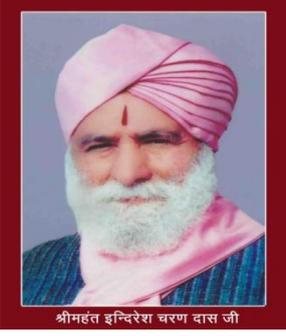


## NINTH SHRI MAHANT INDIRESH CHARAN DAS JI



Great men and saints appear in awaken the common people, to in still wisdom in them, to work for the welfare of mankind and peace and to preach the essence of a righteous life. It has been said –

“प्रबोधाय विवेकाय हिताय प्रशमाय च।  
सम्यक्तत्वोपदेशाय सतां सक्ति प्रवर्तते।।”

This applies to the ninth Shri Mahant Shri Indiresch Charan Dass Ji, of Shri Guru Ram Rai Darbar Sahib. A man in the street may live only for himself and his family but a great man or saint like Shri Mahant Indiresch Charan Dass, is born for the upliftment of the masses. Such genius and extraordinary personalities don't need any kind of publicity or advertisement at all. People get attracted towards them spontaneously. Their life is full of exceptional qualities.

Shri Mahant Indiresch Charan Dass Ji was born on 14<sup>th</sup> November 1919. He came in contact with Shri Guru Ram Rai Darbar Sahib and here he got the facility of board and lodging and took admission in the Mission School. Later he also studied in Colonel Brown School. Those days, students of Hindi schools did not get admission to the schools teaching English at par with students of other schools. Instead, they were admitted to one lower class. Shri Mahant Laxman Dass Ji inducted him as his disciple on 11<sup>th</sup> May, 1938. After his investiture ceremony he was christened 'Indiresch Charan Dass'. He was sent to Sakkar (Sindh, now in Pakistan) where he stayed with Mahant Shri Harnamdas at Sadhu Bela. There he did a thorough study of English Literature, engaged a teacher and read nearly all the plays of Shakespeare. After that he stayed in Chuwachha Sahib, Lahore (now in Pakistan) with Mahant Shri Bachandas Ji. There also he spent most of his time studying English literature and passed his high school examination obtaining first division with four distinctions.

Shri Mahant Laxman Dass was a simple natured person. He had not received any formal education and people tried to take undue advantage of him. He sent his disciple to Allahabad for higher education. Before this, Shri Mahant Indiresch Charan Dass was trained in horse-riding and also became an expert in playing tennis and football. During his B.A. final year at the University of Allahabad, he joined the “Quit India Movement” in 1942 and was sent to Naini Jail. There he came in contact with many famous political leaders including Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri and Shri Firoz Gandhi. He spent his time in studies and also took active part in various discussions in the prison. Some reputed persons of Dehradun requested Shri Mahant Laxman Dass Ji to take advantage of his acquaintance with the British and Indian officers and get his disciple out of the jail. But he said, “Even if they set Indiresch free of my words, what is the guarantee that he would not join the Movement again! I want him to do all that he wishes to.”

There were hardly seven to ten days left for his BA final examination when he was released from the prison. Those were the days of untiring efforts when he worked hard day and night for the examination. He again passed in first division. Though he was interested in English literature yet his Guru instructed him to take up Sanskrit. After doing his M.A. in Sanskrit he took admission in LL.B. but continued his study of English, History, Political Science and Hindi. In between he had also started to write poems.

In April 1945, Shri Mahant Laxman Dass Ji fell seriously ill. A telegram was sent to call back Shri Indiresch Charan Dass Ji. He reached Dehradun on 21<sup>st</sup> April 1945. After instructing and explaining everything to his disciple Shri Mahant Laxman Dass Ji left for his heavenly abode on 24<sup>th</sup> April 1945. After the funeral and the last rites of his Guru, Shri Indiresch Charan Dass Ji composed himself and on May 25, 1945 he was anointed as the ninth Shri Mahant of Shri Guru Ram Rai Darbar. Since then, the work that this great man started as a Karmyogi (man of action) continued for 55 years. The Sanskrit Vidyalaya opened by Shri Mahant Laxman Dass Ji in 1931, was renamed after him. In 1947, Shri Laxman Vidyalaya was also established in his name. Now it is an Intermediate College where students are given free education. In 1952, he established Shri Guru Ram Rai Education Mission and brought a revolution in the field of education. After founding a school at Bhogpur, he established a Degree College at Nahan (Himachal Pradesh). The chain of schools which started then went on increasing up to 80 schools during his lifetime. At present, more than 1 lakh students are studying in these schools.

Feeling the need of English medium schools and the demand of the public, he started the first English medium school in 1965, which is right in front of the Darbar Sahib. He thought of thousands of children like him who were unable to get good education in English medium schools due to penury. Every parent cannot afford to educate his or her ward in such schools. Therefore, he thought of opening such English medium schools which would provide quality education at nominal fees. Alongside these schools would ensure that children were well-versed in Indian culture. Such education would be available to the children of the poor as well. These schools were to be different from the institutions run by Christian Missionaries with different objectives. Today, there are 20 such SGRR Public Schools in Punjab alone. They are also spread over northern India up to Hardoi, Banda, Delhi to Ghaziabad, Meerut, Muzaffarnagar, Saharanpur, Roorkee, Moradabad, Najibabad, Haridwar, Rishikesh, Dehradun etc. There are three schools in Hardoi and 14 in Dehradun. Besides, there are SGRR Public Schools in the hilly areas of Kotdwar, Lalpani, Kanvashram, Srinagar, Pauri, Rudraprayag, Gopeshwar, Karanprayag, Mussoorie, Jhalki, Thatyur, Nainbagh, Narendranagar, Barkot, Purola and Tyuni.

In addition to this, Shri Guru Ram Rai Institute of Technology and Science caters to the need of vocational and technical education which includes the courses and syllabus of BBA, MBA, BCA, MCA, B.Pharm and M. Pharma courses. The last dream of late Shri Maharaj Ji was to establish a hospital and a medical college. His disciple and successor, Shri Mahant Devendra Dass Ji has fulfilled this dream.

Shri Maharaj Ji was very fond of teaching and studying. He used to be busy the whole day. He woke up early in the morning between four and five, studied for a while, finished his morning ablutions, performed puja, read the Gita, went for Parikrama of the Gurudwara, paid obeisance at the Jhanda Ji, offered flowers in the hall of Gaddi and then went up to his room. He ate a light breakfast with milk and then got busy with his work. Earlier he visited the schools every day, taught there, played with the children, instructed them how to play and also worked with the labourers in school which were under construction. He took cement, iron grills etc. to Nahan in a jeep for construction work himself. At that time there was no bridge over the river Yamuna at Paonta Sahib. The jeep had to be taken across in a boat. He drove the jeep himself. Those days he did not have a car. Earlier he used a Buggy. He took his meals in the langar. He ate whatever was served and never found fault with the food. He supervised then construction work in schools and in the evenings he played with students. Then he offered his evening prayers and studied after dinner. The date, time and remarks written in the book are a proof of the fact that he studied till late in the night. He gave his books worth lakhs to Degree College, Nahan.

He was also a proficient writer. He wrote and edited many books, His book on Field Marshal Romel is a matter of surprise because it is not easy for sages to give such a detailed account of warfare. He wrote 'Napoleon Bonaparte' and 'Triumphs and Tragedies' in English. He edited many books on English, Maths, Social Studies etc. for students. He was an able administrator and a shrewd judge of human being. He solved problems within no time and did not yield to any kind of pressure. Generally he did not get into argument and always sent back the devotees and admirers fully satisfied. No sadhu, saint or beggar went back empty-handed from the Darbar Sahib. He rendered all possible help to the persons in difficulty.

Whosoever came in contact with him could not remain without being impressed by him. He had a spiritual brightness on his face, a gleam of brilliance in his eyes, a glimpse of a karmayogi in his daily activities and a depth in his knowledge. While talking he kept in mind the standard of the persons concerned or the audience. He was unique and beyond comparison in his decisions and determination. He never gave himself the credit of any success. He always said that it was the result of Guru Ji's blessings. His disciple Shri Devendra Dass Ji who was inducted to the Gaddi as the tenth Shri Mahant of the Darbar Sahib on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2000 is busy completing the unfinished work of his Guru who can never be forgotten. The educational institutions established by him are his living monuments.

A very large crowd gathered in the Darbar Sahib premises to pay tribute to this great man after he left for his heavenly abode on the 10<sup>th</sup> June 2000. The representative of the District Magistrate came on behalf of the Government to pay homage to this great freedom fighter and placed a wreath on his body. A company of the police gave him the last salute. Saints, followers, admirers and devotees from different centres of the Udaseen sect and 'Akharas' from Punjab, Maharashtra, Delhi, Haridwar, Rishikesh and far off places reached Dehradun to join the funeral procession on his last journey. There were people from all walks of life in that one kilometre long procession. All the market of Dehradun were closed and an ocean of humanity covered the streets and roads through which the funeral procession was to pass. After covering four to five kilometres, the procession reached the special cremation ground meant only for Shri Mahants of Darbar Sahib. But the whole area echoed with heart rendering cries and exaltations and went on till the mortal frame of Late Shri Mahant Indiresch Charan Das Ji was consigned to the flames of the funeral pyre –

“शिक्षा की एक किरण, महन्त इन्दिरेशचरण, इन्दिरेशचरण।”  
“महन्त जी का शिक्षा अभियान, याद करेगा हिन्दुस्तान।”