

Mata Jeeto Ji as the Feminine Light of Guru Gobind Singh Ji

Shanti Kaur Khalsa*

* Email: Shanti@akalsecurity.com

Guru Gobind Singh was the 10th Guru of the Sikhs, and the spiritual father of an entire nation. From his hands he built a community of soldier saints – brave warriors who stood against the tyrants of history. Along side the stories of brave Sikh heroes are the accounts of the courageous women of the Khalsa. The great ladies who shared the life of Guru Gobind Singh are the ones we hold most dear. They bring their light and inspiration to each one of us as we remember their strength, their beauty, and their sacrifice. Here is a glimpse of their stories.

Mata Jeeto Ji

Mata Jeeto ji was the first wife of Guru Gobind Singh ji. She was born in Lahore, the daughter of Bhai Hari Jas, a Subhikkhi Khatri. History is silent about the date of her birth, but by deducing from the dates of her betrothal and marriage, it was approximately 1667.

Her betrothal to the young Gobind Rai took place in 1673, and was blessed by his father Guru Tegh Bahadur and his mother Mata Gujri. As was the tradition of the times, Jeeto's father wanted the bridegroom to come at the head of a royal marriage party to Lahore where the ceremony would be performed with due pomp and dignity.

However, before this could take place the heartrending martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur changed life forever in the city of Anandpur Sahib. As the marriage date drew near, it was neither safe for the young Guru to travel, nor prudent for the elders to leave the city of Anandpur. So, instead of going to Lahore, the Guru brought Lahore to Anandpur Sahib. An entire township complete with houses, markets, and merchants was built near the village of Basantgarh, 7 miles north of Anandpur. The city was named Guru ka Lahore and the marriage of Guru Gobind Singh and Jeeto was held on 23 Har 1734 Bk – June 21st, 1677.

Mata Jeeto grew into a beautiful young woman in the house of her mother-in-law, Mata Gujri ji. She was brought up with the guiding hand of her saintly mother-in-law, and the incredible genius of her husband, Guru Gobind Singh. Mata Jeeto was born and raised in an affluent family, but she always had compassion and care for the common people of Anandpur. Jeeto was known for spend time talking and listening to the people, and for taking up the cause of the town-folks.

Mata Jeeto was the Guru's constant companion, traveling with the Guru when he left Anandpur for Paonta Sahib in 1685, and returning with him to Anandpur Sahib in 1689. In 1691, when she was in her mid-twenties, Mataji gave birth to Baba Jujhar Singh. This joyous occasion was followed by Baba Zorawar Singh in 1696 and Baba Fateh Singh in 1699. She was compassionate and strong, and raised her sons on the stories of the great Sikh martyrs and warriors.

On Baisakhi Day 1699, Guru Gobind Singh created the brotherhood of the Khalsa at Anandpur. He declared that this Khalsa would be both saints as well as soldiers, answering the call of the One God to stand for righteousness and purity. When Guru Gobind Singh was preparing the Amrit for initiating the Khalsa, the Guru placed water in an iron bowl and stirred it with a fierce *khanda* or double-edged sword. Mata Jeeto ji

was moved to ecstasy by the event, and came forward with patasis, sugar-cakes, wrapped in her chuni to add into the water. The Guru agreed, and in this way sweetness was added to the power of the steel. Mata Jeeto ji took Amrit on that day, and became the first Khalsa woman.

Mata Jeeto ji's love for Guru Gobind Singh was immense and far exceeded the love of wife and husband. She was a deeply spiritual woman, and she loved her husband as her Guru. One day she came to Guru Gobind Singh with a request. "Oh great King and husband," she asked with humble eyes, "You are the spiritual guide of your people. Please consider me your student, and grant me also your spiritual guidance." The Guru was lovingly pleased with his wife's request and gave her his personal instruction on meditation. As recorded by history,

*"Gur mantra dey mata ko, boley sahib nal piara
Drirst taravo nasika barsai Amrit dhar"*

"The Guru gave the mantra to Mataji and he spoke to her with love, 'Put your focus on your nose, and Amrit will rain down on you.'"

Mata Jeeto took this instruction deep into her heart, and meditated with an intensity that few people in history have ever matched. Within six months she attained perfection, but there was a heavy price to pay. Baba Sumaer Singh ji recorded this account in his manuscript of 1881, *"She went beyond and attained a subtle level. This is a difficult task. She transcended ridh and sidh and the 100,000 nadi's of the body and even the five kundis. She subdued her mind and achieved the subtle mind. The knowledge of yoga, the bhagats, all sacrifices, charity, pilgrimages, and tapasias were all inferior to her state. Listen to these great words! She, - mataji, sadhanaji, yogiji, - in great love, fell at the feet of her husband. In six months, she controlled her mind. She understood what was unsaid. She realized there would be great battles and her four sons would be martyred."*

How many people have labored and prayed for the ability to see the future? Yet, when Mataji's achieved this spiritual state, her heart broke and she wept at what she saw. She fell at the feet of her beloved husband and asked if this was true – would all her children die in the battles to come? Even the youngest Sahibzada, Baba Fateh Singh, who was not yet a year old? The Guru, with great kindness, told her that this was indeed true. Not only would her children attain martyrdom, it was specifically for this mission that they had come into the world and took birth. Mataji sat silent for a moment, and then asked with a humble voice, "If I must endure this, then for your sake I will. But if it is not necessary, then please spare my tender heart." The Guru replied, in his compassion, that it was not required for Mata Jeeto to endure this. "People like you and I," he replied, "We can come and go as we please."

Mataji dressed in her most beautiful clothes, and in front of her loving husband she sat and entered a deep meditation. Through the strength of her spiritual mastery, she left her earthly body. Mata Jeeto ji left this world at Anandpur in the year 1700, years before the martyrdom of her sons. Her cremation took place at Agampura, near the Holgarh Fort with Guru Gobind Singh, Mata Sundari, and the four Sahibzadey present. Today a Gurdwara stands in memory of that soul most beloved by Guru Gobind Singh.

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References

1. Siri Guru Pad Prem Parkash, Baba Sumaer Singh, page 128.