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Guru Hargobind Ji

Gurus

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Mata Ganga Ji asked her husband Guru Arjan Dev Ji for the gift of a son, for he granted the wishes of so many Sikhs he would surely answer her's as well. Guru Arjan told Mata Ganga Ji to go and seek Baba Budha Ji's blessing. Mata Ganga Ji had her helpers prepare delicious foods and took a processin on chariot to see Baba Budha. When Mata Ji asked for Baba Ji's blessing , Baba Ji replied that he was a grass cutter and didn't have such ability. Mata Ji left disappointed. Guru Arjan Dev Ji explained that if she wanted a blessing she should have gone alone on foot and herself cooked simple food. She did this the next day and Baba Ji took hold of an onion and said ;

“Your son will be the Master of Masters, he will be the King of his people and he will break the rule of the Moguls as I break this onion under my fist.”

At the age of 11 he was nominated by Guru Arjan Dev Ji as the next Guru, he sent a message to his son ;

“Let him sit fully armed on the throne and maintain an army to the best of his ability”

The first phase of Guru Hargobind Ji's life was devoted to building the morale of the Sikh community, Guru Ji's mission was to make the Sikh community self-reliant and brave for the critical times ahead. In addition to participation in congregational prayer and acceptance of God's will, Guru Ji also emphasised proficiency in martial arts. Guru Ji wore the two swords Miri and Piri representing Secular Sovereignty and Spiritual Authority and maintained a fully trained army. The court musicians sang heroic poems called Vars (Dhaddi) to inspire Sikhs to emulate the heroic deeds of well known warriors. Wrestling matches, target practice and swordsmanship became very popular.

Sikh character was being moulded for self-defence and armed opposition to injustice and aggression. Guru Hargobind Ji also had the Sri Akaal Takht (Throne of the Timeless Lord) built, opposite Sri Harimandir Sahib Ji, which again represented the Temporal Sovereignty of the Sikhs, matters of war and peace and other problems facing the Sikh community were resolved here.

Jahangir went hunting with Guru Hargobind Ji sometimes, but grew to dislike Guru Ji after learning about the martial training of the Sikhs, he also became apprehensive of Guru Ji's increasing power and popularity. He had Guru Hargobind Ji imprisoned at Gwailor fort along with 52 other Hindu Princes and Rajas. Jahangir later realised his mistake and ordered Guru Ji to be set free, however Guru Ji only accepted release on condition the other Rajas and Princes be se t free. This was agreed and 52 Princes and Rajas holding onto a special robe came out of prison, this is why Guru Ji is called “Bandi Chhor” (Liberator of the bounded). And at the time of Divali it is not the festival of lights that Sikhs celebrate but the in fact the release of Guru Hargobind Ji and his welcome back to Amritsar. [NB: To be correct these should be called Bandi Chhor Day celebrations].

The second period of Guru Hargobind Ji's life was marked with defensive wars against the Moghul rulers. Jahangir died in 1627 and his successor Shah Jahan was hostile to the Sikhs. He sent a force of 7000 troops under Mukhlis Khan to teach the Sikhs a lesson. Amritsar was plundered but when the Moghul commander was killed the Moghul forces retreated, this was the battle of Amritsar (1628). Guru Ji also fought battles at Kartarpur in which the Moghul commanders Painde Khan and Kale Khan were both killed.

During the later period (1635-1644) which were more peaceful times, Guru Ji devoted himself to missionary work. Guru Ji had 5 sons and chose Har Rai his grandson from Baba Gurditta (who died in 1638) as the next Guru.