

TEACHINGS OF GURU TEGH BAHADUR JI- GUIDE TO A TRUTHFUL AND RIGHTEOUS LIFE

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ABSTRACT

The teachings of Guru Tegh Bahadur, ninth Guru of Sikhs, play a pivotal role even in contemporary times, where hatred and fanaticism are dominant in the society. The Guru's supreme sacrifice is a testimony to the principal of justice which established peoples right and inspired them to practice and preach their own faith with the spirit of fearlessness. Guru Tegh Bahadur, a great poet, was an author of 57 Salokas, and 59 other compositions (Shabads), written in 15 Raagas (measures) which are enshrined in the penultimate part of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the holy scripture of the Sikhs. Referring to His Shloka and Baani which is complete guide to a truthful and righteous life, focussing on the transient nature of the materialistic world thus denounce their attachment. The Saloka also focuses on the inevitable reality of life - Death and the ways to overcome grief by becoming resilient. Not only reciting these Salokas but understanding their meaning deeply would save mankind from this mad rat-race of materialism hence moving towards peace, stability and tranquillity. He also gave a concept of Jiwan-Mukt which means a liberated soul free living in a family but still be detached from its charms.

Keywords: Sacrifice, Saloka, Materialism, Tranquillity, Jiwan-Mukt

INTRODUCTION

The unparalleled martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji, the ninth Guru of Sikhs, upheld the righteousness and for respect of plurality in the society, perpetuation of peace and tranquillity in the society by his supreme sacrifice. He was born as the youngest son of Guru Har Gobind Sahib ji on 18 April, 1621 C.E at Amritsar and was educated there only learning Gurmukhi, Sanskrit and other languages including religious philosophy and archery from Bhai Gurdas and Baba Buddha ji. During his early childhood was known by the name of Tyag Mal, as per his name was reclusive by nature and would sit in solace to meditate. He grew up in Bakala, trained under the able guidance of his father he learnt the art of swordsmanship. His unique quality of fearlessness and bravery earned him the name Tegh Bahadur when he fought the battle of Kartarpur in 1635AD against the Mughals in which he showed the expertise in swordsmanship at the tender age of 13 years. The path of teaching righteousness to the humanity exemplifies Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji's entire life.¹

GURU TEGH BAHADUR JI-BANI

Guru Tegh Bahadur's Bani is filled with a unique kind of Vairag which asks the person to realise the truth of life and death is a reality and inevitable.⁶

Renouncing the life during his early youth is a symbol of sublime austerity, with the mission to appraise others just the truth of life and nothing else. His verses included in Adi Granth sahib, initiated in 1604, contains 30 Raagas is a rich repository of mystic experiences of deep truths of the spiritual world which are narrative of the fact that he was completely detached from the worldly joys and riches. A great poet, he was an author of 57 Shlokas, and 59 other compositions (Shabads), written in 15 Raagas (measures) which are enshrined in the penultimate part of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the holy scripture of the Sikhs.⁷ 31st Raag Jaijaivanti was penned down by Guru sahib which appears on page number 1352 of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, are contemplative of his deep spiritual insights. In this Raag and His Bani the emphasis is on shunning the materialistic approach and ego hence adopting spiritualism. Shlokas are a short verse that convey a deep spiritual message in a concise manner. The shlokas are written as couplets having two lines each that rhyme at the end making them impactful and giving a clear message that God is the ultimate reality of the universe. Guru Teg Bahadur Ji in his 57th shloka did not use the pen-name of Nanak and also composed the hymns in 31st Raag, the uniqueness in his Bani.⁹ It is actually the Divine power-The Hukam of the Supreme which controls the mankind.² These couplets throw light on moral, philosophical, and religious values of human life lived under the influence of the desires and instincts that pulls away from the almighty. The main focus of these Shlokas is that the Almighty is the powerhouse of the Universe, the Divine play of life is according to His plan, Hukam. In present times, humans have wrongfully taken themselves as the Lord, which leads to decay and destruction.

To illustrate his philosophy in his Shlokas Guru Sahib used metaphor and imagery symbols for the mankind. The message through Baani could be conveyed effectively using simpler language and relevant signs, symbols from everyday life.⁸ Emphasising the relationship of fish and water in the opening Shlok itself by saying that a fish cannot survive in the absence of water, similarly a human being cannot be at peace in absence of God The main metaphor used by the Guru is of Yama and his noose. He also used the examples of Ajamil and Gaj, the Elephant being rescued by God's grace, upholding

that only the good deeds could be the saviour. Another illustration used was of the elephant rolling in dirt after bathing, makes cleanliness futile after all the wrongdoings. Guru Sahib also the compared life to bubbles on water, portraying the unstable nature of life.⁹

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The message of being a practitioner of spirituality spread far and wide with his teachings in simple Braj language. His principles were made easy to understand with the illustrations taken from daily-life, which focussed that the humans should realise that the world is a transitory abode and human mind should stay focused on meditation, human body is a gift to be utilized as an opportunity for self-realization³

The materialistic things accumulated by the human being in this world will not stay long. Death is the inevitable reality of life. The period between birth and death is very short. Man spends whole of his life running after materialistic things and seeks more and more to fulfil his lust and desire. These materialistic things are immortal. In Sikhism, the cycle of life and death is stressed upon.⁴ In His hymns he clearly gave the message to the mankind to comprehend the reality of life and death. One who is born will die eventually and as per his deeds done in life which is the Karma, will be reborn again and again, finally would be liberated from this cycle only when he is able to correct his deeds. The attainment of liberation leads to "Mukti", a prime concept of an enlightened being. Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji in his Shlokas primarily focussed on the concept of "Jeevan Mukta". The philosophy of Jeevan Mukta is based on the existence of an ideal being also called Gurmukh who has controlled his lust and greed in the world and hence lives in the form of the selflessness and consistency. According to His teachings this state can be achieved in his present life and for this the important thing is guidance and commitment to the Almighty⁵. Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji's Salokas enlighten us on the uniqueness of the human birth of a human birth which is a blessing and one should not waste this opportunity for the by indulging in worldly vices. The Guru through his shlokas reminds us that this life, is a gift of God and through the guidance of these hymns it is easy to swim across the world-ocean by remembering the divine name, discarding the evils of falsehood, deceit, sham and ego we can make it valuable and worthy⁷. We can address and remember the Almighty, called by many names like Gobind, Ram, etc. who is the Creator of life. To attain enlightenment and freedom from worldly bonds, the Simran, remembrance of the Lord's Naam is required.

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