

THE ARDAAS, IMPORTANCE IN SIKHISM

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INTRODUCTION

Ardaas is a part of almost every religion. Ardaas means to make a request, to express one's feelings to one's Lord God. The forms of Ardaas found in Sri Guru Granth Sahib mean to pray, to beg, to love. Ardaas has a very high place in Sikhism. A Sikh is commanded to take refuge in the Eternal God in times of trouble, suffering or need. The entire history of Sikhism is embodied in Ardaas. Ardaas is a part of the rituals of Gurdwaras. Ardaas is performed by Sikhs in Gurdwaras, religious programs, happiness and sadness. After Ardaas, the Guru's Hukamnama is also taken. In the Rahitnamas, there is an order for Sikhs to begin their work with Ardaas everywhere. Ardaas is an integral part of the life of Sikhs. A Sikh takes refuge in Ardaas while going on a journey, entering a new house, starting a business, and even eating food. In gratitude for the birth of a child, at the time of marriage, on the death of someone, that is, in every part of life, the Sikhs take refuge in Ardaas. A Sikh learns the first line or line of Ardaas from his pilgrimage site, i.e. Gurdwara Sahib. In Gurdwara Sahib, the Sikhs are taught how to pray Ardaas. In the Sangat, a Sikh stands in front of Sri Guru Granth Sahib and prays on behalf of the entire Sangat. The entire Sangat stands silently behind him and pays attention to this Ardaas. Then the Sikh praying says in a loud voice, "Dhyān dhar ke bolo ji Waheguru" Then the entire Sangat says in a loud voice together, "Waheguru" The pronunciation of the word is heard and the Ardaas is completed.

TRADITION AND DEVELOPMENT

The custom of Ardaas seems to have started from the time of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Once when Guru Nanak Dev Ji was ready to go from Talwandi Sabo to Sultanpur, Rai Bular invited him to his house for food. When Guru Ji was about to leave, Rai Bular Ji asked, "Sri Nanak Ji, you are going to Sultanpur. I don't know when you will have your darshan now, so give me some sermon." Seeing his love, Baba Ji replied, "Rai Ji, our teaching is that when your strength fails, then fold both hands and take refuge in Nirankar and pray. You know that in the Sakhis, Bebe Nanaki Ji is gone. Bular Ji and many other Sikhs are found praying before Baba and Baba listens to their prayers. A Sikh comes in the Sakhis.

"ਤਬ ਅਰਦਾਸੀਏ ਸਿਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੇ ਸਨਮੁਖ ਹਾਥਿ ਜੋੜ ਕਰ ਐਸੀਆਂ ਅਰਦਾਸਾਂ ਕਰਹਿ ਜੋ ਸਚੇ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਸਿਖ ਬਸਤ੍ਰ ਸਸਤ੍ਰ ਲਿਆਏ ਹਰਿ। ਸਿਖਾਂ ਉਪਰ ਝਾਕੀ ਹੋਇ। ਸਿਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਜ ਸੰਪੂਰਨ ਕਰਨੇ। ਸਿਖਾਂ ਕੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਚਿਤ ਆਵੈ।"

This Sakhi shows that today the Ardas are offered in Gurdwaras and the entire Sikh congregation participates in it. This practice of Ardas of the Sangat had started since the time of Guru Nanak Sahib. Sikhs used to offer Ardas with folded hands and along with the Ardas, Sikhs used to offer offerings. Similarly, this Ardas continued to grow during the time of the next Gurus. When Guru Arjan Dev Ji inaugurated the Guru Granth Sahib in the Harmandir Sahib, he stopped installing his own separate Gaddi and he himself used to offer Ardas of Guru Granth Sahib. This is why the practice of offering

Ardas to Guru Granth Sahib Ji started. Guru Arjan Dev Ji's life seems to be full of Ardas of gratitude. During the time of Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji, Ardas had started to be offered in the Gurdwara as a rule.

Mohsin Fani writes that when a Sikh had a need, he used to get the Sangat to offer Ardas for him. Guru Hargobind Sahib himself used to get the Sangat to offer Ardas for him. It seems that the Ardas started being performed in the presence of the Panj Pyares and the Guru Granth Sahib during the time of Guru Gobind Sahib. When Banda Singh Bahadur started coming towards Punjab, Guru Sahib ordered him to take the five Sikhs with him whenever there was any trouble. It is said that the present Ardas was originated by Bhai Mani Singh Ji, but there is no written evidence of this. From some of the listeners of the Ardas, it is known that its origin had started from the time of Guru Gobind Singh Ji. A handwritten manuscript was found in which the Ardas is as follows,

ੴ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫਤਹ।

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਭਗਉਤੀ ਜੀ ਸਹਾਇ।

ਵਾਰ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਭਗਉਤੀ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ।

ਪ੍ਰਥਮ ਭਗਉਤੀ ਸਿਮਰ ਕੈ ਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਈ ਧਿਆਇ।

ਫਿਰ ਅੰਗਦ ਗੁਰ ਤੇ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਰਾਮਦਾਸੈ ਹੋਈ ਸਹਾਇ।

ਅਰਜਨ ਹਰ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਨੇ ਸਿਮਰੇ ਸਿਰੀ ਹਰ ਰਾਇ।

ਸਿਰੀ ਹਰਕਿਸ਼ਨ ਧਿਆਈਐ ਜਿਸ ਡਿਠੇ ਸਭ ਦੁਖ ਜਾਇ ।

ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਸਿਮਰੀਐ ਘਰ ਨਉ ਨਿਧ ਆਵੈ ਧਾਇ।

ਸਭ ਥਾਈਂ ਹੋਇ ਸਹਾਇ ।੧।

ਸਤਿ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਬੋਲੇ ਜੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ।੨।

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਧਰ ਕੇ ਬੋਲੇ ਜੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ।

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਜੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਸ੍ਰੀ ਤਰਨ ਤਾਰਨ ਸਰਬ ਦੁਖਾ ਕੇ ਨਿਵਾਰਨ ਸਾਹਿਬ

ਜੀ ਕਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਧਰ ਕੇ ਬੋਲੇ ਜੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ। ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਜੀ ਕੇ ਸਰਬਤ

ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਧਰ ਕੇ ਬੋਲੇ ਜੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ।

ਸਬਦ ਚੌਂਕੀ ਸੇਦਰ ਰਹਿਰਾਸ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ। ਸਰਬ ਕੇ ਕਾਰਜ ਰਾਸ ॥

ਸਿੰਘ ਪੜ੍ਹਦੇ ਸੁਣਦੇ ਲਾਹੇਵੰਦ ਹੋਣ। ਸੁਖ ਹੋਵੈ ਨਾਮ ਚਿਤ ਆਵੈ।

ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ, ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫਤਹ।”

After the martyrdom of Banda Bahadur Ji, when the Sikhs started being oppressed, a part of the Ardas is written with the holy blood of those martyrs, “As the Sikhs were slaughtered, they were put on wheels, their skulls were removed, they were cut with saws, they continued to give martyrdom by remaining true to the Sikh faith”. Similarly, to remember their sacrifices, their history was included in the Ardas.

After the partition of the country, the Sikhs had to leave West Punjab, at that time Nankana Sahib, Panja Sahib, Dera Sahib and many other Gurdwaras were

separated from the Panth. The pain of this separation was added to the Ardas. A special Hukamnama of Sri Akal Takht Sahib ordered to include this sentence in the Ardas,

"ਆਪਣੇ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਸਦਾ ਸਹਾਈ ਦਾਤਾਰ ਜੀਉ, ਸ੍ਰੀ ਨਨਕਾਣਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਗੁਰਧਾਮਾਂ ਦੇ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਛੋੜਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ, ਖੁਲ੍ਹੇ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦੀਦਾਰ ਤੇ ਸੇਵਾ ਸੰਭਾਲ ਦਾ ਦਾਨ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਬਖਸ਼ੋ"।

In this way, the ten Gurus have been meditated on in the Ardas, and the order has been given to say Waheguru with concentration every time. The institutions of the Panth, Takhts, Gurdwaras, Chowkis, Bungas, flags have been asked to be in Chardi Kala and to maintain them. Each and every letter spoken in the Ardas has been lived in our Sikh life. The Ardas is performed jointly in which the entire Sikh Sangat participates. Therefore, for a Sikh, it is a symbol of brotherhood that keeps Sikhs united. It makes a Sikh a true Sikh and by repeatedly saying Waheguru Waheguru, Naam Simran connects the Sikh with the spirit of devotion. It gives new guidance to the Sikh society, protects it from evil, teaches a Sikh to always be happy and teaches him to be grateful to God. It is because of the power of this prayer that the Sikh community remains in a state of progress.

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