

MARTYRDOM OF GURU ARJUN SAHIB

Written by Dr. Devinder Singh Sekhon PhD
Thursday, 15 May 2014 10:38

MARTYRDOM OF GURU ARJUN DEV JI

As Guru Nanak Sahib's Divine Message began to spread among more and more people all over India, the zealots of other religions – particularly Hinduism and Islam – began to oppose Sikhism with more vigour. The main reason for the opposition was the death blow to the highly popular but very misleading rituals of both the religions that the Principles of Sikhism hit at. The priests of both faiths felt threatened as more and more people began to follow the simple and meaningful Principles of Sikhism. The loss in the number of followers in the two main religions meant less and less income to their respective institutions and to themselves as individuals. So, the priests first tried to intimidate the Sikhs with physical attacks, but when they failed, they began to complain to the higher authorities to restraint the spread of Sikhism through legal channels. Such nefarious actions had started even at the time of Guru Nanak Sahib who was attacked physically many times with the intent to killing Him. As an example, most of you must have heard the story about the visit of Guru Nanak Sahib to Hassan Abdaal near Rawalpindi during which He was attacked by Wali Kandhari who pushed a huge rock down the hill to kill Guru Sahib who was sitting at the foot of the Hill. Guru Sahib wasn't hurt because He stopped the rock with His hand. This is just one of the many stories where He was seriously attacked simply because He was enlightening the ignorant people as a result of which they refused to accept the meaningless religious rituals of Hinduism and Islam.

When Guru Nanak Sahib visited Multan, a city known for its large number of ascetics, in 1539, a few of them offered Guru Sahib a bowl overflowing with milk which implied that the City was already crowded with holy people and there was no room for a newcomer like Guru Sahib. Knowing the significance of the overflowing bowl, Guru Sahib smiled and put a small petal of a flower on the top without causing even a drop to overflow. That implied that Guru Sahib was there only for a short visit and had no plan to settle down there. The point is that most religious leaders felt threatened by Guru Sahib's very presence. Such was the opposition to the new Religion.

When Guru Amar Das Ji, the Third Sikh Guru, moved to Goindwal, the local bigots did not like Guru Sahib's treatment of the low caste people who were treated exactly the same way as people of higher castes without any discrimination by Guru Sahib and His Sikhs. A local influential Khattri, Goanda Mal, first tried to harass Sikhs for their "unacceptable respectful behaviour" towards the low castes, but when that approach did not work, he lodged a complaint in the court of Emperor Akbar who happened to be was visiting in Lahore at the time. Akbar listened to Goanda Mal's complaint carefully and sent for Guru Amar Das Ji to appear before him. Guru Sahib sent Bhai Jetha Ji (who became the Fourth Guru under the name of Sri Ram Das Ji) to see Akbar. Bhai Jetha Ji was reluctant to go thinking that he did not have enough

MARTYRDOM OF GURU ARJUN SAHIB

Written by Dr. Devinder Singh Sekhon PhD
Thursday, 15 May 2014 10:38

knowledge of the holy Gurbani, but Guru Amar Das Ji told Bhai Jetha Ji not to worry as Guru Sahib would always be with him spiritually to guide. Bhai Jetha Ji answered all the questions raised in the complaint and clarified all the objections therein very succinctly. Akbar was so pleased with Bhai Jetha Ji and with Gurbani that he rebuked the complainant who came home with a huge insult. Not only that, Akbar went to visit Guru Amar Das Ji and paid his respects to the Guru. He also partook of the Langar and sat on the floor to eat along with all the Sikhs of all castes. He also bequeathed 22 villages in the name of Bibi Bhani Ji (daughter of Guru Amar Das Ji and wife of Guru Ram Das Ji).

Even though that was a big setback to the opponents of Sikhism, they did not relent and continued their nefarious activities whenever they had the opportunity. However, no major incident happened during Akbar's reign. But Akbar's son, Jahangir, was less secular than Akbar and more fanatic. He was very much against the spread of Sikhism because not only Hindus but a sizable number of Muslims also were converting into Sikhism. He wanted to put a stop to the growth of Sikhism and was simply looking for an excuse to punish the Sikh Guru of the time. **In his memoirs, Tazuk-i- Jahangiri, the Emperor writes:** In Goindwal which is on the River Beas, there was a Hindu named Arjun in the garbs of sainthood and sanctity so much so that he captured the fancy of many simple-minded Hindus and even of the ignorant and foolish followers of Islam by his ways and manners, and they had loudly sounded the drum of his holiness. They called him guru and from all sides people crowded to worship and manifest complete faith in him. For three or four generations of spiritual successors they had kept their shop warm. Many times it occurred to me to put a stop to this vain affair or to bring him into the assembly of the people of Islam. [History of the Punjab by Kundra and Bawa]

So, it is quite clear that Jahangir was determined either to end the life of Guru Arjun Sahib or to convert Him into Islam. Soon after Jahangir became the Emperor in October 1605, such an opportunity presented itself. Jahangir's son, Khusrau, rebelled against his father, but when the royal forces defeated and chased him, Khusrau planned to escape to Afghanistan via Lahore. Chandu Lall, a Khattri of Lahore, who was a high official with the Jahangir Government found a golden opportunity to provoke and incite Jahangir to take some stern action against Guru Arjun Sahib. He made a mountain of a molehill (if there was any molehill to begin with) and told Jahangir that Khusrau had made a stop at Goindwal to visit Guru Arjun who helped Khusrau with a large sum of money and blessed him with success. Chandu Lall was very unhappy with Guru Arjun Sahib because Guru Sahib had declined to accept a matrimonial proposal for the wedding between Chandu Lall's daughter and Guru Arjun Sahib's only son, Har Gobind Ji, who became the Sixth Guru after Guru Arjun Sahib's martyrdom.

In those days all the matrimonial relations were arranged by Brahmans. A Brahman who knew Guru Sahib and His fame very well, got the approval of both sides for the matrimony. However, when Chandu Lall, who was a very high official in Jahangir's court, came to know that Guru

MARTYRDOM OF GURU ARJUN SAHIB

Written by Dr. Devinder Singh Sekhon PhD
Thursday, 15 May 2014 10:38

Arjun Sahib was not a very rich person, nor was He a high official, he said some very nasty and mean things against the dignity of Guru Arjun Sahib. He used the analogy of a brick that belonged to the top of a mansion (himself) but was used at the bottom for the drain which carries dirty water (for Guru Sahib). Such nasty wording caused a great resentment among the Sikhs of Delhi who rushed to Amritsar to request Guru Sahib not to accept the proposal of such a vain and conceited individual. Breaking a relationship after having accepted that was considered highly impolite in those days especially because there was a big stigma attached to it for the girl (would be bride) who would have hard time to find a new relationship. So, Guru Sahib did not want to refuse the proposal, and He tried His best to pacify the Sikhs from Delhi. However, Sikhs from Delhi were adamant not to continue with the relationship because they knew Chandu Lall's false conceit all too well. In their judgment, Chandu Lall did not deserve to be related to Guru Sahib and he would prove to be a source of constant trouble in the future. The local Sikhs also got enraged at Chandu Lall's disrespectful attitude and they also put pressure on Guru Sahib to **break the relationship which had not yet been formalized**. Their determination and their logic were successful, and Guru Sahib finally agreed with great reluctance. Now Chandu Lall felt insulted and turned against Guru Sahib and kept looking for some opportunity to harm Him.

When Chandu Lall poisoned Jahangir against Guru Sahib using Khusrau as the tool, Jahangir, who already was looking for some excuse to punish Guru Sahib went crazy to hear how Guru Sahib had helped the rebel. Chandu Lall added more oil to the fire and the bigoted Jahangir lost no time in passing his judgement against Guru Sahib. He did not feel the need to launch an inquiry into the allegation against Guru Sahib to find the facts. Such was the justice system of the rulers! He ordered that Guru Sahib be asked to embrace Islam, and in case He refuses, He be put to death by Yaasa (causing death without spilling a single drop of blood). Chandu Lall secured Jahangir's permission to supervise the punishment. Guru Sahib was asked to remove all the compositions of the fifteen Bhagats (holy men) enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib and embrace Islam if He wanted to escape death following severe torture. Guru Sahib refused firmly to accept any of the two proposals. At Guru Sahib's refusal Chandu Lall became very happy inside because now he had the excuse to inflict grievous torture to Guru Sahib.

Chandu Lall ordered that Guru Sahib be tortured as follows:

1. He should be roasted on a hot iron plate placed on a direct fire under the hot sun of June (it was the month of June at the time of Martyrdom)
2. Searing hot sand be poured on his naked body

3. When Guru Sahib's body is fully blistered, He be thrown in the nearby Ravi River

The Sikhs became very agitated at the treatment and so was a Muslim holy man, Mian Mir Ji who was a great devotee and friend of Guru Sahib. Mian Mir Ji said that he had the spiritual powers to cause the collapse of the governments of Delhi and Lahore. But sitting on the hot plate, the Apostle of Patience, Contentment, and Forgiveness, Guru Arjun Sahib, advised everybody to stay calm and accept Waheguru's Will. Nobody could argue with Guru Sahib and they watched the martyrdom patiently. Guru Sahib was tortured for 2-3 days receiving the torturous treatment at regular intervals. Chandu Lall wanted to prolong the torture for as long as possible. Finally, Guru Sahib's body was thrown in the River Ravi which was never found despite the best efforts of the Sikhs.

It is noteworthy to mention here, that there is no concrete proof that Khusrau ever visited Guru Sahib and most probably he never did because Guru Sahib was not living in Goindwal anymore. He had moved to Amritsar long ago before this incident and was living in Amritsar. Amritsar was not on the main road those days and it was not wise for Khusrau who was on the run to save his life to waste any time before he had reached some safe place. Going to Amritsar leaving the main highway was very risky for him particularly when there was no guarantee that Guru Sahib would help him in any way. No historian has claimed beyond any doubt that Guru Sahib blessed Khusrau with success and helped him monetarily. But for the sake of the argument, let us suppose for a second that Khusrau did visit Guru Sahib; but that's neither a sin nor a crime because Guru's doors are open for all human beings all the time without any discrimination. So, in case Khusrau did visit Guru Sahib, his visit was like any other individual who comes to have the holy sight of the Guru. At the most he may have had meals at the Gurdwara. There was no reason for Guru Sahib to bless a rebel, and history shows that Guru Sahib never had any significant amount of money to donate. It had been the custom and the principle of Guru's house never to amass wealth. Money was spent as soon as it came for public good. So, there is very little possibility that Guru Sahib would have helped Khusrau with money if he did visit Guru Sahib. And if Guru Sahib would have blessed Khusrau for success, there was no reason for the latter not to succeed. But he never did. Guru Arjun would never have had the house of Guru Nanak fail in any blessings. Guru Sahiban's advice has always been to have faith in God and accept His Will. So, most likely, Khusrau did not visit Guru Arjun Sahib at all, and if he did, he did not receive any money or any blessings. Thus all the charges against Guru Sahib were baseless and were simply concocted.

MARTYRDOM OF GURU ARJUN SAHIB

Written by Dr. Devinder Singh Sekhon PhD
Thursday, 15 May 2014 10:38

As far as Jahangir's character is concerned, he was very, very cruel. Khusrau was soon captured by Jahangir's forces. Jahangir had all the soldiers of Khusrau stuffed alive in cows' skins and had Khusrau's eyes stitched shut permanently and he was imprisoned for the rest of his life.

During his reign, Akbar conquered many small and big states which were ruled mostly by Hindu Rajahs. These rulers became part of Akbar's kingdom, but allowed to continue to rule their respective states. Akbar collected annual revenues from them. Also, no such ruler was allowed to maintain an army beyond certain limit as determined by Akbar. When Jahangir became the Emperor, he began to remove such rulers from their thrones one by one and made them prisoners in the fort of Gwalior. He put as many as 52 innocent Rajahs in the prison.

Although Guru Har Gobind Sahib, the Sixth Sikh Guru And the son of Guru Arjun Dev Ji, was not a ruler, Jahangir was very afraid of Him simply because he had ordered the cruel death of Guru Arjun Dev Ji. He invited Guru Sahib to Delhi for a courtesy visit. Guru Sahib was fully aware of Jahangir's possible treachery, but went to see him to know more about him. Jahangir took Guru Sahib to show the famous fort of Gwalior, but when inside, Jahangir could not hide his evil plan, and he put Guru Sahib in the prison just like the other Rajahs.

Guru Sahib remained imprisoned for a few years, but one night Jahangir had a nightmare in which he was pounced upon by a tiger. At the same time Jahangir heard a voice that he would not live unless he released the holy Guru Sahib. Jahangir was so scared that he ordered the release of Guru Sahib the next day. However, Guru Sahib refused to leave the prison unless all the 52 innocent Rajahs were also allowed freedom. Jahangir had to obey Guru Sahib's determined proposal, and all the imprisoned Rajahs were also set free with Guru Sahib. For this kind act, Guru Sahib is also known as the Liberator of the Prisoners.

The is how treacherous and cruel Jahangir was!