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50. THE LAST JOURNEY OF GURU TEGH BAHADUR JI (NINETH SIKH GURU)

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THE LAST JOURNEY OF GURU TEGH BAHADUR JI (NINETH SIKH GURU)

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There are journeys which define the future of humanity. It is these journeys which when undertaken leave lasting impressions on the way mankind would negotiate with its most difficult transition. The last journey of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji invokes an imagery of the collective will, an odyssey undertaken by the living devotee to express dissent towards all that was draconian and evil. For every human being these journeys are a heart wrenching saga where the hollowness of pride and the limits of power is put under strict scrutiny vis-à-vis the spiritual and moral dissent of Guru Tegh Bahadur. These journeys are a symbol of timelessness, rooted in civilization's defining moments. The traveller here though dead physically, is alive forever in the millions of heart who revere the traveller. Though his own heartbeat is silent, it resonates with the throbbing of the eternal 'Akal Purakh.' These journeys are an imagery of the collective effort which change the course of history. For time immemorial, millions would relive this journey as it becomes a personal pilgrimage of self-discovery. At the heart of this searing journey lies the celebration of devout faith. In every hymn, the spiritual victory of Guru Tegh Bahadur over the satanic forces would be sung as the song of life. Guru Gobind Singh writes,

*De Shiva bar mohe eh-hey subh karman te kabhun na taro
Na daro arrseo jab jaye laro nischey ka rapni jit karo
Arr Sikh ho apne he mann ko, eh laalach hou gun tau ucharo
Jab aav ki audh nidan bane att he rann me tabh joojh maro*

(Chandi Charita, Ukti Bilas, Dasam Granth)

(Dear God, grant my request so that I may never deviate from doing good deeds. That, I shall have no fear of the enemy when I go into battle with determination I will be victorious. And when the time comes, I should die fighting heroically on the field of battle). On November 11, 1675, Chandni Chowk became witness to a barbaric act as Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji was executed on the orders of Aurangzeb in Delhi. It is said that there was a wave of fear and terror spread among the people of Delhi who became so timid that even the Sikhs who were present there dared not protest against this cruel act of Aurangzeb. It seemed that Delhi had become a land of many wounds. What history had witnessed was not only profound in implications for the Sikh community, but is a pioneering saga of undying faith and a tale of courage and morality. When all had seemed lost, there stood common men who with their heroic deeds, bravery and fearlessness established a legacy of reclaiming the pious against all odds. The heroism with which the head and the body of the Guru Ji was reclaimed shows the courage and spirit of self-sacrifice Guru Ji's martyrdom inspired. The loss that seemed to tear them apart became a point of departure, a historical tale of love for the Guru, a sacrifice of his human form, so as to create a bridge that spans across all faiths and belief system.

After the confinement of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the daring and devout Sikhs of Delhi had planned to secure the body and severed head of the Guru Ji. When hatred and bigotry were ruling the roost, Bhai Gurditta, Bhai Nanu, Bhai Kalyana, Bhai Gurbaksh Singh and Bhai Jaita saw through their eyes the heartbreaking event of martyrdoms of Bhai Sati Das, Bhai Mati Das and Bhai Dyal Das, one after the other. The ominous dark day was approaching.