

Sikh Martyrdom



Martyr Bhai Taru Singh had his hair mercilessly scraped off along with his scalp. He stood the ordeal most bravely and all the time kept reciting Japji Sahib. He vowed that he would leave his mortal frame only after the death of Zakarya Khan, his tormentor.

Bhai Subeg Singh was a government contractor who, for sometime, had served as the 'Kotwal' of Lahore as well. When he and his son, Bhai Shahbaz Singh, were being mounted on the wheels to be broken alive, the father and the son, on seeing the wheels in action exclaimed:



Blessed is the hour, blessed the wheel,
Blessed Thy will, and blessed our weal,
For our Dharma to mount the wheel,
A boon It is for our bodies to feel.
When the Qazi advised Bhai Subeg Singh to save his son, Shahbaz Singh, for the continuance of his lineage, Bhai Ji is reported to have said;
When our Guru for a righteous call,
Sacrificed himself and his all,
Why then should I save my son,
When he did not save his son.
The father and his son upheld the glorious traditions

of Sikhism even at the cost of their lives.

From 1st to 30th June 1746 was the beginning of a long tradition of Martyrdom. A royal proclamation was issued to the effect that whosoever by Guru Nanak's Faith should be put to death forthwith wherever he may be found.



Increasing number of Sikhs were, thereafter, tortured to death in every conceivable way. However, all glory to the Sikhs, that not even a single of them ever relented even in the face of sure death. Panth Parkash presents the picture of that age in these moving words:

Some were broken on the wheels,
And, some were hanged unto death;
Some were blown by the cannons,
And, some were stabbed unto death;
Of some, the heads were cut by sword,
And, some were drowned or dragged to death; Many a
more was battered to bits
And, thousands thus were done to death;
Seizing some, their heads were cut,
And, others lost their limbs to death;
Some were divested of their eyes;
And some were scalped unto death;
Thus, young or old, if he wore the hair,
He was sure to meet the death.

Baba Banda Singh and his close associate Baba Baj Singh attained martyrdom at a site near 'Qutub Minar' and the mosque of Khawaja Bikhtiar Kaki.



His flesh was pinched apart with pincers, his body was battered to bits and worse still, his tender son, Ajai Singh was mercilessly martyred into pieces before his very eyes. But, Baba Banda Singh, the very embodiment of steadfastness, remained true to his Faith till his last breath. When Farukh Sayyar asked him as to how should he be tread, Baba Banda Singh showed the climax of courage by firmly telling him at his face: 'Just as a king treats another King'. When again questioned as to what type of death he would wish to meet, he said, 'the same as you want for yourself'.



During the war of Bagini, Bhai Kanahiya gave water to all the warriors weather they were Sikhs or not ! He was sermoned to Guru Gobind Singh Ji due to reports of giving water to the enemy.



Guru Gobind Singh Ji asked him if this was true , Bhai Kanahiya replied that Guru Ji had taught him that all were children of one God and therefore he saw no difference between the enemy and the Guru's army. It was his duty to serve water to all as he could see the light of God in everyone. Guru Gobind Singh Ji was very pleased with Bhai Kanahiya's answer.

Bhai Mani Singh who was as true a Sikh, as a real saint, had his limbs cut to pieces. As the executioner started to cut off his wrist, Bhai Mani Singh said to him 'You are not doing your job properly, you were ordered to cut of each and every limb in my body so start from my fingers'



But, even under the spell of such terrible tortures, these words were all the time on his lips:
What do I care for earthly vase
If my sacred' Faith' is safe.
The earthly vase is the mortal Frame,
While my 'Faith' is a lasting game., ';

Guru Teg Bahadur injected new life into the, of his Countrymen by bringing home to them that:
"Those who fear are cowards
And, those who frighten are fools".
He alone is a divinely enlightened person who fears not and frightens not.
'He alone is an enlightened soul, says Nanak who frightens none, and fear none.'
Guru Teg Bahadur was martyred under orders of Aurangzeb. However, prior to him, Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Dyala ji and Bhai Sati Das courted martyrdom in his holy presence.



Bhai Mati Das was sawed alive in twain, but from each part of his body, the holy recitation to this effect could be heard. 'Nothing is born and nothing perishes That alone happens what He wishes'
Similarly, the holy words of the Guru were on the lips of Bhai Dyala Ji as he was being boiled alive in a large kettle, and when Bhai Sati Das Ji was being burnt alive by wrapping him in cotton the holy words 'Guru Guru', ere all the time being recited by him.

The home and hearths of the Sikhs were plundered, their killing officially was allowed and had prices fixed on their heads -



Rs Ten for a mere information about them, fifty for the actual arrest of a Sikh, and eighty for his severed head.



Under such conditions, the Sikhs were forced to seek shelters in hills, marshes and distant wastelands. Not Once, but, five times over, the Sikhs had to pass through such ordeal.

**Text Extracts from illustrated MARTYDOM
TRADITION published by SGPC, Sri Amritsar
Photos taken at Mehtiana Gurdwara in the Punjab**