

Martyrdom of Chote Sāhibzāde (ਸ਼ਹਾਦਤ ਛੋਟੇ ਸਾਹਿਬਜ਼ਾਦੇ)

Although he was skeptical of the promises of safety made by the Mughal leaders, Gurū Gobind Singh complied with his followers' request to leave the battle at Anandpur Sāhib. As he approached the Sarsā (ਸਰਸਾ) river with his family and disciples during a torrential thunderstorm, the Mughal forces rescinded on their word and attempted a sneak attack. The situation was made even more troublesome by the quickly flooding river.

Only Gurū Gobind Singh, 40 Sikhs, and his elder two sons - Sāhibzādā (ਸਾਹਿਬਜ਼ਾਦਾ) Ajit Singh and Sāhibzādā Jujhār Singh – crossed the river safely. The younger two sons of the Gurū, Sāhibzādā Zorāvar Singh and Sāhibzādā Phatah Singh, accompanied by their grandmother, Mātā Gujrī, were separated during the battle. As they fled the scene, they ran into an old acquaintance named Gaṅgū (ਗੰਗੂ) Brahmin, who had worked in their house for nearly 20 years. Upon his request, the three refugees agreed to go with Gaṅgū to his village and stay at his place for some time.

Gaṅgū was caught up in greed though. He knew he would get a handsome reward if he called the police to arrest Mātā Gujrī, Sāhibzādā Zorāvar Singh, and Sāhibzādā Phatah Singh. Accompanied by the village chief, he went to the police station and informed the station in charge about the presence of Gurū Gobind Singh's mother and his two younger sons in his house and asked for prize money for helping the authorities arrest them.

The traitor Gaṅgū proceeded to take the police to his village and had Mātā Gujrī and her two grandsons arrested and handed over to Navāb Wazīr Khān of Sirhand, the Governor of the district. Navāb Wazīr Khān, who had been unable to capture Gurū Gobind Singh, was happy to capture and incarcerate the family.

The next morning, Mātā Gujrī woke her grandsons up to prepare them for their visit to Wazīr Khān's court. She cautioned them that they would be offered all kinds of riches, toys, foods, and anything that one could ever want, if they renounced their faith and accepted Islam. She shared her expectations that the grandsons would make her, Gurū Gobind Singh, and the Sikh community proud.

As the guards came to deliver the Sāhibzāde to Wazīr Khān's court, the two young ones announced their presence by loudly declaring 'Vāhigurū Jī Kā Khālsā, Vāhigurū Jī Kī Fatih!' (ਵਾਹਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ, ਵਾਹਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫਤਹ).

Wazīr Khān was offended and demanded that the two children bow before him. The Sāhibzāde refused, stating that a Sikh only bows to the Gurū. This upset Wazīr Khān even more, who then attempted to break the children's spirits by informing them of their father's death and the impending doom of the Sikh nation. The young ones were unaffected however.

One of the Navāb's counsels suggested that youth so strong and brave at such a young age will only become bigger problems as they age. The counsel suggested an immediate execution, but the Navāb decided that a conversion on such high-profile individuals would be

a worthwhile feat. So he decided to give it time.

The next day, multiple promises were made and threats were given to the Sāhibzāde. They still refused though, which angered the governor. He sent them back to their jail cells again with a similar conclusion. Give it more time.

On the third day, Sāhibzāde again entered by pronouncing ‘Vāhigurū Jī Kā Khālsā, Vāhigurū Jī Kī Fatih!’ This infuriated the already angered Navāb, so he asked the two boys what they would do if they were released.

The brave young boys replied: “A Sikh’s duty is to always fight for freedom against injustice. So we would organize more Sikhs and fight for freedom against any evil rulers. No one could stop us from such a mission.

The governor felt embarrassed and humiliated that he failed in his efforts to convert the two children. An associate of his recognized his frustration and promptly suggested bricking the kids alive before decapitating them. The decision was made.

The two boys were made to stand very close to each other and slowly a wall was built around them, so tight that they could not even move.

The two Sāhibzāde began reciting the Mūl Mantr, a composition that kept them in high spirits. When the wall reached up to their knees, they were asked if they would now convert to Islam. The two boys didn’t even pay attention to him.

The bricklayer continued building his wall until it reached the boys’ necks. They could barely breath at this point, but when asked if they would convert, the children declared with their trademark Vāhigurū Jī Kā Khālsā, Vāhigurū Jī Kī Fatih! The executioner responded by cutting off their heads.

Thus the two sons of Gurū Gobind Singh, aged 6 & 8 years respectively, became the youngest Sikh martyrs. Their bravery provided inspiration for all Sikhs. Mātā Gujṛī is another example and role model for all Sikhs. She was full of faith and determination and was able to share this with her grandsons.