

SANT RAIDAS – A SHORT STORY

(Based on the Biography of Sant)

Dr Yatendra Sharma



SANT RAIDAS (RAVI DAS)



SHRI RAM KATHA SANSTHAN PERTH,
AUSTRALIA, WA 6025
<http://shriramkatha.org>

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PRESENTED TO

**MY GRANDNIECES SAUMYA, SUDHI,
SHARANYA
AND
MY GRANDNEPHEW SUMEDHA**

**MAY LORD SHRI RAM, BHAGWAN SWAMI
SHRI RAMANAND JI MAHARAJ, SANT
RAIDAS JI AND ALL SAINTS BLESS THEM
TO HAVE BLISSFUL LIVES**

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Acknowledgment of Few Blessings

**HH Swami Shri Atmeshananad Ji Maharaj, Senior Monk,
Shri Ram Krishna Mission, Brisbane, Australia**

Namaskar Yatendra Ji. Glad to know that on 27th February 2021 (Sant Raidas Jayanti), the booklet on Sant Raidas is being released by Shri Ram Katha Sansthan Perth. The lives of Saints help us to progress forward by following their footsteps and avoid pitfalls. My prayers to the Divine on the occasion.

**Professor Ian Woolford, Professor of Hindi and Indology,
La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia.**

Dear Yatendra Ji, in a time when it seems we are often surrounded by darkness, it takes a universal figure such as Sant Raidas to show us the light.

I am especially impressed with how accessible your work is. Even someone who is not previously acquainted with the life and works of Sant Raidas would gain much from your biography and critical analysis. I very much enjoyed how you have interwoven Sant Raidas's own words and lyrics with his biography. This truly is a magnificent effort.

Please accept my hearty congratulations for the production of this important work, which I plan to review again on Sant Raidas Jayanti later this month. This will be a valuable resource for years to come.

Foreward

'To love the mankind is to love God' is the saying of our Saints (Sants). The Sants see God in every living being.

The 15th and 16th century were the era being referred as the Bhakti Yug (Devotional Period). This was the era when hardcore Muslim Sultans (Kings) were ruling India. They were bent to destroy Sanatan Dharma by annihilating Hindu culture, destroying Hindu temples and converting Hindus into Islam faith by force. Mother India was very fortunate that during that difficult time for Sanatan Dharma, God sent His chosen sons and daughters to rescue the followers of Sanatan Dharma namely Bhagwan Swami Shri Ramanand, Sant Raidas, Sant Kabir, Sant Namdev, Sant Tukaram, Sant Narsi Mehta, Guru Nanak Dev, Soordas, Goswami Tulsi Das, Sant Charan Das, Meerabai, Sahajo Bai etc, just to mention few names.

This was also the era when social evils were at its worst. So called Brahmins were busy in promoting their own interests and driving Sanatan Dharma followers towards blind believes, such as caste system, undue importance of rituals etc. Bhagwan Swami Ramanand (Shri Ramanand Sampraday followers believe Him to be an incarnation of Lord Ram) appeared at this time. Though born in a Brahmin family, He declared that one could not claim being a Brahmin unless he had attained the state of Brahmn-Gyan (self-realization). He openly propagated that merely by taking birth in a Brahmin family, one does not become a Brahmin. Any person of any caste who has love towards God and has attained a state of Brahmn-Gyan, is a Brahmin. He became a pioneering figure of the 'Bhakti Movement' of that time in North India. He developed His philosophy and devotional themes inspired by Nathpanthi ascetics of the 'Yoga School of Hindu Philosophy'. His teachings were an attempt towards a synthesis between 'Advaita Vedanta' and 'Vaishnava Bhakti'. He accepted the

concepts of both; Saguna Brahm (Worshipping God with a Form) and Nirguna Brahm (Meditating on God without Form). Hence, it could be observed that His followers took respective paths of their own choices to worship the Lord according to their believes. For example, 'Sagun Brahm' was accepted by Goswami Tulsi Das and his followers and 'Nirgum Brahm' was practised by Sant Kabir and his followers. Bhagwan Swami Ramanand asserts that austerity and penances through asceticism are meaningless, if an individual does not realize God (Vishnu) as their inner self. He criticized fasting and rituals. According to His philosophy, the mechanics are not important. These are useless if the individual does not take the opportunity to reflect and introspect on the nature of Brahm (Supreme Being). Bhagwan Swami Ramanand states that reading of a sacred text is of no benefit, if the person fails to understand what the text is trying to communicate. Bhagwan Swami Ramanand who was the founder of 'Shri Ramanand Sampraday', accepted disciples without discriminating anyone by gender, class, caste or religion. As it is evident, He was open to accept even Muslims as his disciples. Sant Kabir is an example to that.

His principal disciples were; Sant Anantanand, Sant Sursuranand, Sant Sukhanand, Sant Naraharidāsa, Sant Bhavanand, Bhagat Pipa, Sant Kabir, Sant Sen, Sant Dhanna, Sant Raidas, Mata Sursuri and Mata Padyawati. Goswami Tulsi Das Ji also joined later and belonged to 'Shri Ramanandi Sampraday'.

In a traditional Sanatan Dharm society, historically, the renunciant life has been rigidly structured by and built around vows of renunciation of and abstinence from the sensuality and materialism of the external world. Shri Ramananda Sampraday refutes the common view in Hindu monastic traditions that a Sadhu without renunciation is not a Sadhu; a monk who takes no vows is not a monk. Shri Sampraday teaches its own approach to the practice and role of vows, bringing more of a focus on Bhakti (devotion) that is integral in both the path

and the goal to achieve Moksha (Salvation). There are no restrictions for devotees (Sadhaks) to practice Bhakti while in Grahstha Ashram (family life). They progress along the path that takes them from possession and sensual pleasure to renunciation and self-control, from material attainment to spiritual prowess. Shri Ramananda Sampraday is the largest order of Hindu renunciants today.

I have made an attempt to describe the life of the great Sant Raidas in this booklet that while living a life of a 'Grahasth', how could he achieve the goal of self-realization and also made several social reforms. He was one of the self-realised disciples of Bhagwan Shri Ramanand.

Sant Raidas was born in a low caste (Chamar) family and lived a life of an ascetic even though belonging to an affluent parentage. His father Raghuram was one of the richest leather traders of that era in the area. Sant Raidas gave up all the materialistic pleasures and lived a life in poverty.

He taught us a lesson of love, non-violence and one God concept. By telling us that 'for a blissful heart, everywhere is Mother Ganga' (*Man Changa to Kathauti Mein Ganga*), he has taught us that what matters most to please the God, is the purity of the heart, guilelessness and innocence. It really does not matter to God whether you are engrossed in rituals or not. Without purity of the heart, guilelessness and innocence in yourself, you cannot achieve self-realization and God. In his simple regional poetic language, he tried to teach us not to discriminate people on the basis of caste, creed and social status. We must live in a cordial and friendly terms with not only fellow human beings, but animals too.

There is a very interesting story which inspired me to author this short story on the great Sant Raidas. As a follower of Shri Ramanand

Sampraday, I am always looking for blessings of Bhagwan Swami Shri Ramanad Ji Maharaj. This is my practice to chant the holy names of Lord before going to sleep. One night after chanting the holy names of the Lord, when I was trying to sleep, I heard a clear voice stating that Sant Raidas Jayanti is approaching soon, and I must author a booklet to describe the life history of Sant Raidas to benefit everyone from his teachings. I bowed to this voice and took a vow to author this booklet before Sant Raidas Jayanti this year in 2021, which is falling on 27 February 2021.

I usually compose poetry and author books/ booklets in Hindi. I was debating whether I should write this short story in Hindi or English. On the request of few friends, I decided to author this in English. The basic reason for that is, in a foreign land where English is the main language, our younger generation brought up here may not be able to read and understand if written in Hindi. I am neither an English literature person nor this is my primary language, so please forgive me if you find mistakes in my narration. My aim is not to contribute towards literature by authoring this booklet, but to give a message as I understand from the teachings of the great Sant Raidas of Sanatana Dharma.

Professor Ian Woolford (Professor of Hindi and Indology, Latrobe University, Melbourne, Australia) says that in a time when it seems we are often surrounded by darkness, it takes a universal figure such as Sant Raidas to show us the light. According to our Scripture, the Lord is pleased by remembering and narrating the holy biography of the Sants. On this Sant Raidas Jayanti, let us remember this great Sant of Sanatan Dharma Sant Raidas and get his blessings to progress on materialistic as well as spiritual path. I pray Almighty and Sant Raidas to enlighten us all and put us on the right path.

SANT RAIDAS – A SHORT STORY

I gratefully acknowledge the wisdom, direction and advises given to me from time to time by my elder brother Shri Narendra Dutt Sharma Ji, my wife Mrs Manju Sharma, my son Anshul Sharma and all my friends particularly, Shri Sunil Garg Ji, Dr Jugal Agarwalla Ji and Professor Pritam Singh Ji.

Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti.

Dr Yatendra Sharma



Shri Ram Katha Sansthan Perth, Australia

Sant Raidas Jayanti 27 February 2021

SANT RAIDAS – A SHORT STORY

Birth and Parents

It was Phalgun Poornima (full moon day of the month Phalgun Hindu Calendar) of late 14th century. All the villagers were celebrating Holi with great pomp and show in the Mandur village near Varanasi. In a colony of cobblers of the village, there was great joy in the house of village cobbler chief Raghuram. All the village cobblers assembled there to greet him. His wife Ghurbinia was very busy in frying bhang (marijuana) pakoras (fried balls of gram flower) for the guests. It was a very joyous moment and every one was enjoying bhang pakoras and throwing coloured water on each other prepared from Teshu (Butea Monosperma) flowers. It would have been noon time when all of a sudden, few soldiers appeared in front of the house of Raghuram. They asked for Raghuram. Raghuram was summoned to the Durbar (Noble Court) of Sharqui Sultan of Jaunpur immediately.

This was the time when Varanasi was under the Rule of Sharqui Sultan of Jaunpur. He was one of the most powerful Sultan (king) of that era. Even the Emperor Lodi of Delhi kingdom was so afraid of Sharqui Sultan that he never dared to move his forces towards Jaunpur Sultanate (kingdom). Sharqui Sultan was very ambitious and always had his eyes to win the Delhi kingdom and merge it into his Sultanate. He was making great preparation for a battle with the Emperor Lodi.

Sharqui Sultan was very cruel and a hardcore Muslim. He destroyed thousands of Hindu temples and was very against Sanatana Dharma. He spared no opportunity to torture Hindus in his kingdom. Summoning of Raghuram by such a cruel Ruler shook the hearts of everyone in the village, not only the village cobblers. Raghuram had

no choice. By disobeying the decree of the Ruler would have invited his wrath, which could be death penalty. Politely, Raghuram surrendered himself to the soldiers and got prepared to leave to Jaunpur which was nearly 40 miles away from his village.

Raghuram appeared in the Darbar (Royal Court) of the Sultan. To his surprise, he found Sultan welcoming him with a smile. After saluting Sultan, Raghuram sat on the floor of the Darbar. 'Raghuram, we order you to prepare 10,000 pair of shoes with the help of all the cobblers of my Kingdom for our soldiers', said Sultan. Raghuram politely bowed to Sultan, fell at his feet and politely said in a low voice, 'O Great Emperor, I am a very poor cobbler. Somehow, I am able to meet my family expenses by repairing and producing few hundred pair of shoes every year. Neither I have capacity to produce 10,000 pair of shoes nor the financial resources to do so. O Lord, how can a small cobbler like me can prepare and gift 10,000 pair of shoes to my dear Emperor?' 'Do not worry about money', I hereby order my treasurer to advance you enough money towards the cost of 10,000 pair of shoes for my soldiers. Also, I issue an order that from today onwards, every cobbler of the Kingdom will work under your supervision and only produce shoes for the soldiers. I want this work to be completed as soon as possible, and give you six-month time', said Sultan. The Sultan was preparing to invade Delhi with large number of soldiers, and needed these pair of shoes for them.

Sultan's words were his decree. Either one should obey or die. Raghuram bowed before the Sultan and looked up at the treasurer of the Kingdom to provide him money as decreed by the Sultan. The treasurer immediately gave him one hundred gold coins for the work.

Raghuram was very happy. In his life, he had never seen even one gold coin and now he was the owner of one hundred gold coins. He requested the treasurer to kindly provide him security with couple of

soldiers to carry this money safely to his village, and then commence working towards securing the services of all the cobblers of the Kingdom and the resources to produce 10,000 pair of shoes for the soldiers of the Sultan. The treasurer provided him the services of two heavily armed soldiers for his safety.

Raghuram started his journey back to his village with two heavily armed soldiers to protect him. He was feeling like a 'Royal' and very happy in his heart that he would be a very rich person by the time he finished producing and supplying these 10,000 pair of shoes to the Sultan. He would have hardly crossed 25 miles, the weather suddenly changed to the worst. All of a sudden it became dark and stormy. Thunder crashed and the dark path was briefly illuminated by a flash, like a strobe light. The sky was all grey and, in the distance, loomed like an ominous black mass. Though this season was known for its storms, but this was something different. A tornado was approaching. At that moment, the skies opened and water gushed from the above.

Raghuram and two accompanied soldiers were now looking for a place where they could get shelter till this storm passed away. They saw a hut close by and rushed there. They shouted for help to request to open the door of the hut so they could get shelter inside in this difficult weather. A hermit (Sadhu) opened the door and asked them to come inside. The party of three was highly relieved. The hermit offered them water and some fruits.

Seeing smile and happiness in the heart of Raghuram, the hermit spoke very polite words to Raghuram, 'This materialistic happiness is very temporary, my friend. You will soon be blessed with a divine son who will give away all your wealth to the needy, and thus will provide salvation to your several descents'. Always remember:

***Poot Sapoot To Kyon Dhan Sanchay.
Poot Kapoot To Kyon Dhan Sanchay.***

'If son is a worthy person, why to accumulate the money? He will earn by his virtues any way. And if son is unworthy, still why to accumulate the money? He will destroy it anyway.'

Raghuram could not understand these mystical words of the hermit, but was very pleased to hear that soon he would be blessed with a divine son. Though it had been long time since he got married, but still was not blessed with a child yet. In his happiness, he gave some Dakshina (donation) to the hermit, and bowed in his feet.

The time passed on. Raghuram now was now not only the richest cobbler in the Jaunpur kingdom, but also chief of the cobbler society of the Jaunpur kingdom and a very respected person. His business of making and repairing shoes was growing day by day.

Poornima of Margshirsh month of late 14th century arrived. It was adorable and charming weather. It looked as if all the trees were getting new clothes in the form of new leaves. Flowers were blooming with fragrance everywhere. The birds were dancing and singing on the tree branches. The sky was very clear, cloudless and blue. The mustard fields looked like as if yellow blanket was spread all over the fields. Beautiful flying butterflies were catching everyone's eyes. The weather was very pleasant. The cold season of winter was gone. One could listen everywhere the charming sounds of bees, cuckoos and other birds. There was a feeling of great pleasure, joy and happiness among the hearts of everyone.

On this beautiful day, Ghurbunia was having severe labour pain. Raghuram called for the village midwife. On hearing the news, all the friends of Raghuram also gathered at his house. Everyone saw a bright light emanating from the sky and entering into the room where Ghurbunia was in labour pain. Soon, midwife came out of the labour room and informed Raghuram that a son was born to Ghurbunia. Raghuram was overjoyed. He gave her one of his precious gold rings from his fingers to midwife. He invited all his friends to celebrate the day with the great pomp and show at his residence. It was a day of Sunday, so the boy was named Ravidas (Devotee of Lord Sun), with a nickname as Raidas in the cobbler society.

Raidas was growing very fast. In his fourth month, he started crawling. Mother Ghurbunia was a great devotee of Lord Ram. Whenever mother Ghurbunia used to pray Lord Ram, Raidas as a toddler, would crawl towards mother and participate in the prayer. When he was three-year-old, the first word came out from his mouth was 'Ram'. As a five-year-old, he composed his first couplet.

Ram Nam Bin Jo Kuch Kahiye, So Sab Bharam Kahai.

'Other than pronouncing the name of the Lord Ram, everything is delusion.'

Education and Marriage

Seeing that his son was a promising child, Raghuram wanted to give him proper education. When Raidas attained the age of five, Raghuram took him to the teacher of the village, Pundit Shardananda. Pundit Shardananda was very impressed with the divine personality of Raidas and admitted him in his school. Unfortunately, soon after, the upper caste villagers objected to giving education to the child of a cobbler and threatened to pull out their children from the school of Pundit Shardananda. Pundit Shardananda submitted to the objections of the upper caste villagers, and though asked Raidas not to sit with the children of the upper castes, but promised him to give education separately. Raidas humbly accepted the request of Pundit Shardananda but composed the following couplet.

***Brahmin Baishya Shudra aur Khatri,
Dom Chamar Malech Man Soi.
Hoi Puneet Bhagwan Bhajan Te,
Aapu Taari, Taarai Kul Doi.***

'Weather you are Brahmin, Vaishya, Kshatriya (upper Caster) or Shudra, Dom, Chamar, Malech (lower castes), one only become sacred by chanting the name of the Lord. He only (who chants the name of the Lord) finds salvation for himself and the descents.'

While taking education from Pundit Shardananda, Raidas became great friend of his son Atmananda. After their study hours, they used to play together. Both of them were very fond of the game 'Hide and Seek'. They would play for hours together even late in the evenings. At one time, when they were playing 'Hide and Seek', it became dark and they could not finish their game. Both of them then promised to

return early in the morning on Sunrise to finish off the game, and left for their respective houses. Next day, early in the morning, Raidas returned to the designated place to wait for his friend to come and play, and finish the game of the last night. He waited and waited for long time but Atmananda did not come. Curious, then he went to the house of Pundit Shardananda. He saw everyone crying in the house. He asked Pundit Shardananda what had happened? Pundit Shardananda told him that your friend was no more and he was dead. Slowly Raidas moved towards the dead body of Atmananda, and by shaking his body loudly spoke, 'O Atmananda, this is late morning now and you are still sleeping. Awake and let us finish our game. You cannot go away like this without finishing off the game as you promised last night.' As soon as Atmananda heard this voice, a miracle did happen and the boy immediately stood up. Seeing Raidas there, he said, 'O friend, what are you doing here? Let us go to our designated place and finish off the game first.'

Seeing this miracle of the boy Raidas, every villager was stunned and realised that Raidas was not an ordinary child but a divine one. They asked forgiveness of Raidas and requested him to join the regular class of Pundit Shardananda with other higher caste children.

Raidas now started going to the regular class of Pundit Shardananda, but soon he lost interest in the education given by Pundit Shardananda. He used to sit in a corner of the school and keep on reciting the name of the Lord Ram. Guruji asked him to return to the class, then Raidas composed few couplets and narrated to Guru Ji;

**Mein Padhyo Ram Ka Nam Aur Duja Nahin Janoon,
Rarra Mammaa Chandi, Teesaro Ank Na Aano.**

Kaha Padhave Bavare Aur Sakal Janjal,
Bho Sagar Jamlok Hai Moh Kaun Lagave Par.

'Pundit Ji, I have learnt the name of the Lord Ram and now do not understand anything else. Besides the two words, Ra and Ma, I do not understand any third word. Why do you want me to teach the knowledge which will entangle me to the world (materialistic things)? This world is like an ocean. This knowledge being given by you will not give me salvation (Moksh).'

After that, Raidas left school and returned home early. Raghuram, his father, asked if he was not well and feeling sick as he left school early. He told his father that he did not want to go to the school. The type of the education provided by Pundit Ji was not what he was looking for. Raghuram could not understand the mystic words of his son, but continued to worry about his welfare.

Raghuram's business of making and repairing shoes was growing steadily. He was indeed not disappointed on the decision of his son Raidas not to go to the school. He gladly commenced teaching the skills of his business to young boy Raidas, making and repairing shoes. Raidas was very promising and intelligent. He learnt all the skills very quickly and was soon making great artistic and durable pair of shoes. However, he would give away shoes made by him to any poor person or Sadhu (Saint) passing through the shop.

When Raidas was about ten-year-old, Raghuram decided to perform a religious ceremony for the welfare of his business by praying and offerings to Mother Lakshmi through Pundits. Since no Pundit would come to the house of a cobbler, so the prayers and offerings were to be made

on the bank of the Mother Ganga. Raghuram especially made 10 pair of shoes for donation to the Pundits performing this religious ceremony for him for this occasion. He told Raidas about this and kept these 10 pair of shoes at one separate place. He left early in the morning that day to participate in religious activity to the bank of Mother Ganga, and instructed his son to look after the shop till he returned.

That day, soon after Raidas came to the shop, a group of Sadhus (Saints) happened to pass through the shop of Raghuram chanting name of Lord Ram. He saw these poor Sadhus walking barefoot without shoes. Their feet were badly damaged by thorns and chaps. Blood was oozing out of their feet, but still they continued to move deeply engrossed in their love to Lord Ram without caring for their pain. He was greatly moved and invited them to come to his shop. Incidentally, the number of these Sadhus was ten, and he had 10 pair of shoes with him left by his father for donation to the Pundits. He immediately gave these ten pair of shoes to these Sadhus.

One of the Sadhu came very close to Raidas and bowed before him murmuring, 'Anant is back', 'Anant is back', 'Anant is back'. Other Sadhus were stunned on this behaviour of this Sadhu and were very curious to know who this Anant was, and why this Sadhu was murmuring and dancing saying that 'Anant is back'? Then this Sadhu commenced narrating a story of the past life of Raidas.

Anant was a very learned Brahmin of Kashi. The disciples of Bhagwan Swami Ramanand Ji Maharaj used to beg Bhiksha from the few houses of Brahmins in Kashi daily, and used to partake with their Guru Swami Ramanand Ji Maharaj. One day when they brought Bhiksha and Bhagwan

Swami Ji was to start eating, all of a sudden, Bhagwan Swami Ji did smell stench like meat. He asked his disciples from where they did bring Bhiksha that day. The disciples told the names of all the Brahmins from where Bhiksha was brought. Swami Ji meditated for a while and found out that the Bhiksha from the house of Anant was not pure. He asked his disciples to bring Anant to Him immediately. Anant was brought before Bhagwan Swami Ji. Bhagwan Swami Ji looked at him angrily and spoke that how shameful it was for him to eat meat being a highly learned Brahmin. 'O Brahmin, being taken birth in a highly pious family and having knowledge of all the Scriptures including four Vedas, you have tempted to the taste of forbidden meat and eat it regularly. I curse you that soon you will meet with an accidental death, and in your re-birth, you will be born in the family of meat eaters 'Shudra', said Bhagwan Swami Ji. Anant was trembling with fear. He bowed again and again in the lotus feet of Bhagwan Swami Ji and begged for His forgiveness. The hearts of the Saints are very forgiving. Bhagwan Swami Ji Maharaj melted on his condition and said, O Brahmin, I cannot take back my curse. You need to be punished for what you did. However, in your new birth, even though you will be born in a family of 'Shudra', you will lead life like a Saint. Eventually, you will become my disciple and show light to the world through your wisdom.' 'Anant met with an accident few months later and died. He was reborn as Raidas now. This boy would one day show light to the whole world as Bhagwan Swami Ji blessed him. Giving their blessings, Sadhus left the village.'

When Raghuram returned and came to know that Raidas had given away all the 10 pair of shoes to Sadhus, he was very furious on Raidas and scolded him. Raidas told to his father, 'O my beloved father, the donations should only be

given to the needy persons. The Brahmins to whom you proposed to donate these shoes are rich. These Brahmins can easily afford to buy new pair of shoes. But these poor Sadhus had no means to buy shoes. They travel all over the country in search of God and truth in heat and cold. They indeed needed these shoes very badly.’ Raghuram was not satisfied by the answer of his son, and was worried that his son would destroy all his wealth one day in this way.

Couple of years passed on. Raidas was now 12-year-old. Raghuram thought that this was the right time for getting Raidas married. Child marriages were quite normal during those days. Of course, he also thought that if Raidas was married, there would be responsibility of running a household on him, and then he would understand the value of the wealth.

Raghuram was not feeling very well today. He had light supper and went to the bed early. Soon, he was embraced by the ‘Goddess of Sleep’. He saw a dream in which he was wandering in a forest aimlessly. Then, he saw a hermitage of a Sadhu (Saint). He was very thirsty and hungry too. So, he knocked the door of the hermitage, and sat at the one corner outside of the hermitage thinking him to be of low caste and might not be permitted to go inside the hermitage by Sadhu. Sadhu came out and asked him to come inside. ‘Maharaj, I belong to a cobbler caste and might not be permitted to come inside the hermitage’, said Raghuram. Sadhu smiled at him and said, ‘you are a human being my child and creation of the Lord. In the eyes of the Lord, no one belongs to a higher caste or a lower caste. All are equal so far, they respect each other. So, do not be afraid of and come inside. I have been waiting for you for long. You have got a divine son and now looking for a daughter-

in-law suitable for him. The sakhi (friend) named Lona of divine Goddess Mother Amba had taken birth to be the wife of Raidas. Go and search for her near the Lord Shiva temple in Kashi.' Raghuram was awakened by this powerful dream, and decided that he would proceed to the Kashi Vishwanath temple next morning to locate and find this girl, Lona.

He reached at the Kashi Vishwanath temple early in the morning which was only few miles away from his home. He commenced enquiring from the cobblers sitting there if anyone did know a girl named Lona. One of the cobblers came forward to him and saluted him. He told him that he lived in a nearby cobbler colony and the name of his daughter was Lona who is 8-year-old now. He belonged to Chimkatiya cobbler sub-caste. Raghuram was very happy to hear as he also belonged to the same sub-caste of the cobblers. In those days marrying their sons and daughters to the same sub-caste was preferable. Raghuram told him that he had a son Raidas who is 12-year-old now and looking for a suitable bride for him. A Sadhu told him that Raidas is destined to marry a girl named Lona who lived in a cobbler colony near Kashi Vishwanath Mandir, hence he was trying to locate her. Father of Lona bowed to Raghuram and said, 'O Chief, how lucky I am that my daughter Lona is accepted by you as your daughter-in-law. Please accept her at your will.'

Soon after that, Raidas and Lona were married.

***Bal Bais Ravidas Ko Keeno Vivah Pitah,
Bado Bhayo Dekhi Karm Nit Kaho Khat Kar Khay.***

The boy Raidas was married by his father. (Though his father thought that he would change after marriage) His

behaviour (his diligence to the Sadhus) remained the same as it was before marriage.

In due course of time, he was blessed with a son, Vijay Das.

Lona Devi was fully devoted to her husband. Every word of her husband was a decree to her. Seeing that both these husband and wife were bent to destroy the hard-earned money of Raghuram, he was very furious. He tried all the possible ways to teach importance of the money to this couple, but in vain.

***Pita Tras Debahun Samjhaven,
Kul Karni Kari Kachu Na Kamaven.
Bahu Adar Kar Sant Bolaven,
Mile Jo Ghar Mein Sab Bhugtawein.***

Father tried all the ways and even scolded his son and daughter-in-law to teach the value of the money, but in vain. Raidas was not making full use of his parental skills to earn the money. Daughter-in-law would invite Sadhus with great respect and whatever she had, would donate to these Sadhus.

Raghuram called a meeting of his near and dear relatives to discuss this affair of his son and daughter-in-law among them and asked their advice on how could he give a better understanding and teach value of the money to Raidas and his wife? All of them unanimously advised that since Raidas was born with golden spoon in his mouth, and had lots of money around him earned by his father, he did not care and understand the value of the money. He will only understand and realise the importance of wealth, and how hard it was to earn, when he was separated from the family

with no financial support and should be asked to earn his own living. With very heavy heart, for the welfare and future of his son, Raghuram accepted this advice and asked his son and daughter-in-law to leave his house, and earn their own money.

Raidas was very sad on this behaviour of his father and other relatives.

***Nar Hari Pragatasi Na Ho, Pragatsi Na Ho Deen Dayaal.
Jan Mat Hee Tai Ho Bigran, Hon Kuch Bujhat Bahuri
Sayaan.***

***Parivaar Bimukhi Moh Laagi, Kuch Samajh Paratu Nahin
Jaani.***

***O Lord, why do you not appear and console me. All the
family members think I am a spoiled child. I am
completely confused and do not know what to do?***

His childhood friend Atmananda heard about this and came running to him. He offered all the possible help to him. He even asked him to come and live with his family. But Raidas would not accept this. Raidas told him that he would be out-casted by his own Brahmin community if he did so. Then Atmananda helped him to build a small hut in the backyard of the big house of his father, and thus Raidas started living there with his wife and son.

***Bado Bhayo Tab Nyaraa Keeno,
Baante Awe So Baanti Na Deeno.
Rakho Bawaro Ke Pacheware,
Kachu Na Kaho Raidas Bichare.***

***Father ordered Raidas to leave his house, and did not
give him any money. Poor Raidas, without uttering a***

single word, started living in a hut in the backyard of the house.

Raidas continued to earn his living by making and repairing shoes. He would only work to earn enough money to meet the expenses of the family. Rest of the time, he would devote to the chanting of the name of the Lord Ram. He would make at least one pair of the shoes per day to give free to either the needy poor person or a Sadhu.

Raidas continued to live in poverty thus, but never asked any help from his parents or anyone else. Bhagwan Swami Ramanand Ji was watching this very carefully. To test the strength and truthfulness of Raidas, he sent one of his disciples to Raidas one day with 'Parasmani' stone (a stone which turns iron into gold by mere touching) to give it to Raidas. The disciple, disguising as a Sadhu, came to the hut of Raidas. Raidas welcomed him and offered all his possible hospitality. In the morning, when Sadhu was departing, he handed over 'Parasmani' to Raidas saying that this is a precious stone and he was afraid it might be stolen by thieves as he was wondering all over the country. Raidas should keep it in safe custody to be returned to him on returning back from his travel. Raidas took the stone, understood its value, but just put it in one corner of his grass matted roof. After one year, when Swami Ramanand Ji sent his disciple back to observe if Raidas made any use of 'Parasmani', he found Raidas living in the same poverty. He asked Raidas about 'Parasmani' and why he did not make use of this to create wealth? Raidas replied, 'O Sadhu, it is not good to be greedy. Why should I generate more wealth when Lord gives me every day to meet my expenses and run my household satisfactorily? Please take your valuable 'Parasmani' stone. I do not need it.'

Two years had passed now since Raghuram ordered Raidas to leave the house and live separately. These two years had been very difficult to Raghuram and Ghurbinia. Raidas was their most beloved only son. Raghuram always believed that Raidas was not capable of living separately and earn for living for his family. He had been anxiously waiting that Raidas would return back soon and apologise to him. He would embrace his son then, and would teach the value of wealth. It did not happen. Raidas, though living in poverty, was very happy and never cared for the wealth of his father. Ghurbinia could not bear this separation. She became ill and insisted to live with her son Raidas, daughter-in-law Lona and grandson Vijay Das. Raghuram could not object to it, and one day Ghurbinia went to the hut of Raidas to live. Daughter-in-law Lona seeing her mother-in-law Ghurbinia coming to the hut, fell at her feet and welcomed with her whole heart. Ghurbinia now started living with her son Raidas and his family, however, would continue to send food and serve her husband with daughter-in-law Lona in all possible ways. Soon after, Raghuram also realised that this was not the wealth, but family which was important. He came to Raidas in his hut and asked him to come back to the house. Raidas with folded hands requested his father Raghuram to distribute all his wealth to the needy and start living with him in his hut.

Raghuram now fully understood his son Raidas and as requested by him, distributed all his wealth to the poor and needy, and start participating in chanting the name of the Lord Ram and Satsang of Raidas. In a way, he became disciple of his own son. Mother Gurbinia, unfortunately, did not survive for long and proceeded to her heavenly abode in the arms of his son Raidas. The death of his beloved

wife Ghurbinia broke the heart of Raghuram, and he also followed Ghurbinia soon to his heavenly abode.

After the death of the parents, Raidas continued to live in his hut and kept the house of his parent as a guest house for Sadhus. The fame of Raidas was increasing day by day and there was always a great crowd in daily Satsang of Raidas. Not only Dalits (lower caste), but the people from all the castes used to flock to the Satsang gathering of Raidas.

Deeksha from Bhagwan Swami Ramanand

Bhagwan Swami Ramanand was the most popular Saint and Guru of Sanatan Dharma of that era. He was revered as incarnation of Lord Ram. Sant Kabir, Sant Dhanna and other great saintly personalities of that era were his disciples. Raidas always thought in his mind that if he could get blessings of Bhagwan Swami Ramanand and if He be kind enough to accept him as His disciple, his birth would be sanctified. However, he was afraid of that being from a lower caste, Bhagwan Swami Ramanand might not accept him as His disciple. Then, he thought of Sant Kabir. When Bhagwan Swami Ramanand accepted a Muslim Sant Kabir as his disciple, it might be a possibility that He would accept him also as His disciple. Having thought that, one day he approached Sant Kabir. Fame of Raidas as a great devotee of Lord Ram had reached the ears of Sant Kabir by then. Sant Kabir, on learning that Raidas had come to his house, ran towards him and welcomed him with open arms and whole heart. Raidas, respecting Sant Kabir as his older brother and equivalent to his Guru, touched his feet and got his blessings.

***Tab Raidas Bichaaree Baata,
Guru Samaan Kabir Bade Bhraata.***

Raidas thought in his mind that Kabir is like his older brother and equal to Guru.

Raidas then opened his heart to Sant Kabir and his desire to become disciple of Bhagwan Swami Ramanand. Sant Kabir whole heartedly welcomed this idea and they then proceeded to the Ashram of Bhagwan Swami Ramanand.

Seeing holy personality of Bhagwan Swami Ramanand Ji Maharaj, Raidas bowed to the feet of Bhagwan Swami Ramanand Ji Maharaj and paid his obeisance. Sant Kabir then explained the reason of visit of Raidas to Bhagwan Swami Ramanand Ji Maharaj. Bhagwan Swami Ramanand Ji Maharaj knew the past life of Raidas and was protecting him since he was born. He gladly accepted Raidas as His disciple, and pronounced that from that time onwards, Raidas will be referred as Sant (Saint) Raidas.

***Ramananda Mohi Guru Milyo, Payo Brahm Visas.
Ram Nam Ami Ras Piyo, Raidas Hee Bhayo Palas.***

I found Ramanand as my Guru who gave me the knowledge of divinity. By chanting the great name of Lord Ram, I became sanctified.

On hearing that Bhagwan Swami Ramanand had accepted Raidas as His disciple and honoured him with the title of 'Sant', all the Brahmins of Kashi assembled in a meeting, and unanimously objected to this act of Bhagwan Swami Ramanand. According to them, a person born in lower caste should not be accepted by Bhagwan Swami Ramanand as His disciple. They approached Bhagwan Swami Ramanand Ji Maharaj in a group and deplored His decision. Bhagwan Swami Ramanand Ji laughed and spoke thus, 'O Brahmins, all of you claim to be born in pious Brahmin families, but none of you are close to the holiness, wisdom, knowledge and devotion to the Lord as Sant Raidas. If you may wish, I allow you to test it in any way you may like to prove greatness of Sant Raidas.'

Brahmins accepted this challenge and after deliberating on this issue came out with a proposal to test Sant Raidas.

These Brahmins, considering them holy, enchanted an Idol of Lord Ram with divine power. This enchanted Idol with holy Mantras, when thrown in the holy water of Mother Ganga, was expected to float and not drowned as it was supposed to have divine powers. They asked Sant Raidas if he could also enchant similarly an Idol of Lord Ram so that it would not be drowned. Sant Raidas was not prepared to accept such a challenge. Sant Raidas said, 'O learned Brahmins, my Guru Bhagwan Swami Ramanand Ji Maharaj has taught me that the one who loves the Lord from the bottom of his heart, finds Him. Praying Lord, participating and organising a Satsang is not only the task of Brahmins, but anyone who may have true love to the Lord, may do so. True love to the Lord may only generate in the hearts of the devotees at the 'Will of Lord' only. I love my Idol (Saligram) of Lord Ram. All of you similarly love your Idols of the Lord. Please let me pray my Idol (Lord Saligram) and you pray your Idols. We should not put our Lord to such a test.' Then one of the Brahmins said that it had been discussed with Bhagwan Swami Ramanand Ji, and he had given permission to you and all of us to go through this test. On hearing that his Guru had ordered him to go through this test, Sant Raidas agreed. He asked Brahmins to throw their enchanted Idol first in the holy water of Mother Ganga, and if it floats and not drowned, he would accept defeat and never chant the name of the Lord again. He would not also call himself as a disciple of Bhagwan Swami Ramanand. If their Idol was drowned, then only he would throw his Idol (Lord Saligram) in the holy water of Mother Ganga to see if his devotion to the Lord and the blessings of his Guru Bhagwan Swami Ramanand Ji were honoured by the Lord.'

Accordingly, the Brahmins threw their enchanted Idol in the holy water of Mother Ganga. It was drowned as soon as

they threw it in Ganga. Then, Sant Raidas chanting the name of the Lord and meditating on the holy feet of his Guru Swami Ramanand Ji, threw his Idol (Lord Saligram) in the holy water of Mother Ganga. It continued to float. Seeing this miracle, all the Brahmins were ashamed and apologised to Sant Raidas. Sant Raidas was now accepted by them as a saintly person.

***Bapura Sant Raidas Kahai Re.
Gyan Vichari Charan Chit Lave, Hari Ko Sarani Rahe Re.
Paati Toden Pooji Rachaven Taaran Taran Kahe Re.
Moorati Maanhi Basen Parmeshwar,
To Paani Maahin Tare Re.
Jhoonthen Maya, Jag Dahkaya,
To Nitap Dahe Re.***

By chanting the name of the Lord and meditating on the holy feet of the Guru in the heart, one can swim over even the materialistic ocean of this world, not only in Mother Ganga. The Lord Himself was present in the Idol, hence it floated. Having false pretence and deceiving in any way, would not bring any good to you.

After getting Diksha from Bhagwan Swami Ramanand Ji Maharaj, Sant Raidas returned to his home. He continued to pray Almighty and preach his gatherings on the glory of the name of the Lord.

***Janam Jaanti Koon Chodikar, Karnee Jaan Pradhan.
Ihyo Ved Ko Dharm Hai, Kahe Raidas Bakhan.
Brahmin Khatri Baish Sood, Raidas Janam Te Naanhin.
Jo Chahe, Subaran Kau, Paawahin Karman Maahin.
Raidas Janam Ke Kaaran, Hot Na Koi Neech.
Nar Koon Nichi Kari Daari Hai, Oche Karam Kee Keech.***

'Do not give any importance to the caste of a person in which he/ she is born. Always give importance to the deeds (Karm). No one is Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya or Shudra from the birth (The child when born has no caste). One only gets results in his life (sorrow or happiness) according to his deeds. Sant Raidas Says that there is no one lower because of his caste. Only the bad deeds (like a mud) of a person make him bad.'

For A Bliss Heart, Everywhere Is Ganga

It was a beautiful morning of Chaitra month of early 15th century. The Sun was very clearly visible in the blue sky. The wind was blowing with cool breeze and fragrance. Sant Raidas was sitting in front of his hut making a pair of shoes for the son of the Sarpanch (Head of the village) Mr Ram Prakash Singh. The son of the Sarpanch, Master Anant Prakash Singh, was getting married that day. The Sarpanch humbly requested Sant Raidas to kindly make shoes for him so that he might have his blessings when he put on during his marriage ceremony. Sant Raidas promised him to deliver pair of shoes by mid-day. Mr Shanti Prasad Sharma, a Brahmin of the village then approached him with a request to repair his shoes. His shoes were torn to the extent that he could not properly walk. He was on his way to take bath in Holy Mother Ganga. Sant Raidas took damaged shoes from his hands and repaired. Mr Shanti Prasad Sharma gave him a quarter (One fourth of Paisa) as remuneration for the repair of his shoes. Sant Raidas took the quarter from the Pundit, and then returned the same back to him requesting to present this as his offering to Holy Mother Ganga. Mr Shanti Prasad Sharma asked him to walk in person with him to the bank of Mother Ganga, take bath and then offer the coin by himself. Sant Raidas said, 'O pious Brahmin, I have promised to deliver the pair of shoes by mid-day to Sarpanch Mr Ram Prakash Singh for his son Master Anant Prakash Singh, who is going to get married this evening. I would have loved to walk with you to the bank of Mother Ganga, take holy bath and then offer the coin by myself, regrettably, I may not be able to go now. Also, my Guru Bhagwan Swami Ramanand Ji taught me, ***Man Changa to Kathoti Mein Ganga.***'

If there is a happiness in the heart, then Mother Ganga resides everywhere even in the 'Platter'.

'Please do a favour to me, and offer this coin to Holy Mother Ganga on my behalf. When I am free, I will go myself to the Ghat (bank), and apologise to Mother.'

Mr Shanti Prasad Sharma gladly accepted to offer quarter to Holy Mother Ganga on behalf of Sant Raidas.

Mr Shanti Prasad Sharma walked to the Ghat (bank) of Mother Ganga and took bath. By pronouncing 'Har Har Gange', he offered the quarter of Sant Raidas to Mother Ganga. A miracle did happen. Mother Ganga appeared in person and accepted the quarter by Herself. She gave a golden bejewelled bangle to Brahmin, asking him to give this to Sant Raidas as 'Return Gift'. Mr Shanti Prasad Sharma was stunned. He bowed to Mother and took the bangle. As soon as he came out of the holy water of Mother Ganga, he was encompassed with greed. He thought that by selling this bejewelled gold bangle, he might make enough money to pass his remaining life with luxury. Thinking this, he went to the goldsmith of the village and sold this bangle to him. This bejewelled gold bangle was very attractive, beautiful and emanating light everywhere. The goldsmith thought that only Raja Virbhan Singh, Mansabdar of the State (a Royal position appointed by the Sultan) might appreciate its beauty and purchase this bangle from me at the right price. So, he approached Raja Virbhan Singh. Raja Virbhan Singh was astonished to see this divine bejewelled gold bangle. He had never seen such a beautiful ornament in his life. He immediately purchased this at a high price, and gifted this to her queen. Seeing such a beautiful, divine jewel, queen was not satisfied with one bangle only. She wanted another similar bangle so that

she could put in both of her wrists. Raja Virbhan Singh ordered his soldiers to bring goldsmith to his court immediately. When goldsmith appeared in the court with folded hands, Raja ordered him to prepare another bangle of similar beauty and divinity. Goldsmith fell at the feet of Raja Virbhan Singh and humbly said, 'O Lord, I have no such skills to make such an attractive, beautiful and divine bangle emanating light. I purchased it from a Brahmin Mr Shanti Prasad Sharma. I will ask him to get another bangle from the same source.'

The goldsmith came to Mr Shanti Prasad Sharma and told him the decree of Raja to either bring another similar bangle or face prosecution. The poor Shanti Prasad Sharma, trembling with fear and with folded hands, appeared in the court of the Raja and told him the whole story. Only Sant Raidas could organise such another divine bangle by a request to Mother Ganga.

The Raja, with Mr Shanti Prasad Sharma, then went to the hut of Sant Raidas. Sant Raidas gave him an appropriate honour by bowing to the Raja and humbly asked if he could do anything for him. Raja asked him to request Mother Ganga to give similar divine bangle as gifted by her to him before. Sant Raidas now meditated on Mother Ganga and came to know all the truth. Sant said, 'O Rajan, why to give trouble to great Mother for such a small matter? Please sit down.' Then he put his hand in his Kathauti (Platter), and lo behold, here was another similar bangle in his hands. Raja wanted to pay him the price of this bangle. Sant Raidas replied, 'O Rajan, Mother Ganga did not charge me anything towards the cost of Her gift. How can I charge you any cost then?' Pleased Raja, then returned to his palace and gifted another bangle to his queen. This incident left a great impression in the mind of Raja Virbhan Singh. From

this time onwards, he revered Sant Raidas as holy person and equal to his Guru.

This incident made Sant Raidas very respected and revered saint in the State of Kashi. Sant Kabir said,

***Sadhun Mein Raidas Sant Hei, Supach Rishi So Maniya.
Hindu Turk Doi Deen Bane Hein, Kuch Naheen
Pahachaniyaa.***

***Among the holy persons, Raidas is the great saint.
Consider him like Rishi (Sage). Whether you are a Hindu
or a Muslim, if you do not understand this, you are an
unfortunate person.***

Guru of Queen Jhali and Mirabai of Chittor

Once the queen Jhali, wife of the great Maharaja Rana Sanga of Chittor (King of Chittor State of Rajasthan), came on a holy pilgrimage to Kashi. She met Bhagwan Swami Ramanand Ji who was very old by this time. She wanted to take Brahm-Gyan (divine knowledge) from Bhagwan Swami Ramanand Ji Maharaj. Swami Ji asked her to go to His disciples, Sant Kabir and Sant Raidas, to fulfil her desire. She went to Sant Kabir and told him the instructions of Bhagwan Swami Ramanand Ji Maharaj. Respecting and bowing to the orders of his Guru Bhagwan Swami Ji, Sant Kabir Ji was prepared to give her Brahm-Gyan, but asked her to wait for some time as he was very busy those days in his social work. Unfortunately, queen Jhali had very limited time as she had to return soon to her kingdom Chittor. Sant Kabir then asked her to go to Sant Raidas, and instructed one of his disciples to lead her to the Sant Raidas. As instructed by Sant Kabir, queen Jhali then went to the hut of Sant Raidas with a disciple of Sant Kabir. When she saw Sant Raidas, she was so enchanted with the divine personality of Sant Raidas that she bowed to him with great reverence. This was very unusual for a great Kshatriya queen like queen Jhali having a high status among Kshatriya queens in India those days. She was not an ordinary queen of any small State. She was the queen Jhali, wife of the great Rana Sanga of Chittor. Sant Raidas was giving a discourse to his followers at the time when queen Jhali arrived in his native village. She listened the discourse of Sant Raidas. She was so engrossed in devotion of Sant Raidas that she decided to stay in the village for few days, and listen discourse of Sant Raidas every day. She was so much impressed with the wisdom and devotion of Sant Raidas that she approached Sant Raidas to accept her as his disciple. Sant Raidas obliged

her by accepting her as his disciple, and gave her Brahm-Gyan (divine knowledge). After being satisfied, happy and fulfilling her desire to attain spiritualism, she prepared to leave to her kingdom. She invited Sant Raidas to visit her kingdom, the State of Chittor.

This incident annoyed Brahmins of Kashi once again.

***Basat Chittor Maanjh Rani Ek Jhali Naam,
Naam Bin Kaan Khali Aani Shishya Bhayee Hai.
Sang Hetu Vipru Suni Chipra Tanu Aag Laagi,
Bhagee Mati Nrap Bheer Sab Aagein Gayee Hai.***

Hearing that queen Jhali of Chittor had accepted Sant Raidas as her Guru, the Brahmins of Kashi became highly jealous. They went in group to the king of Kashi and lodged complaint against Sant Raidas.

The Pundits of Kashi became highly jealous of Sant Raidas. They were always looking for an opportunity to degrade him. They could not digest that a person of lower caste (Chamar) such as Raidas could give Brahm-Gyan to the highly respected Kshatriya queen Jhali. The Pundits believed that this was their birth right only to give such divine knowledge to the Royal families. They approached Raja Virbhan Singh, and lodged complaint against Sant Raidas. The Pundits gave an argument that in Sanatan Dharma, it was clearly mentioned that only holy and revered Brahmins could become Guru and gave divine knowledge to their followers including Royals. Raidas was neither holy nor revered as he belonged to a Shudra caste. He is polluting our Sanatan Dharma and should be punished.

***Apoojyaah Yantra Poojyant Pajya Poojavyatikramaat.
Tryastratra Pravarttante Durbhiksham Maranam
Bhayam.***

Raja Virbhan Singh had already seen the miracle powers of Sant Raidas, and considered him as the most holy and revered person. He did not want to entertain such an absurd thought of Pundits to punish great saint like Sant Raidas. However, the Pundits, supported by other high caste persons of his State, were adamant to give punishment to Sant Raidas. So, he came out with an idea. He said that let the Pundits had discussions on religious scripture (Shastraarth) with Sant Raidas. If the Pundits won this Shastraarth, Sant Raidas would be punished as per their wishes. But, if Sant Raidas won the Shastraarth, then they should respect him, treat him like a great holy saint, and by taking him on their shoulders should roam in the streets of Kashi accepting his superiority in spiritual knowledge. Pundits, confident of their knowledge, accepted this challenge.

Raja Virbhan Singh invited Sant Raidas and Pundits to this Shastraarth (Religious Discussions) in his Darbar. The discussions continued for a week. It appeared many times that Sant Raidas had a lead, but the Pundits did not embrace defeat. There appeared to be no end to this discussion. Raja Virbhan Singh then suggested another idea to finish the Shastraarth. He ordered his Pujari (priest) to bring his 'home shrine', with an idol of Lord Vishnu to the Darbar. He then told both Sant Raidas and Pundits to call Lord Vishnu to their laps from shrine. Whomsoever would be able to attract Lord Vishnu to their respective laps, would be declared winner. Both Pundits and Sant Raidas agreed to this suggestion.

***Vaise He Sinhasan Pai Aaiyee Kai Biraajein Prabhu,
Padhe Ved Vaanee Pai Aaye Na Yeh Nai Hai.
Patit Paawan Keejiye Pragat Aaj,
Gaayee Pad God Aayee Baithe Bhakt Layee Hai.***

The one who could attract the Lord Vishnu sitting now in the middle of the shrine to his laps would be the winner of the competition. Pundits chanted Mantras from Vedas and Puranas, but Lord did not move. When Sant Raidas called Him with his pure heart, the Lord moved to his laps.

Pundits started chanting holy hymns of Vedas and other scriptures to please Lords Vishnu, and praying Him to leave the shrine and come to their laps, but in vain. After the whole day passed and Lord Vishnu did not leave shrine, they accepted defeat. Now Sant Raidas started praying Lord Vishnu with his devotional songs.

***Eisee Laaj (Laal) Tum Bin Kaun Kare.
Ghareeb Niwaz Gusaiyaan Mere Mathe Chatar Dhare.
Jaaki Choti Jagat Kau Laagun Taa Par Tumheen Dhare.
Neechahun Oonch Kare Mera Gobind Kahu Te Na Dare.
Namdev Kabir Tilochan Sadhana Senu Tare.
Kahe Raidas Sunahu Re Santahu Hari Jeeute Samay Sare.***

‘O Lord, who can be kinder than You. You are the Lord of poor persons. Please decorate my head with crown of win. For those who are defenceless, You defend them. O my Govind, You are fearless and capable of turning a mole into mountain. Saints like Namdev, Kabir and Tilochan have got Your blessings through their devotion. Raidas says that O saints, by blessings of the Lord, anything is possible.’

Reciting these couplets, Sant Raidas meditated on the Lord Vishnu and a miracle did happen. The Idol of Lord Vishnu started moving from the shrine and sat on the laps of Sant Raidas.

Sant Raidas was now declared a winner by Raja Virbhan Singh. Raja himself came to Sant Raidas, bowed reverentially and took blessings from the Sant by touching his holy feet. The Pundits then had to take Sant Raidas on their shoulders and roam around in the streets of Kashi, proclaiming Jai (Victory) of Sant Raidas, and accepting him as great holy, wise and great devotee of the Lord.

As said above, queen Jhali invited Sant Raidas to Chittor. Sant Raidas was not willing to go to Chittor leaving his home village. It was one fine morning when Sant Raidas had a visitor none other than Sant Kabir to his house. As soon as he heard the voice of Sant Kabir calling him from the street, Sant Raidas ran barefoot and bowed reverentially to Sant Kabir. Sant Kabir was not only his Guru Bhai, but he respected him like his older brother. Sant Raidas invited Sant Kabir to his house with great respect. He was worshipped by him and seated on an elevated platform, usually reserved for the picture of Bhagwan Swami Ramanand Ji Maharaj, his Guru. After having light refreshment of fruits and milk, Sant Kabir blessed Sant Raidas and requested him to go to Chittor, and bless the Royal family there.

Sant Raidas accepted the orders of Sant Kabir and decided to go to Chittor with his wife Lona and son Vijay Das.

***Agyaa le Kabir Ki, Puni Hari Agyaa Deen.
Raman Mato Chittor Ko, Jan Raidas Tab Keen.***

On receiving orders from Sant Kabir, and taking permission from the Lord, Sant Raidas made up his mind to go to Chittor.

Though it was Spring season of the early 16th century, but that day had a very cold morning. Queen Jhali was sitting in her room in the palace in front of fire to warm herself. A maid came running informing her that a beggar like person with his wife and a son was standing in front of the palace and asking for queen Jhali. He and his small family did not have enough clothes and were shivering due to cold. He told us that his name was Raidas. As soon as queen Jhali heard the name Raidas, she ran towards the gate of the palace in the same sleeping gown as she wore at that time. She touched the feet of her Guru, and was stunned to see the impoverished condition of the Guru and his family. She ordered new warm clothes immediately to be brought to them, and took them to the guest house meant especially for special guests of the king. She cried a lot on thinking how much trouble his Guru and the family had gone through just to honour her invitation. Sant Raidas consoled her and requested not to lament. He had to come here as ordered by his Guru Bhai Sant Kabir and the Lord.

It had been two days now since Sant Raidas and his family arrived in Chittor from Kashi, and were housed as honourable guests in the palace of the king of Chittor. Sant Raidas was singing today his couplets in melodious voice.

***Aayo Aayo Hon Devahidev Tum Saran Aayo,
Sakal Sukh Ke Mool, Jaakee Naheen Sam Tool.
So Charan Mool Paayo.
Liyo Bibidh Joni Vaas Jam Ki Agam Tras,
Tumhare Bhajan Bin Bhramit Phiryo.
Maya Moh Kaam Vishay, Lampat Nikaam Yeh,***

***Ati Dustar Door Taryo.
Tumhare Naam Visaas Chaandiye Aan Aas,
Sansaari Dharam Mero Man Na Dheeje.
Raidas Daas Ki Sevaa Maanahu Dev,
Patit Paawan Naam Aaj Pragat Keeje.***

O Lord of all Gods and Goddesses, I seek Your shelter. O Lord, You are the one who gives happiness. No one is equal to You. I fall at Your Holy Feet. I have taken birth in various forms of lives (Yonies) in my previous births, and have now realised that without your devotion, we live in a world of delusion. Because I have been involved in sins such as attraction to the materialistic things etc, it has been difficult for me to get salvation. Without chanting Your Holy Name, the attraction towards materialistic things cannot be destroyed. O Lord, accept the humble service of this slave Raidas, and by showing mercy on me, prove that You are the one who purifies the sinner (Patit Paawan).

Mirabai, daughter-in-law of queen Jhali, heard this melodious prayer (Bhajan) and was attracted towards the singer. She enquired who this great saint was singing such a devotional Bhajan. She came to know that he was Sant Raidas, the Guru of her mother-in-law queen Jhali. She ran to her mother-in-law and begged her to introduce her to her Guru Sant Raidas.

Mirabai was married to the 'Crown Prince of Chittor Kunwar Bhoj Raj'. She was thus daughter-in-law of the great Maharana Sanga of Chittor. Mirabai was a great devotee of Lord Krishna. She had great influence of her grandfather from her childhood who was a great devotee of Lord Krishna. Though married to Crown Prince Bhoj Raj, she

continued to spend most of her time in devotion of Lord Krishna even after her marriage.

Unfortunately, Kunwar Bhoj Raj was seriously wounded in a war with the Sultan (Emperor) of Delhi in 1516, and after long illness died in 1521. Kunwar Bhoj Raj was very fond of Mirabai, and always encouraged her devotion to Lord Krishna. Though Mirabai lost all her world after the death of her husband, but was protected by her father-in-law, the great king Rana Sanga of Chittor and mother-in-law queen Jhali. After the death of the king Rana Sanga in 1527 in battle of Khanwa, Vikramjit Singh became the king of Chittor. The new King disliked Mirabai as he thought that she was a blot on the Royalty of Chittor. However, since she was protected by the mother queen Jhali, there was nothing much he could had done.

The death of Bhoj Raj and now the king Rana Sanga made both the queen Jhali and Mirabai very sad. The arrival of Guru Raidas at that difficult time was like a light in end of the tunnel from the darkness for queen Jhali.

Queen Jhali introduced Sant Raidas to Mirabai. Mirabai was engrossed in divine personality of Sant Raidas and like queen Jhali, begged him to accept her as his disciple. Sant Raidas accepted her request too.

***Guru Milya Raidas Ji Dini Gyan Ki Gutki.
Chot Lagi Nijnam Hari Ki Mharey Hivrey Khatki.***

Mirabai said, 'I found Sant Raidas as my Guru who gave me knowledge of spiritualism. By his words, I was engrossed in the worship of Lord which was liked by my heart.'

After Mirabai also became disciple of Sant Raidas, both queen Jhali and Mirabai organized a big feast in honor of Sant Raidas, and invited all the respected personalities of the State of Chittor including all the Brahmins. When Brahmins came to know that queen Jhali and Mirabai were disciples of a lower caste person Sant Raidas, they declined to take part in the feast. This was a very difficult situation for both, queen Jhali and Mirabai. They approached Sant Raidas. Sant Raidas humbly said, 'O sisters, why do you worry about such a small matter. I will be happy to accept your feast with my family in my quarters here. Please tell Brahmins and all respected persons of your State whomsoever are invited by both of you, not to worry, and participate in your feast whole heartedly and bless both of you'.

The feast was organized as scheduled. When Brahmins sat for their meals, they saw hundreds of Sant Raidas, each sitting in between two Brahmins. The Brahmins were stunned and realized that Sant Raidas was not an ordinary person, but a divine personality. Leaving their meals, they all approached Sant Raidas in the guest house with folded hands and asked for his forgiveness. Of course, Sant Raidas forgave them. Then, Sant Raidas cut open his chest in front of all the Brahmins and showed them golden sacred thread (Yagyopavit) inside his chest. Brahmins bowed to him reverentially and requested him to join meal with them.

***Gai Ghar Jhali Puni Boli Ke Pathayo Aho,
Jaise Pratipali Ab Taise Pratipaliye.
Aaphu Padhare Un Bahudhan Patware,
Bipra Suni Paanw Dhare, Seedho De Nivariye.
Dwe Dwe Madhi Ek Yo Raidas Ko Nihariye.
Dekhi Bhayee Aanken Deen Bhankhe Sikh Laakhe Bhaye.
Swarn Ko Janaiu Kadho, Twacha Keeni Niyariye.***

Queen Jhali and Mirabai prayed Sant Raidas and requested him to always look after them. After praying (and discussing to organize a grand feast in honor of Sant Raidas), they went to their

palaces respectively. A grand feast was organized. When Brahmins learnt that Sant Raidas was of lower caste, they objected to this feast and declined to eat. However, they saw hundreds of Raidas there, each sitting in between them. Seeing this miracle, they were stunned and asked forgiveness of Sant Raidas. Then, Sant Raidas removed the skin of his chest (cut open his chest) and showed them golden sacred thread inside his chest.

Meerabai became a truthful devotee of Sant Raidas. She had unshakeable faith in her Guru Sant Raidas.

Sant Raidas lived in Chittor for about a month, and then left to his home village Mandur near Kashi. Unfortunately, soon after, queen Jhali also died. After the death of her mother-in-law queen Jhali, the troubles started for Mirabai.

King Vikramjit, the new king of the Chittor State who was her brother-in-law, got her thrown in Gambhiri river at mid-night. She prayed and meditated on her Guru to save her. She saw her Guru Sant Raidas in the turmoil of waves. The waves comfortably sprang her out to the bank of river. This incident confirmed the greatness of Sant Raidas in mind of Meerabai.

On another day in her intuitional devotional state of meditation, Meerabai was talking and laughing with spiritual presence of Guru Sant Raidas in her room. King Vikramjit listened these talks of Mirabai. He thought that she was talking and laughing with some outsider in her room. Out of wrath, he unsheathed his sword to kill her. He knocked at the door and asked her angrily to open the door. Mirabai opened the door. There was no one in the room. The room was filled with dazzling light and Meerabai was absorbed in meditation. This shocked him. His conscience cursed him. He fainted. After some time, he gained consciousness and feeling helpless, he came out of the room.

Meera Bai faced yet another crucial test. A cushioned bed was prepared. Piercing sharp nails were studded on it. Meerabai was asked to sit on it as it was purported to be created for her comfortable sleep. She did as directed. By the virtue of protection of Guru Sant Raidas, the piercing nails became flowers for Mirabai. She had sound sleep on the bed.

King Vikramjit was still haunted by the phobia of killing Meerabai. He chalked out another strategy to kill Meerabai in consultation with his ministers. She was to be offered milk mixed with poison by posing it as nectar sent to her by Guru Sant Raidas. Udabai, the sister of king Vikramjit, secretly told Meerabai that poison mixed milk was going to be offered to her posing as nectar sent to her by Guru Sant Raidas, but milk was actually poisonous and designed to kill her. She should not drink it. Meerabai replied that if it was said to have been sent by Guru Sant Raidas, she would drink it as nectar. As planned, the milk mixed with poison was offered to Meerabai through Pandit Daya Ram, stating that it was nectar sent by Guru Sant Raidas and she should drink it. In meditation, Guru Sant Raidas told her that although it was poison-mixed-milk, yet she should unhesitatingly drink it as nectar. Meerabai chanted the holy name of Guru Sant Raidas and Lord Krishna devotionally, and danced carrying the pot containing poisonous milk in her hands. It actually became nectar. She drank it and became blissful. She sang in ecstasy.

***Vish Ko Pyala Rana Ji Melio Dyo, Mertani Ne Paye
Kar Charanamit Pee Gayee Re, Gun Gobind Ra Aye.***

Rana Ji sent poisonous milk of pot for her to drink. She drank considering this as nectar by meditating on Guru and Govind.

King Vikramjit continued to think of killing Meerabai. He thought out of another plan. A poisonous snake was to be sent to Meera Bai posing as garland sent by Guru Sant Raidas for her. The snake was supposed to sting her when the pot containing snake was to be

opened. The pot carrying poisonous cobra snake was sent to Meerabai and told that it was a garland sent by Guru Sant Raidas for her. She should wear it. She meditated on Guru Sant Raidas and Lord Krishna. By spiritual power of Guru Sant Raidas, the snake became a beautiful garland. She removed lid of the pot. There was a beautiful garland inside the pot. She picked it up and wore it. She was moved and sang spontaneously.

***Saanp Pitaro Rana Ji Bhejyo, Dyo Mertani Gal Daar
Hans Hans Meera Kanth Lagayo, Yo To Mhan Re Nausar Haar***

***Rana Ji sent a pot with poisonous snake to kill her. She wore it
as blessings of Guru, and it turned into necklace of flowers.***

Meera Bai thanked Guru Sant Raidas. She was saved each time by her Guru Sant Raidas and Lord Krishna.

King Vikramjit became helpless soon. He yielded to Meerabai and begged apology for past attempts to kill her. She forgave him. King Vikramjit and members of his family developed deep regard for Guru Sant Raidas. Mirabai wrote and sang profuse devotional poetry in praise of Guru Raidas.

Daily Satsang

After returning from Chittor to his home village Mandur (near Varanasi), Sant Raidas was engrossed in the devotion to Lord Ram, and used to conduct regular discourses (Satsang) in an open field close to his house. He was highly respected Sant (Saint). His fame had spread all over India by now. The crowd in thousands used to flock in his daily Satsang. It was usual practice for him to distribute holy water from his Kathauti (Platter) as Prasadam which devotees used to drink. This holy water from his Kathauti had miraculous power to cure sickness and other ailments. The hearts of those drinking this holy water were purified and they developed devotion to the Lord. This also showed path to solve their materialistic problems.

Once a rich businessman (Seth) happened to be present in this Satsang. After the Satsang was over, as usual, Sant Raidas distributed holy water to all the devotees present in the Satsang from his Kathauti (Platter) as Prasadam. This businessman also got holy water from Sant Raidas. Considering Sant Raidas a person of lower caste and untouchable (Achoot), rather than drinking holy water, he sprinkled it all over his clothes. When he reached home, he discarded his clothes considering being desecrated by the water from an untouchable person. He donated these clothes to one of his sweepers (untouchable). The sweeper was very happy to receive new clothes from his employer businessman and immediately put on him. As soon as he put these clothes on him, his whole body was filled with a smell of great fragrance of the heavenly flowers. At the same time, a disease like leprosy developed in the fingers of the businessman. The businessman then realized this to be the result of insulting holy water from the Sant. He ran to Sant Raidas to his hut and fell at his feet. Sant Raidas was a very kind person. He forgave him and again sprinkled holy water from his Kathauti. The businessman was cured by the holy water of Kathauti. He accepted Sant Raidas as his revered Guru.

SANT RAIDAS – A SHORT STORY

Sant Raidas had great love towards animals too. He used to go the forest near Varanasi and meditate on Lord there in isolation. A lot of species of animals such as deer were inhabited in the Jungle. Once when he was meditating on the Lord sitting on a stone in this Jungle, he realized the presence of a hunter laying net to catch a deer. A female deer was entrapped. She was caught by the hunter and he was about to kill her. Sant Raidas, through his divine eyes, saw that deer was in the jungle to collect food for her small hungry calves. He approached hunter and requested him to let her go to feed her hungry calves. He assured the hunter that she would be back after feeding the hungry calves, and then he could kill her. The hunter would not let her go. However, he agreed to free it against a surety. Sant Raidas offered to stand surety for her. In case she did not return back, Sant Raidas would pay the price equivalent to the expected earnings of the hunter from this deer.

The hunter then released the deer. Deer went to her calves and fed them. She then told her calves the whole tale of having been caught by the hunter and freed only for a short while on the surety of a Sant. The calves said, "O mother, we do not want to live without you. We would also accompany you to be killed by the hunter."

Deer and her calves thus returned back to the Sant where the hunter was also waiting. The hunter was astonished to see the truthfulness of the deer. He realized that this Sant was not an ordinary human being but a great divine person. He fell at the feet of the Sant. He repented for past killings and took a vow not to kill any animal in future. The deer and her calves were freed. The hunter became a disciple of Sant Raidas.

Even though Sant Raidas was very humble, respected by the masses, still there were few jealous Brahmins who continued to hate him and explore every opportunity to degrade or even kill him. They approached the Sultan of Jaunpur and complained against him. The Sultan was very cruel towards Hindus in general, Hindu religious

leaders, culture and traditions. He was converting forcibly large number of Hindus to Islam. He found this as a good opportunity to defame Hindu religion and convince people of his State to get converted into Islam, and not to be deceived by religious leaders of Sanatan Dharma such as Sant Raidas who was a hypocrite not only in his eyes but also in the eyes of so called Hindu religious Brahmin leaders. The Sultan ordered his soldiers to imprison Sant Raidas and put him in prison. On the orders of the Sultan, Sant Raidas was imprisoned and put in the jail. Sant Raidas, after arriving in the jail, went into meditation. It so happened then that the locks of the jail broke away automatically. The soldiers were astonished to see all this. After sometime, they noticed that Sant Raidas was moving freely outside the jail in spite of strict supervision by the soldiers. This was brought to the notice of the Sultan. The Sultan realized the greatness of Sant Raidas and set him free from prison. He also apologized to him.

That night, when Sultan was sleeping in his room in the palace, he saw a strange dream. He found himself surrounded by his enemies who had imprisoned him and were going to kill him. He saw then that Sant Raidas appeared on the scene and rescued him. The Sultan was highly impressed with the spiritual powers of Sant Raidas and never interfered in the affairs of Sant Raidas thereafter.

Sant Raidas's devotion to Lord Ram was increasing day by day.

Din Din Hirad Hari Viswasu.

Din Din Bado Bhayo Raidasu.

As the days passed, the devotion of Sant Raidas to God was increasing many folds.

He was praying Lord Ram day and night to have His Darshan (To see Lord Ram in person with his own eyes). Sant Kabir described this situation of Sant Raidas very well. He lost his sleep. He had no interest in eating food. He could not bear separation from Lord Ram.

***Nindiyaa Na Aaye, Anna Na Bhave.
Baar Baar Raidas Viraha Sataaye.***

Raidas was not able to sleep. He lost all interest in food. He was burning in fire of separation from Lord.

Sant Raidas was now becoming completely detached from the world. He was becoming God conscious. He used to say that he was not a literate person and had no spiritual wealth other than knowing the name of Lord Ram which had been given to him by his Guru Bhagwan Swami Ramanand Ji. He had full faith in the words of his Guru that Lord Ram would embrace him one day and relieve him of his anxiety of separation (Virah) from him.

***Ram Nam Sachha Hai, Aur Sabhi Jhoonthaa Hai.
Ho Banjaro Ram Ko, Sahaj Karo Vyaapaar,
Ram Naam Dhan Laaghiyaa, Ton Vish Laadyo Sansaar.***

The name of the Lord Ram is the only truth, anything else is untrue. Let us be the trader of the name of the Lord Ram. If one could acquire the wealth of the name of the Lord Ram, he could easily survive in the world which is full of poison.

He remained so much engrossed in Lord Ram, that he had no time to do any work for living. His financial condition continued to deteriorate. One of his disciples, a rich businessman, once donated him several gold coins. Sant Raidas did not keep gold coins with him nor he did use these gold coins for his living. He donated these gold coins to build a Lord Ram temple in the village.

As his devotion to Lord increased, Sant Raidas was coming closer to the truth and understanding the teachings of his Guru Bhagwan Swami Ramanand Ji. He was spreading the message of his Guru on social reforms. He always remained in a mood of serendipity, and only spoke truth.

***Raidas Baaman Mat Poojiye, Jo Hoye Gunheen.
Poojahi Charan Chaandaal Ke, Jo Hoye Gun Parveen.***

Sant Raidas says that do not worship a Brahmin if he is a worthless person (A Brahmin who has not realized Brahm-Gyan is a worthless person). It is better to worship the feet of a lower caste person, if he is a person of wisdom.

On the footsteps of his Guru Bhagwan Swami Ramanand Ji, Sant Raidas was also against any rituals to obtain the grace of the God. He used to say that chanting the name of the Lord Ram was enough to get His grace. The God is within yourself. You do not need to go to any pilgrimage or temple or any such holy places to get love of the God. If you call Lord Ram with love and devotion in your heart, He will appear.

***Jaa Kaaj Mein Dorayo, Phirato So Ab Ghat Mein Aay.
Kahi Raidas Dekho Man Maanhi.***

Sant Raidas says that I was trying to look for God everywhere, but found Him in my heart.

Sant Raidas kept on swimming in the river of nectar of love with the God. He was intoxicated with the wine of devotion to Lord Ram, and in this state of toxication of love, he was ready to sacrifice even his head to God.

***Dehu Kalali Ek Pyala, Eisa Awadhu Hai Matwala.
Kahai Kalali Pyala Deyun, Peewan Haare Kaa Sar Leyun.***

O Lord, give me a cup of love in the form of wine. I want to be immersed in your love so much by drinking this wine of love that in that toxication, ready to sacrifice my head to You.

Sant Raidas achieved the highest state of bliss. He would remain unconscious for days in his blissful state. Someone asked Sant Raidas to describe this state of bliss. Sant Raidas said that as a dumb person could not describe the taste of jaggery, similarly I could not describe this blissful pleasure. One had to realize by himself to get the pleasure of this bliss.

Goonge Kaa Gur Kahaa Bakhane.

Sant Raidas achieved completeness. He was one with the God. He commenced preaching of 'Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam' All universe is a family. We all are part of the one God. We all are brothers and sisters. We should all live in harmony.

Krishna Karim, Ram Hari Raghav Jab Lag Ek Na Pesha. Ved Kateb Quran Puraanan, Sahaj Ek Nahi n Vesha.

If you do not consider Krishna, Karim, Ram, Raghav, Hari, one and the same, it is not easy to understand Ved, Puraan, Quran etc (Religious books).

Meeting with Guru Nanak Dev

In late fifteenth century, Guru Nanak Dev was on a pilgrimage to Kashi. He went to see Bhagwan Swami Ramanand Ji in Kashi. Bhagwan Swami Ramanand asked him to meet his disciples Sant Kabir and Sant Raidas too. Thus, Guru Nanak Dev met Sant Raidas in late 15th century.

Guru Nanak Dev was very impressed by the teachings of Sant Raidas.

Later, Guru Arjun Dev Ji collected 41 holy hymns (Bani) of Sant Raidas and incorporated them into Shri Guru Granth Sahib.

Some of the hymns of Sant Raidas incorporated into Shri Guru Granth Sahib are described below.

***Ikoa'nkār saṭgur parsād.
One universal creator God.***

***Kaṭ jāīai re ḡhar lāgo rang.
Where should I go? My home is filled with bliss.***

***Merā chit na chalai man bhaio pang rahāo.
My consciousness does not go out wandering. My mind has become crippled.***

***Ēk divas man bhāi umang.
One day, a desire welled up in my mind.***

***Ḡhas chandan choā baho sugandh.
I ground up sandalwood, along with several fragrant oils.***

***Pūjan chālī barahm thāe.
I went to God's place, and worshipped Him there.***

*So barahm baṭāio gur man hī māhi.
That God showed me the Guru, within my own mind.*

*Jahā jāīai ṭah jal pakḥān.
Wherever I go, I find water and stones.*

*Tū pūr rahio hai sabḥ samān.
You are totally pervading and permeating in all.*

*Beḍ purān sabḥ dekhē joe.
I have searched through all the Vedas and the Puraanas.*

*Ūhā'n ṭao jāīai jao īhā'n na hoe.
I would go there, only if the Lord were not here.*

*Saṭgur mai balihārī ṭor.
I am a sacrifice to You, O my True Guru.*

*Jin sakal bikal bharam kāte mor.
You have cut through all my confusion and doubt.*

*Rāmānand suāmī ramaṭ barahm.
Raamaanand's Lord and Master is the All-pervading Lord God.*

*Gur kā sabaḍ kātai kot karam.
The Word of the Guru's Shabad eradicates the karma of millions
of past actions.*

Mahasamadhi (Final Abode)

Sant Raidas lived a long life of 137 years (some says 120 or 126 years). It was mid-16th century when he took his Mahasamadhi.

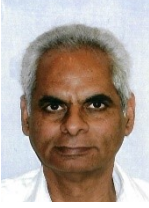
On one day during mid-16th century, Sant Raidas told his wife Lona early in the day to get ready to go to Vaikuntha (the Divine Abode).

Ab Mein Haro Re Hari..

***Halan Chalan Te Deh Thakit, Bhai Lokan Bed Badayee.
Thakit Bhayo Nachan Aur Gavaan Te, Thaaki Pooja Sevaa.***

O Lord, I am now tired. I get easily tired by roaming around. I can no longer do your prayer, nor sing and dance in Your glory, O Lord.

He was engrossed in chanting the name of the Lord. By that time, this news spread in and around Kashi, and all people had gathered to say good bye to their Guru. It is described that a large vehicle appeared from the sky and Lord Ram emerged from that vehicle. Then Sant Raidas and his wife Lona embarked into the divine vehicle. Having led an intensely spiritual life, leaving a great legacy of sweet hymns, Sant Raidas and his wife Lona ascended to Heaven with their bodies. All the devotees stayed for three days on the banks of the Ganga river, singing kirtans and doing fasting, praying to Sant Raidas to give them a token of his presence wherever he was. On the third day, Sant Raidas's paten fell down from the sky and the devotees sang in joy and the sound of the kirtan of Lord Ram.



Dr. Yatendra Sharma, the author of this book, was born in a Sanatan Dharma Hindu family. Following his family traditions, he developed an interest in reading, listening, and narrating religious scriptures since his childhood. He learnt Sanskrit in his childhood from his grandfather Shri Bhagwan Das Ji and Shri Saligram Sharma Agnihotri Ji, the great scholar of Sanskrit and retired Principal of Naravar Sanskrit Mahavidyalay. He completed his Doctorate in Chemical Technology from the Technical University of Graz, Austria, and now serving the mining and mineral industry of Western Australia for more than three decades.

In 2016, with the help of some like-minded friends, he founded a religious organisation 'Shri Ram Katha Sansthan Perth', based on the teachings of Bhagwan Swami Ramananad Ji Maharaj, and following the traditions of 'Shri Ramanand Sampraday'. 'Shri Ram Katha Sansthan Perth' is continually publishing books and booklets on the life stories of the great Sanatan Dharma Saints, Mothers, patriotic kings, etc, to create awareness about the Sanatan Dharma culture to the followers of Sanatan Dharma.