

ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

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The Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur

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The Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur

This brief account of the martyrdom was first published in the April 1976 issue of the magazine 'The past and present' of the Panjabi University patiala. It was contributed by Dr. Ganda Singh, 'whose diligent and painstaking researches have served to fill gaps in the people's knowledge of the history of the Sikhs and won him an honourable place among contemporary historians. The narrative is an objective account of the guru's martyrdom based on contemporary sources supported by Persian writings of the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

Dr. Ganda Singh's most chequered and eventful career, his extensive sojourns of the Middle East & European countries and his aptitude for the study of foreign and Indian languages went a long way to give him first hand knowledge of the various sources of history of the entire Sikh Movement and his recognition as an authority on the subject. We had the pleasure to publish at Guru Nanak Dev Mission Series No. 48, his Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev. Retired as Director of Archives of the PEPSU govt. Dr. Ganda Singh is a member of several International History Societies. He has lately done for the Govt. of India a bibliography of panjabi literature and for the Panjabi University Patiala a bibliography of the Panjab. His published works include 72 books and 250 papers on historical subjects.

Secretary

The Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur

In keeping with the tradition of the founder of the Sikh religion, Guru Nanak, and of Guru Hargobind, the sixth Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur had undertaken an extensive missionary tour of the eastern provinces of India in 1665-70. There he had met, in the beginning of the year 1668, Raja Ram Sing, Kachhwaha of Amber (Jaipur), son of Mirza Raja Jai Singh during his campaign against the Assamese on behalf of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, and, as tradition goes, the Guru was of considerable help to the Raja in his negotiations with the Assamese. It was during this period that there was a marked change in the socio-religious policy of Emperor Aurangzeb who adopted a much stiffer attitude towards the Hindus. On the 17th of Zi-Qada in the 12th Alamgiri regnal year, 1079 al-Hijri, corresponding with April 7, 1669, the Emperor, according to the *Ma' asir-i-Alamgiri* "issued orders to all the governors of provinces to destroy with a willing hand the schools and temples of the infidels; and they were strictly enjoined to put an entire stop to the teaching and practising of idolatrous forms of worship." (Elliot and Dowson, VII-184; J.N. Sarkar, English Translation. Muhammad Fida Ali Talib, Urdu Translation, 54.)

De Graff, who was at Hooghly in 1670, tells us in Orme's *Fragment Notes* 15, translated from the French :

"In the month of January (1670), all the governors and native officers received an order from the Great Mughal prohibiting the practice of Pagan religion throughout the

country and closing down all the temples and sanctuaries of idol worshippers in the hope that some Pagans would embrace the Muslim religion" [Sri Ram Sharma, *The religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, 3rd ed., 171].

While this general order of the Emperor was having its effect in the country, the Sikhs also, according to Muhammad Hashim Khan Khafi Khan's *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*, had their share. Emperor Aurangzeb having received information about them had ordered their deputies to be turned out and their places of worship to be destroyed [pp-ii, 651-52]. Mirza Inayatullah Ismi tells us in the *Akham-i-Alamgiri* that in compliance with the orders of the Emperor, and the consent of the local Qazi, the Sikh temple in the town of Buriya, in the parganah of Khizarabad of the *sarkar* of Sirhind, had been demolished and a mosque had been raised on its site [Rampur, *Insha*, No. 11., pp. 514-5; also *Kalimat-Taiybat*, p. 115].

Guru Tegh Bahadur was at this time in Assam. It was, evidently, there that he heard of the change for worse in the Emperor's militant policy of religious persecution of the non-Muslims, including the Sikhs. As head of the Sikh religion, the Guru naturally felt that his place was then with his people. He could not stay away from his home and headquarters, while they were suffering under the inequities of the Government. He therefore, rushed back to the Panjab and undertook an extensive tour of the Malwa and the southern part of the country, assuring the people that he was with them. The Sikhs from all over the country came to see him and there was always a large assemblage of disciples and followers at his congregations, particularly on the occa-

sions of festivals when considerable offerings were also made to the Guru. Ever since the days of Guru Arjan, when Sikhism had spread to different parts and provinces of India and beyond its western frontier, it had become a usual practice with the Sikhs of distant places to visit the Guru once in a year on the occasion of Baisakhi and to present their offerings to him, being one-tenth or *Daswandh* of their annual earnings. Such of them as could not come personally remitted their *daswandh* through the Master's accredited agents, called *masand*. As the Guru had been away on his eastern tour and had returned to the Panjab after over five years, the gatherings at his meetings were unusually large, with proportionate increase in the amounts of offerings or *bhet* presented to him. Not only this. Added to the number of people who came to see him from places other than those where he was encamped during his travels, quite a large number of devotees came to receive and welcome him to their villages and also accompanied him for some distance to see him off when he left their village to go to the next. Thus, he was always accompanied by a considerable number of Sikhs and other visitors during this tour of the Malwa.

The Sikhs, it may be mentioned here, visited the Guru purely out of their devotion to him and for their spiritual guidance and satisfaction, and they returned to their homes soon afterwards, not unoften in a day or two. And the offerings made by them on these occasion were all voluntary. This practice still continues among the Sikhs when they go into the presence of the Guru, the *Guru Granth Sahib*. But autocratic governments are generally suspicious

of peoples' gatherings, particularly of those who happen not to agree with their socio-political policies.

The Sikh religion from its very beginning had taught its followers to be liberal in their outlook and open-minded in their attitude towards the followers of other faiths. According to Guru Nanak, there is but One religion of Truth, if any one were to practice it—ਏਕੋ ਧਰਮੁ ਦਿਖੈ ਸਚ ਕੋਈ [Basant I, P. 1188]; and there is but One God of the whole universe and the entire humanity is one common brotherhood of His children—ਏਕ ਪਿਤਾ ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ—in the words of Guru Arjun, the fifth Guru [Sorath V, p. 611]. Of the two religions of his days, Hinduism and Islam, the first Guru had said that they were only two different paths with a common destination in God—ਰਾਹ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਖਸਮ ਏਕੋ ਜਾਣ [Gauri I, p. 223].

Sikhism is very much nearer to Islam in its concept of the Unity of God and the Brotherhood of Man, but unfortunately, Emperor Aurazeb in his narrow-minded fanaticism and myopic prejudices could not see the light of Divine grace beyond his own limited sectarianism in Islam. The Shia Muslims and Sufi saints and scholars were not only looked upon with disfavour but were also at times humiliated and put to death for their so called heresies. The non-Muslims, particularly the Hindus, were the worst sufferers. Public practice of their religion was stopped and their places of learning were demolished in many places because “students and learners, Musalmans as well as Hindus, went there even from long distances, led by a desire to become acquainted with the wicked sciences they taught” [Moasir, Elliot and Dowson, vii. 184; Urdu, p. 54].

In spite of its monotheistic creed and universal brother-

hood, with love for all and malice for none, the Sikh movement was also sought to be suppressed by Emperor Aurangzeb. This was opposed to the spirit of true Islam as preached by Prophet Muhammad in the holy Quran, inculcating the concept of the Divine Lord as *Rab-ul-Alamin*, the Lord of the Universe. But the self-willed and self-asserting autocrats know of only one religion, the religion of self and self-aggrandisement. With the increasing popularity of the Sikh Gurus, both among the Hindus and the Muhammadans, a sort of jealousy and fear had disturbed the mental balance of the Muslim revivalists towards the closing year of Emperor Akbar's reign, and, after his death, they poisoned the ears of his son Emperor Jahangir through their protagonists like Shaikh Farid Bukhari, entitled Murtaza Khan, in the royal camp. It was reported to His Majesty that Guru Arjan, the fifth Guru of the Sikhs, had blessed his rebellious son Khusrau during his flight to the Panjab. Writing in his *Tuzuk*, Jahangir says that Guru Arjan "had by his ways and means captivated the hearts of many simple-minded Hindus, nay, even of foolish and stupid Muslims, and he had noised himself about as a religious and worldly leader. They called him *Guru* and from all directions fools and fool-worshippers were attracted towards him and expressed full faith in him. For three or four generations they had kept this shop warm. For a long time the thought had been presenting itself to me that either I should put an end to this false traffic or he should be brought into the fold of Islam." Jahangir then mentions the false and trumped up allegation, of the Guru having blessed prince Khusrau, that had been poured into his ears at Lahore after the

prince's arrest, and says :

‘When this came to the ears of Our Majesty, I ordered that he should be brought into my presence and having handed over his houses, dwelling places and children to Murtaza Khan (Shaikh Farid Bukhari) and having confiscated his property, I ordered that he should be put to death with tortures’ [*Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, 35].

This was the first drastic step that had been taken by the Mughals to crush the rising Sikh movement. Then the sixth Guru Hargobind was imprisoned for some time in the fort of Gwalior and was later kept under strict surveillance. After the death of Jahangir, he was often harassed by the armies of Shah Jahan, and he had to shift to Kiratpur at the foot of the Shivalak hills, away from the central Panjab. Guru Har Rai, the seventh Guru, was called to Delhi by Emperor Aurangzeb. He sent his son Ram Rai who outwitted the Emperor with his clever jugglery of words. God alone knows what might have befallen Guru Har Rai himself and his successor, Guru Harkrishan, who was also summoned to the capital, if they had not died in quick succession. It was through the helpful intervention of Kanwar (later Raja) Ram Singh of Jaipur, who regarded Guru Tegh Bahadur as a godly saint and represented him to Emperor Aurangzeb as a harmless peace-loving devotee of God, that he was not caught in the Emperor's clutches soon after his accession to Guruship and was able to proceed on his long tour in 1665 to the east and north-east. But greater stiffness in the Emperor's policy towards the leaders of non-Muslim faiths as contained in his orders issued in the beginning of 1669, as mentioned earlier, encouraged the royal intelligencers and news-writers to pay closer attention to the

activities of Guru Tegh Bahadur on his return to the Panjab. They saw in those activities a similarity with those of the Pathan leader Hafiz Adam of Banoor, who accompanied by a large number of his followers had been touring in the Panjab, collecting money from the Muslims, in the late thirties and early forties of the seventeenth century, and whom Emperor Shah Jahan had, in 1642, banished from India on account of his activities subversive of law and order. Without being able to see the spiritual relationship between the Sikhs and the Guru, or wilfully putting a wrong construction on it with the evil-intention of inciting Emperor Aurangzeb against Guru Tega Bahadur, or to demonstrate their loyalty to His Majesty, the royal intelligencers reported to the Emperor that, like the Pathan leader Hafiz Adam "the eighth successor of Nanak, named Guru Tegh Bahadur, with many followers having come to him, had become a man of influence and many thousand men moved along with him," collecting money from the Hindus, "and no wonder that if their power increased, they might sally forth in hostile manner" [*Siyar-ul-Mutakhkhirin*, p. 401].

The author of the *Siyar-ul-Mutakhkhirin* here has mentioned that Hafiz Adam, during this tour of Guru Tegh Bahadur, was a companion of his and that the two went about together, exacting money from Muslims and Hindus. But this is incorrect on the very face of it. The Hafiz had been turned out of the country in 1642 by Emperor Aurangzeb's father, Shah Jahan, on the recommendation of his minister Sadullah Khan, with order not to be allowed to return to the east of the river Attock, and he had left for pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina where he had died in December 1643 (Shawwal, 1053 al-Hijri), twenty-one years

before Guru Tegh Bahadur came to the *gaddi* in 1664 and thirty two before his martyrdom in 1675. This is borne out by innumerable works like Kamal-ud Din Muhammad Ahsan's *Rauza-tu-Qayumia*, p. 178; Nazir Ahmad's *Tazkirat-ul-Abidin*, pp. 124-5; *Mirat i-Jahan Numa*, (Rampur), p. 606; Ghulam Nabi's *Mirat u-Qaunin*, p. 417; Mirza Muhammad Akhtir's, *Tazkirah-i-Auliya-i-Hind-o-Pakistan*, p. 401; etc.

But, for Emperor Aurangzeb, the very hint of his reporters suggesting a similarity between the activities of Guru Tegh Bahadur and those of the late Hafiz Adam during the days of his father Shah Jahan, was enough to excite his suspicions and apprehensions. He was then encamped at Hasan Abdal, trying to quell the rebellion of the Pathans on the north-western frontier of India. The Pathans had been in revolt for some time. It was reported to the Emperor towards the end of Rajab, 1084 al-Hijri, October 1673, that the imperial commander Mahabat Khan had neglected to suppress them and had entered into a secret understanding with them. The Emperor was highly displeased at this and on November 17, 1673, deputed Shuja'-at Khan to punish the rebels. But; providence had willed it otherwise, and Shuja'at Khan was killed in the battle against the Afghans and the Mughal army was defeated. The Emperor, therefore, decided to move to the frontier personally and left Delhi on the 11th of Muharram of the 17th year of his reign, 1085 al-Hijri, April, 7, 1674, for Hasan Abdal where he arrived on Rabbi-us-Sani 3, June 26, 1674.

It was during his stay at Hasan Abdal that the reports of Imperial intelligencers against Guru Tegh Bahadur were received by the Emperor. Precise details of these reports are

not available, but one can easily see from the writing of Saiyid Ghulam Husain Khan in his *Siyar-ul-Matakhkhirin* that it had been poured into the ears of the Emperor that, with increase in the number of his followers and financial sources, the Guru might as well raise the standard of rebellion. But the intelligencers' reports and the Emperor's fears were all baseless. The Guru's tour in the southern Panjab was purely of a religious character like those of the first Guru Nanak. Guru Tegh Bahadur had neither the intention nor the means of leading any insurrection against Emperor Aurangzeb. There had been at no time any indication to that effect. The author of the *Siyar-ul-Mutakhkhirin* himself admits in unambiguous words that "the companions of Tegh Bahadur moved about like mendicants; the bearing of swords and arms was not customary among them—*hamrahiyan-i-Tegh Bahadur bataur fuqra migardidand, salah-o-yaraq bastan darmian-i-shan mamul na bud.*" And no rebellion could be expected to succeed against the great Mughal empire without a strong trained army equipped with the necessary munitions of war.

Busy as the Emperor was in quelling the Pathan rebellion on the north-western frontier, he had neither the time nor perhaps the inclination, to make intensive inquiries about the allegations against the Guru. He was already suspicious of the Sikh movement which his grandfather Emperor Jahangir wished to put an end to and which it was in keeping with his own policy and orders of April 8, 1669, to suppress "to put down the teachings and public practice of the religion of the misbelievers." It was in these days in the summer of 1675 that a deputation of the Brahmans of

Kashmir approached the Guru at Anandpur for help to mitigate their sufferings on account of the oppression of imperial policy of trying to convert them to Islam against their will.

On the transfer of Nawab Saif Khan in 1671, his place as governor of Kashmir was taken by Nawab Iftikhar Khan, an enthusiastic exponent and executor of the Emperor's policy of Muslimizing the Hindus. He turned out to be more loyal to the king than the king himself. Either out of his own volition or to win the favour of the Emperor, "Iftikhar Khan (1671-75)", says P. N. K. Bamzai, "tyrannized over the Brahmans of Kashmir to such an extent that they approached Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Sikh Guru, at Anandpur in the Punjab, and solicited his personal intervention with the Emperor. This ultimately led to the Guru's martyrdom" [*History of Kashmir*, p, 371]. How did the Brahmans of Kashmir come to think of Guru Tegh Bahadur as their saviour at this juncture, and not of any of the Hindu ruling chiefs of Rajasthan or any other part of the country? Evidently, the Brahmans had no faith in their moral courage to take up their cause. They had not been able to save the temples of their own *Dharma*, nor the centres of their religious learning. Their devotion to their faith was only skin deep and they appeared not to be prepared to make the supreme sacrifice for it. Guru Tegh Bahadur, on the other hand, was a fearless man of *dharma*, a successor of the great Guru Nanak, whose heart had bled to see his countrymen subjected to the tyranny of the rulers and invaders of his days. In the days, when a word dropping from the lips of the ruler was the law of the land, and there was nothing to stop him from passing a death-sentence against an innocent

person, the Sikh Guru alone had the courage to say, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, that "the Kings of the *Kali*-age behaved like butchers, that righteousness had taken to wings and flown away, and that in the dark night of falsehood the moon of truth was not to be seen" [*Gauri* I, p. 145] In another place, in *Rag Asa*, he had said :

Je sakta sakte kau mare ta man ros na hoi,

Sakta sheeh mare pai vagge khasmai sa pursai.

If a powerful person were to tyrannize over a powerful person, there shall be no anger in my mind;

But if a furious lion were to fall upon a herd of cattle, their master should be answerable for it. [*Asa* I, p. 360].

Here the Brahmans of Kashmir were as helpless as a herd of cattle against the all-powerful Mughals who, instead of acting as protectors of their subjects, were trying to rob them of their *dharma*, and of their lives if they refused to bow down to their behests for conversion to Islam. A fearless man of God with broad universal sympathies, and above narrow communal sectarianism, could alone be of help to them. And to the Brahmans of Kashmir, there appeared to be no other such man in the country except Guru Tegh Bahadur.

This, evidently, was suggested to them by one Pandit Kirpa Ram Datt of Mattan who had known the Guru for some time as a tutor to his young son Gobind Das at Anandpur after his return from his eastern tour. Kirpa Ram must have heard of the details of his travels and conveyed to the Brahmans the impression that the Emperor also, perhaps, regarded Guru Tegh Bahadur as a saint and had not, there-

fore, interfered with him during his long travels throughout the eastern parts of the empire right up to east Bengal and Assam. In some of the important places of Hindu pilgrimage and provincial capitals like Allahabad, Benares, Gaya, Calcutta, Dacca, Dhubri Gauhati, (Kamakhya Devi), etc, he had been staying for weeks and months, addressing congregations, preaching his religion and converting people to his faith. They must have also come to know that the Guru had an admirer and a disciple in Raja Ram Singh of Jaipur whom the Emperor had readmitted into his favour. He had recognized him as the ruler of his state and had honoured him with the title of *Raja* in 1667, after the death of his father Mirza Raja Jai Singh. Towards the end of the year (December 27, 1667), the Raja had received further favours from the Emperor and had been deputed by him to the general command of the expeditionary force against the Assamese. The Guru had met him during his march to Assam and had been of help to him in his negotiations there. Under these favourable circumstances, the Guru's intervention with the Emperor, thought the Brahmans of Kashmir, would help mitigate their persecution at the hands of Governor Iftikhar Khan.

To approach the Guru for the purpose, therefore, they selected Pandit Kirpa Ram Datt as the leader of their sixteen-man deputation and arrived at Anandpur on Jeth Sudi 11, 1732 Bikrami (May 25, 1675).

This is mentioned in the *Bhatt Vahi* Multani-Sindhi in the *Khata Jalhanon ka* as under :

ਭਾਈ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਰਾਮ ਬੇਟਾ ਅਤ੍ਰੁ ਰਾਮ ਕਾ ਪੋਤਾ ਨਰੈਣ ਦਾਸ ਕਾ ਪੜਪੋਤਾ
ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਦਾਸ ਕਾ ਬੰਸ ਠਾਕਰ ਦਾਸ ਕੀ ਦੱਤ ਗੋਤਰਾ ਮੁਝਾਲ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਨ ਬਾਸੀ ਮਟਨ

ਦੇਸ਼ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਸੰਮਤ ਸਤਰਾਂ ਸੈ ਬੱਤੀਸ ਜੇਠ ਮਾਸੇ ਸੁਦੀ ਇਕਾਦਸੀ ਕੇ ਦਿਹੁ ਖੋੜਸ
ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੋਂ ਗੈਲ ਗਰਾਮ ਚੱਕ ਨਾਨਕੀ ਪ੍ਰਗਨਾਂ ਕਹਿਲੂਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਜੀ
ਮਹਲ ਨਾਮਾ ਕੇ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਆਇ ਫਰਆਦੀ ਹੁਆ। ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਇਸੇ ਧੀਰਜ
ਦਈ ਬਚਨ ਹੋਆਂ ਤੁਸਾਂ ਕੀ ਰਖਸਾ ਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਰੇਗਾ।

(ਭੱਟ ਵਹੀ ਮੁਲਤਾਨੀ ਸਿੰਧੀ)

This is also supported by Sarup Singh's *Guru Kian Sakhian Sakhi* No. 25; Sewa Singh's *Shahid Bilas*, No. 33-38, pp. 59-60.

Little did the Pandits know that during the last days of the Guru's absence in the east, and since return, there had been a marked change for the worse in the socio-religious policy of Emperor Aurangzeb and that adverse reports of the Imperial intelligencers against the Guru and the Sikhs had been poisoning the Emperor's mind against him. The Guru, however, gave a very patient hearing to the suppliant Brahmans and sympathised with their cause, saying "Guru Nanak will protect them." Gure Tegh Bahadur at the same time felt that the cause needed a sacrifice which should shame the Mughal rulers into reason and rouse the people out of their lethargy.

Guru Tegh Bahadur's sympathetic response to the appeal of the Brahmans and his readiness for supreme sacrifice in their cause was a thing unique in history. He was neither a Brahman himself, nor did he subscribe to their way of life which prescribed the wearing of the sacred thread and putting distinctive marks on the forehead *Janeu* and *tilak*. These had no place in Sikhism. The founder of Sikhism had not only refused to accept them for himself in his early days but had also discarded them for his followers. But their forcible removal by Muslim fanatics and the

conversion of the Brahmans to Islam against their will were acts of great high handedness and abuse of political power. This the Guru protested against through his sympathy with the helpless people. He was not against any one accepting Islam with a willing heart. It was entirely one's private concern. But if any one forcibly dragged him into it, it deserved, according to Sikh ethics, to be protested against and remedied. High-handedness, wherever it is, and by whomsoever it is practised, particularly in the name of God and religion, calls for censure from the Sikhs. This is what Guru Tegh Bahadur did.

Emperor Aurangzeb, however, took it in a different light. To him sympathy with the idolatrous Brahmans, whom he wished to be brought into the monotheistic fold of Islam, was an affront to his religio-political policy, and he could not brook it. It only added fresh fuel to the fire already smouldering in his mind. On receipt of his intelligencers' reports regarding the Guru's sympathetic response to the Brahmans' appeal, he issued order to the Governor of Lahore to have him arrested, fettered and detained in prison. The Governor passed on the order to the *Faujdar* of Sirhind, Dilawar Khan, who in turn asked the circle *Kotwal* of Ropar, Nur Muhammad Khan Mirza, in whose jurisdiction lay Anandpur, to arrest the Guru. According to Muhammad Ahsan Ijad's *Fragment of the Farrukh-Siyar-Nama*, f. 13 a (Irvine, *Later Mughals*, i, 79), Emperor Aurangzeb "Alamgir had issued the *farman* for Tegh Bahadur's arrest, but the order was kept secret." This, evidently, was done to wait for a suitable opportunity to effect the arrest without any fuss and difficulty. The opportunity came to the *Kotwal* when the Guru, accompanied by only a few Sikhs, left

Anandpur on Sawan 11, 1732 Bikrami, July 11, 1675, and arrived at the village of Malikpur Ranghran near Ropar on his way to cross the river Sutlej for his onward journey. Here he stayed at the house of a Sikh, Bhai Dar-gahia (Nigahia). Hearing of the Guru being at hand, from the police informers deputed for the purpose, *Kotwal* Nur Muhammad Khan Mirza arrived on the spot. Early in the morning of July 12, the *Kotwal* was able to arrest the Guru and his companions with the help of the local Ranghars and a posse of additional police called in to meet the resistance of the Jats of the village who had come out to oppose the arrest. [Kesar Singh, *Bansawali Nama*, the *Parkh*, pp. 88-90 ; Sarup Singh, *Guru kian Sakhian*, No. 25, 26, *Bhatt Vahi*, Talauda, Jind; Irvine, *Later Maghals* i, 79.] Muhammad Ahsan Ijad says in his *Farrukh Siyar Nama—Fragment* that the Guru was then proceeding "to the Ganges to bathe." The mention of the Guru's intention, of going to the Ganges was, in all probability. made by some of his companions at the time of his arrest.

Mirza Nur Muhammad Khan is recorded to have sent the Guru to Sirhind where he seems to have been detained in prison for some three and a half months by *Faujdar* Dilawar Khan waiting for further orders. In addition to the above works and the *Vahi* records mentioning the arrest of the Guru at Malikpur Rangharan, it is also mentioned by Dr James Burgess in his *The Chronology of Modern India*, 1494-1894 (1913). p. 119.

According to Sarup Singh's *Guru kian Sakhian* (*Sakhi* No. 26), Guru Tegh Bahadur was kept in Sirhind for over three months and was despatched to Delhi in an iron cage on

receipt of a *parwana* from the Imperial headquarters. He arrived there on Maghar Vadi 13, 1732 Bikrami, November 5, 1675.

The *Subedar* of Delhi and royal Qazi did their best to persuade the Guru to be converted to Islam and, finding him unwilling, tortured him for five days to coerce him to agree to their proposal. But nothing could shake him 'to abjure his faith or perjure his soul to preserve his muddy vesture of decay.' He was willing to lay down his life rather than to give up his faith. To do their worst, the royal *amirs*, the *Subedar* and the *Qazi*, resorted to the cruellest and the most inhuman ways. On Maghar Sudi 5, 1732. Bk., November 11, 1675, they killed his companions before his very eyes. Bhai Mati Das was bound between two pillars and was cut in twain with a saw, and Dayal Das was boiled to death in a cauldron of hot water, and the third, Sati Das, was roasted alive with cotton wrapped round his body. Thus did the Guru's Sikh companions sacrifice their lives for their faith, with God's Name on their lips and with their faces turned to the Guru. Then came the turn of the Guru himself. He is said to have been asked to show some miracle. And, the greatest miracle of Guru Tegh Bahadur was his unwavering faith in Sikhism, the divine mission of Guru Nanak, inculcating, through word and deed, the Unity of God and Universal brotherhood of man, with no distinction between the so-called believers and unbelievers, the *Momins* and the *Kafirs*, the *Devas* and the *Malechhas*, etc., etc.

To Guru Tegh Bahadur, a Brahman was as good a son of the *Rabbul-Alamin* and a member of the human fraternity as a Muslim and deserved his sympathy if any one tyrannized

over him. With love for all and malice for none, his heart bled for the weak and helpless. This was in keeping with the aim and mission of his life and he was ever prepared to make the supreme sacrifice to uphold it. And when the final choice between Islam and death was offered to him by the Emperor's *amirs* at Delhi under his instructions from Hasan Abdal, he preferred to lay down his life in sympathy with the oppressed and helpless Brahmans of Kashmir whose cause he had espoused against the Emperor's policy of Muslimizing them by force.

Thus did Guru Tegh Bahadur gain martyrdom which stands unparalleled in the history of the world. It is true that there have been in the past, and since then, innumerable martyrs who had, or have, died for their faiths or in the defence of their countries. But Guru Tegh Bahadur died for the freedom of conscience and conviction of people belonging to a faith other than his own. He did not believe in Brahmanism. In fact, the Guru's Sikh faith had discarded the Brahmanical ways of life. Yet he stood for their freedom of belief as God-created human beings in opposition to the narrow sectarianism of the power-mad Mughal autocrat who wished to coerce his subjects into his own way of thinking. This to Guru Tegh Bahadur was against the spirit of humanism and human equality for which he stood and sacrificed his life.

II

The preceding brief account of the last days and martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur is presented as an objective study based on contemporary and semi-contemporary independent Punjabi sources supported by Persian writings of the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The

earliest available reference to the subject is to be found in Sujan Rai Bhandari's *Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh*, completed in A.D. 1697, during the time of Guru Gobind Singh. Sujan

Rai belonged to the town of Batala and was a great admirer of the Sikhs and Sikh Gurus. According to him, "Guru Hargobind's youngest son Tegh Bahadur remained *Guru* for eleven years, and at last, having been imprisoned by the king's nobles, was, according to the order of Emperor Alamgir Aurangzeb, executed at Shahjahanabad in 1806 al—Hijri, 17th regnal year of Alamgir (Aurangzeb). Now when this book is being written, Guru Gobind Rai son of Guru Tegh Bahadur is his successor for the last twenty-two years" [p. 70]. This statement of Sujan Rai was accepted by Munshi Saiyid Ghulam Husain Khan in his *Siyar-ul Mutakhkhirn* in almost the same words, adding, from his own source of knowledge, that after hearing the news of large numbers of Sikhs accompanying the Guru during his travels in the Punjab, collecting money, and fearing that "they might also sally forth in a hostile manner:" Emperor Aurangzeb wrote to the Governor of Lahore "that Tegh Bahadur be arrested, fettered and detained in prison. So this was done according to the order. After a few days another order was received," at Delhi where the Guru had ultimately been sent, "that having executed him, his body should be cut into a few pieces and hung on different sides of the city" [p. 401].

For the arrest of the Guru at Malikpur Rangharan near Ropar, we have depended for our material upon the *Gurukian Sakhian*, completed in A. D. 1790, by Bhai Sarup Singh of Bhadson who had drawn upon his family records of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. He is supported by Kesar Singh Chhibbar's *Bansavali-Nama Dasan*

Patshahian ka, completed in 1826 Bk, A. D. 1769. He tells us therein that he had consulted for his writings the records in the Guru's house at Anandpur where his grandfather Dharm Chand and greatgrandfather Dargah Mall had been *Diwans* to Guru Tegh Bahadur. While Sarup Singh was a resident of Bhadson in the district of Patiala, Kesar Singh's ancestors belonged to Kariala, in the district of Jhelum. The third, equally independent source of our material is a *Bhatt Vaht* preserved at Talauda in the *parganah* of Jind. The entries in the *Bhatt Vahis* are really very important sources of information for our history like those of the old ballads, *kaiyan* and *var* composed and sung by professional genealogists—Bhattis, Jheewars and Mirasis—like the *Khayat* and *Pawada* composers of Rajasthan and Maharashtra. The Bhattis of the Punjab and Malwa are genealogy specialists who move about from village to village in their respective areas, recording important events connected with the families of their *yajmans*. As such, the *Bhatt Vahi* records are not only contemporary but also first-hand, and can, therefore, be safely relied upon. These, in respect of the Guru's arrest at Malikpur Rangharan, his detention at Sirhind and despatch to Delhi in an iron cage, have the additional support of contemporary Persian records like Muhammad Ashan Ijad's *Fragment Farrukh Siyar Nama*, quoted in William Irvine's *Later Mughals*. The fact of the Guru having been arrested at Malikpur Rangharan near Ropar is also mentioned in James Burgess *The Chronology of Modern India 1494—1894* (Edinburgh, 1913), p. 119. The evidence of all these authorities, of one another, is conclusive on these points. None of these writers, Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims, makes mention of Emperor Aurangzeb's presence at

Delhi during the days of the Guru's martyrdom, or of his dialogue with the Guru.

It may, however, be mentioned here that the Emperor's absence from Delhi does not in any way absolve him of his responsibility for the arrest and execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur. In fact, historically speaking, the entire responsibility for the Guru's martyrdom lies exclusively upon the head of the Emperor of Delhi—*Theekar phor Dillis sir*—as Guru Gobind Singh has rightly put it in his *Bachittar Natak*. The order in both the cases—for his arrest to the Governor of Lahore, and for his execution to his officials at Delhi—were issued by the Emperor himself and as such he was directly responsible for them. The officials at Lahore, Sirhind and Delhi were only tools for the compliance of his orders. No king or governor or Chief Justice himself personally sees to or supervises executions, nor is he ever expected to be present at the place of execution. The actual act of the execution is carried out and supervised by the junior functionaries. There is nothing in the *Bachitar Natak* even to suggest by implication that the Emperor was then present in Delhi to 'order and see the Guru's execution.' The words '*theekar phor Dillis Sit, Prabhpur kiya pyan*' only mean that "Having broken the potsherd on the head of the Lord of Delhi, he went to the abode of God." They only throw the moral responsibility for the Guru's execution on the Emperor's head. No other construction can reasonably be put on these words.

III

It is really very unfortunate that with the exception of a very few Gurmukhi works written during the eighteenth

and nineteenth centuries which may be said to be partially objective in the treatment of their subjects, the biographical and historical literature produced by Sikh scholars belongs to hagiographical and epical nature. The authors of the *Guru-Bilas*, the *Suraj-Prakash* and the *Panth-prakash* type of books were great poets, no doubt. In their deep devotion and overflowing reverence and zeal for the exhibition of their poetical skill, they have not been able to restrain their imagination and creative faculty in introducing fiction into their compositions. The admixture of fiction with history has destroyed the purity and truth of the latter doing great injustice and incalculable harm to the saints and heroes of their studies. This is particularly the case with the Guru period where, in many cases, the students, and scholars of history find it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to discriminate between history and fiction. The last events of the martyred Gurus' lives have come to be so shrouded in poetical mystery that their acts of supreme sacrifice and heroic martyrdom have come to be reduced to shivering suicides. For the information of our readers, we draw their attention to some of these works in connection with the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur.

Gur-bilas Patshahi 10, by Bhai Sukha Singh, First edition, Amritsar, Samvat Nanakshahi 420, page 78, Nos. 109-117.

Gur-bilas Patshahi, 10, by Koer Singh Punjabi University, Patiala, 1968, pp. 59-60, Nos. 110-2, 115-7 119-120.

Mehma Prakash, by Sarup Das Bhalla, Punjab Government. Languages Department Patiala, 1971, p. 744, Nos. 23-29.

Parchian Sewa Das, Punjab Government Languages

Department, Patiala, 1962, p. 94.

Bansavali Nama Dasan Patshahian ka, by Kesar Singh Chhibbar manuscript, p. 108, Nos. 105-08 ; p. 111, Nos. 126-26. Also see Punjab University, Chandigarh, publication the *Parkh* for 1972, p. 93.

Gurpratap Suraj Granth, popularly known as *Suraj Prakash*, by Bhai Santokh Singh, Voi. ii. *Ras* 12, *Ansn*, 65.

The worst of it is that some scholars of history and religion like Ghulam Muhaiy-ud Din *alias* Bute Shah Ludhianavi (*Tarikh-i-Panjab*), James Burgess (*Chronology of Modern India*) and others have taken them at their words and have unwittingly or otherwise published their garbled versions as facts of history.

Guru Tegh Bahadur was at Delhi for only a week—*Maghar Vad*: 13 to *Maghe. Sudi* 5, 1732, Bk., November 5 to 11, 1675. During this period he was not only kept in close confinement in the Chandni Chowk *Kotwali* under strict surveillance but was also subjected to merciless torures. There is no evidence whatever contemporary or semi-contemporary, to say that any one, Sikh or non-Sikh, was allowed to see the Guru in the prison or to have an interview with him regarding the conversations that the imperial *Wazir* or the grand *Qazi* or any one else, that could have been used as the basis of the dialogues between the Emperor, the Emperor's *amirs* and Guru Tegh Bahadur given in the *Suraj-Prakash*, *Gur-Bilas* and *Panth-Prakash* type of books. Therefore, the mention of Emperor Aurangzeb's presence in Delhi in November 1675 and of his dialogues with the Guru are nothing but the creation of their authors' fertile poetic imagination.

Poetry and historiography are two different arts. The greatness and beauty of poetry lie in its flights of imagination expressed in the language of excited feelings, in musically set words. History, on the other hand, is an objective narrative written in a plain uninfluenced forthright style aiming at truthful presentation of the past, uninfluenced by the writer's emotions and prejudices. 'History is not history unless it is the truth.'

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