

GURMAT STUDY

Using Technology, To Spread the message of Sikhism

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SAHIBZADA ZORAWAR SINGH JI **(1696-1705)**

Sahibzada Zorawar Singh Ji, the third son of Tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh Sahib, was born to Mata Jito Ji (Also known as Mata Sundari Ji) at Anandpur Sahib on 28 November 1696 and was barely nine years old at the time of the evacuation of Anandpur on the night of 5-6 December 1705. Since Mata Gujar Kaur (Mata Gujari Ji), their grandmother had been especially attached to young Zorawar Singh and his infant brother, Fateh Singh. She took charge of both as they moved out of Anandpur Sahib.

While crossing on horseback the rivulet Sirsa, then in spate, the three were separated from Guru Gobind Singh Sahib. Their cook, Gangu, who had also succeeded in crossing the stream, escorted them to his own house in the village of Kheri, now known as Saheri, near Morinda in present day Ropar district. While unsaddling the horse he saw that there was some cash in the saddlebag. This tempted him to treachery. He not only stole the saddlebag during the night, but also planned to betray the fugitives to the government (Nawab of Sirhind) in hope of a reward.

On the morning of 7th December 1705, the day of the fateful battle of Chamkaur, Baba Zorawar Singh Ji, along with Baba Fateh Singh Ji and their grandmother Mata Gujar Kaur (Mata Gujri Ji), was taken into custody by Jani Khan and Mani Khan Ranghar, the officials at Morinda. They were despatched on the following day to Sirhind where they were consigned to the Cold Tower (Thanda Burj) of the Fort.

On 9 December 1705, Baba Zorawar Singh Ji and Baba Fateh Singh Ji were produced before the Faujdaar, Nawab Wazir Khan, who had just returned from Chamkaur with his feudal ally, Nawab Sher Muhammad Khan of Malerkotla. Wazir Khan tried to lure the Sahibzadas to embrace Islam with promises of riches and honors', but they spurned the suggestion. He then threatened them with death, but they remained undaunted. Death sentence was finally pronounced. Upon Sher Muhammad Khan's intercession for the innocent children to be spared their lives, they were given some more time to ponder over the suggestion to convert. Sahibzada Zorawar Singh Ji and his brother spent another two days of severe winter in their old grandmother's lap in the Cold Tower.

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Still adamant, they were, on 11 December 1705, ordered to be sealed alive in a wall. According to tradition, as the masonry around their tender bodies reached chest high, it crumbled. The Sahibzadas were sent to the Cold Tower again for the night. The next day, 12 December 1705, the alternative of conversion being again turned down, Baba Zorawar Singh Ji and Baba Fateh Singh Ji were martyred by sealing alive in a wall. The aged Mata Gujari Kaur Ji (Mata Gujri Ji), who had all along been kept in the Cold Tower, only a little distance away, breathed her last as the news reached her ears. Mata Gujari Ji through upbringing of her grandsons played such an important role in Sikhism that as Sikhs, we can owe our existence to her. It was due to her teachings that 7 year old and 9 year old did not budge from their faith (Dharma) and attained martyrdom, thus continuing and emphasizing the institute of martyrdom in Sikhism.

Dewan Todar Mal, a wealthy merchant of Sirhind, purchased the land in exchange of Gold Coins / diamonds to perform the cremation of the three dead bodies the following day. The cold tower where Mata Ji & Sahibzadey were kept is now known as "Mata Gujri Ji Burj" and place where cremation took place is today known as "Jyot Swarup". The site of the fateful happenings, since christened Fatehgarh Sahib, close to the old town of Sirhind, is now marked by four Sikh shrines. A religious fair is held here from 25 to 28 December every year to honour the memory of the martyrs.

The renowned Hindi poet, Maithli Saran Gupta in his well known book Bharat Bharati said: ***"Whatever their present position, the future of the community whose sons can thus lay down their lives for their faith, is bound to be glorious."***



GURDWARA FATEHGARH SAHIB, MARTYRDOM PLACE OF SAHIBZADES

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