

## GURU TEG BAHADUR: WEAVER OF THE FABRIC OF HUMANITY

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### ABSTRACT

*The unparalleled sacrifice made by Guru Teg Bahadur cannot be forgotten. The popular perception regarding the purpose of the sacrifice made by Guru by laying down his life for the Hindus to practice the freedom to follow their religion. Guru Teg Bahadur's martyrdom has a message not only for the Sikhs or Hindus but for humanity. The Guru laid down his life for the poor, weak and helpless people. By doing so he proved that freedom from power, attachment and domination paves the way towards spirituality. A fearless, material possessions detachment creates a society which practices social cohesion. The Hindu-Sikh affinity is etched in the fabric of humanity. The Guru laying down his life has revealed to us his concept of the relation between religion and politics. Today again is an era, where we believe that dharma means following the rituals prescribed in a particular religion. Our identity has been associated with our religion. But true dharma means practicing universal broad-based ethical values and not in accordance with the intention to dominate or belittle others.*

**Keywords:** Guru Teg Bahadur, humanity, spiritualism, politics

Guru wanted to spread and continue the message of One Nanak Jote in all. The already established practices of *sangat-pangat* (Gathering and community kitchen practiced till date) teach the humanitarian values of non-discrimination, service to the society, sharing and caring as a pre requisite to existence. The Guru sought harmony in the cosmic scheme. He is a perfect blend of mystic and a revolutionary. He was detached with the world at the same time he was full of compassion who loves the world he lives in. Guru Teg Bahadur the pinnacle of conviction, spiritual leader, a visionary and a man who attained self-realisation by laying down his life not for his family, his community, his fellows but for humanity.

*Bah Jinahn Di Pakariye  
Sar Dije Bah Na chhoriye  
Tegh bahadur bolya dhar payae  
Dharm na chhoriye*

*Translation  
Give up your head,  
But forsake not  
Those whom you have  
Undertaken to protect*

*Says Guru Teg bahadur,  
Sacrifice your life;  
But relinquish not your faith!*

The martyrdom of the Guru aimed at protecting the Hindus from persecution at the hands of Aurangzeb who wanted to convert them forcibly to Islam. In Bachitra Natak Guru Gobind Singh, paid a glowing tribute to his father. Guru Teg Bahadur:

*Tilak janju rakha prabh taaka  
Kino bado kalu mahe saaka  
Sadhan hat ittijinkari  
Sis diya par see na uchri  
Dharm het saaka jin Kiya  
Sis diya par sIRRar na diya*

(The lord protected their paste mark and sacred thread  
He performed a mighty deed in KalYug  
He spared no sacrifice to defend the righteous.  
He gave away his head but did not utter a groan  
He laid down his life for the sake of Dharma  
He sacrificed his life but not his ideal.)

The unparalleled sacrifice made by Guru Teg Bahadur cannot be forgotten. The popular perception regarding the purpose of the sacrifice made by Guru

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by laying down his life for the Hindus to practice the freedom to follow their religion. The Hindus do not have any doubt regarding their gratitude they owe to Guru Teg Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh. This perception holds true. Historically proven fact that the Brahmins from Kashmir and other centres of Hindu pilgrimage, approached Guru Teg Bahadur for protection from Aurangzeb's brutality. The Guru did not make any differentiation based on religion and decided to help them in this hour of crisis. Guru was determined to fully support Hindus with the strong mental makeup of facing death to enable Hindus practice the freedom of religious belief and practice.

But here in this context, Hinduism need not be identified with caste/varna based on stratification rather the martyrdom of Guru holds a multi-dimensional significance.

Guru Teg Bahadur's martyrdom has a message not only for the Sikhs or Hindus but for humanity. A social system should guarantee individual freedom and social harmony leading to a social cohesion among mankind. The desire for domination should be banned since it leads to fear and hatred killing humanity and spirituality among human. This feeling of domination makes a man more attached with worldly possessions, power and pride breaking the threads with spirituality. The Guru laid down his life for the poor, weak and helpless people. By doing so he proved that freedom from power, attachment and domination paves the way towards spirituality. A fearless, material possessions detachment creates a society which practices social cohesion.

Guru Teg Bahadur, a visionary has taught us that pride can be bowdlerized with the quality of humility. Importance of self-discipline cannot be negated which breaks the ties with lust. He advocates renunciation is not compulsion for spiritual salvation. Rather social harmony can be brought about with a liberated fearless soul. Balance must be struck between materialism and spiritualism. Only such a balance spiritually liberated men can bring positive changes in the society.

Just like the other Gurus, Guru Teg Bahadur was compassionate. He decided to oppose the fanatic Aurangzeb and wanted to relieve the sufferings

of the Hindus. The Hindus were pressurized to convert their religion. The Guru defended the Hindus but he was not opposed to either Muslim or Islam. Aurangzeb was equally brutal to non-Sunni Muslims. He was against the forcible conversion of religion. His unparalleled martyrdom reflected the opposition to fanaticism and theocracy.

The Hindu-Sikh affinity is etched in the fabric of humanity. The Guru laying down his life has revealed to us His concept of the relation between religion and politics. Today again is an era, where we believe that dharma means following the rituals prescribed in a particular religion. Our identity has been associated with our religion. But true dharma means practicing universal broad-based ethical values and not in accordance with the intention to dominate or belittle others. Associating religion and politics is not we require but association of politics and ethics will strengthen the fabric of humanity which was beautifully weaved by Guru Teg Bahadur.

Guru's martyrdom echoes to overcome fanaticism with tolerance which is the base in any democracy favouring secularism. Humanity can be revitalised with ethics not limiting to particular sect or religion. But as Guru philosophy tells us that anyone can be spiritually and socially strong once they have imbibed tolerance and universal qualities. Guru Teg Bahadur's martyrdom holds significance in today's times also. The Guru uprooted fanaticism and planted his own blood the ideal of religious tolerance and faith in practicing the preaching's of his fore-fathers.

It begins the road map in history signalling the end of the high and mighty Mughal's atrocities' and high handedness. The martyrdom is a turning point in the sociocultural history of a most illustrious Sikh community, which stand out for their sacrifices and a culture rising from sacrifices. The Guru is a role model for the present youth where he is an exemplar of humanity based on truthfulness and godliness. It is from him that we learn to raise our voice against oppression, atrocity and persecution.

Guru's choice for a simple life shows his deep-rooted philosophy to balance the role as a householder and a mystic. He had numerous visitors from *Sangats* in India and abroad. He has global

followers setting and example that humanity is not bound by geographical limits, religious boundaries and political ideologies. The *vaheer* (preaching group with families on the move) way back in 1656 mirrors his humanitarian principles.

The writing of Gurmukh Singh OBE in his publication reflects the boundaryless, religion free philosophy of the Guru, “The *vaheer* included some members of the Guru family and prominent Sikhs e.g. Tegh Bahadur’s mother, Mata Nanaki, wife Gujri, sister-in-law Hari (wife of elder brother Suraj Mall who had passed away in 1645), brother-in-law Kirpal Chand, husband of sister Sadhu Ram, Dyal Das, Chaopat Rai, Matti Das, Baalu Hasna, Almast, Durga Das, Gaval Das, and others. Historically, the names are interesting e.g. Dyal Das (brother of Bhai Mani Singh) and Matti Das were martyred with Guru Tegh Bahadur in 1675.

Soon after visiting Kiratpur, the preaching tour began on June 13, 1656. The *vaheer* stayed at Kurukashetra and then set forth for Hardwar with preaching stops on the way to reach the city on 29 March 1657. It was the Vaisakhi day 11. From there, while camping for days at a time to hold congregations at Mathura, Prayagraj, Benaras, Sasram and Gaya the *vaheer* reached Patna. According to Bhat Vahi Poorbi Dakhni, on April 19, 1661 the *vaheer* was in Pryag (Alahabad) and on June 21, 1661 in Banaras (Kanshi). There was a prolonged stay at Patna in Bihar.” The above passage reflects that the Gurus’ preaching’s was not limited only to Punjab but it was for humankind inclusive of Hindus majority geographical locations as mentioned.

Martyrdom in Sikh tradition, is not self-immolation but self-realisation to depict the victory of the truthfulness and will of the Creator Being (*Bhana*) over evil. His martyrdom shows the way to sacrifice one’s life to uphold the principle of religious freedom. Guru Teg Bahadur realised the constitutional right of freedom to practise own religion way back then. He chose to let the right of all to live according to own chosen religion than his personal right to live.

Aurangzeb’s officials used various tactics and ways to dampen the spirit of Guru Teg Bahadur.

Chroniclers mention that the jail superintendent Khwaja Abdulla, did allow some flexibility regarding visitors meeting the Guru. This could have been one of the tactics to weaken Guru’s spirit and calmness to relinquish his religious fight. If the Guru wanted he could have miraculously save his and his followers Dayal Das who was lowered into a cauldron of boiling liquid, Mati Das who was sawn in two as he recited Gurbani and finally his younger brother, Sati Das, who was wrapped in cotton wool and burnt to death. But Guru chose to set an example that sacrifice is the ultimate weapon to demean the opponents who are against dharma.

Guru wanted to spread and continue the message of One Nank *Jote* in all. The already established practices of *sangat-pangat* (Gathering and community kitchen practiced till date) teach the humanitarian values of non-discrimination, service to the society, sharing and caring as a pre requisite to existence. Guru Teg Bahadur preached *miri-piri* in his *Bani* which is in continuation of the essential Guru *Jote* (Light) which advocates acceptance of death is a pre requisite to fearless life. Accepting oppression and evil is not an option who wish to follow Guru Nanak. This path required him his life which he laid down for the benefit of humanity.

The Guru sought harmony in the cosmic scheme. He is a perfect blend of mystic and a revolutionary. He was detached with the world at the same time he was full of compassion who loves the world he lives in. His confrontation with Aurangzeb was to show that he opposed a man but rather a mystic’s assertion for the establishment of harmony and equality in society. Guru Teg Bahadur is a saviour of secular sensibility. He upholds the universal moral values which he considered to be supreme and these values must not be considered second to whims and fancies of an Emperor. Guru’s perception of state citizen relations in the context of religious freedom of all citizens, is the very foundation of our constitutional commitment to the ideal of secularism.

Guru Teg Bahadur’s martyrdom created a wave of resentment among the nation. All were shaken to the core and decided not to succumb to the pressures of Mughals but rather live with

dignity. Guru's martyrdom flagged off the beginning of the end of the Mughal empire in India. Guru's sacrifice created a spirit of socio-religious-political awakening. His martyrdom resulted in stimulating the spiritually awakened people into a fearless fighting force which turned the tide of the history of the Sikhs and of Punjab.

Guru Tegh Bahadur the pinnacle of conviction, spiritual leader, a visionary and a man who attained self-realisation by laying down his life not for his family, his community, his fellows but for humanity.

ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਸਿਮਰਿਐ ਘਰ ਨਉ ਨਿਧਿ ਆਵੈ ਧਾਇ॥  
*Tegh Bahadur simareeai ghar nao nidh avai dhae*

*Meditate on Guru Teg Bahadur and the Nine Treasures shall com running to you*

### ONLINE RESOURCES

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