

Bhāi Lālo

After teaching people in Lahaur (ਲਾਹੌਰ) to live honestly the first Gurū returned to Talvaṇḍī (ਤਲਵੰਡੀ) to see his parents. Then after a short stay, he proceeded to go with Mardānā (ਮਰਦਾਨਾ), his companion, on a long journey to visit the sacred places of pilgrimage of the Hindus. On the way they reached Bhāi Lālo's (ਭਾਈ ਲਾਲੋ) workshop at Saidpur (ਸੈਦਪੁਰ) presently known as Aimanābād (ਐਮਨਾਬਾਦ) in Pākistān (ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ). Bhāi Lālo was a carpenter and earned his living by honest work. When Lālo saw two holy men coming towards him, he put aside his work and spread a bed for them and went to get some lunch for them.

As the kitchen was supposed to be the most pure and clean place in a house, Bhāi Lālo asked Gurū Nānak to come there and have his meal. Gurū Nānak replied that since every place is clean and pure, the meal could be brought to him. Bhāi Lālo complied and delivered the meal, which Bhāi Mardānā then divided into three parts. Upon tasting the meal, Gurū Nānak remarked on how tasty it was. "This taste is above the taste of worldly delicacies. I can taste your honest hard labor in every bite."

Another day, Malik Bhāgo (ਮਲਿਕ ਭਾਗੋ), a high government official of the city, gave a general feast. He invited Gurū Nānak too. The Gurū declined the invitation saying, "We are saints, not business men, what have we to do with your feast?" On being asked a second time, Gurū Nānak took Bhāi Lālo with him and went to Malik Bhāgo's house. With great anger Malik Bhāgo told Gurū Nānak that he was being dishonorable by accepting food from a low caste carpenter and not a government official.

Gurū Nānak took Bhāi Lālo's dry roṭī (ਰੋਟੀ) in his right hand, and Malik Bhāgo's fried sweet pancake in his left hand. When he squeezed the right hand the people present there saw drops of milk dripping from it. And when he pressed the left hand with the fried pancakes, everyone saw blood trickling from it. "Look Malik Bhāgo! The wealth you have gathered through your cruelty towards the poor is a blood-sucking act. You had invited me to partake of blood, leaving food pure as milk. How could I accept it?" asked the Gurū. Malik Bhāgo was silent then. Bhāi Lālo on the other hand was the symbol of honesty and hardwork. So according to Gurū Nānak it's better to earn little money with honesty than to amass wealth by devious and crooked means.

For more information visit:

http://www.ikonkar.com/sikhism/Sakis/bhai_Lalo.htm

http://www.ikonkar.com/sikhism/Sakis/malik_bhago.htm

<http://www.sikhsangat.com/index.php?showtopic=13521>

<http://www.info-sikh.com/SchPage4.html>

<http://www.sikh-heritage.co.uk/personalities/bhai%20Lalo/Bhai%20Lalo.html>