

# Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji

**Introduction:** Guru Gobind Singh Ji is the tenth Sikh Guru. His parents were Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji and Mata Gujri Ji. He was born on December 22, 1666, in Patna Sahib, Bihar and was named Gobind Rai at birth. Guru Sahib was a spiritual leader, warrior, poet and philosopher. He lived a life of remarkable courage, sacrifice, compassion, and devotion. This article outlines some events that illustrate these characteristics of Guruji.

**Sacrifice and Leadership:** Guru Gobind Singh Ji's life was one marked with courage and sacrifice. In 1675, at the age of just nine, Guru Gobind Singh Ji lost his father Guru Teg Bahadur Ji who had laid down his life in martyrdom for the sake of the Kashmiri Pandit community who were being forcibly converted to Islam by Emperor Aurangzeb. Then, in 1704 and 1705, Guru Gobind Singh Ji lost all four of his children; the elder two children – Ajit Singh (aged 17) and Jughar Singh (aged 14) died battling enemies at the battle of Chamkaur Sahib (1704), while the younger two children – Zorawar Singh (aged nine) and Fateh Singh (aged six) were martyred by the Mughals at Sirhind (1705). Despite these deep losses, Guru Gobind Singh Ji did not let his spirit falter and demonstrated that he continued to live a life of Chardi Kala and trust in Waheguru, and led the Sikhs with impeccable courage, strategy and leadership.

**Founder of Khalsa:** Guru Gobind Singh Ji founded the Khalsa brotherhood. The word Khalsa is used to denote both the body of initiated Sikhs and the community of all Sikhs. In 1699, Guru Gobind Singh Ji sent Hukumnamas to Sikhs to congregate at Anandpur on Vaisakhi. At the gathering, he asked for a volunteer to sacrifice his head. One came forward, whom he took inside a tent. The Guru returned to the crowd alone, with a blood-stained sword. He asked for volunteers four more times. After the fifth volunteer went with him into the tent, the Guru returned with all five volunteers. He called them the Panj Pyare and were enlisted as the first members of the Khalsa. He introduced the surname of Singh for male Sikhs and Kaur for females, injunctioned the wearing of the 5 Ks as symbolic of Sikh identity. A code of conduct was also established. The Khalsa was enjoined to maintain a brotherhood of arms and take decisions collectively to fight the oppressor for the sake of the helpless. At a time of immense oppression and external threat, Guru Ji thus concretised institutional rules to instil bravery, discipline and inculcate purity both internally and externally, among his Sikhs. In this way, Guru Sahib continued the farsightedness of the Gurus before him who always sought to prepare their Sikhs for the times they were in.

**Battle of Khidrana - Sacrifice and Forgiveness:** After the battle of Chamkaur Sahib, Guru Gobind Singh's army was pursued by the Moghuls, led by Wazir Khan, to Khidrana. Here, 40 Sikhs - the Chali Mukte (the Forty Liberated Ones) - who had initially cowardly deserted Guru Gobind Singh's service, rejoined him and fought bravely alongside him. The head of the Chali Mukte, Bhai Maha Singh, sought forgiveness from Guru Gobind Singh for his earlier desertion. The Guru, in his boundless compassion, tore up the letter of desertion, symbolizing his forgiveness and re acceptance of the Chali Mukte. The Chali Mukte played a crucial role in halting the Mughal advance. They fought bravely though they all perished in the battle. Mai Bhago, a female brave warrior, was a survivor of the battle.

The place of battle called Khidrana was renamed about a 100 years later by Ranjit Singh to Mukh-sar (literally, "lake of liberation"), after the term "Mukt" (moksha) of the ancient Indian tradition, in honour of those who gave their lives for the cause of liberation. The battle of Khidrana showcases Sikh courage and sacrifice. Guru Gobind Singh's unwavering forgiveness also shines through, inspiring devotion.

**Conclusion:** The Guru's open arms are always waiting, ready to welcome us back. Just like the forty Sikhs who returned to Guruji's fold, we must seek forgiveness and embrace his teachings. Are we truly ready to ask for that forgiveness and walk the path of righteousness? The choice is ours.

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Tuti gadhanhar gopal. Sarab jiya ape pritpal

*The Lord of the World is the Mender of the broken. He Himself cherishes all beings. SGGS Ji Ang: 282*