons to Guru Ji. Thus, martyrdom of Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji turned Sri Guru Hargobind Ji into a saint soldier.



Guru Hargobind ji Adopting Miri and Piri **Miri (Temporal) Piri (Spiritual) Swords**

2. **Struggle between Sikh-Mughal Relationship** – Till the reign of Akbar, Sikhs had cordial relations with Mughals. The merciless execution of Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji strained the relationship of Sikhs and Mughals. Both of them began to consider each other their enemies. This led to the beginning of the struggle between the Sikhs and the Mughals.
3. **Atrocities of Mughals on Sikhs** – After the martyrdom of Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji, Guru Hargobind Ji (the sixth Guru) got militarized the Sikhs. This led to the beginning of the political atrocities on Sikhs. In 1609 A.D., Jahangir got arrested Sri Guru Hargobind Ji in the fort of Gwalior. During the reign of Shahjahan, there were a number of clashes between Sikhs and Mughals. In 1675 A.D., Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb got martyred ninth Sikh Guru, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji at Delhi. Sikh – Mughal struggle remain continued during the time of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, Banda Bahadur and Maharaja Ranjit Singh Ji.

4. **Development of Sense of Unity among Sikhs** – After the martyrdom of Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji, Sikh got prepared mentally to face the political atrocities by tooth and nail. Their faith deepened in the Sikh religion. Thus the Martyrdom of Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji became a source of inspiration for Sikhs and this led to the development of sense of unity among Sikhs.

In this way, Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji provided a new direction to Sikh religion. His uncommon humility, bravery, fearlessness, courage and great sense of self-sacrifice filled with a unique kind of zeal. This resulted in the consolidation and massive spread of Sikh religion.

| Points to Remember | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|---|--|------------------|---|---------------|
| Sikh Gurus | Date of Birth | Birth Place | Mother- Father | Wife | Offspring | Guruship year |
| 1. Tsj!Hvsv!Obobl !E fw ji | 15 Bqsjn! 358 . BE | Rae Bho di Talwandi (Pakistan) | Father-Mehta kalu ji Mother-Tripta ji | Bibi Sulakhni ji | Son-Baba Sri Chand, Baba Lakhmi Chand. | 1469 |
| 2. . Tsj! Hvsv! Bokbe! Dev ji | 42!N bsd! 2615- BE | Matte Di sarai (Sarai Naga) Sri Amritsar Sahib. | Father-Pheru mal ji Mother-Shabhrai Devi ji | Bibi khivi ji | Son-Dattu Dassu !Daughters- Bibi Amro, Bibi Anokhi | 1539 |
| 3. Tsj!Hvsv!Bn bs!Ebt! ji | 5 May 1479 AD | Bassarkae, Amritsar. | Father-Tejbhan ji Mother-Sulakhni ji | Mansa Devi ji | Son- Mohan and Mohri Ebvhi fust- Bibi Dani, Bibi Bhani | 1552 |
| 4. . Tsj!Hvsv!Sbn !Ebt! ji | 24 September 1534 AD | Chunna Mandi, Lahore, Pakistan) | Father-Sri Hari Das ji Mother-Anup Devi ji | Bibi Bhani ji | Son- Prithichand, Mahadev, Arjan Dev | 1574 |
| 5. . Tsj! Hvsv! Bsbol! Dev ji | 15 April 1563 AD | Goindwal, Amritsar | Father-Guru Ram Das ji Mother-Bibi Bhani ji | Bibi Ganga ji | Son- Hargobind | 1581 |



IMPORTANT DATES

1. Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji ascended the Guruship in 1581 A.D.
2. In 1588 A.D. famous Sufi Saint laid the foundation stone of Harmandir Sahib Ji.
3. In 1590 A.D., Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji got built a pond (Sarovar – a pool of Salvation) at Majhe Da Khara.
4. In 1593 A.D., Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji got constructed the tank (Sarovar) of Gangsar and established the city of Kartarpur.
5. In 1595 A.D., Guru Ji established a city called Hargobindpur on the banks of river Beas.
6. The compilation of Adi Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji got completed in 1604 A.D.
7. In 1606 A.D., Sri Guru Arjan Devji appointed Sri Guru Hargobind Ji as the sixth Guru of the Sikhs.
8. Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji breathed his last on 30th May, 1606 A.D.,

EXERCISE

I. Objective Type Questions



A. Multiple Choice Questions-

- The name of Guru Arjan Devji's mother was...
a) Bibi Bhani b) Shbrai Devi
c) Bibi Amro d) Bibi Anokhi
- The name of the eldest son of Guru Ram Dasji was....
a) Mahadev b) Arjan Dev
c) Prithichand
- In which Fort Jahangir imprisoned Guru Hargobind Ji?
a) Gwalior b) Lahore
c) Delhi d) Jaipur
- Where did Khusrau meet Guru Arjan Devji?
a) Goindwal b) Hargobindpur
c) Kartarpur d) Santokhsar
- When was Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji martyred by Jahangir?
a) 24 May 1606 A.D. b) 30 May 1606 A.D.
c) 30 May 1581 A.D. d) 24 May 1675 A.D.

B. Fill in the blanks

- Guru Arjan Devji period was from..... upto.....
- In 1590, Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji constructed a Sarovar.....

C. Match the columns

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Martyrdom of Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji | (i) Jahangir |
| 2. Miri Piri | (ii) 30th May 1606 |
| 3. Saint Mian Mir | (iii) Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib ji |
| 4. Khusrau | (iv) Foundation stone of Harminder Sahib ji |

D. Differentiate between

- Miri and Piri



II. Very Short Answer Type Questions

- Who was the fifth Guru of the Sikhs?
- When and who laid the foundation of Harmandir Sahib Ji?
- To whom Guru Arjan Dev ji got dictate Adi Granth Sahib Ji?
- When was the compilation of Adi Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji completed?
- Who was the leader of Naqshbandi?
- Who was the first Granthi of Harmandir Sahib?
- What do you mean by Daswandh?

III. Short Answer Type Questions



- To whom did Sri Guru Ram Das ji give Guruship and when?
- Describe the Martyrdom of Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji?
- What do you mean by religious intolerance of Jahangir?
- Who was Chandu Shah? Why did he turned against Guru Arjan Dev ji?
- What was the immediate cause of Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji's martyrdom?
- What was the role of Masand System in the development of Sikh religion?

IV. Long Answer Type Questions



- What is the contribution of Guru Arjan Dev ji in the development of Sikh religion? Discuss in detail.
- What were the reasons behind Guru Arjan Dev ji's martyrdom? Discuss.
- What were impacts of Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev ji in Sikh religion? Discuss

UNIT-2



Event and Process

History and Changing World



The French Revolution

5

Today, we are used to the idea of democratic form of government in which elections are held regularly and the elected representatives make the laws and run the government. All the citizens have fundamental rights and are treated as equal by law. However, this kind of democracy did not exist before the French Revolution. Countries were ruled by kings or emperors who made laws at their will and the society was divided into high and low classes or estates, each had its privileges and obligations. In this chapter, we will read briefly about how people fought to build democratic political systems and achieved social equality.

Revolution :A sudden and radical change in society.

Historical Background

French Revolution was a great event in the history of the world. It left an immense influence on history. It gave humanity three new ideas- liberty, equality and fraternity. It was a revolution in France from

1789 to 1799. The French Government, particularly during 1780s, was facing the task of increased taxation to ease the burden of the financial crisis it faced. This led to the resentment among the people and paved the way for french revolution in 1789.

However, before we deal with the French Revolution itself, it is desirable to refer to the political, social and economic conditions of Europe on the eve of that great event in the European history.

Ancien Regime (French 'Old Order')

Before the French Revolution, the Bourbon family of kings ruled France. Political and social system of France prior to the French Revolution under the regime, everyone was a subject of the king of France as well as a member of an estate and province. French society was divided into three orders: clergy, nobility and others (the third estate).

Let us Think

How different would our lives had been if we were ruled by the kings? What would have happened if all the people were not equal before the law? Discuss with your class teacher.

Key Words :Monarchy

Monarchy is a form of government in which a country is ruled by a 'monarch' such as a king or queen. The authority, or crown in monarchy is generally inherited.

1.1 Political Set-up

There was a hereditary monarchy in France and the king held himself to the representative of God on earth.

The absolute monarchy reached its zenith during the reign of Louis XIV. Louis XV, the successor of Louis XIV was an incompetent ruler. Instead of improving administration, he indulged himself in a luxurious lifestyle. Louis XV's successor was Louis XVI. Louis XVI, who was the last absolutist king of France (1774-92), was full of good intentions but lacked the ability to make sound decisions and stand by them. He was married to the Austrian Princess Marie Antoinette.



Louis XIV,



Louis XV



Louis XVI

The long years of wars, the cost of maintaining an army, upkeep of the magnificent Palace of Versailles, running government offices had drained the wealth of France. Even an increase in taxes was not sufficient because of the social, political and economic conditions that existed in France.

Society

The French Society was divided into three “Estates”, essentially social groups in which people were born and lived all their life unless so ordered by the authorities.

a) First Estate or the Clergy

The first Estate was made divided into two categories of the Clergy:

- i) The higher clergy
- ii) The ordinary clergy.

The Higher Clergy i.e. Archbishops, Bishops and Abbots ruled the church in France. This was a powerful and wealthy class born with the privileges of not paying taxes. They had great influence in the government. Despite being only 1% of the population, enjoyed the great wealth of church which held about one-fifth of the land of France and had the right to collect a tax called **Tithe** from the people. Archbishops generally humiliated ordinary clergymen and led a luxurious life.



Versailles is also known as the Château de Versailles. It was the centre of political power in France since 1682. Versailles is not only famous for its building but also symbolizes absolutist monarchical power.