

Zafar Nama of Sri Guru Gobind Singhji

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Guru Gobind Singhji is one of the greatest heroes of human history. The world at large knows him for the spirit of sacrifice as a rare martyr who gave his all for Dharma in the service of humanity. As a great Karma Yogi, he fought the evil forces giving personal direction to his followers. He is a rare saint soldier who made Khalsa, his followers, so unique that he submitted himself to the collective will of the Khalsa as God's soldiers. He raised them from the position of passive and peaceful devotees of God to courageous and tough fighters for righteousness. For Guru Gobind Singhji, the means always determined the quality of ends, as is evident from his following prayer to God:

O great God, grant me this boon,
I should never waver from doing righteous deeds.
I should never fear fighting the evil forces in
the battle of life.
Instead, let my self-confidence ensure my victory.
In the heart of my heart, I should ever long,
To sing thy praises like a Sikh.
And when the hour of mortality of this body arrives,
I should die fighting on the battle field
with unbounded courage.
(Swaiyya)

Guru Gobind Singh, the son of martyr Guru Tegh Bahadur and great grandson of the martyr Guru Arjun Dev laid his all, at the altar of the Almighty, namely, his father, mother, his four sons, and even his own life, not only for his own followers, but for the people of all the faiths, indeed for all mankind.

History bears witness that the Hill Rajas of the Shivalik principalities north and east of Anandpur in Northern India, were jealous of the popularity of Guru Gobind Singh, though he never

threatened them nor won any territory for himself. It was the need of the time that the great Guru was born with a Divine Mission. He explains this in his autobiography, Bachitra Natak, that God sent him on this earth:

To spread righteous Religion
And to uproot evil doers.

Guru Gobind Singh never considered himself as an incarnation of God, and did not approve the idea of Avatar for his ownself. According to him, he had been assigned the specific above mentioned mission by the Supreme Lord.

The seat of the Guru, Anandpur Sahib, was situated in the state of Kahlur, then enjoying nominal autonomy, along with other similar hill principalities. In fact, these hill states were obliged to pay tributes to the Mughal overlords. Kahlur was then being administered by Raja Bhim Chand from whose father Guru Tegh Bahadur had bought the land, then known as Makhawal. At this place, the Guru established another Sikh centre and named it Anandpur besides the one already at Kiratpur, at the distance of about seven miles, situated in the state of Hindur, where the forefathers of Guru Gobind Singh had already been living for sometime. The state of Kahlur and Hindur were not on good terms. Bhim Chand did not look with equanimity the growing influence of the Sikhs under Guru Gobind Singh, because of their continued good relations with the state of Hindur. He also looked askance at the Guru's emphasis on the establishment of a casteless and classless society, which was at complete variance with Hindu basic beliefs.

The Raja of Kahlur himself went to the South to place his case against the Guru, before the Emperor Aurangzeb personally. He was accompanied by the other Hill Rajas. The Emperor had already received complaints against the Guru, from his own officials in respect of his awakening the public to live fearlessly. As per routine, the implementation of orders against the Guru was assigned to Wazir Khan, the Faujdar of Sirhind.

Despite the joint efforts of the Mughals, the Hill Rajas and their allies, the attacks on Anandpur Sahib were foiled by the Guru. As a last resort, the Emperor himself sent a signed oath, promising that he was anxious to meet the Guru to settle matters by negotiations. The Mughal commanders and the Hill Rajas, too, took oaths promising safe arrangement if the Guru should evacuate Anandpur.

But the solemn promises were broken. When the Guru was proceeding towards Ropar, he was pursued by the enemy, while crossing the flooded river Sarsa. The Guru's mother and his younger two sons, Sahibzada Zorawar Singh and Sahibzada Fateh Singh, aged nine and seven years respectively, were separated from the main party. Later on, they fell into the hands of

Mughals, at the complaint of Gangu, who was a cook in the Guru's kitchen. Then the soldiers took them to Sirhind. Faujdar of Sirhind forced them either to accept Islam or face the consequences. The children boldly refused to accept Islam. Therefore, at the behest of the Nawab, the children were bricked alive in the wall, and beheaded with sword at Sirhind. Grandmother, Mata Gujari ji, expired in the prison on hearing the tragic end of her two beloved grandsons. Now, at this place stands a great historical Gurdwara Fatehgarh Sahib, in the sacred memory of these innocent children, where followers of all the faiths come to pay their reverence.

The Guru then reached Chamkaur (Ropar district) and entered into a large building, known as Kachi Garhi. As per Zafar Nama, that is, the epistle of victory, the Guru, with his forty companions, was besieged in Kachi Gahi, by a huge army. His elder son, Ajit Singh, aged eighteen and Jujhar Singh, aged fourteen, fought against the enemy heroically, and gave up their lives in this brave fight. When no resistance was possible, the Guru left the place, with three companions, leaving two Sikhs behind on the spot, to engage the enemy there. They too died fighting. The enemy, unable to kill or capture the Guru, left Chamkaur in December 1704.

At this juncture, the Guru was left alone in the thorny wilderness of Machhiwara in Ludhiana district. His three companions were separated from him in the darkness of night. For days, he found no shelter. But in spite of all these turmoils, the Guru was in full communion with the spirit Divine.

One day, he was lying asleep on the cold earth, when the three separated companions, Bhai Daya Singh, Dharam Singh and Man Singh arrived by sheer coincidence. Though physically weak, he was in beatitude spiritually. At this juncture he sang a song which is symbolic of his mood:

We, the devotees must tell our plight to the Lord,
Without Him, the luxury of soft beds is agony
The flask of drinks are like a cross,
Pleasures of Palaces are like living among snakes
if thou art away
The goblet is poison and the cup a dagger.
I would rather love this state with my beloved Lord,
than live in the burning hell with strangers.

Thereafter, the Guru reached Jatpura, where the local Chief Rae Kalha served him. Hearing and seeing the sufferings of the Guru, the devout Muslim shed tears and condemned the oppressor. Since the Guru was being pursued by the Mughal forces, he took leave of Rae Kalha. At last he moved towards Dina-Kangra, which are two small villages in the Moga Tehsil

of the district Faridkot.

In 1706, at Dina, he composed this historic letter, Zafar Nama, and sent it to Aurangzeb, through Daya Singh and Dharam Singh. It was in reply to his letters of invitation, which the Guru had received from the emperor. The Guru replied very frankly that he had no faith in his promises or his solemn vows on the holy Qur'an, because the emperor had always been making false promises in his life, was treacherous and deceitful also. Though he was a monarch and a general, yet he lacked the true spirit of religion. Referring to the cruel murder of his sons, he said, "what though my four sons have been executed, there lives the Khalsa in thousands. They all are my sons. What bravery is it to extinguish a few sparks, you have instead ignited the devastating flames."

The Guru explained that he had taken up arms only because he had exhausted all other means of redress. He also said, "If I had not believed your word and your oath on the Qur'an, I wouldn't have left my town. If I had known that you are cunning like a fox, I would not have been here today."

The epistle is written in classical Persian, which was the court language at that time. It is a unique work in the history of heroic literature in verse form. The theme is in keeping with its title and indicates the sublimity of the saint-soldier and hero. The letter indicates loftiness of the Redeemer addressing an individual of temporal status.

The emperor, though a mighty monarch and general, lacked the tolerance of true religion. He and his generals violated the vows taken on the Holy Qur'an, only to subdue the Guru. Reading the letter, about his own brutal acts, even the heart of Aurangzeb was touched. It awakened his dormant conscience and created in him a mood of true repentance. The day he read the letter, he was confined to bed. He called his scribe and dictated a letter to his son. And this is the last letter of his life, which acknowledges his moral defeat.

Guru Gobind Singh, the great Redeemer of humanity, made Aurangzeb repent for his sins. The Guru awakened his conscience to pray to the Almighty and repent for his cruel deeds. This is Guru's victory, confirming the faith that truth is evergreen. The false splendour of the emperor lies buried under the earth, whereas the true glory of the Guru shall live till eternity, and inspire humanity to fight for human dignity and liberty.

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