

## Request of the Kashmiri Pandits (Brahmins)

Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji was staying in Sri Anandpur Sahib. Meanwhile, in Delhi there was an evil Mughal Emperor named Aurangzeb who wanted to convert the Hindu religion into Islam. This was because he believed that Islam was the only best religion for this world.

Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb started to terrorise Hindu's, raising taxes on them, destroying many Hindu temples and killing Hindu's who wouldn't convert into Islam. He had taken an oath that he would only eat his breakfast after hearing the news of thousands of Hindus converting into Islam. The situation in India was very tense and everyone was scared for their life. Thousands accepted compulsory conversion into Islam just to stay alive.

Aurangzeb was advised by his Muslim priest that instead of killing all the Hindu's, if he can convert the highest class of Brahmin priests of Kashmir into Islam then the rest of the Hindus will follow easily. With this intention, Aurangzeb sent an order to Kashmiri Pandits (Brahmins) for conversion into Islam. He made an offer that if they accept conversion into Islam they will receive lots of money, land and other pleasures of life but if they don't then they will be executed.

The Brahmin priests of Kashmir were terrified by this order of the Mughal Emperor as they did not want to convert to Islam. So they all came together to think of a plan to save their religion. Brahmin priests lead by Kirpal Chand decided to go to a temple to pray and receive a message of hope if any.

At the temple they heard this message from above, "The only one who can save your religion is the great Guru who is sitting on the throne of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji in Punjab. Go to Him and beg for mercy and He will be your only saviour." The Brahmins knew they could not go to any other ruler as they believed there was no one else of any match to Aurangzeb in power or in army.

So with great hope these Brahmins came to Sri Anandpur Sahib. Once they arrived, with folded hands they made a humble plea for help to Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji and said, "We are Kashmiri Brahmins and Aurangzeb is forcefully removing our Janeu (sacred thread) and converting thousands of us into Islam every day. No one can stand up against him. He has now served us with an order for compulsory conversion into Islam or for us to get ready to be killed. Guru Ji, please help and save us from this evil Emperor and keep us in your refuge."

Gobind Rai Ji (Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji) aged only 9 years old at the time, were playing nearby and saw these Brahmins begging Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji to save their religion. Seeing their father in deep thoughts, Gobind Rai Ji came and sat next to Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji and said, "Father these Brahmins look very frightened and worried, what do they want from us and how can they be helped?" Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji replied, "Their religion is in danger and can only be saved if a great spiritual being sacrifices his own life to save theirs". Despite knowing all the consequences of what it could bring upon their future, young Gobind Rai Ji said, "Dear Father, there is no spiritual being who is greater than You in this world".

Hearing these words from Gobind Rai Ji, the Brahmins felt very much relieved. Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji then smiled and said to the Brahmins, "Tell Aurangzeb you have taken refuge and support in the House of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji and if he can convert the Guru of the Sikhs into Islam then we will all accept conversion into Islam. If he can't convert Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji into Islam then we will not change our religion either". The Kashmiri Brahmins sent their reply to Emperor Aurangzeb who agreed to Guru Ji's condition. Aurangzeb thought that now he only had to convert Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji into Islam and everyone else will follow, so Aurangzeb then summoned Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji to Delhi.