



Commemoration of

**350<sup>th</sup>** Martyrdom  
Day of

# Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji

A glimpse of the life, legacy, and  
supreme martyrdom of *Dharam Di Chadar*



# Life, Courage, and the Defense of Freedom of Conscience (1621-1675)

This exhibition honours the life and legacy of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji, the Ninth Sikh Guru, remembered as *Dharam di Chadar* for defending the right to conscience and religion.

His life spans spiritual training in Sri Amritsar Sahib, the meditative discipline of Baba Bakala Sahib, extensive journeys across the subcontinent, major literary contributions, moral leadership, and the supreme martyrdom in Delhi.

## Birth and Lineage

Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur ji was born as Baba Tyag Mal ji on 1 April 1621 in Sri Amritsar Sahib to Sri Guru Hargobind Ji and Mata Nanki ji.

Sri Guru Hargobind ji was the sixth Guru of Sikhs, and had one daughter, Bibi Viro, and five sons: Baba Gurditta ji, Baba Suraj Mal ji, Baba Ani Rai ji, Baba Atal Rai ji, and Baba Tyag Mal ji being the youngest one.

According to the traditional account preserved in *Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevin*, at the time of the birth of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji, Sri Guru Hargobind Ji offered ardas before *Akal Purakh*, seeking that the child be blessed with spiritual resolve, and the strength to uphold righteousness with steadfast courage.

Baba Tyag Mal ji grew up amid a household where service, discipline, devotion, and readiness to protect the vulnerable shaped daily life. From childhood he absorbed values like Naam simran/meditation, humility, and moral courage.



Gurdwara Sri Guru Ke Mahal, Amritsar (Where Guru Sahib was born)



## Early Education and Training

Baba Tyag Mal ji received education in Gurmukhi and Braj-influenced Sant Bhasha of the Sikh tradition. Under the guidance of Sri Guru Hargobind ji and respected scholars, he learned Gurbani recitation, Sikh history, and principles of righteous living.

Contemporary accounts describe him as a child drawn to reflection and meditation, traits that later defined his leadership.

Guru Sahib was also trained in horse riding, sword fighting, and various martial arts.





## From Baba Tyag Mal ji to Teg Bahadur: A Name Earned in Battle

The Battle of Kartarpur (1635) was fought between the Sikh forces led by Sri Guru Hargobind ji and the Mughal army under Paiman Khan.

Though still a young man, Baba Tyag Mal ji participated actively in the conflict.

Impressed by his son's composure, martial skills, and sense of duty, Sri Guru Hargobind ji acknowledged that Baba Tyag Mal ji had embodied the values of both *tegh* (the sword, symbolising resistance to injustice) and *bahadur* (bravery rooted in righteousness).

From this moment, he was known as Tegh Bahadur.



# Sri Kiratpur Sahib to Sri Baba Bakala Sahib: Sacred Continuity

Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji had established Sri Kiratpur Sahib as a crucial centre of the Sikh Panth and resided there until his *Jyoti Jot* in 1644. Thereafter, the *Guriai* was bestowed upon Sri Guru Har Rai Ji, grandson of Sri Guru Hargobind Ji.

During this period, Mata Nanki Ji, along with her son Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji and his wife Mata Gujri Ji, moved to Bakala Sahib (now Sri Baba Bakala Sahib) in present-day Sri Amritsar Sahib, the ancestral village of Mata Nanki Ji.

At Bakala Sahib, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji devoted himself to meditation, spiritual reflection, and guidance of the sangat. Sikh tradition records that he engaged in deep contemplation at the site now commemorated as Gurdwara Sri Bhora Sahib.

Meanwhile in 1658, Aurangzeb ascended the throne at Delhi, marking the beginning of a period characterised by stricter enforcement of orthodox policies and increased intolerance.

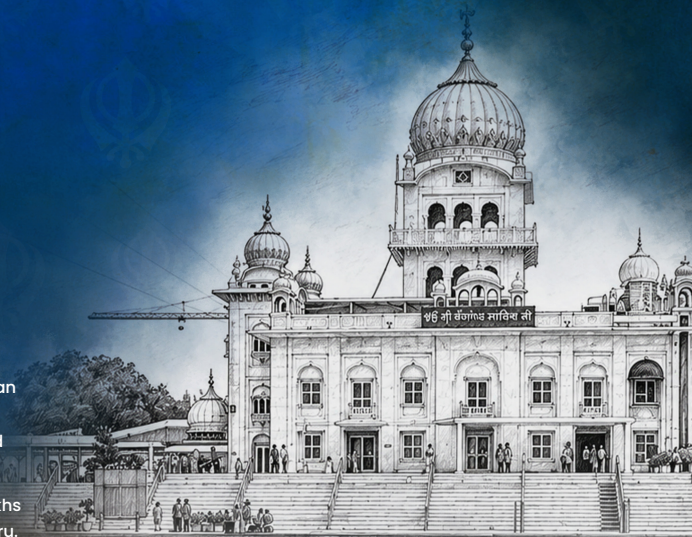


# Search for the True Guru

After the *Jyoti Jot* of Sri Guru Har Rai Ji in 1661, the *Guriai* was bestowed upon Sri Guru Har Krishan Ji, the revered *Baal Guru*. Sri Guru Har Krishan Ji was only 5 years old at this time.

A couple of years later, after being summoned to Delhi during Aurangzeb's reign, Sri Guru Har Krishan Ji was serving the sick during a severe smallpox outbreak when he too contracted the disease and attained *Jyoti Jot* there in March 1664.

His final utterance, "Baba Bakale," directed the Sikhs to Bakala Sahib in Punjab in search of the true Guru. However numerous claimants- recorded in tradition as 22- put forth their claims to the *Guriai*, leading the sangat to seek the true Guru.



Delhi's historic Gurdwara Bangla Sahib, originally the bungalow of Raja Jai Singh of Amber, commemorates the stay of Sri Guru Har Krishan Ji, the eighth Sikh Guru, who selflessly served the suffering during the smallpox and cholera epidemic of 1664.

## Divine Recognition of the Ninth Guru

Amid this uncertainty, a wealthy devout Sikh and international trader, Bhai Makhan Shah Labana ji, arrived from his journey to Delhi.

As per sources, having survived a violent storm at sea through divine grace, he had vowed to offer 500 gold coins (101 in some other sources) to the true Guru if his life was spared.

Once he reached Delhi, he learned that a humble, meditative figure named Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur ji who lived quietly in Baba ABakala Sahib, might be the one he sought.

Guided by his vow, he made his way to Baba Bakala Sahib determined to fulfil this promise.







## “Guru Ladho Re!”

Overjoyed, Bhai Makhan Shah Labana ji ran to the rooftop and shouted at the top of his voice, “*Guru ladho re, Guru ladho re!*” - I have found the Guru, I have found the Guru!”

This proclamation brought the gathered sangat to the site and ended the confusion.



# Establishment of Chakk Nanki (now Sri Anandpur Sahib)

Soon after his ascension to the *Guriai*, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur ji decided to move out of Bakala Sahib, and travel across the country, connecting with the sangats.

Upon reaching Sri Kiratpur Sahib, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji was informed of the passing of Raja Dip Chand of Bilaspur and attended the seventeenth-day ceremony (sattravin) in May 1665 at the invitation of widowed Rani Champa.

During his stay, Guru Sahib conveyed his intention to establish a new settlement near Sri Kiratpur Sahib. The Rani, after consultation, offered land at Makhawal; however, Guru Sahib chose to accept it through a token payment of 500, reflecting the dignity of mutual respect.

After returning to Sri Kiratpur Sahib, Guru Sahib directed Diwan Dargah Mal to survey the site. The foundation of the new settlement was laid on 19 June 1665 and was named Chakk Nanki in honour of Mata Nanki Ji. This settlement later developed into the sacred city of Sri Anandpur Sahib.





## Journey to the East

Soon after laying the foundation of Chak Nanki in 1665, Guru Sahib entrusted the new settlement to devoted Sikhs and proceeded on mission on his eastern travels.

During this period, he was arrested under orders of Aurangzeb by Alam Khan Rohilla (8 November 1665, as recorded in Bhat Vahis), along with several close Sikhs including Bhai Mati Das ji and Bhai Sati Das ji.

Contemporary Assamese chronicles (*Buranjis*) also allude to his detention, reflecting official concern at the growing influence of his teachings.

Certain sources suggest that the Aurangzeb had ordered Guru Sahib's execution during this arrest, however Raja Ram Singh of Amber persuaded Aurangzeb to not do so.

Guru Sahib was briefly held in custody under Raja Ram Singh and released in December 1665, after which he resumed his journey eastward.



## Journey Towards Dhaka

Travelling through Mathura, Agra, Prayag, Banaras, Sasaram, Gaya and Patna, Guru Sahib strengthened established sangats and organised them across Bihar and eastern regions, as evidenced in his Hukamnamas.

He stayed in Sri Patna Sahib during 1666, where the sangat expanded, before proceeding towards Bengal and Dhaka at the invitation of devotees. Mata Gujri ji stayed back in Sri Patna Sahib, and it was here in December 1666 when she gave birth to the future tenth Guru, Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji.

At Dhaka, then a prominent centre, large congregations gathered at the site now associated with *Sangat Tola*. Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur ji's travels extended through parts of Bengal and onward toward Assam around 1668, where he was received with reverence by local communities.



# Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji in Assam: A Message of Peace and Harmony

Around 1668/1669, during his eastern travels, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji met Raja Ram Singh of Amber, who was leading a Mughal force towards Assam.

At the Raja's request, Guru Sahib travelled east and reached Dhubri on the banks of the Brahmaputra, and later Hajo (Kamrup, Assam). Here, people from different communities gathered to seek his blessings and guidance.

During the Mughal-Ahom war, he is remembered in Sikh and Assamese tradition as a respected spiritual presence.

His visit is commemorated today at Dhubri, where Gurdwara Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib and the historic mound known as *Damdama* recall his message of peace and harmony.





## Travels in Malwa and Bangar

After returning from his eastern sojourn, Guru Sahib returned to Chak Nanki around the year 1672, and after this resumed his focus on Punjab.

In the middle of 1673, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji undertook an extensive tour across the Malwa and Bangar regions, returning to Chak Nanki towards the close of 1674. He was often accompanied by his family and devoted Sikhs (*vaheer*).

During these journeys, Guru Sahib met rural communities, many of whom had limited earlier contact with the Gurus. He established and strengthened sangats, encouraged naam simran, honest labour (*kirat*), humility, and moral discipline, and resolved local disputes with wisdom and compassion. His presence gave enduring spiritual direction to the region.

Guru Sahib also addressed social concerns, guiding farming and trading communities toward ethical conduct and simple living. He discouraged social evils such as the cultivation of tobacco and the consumption of intoxicants, emphasising that true religious life must be grounded in righteous action and inner detachment.

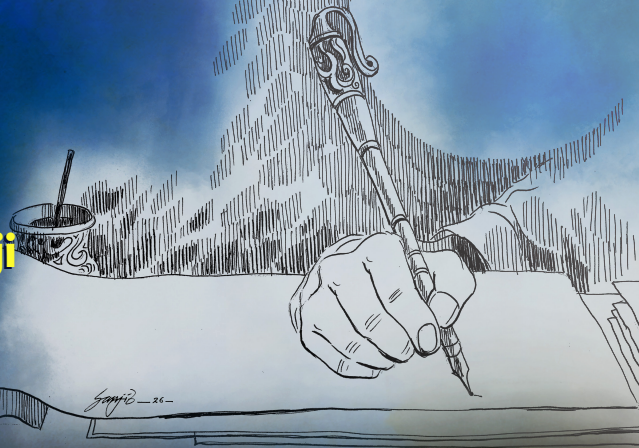


# Bani in Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji

Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji's bani in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji comprises 59 shabads and 57 saloks, set in 15 Raags.

Guru Sahib's bani addresses the transience of human life, detachment from ego and fear, moral courage, and complete reliance on the Divine.

Their philosophical clarity has shaped Sikh devotional practice for centuries and influenced moral discourse in wider Indian traditions.



ਭੈ ਕਾਹੂ ਕਉ ਦੇਤ ਨਹਿ ਨਹਿ ਭੈ ਮਾਨਤ ਆਨ ॥

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਨਿ ਰੇ ਮਨਾ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਤਾਰਿ ਬਖਾਨਿ ॥

*Bhai kahū kau det neh, neh bhai mānat ān.  
Kaho Nanak sun re manā, giānī tāh bakhān.*

*(One who frightens no one and fears no one else-  
O mind, says Nanak, call such a person truly wise.)*

- Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji  
Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji, Ang 1427



# Hukamnamas and Administration

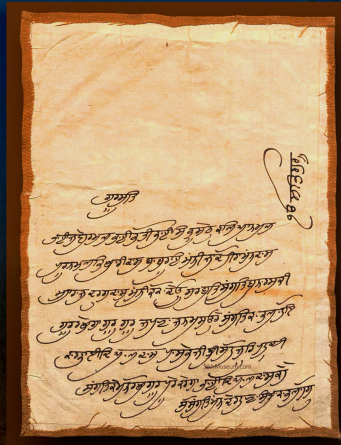
Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur ji issued hukamnamas (edicts) to guide sangats, settle disputes, and nurture unity across regions.

These letters reveal his administrative ability, gentle firmness, and attention to community welfare.

Many originals are preserved in Sikh archives across the country.



Hukamnama of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji sent to Patna at the time of the birth of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, preserved at Takhat Sri Patna Sahib.



Early administrative hukamnama of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji addressed to the sangat of Benares (Varanasi), from the Dr. Guralp Singh Bhullar collection.



## Companions of Guru Sahib

Among those who travelled with the Guru Sahib were Bhai Mati Das ji, Bhai Sati Das ji, Bhai Dayala ji, Bhai Jaita ji (later Bhai Jiwan Singh), and Bhai Makhan Shah ji. Their loyalty, scholarship, and courage contributed significantly to the Guru Sahib's mission.

Bhai Mati Das Ji was a learned and steadfast sevadar in the service of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji. He remained in close attendance upon the Guru and accompanied him to the very end.

Bhai Sati Das Ji, the younger brother of Bhai Mati Das Ji, was a dedicated Sikh who served in the Guru's household.

Bhai Dayala Ji was a devoted Sikh companion of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji who remained by the Guru's side till his last days.



## Rising Religious Persecution

By the early 1670s, Aurangzeb had intensified policies that reflected a stricter Islamic orthodoxy. The demolition of temples in North India, curbs on public religious expression, and pressure on local officials to enforce conformity created widespread social tension.

In Kashmir, Sikh and later historical sources – including works like *Bansavalinama* and *Gur Bilas Patshahi Dasvi* describe that sections of the Kashmiri Pandit community faced intensified state-led coercion, harassment, and threats of forced conversion under the Mughal governor of Kashmir- Iftikhar Khan.



## Meeting with Kashmiri Pandits



It was under this increasingly hostile political climate a delegation of Kashmiri Pandits, led by Pandit Kirpa Ram Datt of Mattan, travelled to Sri Anandpur Sahib in 1675 seeking protection and moral leadership from Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji.

They informed Guru Sahib that Iftikhar Khan was forcibly converting Kashmiri Pandits and killing those who refused.

Guru Sahib was aware of the growing cruelty under Aurangzeb, having witnessed conditions during his travels. The appeal of the Pandits described the coercions taking place and showed that the matter could not be ignored.

They sought defence of religious freedom and the right to practise their faith without coercion. Guru Sahib listened and reflected deeply on their request.



# The Ethical Stand and Journey to Delhi

According to Sikh tradition, during this critical point Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, son of Sri Guru Tegh Bahdur ji also spoke with his father about the crisis.

Sri Guru Tegh Bahdur ji explained that the situation demanded the sacrifice of a noble soul. Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, then advised that such a responsibility rested best with his father.

Taking this as a clear path before him, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji chose to stand for the protection of religious liberty. Guru Sahib asked the pandits to go and tell Aurangzeb that if he could get Guru Sahib to convert to Islam, the pandits would follow suit.

Before departing Chak Nanki, he entrusted the *Gurial* to Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji in the presence of the sangat.

In July 1675, Guru Sahib began his journey towards Delhi, accompanied by Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Sati Das, and Bhai Dayala ji, resolved to defend the right of all to practise their faith, aware of the consequences that might follow.

# Detention in Malikpur Rangharan, Punjab

On 12 July 1675, under orders from Aurangzeb, Guru Sahib and his companions were arrested at the village of Malikpur Rangharan near Ropar (in present-day Punjab) by an armed contingent led by Mirza Nur Mohammad Khan, who was the officer in-charge of Ropar Police Post.

Sikh tradition holds that Aurangzeb had grown uneasy with the expanding following of Guru Sahib, particularly after his recent tours in Malwa and Bangar.

After the arrest, Guru Sahib and his companions were first taken to Sirhind (Punjab), where the faujdar ordered their detention in Bassi Pathana and notified Aurangzeb. They were held for about four months under harsh conditions and subjected to rigorous torture while Aurangzeb was regularly informed of the proceedings.







# Unshaken Before Tyranny: The Martyrdom of Bhai Mati Das ji, Bhai Sati Das ji, and Bhai Dayala ji

When Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji and his companions refused to submit to orders of Aurangzeb, their barbaric executions were carried out publicly at Chandni Chowk in Delhi in November 1675.

In a brutal attempt to pressure Guru Sahib, his devoted Sikhs were subjected to inhumane cruelty right in front of him. Bhai Mati Das ji, Bhai Sati Das ji, and Bhai Dayala ji accepted martyrdom with steadfast faith, choosing to uphold their beliefs rather than yield to coercion, and offered their supreme sacrifice in the presence of their revered Guru.



Bhai Mati Das ji was bound between wooden planks and sawn alive from head downward. Throughout the torture, he is remembered as reciting Japji Sahib until his last breath.



Bhai Sati Das ji, brother of Bhai Mati Das ji, was wrapped in cotton, bound, and set alight. He accepted martyrdom calmly, refusing to renounce his beliefs.



Bhai Dayala ji was bound and placed in a large cauldron of water, which was then heated until it boiled. Throughout the ordeal, Sikh tradition remembers him as remaining immersed in recitation of Gurbani and steadfast in faith.



# The Supreme Martyrdom of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur ji

In November 1675, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji attained shaheedi at Chandni Chowk, Delhi, upholding the fundamental Sikh principle of freedom of conscience and faith.

He was publicly beheaded by executioner Sayyed Jalal-ud-din from Samana, on the orders of Aurangzeb.

Gurdwara Sis Ganj Sahib in Chandni Chowk, Delhi now marks the sacred site of his martyrdom and enduring legacy.



*Theekar phor dilees sir, Prabh pur kiyo payan,  
Tegh Bahadur si kriya, Kari na kinhoo aan.  
Tegh Bahadur ke chalat, Bhayo jagat main sok.  
Hai hai hai sab jag bhayo, Jai jai sur lok.*

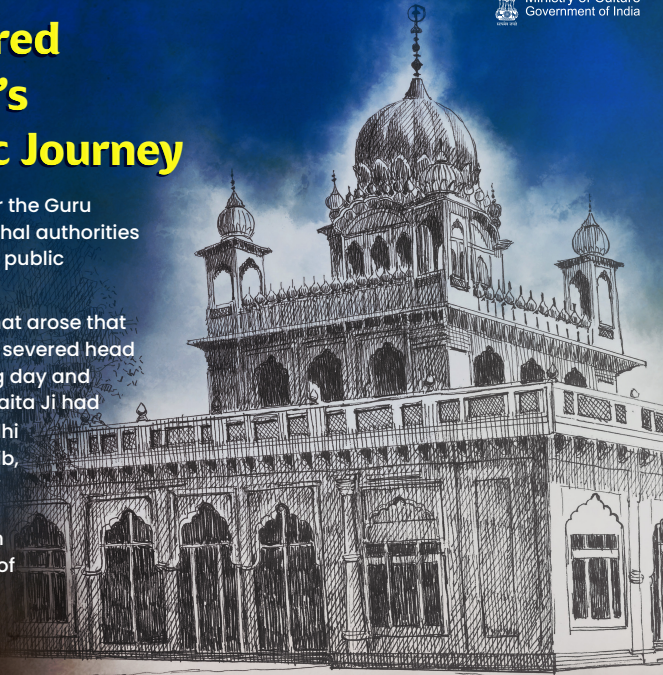
**- Bachittar Natak**

*(Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur ji broke the power of tyranny in Delhi and gave his life in a deed unmatched in history. His martyrdom brought grief to the world, while the heavens rejoiced in his victory.)*

# Safeguarding the Sacred Remains: Bhai Jaita ji's Devotion and Historic Journey

Early Sikh historical sources recount that after the Guru Sahib's execution in Chandni Chowk, the Mughal authorities left the body exposed under guard to prevent public cremation or honour.

According to these sources, during a storm that arose that evening, Bhai Jaita ji carried the Guru Sahib's severed head safely from Delhi to Anandpur Sahib, traveling day and night. Some sources also mention that Bhai Jaita Ji had first taken the Sees (head) of Guru Ji from Delhi to Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji at Sri Kiratpur Sahib, where Gurdwara Bibangarh Sahib is currently adorned. After that, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, while performing kirtan with the congregation from Sri Kiratpur Sahib, took the Sees (head) of Guru Ji and reached Sri Anandpur Sahib. The place where Guru Ji's Sees (head) was cremated in Sri Anandpur Sahib is adorned with Gurdwara Sees Ganj Sahib.



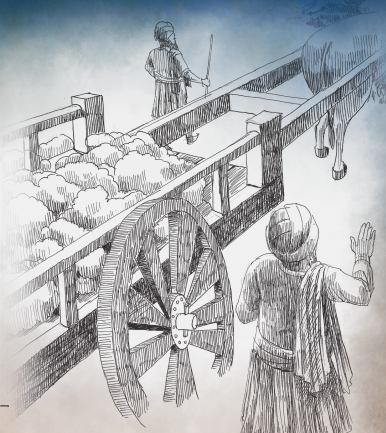
*Ganjib* - 26 -

Gurdwara Sees Ganj Sahib,  
Sri Anandpur Sahib

## A Home Offered in Reverence: Bhai Laxhi Shah Vanjara ji's Sacrifice

During the same storm that arose that evening, Bhai Laxhi Shah Vanjara ji, assisted by his family members placed the Guru's body on his ox-cart under cover of darkness and transported it to his residence in Raisina village, then on the outskirts of Shahjahanabad (Delhi).

To ensure the Guru Sahib's cremation with full dignity and to prevent dishonour, he set his own house ablaze, allowing the rites to be performed under the cover of what appeared to be an accidental fire.



## A Testament to Courage, Seva, and Faith

The site of that sacrifice later became Gurdwara Rakab Ganj Sahib.

The present structure was developed in the 18th century and rebuilt in its current form in the 20th century.

It stands as a sacred memorial to the Guru Sahib's shaheedi and to the devotion and courage of Bhai Lakhī Shah Vanjara ji.



The legacy of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji continues to inspire generations.

His teachings remind humanity that the defense of conscience is the highest form of service, and that the courage to stand for righteousness is the foundation of a just and humane society.

ਧਰਮ ਹੇਤਿ ਸਾਕਾ ਜਿਨਿ ਕੀਆ ॥ ਸੀਸੁ ਦੀਆ  
ਪਰ ਸਿਰੁ ਨ ਦੀਆ ॥

धरम हेति साका जिनि कीआ ॥ सीसु दीआ  
पर सिररु न दीआ॥

*(For the sake of Dharma (righteousness), he sacrificed himself. He laid down His head, remaining uncompromising in His principles.)*

- Bachittar Natak