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# STUDIES IN SIKHISM AND COMPARATIVE RELIGION

*Special Issue on Sri Guru Teg Bahadur Ji*



**GURU NANAK FOUNDATION, NEW DELHI**

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## TRAVELS OF GURU TEGH BAHADUR

*\*Dr. Harpreet Kaur*

Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib, Ninth Guru of the Sikhs spend the early life, from 1656-64 in spiritual preparations and also, prepared the community to be a formidable force against atrocious rule by equipping with arms, ammunitions and power. The Guru remained focused on purging people from superstitions, fanaticism, parochialism and other evils rampant in the Indian society during those times. His martyrdom is exemplary for he laid his life for the sake of preserving diversities in the society. He travelled widely to create a bond of togetherness amongst the populace especially the suffering lot who were infused with new vigour and spiritual freedom. He journeyed across the villages of Malwa Region situated in western and central India and also, reached as far as Bangladesh.

A striking feature of these travels was that the Guru identified himself with the common men and mingled with them solving their economic plight. The woes present in the daily lives of the masses like, lack of drinking water, scarcity of food etc. was solved by the Guru during his tours. The Guru got wells dug for them, Persian wheels were consecrated for irrigation on barren lands and trees were planted.

Guru Tegh Bahadur made Anandpur Sahib his seat of pontificate. The spread of the spiritual empire of the Sikhs was throughout the country and Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib's journey was a progression of spreading the tenets preached by Guru Nanak Dev ji. However, none of the Gurus after that had travelled so far. Guru Tegh Bahadur ji decided to take stock of the Sikh organization of *masands* that were established to bring cohesion in the community but by then had divulged into a disintegrating system. He also established new places of worship and revitalized old Gurdwaras established by earlier Guru Sahibs with an aim to have a renewed activity amongst the Sikhs.

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