

# Legacy of The Tenth Master

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GURU GOBIND SINGH (1666-1708) is among the most revered of Gurus. Right from childhood he showed great brilliance and forethought. An ineffable personality, his keenness for perfection was evident in his 20's. Guru Sahib was a profound thinker, writer, philosopher, soldier and saint. In this, Bhai Gurdas II is eloquent when he wrote with great passion: "Guru Gobind Ji appeared in the world as the Tenth Master. He recited the name of the Creator who is unseen, eternal, and saintly. He established the Khalsa, a sect of his own, and gave it great glory. Wearing long hair he grasped the sword and smothered his enemies. He put on the breeches of self-restraint and practiced arms. He established the Sikh war-cry and was victorious in mighty battles. He thus arose the race of Singh's who wore blue clothes. Gobind Singh! You were both Guru and disciple!" Guru Gobind Singh Ji instilled into the Sikhs a feeling of valor and passion for Sikhism, something that will never be forgotten. He accomplished this by sacrificing his father, mother, his four sons, and ultimately his own life, all in order to protect the Sikhs from the Mughal forces bent on forcing these Sikhs to convert to Islam. It really touches the heart to see to the extent in which he sacrificed in essence his life, all in order to support what is now a failing cause. Guru Gobind Singh Ji worked infinitely to strengthen the Sikh cause, though his main contributions include the formation of the Khalsa, his selection of the Adi Granth as the everlasting and eternal Guru and lastly, his literary masterpieces that became some of the most significant works to the Sikhs, just second to the Guru Granth Sahib.

First and foremost, Guru Gobind Singh Ji is widely known in the Sikh panth for his creation of the Khalsa. In March of 1699, Guru Gobind Singh Ji sent for Sikhs from all over Punjab to gather at Anandpur Sahib for the Vaisakhi festival. Here, the Guru appeared before the assembled group of proud and passionate Sikhs with their hair flowing and their warrior spirit clearly visible. And to the masses he demanded in such a respect that only a man of that stature could, for a Sikh who would sacrifice his life for his Guru. After having to shamefully repeat his request twice, Daya Raam, an untouchable, eventually stepped forward and offered his head to his mentor, his instructor, and most importantly, his Guru. The Guru immediately took him into the tent and reappearing among the crowd with a sword dripping the fresh blood of a fallen hero. He did this four more times, and to the surprise and relief of the other Sikhs, the five Sikhs who were willing to sacrifice their lives for Guru Gobind Singh Ji were brought out as he announced that his sword was bloody as he had been killing goats that were previously placed in the tent. These five loyal Sikh's clothing was replaced by the Kachhera, the Kirpan, the Kangha and the Kara, thus establishing the "Five K's," an accurate representation of Sikh solidarity, unity, and strength. Following this momentous occasion was the baptism ceremony that initiated the first five as the Panj Pyare, or the Five Beloveds into what the Guru called the "Khalsa." These Panj Pyare then vowed to live by each of the principles the Guru laid down for them. At the end of the ceremony, the Guru had the Panj Pyare also baptize him, where he then invited other men and women to take baptism and initiation into the Khalsa panth. This Khalsa Panth that the Guru was creating was called Akaal Purakh Ki Fauj, or the army of God. With the creation of the Khalsa being one of the most momentous occasions in Sikh history, it was created as a divine and dynamic force to lead the human race to strive for excellence and to

establish equality among people, rejecting discrimination of caste and creed. The Guru Sahib left his followers with a phrase: “Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh,” which means that the Khalsa belongs to the Lord and to the Lord belongs victory. Guru Gobind Singh Ji created the Khalsa not for recognition, but rather it was out of his unbound love for the downtrodden, as he wanted the Khalsa to move forward, serve humanity, and speak up for those who are unable to speak for themselves.

Secondly, Guru Gobind Singh Ji’s selection of the Adi Granth as the panth’s eternal and living Guru was another one of the Guru’s most important contributions to his followers. The Adi Granth, after being affirmed as the perpetual Guru of the Sikhs and the Granth on October 20, 1708 by Guru Gobind Singh Ji, came to be known as the Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The Adi Granth literally means “the first book” and is the early compilation of the Sikh Scriptures by Guru Arjan Dev Ji, the fifth of the Sikh Gurus, in 1604. The Adi Granth was first written by Bhai Gurdas at the Guru’s dictation and is a collection of nearly 6,000 hymns of the Sikh Gurus and various early and medieval saints of different religions and castes in its final form. In fact, it contains the banis of thirty-six Hindu and Muslim saints who lived between the twelfth and seventeenth centuries. The Adi Granth is the ideal “instruction manual” between man and God. It emphasizes salvation that can be attained through a sincere faith in God and a renouncement of material wealth and egoism. It is truly considered the supreme spiritual authority and head of the Sikh religion. The Adi Granth or Guru Granth Sahib is considered the one of the most unique scriptures for any religion due to its universal message of love, truth and harmony. It truly contains a universal message of spiritual living for the entire human race.

The Tenth Guru’s life is a definite affirmation of his personal values. Despite the fact that his great-grandfather, father, four sons and countless comrades-in-arms were put to death by war and struggle for existence, he opposed no faith, but only the tyrannical few who denied others the right to practice their beliefs. This is truly what spiritualism is all about.

Guru Gobind Singh Ji is an embodiment of saint-hero. He fought for his beliefs and represented the weak, he sacrificed his family to keep *Sikhi* alive, and he did what he could to pass on the faith that he so loved and adored, through his literary accomplishments, the creation of the Khalsa, and his establishment of the Adi Granth as the true and eternal Guru. As Cicero, a Roman orator once said, “In men of the highest character and noblest genius there is to be found an insatiable desire for honor, command, power, and glory.” Guru Gobind Singh Ji truly took this “insatiable” desire, harnessed it, and created what can now truly be called a legacy for his Sikh people.

