

‘DHARAM DA RAKHA’— LIFE AND TIMES OF GURU TEG BAHADUR

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ABSTRACT

Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji was the notable martyr of Sikhism. Guru Tegh Bahadur, originally given the name Tayagmal, was the youngest son of the sixth Guru Hargobind, from his second wife Mata Nanaki ji. He is from village Bakala in the northeast of Amritsar. Shri Guru Ram Das ji, the founder of the city Amritsar, was his great grandfather and Guru Arjan Dev ji, the founder of Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple), Amritsar was his grandfather. Regarding the birth of Guru Tagh Bahadur several dates have been mentioned but the generally accepted date is Baisakh Vadi 5, 1768 BK which corresponds to April 1, 1621 A.D. Guru Tegh Bahadur acquired proficiency in the religious philosophy of Sikhs and Hindus. He has attained a good mastery of Punjabi, Braj Bhasha and Sanskrit. His works includes shabad and ragas. His works are included in the Adi Granth. Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji did a lot of travelling in company with his father and other members of the family. He paid visit to Tarn Taran, Khadur Sahib, Goindwal and Kartarpur. When Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji returned back from his missionary tours, the situation in the country especially North India, was taking a new and critical turn. In the present paper, author tries to bring out some important facts about the life of Guru Tegh Bahadur.

Keywords: *Life and Times, Adi Granth, Visits, Religious philosophy and Vision.*

Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji (1621-1675), the ninth Guru of the Sikhs was the notable martyr of Sikhism. His original name was Tyag Mal (Master of Renunciation), spent his childhood at Amritsar. Guru Hargobind, when saw the new-born for the first time, had remarked, “This son of mine will be very brave and an expert swordman”. In his early years he learned Gurmukhi, Hindi, Sanskrit and Indian religious philosophy from Bhai Gurdas, and archery and horsemanship from Baba Budha while his father Guru Hargobind Ji, Master of Miri and Piri taught him swordsmanship (Sikhiwiki).

Guru Tegh Bahadur had also authored Bani which is very soulful, it is found particularly at the end of Guru Granth Sahib. Guru Tegh Bahadur contributed many hymns to Granth Sahib including the Saloks, or couplets near the end of the Guru Granth Sahib. Guru Tegh Bahadur toured various parts of Mughal Empire and was asked by Gobind Sahali to construct several Sikh temples in Mahali. His works include 116 shabads, 15 ragas, and his bhagats are credited with 782 compositions that are part of bani in Sikhism.

Year	Event	Age
1621	Born at Amritsar	
1632	Marriage with Mata Gujri	11
1665	Appointed as the Ninth Guru	44
1666	Birth of Guru Gobind Singh ji	45
1666	Founded city of Anandpur	45
1666-70	Visited Bengal and Assam	45-49
1670	Return to Punjab	49
1673	Second tour of Malwa	52
1675	Petition of Kashmiri Pandits	54
1675	Gurgaddi passed on to son	54
1675	Martyrdom due to the above Petition	54
Source: https://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Guru_Tegh_Bahadur		

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TIMELINE- GURU TEG BAHADUR

After the death of Guru Father in 1644 A.D., he shifted to Bakala along with his mother and wife. Bakala was his maternal village where he lived in an ordinary house and spent most of his time in meditation. In fact, he was preparing himself for the great job he was destined to do and for which an equally big heart and a highly accomplished soul (mind) were required. He knew that in order to achieve a big objective, an equally big sacrifice was required to be made. Guru Tegh Bahadur had to pass through terrible times along with his rest of the family. There is also strong evidence that Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji took part in the battle of Kartarpur.

“It is perhaps not imprudent to call him the greatest humanitarian this world has ever seen,” says a member of the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (DSGMC), which is headquartered at Rakab Ganj Sahib. “No one else sacrificed himself for the people of another religion.”

Guru ji, also known as “Hind ki Chaddar” (Protector of Hindu Religion) because he sacrificed his life to save Kashmiri pandits and Hindu religion.

His son the Great Guru Gobind Singh has described this supreme act in his autobiography as follows:

“The Lord protected their frontal mark and sacred thread; and performed a supremely heroic act in this age of Ignorance. To uphold righteousness, so supreme an act did He perform; He gave His head, but did not utter a word of sorrow. For the sake of righteousness. He did this great heroic deed; He laid down His life but not the principles. Miracles are a cheap way of fooling people; True Prophets of God are ashamed of displaying occult powers.

Guru Tegh Bahadur broke His earthly vase on the head of the Emperor of Delhi; And went to the Abode of God. No one has ever done such a unique deed as did Guru Tegh Bahadur.

On the Ascent of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the whole world went into mourning. Alas! Alas! rose the wailing cries from the earth; While the shouts of Glory! Glory! resounded the heavens.”

Sikh Missionary Society, U.K. in their publication, “The Supreme Sacrifice of Guru Tegh Bahadur: The Unique Sacrifice(2004) highlighted

following points which are worth noting regarding the martyrdom of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur:

- (i) The Guru made this supreme sacrifice in order to protect the Hindus “frontal mark and sacred thread.” This clearly shows that the Guru was sacrificing his life for the cause of the others (Hindus).
- (ii) That “No one has ever done such a unique deed as did Guru Tegh Bahadur.” That is, no one in the history of mankind has sacrificed his life to protect the freedom of worship of others.
- (iii) That the Guru performed this great heroic deed “for the sake of righteousness.” Therefore it would be unwise to give any other cause for his martyrdom.
- (iv) That the Guru “laid down his life, but not the principles” - SIS DIYA PAR SIRR NA DYA. i.e. the Guru was offered a choice between accepting Islam or death; ‘and that he willingly accepted the latter.
- (v) That the Guru did not show any miracles which He regarded were “a cheap way of fooling people,” i.e. the Guru had another choice-that of showing miracles. The Guru again chose death rather than showing miracles, which “the true prophets of God are ashamed of.”
- (vi) That “Guru Tegh Bahadur broke his earthly vase on the head of the Emperor of Delhi.” i.e. Aurangzeb must have been at Delhi at the time of the martyrdom and is directly responsible for it.

“For saving the Hindu religion, for safeguarding Tilak (sacred mark applied by Hindus) and Janeu (the Brahminical thread), Guru Tegh Bahadur arrived in Delhi’s Chandni Chowk (for his martyrdom). Bhai Dyalal, Bhai Mati Das, and Bhai Sati Das also sacrificed their lives while opposing Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb’s oppression,” Giani Puran Singh said.

Fauja Singh and Gurbachan Singh Talib in their book, “Guru Tegh Bahadur-Martyr and Teacher” mentioned three major achievements of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji as follows:

- (i) The first is the foundation of Chak Nanaki

which was also often called Makhawal. It was here that the Khalsa was created by Guru Gobind Singh ji at the end of the seventeenth century. Much of the credit for such a conspicuous role of Anandpur Sahib in subsequent periods goes to the Ninth Guru for the sagacity and farsightedness shown by him in selecting the site.

(ii) The second achievement was his many years of continuous work among the Sikh Sangats outside the region of Punjab. Although links with these Sangats had been continually maintained by the preceding Gurus, yet no Guru had personally visited them ever since their establishment in the times of Guru Nanak or later. Guru Tegh Bahadur was a great traveller, almost tireless, and undertook long and arduous journeys to meet Sikh Sangats residing in far-flung areas of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal and Assam. As a result of his personal contact, these congregations were revived and their organisation was considerably improved. Of all the places honoured by his visits, Patna has become the most sacred place in East India for the Sikh community; for it was here that the last Guru of the Sikhs (Dasmesh Pita), Guru Gobind Singh ji was born.

(iii) The third and the most important achievement of the Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji was his fight against tyranny. Emperor Aurangzeb's fanatical measures to establish a pure Islamic State in the country, converting it into Darul Islam, had sent a wave of horror through the length and breadth of India. Ruthless destruction of temples and schools, forcible conversions and discrimination in fiscal administration unnerved the entire body of non-Muslims. In this state of utter demoralization, a deputation of Brahmins waited upon Guru Tegh Bahadur at Chak Nanki and by a passionate appeal secured a promise from him that he would even lay down his life to rescue them from their critical position. But for him, it was not a question merely of saving the Hindu religion or even for that matter, the Sikh religion. It was a question of defending Dharma in the largest Indian connotation. Oppression or tyranny in any form was construed as an attack on Dharma and had to be struggled against in the name and defence of Dharma."

The supreme sacrifice of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji left a profound impact on the minds of the people. Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji fought against forced conversion on the orders of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. Guru Tegh Bahadur bravely sacrificed himself to protect the Hindus of Kashmir who had taken refuge in him when Aurangzeb forced them to convert their religion. Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji had a versatile personality and a great warrior. The achievements of Guru Tegh Bahadur are remarkable. Every year on 24 November, Sikhs celebrate Shaheedi Diwas to remember Guru Tegh Bahadur, who sacrificed his life for people who were not from his community.

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