

ਗੁਰੂ ਕਾ ਲੰਗਰ

Guru Ka Langar

Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the founder of Sikh religion, had prescribed a certain way of life for his followers:

Naam japo, kirt karo, and wand chhako

(Remember Waheguru, make honest earning and share with others)

On this basic principle Guru Nanak Dev Ji introduced the system of community kitchen “**Guru Ka Langar**”. Freshly prepared vegetarian meals are served to eradicate the social barriers between high and low, rich and poor, touchable and non-touchable, Sikh and non-Sikh, king and the pauper. The Langar is an open kitchen found in all Gurdwaaras, provides free meals, and is open to everyone. Langar is served while the sangat is seated on the floor; a tradition emphasizing the equality. It has developed among the Sikhs the spirit of discipline and service and the will to give away something in the cause of religion and humanity.



The service (**sewa**) in the community kitchen aims at doing away with ego (cleaning sangat's (**ਜੀ ਭਾਈ**) dishes cleans one's mind and does away with one's sins). It instills a sense of human service, humility, and humbleness. Langar serves as a strong bond of union within the community and the Sikhs feel it to be their honor to serve the travelers, pilgrims or other visitors to the Gurdwaras or their homes. A Gurdwara without Langar is inconceivable.

Sacha Sauda (True Bargain): Going back into history, the father of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Mehta Kalyan Das Ji gave Guru

Ji 20 Rupees, and asked Him to go to the city and do some good business. On the way to the city Guru Ji met some saints who were in the need of food. Guru Ji thought that the best deal He could do with those 20 Rupees would be to serve food to those saints. He purchased the groceries, prepared the food and served those saints. That was the beginning of concept of Langar.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji would use a small share of His agriculture earnings for his domestic affairs and would contribute the remaining towards **Sangat** (congregation of religious people). Thus giving away a part of one's earnings in the service of humanity became a well-established practice in the lifetime of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. All the visitors who called upon Guru Sahib to pay homage and listen to his hymns brought something with them as an offering. Guru Sahib distributed the offerings among the poor, the needy and those present. When congregations became larger and more regular, Guru Sahib established a Langar for all for the consumption of the Sangat.

Guru Angad Dev Ji popularized and expanded the community kitchen as it was of great service to the outcaste, destitute and poor people. Mata Khivi Ji, wife of Guru Angad Dev Ji prepared and distributed food with her own hands.

Bhai Satta and Bhai Balwand Ji in Guru Granth Sahib say;

ਬਲਵੰਦ ਕੀਵੀ ਨਕ ਜ ਨ ਭੀ ਸੁਭਿਲੀ ਚਾਉਪਤੀ ।] ਭੀਰ ਦਲੀਐ ਧਰਮੀਐ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਕੀਰੀ । ਗੁਰੂ (੨੨੧੬) (੧੬੭੬)

Balwand says that Khivi is a noble woman, who gives soothing, leafy shade to all. She distributes the bounty of the Guru's Langar; the kheer - the rice pudding and ghee, is like sweet ambrosia.

Guru Amar Das Ji made it obligatory for the visitors to go to langar first and then attend the Sangat or behold him. "*Pehle Pangat Pachhe Sangat*".



This created amongst the followers a feeling of affection, mutual harmony, fellowship and unity. Once Emperor Akbar went to meet the Guru and he had to first partake in **Pangat** (sitting on the floor in a row, with heads covered), and only then was he allowed to meet Guru Sahib. The Langar at that time was run from the offerings of the Sikhs. Whatever was received was consumed. Nothing was saved for the next day and the leftover food was fed to the fish in river Beas. Since then it has endured throughout Sikh history and the principle of Langar is maintained today as it was at Guru Ji's time.

After the Gurgaddi to Guru Ram Das Ji Amritsar became the headquarters of the fourth, the fifth and the sixth Guru. Guru Arjan Dev Ji and Guru Hargobind Ji maintained the langar with equal zeal and zest. During Guru Hargobind Ji's lifetime his son, Baba Atal Ji, was in charge of the langar. He supplied food from Guru-ka-langar to the Sikhs in the battlefield. His service and devotion led to a proverb, which says: "**Baba Atal, pakki pakai ghall**" (Baba Atal, supply cooked meals).

When Guru Hargobind Ji settled at Kiratpur, Langar continued to exist there. The seventh Guru, Guru Har Rai Ji and Guru Har Krishan Ji preserved the same tradition. As Guru Tegh Bahadur remained mostly on the move, a mobile langar followed him. Guru Gobind Singh not only maintained his own langar, but also advised on others to do so.

Preparation of Langar

The devotees voluntarily offer the provisions in the Langar and prepare the meals while chanting Gurbaani hymns or Naam simran. All utensils and supplied should be clean. It is considered to be fortunate to do seva in the Langar and serve the community. Langar preparation seva is open to everyone. After the Langar is prepared, a thaali is prepared for Guru Sahib and ardaas is performed to seek Guru Sahib's acceptance and blessing to serve in the Sangat.

General Rules concerning tradition of Langar:

- ?? The Langar must be fresh, vegetarian, and simple
- ?? The Langar must be prepared by devotees by reciting Gurbaani or Nam simran
- ?? The Langar must be served after performing Ardaas and presenting to Guru Sahib.
- ?? The Langar must be distributed in the Pangat (people sitting on the floor in a row with heads covered) without any discrimination in terms of caste, color, creed, gender and status
- ?? The Langar must never be touched with dirty hands (**ਭੀਰ-ਧਰਮ**), while preparing and serving.
- ?? Ultimate attention must be given to sucham (**ਸੁਚਮ**).
- ?? Food should only be taken as much as needed and should not be wasted
- ?? We should all take a good care of kitchen and Langar hall and keep it clean and tidy
- ?? All items in the Langar should be accessible to all the sangat