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Commemorating
350th Martyrdom of
GURU TEG BAHADUR SAHIB JI

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GURUDWARA RAKAB GANJ SAHIB



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MEDITATION

ਜੈਜਾਵੰਤੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੯ ॥

ਬੀਤ ਜੈਹੈ ਬੀਤ ਜੈਹੈ ਜਨਮੁ ਅਕਾਜੁ ਰੇ ॥
ਨਿਸਿ ਦਿਨੁ ਸੁਨਿ ਕੈ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਸਮਝਤ ਨਹ ਰੇ ਅਜਾਨ ॥
ਕਾਲੁ ਤਉ ਪਹੂਚਿਓ ਆਨਿ ਕਹਾ ਜੈਹੈ ਭਾਜਿ ਰੇ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥
ਅਸਥਿਰੁ ਜੋ ਮਾਨਿਓ ਦੇਹ ਸੋ ਤਉ ਤੇਰਉ ਹੋਇ ਹੈ ਖੇਹ ॥
ਕਿਉ ਨ ਹਰਿ ਕੋ ਨਾਮੁ ਲੇਹਿ ਮੂਰਖ ਨਿਲਾਜ ਰੇ ॥੧॥
ਰਾਮ ਭਗਤਿ ਹੀਏ ਆਨਿ ਛਾਡਿ ਦੇ ਤੈ ਮਨ ਕੋ ਮਾਨੁ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਜਨ ਇਹ ਬਖਾਨਿ ਜਗ ਮਹਿ ਬਿਰਾਜੁ ਰੇ ॥੨॥੩॥

[SGGS: 1352]

Translation*

O brother! Your life is slipping away, slipping away aimlessly, (It is an opportunity to remember and obey God's Naam/virtues so as to merge in Him). (Unfortunately) Even after listening to the Puraanas (ancient scriptures) you do not understand, oh unwise person (ajaan = ignorant like a child). Death is about to arrive; now where will you run away from it? ||1||Pause||

You believe that this body is permanent, imperishable; but it will turn to dust. Why don't you remember Naam (virtues and qualities) of God, you shameless fool? ||1||

Bring the thoughts of devotional worship and obedience of God (Raam – Formless God pervading in everything and everybody) into your mind and abandon the pride of your ego (i.e. stop implementing your self-will). Servant Nanak (tells you) that this is the way (i.e. obedience to God's Will) to live in the world (to achieve the objective of life). ||2||4||

*Translation by : S. Bhupinder Singh

ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਕੇ ਚਲਤ ਭਯੋ ਜਗਤ ਕੇ ਸੋਕ ॥
ਹੈ ਹੈ ਹੈ ਸਭ ਜਗ ਭਯੋ ਜੈ ਜੈ ਜੈ ਸੁਰ ਲੋਕ ॥

Publisher's Note

Since 1953 The Sikh Review, a monthly publications, has strived to serve English reading Sikh and non-Sikh readers worldwide on and about all aspects of Sikhs and Sikhi. As the world pays homage to the supreme sacrifice of Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib Ji, the protector of All Faiths, we, too, take note of this momentous event never recorded before in human history.

The Sikh Review has the honour and privilege of releasing this Special Issue to mark the 350th Martyrdom Anniversary of Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib Ji. In our humble endeavour, we invited scholars and historians from across the globe to submit their erudite contributions on the Life and Teachings of the great Guru, whose message has rightly become the clarion call of tolerance and interfaith understandings in a strife-torn world. Today, Guru Sahib's Martyrdom stands as a single highest legacy of sacrifice, courage, peace and "Religious Freedom". We, at The Sikh Review, are indeed gratified by the response to our appeal. Therefore, we have decided to publish and highlight the submitted articles in this issue.

We are sure that readers will enjoy reading the informative articles and will be hugely benefitted from Guru Teg Bahadur's message of Universal Brotherhood. Thus, they will also share the fruits of Gurmat values with their fellow human beings.

– Publisher



Commemorating 350 Years of Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur: A Universal Legacy of Courage, Peace, and Freedom

*S. PARTAP SINGH**

In 2025, we solemnly mark the 350th anniversary of the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Sikh Guru, whose life and sacrifice embody the highest ideals of courage, peace, and religious freedom. His legacy is not confined to the boundaries of India or the Sikh community alone; it is a profound and enduring message for the entire human race, a timeless beacon of hope and resilience in the face of tyranny and intolerance.

Guru Tegh Bahadur lived in a period of intense religious and political upheaval during the late 17th century under the Mughal Empire. Emperor Aurangzeb, known for his orthodox policies, sought to impose Islamic law across his dominion, often through coercion and forced conversions. This era was marked by systemic persecution of non-Muslim communities, especially Hindus, who faced pressure to abandon their faith or face dire consequences.

Among those most affected were the Kashmiri Pandits, a Hindu Brahmin community, who endured brutal oppression and forced conversions. It was in this dark context of religious intolerance that Guru Tegh Bahadur emerged as a beacon of hope and resistance. Although he was a Sikh—a follower of a distinct and emerging faith—he chose to stand not only for his own community but for the freedom of conscience of all oppressed people, irrespective of their religion.

Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom is a landmark event in the history of India and the world. When the Mughal authorities demanded that he convert to Islam, he refused, choosing instead to embrace death rather than betray his principles or abandon the oppressed. His decision to give his life to protect the right of others to practice their religion

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freely was unprecedented. It was an act of supreme courage and selflessness that transcended sectarian divides.

By sacrificing his life, Guru Tegh Bahadur not only defended the Kashmiri Pandits but also enshrined the principle that freedom of faith is a universal human right. This act of martyrdom laid the groundwork for the Sikh community's enduring commitment to justice, equality, and human dignity. More broadly, it helped shape the evolving Indian ethos of religious pluralism and tolerance.

While Guru Tegh Bahadur is rightly remembered for his martyrdom, his life was also distinguished by his role as a peacemaker and negotiator. Historical records highlight his efforts to mediate conflicts and bring about peace between the Mughal Empire and the ruler of Assam. This aspect of his leadership underscores his wisdom and statesmanship, qualities that complemented his spiritual guidance. His ability to engage with diverse religious and political leaders through dialogue demonstrates the power of negotiation and understanding in resolving conflicts.

Guru Tegh Bahadur's example reminds us that peace is not merely the absence of war but the result of active engagement, respect, and empathy among differing communities.

At the core of Guru Tegh Bahadur's legacy is a profound respect for the plurality of human beliefs. He did not impose his faith on others; rather, he stood firmly for the right of every individual to choose their spiritual path. This message of interfaith respect and tolerance is especially relevant in today's world, where religious conflicts and intolerance continue to threaten global peace and security.

In commemorating his 350th martyrdom anniversary, it is crucial to emphasize the importance of interfaith dialogue as a tool for fostering understanding and harmony. Guru Tegh Bahadur's life teaches us that true faith is not diminished by diversity; instead, it is enriched through mutual respect and coexistence.

Guru Tegh Bahadur's sacrifice and teachings transcend the specific historical and cultural context of 17th-century India. His message is universal, applying to all people, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, or religion. He stands as a symbol of the universal values of freedom, human dignity, and the courage to stand against oppression.

In an era where religious persecution and intolerance persist in many parts of the world, Guru Tegh Bahadur's life is a call to action for the global community.

How to Commemorate Guru Tegh Bahadur's Martyrdom in 2025

The 350th anniversary of Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom offers a timely opportunity to reflect on his legacy and renew our commitment to his ideals. Commemoration should go beyond ceremonial observances to include meaningful educational, cultural, and social initiatives:

- 1. Educational Programs:** Schools, colleges, and universities should incorporate comprehensive curricula that teach students about Guru Tegh Bahadur's life, his sacrifice, and his message of religious freedom. This education can foster a deeper understanding of human rights and the importance of tolerance.
- 2.** Here, our prime Institutions like the Chief Khalsa Dewan, newly established Khalsa College University at Amritsar, all private Sikh Universities Pan India, and major education hubs must play a leading role in working out of divinity curriculum for Educational Institutions to start with.
- 3. Interfaith Forums and Dialogues:** Organizing interfaith conferences and dialogue sessions can promote mutual respect and understanding among different religious communities. Such initiatives can draw inspiration from Guru Tegh Bahadur's commitment to peaceful negotiation and coexistence.
- 4. Cultural Exhibitions and Art:** Exhibitions showcasing the life, teachings, and historical context of Guru Tegh Bahadur can engage the public emotionally and intellectually. Artistic expressions—whether through music, drama, or visual arts—can powerfully convey his universal message.
- 5. Public Awareness Campaigns:** Media campaigns can highlight the relevance of Guru Tegh Bahadur's sacrifice in today's world, reminding people of the ongoing struggles for religious freedom globally. These campaigns can encourage civic engagement and solidarity.
- 6. Government Recognition and Support:** Governments, particularly in India but also globally, all Sikh Chairs worldwide, can formally recognize the anniversary through official statements, commemorative events, and support for educational and cultural initiatives. This recognition underscores the national and international importance of his legacy.

7. Community Service and Human Rights Advocacy: Inspired by Guru Tegh Bahadur's spirit of compassion and justice, communities can engage in service activities supporting religious minorities, refugees, and victims of persecution. Advocacy for human rights at local and global levels can also be a fitting tribute.

Renewing Our Commitment to Religious Freedom and Peace

As we honour Guru Tegh Bahadur's sacrifice, we must also confront the contemporary realities where religious freedoms are threatened. Around the world, millions still face discrimination, violence, and persecution because of their beliefs. In many regions, religious intolerance fuels conflict and undermines social cohesion.

Guru Tegh Bahadur's legacy challenges us to stand united against such injustice. It reminds us that the fight for freedom of faith is ongoing and requires vigilance, courage, and empathy. Upholding his principles means committing to policies and practices that protect religious rights, promote peaceful coexistence, and celebrate diversity as a strength rather than a threat.

Conclusion:

The 350th anniversary of Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom is not merely a moment to look back—it is a call to look forward with renewed determination. His life and sacrifice offer a luminous example of how courage, compassion, and respect for diversity can shape a just and peaceful society.

Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom is a universal legacy—a testament to the enduring power of standing up for what is right, even in the face of death. It is a message that transcends time and place, urging all people to cherish and defend the freedom to believe, worship, and live with dignity.

As we commemorate this historic milestone, let us embrace Guru Tegh Bahadur's vision for the world: one where freedom of faith is guaranteed, where dialogue replaces division, and an environment of peace becomes a Beacon for All Humanity



Partap Singh, DIG Retd
Editor-in-Chief

PS : With great reverence and respect to Guru Tegh Bahadur on 350th year of Martyrdom, The Sikh Review while dedicating November 25 issue, seeks views/suggestions of the dedicated Readers, Scholars and our worldwide Contributors to enable us strive to further improve the coverage.

1675: 350 Years of the Unique Sacrifice of Guru Tegh Bahadur

CHARAN SINGH*

Abstract

The martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur in 1675 remains a unique landmark in global history. The ninth Sikh Guru voluntarily chose death to defend religious freedom, human dignity, and interfaith solidarity, especially protecting people from forced conversions to Islam. His sacrifice was the culmination of two centuries of Sikh reform, beginning with Guru Nanak's challenge to caste and gender inequality, and sustained through institutions like langar, inclusive scripture, and social empowerment of the marginalized. Three hundred and fifty years later, his legacy endures as a timeless affirmation of equality, pluralism, and freedom of conscience—principles central to modern human rights.

In November 1675, Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Guru of the Sikhs, was executed in Chandni Chowk, Delhi, under the orders of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. This event stands as one of the most extraordinary episodes of voluntary martyrdom in world history. Guru Tegh Bahadur walked to his martyrdom not in pursuit of political power or personal gain, but to uphold the principles of religious freedom, human dignity, and interfaith harmony. His sacrifice, offered to protect Kashmiri Pandits and others facing forced conversions, continues to resonate as a profound defense of human rights.

The uniqueness of this martyrdom lies not only in the selfless act itself but in the moral universe it represented: the recognition of freedom of conscience, the universality of human dignity, and the importance of inter-community solidarity. Guru Tegh Bahadur's decision articulated values that prefigure modern understandings of human rights. His execution was not merely an episode of personal courage but a defining moment in the larger historical narrative of equality, justice, and pluralism.

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This brief article is focussed on the broader social, religious, and political context of Guru Tegh Bahadur's sacrifice. It situates his martyrdom within the Sikh tradition of reform, and examines his legacy as both a defender of the marginalized, and a symbol of interfaith solidarity. Three and a half centuries later, the lessons of his martyrdom remain deeply relevant.

The Social Context: Caste, Gender, and Inequality in Early Modern India

When Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, was born in 1469, Indian society was sharply stratified along caste lines. Women too faced restrictions, not only in public life but also in spiritual participation, as purdah and ritual exclusions reinforced patriarchal subordination.

Guru Nanak challenged this deeply entrenched social order. In his travels beginning in 1501, he was accompanied by Bhai Mardana, a Dalit musician, and deliberately chose to reside with Dalits during his journeys, thereby symbolically eroding caste-based exclusion. His proclamation that all human beings—regardless of caste, creed, color, or gender—were equal before God marked a radical departure from the prevailing orthodoxy.

He insisted that the soul, being divine, transcended bodily distinctions of caste or gender. By articulating this principle, Guru Nanak opened the doors of spiritual participation to all, establishing the philosophical foundations of Sikh egalitarianism. Guru Tegh Bahadur's own reformist actions more than a century later must be understood as a continuation of this egalitarian trajectory.

Langar: The Great Equalizer

One of the most powerful instruments of social reform initiated by Guru Nanak and institutionalized by his successors was the practice of langar, or community dining where collapsing the rigid boundaries of purity and pollution that underpinned caste hierarchy, became a living embodiment of equality. The practice encountered significant resistance during the tenure of Guru Amar Das (1551–1574), especially from upper-caste groups who felt that such an institution undermined the established social hierarchy. Yet, the Sikh Gurus persisted, making langar an indispensable part of Sikh religious life. Guru Tegh Bahadur inherited this tradition and ensured its continuity, thereby reinforcing the social space where women and men, Dalits and Brahmins, rich and poor could meet and celebrate, as equals. Langar redefined religious community, which by 1675 had spread far and wide, as an inclusive fellowship, rejecting exclusion and privilege, in spirituality.

Water, Rituals, and Social Autonomy

The opposition to Sikh egalitarian practices extended beyond food. Denied access to wells and water sources due to their rejection of caste barriers, Sikhs under Guru Amar Das, constructed their own baolis (step-wells), making water freely available to all. Similarly, Sikh Gurus developed distinct hymns and practices for birth, marriage, and death ceremonies. This autonomy in religious and social practices reinforced the Sikh rejection of caste discrimination. Guru Tegh Bahadur further consolidated the principles of inclusivity and dignity.

The Adi Granth: Inclusion of Diverse Voices

The compilation of the Adi Granth by Guru Arjan in 1604 was another milestone in the assertion of equality. The scripture incorporated the writings of saints from diverse castes and professions—farmers, weavers, cobblers, barbers, butchers, alongside those of Brahmins, Kshatriyas and rulers. It also included the compositions of Sufi mystics and Hindu bhaktas, thereby affirming Sikhism's openness to wisdom across traditions.

When Guru Arjan bowed before the Adi Granth upon its installation at the Harmandir Sahib, he symbolically subordinated even the Guru's authority to the collective wisdom of humanity. This inclusivity would later be reinforced when Guru Gobind Singh added the Bani of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji in Adi Granth and in 1708, bestowed eternal Guruship upon the scripture, declaring it the Guru Granth Sahib.

By this act, Sikhism institutionalized equality not only socially but scripturally, giving equal sacred value to the voices of the marginalized.

Dalits in the Sikh Army: From Subjugation to Empowerment

Guru Har Gobind (1595–1644), the sixth Guru, introduced the doctrine of Miri-Piri—worldly power and spiritual authority. He wore two swords at his coronation to symbolize the balance of these responsibilities. Crucially, he recruited Dalits into his army, enabling those who were once forbidden to ride horses, wear turbans, or wield weapons to participate in armed resistance.

This transformation from social exclusion to martial participation marked a profound revolution in social relations. Dalit Sikhs became soldiers of the Akal Sena (Immortal Army), defeating Mughal forces in several encounters. Guru Tegh Bahadur inherited this tradition, continuing to maintain an armed contingent that included people from all castes and professions.

The role of Bhai Jeta, a Dalit Sikh who courageously carried Guru Tegh Bahadur's severed head from Delhi to Anandpur Sahib in 1675, epitomized the empowerment of the marginalized. Guru Gobind Singh's embrace of Bhai Jeta as "Rangreta, Guru ka beta" was a profound declaration of caste equality.

Gender Equality and the Role of Women

Another striking dimension of Sikh reform was the elevation of women's status. Guru Nanak had declared women to be equal participants in spiritual life, rejecting their subordination under patriarchy. By Guru Tegh Bahadur's time, this principle was firmly embedded in Sikh practice. Mata Gujri, wife of Guru Tegh Bahadur, embodied this vision. She was not only a supportive partner and mother to Guru Gobind Singh but also a guiding force for her grandsons, the young martyrs Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh. Her courage in the face of trials, and her steadfast guidance to her grandsons to uphold their faith, exemplified the lived reality of empowered womanhood in Sikh tradition.

Guidance to Royalty: The Ethics of War

Guru Tegh Bahadur also intervened in political disputes, most notably between Raja Ram Singh and the Ahom king Chakradhwaj Singh in Assam. His counsel to both rulers was that war should only be pursued for noble causes, such as the protection of the poor and weak, and not for ego or hatred.

By articulating this ethic of warfare, he extended the principle of human dignity to the domain of politics. His message reflected the Sikh doctrine that true power lies not in domination but in service and defense of justice. This moral vision of kingship and warfare resonates with contemporary debates on ethical leadership and just war.

Youth and the Message of Courage

The martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur also highlights the role of youth in social transformation. Bhai Jeta, only twenty years old in 1675, displayed extraordinary stamina, courage, and loyalty in carrying the Guru's severed head across a perilous 315-kilometer journey. His act demonstrated that youth possess not only the physical strength but also the moral fortitude to undertake tasks of historic consequence.

This message remains relevant today: the energy and determination of young people are crucial for sustaining movements of justice and equality.

Establishment of Spiritual-Moral Reform

Guru Tegh Bahadur's social contributions cannot be separated from his spiritual vision. His hymns, preserved in the Guru Granth Sahib, emphasize detachment from material wealth, humility, and remembrance of God. He taught that human suffering often arises from ego, attachment, and greed. By cultivating inner discipline, one could overcome fear and oppression. This spiritual strength translated into social reform. By teaching people to be fearless and truthful, he gave them moral courage to resist tyranny. His stress on ethical living, truth, compassion, and service, became the foundation of Sikh identity. In this sense, his contribution was not limited to institutional reforms but extended to reshaping the very moral fabric of society.

Founding of New Centers of Social Life

In 1665, Guru Tegh Bahadur founded Anandpur Sahib, a town that became not only a spiritual capital but also a center of social life. Here, people of different regions, religions and communities came together. The Guru promoted collective living, self-reliance, and defense against injustice. This city later became the birthplace of the Khalsa under Guru Gobind Singh Ji, underscoring the continuity between his father's vision and the Sikh community's institutional evolution.

By founding such centers, Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji offered alternatives to oppressive state structures. These towns functioned as spaces where social justice, religious freedom, and cultural expression flourished despite Mughal repression.

Celebration of Interfaith Harmony

Perhaps the most extraordinary aspect of Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom was its interfaith dimension. Nearly 500 Kashmiri Pandits, representing another religious tradition, approached the Sikh Guru for protection. In choosing to sacrifice his life for their freedom, Guru Tegh Bahadur embodied the highest ideal of interfaith solidarity.

This act was not an isolated gesture but consistent with the Sikh tradition of service to all humanity. From Guru Nanak's travels, which spread the message of one God across diverse regions, to the community's longstanding practices of offering medical aid and digging wells, Sikhism had consistently affirmed universal service. Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom gave ultimate expression to this ethos.

Conclusion

The sacrifice of Guru Tegh Bahadur in 1675 must be understood not only as an act of personal martyrdom but as the culmination of a two-century-long revolution of equality initiated by Guru Nanak. It embodied the principles of caste equality, gender justice, and interfaith harmony.

By sustaining institutions such as langar and sangat, by rejecting purdah and ceremonial exclusions, by empowering Dalits to fight as soldiers and women to lead as equals, Guru Tegh Bahadur created a framework of social reform that anticipated modern discourses on rights and justice. His martyrdom was the ultimate affirmation that the dignity of all human beings, including the most vulnerable, was non-negotiable.

In academic terms, his legacy can be interpreted as a historically grounded assertion of universal human rights. It positioned Sikh philosophy as an early contributor to global discourses on equality, dignity, and religious freedom. The role of Mata Gujri and other women ensured that this vision was not merely theoretical but lived, embodied, and transmitted across generations.

Three hundred and fifty years later, the relevance of Guru Tegh Bahadur's sacrifice endures. It challenges us to uphold freedom of conscience, to embrace equality across divisions of caste and gender, and to pursue justice even at great personal cost. His life and martyrdom remain a beacon of interfaith solidarity, social reform, and human dignity for the world.



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Homage to Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji

BHUPINDER SINGH *

Abstract

The supreme sacrifice of Guru Tegh Bahadur is eulogized as “Hind Dee Chaddar”, meaning as a protective cover over all of India; however, such a sacrifice for the protection of another faith has no other parallel. With his sacrifice, Guru Ji defied the royal addict of forceful conversion of the majority, but his dead body also defied the social and cultural norms associated with its disposal. Guru Ji, with his own Bani, has emphasized the ephemeral nature of human existence. This aspect was very clear to Guru Ji, and he did not hesitate to sacrifice it. In this article, we will explore the unique sacrifice and also explore how even the severed head and torso played their defying roles.

Introduction

On the occasion of the 350th anniversary of the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji, let us remember the great sacrifice, as well as look at his own Bani, about his views on death. He has summed up the fate of the dead body in two short and crisp lines as under:

ਘਰ ਕੀ ਨਾਰਿ ਬਹੁਤੁ ਹਿਤੁ ਜਾ ਸਿਉ ਸਦਾ ਰਹਤ ਸੰਗ ਲਾਗੀ ॥ ਜਬ ਹੀ ਹੋਸ ਤਜੀ ਇਹ ਕਾਇਆ ਪ੍ਰੇਤ ਪ੍ਰੇਤ ਕਰਿ ਭਾਗੀ ॥੨॥

“Ghar kee naar bahut hit jaa siao sadhaa rahat sang laagee. Jub hee hans tatee ieh kaaiaa prēt prēt kar bhaagee.2.” (SGGS, Pg. No. 634)

Translation: Your wife, whom you love so much, and who remained ever attached to you, runs away crying, “Ghost! Ghost!”, as soon as the swan-soul leaves this body.

This is an authentic and universal stark reality of the ephemeral nature of life. In an instant, even the most intimate relationships end, and the dead body is cremated or buried as per the family traditions. What we see is that even the closest and intimate human relationships are essentially for those living alone. No one likes to keep a dead body or be

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near it. In fact, in Western societies, the law requires that one has to keep the body in a funeral home before the last rites. Guru Ji even noticed this aspect of how quickly the dead body is removed from the house in these words:

ਤਨ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਾਨ ਹੋਤ ਜਬ ਨਿਆਰੇ ਟੇਰਤ ਪ੍ਰੇਤਿ ਪੁਕਾਰਿ ॥ ਆਧਿ ਘਰੀ ਕੋਊ ਨਹਿ ਰਾਖੇ ਘਰ ਤੇ ਦੇਤ ਨਿਕਾਰਿ ॥੧॥

“Tun te praan hott jab niaare Terat prêet pukaar. Aadh gharee kouoo neh raakhai ghar te dhet nikaar.” (SGGS, Pg. No. 536)

Translation: When the soul is separated from the body, then they will cry out, calling you a ghost. No one will let you stay, for even a while; they drive you out of the house.

Martyrdom

The dead body is called a ghost and driven out of the house, and the closest relationship that ended is eulogized during the funeral. But in the case of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji, we see a new reality being unveiled. Guru Ji did not have a normal death; even the last rites of his dead body defied the normal fate. Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji sacrificed his life for the protection of the Hindu faith in Delhi, during the reign of Aurangzeb. Under strict orders of forced conversions by the ruler Aurangzeb, the Hindus were forced to relinquish their faith to get relief from the Jazia Tax as well as to save their lives. The poorer and lower caste Hindus had already reconciled with the orders by converting. Now, the thrust was on converting the higher caste Hindus-Brahmins in their citadel, Kashmir, which could accelerate the conversion process due to its cascading effect. Alarmed and panicked Brahmins of Kashmir held their conclave in Mattan and decided to seek help from Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji in Anandpur. Their delegation of five hundred under the leadership of Kirpa Ram came to Anandpur and narrated their plight to Guru Ji. Guru Ji, after deliberations and input from his young son Gobind Rai of 9 years of age, suggested to Kirpa Ram to send a message to the ruler. The message was that the Emperor Aurangzeb should stop mass persecution, and if Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji converted to Islam, then they all would follow suit.

On hearing the message, Aurangzeb was elated and issued orders for Guru Ji's arrest and to be brought to Delhi. In the meantime, Guru Ji came to know of the royal edict and started his preparations for Delhi without waiting for the formal delivery of the summons. Guru Ji was accompanied by three beloved Sikhs and was arrested near Ropar while heading towards Delhi. He was initially interned at Bassi Pathana in Sirhind for about 3 months and then transferred to Delhi on November 04, 1675. Bewildered,

Aurangzeb asked Guru Ji as to why he was offering himself for Hindus, whose idol worship and caste system were not practiced and preached by the founding Sikh Guru Nanak or the subsequent Gurus? Guru Ji replied that Hindus are being treated as sub-humans and inferior in your reign, which is not fair. Guru Ji condemned the use of force for conversion to Islam, adding that everyone should have the freedom to practice their belief and faith. Guru Ji was then asked to show some miracles, which he firmly refused. Finally, he was told in clear terms that the other option for not accepting Islam was to be prepared for death. First, Guru Ji's companions Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Sati Das, and Bhai Dyala were tortured and killed by sawing in half, boiling in a cauldron and wrapping in cotton, and being put on fire, respectively. However, all three stayed calm and steadfast in their faith by willingly embracing death. Aurangzeb was hoping that seeing the persecution of his close associates would weaken Guru Ji's determination, because of his concern for their welfare, as well as concern for his own safety. However, when Guru Ji stayed firm, he was beheaded on November 11, 1675, by Jalaludin at Chandni Chowk on the orders of his chief. The sacrifice touched the hearts of the masses. People burst into loud shrieks, lamenting, with tears dropping from their eyes. Today, a memorial Sis Ganj Gurudwara stands there in that place honoring that unique and supreme sacrifice.

The ruler and his coterie had planned that the next day, the body would be cut to pieces and hung on the various gates of Delhi, as a message for those who choose to defy. However, suddenly large dark clouds enveloped the sky, unleashing a severe dust storm, as if nature was also expressing solidarity with the grieving masses. Unprepared for the sudden storm, everyone started running seeking shelter for their own safety. Bhai Jaita Ji swung into action and picked up Guru Ji's head, wrapped it in an old shawl that he had, and hurried away towards Anandpur Sahib. There, he presented it reverently to Guru Gobind Rai (later Singh) Ji, who calmly received the head without an emotional outburst of tears of pain and sadness. Guru Ji was very impressed by the devotion and courage that Bhai Jaita Ji displayed through this daring act. Guru Ji hugged Bhai Jaita Ji and affectionately declared, "O Rangreta, you are Guru's son." Mata Gujar Ji, wife of Guru Teg Bahadur Ji, came forward and bowed before her husband's severed head and prayed to the Almighty to give her strength and courage in carrying out her duties with the same exemplary determination as valiantly displayed by her late husband. Guru Gobind Singh Ji summed up the feat in these words:

ਤਿਲਕ ਜੰਝੁ ਰਾਖਾ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਤਾ ਕਾ ॥ ਕੀਨੋ ਬਡੋ ਕਲੂ ਮਹਿ ਰਾਖਾ ॥ ਸਾਧਨ ਹੇਤਿ ਇਤੀ ਜਿਨਿ ਕਰੀ ॥ ਸੀਸੁ ਦੀਆ ਪਰੁ
ਸੀ ਨ ਉਚਰੀ ॥(੧੩)

*"Tilak janjoo raakhaa prabh taa kaa. Keeno baddo kaloo meh saakaa. Saadhan het
itee jin karee. Sees dheaaa par see na aucharee. 13."*

Translation: He protected (with his life) the forehead mark and sacred thread (of the Hindus), which marked an unparalleled heroic event in the Dark Age. For the sake of saints, he laid down his head without a groan.

These words perfectly paint a picture of the heroic deed and convey a true assessment of the momentous task that Guru Ji undertook for the rights of the Hindus to practice their beliefs freely. We cannot find another instance or a historical parallel where someone laid down their life for the protection of another's faith. Although we can find quite a few examples, when someone lays down his own life for the protection of his own belief and faith.

Acts of Defiance

Guru Gobind Rai arranged the cremation rites of the severed head in the compound of their residence. On that spot stands a magnificent Gurudwara commemorating this unparalleled feat, where thousands visit daily and bow their heads in reverence.

In the meantime, in Delhi, the body was picked up in Chandni Chowk by Bhai Lakhi Shah, who happened to be in the vicinity, unloading lime from his carts at the Red Fort for royal forces. He quietly lifted the body despite the raging storm on his bullock cart and moved it to Raisina, his home. Driving the cart with the body into his house, set the house on fire to cremate the body, creating an impression of an accidental fire. Here, we can see a devotee and man of faith, bringing a dead body inside his own house, contrary to normal traditions, when everyone takes the body out. While people are afraid to visit the cremation grounds in the darkness of the night, this place has become a place of pilgrimage day and night.

Today, we have befitting memorials at Chandi Chowk, Rakab Ganj, Raisina in Delhi, places associated with martyrdom and the cremation of the body. There is also a memorial Gurudwara Sis Ganj, Anandpur Sahib, where the head was cremated. Also, there is another memorial called Gurudwara Sheesh Ganj, Taraori, in Karnal district, commemorating the stay of Bhai Jaita there, for a night's rest on his onward journey towards Anandpur. Recently,

a new memorial, called Guru Tegh Bahadur Memorial Park on the G.T. Road, towards Karnal, has been built in honor of the indomitable spirit of Guru Ji and his three companions.

Conclusion

The memory of the supreme sacrifice of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji and his indomitable spirit is strongly ingrained in the masses. It continues to inspire people today and will continue to do so in the time to come. The universal truth that Guru Ji has expounded about the fate of the dead body did not apply to his body. Guru Ji was one with the Creator while alive, plus what his sacrifice did to protect the freedom of Hindus was to practice their faith. Guru Gobind Rai (later Singh) Ji has said the following about the Supreme Sacrifice:

ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਕੇ ਚਲਤ ਭਯੋ ਜਗਤ ਕੇ ਸੋਕ॥ ਹੈ ਹੈ ਹੈ ਸਭ ਜਗ ਭਯੋ ਜੈ ਜੈ ਜੈ ਸੁਰ ਲੋਕਿ॥੧੬.

“Tegh Bahdur Ke Chalat Bhayo Jagat Ko Soak. Hai Hai Hai Sabh Jag Bhayo Jai JaiJai Sur Lok. 16”

Translation: At Tegh Bahadur's departure, the whole world was plunged into grief. But the celestial realms echoed with his glory. □

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The Sikh Review

Guru Tegh Bahadur And The New Dispensation

RAVINDER SINGH*

Abstract

This essay commemorates Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom by interpreting it as the culmination of Guru Nanak's revolutionary vision—a "new dispensation" that challenged both imperial absolutism and ecclesiastical authority. Rather than retelling biography, it situates Guru Tegh Bahadur within the arc of Sikh history: Guru Arjan's execution in 1606, the crystallization of Sikh identity, and the Mughal perception of the Gurus as rival sovereignties

The date was November 15, 1675. The location: Chandni Chowk, the main artery of Shahjahanabad - the old walled City of Delhi and the imperial seat of the Mughal Empire. In the hustle and bustle of the bazaar - amidst hawkers, vendors, and traders going about their business - an iconic moment in Sikh history was unfolding: Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth jot to the spiritual throne of Guru Nanak and descendant of four Gurus, appeared in the public square, facing execution by order of Emperor Aurangzeb. The Guru was beheaded at the spot where Gurudwara Sisganj stands in memoriam.

In Sikh memory, Guru Tegh Bahadur is the second Guru martyr of the faith, following his grandfather, the fifth Nanak Guru Arjan, who was also tortured and executed by the Mughal authorities in 1606. While Guru Arjan's death catalyzed the Sikh community into a martial posture of self-defense, Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom became a rallying point for religious liberty and broader human rights. It became foundational to the establishment of the Khalsa in 1699 - an ethos whose reverberations continue to shape Sikh consciousness today.

II. From Chandni Chowk to Anandpur

The execution at Chandni Chowk, like all public executions throughout history, was intended to be a show of imperial might, carefully orchestrated to inspire fear - to keep the

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populace in line. Guru Tegh Bahadur's body was left exposed as a stark warning to others. The fear it must have inspired can scarcely be imagined.

Yet, from the darkness of terror emerged two Sikhs who stepped forward with unwavering resolve and courage. Bhai Jaita Ji (later known as Bhai Jiwan Singh), a dyer by profession from the Rangreeta caste, braved the Mughal patrols to recover the severed head of the Guru and make a perilous 200-mile journey from Delhi to Anandpur Sahib, where he was received by the nine-year-old Gobind Rai, the future Guru Gobind Singh, who declared that the sacrifice would not be in vain.

Although its authenticity is now contested, the Bachittar Natak (Wondrous Drama) contains lines attributed to Guru Gobind Singh that describe the event thus:

ਧਰਮ ਹੇਤਿ ਸਾਕਾ ਜਿਨਿ ਕੀਆ ॥ ਸੀਸੁ ਦੀਆ ਪਰ ਸਿਰੁ ਨ ਦੀਆ ॥

Dharam het saka jin kiya, sis diya par sirar na diya.

ਤਿਲਕ ਜੰਝੂ ਰਾਖਾ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਤਾ ਕਾ ॥ ਕੀਨੋ ਬਡੋ ਕਲੂ ਮਹਿ ਸਾਕਾ ॥

Tilak janju rakha prabh taka, keno bado kaloo mahin saka.

For the sake of righteousness, he made the supreme sacrifice;

He gave his head but not his resolve.

He protected the sacred tilak and sacred thread,

And made a great offering in this dark age.

This was no private grief but a public declaration: Tegh Bahadur's death was a defense of conscience itself. Gobind Rai embraced Jaita, proclaiming: "Rangreeta Guru ka Beta (ਰੰਗਰੇਟਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਕਾ ਬੇਟਾ)," i.e., the Rangreeta is the Guru's own son. In that gesture, caste hierarchy was overturned, and the seeds of the Khalsa were sown: equality, fraternity, collective sovereignty.

At the same time, Lakhi Shah Vanjara, a Sikh trader and supplier to the Mughal army, managed to retrieve the Guru's headless body. Concealing it beneath bales of hay, he brought it to his house in Delhi. To avoid Mughal detection, he set his home ablaze so that the body could be cremated with dignity. Gurdwara Rakab Ganj now marks the site.

The Mughals may have severed Guru Tegh Bahadur's head on that fateful day in November 1675, but they could not extinguish Guru Nanak's vision of a utopia on Earth, Halemiraj. In 1699, Guru Tegh Bahadur's spirit worked through Guru Gobind Singh and

reemerged as the Khalsa, created on the principle of offering one's head as sacrifice, of which Guru Tegh Bahadur was an exemplar.

III. The Current Debate around Guru Tegh Bahadur's Martyrdom

A pressing historical question that persists is this: why did the Mughal state consistently single out the Sikh Gurus as threats to imperial authority? Why was Guru Arjan accused of treason, and Guru Har Gobind compelled to fight imperial battles? Why was Guru Tegh Bahadur repeatedly arrested, placed under surveillance, and then executed? And why was Guru Gobind Singh pursued with assassination attempts?

The traditional narrative tends to couch the conflict in terms of the religious fanaticism of Aurangzeb and the Guru's defense of the Kashmiri Brahmins' right to free conscience. That was undoubtedly a factor and may have served as the trigger. But it misses the bigger picture.

Scholars have only now begun to diversify the explanation to include factors such as economic pressures, peasant unrest, the crystallization of religious identities, and the emergence of new polities as contributing causes. But even this broader examination of the causes leading to Guru Tegh Bahadur misses the fundamental reason. For that, we have to turn to Guru Nanak.

IV. Guru Nanak: The New Dispensation

We are accustomed (or shall I say conditioned) to view Guru Nanak through a Vedantic or Anglophone lens, which portrays him as a retiring mystic removed from worldly affairs. We fail to see Nanak for what he truly was: A Revolution. Guru Nank was a revolutionary because he *"challenges, questions, overturns assumptions, unsettles moral codes and disrespects sacred ...entities."* (Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh, *The First Sikh*, 154).

Woven into the genius of his mystical outpourings was a challenge and a call to uproot the very structures of violence and injustice in society. Guru Nanak was not trying to fit into an existing system. Instead, he was the 'dawn of a new sun' - a new civilizational paradigm, *halemiraj* (ਹਲੇਮੀ ਰਾਜ). Its dazzling brilliance would disperse old and hackneyed patterns of thinking, just as the sun scatters the stars.

Guru Nanak inaugurated a new spiritual-sovereign order, a dispensation rooted in the sovereignty of Truth,

ਨਾਨਕਿ ਰਾਜੁ ਚਲਾਇਆ ਸਚੁ ਕੋਟੁ ਸਤਾਣੀ ਨੀਵੈ ਏ॥

(SGGS: 966)

Nanak raj chalaya, kot satani neev de

Where the Divine was the unequalled sovereign of all, *nahin har saman koi raja*. (ਨਹੀਂ ਹਰ ਸਮਾਨ ਕੋ ਰਾਜਾ॥) Built not with physical armies but unassailable Truth, protected not with forts constructed of stone but on the edifice of humility.

Guru Nanak's double assault - against royal and ecclesiastical absolutism - undermined the very justification of the Mughal empire, built as it was on the notion of the divine right of kings, an idea endorsed by a colluding clergy: Aurangzeb was the shadow of God on Earth, *zil ih lahi* (ਜਿਲ ਇਲੇ ਇਲਾਹੀ) . Guru Nanak offered a radical spiritual and ethical alternative to the corrupt and violent rule of temporal kings, such as Aurangzeb.

In Nanak's new Order, succession came not through birthright but by self-sacrifice. Nanak framed life as the "game of love":

ਜਉ ਤਉ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਖੇਲਣ ਕਾ ਚਾਉ ॥ ਸਿਰੁ ਧਰਿ ਤਲੀ ਗਲੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਆਉ ॥

(SGGS PG. 1412)

"If you desire to play this game, come with your head on your palm" Love demands sacrifice; authentic living requires courage to challenge injustice. It required a self-aware and awakened individual, yoked to the cause of serving humanity, to move it teleologically in concordance with divine Will, Hukam.

V. Guru Tegh Bahadur: The Exemplar

The biographical details of Guru Tegh Bahadur's life are well-known and do not need repetition here. What is essential is to recognize that in the events of his life were sown the seeds of this great sacrifice. And the tone of his Bani suggests a keen awareness of impending death. Given irreconcilable principles, the historical dialectic would have inevitably led to the event at Chandni Chowk. This inescapability has been beautifully captured by the Sikh chronicler Bhai Nand Lal Goya in his Persian work, the *Ganjnama*.

Nand Lal was a scholar and poet of eminence, a tutor to the royal family and a confidant of Guru Gobind Singh, which makes his testimony all the more significant and revealing. What immediately strikes the reader is his description of Guru Tegh Bahadur as the ninth sovereign of Guru Nanak's new dispensation, subservient to no earthly authority: *saltnat-e-naham, nao ayeen* (*Ganjnama*, 98 as cited in Harinder Singh, *Sikhri Article*, 2021) - placing the Guru on an equal and opposite footing to Aurangzeb.

He describes Guru Tegh Bahadur as the man of the hour; all hands were fastened to the hammock of his benevolence, dasteh hama-gan b-zaileh afzaaleh oon (Ganjnama, 103 as cited in Harinder Singh, Sikhri Article, 2021). His Bani is bar sare anwarey ilam haq-e kaloon - the light leading all out of darkness. Guru Tegh Bahadur was sovereign and prophetic.

In defending conscience and freedom of expression, the Sikh Gurus were also asserting the principle of divine sovereignty, an autonomy that no Empire (then or now) could absorb. Not surprisingly, the Mughals viewed Guru Tegh Bahadur, as they did Guru Arjan, as a rival sovereignty - a state within a state. The charges brought against the Guru were accusations of sedition and treason.

VI. Conclusion: Legacy and Relevance Today

Guru Tegh Bahadur was executed not simply because he supported the Kashmiri Brahmins or that he refused conversion to Islam or that he declined to perform miracles - all these were factors indeed. But the foundational cause was that in the person of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the Mughals were confronted with the light of Guru Nanak.

In accepting death, Guru Tegh Bahadur exemplified Guru Nanak's lesson of "dying while alive," ਜੀਵਨ ਮੁਕਤਿ (jeevan-mukat), to give one's life for something bigger that transcends attachments, ego, and fear of death.

The question for us: Are we responding to the Guru's call for a head?



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Guardian of Conscience: Guru Tegh Bahadur and the Universal Right to Faith and Belief

KARAN BIR SINGH SIDHU, IAS (RETD.)*

(Our humble tribute on the commemoration of the 350th anniversary of his martyrdom)

1. Miri Piri in the Blood: The Youngest Son of Guru Har Gobind

Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621–1675) was the youngest son of Guru Har Gobind, the sixth Guru—revered as Miri Piri de Malik (ਮੀਰੀ ਪੀਰੀ ਦੇ ਮਾਲਕ), sovereign of the temporal and the spiritual. In that house, the sword and the rosary were not contradictions but complements. The child Tegh Bahadur (then known as Tyag Mal, meaning “Master of Renunciation”) grew where courage was principled and devotion socially engaged—an environment that made later martyrdom a serene inevitability rather than a dramatic surprise.

He earned the name Tegh Bahadur, “Brave Wielder of the Sword,” after showing exceptional valour in the Battle of Kartarpur, where his quiet strength revealed its steel in defence of righteousness. Yet even in receiving a warrior’s title, his inner compass remained turned toward renunciation, reflection, and righteousness.

2. A Silence that Spoke: 26 Years, 9 Months, 13 Days at Baba Bakala

Although Guru Tegh Bahadur had been married to Mata Gujri Ji on 4 February 1633, the early decades of their marriage coincided with his prolonged tapasya at Baba Bakala. Mata Gujri Ji served him with unwavering devotion—managing the household, welcoming visitors, and attending to the sangat. Yet, in a disciplined spirit of self-restraint and meditation, they chose a state of continence and thus desired no children during this period.

Far from being isolated, Guru Tegh Bahadur regularly visited nearby villages to strengthen sangats, preach the Guru’s message, and address community needs such as digging wells. His significant visit to Delhi in 1664 to meet the Bal Guru, Sri Guru Har Krishan Sahib, further reflects his deep engagement with the Panth even during his contemplative seclusion.

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3. “Gur Ladho Re!” (ਗੁਰੂ ਲਾਧੋ ਰੇ!) : Makhan Shah Labana’s Rooftop Cry

The veil lifted through the steadfast faith of Makhan Shah Labana. Testing each self-proclaimed guru with a token offering from a vow made at sea, he found only one who quietly asked for the full promised sum. Bursting onto a rooftop, he cried, “Gur ladho re!” (ਗੁਰੂ ਲਾਧੋ ਰੇ!)—“I have found the Guru!” The Ninth Nanak was thus revealed in rustic humility, reaffirming that Truth often sits quietly while pretenders clamour.

4. Not Just “Saving Hindu Dharma” — Upholding Dharma Itself

We must gently correct a persistent misreading. Guru Tegh Bahadur did not die to “save Hindu Dharma” in a sectarian sense; he upheld Dharma (ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਰਾਖੀ)—the moral order and freedom of conscience for all. When Kashmiri Pandits sought refuge from Aurangzeb’s tyranny, he saw not a ritual to defend but a right to believe. This was no inversion of Sikh values but their flowering, Sikhism’s ethos is to protect the oppressed, irrespective of label.

5. From the First Nanak’s Thread to the Ninth Nanak’s Martyrdom

Guru Nanak, as a child, had repudiated the janeu (ਜਨੇਊ), questioning the worth of an external thread devoid of inner ethical fibre. The Ninth Guru’s martyrdom is that same principle rendered in flesh and blood: spirituality cannot be regimented by imperial decree. The continuum from the First Nanak’s quiet defiance to the Ninth Nanak’s supreme sacrifice reveals a seamless transition of belief, courage, and conscience across generations.

6. Zenith of an Emperor, Summit of a Saint

Aurangzeb stood at the zenith of Mughal power during Guru Tegh Bahadur’s Guruship (1664–1675); Delhi’s might was concentrated in the iron grip of a single autocratic will. In that arena, an unarmed saint refused submission. The scaffold in Chandni Chowk became a pulpit, and the consecrated head of unparalleled sacrifice, a defiant testament to liberty. With one fearless act, Guru Tegh Bahadur declared that no emperor may dictate the soul—especially where the struggle for the downtrodden is concerned.

7. The Child Who Prompted the Father: Gobind Rai’s Question

Sikh tradition recalls young Gobind Rai (later Guru Gobind Singh) asking, upon hearing of the Pandits’ plight, “Who is greater than you to defend them?” That innocent query nudged Guru Tegh Bahadur toward Delhi. Thus, the second great martyrdom in the Sikh Gurus’ line was etched into the child’s consciousness—instilling in him the necessity of a

disciplined community of saint-soldiers. The Khalsa, born in 1699, had its roots in the Ninth Nanak's stoic and supreme sacrifice in 1675.

8. Eastward Footprints: Patna Sahib, Dacca, Sylhet and Beyond

Following in Guru Nanak's footsteps to Kamrup (Assam), Guru Tegh Bahadur journeyed eastwards—to Patna Sahib, Dacca, Sylhet, and the Brahmaputra delta. He consolidated sangats, resolved disputes, initiated public works such as digging wells, and recited shabads that nurtured spiritual life. A network of couriers carried hukamnamas between Anandpur Sahib, Patna, and Bengal, linking distant Sikhs. Trusted masands like Bhai Almast were appointed to steward these centres, embedding a vibrant Sikh presence across Bengal and Assam.

9. Shalok Mahalla 9: Captivating Verses, Liberating Truth

Among Guru Tegh Bahadur's enduring legacies are the 57 saloks of Shalok Mahalla 9 — piercing verses traditionally believed to have been composed in captivity and smuggled out with aid from sympathetic guards. Enshrined later by Guru Gobind Singh in the Damdama Bir, they now form part of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

Here are selected saloks, presented with Gurmukhi, transliteration, and English translation:

1. ਗੁਨੁ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਗਾਇਓ ਨਹੀ ਜਨਮੁ ਅਕਾਰਥ ਕੀਨੁ ॥
ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹਰਿ ਭਜੁ ਮਨਾ ਜਿਹ ਬਿਧਿ ਜਲ ਕਉ ਮੀਨੁ ॥੧॥ SGGS PG.1426
Gun Gobind gaeo nahi janam akarath kin. Kaho Nanak har bhaj mana jih bidh jal kau min.
— If you do not sing the Lord's praises, life is wasted; cling to Him as fish to water.
2. ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮੁ ਉਰ ਮੈ ਗਹਿਓ ਜਾ ਕੈ ਸਮ ਨਹੀ ਕੋਇ ॥
ਜਿਹ ਸਿਮਰਤ ਸੰਕਟ ਮਿਟੈ ਦਰਸੁ ਤੁਹਾਰੋ ਹੋਇ ॥੫੭॥੧॥ SGGS PG.1429
Ram nam ur mai gahio, ja kai sam nahi koi. Jih simarat sankat mitai daras tuharo hoi — I have enshrined the Lord's Name; by the Guru's grace, all Maya's entanglements are cut.
3. ਸਗਲ ਦੁਆਰ ਕੋ ਛਾਡਿ ਕੈ ਗਹਿਓ ਤੁਹਾਰੋ ਦੁਆਰਾ॥
ਬਾਹਿ ਗਹੇ ਕੀ ਲਾਜ ਅਸਿ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਦਾਸ ਤੁਹਾਰਾ॥
Sagal duar ko chhad kai, gahio tuharo duar. Ba-h gahe ki laj as Gobind das tuhar.

— For saking all other doors, I grasp Yours; now uphold the honour of my arm, O Lord of the universe.

4. ਜਿਹ ਸਿਮਰਤ ਸੰਕਟ ਮਿਟੈ ਦਰਸੁ ਤੁਹਾਰੋ ਹੋਇ ॥੫੭॥੧॥

Jeh Simrat Sankat mitai daras tuharo hoi.

— With your vision, all afflictions vanish.

These saloks trace a spiritual trajectory that is at once personal and universal. They move from a lament over a wasted life — (ਜਨਮੁ ਅਕਾਰਥ ਕੀਨੁ) “janam akarath kin” — a chilling note of caution to all mortals engrossed in worldly illusion, to the triumphant anchoring in the Divine Name — ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮੁ ਉਰ ਮੈ ਗਹਿਓ “Ram nam ur mai gahio” — and finally, to a state of total surrender — ਸਗਲ ਦੁਆਰ ਕੋ ਛਾਡਿ ਕੈ “Sagal duar ko chhad kai”. Their brevity belies their sweep: an entire soul’s arc from distraction to devotion, captured in the quiet dignity of a condemned saint’s final utterances.

10. The Final Rites: Lakhi Shah Banjara and Rakabganj Sahib

While Bhai Jaita Ji carried the consecrated head, Lakhi Shah Banjara Ji risked all to recover and cremate the Guru’s body by setting fire to his own home. Gurdwara Rakabganj Sahib stands today where his house once stood—a testament to his fearless sewa and the reverence with which Sikhs honour both body and spirit.

11. The Carrier of the Consecrated Head: Bhai Jaita’s Sacred Journey

Bhai Jaita’s perilous journey carrying the Guru’s head to Anandpur Sahib defied Mughal vigilance. Later honoured as Bhai Jiwan Singh, he epitomised Sikh egalitarianism and courage, earning the immortal title: Ranghretta Guru ka beta (ਰੰਗਰੇਟਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਕਾ ਬੇਟਾ) — the Ranghretta is the Guru’s own son.

12. An Offering for Our Time

On this 350th anniversary, Guru Tegh Bahadur’s martyrdom stands as a timeless proclamation of conscience. His life reinforces a global human rights ideal: every person’s freedom to live by their creed. He remains the Hind-di-Chaadar, but even more, the shield of the human conscience Dharam Di Chadar (ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਚਾਦਰ) — a voice that whispers to tyrants, you may take the body, not the belief, and to the faithful, you may walk unarmed, but never alone. □



Some Key aspects of Guru Tegh Bahadur's life and his legacy

KIRPAL SINGH*

Abstract

Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth of the Ten Gurus of Sikhism, is revered for his courage, spiritual wisdom, and ultimate sacrifice for religious freedom. He was born in Amritsar in 1621, his original name was Tyag Mal. He earned the name Tegh Bahadur ("Brave Sword") for his valor in battle. He is known as the "Shield of India" (Hind di Chadar) for defending the rights of Kashmiri Pandits against forced conversions to Islam. His martyrdom, at the hands of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, is a defining moment in Sikh history. Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji contributed over 100 hymns to the Guru Granth Sahib, emphasizing themes of God, human attachments, and spiritual enlightenment.

Advocacy for Religious Freedom and his martyrdom:

He strongly opposed the forced conversions of Hindus during Aurangzeb's reign and ultimately sacrificed his life to protect their religious freedom. Guru Tegh Bahadur was publicly beheaded in Delhi in 1675 for refusing to convert to Islam. He is remembered as a protector of humanity and a symbol of courage and sacrifice. His martyrdom is commemorated as Shaheedi Divas on November 24th (according to the Nanakshahi calendar). Guru Ji was steadfast in his beliefs in human liberty:-

ਭੈ ਕਾਹੂ ਕਉ ਦੇਤ ਨਹਿ ਨਹਿ ਭੈ ਮਾਨਤ ਆਨ ॥

Bhai Kaahoo Ko Dhaeth Nehi Nehi Bhai Maanath Aan //

One who does not frighten anyone, and who is not afraid of anyone else

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਨਿ ਰੇ ਮਨਾ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਤਾਹਿ ਬਖਾਨਿ ॥੧੬॥

Kahu Naanak Sun Rae Manaa Giaanee Thaahi Bakhaan //16// (SGGS PG.1427)

- says Nanak, listen, mind: call him spiritually wise. ||16||

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Among his Legacy, he contributed towards the building of Anandpur Sahib. He founded the city of Anandpur Sahib, which became a significant center for Sikhism, where the Khalsa Panth was later founded by his son, Guru Gobind Singh. Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji also traveled extensively to spread the teachings of Sikhism and established community kitchens (langars) and wells for the benefit of the people.

Spiritual guidance about the importance of Gurmat Naam is highlighted by Guru Teg Bahadur Ji as given below:-

ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮੁ ਉਰ ਮੈ ਗਹਿਓ ਜਾ ਕੈ ਸਮ ਨਹੀ ਕੋਇ॥
raam naam our mai gehiou jaa kai sam nehee koe //

I have enshrined the Lord's Name within my heart; there is nothing equal to it.

ਜਿਹ ਸਿਮਰਤ ਸੰਕਟ ਮਿਟੈ ਦਰਸੁ ਤੁਹਾਰੇ ਹੋਇ ॥੫੭॥੧॥
jih simarath sankatt mittai dharas thuhaaro hoe //57//1// (SGGS PG. 1429)

Meditating in remembrance on it, my troubles are taken away; I have received the Blessed Vision of Your Darshan. ||57||1||

ਹਰਿ ਕੋ ਨਾਮੁ ਸਦਾ ਸੁਖਦਾਈ ॥
Har Ko Naam Sadhaa Sukhadhaaee //

The Name of the Lord is forever the Giver of peace.

ਜਾ ਕਉ ਸਿਮਰਿ ਅਜਾਮਲੁ ਉਧਰਿਓ ਗਨਿਕਾ ਹੂ ਗਤਿ ਪਾਈ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥
Jaa Ko Simar Ajaamal Oudhhariou Ganikaa Hoo Gath Paaee //1// Rehaao //
 (SGGS PG.1008)

Meditating in remembrance on it, Ajaamal was saved, and Ganika the prostitute was emancipated. ||1||Pause||

ਭੈ ਨਾਸਨ ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਹਰਨ ਕਲਿ ਮੈ ਹਰਿ ਕੋ ਨਾਮੁ ॥
Bhai Naasan Dhuramath Haran Kal Mai Har Ko Naam //

In this Dark Age of Kali Yuga, the Name of the Lord is the Destroyer of fear, the Eradicator of evil-mindedness.

ਨਿਸਿ ਦਿਨੁ ਜੋ ਨਾਨਕ ਭਜੈ ਸਫਲ ਹੋਹਿ ਤਿਹ ਕਾਮ ॥੨੦॥
Nis Dhin Jo Naanak Bhajai Safal Hohi Thih Kaam //20// (SGGS PG 1427)

Night and day, O Nanak, whoever vibrates and meditates on the Lord's Name, sees all of his works brought to fruition. ||20||

ਜਿਹਬਾ ਗੁਨ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਭਜਹੁ ਕਰਨ ਸੁਨਹੁ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ॥

Jihabaa Gun Gobindh Bhajahu Karan Sunahu Har Naam //

Vibrate with your tongue the Glorious Praises of the Lord of the Universe; with your ears, hear the Lord's Name.

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਨਿ ਰੇ ਮਨਾ ਪਰਹਿ ਨ ਜਮ ਕੈ ਧਾਮ ॥੨੧॥

Kahu Naanak Sun Rae Manaa Parehi N Jam Kai Dhhaam //21// (SGGS PG. 1427)

Says Nanak, listen, man: you shall not have to go to the house of Death. ||21||

Guru Teg Bahadur Ji guides us regarding the close vicinity of Waheguru who is accessible on giving up one's urge for greed (Maya) and self ego (ahankar) etc:-

ਕਾਹੇ ਰੇ ਬਨ ਖੋਜਨ ਜਾਈ ॥

Kaahae Rae Ban Khojan Jaaee //

Why do you go looking for Him in the forest?

ਸਰਬ ਨਿਵਾਸੀ ਸਦਾ ਅਲੇਖਾ ਤੋਹੀ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਮਾਈ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

Sarab Nivaasee Sadhaa Alaepaa Thohee Sang Samaaee //1// Rehaao //

(SGGS PG.684)

Although he is unattached, he dwells everywhere. He is always with you as your companion. ||1||Pause||

ਜਿਉ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਅਰੁ ਪੇਖਨਾ ਐਸੇ ਜਗ ਕਉ ਜਾਨਿ ॥

Jio Supanaa Ar Paekhanaa Aisae Jag Ko Jaan //

Like a dream and a show, so is this world, you must know.

ਇਨ ਮੈ ਕਛੁ ਸਾਚੇ ਨਹੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਬਿਨੁ ਭਗਵਾਨ ॥੨੩॥

Ein Mai Kashh Saacho Nehee Naanak Bin Bhagavaan //23// (SGGS PG. 1427)

None of this is true, O Nanak, without God. ||23||

ਜਿਹਿ ਮਾਇਆ ਮਮਤਾ ਤਜੀ ਸਭ ਤੇ ਭਇਓ ਉਦਾਸੁ ॥

Jihi Maaeiaa Mamathaa Thajee Sabh Thae Bhaeiou Oudhaas //

One who renounces Maya and possessiveness and is detached from everything

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਨੁ ਰੇ ਮਨਾ ਤਿਹ ਘਟਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਨਿਵਾਸੁ ॥੧੮॥

Kahu Naanak Sun Rae Manaa Thih Ghatt Braham Nivaas //18// (SGGS PG.1427)

- says Nanak, listen, mind: God abides in his heart. ||18||

ਜਿਹਿ ਪ੍ਰਾਨੀ ਹਉਮੈ ਤਜੀ ਕਰਤਾ ਰਾਮੁ ਪਛਾਨਿ॥

Jihi Praanee Houmai Thajee Karathaa Raam Pashhaan //

That mortal, who forsakes egotism, and realizes the Creator Lord

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਵਹੁ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨਰੁ ਇਹ ਮਨ ਸਾਚੀ ਮਾਨੁ ॥੧੯॥

Kahu Naanak Vahu Mukath Nar Eih Man Saachee Maan //19//

- says Nanak, that person is liberated; O mind, know this as true. ||19||

ਜੋ ਪ੍ਰਾਨੀ ਨਿਸਿ ਦਿਨੁ ਭਜੈ ਰੂਪ ਰਾਮ ਤਿਹ ਜਾਨੁ॥

Jo Praanee Nis Dhin Bhajai Roop Raam Thih Jaan // (M. 9, SGGS. 1427)

That mortal who meditates and vibrates upon the Lord night and day - know him to be the embodiment of the Lord.

ਹਰਿ ਜਨ ਹਰਿ ਅੰਤਰੁ ਨਹੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਚੀ ਮਾਨੁ ॥੨੯॥

Har Jan Har Anthar Nehee Naanak Saachee Maan //29//

There is no difference between the Lord and the humble deciple of the Lord; O Nanak, know this as true. ||29||

Conclusion

In conclusion, the entire Bani of Guru Teg Bahadur Ji beautifully sums up his Spiritual legacy on the Gurmat Guidance for the Humanity. His advices are handy to steer through the life journey in a meaningful way at all stages of one's life and to achieve the ultimate goal of life i.e. the merger with Akalpurakh. However, Guru Ji cautions us as well about the difficult Spiritual Path (Marg) which is accessible only by Gurmukhs.



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Sultan-ul Duniya Wal-Akhirat: Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib The Sovereign of the World and Hereafter

*S. HARINDER SINGH**

The Sikh historical narratives live in the psyche of the Guru Khalsa Panth, the flag-bearers of the Sikh collective. Ik Oankar or 1Force narratives are recorded as perpetual infinite wisdom in the Guru Granth Sahib, the charter of the Sikh collective. The historical narratives were passed from bosom to bosom, told and retold from generation to generation. Two of those witnessing the events recorded their impressions of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib (1621-1675) in the two texts. They both were contemporaries of the Guru, and their texts are considered either a contemporary or a near-contemporary source. The writings of Bhai Nand Lal 'Goya' and Chandra Sain 'Sainpati' have been informing and transforming the Sikh psyche since the eve of the seventeenth century. This essay is an attempt to present the grandeur and legacy of the Ninth Sovereign from Goya's Ganjnamah and Sainpati's Sri Gur Sobha. They were two of the fifty-two court poets in the Darbar of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib (1666-1708).

In the current climate of appropriation and revisionism, these two aforementioned textual sources must form the basis of the Guru's life and legacy narrative. The popular mandates are an attempt to revise Sikh narratives, especially after the fourth centennial commemorations of the Ninth Nanak, Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib.

The actual original texts, dating, and inter-language transcription continue to be part of the academic debate. The authors' names, biographies, and Sikh lifestyles remain unfinished, though they seem to gather some steam and fascination in academia and the community.

The Sikh inspiration is beautifully captured in both texts: their love for the Guru, their linguistic and poetic scholarship, as well as their clarity on the Guru's perfection and mission, is uncontested. And that is what is presented here, a new translation from selections from their writings about Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib.

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Goya's Ganjnamah

Bhai Nand Lal 'Goya' (1633-1713) was born in Ghazni, Afghanistan, and died in Multan, Pakistan. His poetry is in Panjabi and Persian. Ganjnamah (Treasury-Book) is in Persian. It is divided into ten parts; each part has two subsections. Each part deals with one of the Gurus in the order of their guruships. Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib is covered in the ninth part.

In the first subsection, Saltnat-e-Naham, Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib is presented as the Sovereign who ruled a sultanate. It also unveils the mystery of the Guru's name in letters of the Persian alphabet. In the second subsection, Vahiguru Jiu Sati, the Guru's status is lovingly, creatively, and poetically enunciated.

In common parlance, the Sultanate refers to both the state and the period ruled by the Sultan. It is rooted in the Islamic political ideology of the kingdom. When Goya intentionally chooses to use the term Sultanate, he establishes the domain of the Guru in contrast to the Mughal state and asserts Sikh sovereignty.

Through Goya, the various facets of the Guru unfolded: sovereign, divine, powerful, examiner, reviver, uniter, advisor, officer, and so on. Each facet established the Guru's perfection in a subtle yet direct manner. Then, each letter of the Guru's name describes an attribute of the Guru.

Saltnat-e-Naham: The Sultanate of the Ninth

The Sultanate of the Ninth has a new constitution
and is the chief among chief devotees of the Truth.

The Sovereign of the World and Hereafter,
and the adornment of the throne of honor and grandeur.

Even though it is the possessor of Divine power,
it bows its head to Divine Command and Will
and is the hidden instrument of Divine greatness and majesty.

The examiner of auspicious command followers,
and the reviver of impartial determined devotees.

The power among the powerful ones and the unity among the united ones.

Remains steadfast due to the nature of the ancient Divine.

And the constant advisor to the auspicious and great Divine.

The officer of the special chosen ones,
and the crown of the Truth-embodied devotees of the Truth.

The associated 'T' in the blessed name beautifies the trust and living in Divine Will.

And the Persian 'E' exemplifies complete great faith.

The blessed 'G' exhibits a gracious, humble nature from head to toe.

And 'B' linked with 'H' adorns the gathering of knowledge and education.

'A' from the Truth decorates the conviction and the Truth.

And 'D' of infinite vision justly rules both the worlds.

The last 'R' knows the mystery of the Divine way,
and forms the Truthful foundation of the highest Truth.⁹⁸

Vahiguru Jiu Sati: Revered Awe-Wisdom is Eternal

Guru Tegh Bahadur is a grace-treasure from head to toe,
He beautifies the Divine gathering with authority and splendor.⁹⁹

His auspicious existence illuminates rays of Truth,
His victorious grace illuminates both worlds ¹⁰⁰

The Divine chose him from the collective of the chosen ones
and considered his acceptance of the Command
and Divine Will the best.¹⁰¹

His status was elevated to the greatest among the accepted ones,
He is to be hailed in both worlds as decreed by Divine grace.¹⁰²

His hem of radiance has everyone's hands on it for prosperity,
His voice of Truth is beyond the rays of all knowledge ¹⁰³

Throughout the composition, there are many Islamic as well as Sufi phrases. Four words stand out in the original Persian, which require more context. In Sufi parlance, Taslim-o-Raza has a very specific meaning. Taslim is accepting the Divine Command without any complaint, while Raza is accepting the Divine Will as pleasing. Hence, Taslim is a state of submission before the appearance of the Command, and Raza is surrendering

to the Will after the occurrence of whatever the Command is. Similarly, in certain Sufi schools, the Jabrutis are those in the realm of 'Power' while Lahutis are in the realm of 'Unity.' The aforementioned translation aims to incorporate these powerful elements into the Sikh paradigm for a global audience.

Sainapati's Sri Gur Sobha

Chandra Sain 'Sainapati' (years unknown) was from the Panjab; he was born in Lahore, Pakistan, and spent his later days in Wazirabad, Pakistan. Sri Gur Sobha is in the Panjabi and Braj languages; its script is Gurmukhi. It is composed of nineteen poetic forms and meters, divided into twenty chapters over nine hundred and thirty-five verses.

Sainapati's portrayal of the Guru is in the classic Indic tradition of epics. He employed the textual techniques used to present Hindu heroes.

In this Chaupai, Sainapati presents Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib as Sristi ki Chadar, the protector of humanity. Srisati or Srishati is creation or humanity. It is important to note that dharam (connoting religion or law) and Hind (connoting Hindus or India) have become more popular narratives. Srisati includes Dharma and Hind, and so much more.

Guru Tegh Bahadur was revealed,
whose domain covered the whole creation,
who protected the honor of the act and the principle,
whose witnessed narrative became eternal in the Dark era 14

The Guru's fame spread throughout the whole creation,
which protected all principles,
who was victorious-victorious in the three worlds,
This is how Eternal-Guru protected the honor. 15

Hindu forehead mark, sacred thread, and religious center,
They exist eternally due to the Guru's compassion.

In principle, the Guru departed for the Divine abode,
The next Guru became known as Guru Gobind Singh 16

In this Svaiya, the Guru again is presented as the emancipator of the world, not just the religious world or the Hindu world.

Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh
became the emancipator and the emancipation.

Glorious victory resounded in the three worlds;
The Guru was revealed as the first, the doer, and the deed.

The destroyer of the wicked and the liberator of the truth-exemplar,
the emancipator of the whole world, and the eliminator of fear.

All gods proclaimed: Victorious! Victorious! Victorious!

They entered the sanctuary of the Guru.¹⁷

In this Kabitu, all Gurus are presented as Nanaks and Sovereigns who cover or protect the whole world.

You alone are Guru Nanak; you alone are Guru Angad,
You alone are Guru Amardas; you alone are Guru Ramdas,
You alone are Guru Arjan; you alone are Guru Har Gobind,
You alone are Guru Har Rai; you alone are [Guru] Har Krishan,
You became the Ninth Sovereign; your power protected in the Dark era,
Tegh-Sword alone is Bahadur-Warrior;
You alone cover-protect the whole world.

You alone are the Tenth Sovereign Guru Gobind Singh;

You alone came as the Divine to liberate the world.^{5.46}

There are two more references to Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib in this text. The Guru purchased the deeded Makhoval village land in 1664 and named it Chak Nanaki. It was later renamed Sri Anandpur Sahib. In this Dohra, Sainapati refers to Makhoval.

The beautiful Makhoval is the dwelling place of the Eternal-Guru,
where the extraordinary wonders of myriad divine plays
in multiple dimensions were seen.^{7.48}

In this Dohra, Sainapati references Sahibzade Jujhar Singh and Fateh Singh, who were martyred at Sirhind in the continuous saga of their grandfather Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib.

Blessed, blessed are the sons of Gurdev (Perfection-Divine)
who had no greed for their bodies.

They protected the principle in the Dark Era
to receive fame from their grandfather (Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib).74.543

The Narrative

Now, after more than 400 years since the Prakash Purab (Illumination Day) of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib, and as we mark 350 years since his Shahidi (martyrdom), it is prudent to acknowledge and re-establish the original narrative: The Guru was the Sovereign. Guru was the Ninth Sovereign in the line of the Raj started by Guru Nanak Sahib. The Guru was neither Hindu nor Muslim. The Guru never even in thought or practice, entertained any animosity or discrimination towards anyone. The Guru declared: "Nanak says that the mind must accept this explanation that the insightful does not instill fear in anyone nor is fearful of anyone."

The Guru lived the 1Force-1Ness paradigm born out of 1Oankar-Nam culture. The Guru contemplated IkOankar, composed music, fought battles, established centers, mediated treaties, addressed corruption, and embraced martyrdom. The Guru's followers, friends, and adversaries included the Sikhs, the Hindus, and the Muslims. The Mughal empire, the Hindu Hill chiefs and Rajput kings, and the Sikh masands did not accept the Guru's open and transparent way.

Today's narrative of the Guru is either nefarious revisionism or intentional omission by the Hindutva forces in Indian publications and the Islamic publications in Pakistan. Elements of this are global, online, and amid Sikh writings as well. This huge challenge must be addressed and will require diligence and deliberation for corrections to materialize.

To deeply know and intimately connect with the Guru, one must read, study, listen to, and sing the sabads (verse or composition) in the Guru Granth Sahib. Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib revealed the infinite wisdom in fifty-nine Sabads in fifteen rags (musical modes) as well as fifty-seven saloks (poetic praise). That is where the perfect Sikh narrative resides!



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Guru Teg Bahadur Ji's Martyrdom: The Real Message And The Efforts To Obscure It

*KARMINDER SINGH DHILLON, PhD.**

Abstract

The motivation for the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur ji, his message for mankind, and its philosophical underpinnings are contained within the writings of the ninth Guru as found within the Sri Guru Granth Sahib. This has, however, not stopped a whole gamut of efforts towards obscuring the truth of his martyrdom, its motivation, and its philosophical foundations. Three sources of such efforts are identified in this essay. The earliest attempts at such corruption can be discerned from within the classical Sikh historical literature. The second source is Sikh clergy, institutions, and intellectuals who propagate the corrupted narratives unthinkingly and uncritically, failing to apply the touchstone of Gurbani in their analysis. The third source comprises the Hindutva-led movements within India whose primary aim is the cooption of Sikhi and Sikh Gurus. The general population of Sikh masses, large proportions of whom have broken away from reading, critical thought, and objective analysis, have their fair share of blame as well.

INTRODUCTION

The Sikh world generally accepts Chandra Sain Sainapat's mention of the martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur in Sri Guru Sobha Granth (1711 AD) as the earliest attribution towards the motivation and philosophical underpinnings of the event. Counted as a contemporary of the tenth Guru, his attribution is captured herein:

ਤੇਗ ਹੀ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਜਗ ਚਾਦਰ ਸਭ ਤੂਹੀ ਹੈ ॥

Teg Hi Bahadur Jug Chador Sabh Tuhi(n) Hai. (Chap 2, 5:56); and again herein:

ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਭਏ ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ॥

ਸਗਲ ਸ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟ ਪੈ ਜਾਕੀ ਚਾਦਰ॥

Pargatt Bhaye Gur Teg Bhadur. Sagal Srishtt Paiy Jaki Chador. (Chap 1:14).

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His use of the word Chador points to a poetic depiction of the concepts of “protection, defense, and shield.” His use of the words Jug Chador and Srisht Ki Chador illustrates Sainapat’s belief that a universal objective was the philosophical underpinning of the event. His choice of words further points towards the defense of humanity and protection of mankind as a whole, being the philosophical foundation and message of martyrdom.

CLASSICAL SIKH LITERATURE.

The gamut of texts that are generally (and erroneously) classified as “Classical Sikh History” is plagued with numerous problems. Questionable authorship; unverifiable time frames of their actual writing; anti-Sikh and anti-Guru slants; and agenda-based accounts are just some of them.

A systematic examination of some of the classical literature exposes an attempt to drown Sainapat’s depiction and replace it with a narrow analysis that the martyrdom was inspired by a particular group of people and undertaken in the defense of specific symbols of a specific belief system.

Kesar Singh Chibber’s Bansavalinama of 1769 relegates the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur to within the narrow scope of “dharam” or religion. He writes of Guru Teg Bahadur telling Sikhs during his imprisonment:

ਇਸ ਦਾ ਅਸਾਡਾ ਹੋਸੀ ਸਦਾ ਲੇਖਾ ਧਰਮ ਰਹੇ ਅਤੇ ਸੀਸੁ ਜਾਉ ॥ Chapter 9 verse 157 and 163

Translation : This is my account; religion gets saved at the expense of my head. He further writes of Mata Gujri ji saying to Guru Gobind Singh.

ਤੇਰੇ ਪਿਤਾ ਧਰਮ ਰਖਿਆ ਤੇ ਸੀਸੁ ਕਟਾਇਆ ॥ Chapter 9 verse 163

Your father was beheaded in the protection of religion.

Seven decades later in 1841, Ratan Singh Bhangu in Pracheen Panth Parkash specifies the “dharam.”. He writes:

ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਫਿਰ ਗੁਰ ਭਯੋ ॥
ਪਰਸਵਾਰਥ ਹਿਤਿ ਜਿਨਿ ਸਿਰ ਦਯੋ ॥
ਕਲਯੁਗ ਮੈ ਬਡ ਸਾਕਾ ਕੀਯਾ ॥
ਧਰਮ ਕਰਮ ਰਖ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਲੀਯਾ ॥ Episode 11, verse 7

Translation: Guru Tegh Bahadur made the supreme sacrifice in Kaliyuga, and protected the religious rights and rituals of the Hindus.

In 1843, Nirmla Kavi Santokh Singh's Gurpartap Suraj Granth would assert that the motivation came from a particular group of Hindus – namely the Kashmiri Brahmins. He writes that the Kashmiri Brahmins went to Shivji to seek his intervention in Aurangzeb's tyranny. Shivji is said to have composed a personal letter with instructions to the Brahmins to deliver it to Guru Teg Bahadur. Santokh Singh writes:

ਪ੍ਰਾਨ ਅੰਤ ਲਉ ਦਿਜ ਭਏ ਜਾਨੈ ਰਿਦੈ ਤ੍ਰਿਨੈਨ ॥ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਧਾਰਿ ਪੱਤ੍ਰੀ ਬਿਖੇ ਲਿਖਿ ਉਪਾਏ ਕਿ ਬੈਨ ॥੧॥ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਨਾਨਕ
ਜਹ ਗੁਰੂ ਬਿਸਾਲਾ॥ ਅਪ੍ਰਮੇਯ ਸਮਰਥ ਕਲਿ ਕਾਲਾ ॥ ਤਿਨ ਗਾਦੀ ਪਰ ਬੈਠਯੋ ਜਾਇ॥ ਕਾਜ ਤੁਮਾਰੈ ਸਾਰੈ ਸੋਇ ॥੨॥
ਇਹੀ ਪੱਤ੍ਰਕਾ ਲੈ ਤੁਮ ਜਾਵਹੁ॥ ਬਿਰਥਾ ਅਪਨੀ ਸਕਲ ਸੁਨਾਵਹੁ ॥ ਸੋ ਰਾਖਿਹਗੇ ਧਰਮ ਤੁਹਾਰਾ॥ ਇਨ ਬਿਨ ਅਨ ਤੇ ਹਵੈ ਨਾ
ਉਬਾਰਾ ॥੩॥ Suraj Parkash Vol 9 Chapter 28.

Translation: Shivji realized the predicament the Brahmins were in. He became benevolent and wrote the following instructions in his letter. Guru Nanak was a great Guru in Kaljug, all capable. Whoever is now sitting on his throne will help resolve your problem. Take this letter of mine to give to him and narrate your problem. No one other than him can save you.

The Bachittar Natak goes further to relegate the under pinnings of martyrdom to two very specific symbols of a specific religion. The verses read:

ਤਿਲਕ ਜੰਝੁ ਰਾਖਾ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਤਾ ਕਾ ॥ ਕੀਨੋ ਬਡੋ ਕਲੂ ਮਹਿ ਰਾਖਾ ॥
ਧਰਮ ਹੇਤ ਸਾਕਾ ਜਿਨ ਕੀਆ ॥ ਸੀਸ ਦੀਆ ਪਰ ਸਿਰਰ ਨ ਦੀਆ ॥

*Tilak Janju Rakha Prab Taka. Kino Bdo Klu Meh Saka... Dharm Heyt Saka Jin Keeya.
Sees Diya Par Sirer Na Diya.*

Translation: The massive event of the sacrifice in Kalyug was in defense of the sacred mark tilak and the sacred thread janju. He gave his head in the name of religion for these symbols, but not his faith in them (Sirer na diya). These verses tie the martyrdom of the Guru explicitly to the two symbols, and pin the Guru's faith onto the same symbols – neither of which were adorned by the Gurus or prescribed by them for Sikhs.

SIKH CLERGY, INSTITUTIONS, INTELLECTUALS, AND LEADERSHIP

Our clergy (ragis, parcharaks, kirtanias, kathakars), institutions, and intelligentsia have failed to play their respective roles. Had they done so, the Sikh world at large would not have been in the quagmire it is in, having relegated a martyrdom of epic proportions to one undertaken in the defense of two symbols of a particular religion.

At every commemorative event of the martyrdom, our clergy ingrain this narrative, our institutions go along with the narrative, and our intelligentsia have come to subscribe to it. The Sikh world has been ingrained with the narrative that Guru Teg Bahadur is Hind Dee Chador – the protector of the Hindu nation to whom the symbols of Tilak and Janju belong.

THE HINDUTVA ENTERPRISE

The designs of forces within the government and ruling elite who subscribe to Hindutva and have the agenda of co-opting Sikhs and Sikhi into their bigger fold end up as the biggest beneficiaries of the corruption and distortion that has befallen the narrative of martyrdom. These forces assert that if not for the sacrifice of Guru Teg Bahadur, Hinduism would not have survived, calling for this or that road, institution, or structure to be named or re-named after Guru Teg Bahadur ji. Public funds are used at the behest of these forces for the construction of monuments and commemorative celebrations of the martyrdom.

Sikhs feel proud that non-Sikhs are honouring their Guru. Little do they realize that any such honor cannot exist if the basis for it is a distorted, corrupted, and hijacked narrative to begin with. Little do they realize that there can be no honor in relegating a martyrdom of universal stature to one that happened for the protection of one religion and two symbols.

THE MARTYRDOM, ITS MOTIVATION AND ITS PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS

Guru Teg Bahadur ji was put to death – by the order of then Emperor Aurangzeb - in the public square of Chandni Chowk, Delhi on the 11th of November 1675.

In 1670, Aurangzeb announced his policy of Ek Mazhab. His rationale was that everyone professing one religion was the way to peace and unity. Aurangzeb had decreed an end to all customs, rituals, and practices that contravened his Ek Mazhab dictate.

In the mind of Guru Teg Bahadur, the notion of a single mazhab was antithetical to the root principle of nature, which was diversity. Diversity was a foundational belief of Guru Nanak's Sikhi as encapsulated in the verse on page 385 of the SGGS:

ਏਕੁ ਬਗੀਚਾ ਪੇਡ ਘਨ ਕਰਿਆ ॥

ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਨਾਮੁ ਤਹਾ ਮਹਿ ਫਲਿਆ ॥੧॥

(SGGS PG. 385)

Eyk Bageecha Peyd Ghan Kariya. Amrit Nam Tha Meh Faliya.

Translation: The Orchard – meaning Humanity - is One, but the Vegetation Within it – meaning the people - is Diverse Aplenty. It is Within Such Kind of a Diverse Creation That Divinity Comes to Fruition.

Here is yet another verse on page 1056 that says that diversity was the foundational tenet of creation.

ਮੇਰੈ ਪ੍ਰਭਿ ਸਾਚੈ ਇਕੁ ਖੇਲੁ ਰਚਾਇਆ ॥
ਕੋਇ ਨ ਕਿਸ ਹੀ ਜੇਹਾ ਉਪਾਇਆ ॥

(SGGS PG.1056)

Mairaiy Prabh Sachaiy Ek Kheyli Rchaya. Koye Na Kis Hee Jeha Upaya.

Translation: The Creation Of My Master Lord Is Such: No Entity Is Created Like The Other.

Guru Teg Bahadur thus decided, according to his own humanist convictions, to convey an ultimate message to humanity at large that defending the right to one's beliefs was an unassailable right. He went to Aurangzeb on his own to send a message that his One Mazhab dictate was unacceptable. That Aurangzeb would stand by his narrow, extremist, and intolerant beliefs and resort to execution was known to Guru Teg Bahadur ji, as seen from his act of installing his successor before leaving. The ultimate martyrdom thus became a reality.

CONCLUSIONS

The Sikh world needs to stop presenting the martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur in a way that reduces its significance and narrows its importance. The narrative of the Guru laying down his life for one particular religion, its two particular symbols, is akin to encapsulating the depths of an ocean into a teacup. We need to realize that we are reducing Guru Teg Bahadur ji to Hind Dee Chadur, when even to address him as Manukhta Dee Chadur, or Insaniyat Di Chadur, or Sresht Di Chadur would be an understatement. The Guru was standing up for the oppressed, no matter their faith and beliefs, and he did so even when faced with certain death. Guru Teg Bahadur ji stood up on his own, not at the behest of any number of people from any particular religion. The 350th Anniversary of the martyrdom is an occasion to ponder over the real messages that emanate from the supreme sacrifice: messages that are relevant to Sikhs in particular and humanity in general.



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ਠੀਕਰਿ ਫੋਰਿ ਦਿਲੀਸਿ ਸਿਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਪੁਰ ਕੀਯਾ ਪਯਾਨ॥
 ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਸੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਆ ਕਰੀ ਨ ਕਿਨਹੂੰ ਆਨ॥(੧੫)
 ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਕੇ ਚਲਤ ਭਯੋ ਜਗਤ ਕੋ ਸੋਕ ॥
 ਹੈ ਹੈ ਹੈ ਸਭ ਜਗ ਭਯੋ ਜੈ ਜੈ ਜੈ ਸੁਰ ਲੋਕ ॥(੧੬)

*Breaking the potsherd of his body head of the king of Delhi
 (Aurangzeb), He left for the abode of the Lord.
 None could perform such a feat as that of Tegh Bahadur. (15)
 The whole world bemoaned the departure of Tegh Bahadur.
 Whith the world lamented, the gods hailed his arrival in heavens. (16)*



A Sovereign Stand for Conscience: Guru Tegh Bahadur and the Defense of Religious Freedom (1675)

*SATPAL SINGH JOHAR**

Abstract

Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom in 1675 marks a singular moment in world history: a spiritual sovereign laying down his life not for his own faith, but to defend the religious freedom and dignity of others. This submission traces the journey from Anandpur Sahib to Chandni Chowk, exploring the moral architecture of his decision, the poetic and spiritual legacy he left behind, and the universal relevance of his sacrifice. This essay reflects on the profound moral and spiritual victory achieved by the Guru's stand against imperial coercion. It is a story of conscience confronting empire, of silence undermining tyranny, and of dharma sheltering creation. The Guru's sacrifice catalyzed a profound shift in consciousness that weakened the Mughal Empire's moral authority and established an enduring principle of sovereign dignity.

Preamble and Introduction: The Flame of Conscience

The personality of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib was unique—a fusion of humility, bravery, compassion, spirituality, conviction, and unwavering commitment. He was a selfless protector of human rights and religious freedom, a poet and warrior who lived by the philosophy “Never be scared, and never scare anyone” (as remembered in Sikh lore) **ਭੈ ਕਾਹੂ ਕਉ ਦੇਤ ਨਹਿ ਨਹਿ ਭੈ ਮਾਨਤ ਆਨ ॥**

A leader in the truest sense, Guru Tegh Bahadur carried forward the path laid by Guru Nanak Dev Ji with clear vision, deep devotion, and fearless conviction. Through extensive travels across Bengal, Assam, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh, he spread the message of universal dharam—righteousness beyond ritual—and built spiritual sanctuaries for the oppressed and the seeking.

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This humble write-up seeks to illuminate how a leader, with profound commitment and just a handful of devoted companions, could walk unarmed into the heart of a brutal empire and achieve a decisive moral and spiritual victory—not with weapons, but with a supreme sacrifice that fundamentally changed the course of history and challenged the empire's legitimacy.

Through his poetic hymns enshrined in Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, Guru Tegh Bahadur laid the spiritual and philosophical foundation for the transformation of Sikhs into the Khalsa—the embodiment of saintly courage and sovereign dignity. He authored 117 hymns in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib, emphasizing detachment, dignity, and divine remembrance (SGGS, M. IX).

In the 17th century, under Emperor Aurangzeb's rule, the Mughal Empire intensified its campaign of religious coercion. Non-Muslim communities faced forced conversions, destruction of places of worship, and systemic humiliation. Amid this climate, Guru Tegh Bahadur emerged not merely as a religious figure but as a moral refuge—a sovereign of conscience whose fame had spread across the subcontinent. His life was a fusion of spiritual depth and worldly engagement. His diplomacy in Assam, his challenge to ritualism in Kurukshetra, and his humility at Tham Sahib in Amritsar all reflected a philosophy of universal dharam.

The Plea from Kashmir

In 1675, a delegation of Kashmiri Pandits arrived at Anandpur Sahib, fleeing forced conversion. They sought protection—not from a warrior, but from a saint. Guru Tegh Bahadur listened, then turned to his nine-year-old son, Gobind Rai, and asked:

“Who can offer themselves to stop this tyranny?”

Gobind Rai replied, “None but you, Father.”

This moment was not filial—it was prophetic. The Guru accepted the call, not to defend Sikhism, but to defend the principle of choice, the freedom of conscience, and the dignity of all beings.

The Army of Four take on the powerful Mughal Empire: Chandni Chowk as Battlefield

Guru Tegh Bahadur set out for Delhi with three companions—Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Sati Das, and Bhai Dayal Das. Their journey was unarmed, deliberate, and spiritually charged. They halted at sacred sites like Kurukshetra and Dhamdhan,

offering teachings and blessings. This was not a march of resistance — it was a pilgrimage of truth.

Four men walked into the heart of the mighty Empire. No weapons. No army. Only truth. Chandni Chowk became the battlefield—not of swords, but of silence. Guru Tegh Bahadur's presence turned Delhi into a moral arena, where tyranny would be confronted by spiritual sovereignty.

Captivity and Torture

The Guru and his companions were arrested near Agra and imprisoned in Kotwali prison, Chandni Chowk, Delhi. For a period of time, they endured threats, temptations, and psychological warfare. Yet their resolve remained unshaken. They refused conversion, refused compromise, and refused to perform miracles for self-preservation.

Each companion was executed in front of the Guru: Bhai Mati Das was sawed alive, Bhai Dayal Das was boiled in oil, and Bhai Sati Das was burned. The Guru was immersed in reciting Gurbani and remained calm and cool. He was repeatedly asked either to convert or face death.

Guru Tegh Bahadur watched, unmoved. His silence was not surrender—it was spiritual defiance. On November 24, 1675, he was publicly beheaded in Chandni Chowk. His martyrdom was not a death—it was a declaration.

The Shelter of Dharma: Poet Sainapati's Testament

Poet-historian Sainapati, writing in *Sri Gur Sobha* (ca. 1711), offers a testimony that transcends sectarian boundaries. He describes Guru Tegh Bahadur as the “chadar” over all creation (ਸਗਲ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਪੈ ਜਾਕੀ ਚਾਦਰ)—a shelter not just for humans, but for the entire cosmic order.

ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਭਏ ਗੁਰੁ ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ ॥ ਸਗਲ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਪੈ ਜਾਕੀ ਚਾਦਰ ॥

Guru Tegh Bahadur appeared—whose canopy sheltered all of creation.

ਕਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਕੀ ਜਿਨਿ ਪਤਿ ਰਾਖੀ ॥ ਅਟਲ ਕਰੀ ਕਲਿਜੁਗ ਮੈ ਸਾਖੀ ॥

He upheld the honor of righteous deeds and made an unshakable testimony in the age of darkness (Sainapati, 2000, canto 14).

These verses are not poetic flourishes — they are civilizational declarations.

Eyewitness Context: Historical Climate of Persecution

The persecution witnessed by travelers such as François Bernier (1625–1688), a French physician and traveler, provides critical context for the religious environment that culminated in Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom. Though his book, *Travels in the Mughal Empire* (1656–1668), predates the execution, it describes the systematic cruelty of the era.

In his book, Bernier writes, “I have seen with my own eyes the violence with which Aurangzeb pursued his policy of conversion. Temples were destroyed, and those who refused to convert were treated with cruelty. The execution of a revered Sikh Guru for refusing to embrace Islam was a matter of great concern.” (Bernier, 1934, p. 312).

This passage establishes the climate of persecution that culminated in Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom.

Accounts of Bhai Jaita (Jiwan Singh)

Description: Bhai Jaita, who was present at the Guru's execution, carried Guru Tegh Bahadur's severed head to Anandpur Sahib. His oral and written testimony, later recorded by Sikh historians, provides direct, vivid eyewitness accounts. Bhai Jaita escaped with Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib's head. He felt Guru Gobind Rai and the Sikhs would be waiting to have the final darshan at Anandpur Sahib (based on *Guru Kian Sakhian* and *Katha* by Giani Pinderpal Singh).

Scholarly Reflection: Dr. N. Gerald Barrier

In his book, Dr. Barrier writes, “Guru Tegh Bahadur's execution was a momentous event in Sikh history. It was the first time that a major religious leader had been executed for defending the rights of another religious community. His death gave the Sikh community a new sense of identity and purpose.” (Barrier, 2004, p. 12).

This quote affirms the civilizational significance of the Guru's sacrifice—not merely as a religious act, but as a foundational moment in the evolution of Sikh identity and the defense of universal human rights.

Historian Rattan Singh Bhangu writes in *Sri Gur Panth Prakash* (1841): “Guru Tegh Bahadur gave up his life for the protection of others’ human rights.” (Bhangu, 2004, pp. 56–57). This line reframes the martyrdom not as a communal defense, but as a universal stand for dignity.

Bhai Santokh Singh’s Suraj Granth

In *Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth*, Bhai Santokh Singh describes how, upon the Guru’s departure, divine beings (Devatas) welcomed him, singing praises of his righteousness: “Whenever the world departs from its natural course, You take form—not as a miracle, but as the savior of dharam.” (Santokh Singh, 2009, p. 803). This affirms that when righteousness is threatened, the Guru arises—not to destroy, but to restore balance.

Impact: The Legacy That Reshaped Conscience

Guru Tegh Bahadur’s martyrdom did not immediately halt Mughal policies of religious coercion—but it shattered their moral legitimacy and catalyzed a profound shift in public consciousness.

Immediate Effects

- Aurangzeb’s tyranny exposed
- Public awakening among Hindus and Sikhs
- Birth of the Khalsa in 1699

Long-Term Consequences

- Moral resistance spread across communities
- Decline of Mughal moral authority
- Legacy of pluralism and interfaith dignity

Spiritual Continuity

His sacrifice ensured that the flame of religious freedom remained aflame in the sacred land for all times to come.

“He did not die for a ritual. He died for the right to choose. He did not protect a sect. He sheltered creation.”

Closing Invocation: The Flame That Walked Alone

He walked alone, but not in silence.
His steps echoed louder than swords.
Three companions, no weapons—only truth.
Chandni Chowk did not see a battle.

It saw a man who refused to bow.
Eight days in chains.

Offers of gold, comfort, survival.
He chose none.

One was sawed. One was boiled. One was burned.
He watched, unmoved.

Then came the blade.
Not to kill—but to crown.

The severed head reached Anandpur.
The child received it—not with tears, but with fire.

From that fire rose the Khalsa.
From that silence rose a roar.

Guru Tegh Bahadur did not die.
He defeated an empire.

Not with armies.
But with conscience.

Aftermath and Legacy

His severed head was carried by Bhai Jaita (later Bhai Jiwan Singh) to Anandpur Sahib. This account is drawn from Sikh oral and written tradition (Bhatt Vahis; Guru Kian Sakhian). His son, Guru Gobind Rai, received it—not with tears, but with fire. From that fire rose the Khalsa. The Guru's body was cremated at Rakab Ganj, his head at Anandpur Sahib. These sites became sanctified spaces of resistance.

Guru Gobind Singh did not mourn—he mobilized. The Khalsa was born not from ambition, but from ancestral fire.



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The Martyr for Religious Freedom: Guru Tegh Bahadur's Legacy in Pluralistic Societies

*DR. DEVINDER PAL SINGH AND DR. BHAI HARBANS LAL ***

Abstract

Guru Tegh Bahadur, the Ninth Guru of the Sikhs, is revered not only for his spiritual wisdom but also for his unparalleled martyrdom in defence of religious freedom. In an era marked by religious persecution under Mughal rule, his ultimate sacrifice in 1675 to protect the rights of Kashmiri Pandits to practice their faith freely signifies a pivotal moment in the history of human rights. This article explores Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom through the lens of pluralistic societies. It draws connections between his advocacy for universal religious freedom and contemporary frameworks of interfaith harmony, human rights, and secular governance. Employing a qualitative research methodology rooted in historical-textual analysis, the study examines primary Sikh scriptures and secondary scholarly interpretations. The findings highlight how Guru Tegh Bahadur's legacy informs modern discourses on religious pluralism, civil liberties, and ethical resistance against authoritarianism. This martyrdom, far from being a sectarian act, epitomizes a transcendent commitment to the dignity of all religions. In the modern era, when pluralism is increasingly threatened by sectarianism and authoritarianism, the life and sacrifice of Guru Tegh Bahadur continue to serve as a guiding light. His example challenges both states and societies to uphold the sanctity of conscience and protect diversity as a fundamental human and divine right.

Introduction

Pluralism, the peaceful coexistence of diverse cultures, beliefs, and identities, forms the foundation of inclusive and democratic societies. However, the history of religious pluralism is often fraught with persecution, coercion, and resistance. In this context, the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the Ninth Guru of the Sikhs, emerges as a landmark

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event that transcends sectarian boundaries and articulates a universal ethic of religious freedom. Born in 1621 in Amritsar, Guru Tegh Bahadur lived through a period of escalating Mughal oppression, during which religious minorities, especially Hindus, faced forced conversions and systemic discrimination under Emperor Aurangzeb's regime (Grewal, 1998). Guru Tegh Bahadur's intervention on behalf of Kashmiri Pandits, defending their right to practice Hinduism without converting to Islam, was not merely a political act but a profoundly spiritual and ethical stance rooted in the Sikh belief in the oneness of humanity and divine will.

This paper argues that Guru Tegh Bahadur's legacy serves as an enduring model for religious pluralism, intercultural solidarity, and ethical resistance against authoritarianism. Drawing upon Sikh scriptures, historical records, and modern scholarly interpretations, it evaluates how his teachings and sacrifice continue to inform contemporary challenges in multi-religious societies. Through an interdisciplinary approach, the article seeks to reframe Guru Tegh Bahadur not just as a Sikh martyr but as a universal defender of conscience. His death is not only a chapter in Sikh history but also a beacon for all societies grappling with the tension between religious identity and state power, and between individual conscience and collective oppression.

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative and interpretive methodology to explore the legacy of Guru Tegh Bahadur in the context of pluralistic societies. The primary research method involves a historical-textual analysis of Sikh scriptures, such as the Guru Granth Sahib, Bachittar Natak, and related hagiographies (Janamsakhis), alongside Mughal-era Persian records and eyewitness accounts of the Guru's martyrdom. These primary sources are critically analyzed in conjunction with contemporary academic literature from scholars of Sikh studies, comparative religion, and political philosophy (McLeod, 2000; Mandair, 2013).

The research also employs thematic content analysis to identify recurring motifs in Guru Tegh Bahadur's teachings, such as the sanctity of individual conscience, non-coercive religiosity, and righteous resistance to tyranny. Secondary data include peer-reviewed journals, historical analyses, and records of interfaith dialogue that reference the Guru's contributions. A comparative lens is applied to juxtapose Guru Tegh Bahadur's principles with contemporary international frameworks on religious freedom, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

This interdisciplinary approach enables a holistic understanding of the Guru's martyrdom, not just within Sikh theology, but also within broader socio-political paradigms. The methodology is grounded in decolonial and human rights perspectives, allowing the Guru's legacy to be contextualized within both historical and contemporary pluralistic societies.

4. Results

4.1 Martyrdom as a Sacrifice for Religious Pluralism

Guru Tegh Bahadur's execution in 1675 marked the first known instance of a religious leader willingly sacrificing his life for the religious freedom of another community. His refusal to convert to Islam or persuade others to do so stands as a profound act of spiritual defiance. The Guru's martyrdom was not motivated by political gain or territorial ambition but by an ethical imperative to uphold the principle of *sarbat da bhala* (security and the right to practice one's own faith). Historical records, including those of Mughal chroniclers, confirm that he was approached by Hindu leaders from Kashmir and Satnamis from East India to intervene against forced conversions (Grewal, 1998). His subsequent arrest and execution at Chandni Chowk in Delhi solidified his role as a champion of pluralism.

His sacrifice holds universal implications, emphasizing that religious liberty transcends doctrinal boundaries. This act aligns with Sikh principles articulated in the *Guru Granth Sahib*, which affirms that all paths to God are valid when pursued with sincerity. It exemplified the Sikh doctrine: ਨਾ ਕੋ ਬੈਰੀ ਨਾਹੀ ਬੇਗਾਨਾ (no one is my enemy, no one is a stranger). The Guru's stance also prefigures modern conceptions of religious freedom enshrined in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Therefore, Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom is not merely a Sikh event but a universal assertion of the human right to spiritual self-determination.

4.2 Ethical Resistance Against Authoritarianism

Guru Tegh Bahadur's legacy is also that of an ethical resistor against state-imposed tyranny. Under Emperor Aurangzeb's rule, religion was utilized as a tool of imperial control. In this environment, the Guru emerged as a moral counterforce who challenged state authority without resorting to violence, thereby reinforcing the Sikh ideal of *miri-piri*, which integrates temporal and spiritual authority.

His opposition was unique in that it embraced *ahimsa* (non-violence) and spiritual activism. By refusing to convert and defending others' right not to convert, Guru Tegh

Bahadur placed moral authority above political expediency. His stance exposed the Mughal Empire's intolerance and compelled the state to confront its contradictions publicly. His martyrdom destabilized the moral legitimacy of the regime and inspired future resistance, particularly under his son and successor, Guru Gobind Singh.

Ethically, Guru Tegh Bahadur's resistance embodies the Sikh concept of the acceptance of Hukam (self-sacrifice) and dharm yudh (righteous struggle), not in the form of war but as the highest spiritual offering. His life affirms that authentic leadership resides in moral courage, not political dominance. In pluralistic societies today, his legacy calls for leaders who prioritize ethical conviction over authoritarian control, who protect diversity rather than exploit it. The Guru's example remains a model for resisting oppression through conscience rather than violence.

4.3 Interfaith Solidarity and Spiritual Universalism

Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom is a testament to interfaith solidarity rooted in spiritual universalism. Unlike religious figures who restrict their advocacy to their own communities, Guru Tegh Bahadur extended his protection to Kashmiri Pandits, followers of a completely different religious tradition. This act underscores the Sikh belief that truth and divine connection are not the exclusive domain of any single faith. His actions reflect the Sikh tenet that all paths to the Divine are valid when pursued with sincerity. His sacrifices exemplify the Sikh doctrine: "ਮਾਨਸ ਕੀ ਜਾਤਿ ਸਬੈ ਏਕੈ ਪਹਿਚਾਨਬੈ" (Recognize all humanity as one race).

This form of solidarity goes beyond tolerance and enters the realm of active responsibility for the rights of others. It provides a practical example of spiritual universalism, a concept in which all beings are viewed as spiritually interconnected, regardless of their religious identity. Guru Tegh Bahadur's decision to risk and ultimately give his life for those of another tradition places him among the few global figures who operationalized interfaith ethics into life-and-death decisions.

This action becomes especially significant in a world where religious identities are often manipulated to foster division. His martyrdom calls into question religious exclusivism and encourages mutual defence among different faiths. As modern societies grapple with the need for interreligious cooperation, the life of Guru Tegh Bahadur offers a blueprint for constructive solidarity. His actions affirm that spiritual leadership entails not only preaching truth but also standing with those whose truths may differ from one's

own, thus promoting a deeper, more inclusive understanding of divine will and social justice.

4.4 Role in Shaping Sikh Ethos of Sacrifice and Justice

Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom significantly influenced the shaping of Sikh identity, particularly the ethos of seva (selfless service), tyag (sacrifice), and dharma yudh (righteous struggle) (Singh, 2020; Singh, 2021). Before his execution, the Sikh tradition already embodied the values of justice and equality under the guidance of Gurus like Guru Nanak and Guru Har Gobind. However, Guru Tegh Bahadur's sacrifice crystallized these principles into a living legacy that deeply informed the evolution of the Sikh community under his son, Guru Gobind Singh.

His martyrdom paved the way for the formalization of the Khalsa in 1699, a collective of initiated Sikhs committed to upholding justice and protecting the oppressed. Guru Gobind Singh often cited his father's martyrdom as a source of inspiration, noting that the ultimate spiritual duty lies in defending truth even at the cost of one's life. Guru Tegh Bahadur's sacrifice thus transcends individual martyrdom and becomes a foundational moment in Sikh collective consciousness.

This ethos continues to influence Sikh activism globally, whether in humanitarian missions, rights advocacy, or civic resistance. His example is invoked by Sikhs and non-Sikhs alike as a model of principled leadership and valour guided by moral clarity. The Guru's legacy also affirms that spirituality in Sikhism is not escapist but deeply engaged with worldly injustices. Hence, Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom is more than a historical event; it is a defining moment in shaping Sikh values that prioritize justice, compassion, and willingness to sacrifice for the greater good of all humanity.

5. Discussion of Results

5.1 Relevance of Martyrdom in Today's Pluralistic Societies

In contemporary multi-religious and multicultural societies, Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom offers a powerful archetype of interfaith solidarity. The fact that a Sikh Guru gave his life to protect Hindus from forced conversion exemplifies religious altruism that transcends narrow sectarian concerns. This is especially significant in a global climate where religious intolerance is resurging in the form of majoritarian nationalism, xenophobia, and identity-based violence.

Guru Tegh Bahadur's act reaffirms that true pluralism is not passive coexistence but active defense of others' rights to believe differently. His example encourages communities to stand up for the persecuted, even when those being defended do not share one's own faith or ideology. In this light, his legacy is akin to a universal ethic of conscience, a template for interfaith engagement grounded in mutual respect rather than mere tolerance.

Moreover, his martyrdom remains a challenge to modern states that compromise individual liberties for the sake of national unity or security. It advocates for secular governance that protects diversity rather than erases it. Guru Tegh Bahadur's life provides a framework through which faith-based communities can engage in civic resistance and advocate for inclusive public policies. His legacy is particularly instructive for human rights defenders, educators, and interfaith practitioners seeking to build societies where freedom of belief is upheld as an inalienable right, not a privilege.

5.2 Guru Tegh Bahadur as a Model of Ethical Dissent

Guru Tegh Bahadur's life exemplifies the highest form of ethical dissent, nonviolent resistance rooted in spiritual conviction. Unlike political revolutionaries who rely on ideological frameworks, his protest was grounded in the principles of divine justice and compassion. His martyrdom exemplifies how religious leadership can offer ethical guidance in the face of state coercion without devolving into violence or partisanship.

This mode of dissent is urgently needed in today's global climate, where protest movements often oscillate between apathy and extremism. Guru Tegh Bahadur's model invites moral leaders to engage oppressive systems with integrity and non-violence, refusing to be complicit yet avoiding hatred. His resistance was based on universal principles, not sectarian benefit, making him a figure of global ethical relevance.

Furthermore, his martyrdom reveals how dissent can be spiritually generative. His sacrifice gave birth to a new phase of Sikh identity under Guru Gobind Singh, who institutionalized the Khalsa. Thus, ethical resistance not only protects values but also redefines communities. In pluralistic societies, Guru Tegh Bahadur's example urges individuals to use spiritual strength for civil courage, where justice and dignity are defended not just through protest, but through self-sacrifice and moral clarity. His legacy stands as a profound rebuke to authoritarianism and a beacon for those seeking to uphold human dignity in an increasingly polarized world.

5.3 Contemporary Relevance of Interfaith Solidarity

Guru Tegh Bahadur's interfaith solidarity resonates powerfully in today's efforts to bridge divides between religious communities. His willingness to die for the rights of all religious communities redefines what it means to uphold pluralism: it is not enough to passively allow others to exist; genuine pluralism demands active protection of the religious freedom of others, even those whose beliefs differ from one's own. This spirit of solidarity is urgently needed in contemporary societies where religious nationalism, sectarian violence, and identity politics threaten intercommunal harmony.

In practical terms, his legacy can inform interfaith education, peacebuilding initiatives, and policy development aimed at protecting the rights of minority groups. Interfaith dialogue often stops at the level of cultural exchange, but Guru Tegh Bahadur's model encourages advocacy and risk-taking for the dignity and conscience of others. His life poses a challenge to faith leaders across traditions: are they willing to stand for others with the same conviction as they do for their own?

This ethic also applies to civic society, where defending religious minorities is increasingly seen as a political risk. By embodying the principle of "I defend your right to believe as you wish," Guru Tegh Bahadur transcends religious identities and provides a universal moral framework. In this light, his martyrdom serves not only Sikhs but all humanity as a prototype of courageous interfaith alliance, something that remains a cornerstone of lasting peace in pluralistic nations.

5.4 Spiritual Activism and the Ethical Foundations of Resistance

Guru Tegh Bahadur's form of resistance redefines activism through the lens of spiritual ethics (Lal and Singh, 2025). In an era when resistance is often co-opted by ideological extremism or devolves into performative gestures, his martyrdom embodies spiritual activism, a conscious, principled opposition to injustice grounded in devotion and self-sacrifice, rather than hatred or violence.

This concept can inform new paradigms in activism, particularly for faith-based communities engaging with systemic oppression, environmental degradation, or human rights violations. His legacy insists that true activism must be anchored in inner transformation and divine alignment. His protest was not rooted in ego or politics but in a divine imperative to uphold dharma (righteousness). As such, it carries a depth often absent in modern secular resistance.

Importantly, Guru Tegh Bahadur's model offers a template for confronting authoritarianism without replicating its aggression. His refusal to convert was not a refusal to engage, but a deliberate, nonviolent rejection of coercion. He chose suffering over submission, faith over fear, a decision that reverberates in movements such as Gandhi's satyagraha and Martin Luther King Jr.'s nonviolent resistance.

In pluralistic societies where dissent is often criminalized or dismissed, spiritual activism rooted in moral authority offers a transformative model. It resists the dehumanization of the other and reclaims the sacred dimension of justice. Guru Tegh Bahadur's resistance becomes not only a historical stance but an ongoing call to merge the inner and outer struggles for truth, thereby elevating the ethical caliber of contemporary civic engagement.

6. Conclusion

Guru Tegh Bahadur's life and martyrdom offer a timeless message for pluralistic societies navigating the complexities of religious diversity and state authority. His defence of the Kashmiri Pandits was not merely a political intervention but a moral and spiritual act affirming the sanctity of every individual's right to believe freely. In doing so, he not only upheld the Sikh ethos of universal brotherhood but also prefigured the principles now enshrined in modern human rights discourse.

His ethical resistance to Aurangzeb's authoritarianism redefined the role of religious leadership, not as dogmatic authority, but as a moral compass. He wielded spiritual power to confront political oppression, demonstrating that true strength lies in conscience, not coercion. Today, when religious freedom is under threat in many parts of the world, the legacy of Guru Tegh Bahadur remains profoundly relevant. His martyrdom reminds us that pluralism requires vigilance, courage, and, at times, great sacrifice.

In contemporary interfaith and multicultural contexts, his example serves as a guide for building alliances across religious boundaries, advocating for human rights, and resisting state overreach with nonviolence and dignity. The life of Guru Tegh Bahadur compels us to envision a society where diversity is not just tolerated but actively protected. His martyrdom is not a relic of the past but a living testament to the enduring power of spiritual conviction in defence of universal human values. □

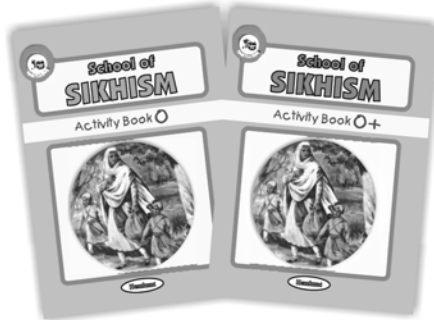
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ਪਹਿਲਾ ਮਰਣੁ ਕਬੂਲਿ ਜੀਵਣ ਕੀ ਛਡਿ ਆਸ ॥
 ਹੋਹੁ ਸਭਨਾ ਕੀ ਰੇਣੁਕਾ ਤਉ ਆਉ ਹਮਾਰੈ ਪਾਸਿ ॥੧॥
First, accept death, and give up any hope of life.
Become the dust of the feet of all,
and then, you may come to me. || 1 ||

[SGGS: 1102]

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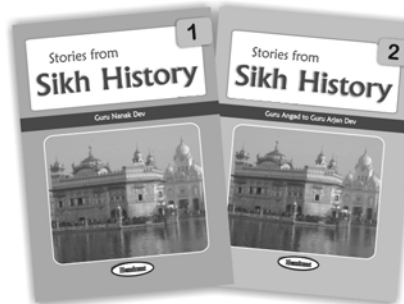
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Prophet-Martyr Guru Tegh Bahadur

*NIKKY- GUNINDER KAUR SINGH**

Abstract

The article commemorates the 350th anniversary of Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom by focussing on the seamless synchrony between the Guru's person, his bani, and his history. Her thesis: our Prophet-Martyr Guru will continue to stir hearts, awaken the conscience, strengthen our moral imagination, and bond humanity across man-made differences.

"Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom was a superb act of self-giving, of complete reliance on God's Will.... The event had in it a rare potentiality of history. It initiated a process which changed the course of events in northern India. It broke the stupor of an indolent society and resuscitated its spirit. It brought about a widespread moral and political awakening. A new impulse of chivalry arose." With this prelude by Professor Harbans Singh, we commemorate the 350th anniversary of Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom. Together we remember the beauty of the Guru's person, the power of his teachings, and the history he helped to shape. For his boundless valor, the son of Guru Har Gobind and Mata Nanaki was renamed Tegh Bahadur ("Brave Sword"). Bravery defined the youngster, but even more so did his contemplative nature and profound spirituality. Committed to the good of humanity, Guru Tegh Bahadur travelled extensively performing philanthropic deeds, while consolidating the Sikh tradition. An extraordinary poet of the Absolute One, he composed artistic verses that have nothing artificial about them. A daring defender of freedom and justice, he made the ultimate sacrifice against historic oppression. Each drop of the Guru's blood spilled by his cruel execution upholds the fundamental unicity of the Divine, and the plurality of Its existential expressions.

In Bachittar Natak Guru Gobind Singh records the *raison d'être* for his father's supreme sacrifice: "He protected their frontal mark and sacred thread — *tilak janvu rakha prabh ta*

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ka" (BN 5:13). Guru Tegh Bahadur was not a votary of either tilak (sacred mark on the forehead) or janeu (sacred thread worn by upper-caste male Hindus); yet the Sikh Guru staked his life for the right of those who believed in them. The defence of these two religious symbols signified the fundamental right of all individuals to freely practice their religion. Guru Tegh Bahadur stands as a singular phenomenon in world history—that an individual would give up his life for the flourishing of others. His sacrifice is a powerful reminder for our dangerously divided and polarized world: unity does not mean sameness or homogeneity; it means respecting differences and ensuring that everyone, irrespective of religion, race, class, or caste, has the right to worship freely, live with dignity. Rather than assimilate into a global “melting pot”—wherein true diversity all too often becomes “melted” into dominant norms of sameness—we all need to respect, actively engage with, and mutually promote diversity of religions, cultures, races, genders, and species.

In his life and teaching, Guru Tegh Bahadur highlights the foundational Sikh philosophical, ethical, and aesthetic ideals and motifs. With his categorical declaration of the unicity of the Divine One—

ਸਭ ਸੁਖ ਦਾਤਾ ਰਾਮੁ ਹੈ ਦੂਸਰ ਨਾਹਿਨ ਕੋਇ॥ “there is no other, dusar nahin koe” (SGGS: 1426)—the ninth Guru reinforces the first Guru’s primal pronouncement: ik oankar (One Being). There is of course no opposition between the One and the many, nor is there any antithesis between unity and plurality:

ਨਾਨਾ ਰੂਪ ਧਰੇ ਬਹੁ ਰੰਗੀ ਸਭ ਤੇ ਰਹੈ ਨਿਆਰਾ ॥੨॥

“nana rupe dhare bahu rangi sabh te rahai naira —

the One takes on myriad forms and multiple colours, yet remains distinct from all” celebrates Guru Tegh Bahadur in Rag Bairagari (SGGS: 537). Like his predecessors, he rejects an exclusivist monotheism; the One in its diversity transcends all exclusions and negations.

The Kantian dictum about totality being plurality regarded as unity underscores the Sikh engagement with difference and diversity in everyday lived reality. The founder Guru, Nanak, radically disavowed homogeneity and uniformity:

ਇਕਤੁ ਰੂਪਿ ਫਿਰਹਿ ਪਰਛੰਨਾ ਕੋਇ ਨ ਕਿਸ ਹੀ ਜੇਹਾ ॥੨॥

“ikkatu rupi firahi parchanna koe na kis hi jeha —

Your one form is everywhere but no two forms are alike!” (SGGS: 596)

The fifth Guru has said,

ਇਕਸੁ ਤੇ ਹੋਇਓ ਅਨੰਤਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਏਕਸੁ ਮਾਹਿ ਸਮਾਏ ਜੀਉ ॥੯॥੨॥੩੬॥

“ikkasu te hoio ananta nanak ekasu mahi samae jio — from the One issue countless beings, and into the One, says Nanak, they ultimately merge” (SGGS: 131). Unicity is not opposed to plurality: it arises from the co-existence of numerous elements. A “total” perspective mandates an engagement with the richness of differences. The ideal of ensuring that people of diverse backgrounds should be free to practice their respective religions is central to this message of the Gurus, and it was actualized by the ninth Guru’s blood-soaked offering. He challenged an instance during the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb’s rule of a group of Hindus being forced to convert, and for his defence of religious freedom he was executed in public in Chandni Chowk, near the Red Fort, in Delhi on November 11, 1675.

The Prophet Martyr’s poetry holds a unique importance as it joins the personal voice of sacrifice with the universal longing for justice, truth, and freedom. As Professor Harbans Singh eloquently describes, “This was the melody hatched in the soft silences of Guru Tegh Bahadur’s soul.” His melodic repertoire of fifty-nine shabads (hymns) and fifty-seven shaloks (couplets) fosters kinship with all fellow beings. Simultaneously involving the visual, perceptual, syntactic, and semantic processes, Guru Tegh Bahadur’s sublime lyrics produce a powerful, mysterious spiritual effect upon readers and listeners. While his hymns are spread across fifteen ragas or musical measures of the Guru Granth Sahib, his couplets form the concluding segment of the sacred text. These are read as part of the epilogue during the bhog ceremony, the ceremonial concluding of the Guru Granth Sahib during religious and social occasions. They were composed by Guru Tegh Bahadur shortly before his martyrdom. Brevity and simplicity constitute their poetic power, and as lyrical conclusions to Sikh ceremonies and all rites of passage, they carry enormous emotional weight—whether solemn, hopeful, reflective, or celebratory.

The Guru imaginatively utilizes the cognitive processes of similes and metaphors which transfer meaning from one realm to another. Like neurons firing across to connect gaps in the nervous system, these literary ornaments, alankar, create a synaptic effect. The very first couplet expresses the Guru’s love for the Divine: “Love the Divine, my mind, as a fish loves water —

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹਰਿ ਭਜੁ ਮਨਾ ਜਿਹ ਬਿਧਿ ਜਲ ਕਉ ਮੀਨੁ ॥੧॥

Kah nanak har bhaju mana jih bidhi jal kau minu (SGGS: 1426)

Over and again, he acknowledges the ephemerality of life as it vanishes like a hailstone—(oré), like a dream (supanai), like a wall of sand (baru ki bhiti), and—the Guru repeats in Raga Gauri and Rag Sarang—like a cloud’s shadow (badar ki chhai) (GGS: 219 and 1231);

each instant “life drips away like water from a cracked pitcher—

ਛਿਨੁ ਛਿਨੁ ਅਉਧ ਬਿਹਾਤੁ ਹੈ ਫੂਟੈ ਘਟ ਜਿਉ ਪਾਨੀ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

chhinu chhinu audh bihatu hai phute ghatu jio pani (SGGS: 726)

However, his imagery does not produce a pessimistic or static effect; “Guru Tegh Bahadur’s perspective is life-affirming, not life-denying” writes Professor Harbans Singh. The Guru who gave up his life without fear or the slightest hesitation helps us face death authentically by accepting it as a natural part of our existence, without denial or illusion. For the German philosopher Martin Heidegger, human existence (Dasein) is characterized by Being-towards-death: through anticipating death, one becomes free, liberated from the inauthenticity of lostness (Being and Time, 1927). Likewise, Guru Tegh Bahadur reminds us that death is always before us, and that such awareness is precisely what enables us to live authentically. Once we realize that finitude defines the horizon of life, we live each instant to the utmost — freely, genuinely, ethically. Antithetical to a “stone-like existence — jaise pahanu” (Guru Tegh Bahadur’s analogy, SGGS: 831) — every being and every relationship acquires significance, and the world itself projects its meaning in a fuller way.

Paradoxically then, by confronting us with the finitude of death, our Prophet and Martyr Guru awakens us from oblivion to the awareness of inner infinity: the all-inclusive Divine exists within the very fibres of our being, “just like the perfume in a flower, like the reflection in a mirror—

ਪੁਹਪ ਮਧਿ ਜਿਉ ਬਾਸੁ ਬਸਤੁ ਹੈ ਮੁਕਰ ਮਾਹਿ ਜੈਸੇ ਛਾਈ ॥

puhap madhi jio basu basatu hai mukar mahi jaise chhai (SGGS: 684). Such aesthetically charged images lead inward, towards discovering the vast and beautiful potential we possess within. The scent cannot be seen, nor the mirror’s reflective power,

but both do exist. And so does the Infinite Divine all around and within us. Guru Tegh Bahadur's striking comparisons assert the existence of the Timeless reality in our temporal body. Effectively, they make the intangible metaphysical Being tangible, spark the imagination, evoke emotions, and enhance the musicality and rhythm of his memorable verses.

In the essential sense, there is no difference between the finite individual and the Infinite One. Those absorbed in that One know and experience everything and everyone as a part of Infinite unicity and so they perform their actions accordingly.

ਜਿਹ ਘਟਿ ਸਿਮਰਨੁ ਰਾਮ ਕੋ ਸੋ ਨਰੁ ਮੁਕਤਾ ਜਾਨੁ ॥
ਤਿਹਿ ਨਰ ਹਰਿ ਐਤਰੁ ਨਹੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਚੀ ਮਾਨੁ ॥੪੩॥

jih ghati simranu ram ko

so naru mukta janu

tihi nar hari antaru nahi

nanak sachi manu (#43)

SGGS:1428

They who enshrine the Divine in their heart,

know them as liberated.

Says Nanak, know this for sure,

between the Divine and them, no difference lies.

Mukti—liberation—evidently is not a state after death: it is a distinct condition, at once both an emotive and cognitive intimacy with the Infinite One attained here and now. Temporal life in this ever-shifting world is fully affirmed. The Guru reminds us, “We do not know the secret of the pure One who dwells in our heart—

ਘਟ ਹੀ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਬਸਤ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੁ ਤਾ ਕੋ ਮਰਮੁ ਨ ਜਾਨਾ ॥੨॥

Ghat hi bhitari basat niranjanu ta ko maramu n jana” (SGGS: 632). Savouring the love for the all-inclusive Divine “as fish loves water,” Guru Tegh Bahadur inspires us to “immerse in the colour of that singular love—bhaju teh ek rangi” (SGGS: 1187); to shine in the radiance of the brilliant “jewel” (ratan). As the Guru's similes make their way into the psyche, they flush out the ignorant selfish ego, expand the self, instil confidence, and open up new possibilities of existentiality.

His mirror (mukar or darpani) reappears in Raga Sorath with the added importance of justice (niai)—“That One dwells within everybody equally, says Nanak, like a mirror of justice—

ਸੋ ਤੁਮ ਹੀ ਮਹਿ ਬਸੈ ਨਿਰੰਤਰਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਦਰਪਨਿ ਨਿਆਈ ॥੩॥੫॥

so tum hi mahi vasai nirantari nanak darpani niai” (SGGS: 632). Looking into the perfect mirror within, we simultaneously become conscious of both the egalitarian justice of the Divine and our own blind spots, greed, falsities, prejudices, and so forth. Guru Tegh Bahadur’s transformative similes and metaphors are not about submission to authoritarian dictates and external notions of justice; instead, they empower humans to align themselves with clarity, equality, transparency, and fairness—a state of being no different from the Supreme One. Subconsciously, the Guru’s words train us to embody Truth, so that justice is reflexively reflected in daily practices, attitudes, choices, and relationships.

Indeed, Guru Tegh Bahadur himself is a mirror for humanity. The lover of the Absolute One shows us true courage—not in seeking one’s own survival, but in ensuring the survival of justice and liberty for others. His death gives us life—through his sacrifice we inherit human freedom and dignity. The path of love he opened allows us to practice our beliefs, cherish our differences, and live fearlessly. His death is not an end, but a priceless gift that nurtures life, love, unity, and justice. As I write, I am transported from Maine to the beautiful spot in the village of Bahadurgarh (named after the Guru) on the outskirts of Patiala where Guru Tegh Bahadur is believed to have meditated and given discourses for over three months sometime in the early 1670s. The place was then called Saifabad, and the Guru stayed here at the request of his great admirer Nawab Saif Khan, who had for years followed the Guru on his travels to places as distant as Assam. Back when I was a child, my parents and I would frequently walk over from the Punjabi University campus to pay our homage. It was just a small room with colorful walls in arabesque designs adorned with luminous mirrors—now replaced by a big marble complex, Gurdwara Shri Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib. There was something magical about the space that took us down our rich past, making the present most meaningful, most exalting. Our Prophet-Martyr Guru will continue to stir hearts, awaken the conscience, strengthen our moral imagination, and bond humanity across man-made differences. □

Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib and The Establishment of Khalsa Panth

*ISHMEET KAUR CHAUDHRY**

Abstract

This essay focuses on the messages that can be drawn from the life of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib, the ninth Guru of the Sikhs. It includes excerpts from a picture book that the author had curated in collaboration with Dr Jaswant Singh, Director, Gurbani Research, SIKHRI. The main focus of this paper is to understand the significance of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib's martyrdom, his birth and parentage, followed by his martial skill at sword fighting, the importance of the presence of significant women around him, his mother, sister and wife in his life, his popularity that provides the reason why Kashmiri Pandit's visited him and requested him to sacrifice his life for them and finally his martyrdom and a conversation just before being martyred with the jalad (executioner) as conceived through poetic imagination by the poet Surjeet Singh Panchhi.

Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib, the ninth Guru of the Sikhs, embodiment of benevolence, spirituality, bravery, and the sacrificial spirit, what messages can we draw from his life, martyrdom, and afterlife?

I would like to begin with discussing the significance of his martyrdom, what I mean by the afterlife.

Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib's spirit continues to inspire us through the formation of the Khalsa panth. His martyrdom becomes a significant point in history that leads to the establishment and formation of Khalsa Panth. Discussion usually ceases at the point of his martyrdom, which was executed for saving the Kashmiri Pandits *prima facie*, but for the welfare of the entire human race, and to stand for the rights of humans to be able to practice their faith irrespective of their religion. Spiritual growth is the most important concern for all human beings, and any restriction or barrier in this endeavour needs to be challenged.

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No religion is lesser than the other, nor is any religion better than the other. Those people who follow the path of spirituality finally rise above the boundaries of institutional religions and establish truth as the central point. So did Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib, and his supreme sacrifice is the greatest example of this fact. Khalsa panth continues to establish truth and fights for the rights of humankind, stands with the poor and those in destitute or facing political, social, or other kinds of conflicts even today. The ideology of the Khalsa panth surpasses institutional religious boundaries and establishes itself as a protector of Truth. How did this become possible? It is through the great sacrifice of the Great Guru, the ninth light. Once Bhai Jetha ji presented his head to Gobind Rai, the nine-year-old child, he declared that he would make such a panth that would be distinct, the people following this panth would stand out in the crowd, would fight for what is truth, openly, and would be fearless. This spirit has been held by the Khalsa panth for all these years. This is the afterlife of the ninth Guru, particularly not to doubt that the spirit of all the previous Gurus also illuminates in the Guru Granth Sahib.

A humble attempt was made to depict the life and teaching of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib through a book of paintings, wall frescos, and art in 2022. Here are a few excerpts from Life Sketch and Teachings of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib, Ninth Guru of the Sikhs by Ishmeet Kaur Chaudhry and Jaswant Singh, published by Nanakshahi Trust, Chandigarh, 2022.

Birth and Parentage:

Guru Tegh Bahadur was born in 'Guru Ke Mahal' at Amritsar on 1st April 1621 to Mata Nanki and Guru Hargobind Sahib, the sixth Guru of the Sikhs. He had four elder brothers: Baba Gurditta, Baba Ani Rai, Baba Suraj Mal, Baba Atal, and one elder sister, Bibi Veero. Amritsar had already become the political and spiritual capital of Sikhism. The atmosphere of the city had a significant influence on the child Tyagmal, who later became Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib.

Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib's father, Guru Hargobind Sahib, was the sixth Guru of the Sikhs, who became the Guru at the age of eleven, after the martyrdom of his father, Guru Arjan Sahib, the fifth Guru of the Sikhs. Guru Hargobind Sahib was an extremely charismatic personality, a great warrior who had a significant influence on his son, Guru Tegh Bahadur. He initiated the concept of *mī rī* (temporal power) and *pī rī* (spiritual power) in Sikhism. His mother, Mata Nanki, was married to Guru Hargobind Sahib in 1613. She

was alive when her son, Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib, was executed. She accepted the martyrdom of her beloved son as the Divine will. Kavi Santokh Singh in Gurpratap Suraj Prakash Granth describes the personality of Mata Nanki as follows:

*Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur's mother
Known as Nanaki in the world
Devoted wife, pious personality
Beautiful, well-mannered,
matchless in virtues
Soft-spoken, far-sighted
Satguru-focused, delightful
Beloved of children, sweet-hearted,
of a noble lineage
Always compassionate, most gentle.*

[Trans. Self Adhaya 6 Raas 11]

Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib was equally compassionate and highly influenced by his mother.

From Tyagmal to Tegh Bahadur

When the child Tegh Bahadur was born, Guru Hargobind Sahib named him Tyag Mal. The word Tyag means sacrifice. Tyag Mal was a witness to the battles being fought by his father from a very young age. The first battle he witnessed was at the age of seven in 1628, the Battle of Amritsar. The second battle was fought at Sri Hargobindpur, near Gurdaspur, in 1629. Guru Hargobind Sahib wore two swords, one of *mī-ri* (temporal power) and the other of *pī-ri* (spiritual power). During this battle, it is said that Guru Hargobind Sahib broke his sword of *mī-ri*, but he did not consider it appropriate to use the sword of *pī-ri* to kill anyone, symbolizing that the sword of spirituality was meant to kill one's own frailties and weaknesses (such as arrogance, anger, lust, etc.). These vices are impediments to the overall growth of an individual. Therefore, he fought vigorously using his hands, instead of a weapon, and still stood victorious. Child Tyag Mal witnessed it closely. Along with witnessing the father's valorous acts on the battlefield, the child Tyag Mal also observed his father's stability of mind, equipoise in conduct, and self-control. This had a great impact on his mind. While he became a great warrior and an able master

of the sword, he also came to be known for his politeness and soft-heartedness, which he acquired from his father and mother. In 1635, at the age of fourteen, he displayed his bravery and mastery of using the sword exceptionally in the battle of Kartarpur, near Jalandhar. Guru Hargobind Sahib was extremely appreciative of his son and called him Tegh Bahadur, meaning a brave warrior of the sword. Thereafter, he was known and addressed as Tegh BAHADUR. (Josh 22)

Affection for Women in his life, Mother, Sister, and Wife:

It is said that when the child Tyag Mal grew up as Tegh Bahadur, he looked much like his father, having a well-built physique of a warrior, a strong chest, tall and robust. He acquired the attributes of politeness, generosity, love, and patience from his mother, Mata Nanki. Bibi Veero, his sister, also had a great influence on her brother, as she is known for having showered immense love on her brother. Bibi Veero's entire family, her husband and four sons, were martyred in battles.

Prof. Fauja Singh states these influences on Guru Tegh Bahadur are as follows:

Guru Tegh Bahadur owed not a little to his parents and teachers in respect of his qualities of head and heart. From his mother, Nanaki, he imbibed tenderness of heart, love of solitude, and charitableness. From his warrior father, he learnt the noble qualities of fearlessness, courage, a will to fight tyranny, love of travel, skill in the use of arms and horses, and above all, the urge to uphold dharma. Baba Budha Ji inculcated into his sensitive mind the tendency of mysticism which he himself had imbibed from Guru Nanak, founder of the Sikh faith. Bhai Gurdas imparted to him a philosophic and poetic bent of mind. (Singh and Talib 11)

Likewise, in Mahima Prakash, it has been described that Guru Tegh Bahadur was extremely benevolent, humble, action-oriented, brave, and kind, always in a state of equipoise and of a reflective nature. He would spend several days in contemplation, right from his childhood. (S.Singh14)

He was married to Gujri, the daughter of Lal Chand Khatri and Bishan Kaur of Kartarpur, Jalandhar. Now revered as Mata Gujri, her contribution and sacrifice for the Sikh faith are unmatched. She gave birth to Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru of the Sikhs, after 32 years of her marriage at Patna in the year 1666. (Ghuman 36)

Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib's Popularity: Far and Wide

What could be the reason that led the Kashmiri Pandits to reach out to Guru Sahib and request him to protect them?

An early historical text by a Sikh historian, Ratan Singh Bhangu, explains that Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib's fame had "spread far and wide in the whole world." He was known as "the bravest of the brave", and whoever felt "oppressed, tortured, and aggrieved, sought his protection and felt relieved. Therefore, whoever came into his contact was comforted. This has also been beautifully poeticized by poet Surjeet Singh Panchhi through his creative imagination.

Panchhi has depicted this martyrdom through a conversation between Guru Sahib and the executioner who fumbled to hold a sword in his hands while beheading Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib. The poet explains how Guru Sahib comforted the executioner and cleared his dilemma of whether he should raise his sword to kill Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib or not. Panchhi explains how Guru Sahib, in a state of equipoise, accepted the Divine will and asked Jalal-u-Din Jalad, the executioner, to perform his duty.

This was a martyrdom that would eventually be considered the greatest of all sacrifices in the world:

Jalal-u-Din Jalad (Executioner) Jalal-u-Din Jalad, came near Satiguru Ji:

*"I have executed innumerable people, but today my heart is not firm
The sword keeps falling from my hand, even if I hold it with full strength
This is a testing time; the misfortune is weighing heavily on me."*

Guru Sahib:

*"Don't hesitate, my dear, no need to get worried
Having completed my prayer, I will bend my head towards the earth
Then, you can perform your duty with full force
Neither will you be accounted as a sinner, nor do you need to fear."*

[Trans. Self] (Panchhi 221-222)



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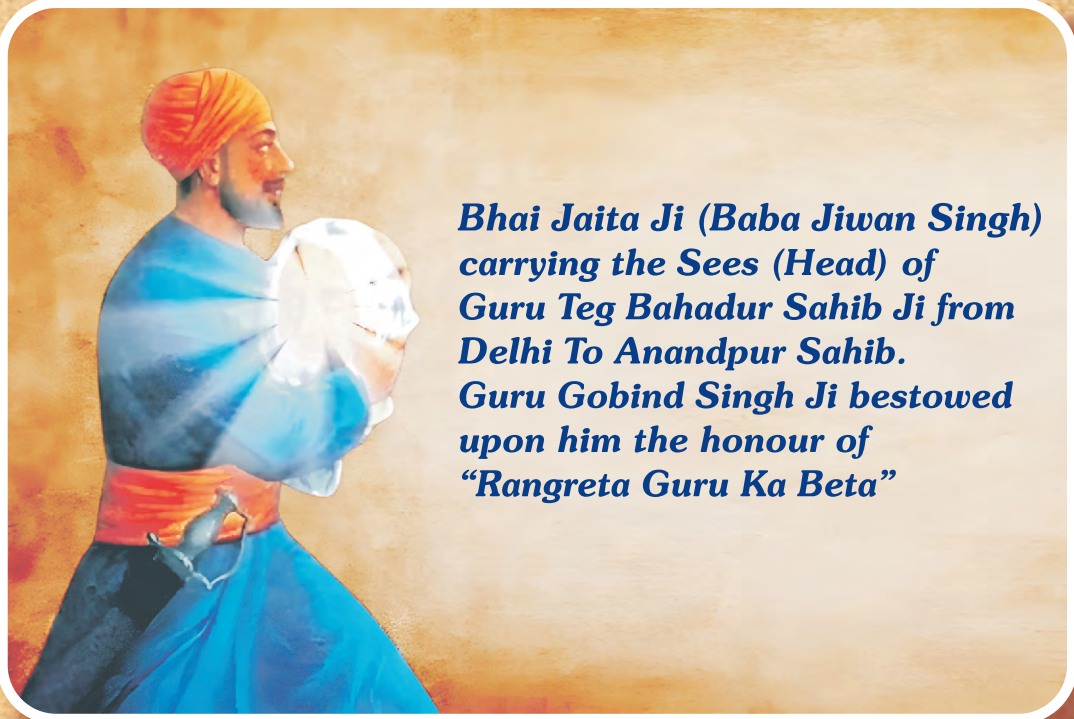
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ਗਗਨ ਦਮਾਮਾ ਬਾਜਿਓ ਪਰਿਓ ਨੀਸਾਨੈ ਘਾਉ ॥
 ਖੇਤੁ ਜੁ ਮਾਡਿਓ ਸੂਰਮਾ ਅਬ ਜੂਝਨ ਕੇ ਦਾਉ ॥੧॥
 ਸੂਰਾ ਸੋ ਪਹਿਚਾਨੀਐ ਜੁ ਲਰੈ ਦੀਨ ਕੇ ਹੇਤ ॥
 ਪੁਰਜਾ ਪੁਰਜਾ ਕਟਿ ਮਰੈ ਕਬਹੂ ਨ ਛਾਡੈ ਖੇਤੁ ॥੨॥੨॥

The battle-drum beats in the sky of the mind; aim is taken, and the wound is inflicted. The spiritual warriors enter the field of battle; now is the time to fight! || 1 || He alone is known as a spiritual hero, who fights in defense of religion. He may be cut apart, piece by piece, but he never leaves the field of battle. || 2 || 2 ||

[SGGS: 1105]



***Bhai Jaita Ji (Baba Jiwan Singh)
carrying the Sees (Head) of
Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib Ji from
Delhi To Anandpur Sahib.
Guru Gobind Singh Ji bestowed
upon him the honour of
“Rangreta Guru Ka Beta”***



Bhai Lakhi Shah Vanjara

**After Martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur Ji, Risks Life,
Rescues Body, Sets His Own Home On Fire For Sanskaar**



BHAI SATI DAS, BHAI DAYAL DAS AND BHAI MATI DAS

Bhai Mati Das and Sati Das were brothers and served Sri Guru Har Rai Ji with heart and soul. Bhai Dayal Das was younger brother of martyr Bhai Mani Singh. In 1675, Aurangzeb ordered forcible conversion of Hindus to Islam. Sri Guru Teg Bahadar Ji opposed the acts of Aurangzeb and was arrested along with Bhai Mati Das, Sati Das and Bhai Dayal Das. Aurangzeb asked Guru Ji to embrace Islam. When Guru Ji refused, the qazi pronounced death sentence to three Sikhs by torturing them in front of Guru Ji to break his resolve. Bhai Mati Das was tied between two wooden planks and sawed from head downwards and attained martyrdom. Bhai Sati Das was wrapped in cotton and burnt alive. Bhai Dayal Das was seated in a cauldron full of boiling water and attained martyrdom reciting Gurbani. All three would always be a source of inspiration for the Sikhs to uphold the principles of Sikhism.

Sikhs Love for the Guru: The Everlasting Message of Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Sati Das, and Bhai Dayala

*DR STUTI MALHOTRA***

Abstract

This article explores the profound devotion and ultimate sacrifice of Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Sati Das, and Bhai Dayala — three revered companions of Guru Tegh Bahadur. Their martyrdom is not merely a tale of resistance but an enduring testimony of love for the Guru. Rooted in Sikh tradition where discipleship is defined by surrender and fidelity, these Sikhs exemplified a spiritual state that transcended fear, pain, and death. Drawing upon scriptural references and historical accounts, the narrative situates their devotion within a lineage of generational loyalty and highlights how their steadfastness transformed suffering into an expression of love. More than historical figures, they emerge as universal symbols of courage, integrity, and the power of love to outlast tyranny.

Article

The martyrdom of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur on 11 November 1675 is rightly remembered as one of the most extraordinary events in the history of faith and freedom. Yet, the radiance of this sacrifice cannot be understood in isolation from the devotion of his three companions—Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Sati Das, and Bhai Dayala. These saintly Sikhs were not merely followers who happened to share in the Guru's fate. They were, in fact, the very embodiment of a disciple's love.

What stands out in Sikh tradition is not simply that they gave up their lives, but that they did so willingly, joyfully, and with an equanimity that reflected their absolute prem (love) for their Master. The story of these martyrs, then, is less about cruelty and more about love — a love so deep that it transformed suffering into an expression of fidelity.

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From the time of Guru Nanak, the Sikh path has emphasized that the bond between Guru and Sikh is grounded in love. Gurbani resounds with this theme:

ਸਾਚੁ ਕਹੋ ਸੁਨ ਲੇਹੁ ਸਭੈ ਜਿਨ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਕੀਓ ਤਿਨ ਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਪਾਇਓ ॥

“saach kaho(n) sun leh sabhai jin prem keeo tin hee prabh paio.” (Dasam Granth Page 13)

I speak Truth, all should turn their ears towards it: he, who is absorbed in True Love, would realize the Lord.

Love, in the Sikh vision, is not sentimental attachment but total surrender of self to the higher truth embodied in the Guru. It is this surrender, rooted in trust, that frees the disciple from fear, even from the fear of death.

The lives of Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Sati Das, and Bhai Dayala are shining testimonies of this principle. They demonstrated through action that to love the Guru is to share in his destiny, without bargaining, without hesitation.

Historical sources emphasize that these three Sikhs were not only disciples but also close companions, advisers, and confidants of Guru Tegh Bahadur. Their loyalty was not merely tested in Delhi; it was proven throughout the years of their service. They accompanied him on journeys, assisted in his household, and absorbed his spiritual teachings.

When the Guru was summoned to Delhi, these companions insisted on going with him. They were under no compulsion; rather, they chose to accompany their Guru in full awareness of the dangers ahead. This decision reveals the essence of Sikh discipleship: a love that does not abandon the Guru in adversity, but instead seeks to share in it.

It is said that these disciples had “transcended the fear of death”. For them, pleasure and pain, gain and loss, life and death were all equal—because love had dissolved the dualities of existence. Such was their spiritual state that they embodied the Guru’s own serenity.

Guru Arjan Saheb Ji had earlier sung:

ਜੋ ਨਰੁ ਦੁਖ ਮੈ ਦੁਖੁ ਨਹੀ ਮਾਨੈ ॥

“Jo nar dukh mae dukh nahee maanae”.

(SGGS P 633)

That man, who, in the midst of pain, does not feel pain,

This equilibrium, born of love, was evident in the way the Guru's companions accepted their fate. Their calmness was not stoic resignation, but the overflowing confidence that comes from standing by the one they loved most.

The devotion of these three Sikhs did not arise in a vacuum. They hailed from families that had served the Gurus with distinction for generations. Bhai Mati Das and Bhai Sati Das traced their lineage to disciples of Guru Arjan and Guru Har Gobind; their ancestors had fought alongside the Guru in battle. Bhai Dayala came from a family equally distinguished in loyalty and sacrifice. This continuity of devotion across generations reveals that love for the Guru is not a fleeting emotion, but a cultivated tradition. It is a spiritual inheritance passed from parents to children, sustained by service (seva), faith, and example.

What makes their devotion remarkable is not merely that they followed the Guru, but that they insisted on sharing his ordeal. The chronicles record that when Guru Tegh Bahadur was arrested, they chose to stand by him, despite knowing the peril involved.

This choice reflects the teaching of the Second Guru, Guru Angad Saheb Ji, who had declared:

ਜਿਸੁ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਸਿਉ ਨੇਹੁ ਤਿਸੁ ਆਗੈ ਮਰਿ ਚਲੀਐ ॥
ਧ੍ਰਿਗੁ ਜੀਵਣੁ ਸੰਸਾਰਿ ਤਾ ਕੈ ਪਾਛੈ ਜੀਵਣਾ ॥੨॥

"Jis piaaré sio nehu tis aagae mar chaleeae.

Dharig jeevan sansaar iaa kæ paachhae jeevnaa." (SGGS P 83)

Die before the one whom you love;

To live after he dies is to live a worthless life in this world.

Their devotion fulfilled this teaching literally. They chose to "die before the loved one departs," affirming that true discipleship is measured not by words, but by willingness to stand beside the Guru in his darkest hour. It is tempting to frame their sacrifice as mere resistance to oppression. Yet, at its heart, it was an act of love. Tyranny thrives on fear; it seeks to break loyalty and scatter devotion. But love disarms fear. By refusing to abandon the Guru, these Sikhs showed that the love between Guru and disciple is stronger than the might of any empire. Their loyalty was thus a form of spiritual defiance. Without raising a weapon, without resorting to anger, they demonstrated that fidelity to truth cannot be coerced. Their love itself became a shield, preserving their dignity even in the face of persecution.

Before their final trial, Guru Tegh Bahadur is said to have blessed them, declaring: “All my blessings are with you, my noble disciples. What greater joy and pride can I have than the thought that my dearest disciples are with me?”

These words reveal the mutuality of love in the Sikh tradition. Just as the disciples loved the Guru, the Guru cherished his Sikhs with equal intensity. Their bond was not hierarchical but relational, a sacred fellowship in which love was the currency.

The story of Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Sati Das, and Bhai Dayala Ji is not confined to Sikh memory; it offers a universal message. In a world often fractured by coercion, dogma, and domination, their example reminds us that true strength flows from fidelity, not force. They demonstrated that love for truth, embodied in love for the Guru, can empower individuals to withstand any trial. Their devotion is not about dying; it is about living with integrity, about refusing to compromise one’s deepest commitments.

For humanity at large, their message is clear: dignity is preserved not by yielding to fear, but by standing firm in love. Their memory continues to anchor the Sikh spiritual tradition in its resistance to tyranny and its affirmation of the human soul’s sovereignty. The Sikh ardas (daily prayer) remembers these martyrs with reverence, not merely for the manner of their death, but for the spirit of their love. Their story continues to inspire generations because it embodies a timeless truth: that to love the Guru is to rise above fear, to remain steadfast in adversity, and to dedicate one’s life to truth.

The lives of Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Sati Das, and Bhai Dayala are thus eternal reminders that the path of love is the path of liberation. Their devotion remains a beacon for Sikhs and for all humanity—a call to nurture fidelity, courage, and above all, love.

Conclusion

The sacrifice of Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Sati Das, and Bhai Dayala continues to resonate as a timeless message of fidelity to truth and fearless love for the Guru. Their devotion underscores that true discipleship is not bound by words but by the courage to stand unwaveringly beside one’s Master in the face of adversity. By willingly sharing Guru Tegh Bahadur’s destiny, they embodied the Sikh ideal that love dissolves fear and transforms trial into triumph. Their legacy endures not only in Sikh memory but as a universal reminder that dignity, integrity, and liberation are born of steadfast love. In remembering them, we are called to embody the same spirit of fidelity and fearlessness in our own lives. □

Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji – Embodiment of Sacrifice, Bravery, and Valor

UPENDER AMBARDAR*

Abstract

Guru Teg Bahadur, the ninth Sikh Guru, stands immortalized in our history as an unparalleled warrior, a renowned spiritual scholar, a recognized devotional poet, and a heroic martyr. He is famously remembered for fearlessly standing against religious persecution, intolerance, and forced conversions during the Mughal rule. His everlasting teachings of courage, righteousness, and crusade for religious freedom continue to guide and inspire humanity. Justifiably, Guru Ji stands tall in being called "Srishti Di Chadar", the Protector of humanity.

Guru Tegh Bahadur ji, the ninth Guru of Sikhism, born on 18 April 1621, in Amritsar, Punjab, stands as a testament to unwavering sacrifice, selflessness, bravery, valour, compassion, and self-offering for a cause greater than one's own. It was a sheer presence of the divine nature and spiritual disposition in him that made Guru ji to endure unspeakable tyranny with unbelievable calm and composure. Steeped in the ancient and time-tested "Guru-Shishya" tradition and following the footsteps of the 8th Guru Shri Har Krishan ji, he became the 9th Guru on 16th April 1664. It was due to his mastery and absolute hold over the sword-wielding skill and martial art forms that he was given the rightful name of Tegh Bahadur. He was named Tayag Mal by his parents, Guru Hargobind Ji and Mata Nanki. He earned the name of Tegh Bahadur later on after he exhibited exemplary valour in the battle of Kartarpur against the Mughal invaders in sword-wielding skill, archery, and horsemanship.

In addition to being a fearless and formidable warrior, he was also a reputed devotional poet, a master mind, a thinker, and a spiritualist to the core, who carried forward the light

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of righteousness and sense of inspiration for the oppressed people. His extensive travels facilitated the setting up of the religious teaching centres, drinking water facilities, and community kitchens in different places. He was instrumental in the establishment of the town of Chak-Nanki in Punjab, now famously known as the city of Anandpur Sahib. His 116 poetic hymns, which include Sholkas and devotional couplets, illustrate the themes varying from objectivity, spiritual elements, to the nature of mind and body. They form a part of the holy Shri Guru Granth Sahib.

His supreme sacrifice is regarded as a decisive happening that made his illustrious son, the 10th Sikh Guru, Gobind Singh Ji to establish the Khalsa in the year 1699. It was a disciplined body of saint soldiers, engaged in safeguarding the spiritual purity, freedom of religious belief, to fighting against religious fanaticism, intolerance, and tyranny. In November 1675, Guru Ji, along with his close companions, namely Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Dayala, and Bhai Sati Das, were brought to Chandni Chowk, Delhi. They were threatened to change their religion and convert to Islam or else face dire consequences. Steedfast in their determination and firmly anchored in their religious belief, the brave of these braves were brutally tortured and savagely killed for their refusal to renounce their chosen faith. It happened before the very presence of the Guru Ji, and it steeled his resolve to fight religious oppression at all costs. Later on 24th November, 1675, the Guru Ji was publicly beheaded in the Chandni Chowk area of Delhi on the orders of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. The place where he offered the highest self-sacrifice now houses the hallowed Gurudwara Sis Ganj Sahib. The second Gurudwara, Rakab Ganj Sahib, also in Delhi, is built at the spot where one of Guri ji's disciple burned his house to cremate his body. Additionally, the holy Gurudwara Shri Sis Ganj Sahib in Anandpur Sahib, Punjab, marks the place where the severed head of the Guru Ji was cremated after it was brought there by Bhai Jaita Ji later known as Bhai Jeevan Singh. His martyrdom not only hardened the resolve to fight against religious intolerance and persecution but also galvanized the Sikh panth in cohesiveness. It was a watershed moment in the struggle against religious oppression.

Guru Tegh Bahadur and Kashmir connect: Guru ji, for the minuscule Kashmiri Pandit community, represents a scintillating example of the highest self-sacrifice, fearlessness, and religious firmness, having no parallel in recent human history. He is also known as "Hind-Di-Chadar". Kashmiri Pandits venerate and treasure him as "Dharam-Di-Chadar" of the pandit community for being their protector from forced conversion and religious

oppression. He is also remembered as the personification of divinity in the mortal form for his momentous role in saving an ancient civilizational culture and faith of Kashmir.

Pleading for help: In the year 1675, a delegation of Kashmiri Pandits led by Pandit Kripa Ram Dutt and Pandit Trilok Nath Raina came all the way from Kashmir to Anandpur Sahib to seek help from Guru Tegh Bahadur to save them from the religious torment and forced conversion by the then Mughal governor of Kashmir, Iftikhar Khan. The Guru ji responded that it can be halted only by the offering of a sacrifice by a spiritually endowed eminent person. It prompted a remark from his son, Shri Gobind Rai (Later Shri Guru Gobind Singh ji), that there was none greater than himself. Guru Ji took this remark as a divine signal. As a counter response, the Pandit delegation was asked to tell the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb that they would follow suit if he could succeed in converting Guru Ji. This open defiance led to his arrest, unspeakable torture, and martyrdom in Delhi in November 1675.

Honoured place of Guru Ji: Guru Tegh Bahadur enjoys enormous reverence in the social memory of the Kashmiri Pandit community. This social knowledge and historical information are passed down through the generations. It is to the extent that Guru Ji's photograph finds an honored place in their pooja rooms. It is a reflection of the collective gratitude and indebtedness; it also finds manifestation during the Shivratri festival pooja, where some specific families install Guru ji's photograph in the pooja room along with their festival utensils, symbolizing different deities. Additionally, in the collective remembrance, seminars and special programs are mounted on Guru Ji from time to time. In brief, Guru Tegh Bahadur ji's entire life and resistance continue to serve as a powerful inspiration within our social matrix to cope with adversity and new challenges.



ਭੈ ਕਾਹੂ ਕਉ ਦੇਤ ਨਹਿ ਨਹਿ ਭੈ ਮਾਨਤ ਆਨ ॥
ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਨਿ ਰੇ ਮਨਾ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਤਾਹਿ ਬਖਾਨਿ ॥੧੬॥

*One who does not frighten anyone, and who is not afraid of anyone
else - says Nanak, listen, mind: call him spiritually wise. || 16 ||*

[SGGS: 1427]

Guru Tegh Bahadur : (ਮੇਰਾ ਬੈਦੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਵਿੰਦਾ) Mera Baid Guru Govinda

DR. KALA SINGH*

Abstract

A good physician creates awareness in the community about the existence of the problem. This paper will discuss that's what Guru Tegh Bahadar did. He is the True Guru Physician who preaches how to live a spiritual, perfect, truthful life free of stress, worries, greed, and attachment to worldly possessions, anger, sexual lust, ego, and mental problems through his Bani in SGGS.

ਮੇਰਾ ਬੈਦੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਵਿੰਦਾ ॥

ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਅਉਖਧੁ ਮੁਖਿ ਦੇਵੈ ਕਾਟੈ ਜਮ ਕੀ ਫੰਧਾ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ

(SGGS PG.618)

*Mera Baid Guru Govinda // Har Har Naam Aukhadh Mukh Devai Kattai Jam Ki Fanda
//1// Rehao //*

Embodiment of Creator God, the Guru is my Physician. Whoever takes medicine of spiritual knowledge and wisdom from the Guru Physician cuts away the noose of spiritual death, giving vices, like ardent sexual desire, anger, intoxication with worldly passion (Maya), ego, and jealousy, and they usher in the mind Godly Virtues like voluntary service, contentment, compassion, righteousness, and truthfulness, which give spiritual life. Such a person never gets stressed in life and is free of most mental and physical problems.

He preaches there is only One Creator God, who dwells in everyone.

ਘਟ ਘਟ ਮੈ ਹਰਿ ਜੂ ਬਸੈ ਸੰਤਨ ਕਹਿਓ ਪੁਕਾਰਿ ॥

(SGGS PG.1427)

Ghat Ghat Mai Har Ju Basey santan Kahiyo Pukar //

Creator God abides in every molecule of the cosmos.

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As Gurbani is directed at human Mind (ਮਨ), this philosophy of One Cosmic Law and One Universal Energy (Creator God) permeates the entire universe, making entire humanity spiritual kinsmen. There will naturally be world peace. There will not be terrorist attacks and killings of each other. It will promote human equality. With that, everyone in the world will be stress-free and, in turn, free of most mental and physical problems. The important fact to note is that Guru is emphasizing introspection, not changing others.

ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਬਾਝੁ ਵੈਦੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ ॥ ਆਪੇ ਆਪਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੁ ਸੋਈ ॥

Satgur Bajhahu Vaid N Koyi || Aape Aap Niranjan Soyī ||

ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਮਿਲਿਐ ਮਰੈ ਮੰਦਾ ਹੋਵੈ ਗਿਆਨ ਬੀਚਾਰੀ ਜੀਉ ॥੪॥

Satgur Miliai Marai Manda Hovai Giyan Bichari Jeeo ||4|| (SGGS PG. 1016)

There is no spiritual physician other than the True Guru, who is the embodiment of the Creator God. Meeting the True Guru (Getting spiritual knowledge), evil is conquered, and spiritual wisdom is contemplated.

Most physical illnesses are connected with stress and worry. When the mind is free of stress and worries, one will be free of most physical illnesses as well. As a True Physician, Guru diagnosed that the Man is sick, engrossed in worldly temptations, and the root cause of problems.

ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੯ ॥Gourri Mehla 9 ॥

ਮਨ ਰੇ ਕਹਾ ਭਇਓ ਤੈ ਬਉਰਾ ॥ ਅਹਿਨਿਸਿ ਅਉਧ ਘਟੈ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਨੈ ਭਇਓ ਲੋਭ ਸੰਗਿ ਹਉਰਾ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

SGGS Pg. 220

Mann Re Keha Bhaeu Tai Boura || Ahinis Aoudh Ghattai Nehi Janai Bhaeiou Lobh Sang Houra ||1|| Rehao ||

ਜੋ ਤਨੁ ਤੈ ਅਪਨੇ ਕਰਿ ਮਾਨਿਓ ਅਰੁ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਗ੍ਰਿਹ ਨਾਰੀ ॥

ਇਨ ਮੈ ਕਛੁ ਤੇਰੇ ਰੇ ਨਾਹਿਨ ਦੇਖੇ ਸੋਚ ਬਿਚਾਰੀ ॥੧॥

(SGGS PG.220)

Jo Tann Tai Apno Kar Maniou Ar Sundar Grih Nari || En Main Kach Tero Re Nahan Dekho Soch Bichari ||1||

O Mann! Why are you going crazy indulging in worldly temptations? Don't you know that your life is decreasing every moment, and you are wasting it in worthless passions? Reflect and contemplate that your body, beautiful home, and spouse will not be with you forever. To fulfill these indulgences, you are always engrossed in vices (Panj Chor) and forget Godly Virtues, which makes your life miserable.

There is a need to differentiate between need and greed. We need many things in the world to survive, but when need becomes greed, it gives mental stress, worries, and accompanies mental and physical problems.

ਚਿੰਤਾ ਤਾ ਕੀ ਕੀਜੀਐ ਜੋ ਅਨਹੋਨੀ ਹੋਇ ॥
ਇਹੁ ਮਾਰਗੁ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਕੋ ਨਾਨਕ ਥਿਰੁ ਨਹੀ ਕੋਇ ॥੫੧॥ (SGGS PG. 1429)

Chinta Ta Ki Kijiai Jo Anhoni Hoe // Eh Marag Sansar Ko Nanak Thir Nehi Koe //51//

We worry and become anxious when something unexpected and untoward happens. Everything and every situation is expected and likely to happen. A stable marriage can break down anytime. One can lose a permanent job. Guru says nothing is stable or permanent in this world. If one loses all money, that also will not last forever. So we should not worry unnecessarily and get depressed. Instead, we should be concerned and learn how to get over and cope with the problem.

ਨਰ ਚਾਹਤ ਕਛੁ ਅਉਰਿ ਅਉਰੈ ਕੀ ਅਉਰੈ ਭਈ ॥
ਚਿਤਵਤ ਰਹਿਓ ਠਗਉਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਫਾਸੀ ਗਲਿ ਪਰੀ ॥੩੮॥ (SGGS PG. 1428)

Nar Chahat Kach Aur Aurai Ki Aurai Bhei // Chitvat Rehiou Thagour Nanak Fasi Gal Pari //38//

ਜਤਨ ਬਹੁਤ ਸੁਖ ਕੇ ਕੀਏ ਦੁਖ ਕੇ ਕੀਓ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥
ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਨਿ ਰੇ ਮਨਾ ਹਰਿ ਭਾਵੈ ਸੋ ਹੋਇ ॥੩੯॥ (SGGS PG.1428)

Jatan Bahut Sukh Ke Keeae Dukh Ko Keeou N Koe // Kahu Nanak Sunn Re Mna Har Bhavai So Hoe //39//

We wish for something, but something different happens. So our mind is always at unease and unhappy. Then we try different means of achieving it and never come out of the vicious circle. We make all sorts of efforts to find peace and pleasure, but not pain and suffering. Guru says, we should be content and happy with what we are and have. At the same time, hope, not expect, and strive by honest means as per Godly Virtues.

ਸੋਰਠਿ ਮਹਲਾ ੯ ॥ Sorath Mehla 9 ॥
ਮਨ ਰੇ ਕਉਨੁ ਕੁਮਤਿ ਤੈ ਲੀਨੀ ॥
ਪਰ ਦਾਰਾ ਨਿੰਦਿਆ ਰਸ ਰਚਿਓ ਰਾਮ ਭਗਤਿ ਨਹਿ ਕੀਨੀ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ॥

Mann Re Koun Kumat Tai Lini // Par Dara Nindia Ras Rachiou Ram Bhagat Nehi Kini //1// Rehao //

ਮੁਕਤਿ ਪੰਥੁ ਜਾਨਿਓ ਤੈ ਨਾਹਨਿ ਧਨ ਜੋਰਨ ਕਉ ਧਾਇਆ ॥
ਅੰਤਿ ਸੰਗ ਕਾਹੂ ਨਹੀ ਦੀਨਾ ਬਿਰਥਾ ਆਪੁ ਬੰਧਾਇਆ ॥੧॥

*Mukat Panth Janiou Tai Nahan Dhan Joran Ko Dhaya // Aant Sang Kahu Nehi Dina
Birtha Aap Bandhaya ||1||*

ਨਾ ਹਰਿ ਭਜਿਓ ਨ ਗੁਰ ਜਨੁ ਸੇਵਿਓ ਨਹ ਉਪਜਿਓ ਕਛੁ ਗਿਆਨਾ ॥
ਘਟਿ ਹੀ ਮਾਹਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੁ ਤੇਰੈ ਤੈ ਖੋਜਤ ਉਦਿਆਨਾ ॥੨॥

SGGS PG.631-632

*Na Har Bhajou N Gur Jan Sevio Neh Upajou Kach Giayana // Ghatt Hi Mahi Niranjana
Terai Tai Khojat Udiana ||2||*

Here again, Guru is questioning the mind of (Mann): what evil-mindedness and foolishness have you developed? You are engrossed in the sexual lust of spouses of others and slandering; you have not imbibed Godly Virtues. In the end, all the wealth you have collected will not go with you, but you have entrapped yourself in vain. All this wealth will not give you eternal peace. Neither have you come to the refuge of the Guru to obtain spiritual knowledge, nor do you have Godly Virtues. Eternal peace giving Godly Virtues abide within you, but you are looking for it in worldly possessions.

ਵੈਦਾ ਵੈਦੁ ਸੁਵੈਦੁ ਤੂ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਰੋਗੁ ਪਛਾਣੁ ॥

(SGGS PG.1279)

Vaida Vaid Su vaid Toon Pahila Rog Pachan //

As the True Best Physician Guru has diagnosed that the root cause of problems is restless Mann which is always busy with ardent worldly passions.

ਸੋਰਠਿ ਮਹਲਾ ੯ ॥ Sorath Mehla 9 ॥

ਮਾਈ ਮਨੁ ਮੇਰੇ ਬਸਿ ਨਾਹਿ ॥ ਨਿਸ ਬਾਸੁਰ ਬਿਖਿਅਨ ਕਉ ਧਾਵਤ ਕਿਹਿ ਬਿਧਿ ਰੋਕਉ ਤਾਹਿ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ॥

*Mayi Mann Mero Bas Nahi // Nis Basur Bikhian Ko Dhavat Kih Bidh Roko Thahi ||1||
Rehao //*

ਬੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਕੇ ਮਤ ਸੁਨਿ ਨਿਮਖ ਨ ਹੀਏ ਬਸਾਵੈ ॥
ਪਰ ਧਨ ਪਰ ਦਾਰਾ ਸਿਉ ਰਚਿਓ ਬਿਰਥਾ ਜਨਮੁ ਸਿਰਾਵੈ ॥੧॥

*Beid Puran Simrit Ke Mat Sunn Nimakh N Hiye Basavai // Par Dhan Par Dara Sio
Rachiu Birtha Janam Siravai ||1||*

ਮਦਿ ਮਾਇਆ ਕੈ ਭਇਓ ਬਾਵਰੇ ਸੂਝਤ ਨਹ ਕਛੁ ਗਿਆਨਾ ॥
ਘਟ ਹੀ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਬਸਤ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੁ ਤਾ ਕੋ ਮਰਮੁ ਨ ਜਾਨਾ ॥੨॥

SGGS PG.632

Madh Maya Kai Bheiou Bavro Sujhat Neh Kach Giyana || Ghatt Hi Bhitat Basat Nirnjan Ta Ko Maram N Jana ||2||

My Mann (ਮਨ) is not under control because he is pursuing ardent worldly temptations all the time. How can I restrain it? It listens to the teachings of the Holy Books (Granth) but does not enshrine them even for an instant. Engrossed in the wealth and sexual lust of spouses of others, life passes away uselessly. We have seen how celebrities have been disgraced because of their sexual lust in the “Me Too Movement”. Gone insane with ardent worldly passions, it does not understand even an iota of spiritual wisdom. Though Godly Virtues abide within, it does not know.

Guru then explains that after recognizing the problem and making the diagnosis, one asks for the treatment from Physician Guru (Vaid).

ਸੋਰਠਿ ਮਹਲਾ ੯ || Sorath Mehla 9 ||

ਪ੍ਰਾਨੀ ਕਉਨੁ ਉਪਾਉ ਕਰੈ ॥ ਜਾ ਤੇ ਭਗਤਿ ਰਾਮ ਕੀ ਪਾਵੈ ਜਮ ਕੋ ਤ੍ਰਾਸੁ ਹਰੈ ॥੧॥ SGGS PG.632

Prani Koun Upao Karai || Ja Te Bhagat Ram Ki Pavai Jam Ko Tras Harai ||1|| Rehao ||

ਕਉਨੁ ਕਰਮ ਬਿਦਿਆ ਕਹੁ ਕੈਸੀ ਧਰਮੁ ਕਉਨੁ ਫੁਨਿ ਕਰਈ ॥

ਕਉਨੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਜਾ ਕੈ ਸਿਮਰੈ ਭਵ ਸਾਗਰੁ ਕਉ ਤਰਈ ॥੧॥

Koun Karam Bidia Kahu Kaisi Dharam Koun Fun Kari || Koun Naam Gur Ja Kai Simrai Bhav Sagar Ko Tarei ||1||

ਕਲ ਮਹਿ ਏਕੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਨਿਧਿ ਜਾਹਿ ਜਪੈ ਗਤਿ ਪਾਵੈ ॥

ਅਉਰ ਧਰਮ ਤਾ ਕੈ ਸਮ ਨਾਹਨਿ ਇਹ ਬਿਧਿ ਬੇਦੁ ਬਤਾਵੈ ॥੨॥

Kal Mai Ek Naam Kirpa Nidh Jahi Japai Gat Pavai || Aur Dharm Ta Kai Sam Nahan Eh Bidh Baed Batavai ||2||

ਸੁਖੁ ਦੁਖੁ ਰਹਤ ਸਦਾ ਨਿਰਲੇਪੀ ਜਾ ਕਉ ਕਹਤ ਗੁਸਾਈ ॥

ਸੋ ਤੁਮ ਹੀ ਮਹਿ ਬਸੈ ਨਿਰੰਤਰਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਦਰਪਨਿ ਨਿਆਈ ॥੩॥੫॥

Sukh Dukh Rehat Sda Nirlepi Ja Ko Kehat Gusayi || So Tum Hi Meh Basai Nirantar Nanak Darpan Niayi ||3||5||

Once the diagnosis has been made that the Mann is not under control, the question arises, how to control it? Which deeds, what sort of knowledge, and which righteous path

should one follow? Guru then replies that in the mindset of Kal Yug, one can obtain salvation (Mukti) from ardent worldly passions by imbibing and practicing Godly Virtues in everyday life. O Nanak! When one attains Godly Virtues, one is detached from pain and pleasure, and forever unattached to ardent worldly passions. Such Godly Virtues dwell deep within our inner selves, like the image in a mirror.

After that, Guru (Vaid) gives medicine in the form of advice.

ਰਾਗੁ ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੯ ॥

Rag Gourri Mehla 9 ||

ਸਾਧੋ ਮਨ ਕਾ ਮਾਨੁ ਤਿਆਗਉ ॥

ਕਾਮੁ ਕ੍ਰੋਧੁ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਦੁਰਜਨ ਕੀ ਤਾ ਤੇ ਅਹਿਨਿਸਿ ਭਾਗਉ ॥੧॥

Sadho Mann Ka Maan Tiago || Kam Krodh Sangat Durjan Ki Ta Te Ahnis Bhagao
 ||1|| *Rehao* ||

ਸੁਖੁ ਦੁਖੁ ਦੋਨੋ ਸਮ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਨੈ ਅਉਰੁ ਮਾਨੁ ਅਪਮਾਨਾ ॥

ਹਰਖ ਸੋਗ ਤੇ ਰਹੈ ਅਤੀਤਾ ਤਿਨਿ ਜਗਿ ਤਤੁ ਪਛਾਨਾ ॥੧॥

Sukh Dukh Dono Sam Kar Janai Aur Maan Apmāna || Harkh Sog Te Rehai Atita Tin
Jag Tat Pachana ||1||

ਉਸਤਤਿ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਦੇਉ ਤਿਆਗੈ ਖੋਜੈ ਪਦੁ ਨਿਰਬਾਨਾ ॥

ਜਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਇਹੁ ਖੇਲੁ ਕਠਨੁ ਹੈ ਕਿਨਹੂੰ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਜਾਨਾ ॥੨॥੧॥

SGGS PG. 219

Ustat Ninda Doyu Tiagai Khojai Pad Nirbana || Jan Nanak Eh Khel Kathan Hai Kinhun
Gurmukh Jana ||2||1||

Guru is advising to for sake the pride of mind (Ego). Sexual lust and anger are like the company of evil people – always keep away from them. One who considers pain and pleasure, honour and dishonour the same. Who remains detached from joy and sorrow realizes the true essence in the world. That person has found the essence of life, which neither praises nor slanders others and is always in search of that spiritual state of mind in which no ardent worldly passions affect him. But O Nanak, to attain this state is very difficult; exceptionally rare is the imbibing of spiritual knowledge and wisdom of the Guru.

ਬਿਲਾਵਲੁ ਮਹਲਾ ੯ || Bilaval Mehla 9 ||

ਹਰਿ ਕੇ ਨਾਮ ਬਿਨਾ ਦੁਖੁ ਪਾਵੈ ॥

ਭਗਤਿ ਬਿਨਾ ਸਹਸਾ ਨਹ ਚੁਕੈ ਗੁਰੁ ਇਹੁ ਭੇਦੁ ਬਤਾਵੈ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ .

Har Ke Naam Bina Dukh Pavai || Bhagat Bina Sehsha Neh Chookai Gur Eh Bhed Batavai ||1|| Rehau ||

ਕਹਾ ਭਇਓ ਤੀਰਥ ਬ੍ਰਤ ਕੀਏ ਰਾਮ ਸਰਨਿ ਨਹੀ ਆਵੈ ॥

ਜੋਗ ਜਗ ਨਿਹਫਲ ਤਿਹ ਮਾਨਉ ਜੋ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਜਸੁ ਬਿਸਰਾਵੈ ॥੧॥

Keha Bheiou Tirath Brat Kiye Ram Saran Nehi Avai || Jog Jag Nihfal Tih Mano Jo Prabh Jas Bistravai ||1||

ਮਾਨ ਮੋਹ ਦੋਨੋ ਕਉ ਪਰਹਰਿ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਕੇ ਗੁਨ ਗਾਵੈ ॥

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਇਹ ਬਿਧਿ ਕੋ ਪ੍ਰਾਨੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਕਹਾਵੈ ॥੨॥੨॥

SGGS PG. 830-31

Maan Moh Dono Ko Parhar Gobind Ke Gunn Gavai || Kahu Nanak Eh Bidh Ko Prani Jivan Mukat Kehavai ||2||2||

Guru reveals the secret of eternal peace in life. Without imbibing Godly Virtues, most of doubt and duality is not dispelled. Life devoid of Godly Virtues is full of pain and misery. Without the sanctuary of Godly Virtues, pilgrimages to sacred shrines and fasts are meaningless. Those who forget Godly Virtues, their asceticism, sacrificial feasts, and other such rituals are fruitless. Says Nanak, one who forgoes pride and love of ardent worldly passions, remembers Godly Virtues all the time, attains salvation while living (Jivan Mukat), and is free of mental stress.

ਜਿਹਥਾ ਗੁਨ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਭਜਹੁ ਕਰਨ ਸੁਨਹੁ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ॥

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਨਿ ਰੇ ਮਨਾ ਪਰਹਿ ਨ ਜਮ ਕੈ ਧਾਮ ॥੨੧॥

SGGS PG.1427

Jihba Gunn Gobind Bhajhu Karan Sunhu Har Naam || Kahu Nanak Sunn Re Mna Pareh N Jam Kai Dham ||21||

Guru further says that to obtain salvation (Mukti) now, our tongue should talk and our ears listen to Godly Virtues. That means if all our sense organs (Giyani Indriya) are attuned to Godly Virtues, we will not fall prey to ardent worldly passions and obtain salvation (Mukti) now in the form of stress stress-free life.

ਰੋਗੁ ਦਾਰੂ ਦੋਵੈ ਬੁਝੈ ਤਾ ਵੈਦੁ ਸੁਜਾਣੁ ॥

SGGS PG.148

Rog Daru Dovai Bujhey Ta Vaid Sujan ||

A good Physician diagnoses and treats the illness. That's what Guru Tegh Bahadur wants us to do. Those who take the treatment prescribed by the Vaid Guru have recovered from the illness of Mann.

Conclusion: Guru Tegh Bahadur preaches that one should not get depressed while in difficulty and get proud and infatuated when in pleasure. The martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur shows that he decided to stand up for the right of freedom of worship for Hindus, though he was not a Hindu. He believed in One God present in all human beings and creatures of God, and everyone has the freedom of worship. Such a type of sacrifice is unique in the history of mankind. Guru Tegh Bahadur was the Champion of Human Rights. The modern-day Human Rights Movement was born in 1920 after the French Revolution, but no one knows the contribution of Guru Tegh Bahadur. There is a need to spread this message to everyone, as this message is for the entire humanity, not only for Sikhs. □

ਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਦਰਸਨੁ ਦੇਖਿ ਨਿਹਾਲ ॥
ਗੁਰ ਕੇ ਸੇਵਕ ਕੀ ਪੂਰਨ ਘਾਲ ॥
ਗੁਰ ਕੇ ਸੇਵਕ ਕਉ ਦੁਖੁ ਨ ਬਿਆਪੈ ॥
ਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਦਹ ਦਿਸਿ ਜਾਪੈ ॥੩॥

Gazing upon the Blessed Vision of the Guru's Darshan, I am exalted.

The work of the Guru's servant is perfect.

Pain does not afflict the Guru's servant.

The Guru's servant is famous in the ten directions. || 3 ||

[SGGS: 864]

The Religious Philosophy of Guru Teg Bahadur Ji

CHHANDA CHATTERJEE*

Abstract

The article delves into the philosophy of Guru Teg Bahadur and argues that the Guru had a clear perception of the pitfalls that await human beings in their worldly concerns and attempted to guide them back towards righteousness and a proper attitude towards life. He was hopeful that even if a person fell into temptations, he could always take refuge in the protective care of the Lord, as the Lord was an eternal redeemer of sins.

Guru Teg Bahadur, or Tyag Mal, before he was nominated as the Guru, had always been a philosophical person from his very childhood. He excelled in his martial ability, which he had evinced as a boy in defending Kartarpur against Mughal depredations. This earned him the name 'Teg Bahadur', Teg signifying the sword and Bahadur in recognition of his bravery. Father Guru Har Govind recognized his abilities with the gift of this title. But he also knew that young Teg Bahadur's heart was not in war or statecraft. Rather, he preferred silent contemplation about the deeper meaning of life and how to cross over the difficult journey of life towards the attainment of eternal bliss. That is why, when it came to the question of succession, Guru Har Gobind nominated Har Rai, the son of his eldest son, who had predeceased him. But as fortune would have it, eventually the succession passed to Teg Bahadur, and he became the Guru. But he was made of a different stuff. And he blazed his trail with the noble sacrifice of his head for the cause of freedom of religious faith. The most striking part of the incident was that it was not his own faith, to which he subscribed. It was for the sake of another faith – the faith practiced by Kashmir Pandits, who were not a part of the Sikh fraternity. The Guru thought it important that all should have equal freedom to think for themselves. No one should be compelled to conform to a discipline forcibly. All should have equal opportunity to think for themselves. Nothing should be imposed.

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A study of Guru Teg Bahadur's bani reveals an extremely cynical view of life. He pointed out that there was no real friend in this world. Practically everyone, even close relatives like wife and children, turned their backs when a person did not possess anything of worth. As long as a person commands some wealth, he is surrounded by all – wife, children, in-laws, and friends. All fake intimacy and fondness. But when wealth passes away, everyone deserts a man's side.

ਇਹ ਜਗਿ ਮੀਤੁ ਨ ਦੇਖਿਓ ਕੋਈ ॥

ਸਗਲ ਜਗਤੁ ਅਪਨੈ ਸੁਖਿ ਲਾਗਿਓ ਦੁਖ ਮੈ ਸੰਗਿ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

ਦਾਰਾ ਮੀਤ ਪੂਤ ਸਨਬੰਧੀ ਸਗਰੇ ਧਨ ਸਿਉ ਲਾਗੇ ॥

ਜਬ ਹੀ ਨਿਰਧਨ ਦੇਖਿਓ ਨਰ ਕਉ ਸੰਗੁ ਛਾਡਿ ਸਭ ਭਾਗੇ ॥੧॥

(SGGS PG.633)

Ih jag meet na dekhio koi. Sagal jagat apnea such lagio Duk me sang na hoee Dara, meet, put, Sambandhe Sagra dhan sio lage. Jab hi nirdhan dekhio nar koi Sang chhaad sab bhage.

He also knew that the ultimate destiny of all human beings is death. We all attach great importance to our bonding with our near and dear ones while we are alive. We do not even hesitate about indulging in unjust acts for the benefit of our kith and kin. But the Guru tried to remind his followers that no one would accompany a man. God alone would accompany a man in his final journey to the ultimate.

ਨਾਨਕ ਭਉਜਲੁ ਪਾਰਿ ਪਰੈ ਜਉ ਗਾਵੈ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕੇ ਗੀਤ ॥

(SGGS PG.536)

Nanak bhaojal paar paraye jao Gaavae parab ke geet

Once this truth about the fickleness of everything in life was appreciated, the Guru also had suggestions about how a wise man should look at the happenings around him. Since all things in this life were ephemeral, Teg Bahadur thought that the right attitude would be to remain unmoved by anything, whether good or evil. Life should be viewed as a great game – the hardest of games, where one should carry on with equanimity without being moved by the world's pains. While one should not revel too much in joy, one should also remain nonchalant when struck by sorrow. Prestige and disrepute, praise and blame – nothing should move a person at all. The wise should remain impervious to wrath, greed, or desire. There lies the key to Nirvana.

ਜੋ ਨਰੁ ਦੁਖ ਮੈ ਦੁਖੁ ਨਹੀ ਮਾਨੈ ॥ ਸੁਖ ਸਨੇਹੁ ਅਰੁ ਭੈ ਨਹੀ ਜਾ ਕੈ ਕੰਚਨ ਮਾਟੀ ਮਾਨੈ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਨਹ ਨਿੰਦਿਆ ਨਹ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਜਾ ਕੈ ਲੋਭੁ ਮੋਹੁ ਅਭਿਮਾਨਾ ॥ ਹਰਖ ਸੋਗ ਤੇ ਰਹੈ ਨਿਆਰਉ ਨਾਹਿ ਮਾਨ ਅਪਮਾਨਾ ॥੧॥ ਆਸਾ ਮਨਸਾ ਸਗਲ ਤਿਆਗੈ ਜਗ ਤੇ ਰਹੈ ਨਿਰਾਸਾ ॥ ਕਾਮੁ ਕ੍ਰੋਧੁ ਜਿਹ ਪਰਸੈ ਨਾਹਨਿ ਤਿਹ ਘਟਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਨਿਵਾਸਾ ॥੨॥ (SGGS PG.633)

Jo nar dukh me dukh nahi mane. Sukh sanehu ar bhae nahee Ja koi kanchan maatee mane. Nah nindiaa nah ustat Ja kae lobh moh abhimanaa. Harakh Sogte Rahe Niaro Nahi maan apamaanaa. Aasaa mansaa sagal tiagee Jag te rahae nirasaa. Kam krod jih parsae nahan Tih ghat barahm nivaasa.

Such would be the kind of person, the Guru hoped, who would be blessed by an union with the Ultimate as water mingles with water.

When a person is able to ignore both joy and sorrow, prosperity and ruin, praise and shame as irrelevant and a passing phase, then he can attain eternal peace or Nirvana. This Nirvana is the cessation of maya or worldly delusions. The Guru tried to alert people regarding the transitory nature of all these poignant emotions, which pervade human consciousness during their occurrence and make people forget that such ups and downs alternate like rain and sunshine. Power and prestige make people proud, and they tend to forget that such power has its limits, and they commit wrongs and hurt the weak in the delusion of their pride. That is why the Guru advised distance from pride, anger, or lust, as these were the enemies of good people.

ਸਾਧੋ ਮਨ ਕਾ ਮਾਨੁ ਤਿਆਗਉ ॥
ਕਾਮੁ ਕ੍ਰੋਧੁ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਦੁਰਜਨ ਕੀ ਤਾ ਤੇ ਅਹਿਨਿਸਿ ਭਾਗਉ ॥੧॥ (SGGS PG.219)

Sadho man ka maan tiago. Kaam krod sangat durj Kee taa te ahinis bhago

Guru Teg Bahadur attached maximum importance to control of the mind. Once a person has achieved control of the mind, he would not be far from knowing God himself. The blessings of the Lord would descend on him in no time.

ਚੰਚਲ ਮਨੁ ਦਹ ਦਿਸਿ ਕਉ ਧਾਵਤ ਅਚਲ ਜਾਹਿ ਠਹਰਾਨੇ ॥
ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਇਹ ਬਿਧਿ ਕੇ ਜੋ ਨਰੁ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਤਾਹਿ ਤੁਮ ਮਾਨੋ ॥੨॥੩॥ (SGGS PG.685)

Chanchal man dah dis ka-o Dhavat Achal Jahi thehraano.
Kahu Nanak ih bidh ko jo nar Mukti taahi tum maano

In spite of all teachings, human nature is prone to commit errors. Ordinary mortals cannot usually rise above fear, grief, temptations, and pride. But even for those who had gone astray, God never closes His door.

ਪਤਿਤ ਉਧਾਰਨ ਭੈ ਹਰਨ ਹਰਿ ਅਨਾਥ ਕੇ ਨਾਥ ॥
ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਤਿਹ ਜਾਨੀਐ ਸਦਾ ਬਸਤੁ ਤੁਮ ਸਾਥਿ ॥੬॥ (SGGS PG.1426)

Patit udhaaran bhai haran Har anath ke naath.

Kahu Nanak te jaaneesai Sadhaa basat tum saath.

If we go a little deeper into the shabads of the ninth Guru, we can discern a very sharp mind, fully aware of the ways of the world. There is no reason to think that he turned his back on the world and sought his personal peace of mind. He was a keen observer of reality and fully aware of the pitfalls and temptations of this world. And his heart always pined for the people who were constantly falling into errors and moving further away from the benedictions of the Supreme. But he knew in the heart of his heart that the Almighty was always eager to receive his repentant children back with open arms once they regretted their ways and wanted to come back to his fold. For the Guru, He was the patit pavan or redeemer of sins and the Nath (ਨਾਥ) for the anath (ਅਨਾਥ). Again and again, he kept on reminding whoever would listen to him that it was never too late for a penitent to come back.



ਤਨੁ ਧਨੁ ਸੰਪੈ ਸੁਖ ਦੀਓ ਅਰੁ ਜਿਹ ਨੀਕੇ ਧਾਮ ॥
 ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਨੁ ਰੇ ਮਨਾ ਸਿਮਰਤ ਕਾਹਿ ਨ ਰਾਮੁ ॥੮॥
 ਸਭ ਸੁਖ ਦਾਤਾ ਰਾਮੁ ਹੈ ਦੂਸਰ ਨਾਹਿਨ ਕੋਇ ॥
 ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਨਿ ਰੇ ਮਨਾ ਤਿਹ ਸਿਮਰਤ ਗਤਿ ਹੋਇ ॥੯॥

He has given you your body, wealth, property, peace and beautiful mansions. Says Nanak, listen, mind: why don't you remember the Lord in meditation? || 8 ||

The Lord is the Giver of all peace and comfort. There is no other at all. Says Nanak, listen, mind: meditating in remembrance on Him, salvation is attained. || 9 ||

[SGGS: 1426]



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Oneness Of Guru Nanak – Ik Onkar Formless Form Of Cosmic Power

*PROF. CHARANJIT SINGH SHAH**

Abstract

Understanding oneness of Guru Nanak is a real Spiritual Empowerment leading from Aakar to Nirakar. Form to formless. Eternal experience of soul to soul connect without any myth rituals and sectorialism of religious fanaticism. It is a matter of inner engineering of connect with the deepest oceanic silence and treasure which Guru Nanak expresses as IK ONKAR

More and more one tries to understand Guru Nanak, one feels so ignorant that all of life, I am in the myth, superstitious, rituality and fanaticism of religious bondage. I feel like a frog in a well. I see sea in the well. I have the limited boundaries of religion bondage and limit my Guru Nanak in the four boundaries of a Gurudwara. I have never ever tried to travel with My Guru Nanak, who is perhaps, as a scholar, as a Scientist, Psychiatrist, a protestant, reformer, democrat, researcher, protector, demonstrator, critic, traveller, debator, always looked upon human values, equality in society. Religion & being religious is always out of fear syndrome but spirituality is the understanding of the Oneness of Guru Nanak, understanding the formless form of Guru Nanak, the Cosmic Energy. The Hukam is the order of the cosmic power which perhaps cannot be expressed but can be experienced focussing with body, mind & Intellect.

Guru Nanak's companion, Bhai Mardana, travelled with him more than 32000 miles around the globe and experienced the great evolution of ॐ - OM significantly known universally as the sound of universal truth, the Anhad Naad but still the society is segmented with various individual powers and sub-powers as creator, destroyer & sustainer. The society divided in castes, sub-caste, religions, deras, sects, groups and looking for

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salvation through various process of pursuing the body with hardship, struggle, fasting etc. but the revolutionary Guru Nanak, the leader of the Bhagati Movement taught a very practical and scientific way of shifting of mind-set from rituality to sewa, simran and kirtan; remembering the cosmic power 24/7 and defined as Shukrana, gratitude. It is from changeless to ever-changing, Nirakaar to Aakaar, temporary to permanent which remains always is Akaal & truthful and to be preached as Sat Sri Akaal, the ੴ is ਸਤਿਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ.

Bhai Mardana, the truest of Sikh, who was blessed with Guru Nanak's association of more than 45 years and with due respect, can be called as

ਹਰਿ ਜਨ ਹਰਿ ਅੰਤਰੁ ਨਹੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਚੀ ਮਾਨੁ ॥੨੬॥ (SGGS PG.1428)

He is the first Sikh of Guru Nanak but he remained as Muslim all his life till he was buried.

Guru Nanak never ever tried to be segmented in one more religion but wished to unifying all religious & sects. That is why Guru Nanak says-

ਅਵਲਿ ਅਲਹ ਨੂਰੁ ਉਪਾਇਆ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਕੇ ਸਭ ਬੰਦੇ ॥
 ਏਕ ਨੂਰ ਤੇ ਸਭੁ ਜਗੁ ਉਪਜਿਆ ਕਉਨ ਭਲੇ ਕੋ ਮੰਦੇ ॥੧॥
 ਮਾਨਸ ਕੀ ਜਾਤ ਸਬੈ ਏਕੈ ਪਹਿਚਾਨਬੋ॥ (SGGS PG.1349)

Can anybody or a religious head change the direction of the oscillation of the earth or rotation of the earth in 24 hours creating day & night and 365 days creating seasons and climatic changes. Yes, No one can change and that Guru Nanak says is the Oneness of Cosmic Power IK ONKAR.

To conclude, Guru Nanak's philosophy is –

ਸਾਚੁ ਕਹੈ ਸੁਨ ਲੇਹੁ ਸਭੈ ਜਿਨ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਕੀਓ ਤਿਨ ਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਪਾਇਓ॥੨੬॥

Humbly to state to understand Guru Nanak is to understand Japji and to understand Japji or the cause and purpose of life is to understand & recite Mool Mantra-

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

The Guru firmly emphasised upon how to be truthful & how this wall of falsehoodness shall be removed is the order of the Universe, The HUKAM

ਕਿਵ ਸਚਿਆਰਾ ਹੋਈਐ ਕਿਵ ਕੂੜੈ ਤੁਟੈ ਪਾਲਿ ॥
 ਹੁਕਮਿ ਰਜਾਈ ਚਲਣਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਨਾਲਿ ॥੧॥੧॥

Therefore, the mission of Guru Nanak has perhaps been misunderstood and needs to be truly understood authoritatively to be believed, conceived, and achieved as the path of the universal truthfulness and Cosmic Power of Oneness beyond the religious fanaticism of supremacy of one religion over other and we keep our egotistic mind confused and perhaps sitting on the cross road with varied religious path of worship mythfully falls into ritualities and forget the reach to the destination. The path of reaching the destination, the Sachkhand through the hardest truthful paths can be realised by Guru Nanak's argued path of conclusion and not an iota of confusion of conflict in mind. The righteous path of spiritual truest path of truthfulness of ever pervading universal power is realisation of IK ONKAR.



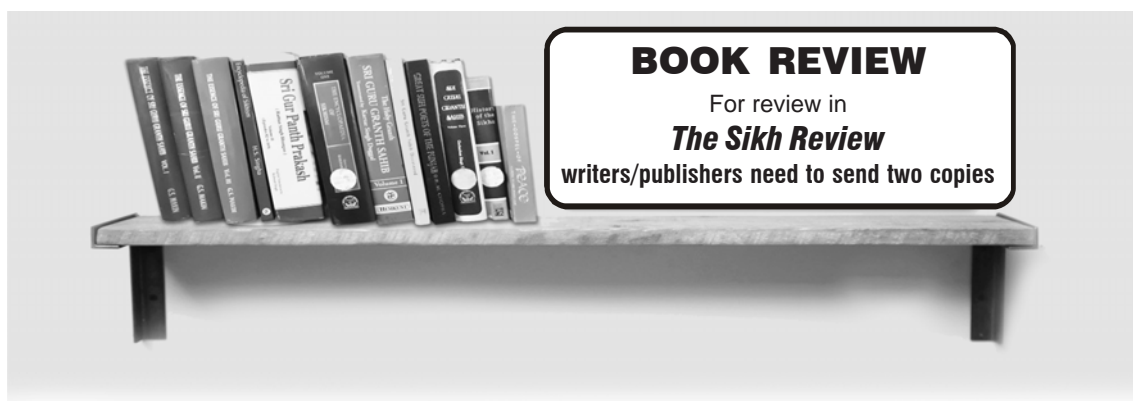
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BookTitle	: Sultanpur Lodhi: Dooja Nankana Sahib
Editor	: Dr. Assa Singh Ghuman
Publisher	: European Panjabi Sath, Walsall, United Kingdom
ISBN	: 978 93 85648 46 5
Pages	: 212
Price	: Rs. 200/-

A Review by Dr Jasbir Singh Sarna*

Dr. Assa Singh Ghuman's book, *Sultanpur Lodhi: Dooja Nankana Sahib*, is a meticulously researched work that sheds light on the historical, religious, and cultural significance of Sultanpur Lodhi, a town deeply connected to the life of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Published by European Punjabi Sath, Walsall, United Kingdom, the book comprises 212 pages and includes 35 color plates depicting historic sites associated with the town. With forewords by eminent scholars Dr. Paramvir Singh, Mota Singh Sarie, and Dr. Nirmal Singh, the work attempts to elevate the historical standing of Sultanpur Lodhi as a pivotal place in Sikh heritage, often referred to as the "Second Nankana Sahib."

The book is systematically divided into multiple sections, each addressing different facets of Sultanpur Lodhi's historical and spiritual significance. The inclusion of high-quality images of historical sites enhances the visual and documentary value of

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the book, making it not only a scholarly resource but also an important archival contribution.

Dr. Ghuman traces the origins of Sultanpur Lodhi, delving into its early history and the role played by various ruling dynasties, particularly the Lodhi rulers. The book provides an analytical account of the town's foundation, referencing Persian, Punjabi, and colonial sources such as the writings of Alexander Cunningham, Diwan Ram Jass, and Ram Sukh Rao. The discussion on Daulat Khan Lodhi's governance and his connection with Guru Nanak Dev Ji's early life in the town is especially insightful. The author emphasizes that despite being a crucial site in Sikh history, Sultanpur Lodhi has not received the recognition it deserves in mainstream historiography. A central theme of the book is the period Guru Nanak Dev Ji spent in Sultanpur Lodhi before embarking on his spiritual journey (Udasis). Dr. Ghuman provides a detailed narrative of Guru Nanak Dev Ji's employment as a Modi (storekeeper) under Daulat Khan Lodhi and his daily routine, which included deep meditation by the banks of the Kali Bein river. The book argues that it was in Sultanpur Lodhi that Guru Nanak Dev Ji experienced his divine revelation—"Na koi Hindu, Na koi Musalman"—which became the foundation of Sikh philosophy.

The book presents a compelling argument that the town served as a spiritual crucible for Guru Nanak Dev Ji's teachings. Dr. Ghuman suggests that Sultanpur Lodhi played a role similar to that of Nankana Sahib, as it was here that the Guru's worldview matured. The author links various Sikh principles, such as equality, justice, and devotion to a formless divine, to the revelations and experiences Guru Nanak Dev Ji had in Sultanpur Lodhi.

A particularly engaging section of the book is its discussion on the Janam Sakhis (biographical accounts of Guru Nanak Dev Ji). Dr. Ghuman critically examines the historicity of these texts, distinguishing between mythological embellishments and probable historical events. He cross-references Janam Sakhi narratives with contemporary Persian and Mughal records, including the Baburnama, to assess the credibility of different accounts of Guru Nanak Dev Ji's life in Sultanpur Lodhi. The 35 color plates included in the book serve as essential visual documentation of the town's

historical and religious landmarks. Dr. Ghuman provides a historiographical analysis of these sites, referencing British-era surveys and contemporary conservation efforts, particularly highlighting the contributions of environmentalist Baba Balbir Singh Seechewal in reviving the sacred Kali Bein.

The book masterfully blends historical, religious, and architectural studies, making it a comprehensive resource. Dr. Ghuman's extensive use of primary and secondary sources, including colonial-era surveys, Persian chronicles, and Sikh texts, lends credibility to his arguments. The inclusion of 35 high-quality color plates significantly enhances the book's value, offering readers a tangible connection to the historical sites discussed. The author avoids overly devotional narratives, instead providing a balanced historical account that critically examines both Sikh and non-Sikh sources.

While the book makes excellent use of colonial and pre-colonial sources, engagement with contemporary historical scholarship on Punjab's medieval history could have further enriched the analysis. The book primarily focuses on Persian and Punjabi sources but does not extensively discuss Arabic or Sanskrit sources that may provide additional historical insights. While the book extensively covers Guru Nanak Dev Ji's period, it does not delve deeply into how Sultanpur Lodhi evolved in the post-Guru period, particularly during the Mughal, Sikh, and British eras.

Sultanpur Lodhi: Dooja Nankana Sahib by Dr. Assa Singh Ghuman is a significant contribution to Sikh studies and the historiography of Punjab. By meticulously chronicling the historical, spiritual, and architectural heritage of Sultanpur Lodhi, the book elevates the town's status as an integral part of Sikh history. It successfully argues that Sultanpur Lodhi is as important as Nankana Sahib in understanding the early life and spiritual evolution of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Despite minor limitations, the book remains an invaluable resource for scholars, historians, and the Sikh community at large. It not only provides a well-documented historical account but also serves as a call for the preservation and recognition of Sultanpur Lodhi's rich heritage. This work is essential reading for anyone interested in the historical and spiritual journey of Guru Nanak Dev Ji and the formative years of Sikhism. □

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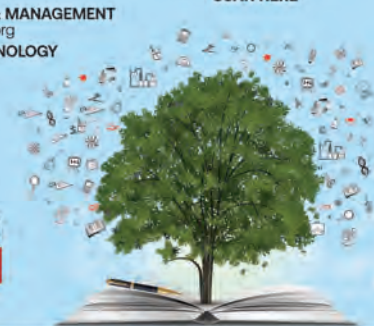
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