

**Grade: 2**

**Lesson Number: 13**

**Unit Name: Ten Nānaks**

**Course: Virṣā**

**Title: Gurū Arjan's Martyrdom**

### **Standards**

#### **Standard 5: Ten Nānaks**

- Students identify the 10 Gurūs and two Choṭe Sāhibzāde.
  - *Students will be able to name all 10 Gurūs and two Choṭe Sāhibzāde. They will be able to identify a few key characteristics of each Gurū. The stories about the two Sāhibzāde should introduce concepts from Gurbānī, including pain (dukh), joy (sukh), as well as martyrdom (shahīdī).*

### **Objectives**

1. Children will learn about Gurū Arjan's life, with concentration on his martyrdom.

### **Prerequisites**

- Previous completion of Lesson I on Gurū Arjan.

### **Materials**

- Paper and Pencils

### **Advanced Preparation**

- Teacher should be familiar with the life story of Gurū Arjan, especially events leading up to his martyrdom. (resources attached)

### **Engagement (10-15 minutes)**

- Review with children Gurū Arjan's compiling of the Ādi Granth as covered in the previous class (Lesson 12). Let them do most of the talking.
- You should ask them question that will lead to the answers about:
  - What was important about compiling it?
  - How did he go about compiling it?

### **Exploration (35-40 minutes)**

- Begin explaining to children that Gurū Rāmdās chose Gurū Arjan for Gurūship because he saw him fit as the individual who could pass on the message of Gurū Nānak.
- When he made him Gurū, Prithī Cand (ਪ੍ਰਿਥੀ ਚੰਦ), Gurū Rāmdās' eldest son and Gurū Arjan's brother, was very angry because he wanted to become the next Gurū.
- Prithī Cand went and complained to Emperor Jahāṅgīr (ਜਹਾਂਗੀਰ). Jahāṅgīr was Emperor Akbar's son and Emperor Akbar (ਅਕਬਰ) was friendly with Gurū Arjan.
- Emperor Jahāṅgīr was becoming afraid that Sikhī was becoming distinct because by now Harimandar Sāhib was made and Gurū Arjan had the Ādi Granth installed.

- He was afraid that everyone would start following Gurū Arjan's religion and no one would follow Islām.
- He was also angry because Gurū Arjan had given some money to Khusro, Jahāṅgīr's half brother, who wanted to fight against Emperor Jahangīr for his throne.
- Khusro (ਖੁਸਰੋ) had escaped after being captured by Jahāṅgīr's army. When he escaped he went to Gurū Arjan and that's when he got the money.
- Then Jahāṅgīr called upon Gurū Arjan to come to Lahore and locked him up in the Lahore Fort.
- Gurū Arjan was chained to a post in an open place exposed to the sun from morning to evening in the very hot months of May through June.
- Below his feet a heap of sand was put which burnt like a furnace.
- Boiling water was poured on his naked body at intervals.
- His body was covered with blisters all over, but the Gurū would still utter this sabad, which is on Page 394 in the Gurū Granth Sāhib:  
 ਤੇਰਾ ਕੀਆ ਮੀਠਾ ਲਾਗੈ ॥ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਪਦਾਰਥੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਮਾਂਗੈ ॥  
 terā kīā mīṭhā lāgai. hari nāmu padārathu nānaku māṅgai.  
 'Whatever you ordain appears sweet. I just ask for the gift of Name'
- The Gurū was ordered to be killed.

#### **Explanation/Extension (5-10 minutes)**

- Ask for reaction from the children on what they have just learned and have them write their thoughts immediately. Collect their thoughts before the end of the class.

#### **Evaluation (On-going)**

- Teacher should use the Engagement section to see if children can successfully review Gurū Arjan's compilation of the Ādi Granth. Check students' progress in their written pieces for critical thinking.

## **Teacher Resources**

### **Books**

Singh Teja and Ganda Singh. A Short History of the Sikhs. Patiala: Punjab University, Patiala, 1994. pp 24-34

Singh, Puran. The Book of The Ten Masters. Amritsar: Singh Bros., August 2002. pp70-82

Singh, Santokh, Dr. The Gurū's Word & Illustrated Sikh History. Princeton, Ontario: Spiritual Awakening Studies, South Sea International Press Ltd., 2000. pp96-114

Singh Sahib Prof. About Compilation of Sri Gurū Granth Sahib. Amritsar: Kulwant Singh Suri, Lok Sahit Parkashan, 1996.

### **Gurū Arjan's Martydom**

*Note to teacher: This is for teacher reference and not to be read to the children directly.*

As was to be expected, the natural loss of Gurūship also came as a great shock to the over-ambitious Prithī Cand (ਪ੍ਰਿਥੀ ਚੰਦ). He now began to make all sorts of machinations to see Gurū Arjan ousted. Gurū Arjan did his best to placate him and assigned him to all the income that was to accrue from property. For the maintenance of the community-kitchen and other institutions of the Sikh Nation, he depended on voluntary offering of the Sikhs. Prithī's machinations and his exploiting of some segments of the Sikh community led to trying times for Gurū Arjan and his Nation. The flow of income into the Sikh Nation dwindled and Sikh institutions, including the laṅgar (ਲੰਗਰ), suffered. Even musicians of the Gurū, such as Sattā and Balvand (ਸਤਾ-ਬਲਵੰਡ), parted company with Gurū Arjan. Gurū Arjan, however, remained detached and imperturbable in his omniscient harmony with the Divine will. Bhāi Gurdās (ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ), a maternal uncle of Gurū Arjan and an ardent Sikh preacher on assignment at Agra, came to know of the state of affairs at Cak Rāmdās (ਚਕ ਰਾਮਦਾਸ). He came back and, with the help of devoted Bābā Budhā (ਬਾਬਾ ਬੁਢਾ), showed Prithī Cand his proper place and checked the pilferage of the much-needed revenue for construction works that were going on at that time. The Gurū asked the Sikhs to contribute one-tenth of their income to the Gurū's exchequer.

After initial animosity and acts of meanest treachery for which Prithī Cand, the elder brother of Gurū Arjan, earned the sobriquet Mīṇā (ਮੀਣਾ / the detestable) from Bhāi Gurdās, he had reconciled a bit with his lot in the hope that after Gurū Arjan's dying issueless, the Gurūship would automatically pass on to his son, Meharbān (ਮੇਹਰਬਾਨ). But this was not to be. The birth of a child to Gurū Arjan upset his plan. He again became at loggerheads with the Gurū. Many a hymn left by Gurū Arjan and recorded in the Gurū Granth Sāhib, reveal attempts made by him on the life of the little child and his providential escape every time. Prithī Cand, in collusion with Akbar's (ਅਕਬਰ) Hindu courtier Bīrbal (ਬੀਰਬਲ), imposed a visitor's

tax on the residents of Amritsar. On Gurū's advice, these lower-caste individuals refused to pay the tax, upon which Bīrbal – a representative of Brahminism – was furious. He decided to raze Amritsar to ground, but before he could proceed towards Amritsar, he got an order from Jahāṅgīr (ਜਹਾਂਗੀਰ) to fight the Yusafāzīs (ਯੂਸਫਾਜੀ) . Bīrbal was killed in the battle.

Prithī Cand then instigated the Muslim Governor of Jalandhar, Sulhī Khān (ਸੁਲਹੀ ਖਾਂ), and incited him to attack and harass the Gurū, but Sulhī Khān met an ignominious death by a fall in a live kiln on his way to Cak Rāmdās (ਚਕ ਰਾਮਦਾਸ) or Rāmdāspur. Prithī Cand felt very discomfited and was always in search of fresh excuses to vilify and harm Gurū Arjan. Gurū Arjan thanked the Divine.

Gurū Arjan invited martyrdom because his sovereign ways threatened the religious, political and social establishment of the time. The key players representing the establishment included the arrogant Brahminical order represented by Candū Shāh (ਚੰਦੂ ਸ਼ਾਹ), an intolerant Sufī (ਸੂਫੀ) sect represented by Shekh Ahmad Sarhindī (ਸ਼ੇਖ ਅਹਮਦ ਸਰਹਿੰਦੀ) and an illegitimate government represented by Jahāṅgīr, who had usurped the throne.

There is a strong attempt to deprecate Sikh memory, and this article presents not just an overview of the martyrdom of Gurū Arjan, but also an exercise to understand how Sikh history is being distorted.

Sikh historical accounts put the blame of Gurū Arjan's martyrdom largely on Candū Shāh, who was one of Jahāṅgīr's finance officials. The reasons for Candū's stand against the Sikh Gurū were two:

- Gurū Arjan refused to marry his son, Hargobind, to Candū's daughter upon the counsel of the saṅgat (ਸੰਗਤ) of Delhi. Candū interpreted this refusal as deliberate humiliation and stirred feelings of animosity within Candū. Such virulent reactions to perceived wounded pride prevail in Pañjāb even today.
- As an upper-caste Hindu and as a representative of Brahminism, Candū took exception to Gurū Arjan's growing influence that sought to create an egalitarian society at the expense of the stratified caste-structure that gave special status to men like Candū. He allied with Gurū Arjan's brother, Prithī Cand – another detractor of the Sikh movement – to orchestrate the martyrdom of Gurū Arjan by filing a formal complaint in the Mughal court.

Mohsin Fānī (ਮੋਹਸਿਨ ਫਾਨੀ), the author of *Dabistā-e-Mazhaib* (ਦਬਿਸਤਾਨ-ਏ-ਮਜ਼ਹਬ), a contemporary account in Persian, says that a heavy fine of Rupees 100,000 was imposed against the Gurū who refused to pay it. The Sikh oral history is unambiguous about Candū's role in carrying out tortures against Gurū Arjan after convincing Jāhāṅgīr. The Gurū was made to sit on a hot iron plate, hot sand was thrown over his body and he was boiled in a cauldron. He was, therefore, deprived of food and water and put into hot blazing sand and stoned, which caused blood to ooze out of his head. He was tortured for three to five days. The Gurū remained in blissful state, accepting this as Vāhigurū "sweet Will." With wounds

blistering on his body, on 30 May 1606, tied hand and feet, he was thrown into river Rāvī (ਰਾਵੀ).

Jahāṅgīr alone should not be held responsible for the Gurū's martyrdom. He did play some role. Candū and other elements hostile to the Panth, however, instigated him to his decision. The fact remains that Sikhī was a threat to both, the practitioners of Brahminism – an ideology the Sikh Gurūs condemned, and to the Mughal state that was increasingly becoming intolerant of non-Semitic faiths. It may be stated that Jahāṅgīr was not religious and had even considered converting to Christianity at one time, so the threat came from others instigating him. Later, under the influence of Hazrat Miām Mīr (ਹਜ਼ਰਤ ਮੀਆਂ ਮੀਰ), J āhāṅgīr even tried to correct his mistaken ways. Eventually, he became friends with Gurū Hargobind, the Sixth Nānak.

Candū's role in Gurū Arjan's martyrdom is a certainty when one looks at his own execution at the hands of the Sikhs after Jahāṅgīr handed him over to Gurū Hargobind. "According to the Sikh traditional accounts, Candū was handed over to the Gurū [Hargobind] for torturing Gurū Arjan and met a sad end at the hands of Sikh *sangat*." Gurū Hargobind would have never allowed this to happen if Candū were not responsible.

Books

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