

Guru Har Krishan Sahib: A Great Martyr

I am highly surprised to find that nobody has recognized Guru Har Krishan Sahib, the Eighth Sikh Guru, as a martyr as of yet. In fact, He was not just a martyr, He was a great martyr! As we will find out shortly, at a very young age of less than eight years, He did something that nobody else had ever done before at that young age in the entire world. He was selfless, fearless tireless and in-discriminatory in serving humanity, and He sacrificed His young life in the service of suffering humanity.

Definition of Martyr

In addition to the different definitions given below, all the sources have also defined a martyr as a witness (mainly related to religion)

Oxford Dictionary: A person who suffers for adhering to a principle or a cause.

Webster Dictionary: A person who suffers death for his or her beliefs.

Wikipedia: Is somebody who suffers persecution and death for advocating some belief or cause, or refusing to renounce a belief or cause or refusing to advocate some belief or cause.

Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha: 1. A martyr is an individual who does something exemplary (noble) for people to remember. 2. One who has dedicated his/her life to a religious cause (service to mankind).

No matter what definition we use, as we will see shortly, Guru Har Krishan Sahib was a great martyr by any definition.

Har Krishan Ji was born on July 7, 1656 to Guru Har Rai Sahib Ji and to Mother Kishan Kaur Ji at Kirat Pur Sahib.□ He was a very different kind of boy right from His birth. Bhai Nand Lall Ji, a well-known Persian scholar and a great Sikh writes about Guru Har Krishan Sahib as follows:

§ Tauseefay Sanaa Bhai Nand Lall Ji: Guru Har Krishan Sahib is the treasure of all grandeur and kindness. Of all His favourites, Waheguru has praised Him (Guru Har Krishan) the most.

Guru Har Krishan Sahib is God-like and His existence is solely for divine gifts and for showering kindness.

Everybody is desirous of His nourishing largess, and the earth and the sky serve Him.

The two worlds (the present and the future) have found salvation through His beneficence, and every entity is shining like the sun because of His kindness.

All God-loving people are looking to Him for His largesse, and the sky and the underworld are under His control.

Such was the personality of Guru Har Krishan Sahib. He had attained the high spiritual level needed for Guruship at the young age of five. Having determined that, Guru Har Rai Sahib found Har Krishan Ji completely competent in every way to succeed Him as the Eighth Guru. So, Guru Sahib passed on the Guruship to Har Krishan Sahib on Oct. 7, 1661. Before Guru Har Rai Sahib left this mortal world, He advised young Har Krishan Sahib not to be friends with Aurangzeb, the then king of India.

MARTYRDOM: In late 1663, Aurangzeb invited Guru Har Krishan Sahib to visit him in Delhi. Guru Ji left Kirat Pur Sahib on January 22, 1664 with a few Sikhs for Delhi. Many more Sikhs joined Guru Sahib on the way. On the third or the fourth day of the journey, Guru Sahib made a stop at Panjokhara, a small village about 10 km from Ambala, where a highly conceited Brahman, Lall Chand was living. Lall Chand came to see Guru Sahib and the level of his conceit multiplied when he noted that Guru Sahib was only a small child. He thought the child Guru would be no match for him in the knowledge of religious books, and that he could easily beat Guru Sahib. On coming close to Guru Sahib, he said very satirically, “You are a successor of Guru Nanak, and you also have the same name as Lord Krishna, but what do you know about Gita, the holy book uttered by Lord Krishna?” An illiterate water carrier, Chhajju Ram, happened to be passing by just at the time. Guru Sahib called Chhajju Ram and touched his head with His cane, and asked him to explain the meaning of Gita to the Brahman. The Brahman could not believe when Chhajju (believed to be mute too) not only explained the

meaning of Gita, but also to the depth which the Brahman himself was not aware of. Lall Chand realized that Divine knowledge was not necessarily related to age, and some Great Souls were born with It. He fell on the feet of Guru Sahib and begged to be forgiven. Guru Sahib hugged him and advised him to use his knowledge to help people. There is a beautiful Gurdwara in Panjokhara now commemorating the visit of Guru Har Krishan Sahib.

On reaching Delhi, Guru Sahib decided to stay with Raja Jai Singh, who was a very high official in Aurangzeb's court. Despite Aurangzeb's repeated requests, Guru Sahib did not go to his palace to stay with him. Aurangzeb had developed great fear and respect for Guru Sahib as Guru Sahib's elder brother, Baba Ram Rai Ji, had impressed Aurangzeb with his supernatural powers. Aurangzeb concluded if Ram Rai Ji had so amazing power even without being the Guru, Guru Har Krishan Sahib must be controlling unlimited powers because He Himself was the Guru. So, he did not bother Guru Har Krishan Sahib in any way and let Him do whatever He chose to do.

Unfortunately, an epidemic of small pox had gripped the city of Delhi those days and several hundred people were dying every day. Guru Sahib could not see the suffering of the people, and He personally began to serve them indiscriminately. Guru Sahib worked tirelessly round the clock for many days to treat the suffering humanity. During this hard labour of service, Guru Ji Himself got the attack of small pox as a result of which He became very ill and left this mortal world on 8th of March, 1664. This selfless service of humanity which resulted in His worldly death is martyrdom by any definition. Guru Sahib had the choice not to go the small pox- infested areas and not to serve humanity to save His own life. But He never did that, and chose His own death to save thousands of people suffering from the incurable disease. If Guru Har Krishan Sahib is not a martyr, then who else is?

Even though, Guru Har Krishan Sahib (or any other Guru Sahib for that

matter) could not care less whether He is called a martyr or not, but we need to acknowledge His martyrdom for His selfless service to humanity and show our additional respect for the Great Guru.

Let all of us join forces and urge the SGPC to acknowledge Guru Har Krishan Sahib a great martyr.

WHY DID HAR KRISHAN SAHIB JI BECOME GURU AT SUCH AN EARLY AGE?

Some people may ask why Guru Har Rai Sahib passed on the Guruship to His very young son, Har Krishan Sahib, when Guru Sahib Himself was very young of thirty-one years and in great health (Guru Har Rai sahib, the son of Baba Gurditta Ji, and the grandson of Guru Har Gobind Sahib, the Sixth Sikh Guru, was born on Jan. 16, 1630 at Kirat Pur Sahib. He became the Seventh Guru on March 08, 1644 at the young age of fourteen years). Let us find the answer to this question from some important historical events. In 1661 Aurangzeb, the then Mughal emperor of India invited Guru Har Rai Sahib to pay him a visit in Delhi. Guru Har Rai Sahib asked His elder son, Baba Ram Rai Ji who was eleven ears at the time, to go to Delhi instead. Baba Ram Rai Ji was very pleased to obey because he would get an opportunity to visit the Emperor. Guru Har Rai Sahib was well aware of Baba Ram Rai Ji's interest in the mundane things on one hand, and the Emperor's fascination with the display of supernatural powers on the other. So, before Baba Ram Rai Ji left for Delhi, Guru Har Rai Ji warned him very strictly about two things. First, Baba Ram Rai Ji would not display any supernatural powers to impress Aurangzeb, and second, he would show full respect for Gurbani and would not distort it in any way. Baba Ram Rai Ji agreed to both the restrictions, but soon after he had met the Emperor, he unleashed the display of all his powers to win over the favour of the Emperor. The Emperor was impressed beyond belief.

Explaining the insignificance of the Muslim belief of not burning their dead bodies because if burned, their souls would burn in hell and also they would not be able to rise on the day of Judgment, Guru Nanak Sahib writes in Assa Di Vaar that after the bones of the dead bodies rot away, they become part of clay which is considered very good for making pottery.□ So, when a potter uses that clay and bakes the raw earthenware in a kiln, the dead bodies in the form of clay used in pottery burn any way.□ So, what is the advantage of not burning the dead?

Aurangzeb raised this issue with Baba Ram Rai Ji, and asked for clarification. Ram Rai Ji was very clever and very witty, he quickly replied, “Sir, Guru Nanak Sahib did not write ‘the clay of the Muslim’, He actually had written ‘the clay of the dishonest’. Aurangzeb knew very well that Baba Ram Rai had purposely lied to please him, but still the Emperor was very happy Baba Ji’s eagerness to please him (Emperor). He promised Baba Ji that he (the Emperor) would help him to ascend the throne of Guruship after the death of Guru Har Rai Sahib. Baba Ji was overjoyed and returned to Kirat Pur happily after a few more days.

When Baba Ji reached Kirat Pur, Guru Har Rai Sahib was waiting for him and saw him coming through a window of His room on the top floor.□ When Baba Ji reached quite close, Guru Sahib asked him to stop then and there and said, “You deliberately disobeyed my instructions to you. I was very unhappy with your display of supernatural powers to impress the King, but I might still have excused you. However, I cannot excuse you for the disrespect you have shown for the Great Guru Nanak by distorting His holy Baani. So, you are not allowed to enter the house, and you go back where you came from”. Such was Guru Sahib’s respect for Gurbani.

Guru Sahib knew full well that after leaving Kirat Pur Sahib, Baba Ram Rai Ji would go directly to Aurangzeb for help, and expecting some kind of ugly interference from Aurangzeb for Guruship after His worldly death, Guru Har Rai Sahib, decided to pass on the Guruship to His younger son, Har Krishan

Sahib, immediately. Even though Guru Har Rai Ji was only thirty-one years old and in very good health, and Har Krishan Sahib was only five years old at the time, Guru Har Rai Sahib was fully convinced of Har Krishan Sahib's Divine ability to be the Guru even at that young age. So, Guru Har Rai Sahib called a gathering of the Sikhs at Kirat Pur Sahib, and declared Har Krishan Ji, His successor.

Because, we cannot have two living Gurus at the same time, Guru Har Rai Ji left for His heavenly abode on Oct. 6, 1661, and Har Krishan Sahib ascended the throne of Guruship the following day i.e. Oct. 7, 1661 at the age of about five years and seven months.

That is why Guru Har Krishan Sahib became the Eighth Guru at such an early age. It also seemed to be the Will of Waheguru to show the masses that age is not always a factor for Waheguru to appear in a human heart and enlighten it with His Knowledge.

NOTE 1: Aurangzeb did bestow Baba Ram Rai Ji with a large estate in Dehra Doon where he spent the rest of life in riches. So, there is a solid proof that Aurangzeb would definitely have tried to help Baba Ram Rai to become the next Guru.

NOTE 2: Many scholars have written that Aurangzeb came to visit Guru Har Krishan Sahib when He was staying with Raja Jai Singh at latter's palace in Delhi, but Guru Sahib refused to see him (Aurangzeb) even though Aurangzeb stood waiting outside for hours. There does not seem to be much truth to this statement for a variety of reasons.

(1).What could have been the just reason for Guru Sahib to have refused to see Aurangzeb? None of the Guru Sahiban ever refused to see even the hard core criminals. It is true that Aurangzeb was a tyrant, a big sinner, and was not trustworthy, yet – even Guru Gobind Singh Ji went to see him when Aurangzeb invited Guru Sahib. And this happened despite the fact that Guru Ji was made to leave Anand Pur Sahib when Aurangzeb and the Hill Rajas took oaths not to attack Guru Sahib once He left Anand Pur Sahib, but

broke their promises and did attack Guru Sahib. Not only that Guru Sahib's younger sons were martyred ruthlessly by Wazir Khan, the governor of Sirhind at the time and a representative of Aurangzeb. Still Guru Gobind Singh Ji agreed to see Aurangzeb even though the meeting never took place because Aurangzeb died before Guru Sahib reached Aurangzeb's sojourn.

Similarly, Guru Nanak Sahib went to the death-trap of Sajjan Thug to enlighten him and to stop him from killing innocent people.

So, why would Guru Har Krishan Sahib refuse to see Aurangzeb especially when He went to Delhi for that reason i.e. to see the latter at his invitation?

(2). Aurangzeb was the emperor of a huge empire and could not have possibly tolerated that type of ignoring by anyone. Remember, when Guru Nanak Sahib declined the invitation of Malik Bhago and did not go to his public dinner, Bhago got very mad because his ego got hurt, and he sent his soldiers to bring Guru Sahib forcibly.

Similarly, when Humayun, the then king of India, went to Guru Angad Sahib to seek His blessings, but got mad when he had to wait to get Guru Sahib's attention and he tried to draw his sword to attack Guru Sahib. It is a different story that he failed to draw the sword and Guru Sahib made him realize that sword is not meant to attack Holy Men.

So, why would Guru Har Krishan Sahib offend Aurangzeb without any good reason? Remember also, that it was the same cruel and unjust Aurangzeb who martyred Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib, the Ninth Sikh Guru when He asked Aurangzeb not to forcibly convert Hindus into Islam. If ignored, Aurangzeb could have done anything to harm Guru Sahib.

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Sunday, 08 September 2013 13:50

So, it seems unlikely that Guru Har Krishan Sahib ever refused to see Aurangzeb.