

## Sheltering the Honour of the Poor

As was the name given ‘Tyag Mal’, from a young age Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji had no attachments with worldly materialistic items.

Once at a very young age, during Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji’s eldest brother Baba Gurditta Ji’s wedding, Guru Ji was accompanying the wedding procession. Everyone was happy, wearing beautiful royal wedding robes for the wedding ceremony and on royal horses. Mata Nanaki Ji also dressed young Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib Ji in a beautiful robe adorned with golden bracelets.

Locals gathered around to watch the wedding procession of Baba Gurditta Ji who was the first son of Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji. Amongst the locals, there was a poor child who had no clothes on his body and was staring at the procession with saddened eyes. Whilst everyone had their attention on the sights and happiness of the wedding procession, the attention of young Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib Ji went on this poor child who had no clothes.

Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji approached the poor child and asked, “Why don’t you have any clothes on your body?”

The child replied, “Prince of Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji, we are so poor that in our house we hardly have money to buy food, let alone buy any clothes”.

Looking at the pain and sorrow in the boy’s eyes, Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib Ji without any second thoughts in their mind or any attachment for their personal belongings, took off their royal wedding robe from their body and gave it to the poor child to cover his body. They then took off their golden bracelets that Mata Nanaki Ji had given them for the wedding and told the poor boy to sell them so that he could buy food to eat.

Mata Nanaki Ji was surprised to see Guru Ji not wearing the royal wedding robe and golden bracelets that she had dressed Guru Ji in. With curiosity Mata Nanaki Ji asked, “My dear Son, where is your beautiful wedding robe that I dressed you in?”

Guru Ji replied, “Mother, you can dress me with more clothes, but I have given my robe to that poor boy whose mother wishes to see her son dressed in beautiful clothes but cannot afford to”.

Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji heard these humble words of their son and said, “My dear Son I can see that you have already started at such a young age the mission for which you have come into this world”. Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib Ji couldn’t see another’s honour being compromised, such as to see a child without any food or clothes.

At a very young age Guru Ji gave their own clothes to cover the body of a poor and deprived child but later in life Guru Ji gave the ultimate sacrifice by giving their own life to cover the honour of the Hindu faith. Guru Ji protected the Hindu religion from compulsory conversion into Islam. Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji was never in support of wearing the Hindu Janeu (a sacred thread). The First Guru, Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji refused a forceful wearing of the Janeu on their body and the Ninth Guru, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji refused the forceful removal of the Janeu from the Hindus’ body by Muslim emperor Aurangzeb. Even though Guru Ji was steadfast in their opposition to Hindu mythological idolatry and superstitious practices, Guru Ji was a firm believer in the right to freedom of worship, equality and justice for everyone.