

“DHARAM DA RAKHA” – LIFE AND TIMES OF GURU TEGH BAHADUR

Abinash Mahapatra*

Dr. Jasleen Kaur**

ABSTRACT

Conferring to the theme of this paper, the content has been broadly diversified into specific distinct labels, in accordance with the dimensions to Nauwey Patshah Sahib Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Maharaj Ji's Life and Times where it is not intended to portray only a mere historical context of His biography, rather it is being tried to put forth the real essence of the morals which He tried to preach the mankind after a detailed scrutiny of various instances pertaining to His Life including the travels and the message of mystical experience through His Bani (The Holy Shabad). References used for the preparations of this paper have been cited for further investigation and research on the specified subject.

Keywords: *Guru Tegh Bahadur, East India Travels, Srisht di Chadar, Salok Mahela 9, Bachitar Natak.*

Prior to an exact tenure of 400 years, thus born a ray of hope in the prevailing dusk of the society now blazing as a Sun, eradicating all the dark prejudices across the seven seas to irradiate the entire globe, in the consecrated reminiscence of the Lord's own embodiment to whom we address as Nauwey Patshah Srisht di Chadar Satguru Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib Ji Maharaj who was a live specimen of rectitude and modesty, the principle Sikh Doctrines established by the First Sikh Guru – Satguru Sahib Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji Maharaj and was further propagated by the 7 succeeding Sikh Gurus.

To comprehend the life of Nauwey Patshah, it is must for an individual to apprehend the perception of Ek Nanak Jyot. It seems grasping to study the Life of Nauwey Patshah but once a person gets imbibed profoundly, he / she will be lack of words to define what exactly He was! Though meditating long hours & engulfed with empathy as well as steady determination, He was not a solitary person who even attended His household errands. Each and every instance of His life is assumed to be a preaching of the Sikh principle that household and mystic if fragmented can never lead a person for God Realisation.

It is unanimously noted that His Bani though very profound & significant in all aspects focuses on the central theme of Vairag, but the concept of Vairag in His Bani goes contradictory to the Indian Ethnic of Vairag. The morals He laid down, the message He conveyed through His Bani forms a prominent landmark in the course of the Human History preaching them the essence of humanitarianism. The martyrdom of Nauwey Patshah was an earth-shattering moment as it has never been noted in the chronicles of World History for the Master of one Religion attaining Martyrdom for the Religious Freedom of others thus, sauntering on the essence of His Grandfather, the fifth Sikh Guru – Satguru Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji Maharaj.

Brief Sketch of His Life & Travels

On 1st of April 1621, post to the birth of Mata Viro Ji (only daughter), a boy named Sri Tyaag Mal was born as the youngest and fifth son to the Sixth Sikh Guru – Chhevin Patshah Satguru Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji Maharaj and Mata Nanki (Singh, 1972) Ji. Since infantile, Sri Tyaag Mal was ruminative and mystically determined who was obstinately engrossed in music & poetry. Sri Tyaag Mal had the Gur Sikhs Baba Buddha Ji and Bhai Gurdas Ji as His instructors who instilled in Him

* *Sikh Historian & Author, President of Punjabi Global Foundation, Odisha Chapter & President of Legal Cell, Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee Bihar (SGPCB).*

** *Assistant Professor, Guru Hargobind Khalsa College of Education, Gurusar Sadhar, Ludhiana (Punjab, India).*

the art of archery, the marital arts in swords and other arms, horsemanship and Religious Education pertaining not only to Sikhi as well as other Indic Religions (Bhalla,1971).

Now the question arises, how the name got transformed from Tyaag Mal to Satguru Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib Ji Maharaj ? The Sikh Chronicles reflect that since the tenure of 6th Sikh Guru – Miri Piri de Malik Chevin Patshah Satguru Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji Maharaj, the Sikhs were instilled with the spirit of gallant (BirRas) and irrespective of the Sikh religious Practices, they were also insisted to engross in wars against the social evils (Mughals).

Chevin Patshah in His epoch had fought four massive wars against the Mughals within a very short span of one year (1634 – 1635). Legend prevails that Sri Tyaag Mal's warfare skills were observed nearly at the age of 13 in which He participated in the battles and honourably attained the title Tegh Bahadur (Chibber, 2005). Satguru Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Maharaj Himself utters:

***“Jis ki Degh
Us ki Tegh”***

(The one who is charitable, can only command the sword)

One of the most important Historical Source persisting which connotes to the Life and Times of Nauwey Patshah Satguru Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib Ji Maharaj is the Bachittar Natak of Sri Dasam Granth Sahib Ji inscribed by His son Dasam Patshah Kalgidhar Pita Sahib Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji Maharaj in which He pens the following lines,

***“Tilak Janju Rakha Prabh Taka
Kino Bado Kalu Meh Saka
Saadan Het Ieti Jin Kari
Sis Diya, Par Si na Uchri”***

(He protected the forehead mark and sacred thread (of the Hindus) which marked a great event in the iron cage. For the sake of saints, he laid down his head without even a sign. For the sake of dharma, he sacrificed himself. He laid down his head but not his creed. The saints of the Lord abhor the performance of miracles and malpractices).

***“Theekar fore dilees sir,
Prabh par kiyopayan,
Tegh Bahadur si kriya,
Kari nakin hooaan”.***

(He erupted the bonds of earthly clay and ensued towards the abode of Akal Purakh Sri Waheguru Ji. None in universe ever performed such deed as noble as did my father Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji).

***“Tegh Bahadur kechalat,
Bhayojagat main sog.
Haihaihai sab jag Bhayo,
Jai jaijaisur log.”***

(With the exodus of Sri Tegh Bahadur Ji, the world was stricken with sorrow. A moan of disgust presided the earth but there was a conqueror's welcome by the inhabitants of the paradise with the sounds of Jaikaara).

Post to Pehli Patshah Sahib Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji Maharaj, it was only Nauwey Patshah who went on Udasis (Spiritual Journey), though constrained to East India only, the theme of this Udasi was synonymous to that of Pehli Patshah i.e. to eradicate the masses from the shackles of social evil followed by the birth of Amrit de Daate Kalgidhar Patshah Sahib Sri Gobind Singh Ji Maharaj in Patna Sahib, Bihar (Mahapatra, 2020). Innumerable authentic and profoundly researched sources are prevailing which depicts the various instances of Nauwey Patshah Ji's tenure pertaining to Punjab and nearby regions. But the historical context of Nauwey Patshah Ji connoting to the maximum portion of East India and Himachal Pradesh has been unexplored for which the following lines have been penned in order to explore this unexplored history of Nauwey Patshah Ji's travels to East India.

The Travels to East India

When we speak of East India and pen the Sikh Historical Context in a chronological sequence, it starts from the state of Bihar and then further ensuing from Assam, Bangladesh & West Bengal, ends in Odisha. The Sikh Historical Chronicles are suggestive that Pehli Patshah Satguru Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji Maharaj, Chevin Patshah Satguru Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji Maharaj & Nauwey

Patshah Satguru Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib Ji Maharaj were the only three Sikh Gurus for whom we experience a profound link of Sikh History with East India (Mahapatra, 2020).

Though, it were only Satguru Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji Maharaj and Satguru Sri Tegh Bahadur Sahib Ji who have visited the East India during their Udasi (Spiritual Journey), Chevin Patshah Satguru Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji Maharaj sent Baba Gurditta Ji (His own son), Bhai Almast Ji and many others for the propagation of Guru Nanak Philosophy to keep the people strayed from the shackles of superstitions, baseless rituals and other social evils. At the instance when Satguru Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib Ji Maharaj entered the province of East India through Bihar, there were already Guru Nanak Naam Leva Sangat keenly awaiting His presence. Some instances pertaining to His East India Udasi will be discussed beneath.

Kalgidhar Patshah Sahib Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji Maharaj has penned in Bachittar Natak,

***“Mur pit Purab, kiyaspayana
Bhant bhant ke Tirith nana
Jab eh Jat Triveni bhaye
Pun dan din karat bitaye”.***

(My father went to the east, He visited all sorts of places of pilgrimage; When he reached Triveni (Prayag), He spent his time in alms-giving)

Satguru Shri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji descended on the soil of Bihar in the year of 1666 accompanied by Mata Nanki, Mata Gujri Ji and Kirpal Chand Ji. On entering the state of Bihar, Guruji bathed Himself in Karmanasha River. Legend prevails that this river is named so because whosoever gets bathed in it loses the fruit and efficacy of his religious austerities and pilgrimages. When Guruji concluded his bath, the priests sitting nearby uttered,

“What kind of saint are You? Don’t know when you bathed in this river, all your deeds went futile”!

Guruji smiled and responded,

“No water could mar or undo the merits of good actions”.

With His melodious tone in Divine ecstasy,

Guruji uttered a Shabad here and broke the shackles of superstitions and blind faiths prevailing in the mind-sets of people. The priests too had Siddh Gosht (Spiritual Debate) with Guruji and finally accepted Guruji as their Master. This news spread like wildfire and when Guruji reached Sasaram, He along with His family were passing by a tobacco field owned by Bhai Achal Ji and Mata Jio Ji during that epoch (Mahapatra, 2020).

Guruji’s horse hesitated did not proceed further into the tobacco fields. Guruji summoned the owners of the field named Bhai Achal Ji and Mata Jio Ji and instilled in them the real essence of Life. He preached them to forbid the use and cultivation of tobacco thus transforming them and the Sangat intoxicated. Guruji ordered them to establish a Gurdwara to which they readily accepted. Seeing the devotion of the devout couple, Guruji gifted them with one of His steel arrows and henceforth, travelled to further areas of Bihar including to the residence of Salas Rai in Patna where His son the Tenth Master was born, currently where persists Takhat Sri Harimandar Ji Patna Sahib originally constructed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh Ji (Mahapatra, 2020).

It was from here in Patna, Guruji accompanied Raja Ram Singh to Assam who had sought His help and was himself present in Patna to receive Guruji. Five Sufi Saints from Malda, West Bengal namely – Shah Akbar, Shah Bagmar, Shah Sharan, Shah Safi and Shah Karan were also invited along with Guruji for the purpose of reconquering the Mughal Forces who were once defeated in Guwahati enrouting the banks of Brahmaputra River. Guruji accompanied by Raja Ram Singh and five Sufi saints reached Dhubri and it was the first place in the state of Assam marking Guruji’s arrival. Reaching the zone, Guruji firstly bowed at the Manji memorializing Satguru Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji’s visit and sat on the banks of Brahmaputra River. The caretaker of this Manji was an Udasi entitled Mahant Jivan Das. (Mahapatra, 2020).

Post getting the issues resolved, Guruji planned to return Patna but on His way, He proceeded towards Bangladesh, West Bengal, Odisha and then following the banks of Mahanadi & Brahmaputra,

Guruji reached Patna and had the first glance of His son Sri Gobind Rai, later known as Dasam Patshah Sahib Sri Gobind Singh Ji Maharaj. From Bihar, Guruji proceeded to Delhi (the state which he visited thrice) and then ensued to reach Anandpur from where He sends a letter seeking His family to move to Punjab (Multani, 1967).

The Martyrdom of Nauwey Patshah

While Guru Sahib was here in Anandpur, the Kashmiri Pandits led by Kirpa Ram who were given threats either to get converted into Islam or accept the death. Guruji was in deep thoughts when young Gobind Rai stepped in and probed of the eeriness persisting in the aura. When Guruji replied young Gobind Rai the exact cause, He uttered:

“It is only a “MahaPurakh” who will have to make a sacrifice to stop this butchery. We need not have to find a supreme soul who will die so as to awaken the sleeping consciousness of the people of Hind. You are the most spiritually aware person in whole of Hind who can make that sacrifice”.

Realising His son’s ability to be bestowed with the succeeding GurGaddi to accomplish the noble deeds which has left unaccomplished, Nauwey Patshah Ji uttered:

“Go and tell Aurangzeb that if he can convert Guru Tegh Bahadur to Islam, they will all convert. Otherwise he should leave them alone”.

He directed his courtiers to summon the Guru to Delhi and force him to adopt and accept Islam or be prepared to lose his life. He anticipated that his end was near. In His Bani “Salok Mahela 9”, Nauwey Patshah Ji states in stanzas 53 as well as 54.

***Bal Chhutyo Bandhan pare
Kachuna hot upae
Kah Nanak abo HariGaj
Tiyon hot sahae.***

[My strength is exhausted, I am in shackles, there is no way out. Sayeth Nanak You are now my only hope who will save me as You saved the drowning elephant that prayed]

***Balhoa Bandhan Chute
Sab Kic— hot upae
Nanak sab Kic—tumre hath main
Tum hi hot sahae.***

[Strength is there by Thy grace, O Lord. The chains of bondage are dropping, every succour is at hand for liberty and truth. Sayeth Nanak O Lord, everything is in Thy power It is only Thou who can protect]

Guruji was imprisoned in an iron cage in chains. There he was subjected to severe mental and physical tortures. In order to weaken the Guru mentally, his companions were taken to some other prison but he was informed that they had fled away. The Sajid Hasan Abdullah of Mani Majra treated Guruji with consideration as far as circumstances permitted. In these adverse circumstances, the Guru composed two more stanzas, 55 & 56,

***“Sang Sakha Sab tajgai
Kou na nibhyo sath
Kaho Nanak yehbipat men
Tek ek Ragh Nath.”***

(My associates & companions have all abandoned me; none has remained with me till last. O Nanak, in this calamity God is alone my refuge).

***Nam rahyo sadhu rahyo
Rahyo Gur Gobind.
Kauh Nanak eh Jagat men
Kin Japyo Gurmant.***

(The name will persist so also the saints and only the Lord will remain. Says Nanak in this world, few are only His men).

In order to nominate the next Guru, Nauwey Patshah took five coins and a coconut, prayed, bowed before him and sent these articles to his son Sri Gobind Rai through Gurditta who immediately left for Anandpur. The emperor had many religious disputations with Tegh Bahadur, and asked him to show miracles, if he was true guru, or to embrace Islam. Nauwey Patshah replied that showing a miracle was to interfere in the work of God which was wholly improper. As for embracing Islam he considered his religion as good as Islam, and

therefore the change of religion was not necessary (Singh, 1935).

The emperor ordered that Guru be put to the severest tortures. After five day's persecution on 10th November, the most heinous and most horrible scene was enacted before the eyes of Guru who was kept in the iron cage. Aurungzeb thought that the sight of such ghastly deeds might force the Guru to change his mind for embracing Islam. Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Sati Das and other beloveds of Nauwey Patshah were rewarded with superlative cruel & brutal deaths but had no impact on Guruji. Again, Guruji was given both the options to which He denied and finally His execution orders were issued.

On the morning destined for the martyrdom, Nauwey Patshah sat in meditation, recited the Japuji and Sukhmani. Recollecting the supreme sacrifice of his grandfather, Satguru Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji Maharaj, the clock had just struck 11 AM when He was produced before the masses. The executioner was summoned and a heavy blow was given. The result was that the head of Nauwey Patshah rolled down to the amazement of all where currently persists Gurdwara Sis Ganj. The adjacent building where Guru Sahib was imprisoned, was acquired by the Sikhs from the Delhi Administration on 11th of October 1968 (Mahapatra, 2020).

Dasam Patshah Sahib Sri Gobind Singh Ji Maharaj has Himself defined in Bachittar Natak of Sri Dasam Granth Sahib Ji the cause of this massive sacrifice:

***“Bahen jinahn di pakriye,
Sir dije Bahen na Chhoriye
Guru Tegh Bahadur boliya
Dhar paiyai dharna na Chhoriye”.***
[Give up your head, but forsake not those
whom you have undertaken to protect. Says
Teg Bahadur, sacrifice your life, but relinquish
not your faith]

*Tegh Bahadur Simriye Ghar Nau Niddh Avai
Dhae
Waheguru Ji ka Khalsa
Waheguru Ji ki Fateh*

REFERENCES

- Bahadur, Satguru Sri Guru Tegh. *Salok Mahela 9*(Stanza 53 & 54) present in the Ang of Satguru Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Maharaj.
- Bahadur, Satguru Sri Guru Tegh. *Salok Mahela 9* (Stanza 55 & 56) present in the Ang of Satguru Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Maharaj
- Bhalla, S.D. (1971). *Mahima Parkash Granth*. Patiala : Punjabi University.
- Bhangoo, R.S. (2015). *Prachin Panth Parkash* in English. Amritsar : Singh Brothers.
- Bhangoo, R.S. (2015). *Prachin Panth Parkashin* English. Amritsar: Singh Brothers. Bihar authenticated by the Hon. Chairman of Dharam Parchar Committee of Takhat Sri Harimandar Ji Patna Sahib.
- Chhibber, K.S. (2005). *Bansavali Dason Patsahiyan Da*. Amritsar : Singh Brothers.
- Chhibber, K.S. (2005). *Bansavali Dason Patsahiyan Da*. Amritsar : Singh Brothers.
- John, J.H. (1904). *The Sikhs*. Edinburg, London : William Blackwood Publishers.
- Latif, S.M. (1964). *History of Punjab*. Patiala : Punjabi University.
- Mahapatra, A. (2020). *The East India Sikh History*, Chapter 1 – The Sikh History of Bihar authenticated by the Hon. Chairman of Dharam Parchar Committee of Takhat Sri Harimandar Ji Patna Sahib.
- Mahapatra, A. (2020). *The East India Sikh History*, Chapter 2 – The Sikh History of Assam authenticated by Hon. Chief Minister of Assam & Hon. Secretary of Eastern Zone Sikh Pratinidhi Board, Gurdwara Dhubri Sahib, Assam.
- Mahapatra, A. (2020). *The East India Sikh History*. Authenticated : Takhat Sachkhand Sri Hazur Abchal Nagar Sahib, Nanded, Maharashtra.
- Mahapatra, A. (2020). *The Sikh History of Delhi*. Authenticated by Incharge S.G.P.C. Sikh Mission (Gurdwara Rakabganj Sahib), Delhi.
- Mahapatra, A. (2020). *The Sikh History of Delhi*. Authenticated by Incharge S.G.P.C. Sikh Mission (Gurdwara Rakabganj Sahib), Delhi.

- Mahapatra, A. (2020). *The Sikh History of Delhi*. Authenticated by Incharge S.G.P.C.
- Multani, K.S. (1967). *Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji wan Brittant*. Ludhiana : Lahore Books.
- Nabha, K.S. (2008). *Mahan Kosh (English)*. Patiala : Punjabi University.
- Singh, G. & Singh, T.(2006). *A Short History of the Sikhs*. Patiala : Punjabi University.
- Singh, G. (2014). *Twarikh Guru Khalsa (Part 2)*. Amritsar : B. Chatar Singh Jiwan Singh.
- Singh, S. (1972). *Gur Bilas Patshahi 6*. Patiala : Punjabi University.
- Singh, S. (1935). *Suraj Parkash Granth*. Amritsar: Chief Khalsa Diwan.
- Singh, Satguru Sri Gobind (1696). *Sri Dasam Granth Sahib Ji*, Chapter 3 – Bachittar Natak. Puratan Bir of Dasam Granth Sahib Ji at Takhat Sachkhand Sri Hazur Abchal Nagar Sahib & Takhat Sri Harimandar Ji Patna Sahib.

* * * * *