

DEATH OF A GURU (KS3/4)

Concept – Commitment

The creation of the Sikh holy book, the Guru Granth Sahib, came at a price still remembered today.

It was going to be a very hot day. The soldier wiped the sweat from his forehead as he glared angrily at the old man who stood calmly in front of him.

“You do know what you have to do, don’t you?” said the soldier. “Just do as they say and change the words in your holy book. That’s all our Emperor wants. Cut out the bits he doesn’t like; then you can leave this fortress as a free man.”

The Guru frowned. “But our book is finally complete, and it is full of wisdom and praise to God. We thought hard and prayed about it for many months. We cannot change it now.”

The soldier sighed. He was only obeying orders. “Then we will make you change your mind. Do you understand me, Guru Arjun? We are very good at changing the minds of stubborn people. We can make you wish you had never been born.”

Guru Arjun paused to think about this, then spoke. “You may do that. But I will not change what is in the book.”

“We’ll see,” said the soldier. He gave his orders. A great iron sheet was heated over a fire until it was red-hot. The old man was dragged out from his cell to see it. “We are going to strip you of your clothing, and then stretch you

out on that iron sheet if you don’t obey the Emperor. Do you understand?” The old man nodded silently.

He stayed silent as they roasted him on the iron sheet. He stayed silent when burning hot sand was poured over his body. He stayed silent when they dipped him in boiling water. After five days of torture, the old man’s body was covered in horrible blisters – but he still would not change his mind.

As his life ebbed out of him he finally spoke, so painfully. “Would ... it ... be possible for me to bathe in the river that flows outside this fortress?” The soldier agreed, and Guru Arjun was taken outside. As he waded in, he whispered: “Sweet is your will, O God. I only seek the gift of your Name.” They were his last words as the waters swept over his broken body.

Guru Arjun Dev Ji is remembered with affection by Sikhs today for his devotion to God, his building of the Golden Temple at Amritsar, and his compilation of the great holy book that is called the Guru Granth Sahib. Each anniversary of his death, many Sikhs remember him at their ... by giving out beautifully cold refreshing drinks!



Research the life of Guru Arjun Dev Ji. Then create a poster advertising the giving out of free drinks at a local Gurdwara, explaining the reasons behind it.

Explore ways it is possible to defeat evil by repaying it with good.

Create poetry about the different types of bravery that people can show during their lives.

List beliefs pupils have. How far would they go to defend them? Why? Do they think they will hold the same beliefs in ten years time? Why?