

What is the price of freedom?

**Is there anything in this world worth dying
for?**

Does courage have any boundaries?

Does evil have any limits?

Can truth ever be silenced?



Since the beginning of time, leaders of the world have abused their powers in many ways. Countries have attacked smaller nations, Kings have taken over property belonging to others, people have been forced into slavery, people's human rights have been violated, families have been destroyed and people have been forced to give up their religion. All of this for one reason only.....the desire to have ultimate Power and control over others in this world.

In history we have seen that people become silent to torture and come to accept it. They do not raise a voice against the crimes that are committed against them because they get used to tyranny and live in constant fear. This is true again and again. The British who were only a small percentage of the population of India dominated it for years. During 378 BC, the Spartans who numbered only 9000 made 250,000 Athenians their slaves. However, after endless years of slavery, there is always 1 person in a million that stands up and reveals the truth to the world. The truth this individual speaks is hated by all, by the people in power and even by the people the truthful person is trying to protect.

One of the cornerstone principles of the Sikh religion has been and always will be the dedication to standing up for one's own freedom and the freedom of others. The concept of miri-piri (saint-soldier), refers directly to the Sikh nation's oath to be willing to sacrifice everything for the sake of truth, justice, and religion. Guru Granth Sahib Ji's bani gives many examples about truth, freedom, battles, warriors, bravery, honor and respect. Gursikhs live by these words because they are true, and we must always follow the message of Gurbani. Here are a few examples.

In the following quote Guru Nanak Dev Ji talks about the importance of living with honour. If you do not stand up for freedom, you are considered dishonorable.

ਜੇ ਜੀਵੈ ਪਤਿ ਲਥੀ ਜਾਇ ॥

Those who live without honor;

ਸਭੁ ਹਰਾਮੁ ਜੇਤਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਖਾਇ

everything they do and eat is impure.

In the following quote Guru Arjan Dev Ji talks about the attributes of the person who stands up for freedom and truth:

ਪਹਿਲਾ ਮਰਣੁ ਕਬੁਲਿ ਜੀਵਣ ਕੀ ਛਡਿ ਆਸ ॥

First, accept death, and give up any hope of life.

ਹੋਹੁ ਸਭਨਾ ਕੀ ਰੇਣੁਕਾ ਤਉ ਆਉ ਹਮਾਰੈ ਪਾਸਿ ॥੧॥

Become the dust of the feet of all, and then, you may come to me.

To stand up for the truth is the ultimate display of love for God. Guru Nanak describes how this love should be displayed and the spirit of the person who truly accepts this commitment.

ਜਉ ਤਉ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਖੇਲਣ ਕਾ ਚਾਉ

If you desire to play this game of love,

ਸਿਰੁ ਧਰਿ ਤਲੀ ਗਲੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਆਉ ॥

then place your head on the palm of your hand and walk towards me.

ਇਤੁ ਮਾਰਗਿ ਪੈਰੁ ਧਰੀਜੈ ॥

When you place your feet on this Path,

ਸਿਰੁ ਦੀਜੈ ਕਾਣਿ ਨ ਕੀਜੈ ॥੨੦॥

While giving your head, do not hesitate or turn back.

In the following quote, Bhagat Kabeer Ji describes a true warrior.

ਗਗਨ ਦਮਾਮਾ ਬਾਜਿਓ ਪਰਿਓ ਨੀਸਾਨੈ ਘਾਉ ॥

The battle-drum beats in the sky; aim is taken, and the wound is inflicted.

ਖੇਤੁ ਜੁ ਮਾਂਡਿਓ ਸੂਰਮਾ ਅਬ ਜੂਝਨ ਕੋ ਦਾਉ ॥੧॥

The spiritual warriors enter the field of battle; now is the time to fight!

ਸੂਰਾ ਸੋ ਪਹਿਚਾਨੀਐ ਜੁ ਲਰੈ ਦੀਨ ਕੇ ਹੇਤ ॥

He alone is known as a spiritual hero, who fights in defence of religion.

ਪੁਰਜਾ ਪੁਰਜਾ ਕਟਿ ਮਰੈ ਕਬਹੂ ਨ ਛਾਡੈ ਖੇਤੁ ॥੨॥੨॥

He may be cut apart, piece by piece, but he never leaves the field of battle.

In order to demonstrate the courageous nature of the Gursikhs, we have chosen the movie 'Braveheart'. We have edited many scenes because of their inappropriateness and therefore would NOT recommend that you watch this film on your own. The purpose of today's class is to relate the hardships and the sufferings Sikhs have faced by comparing with others who have fought for freedom. The movie has been edited with references to Sikh history so that a strong connection can be made for the students. The movie may be paused as well.

The movie Braveheart takes place in the late 13th century, and is the true story about William Wallace, a Scottish man who returns to Scotland after living away from his homeland for many years. The King of Scotland has died without an heir, and therefore has no one to take over his throne. In the meantime, The King of England, who is evil and ruthless, and is known as Edward the Longshanks, has seized the throne and now has control over Scotland. He victimizes the people of Scotland, because he wants to control the land, but does not see the Scottish people as his own. The people of Scotland suffer through the Kings evil policies until William Wallace finally gets them to unite against the English forces. Wallace becomes the leader of a group of people who are poor, weak and disorganized.

Braveheart ↔ Sikh History & Sikh Philosophy

1 Foreign Rule & Loss of Freedom

Movie: England controls Scotland through fear and heavy taxes.

Sikh History Connection:

- Mughal Hukoomat (ਹੁਕੂਮਤ) over Punjab
- Sikhs living under Zalim Raj (ਜ਼ਾਲਮ ਰਾਜ)

Pause & Ask:

👉 How does living under Zalim Raj (ਜ਼ਾਲਮ ਰਾਜ) push people toward resistance? **Living under an unfair and cruel government makes people suffer and lose their rights. After some time, people get tired of being treated badly and decide to stand up and fight for their freedom.**

2 Wallace as a Reluctant Warrior

Movie: Wallace wants peace, not war.

Sikh Philosophy:

- Fighting only when justice is attacked
- Called Dharam Yudh (ਧਰਮ ਯੁੱਧ) — righteous struggle
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Pause & Ask:

👉 Is Wallace fighting for power, or for justice?

Wallace is fighting for justice. He wants freedom for his people, not power or control.

3 Murder of Wallace's Wife = Awakening

Movie: Her death awakens rebellion.

Sikh History Connection:

- Shaheedi (ਸ਼ਹੀਦੀ) of Guru Arjan Dev Ji
- Shaheedi (ਸ਼ਹੀਦੀ) of the Sahibzaade

Key Term:

Shaheedi (ਸ਼ਹੀਦੀ) = sacrifice for truth

Pause & Ask:

👉 Why does Shaheedi (ਸ਼ਹੀਦੀ) strengthen movements instead of destroying them?

When someone gives their life for truth, it inspires others. It makes people stronger and more determined to continue the fight.

4 “They May Take Our Lives...” Speech

Movie: Wallace inspires fearful soldiers.

Sikh Philosophy:

- Chardi Kala (ਚੜਦੀ ਕਲਾ) — high spirits

- Guru Gobind Singh Ji's fearless tone

Pause & Ask:

👉 Why is freedom of belief more important than physical safety?

Freedom of belief means you can follow your faith and truth. Without it, life has no real meaning. Physical safety is temporary, but truth and faith are more important.

5 Poor Villagers vs Powerful Empire

Movie: Farmers fight a royal army.

Sikh History Connection:

- Sikhs vs Mughal forces
- Baba Banda Singh Bahadur

Key Term:

- Sant-Sipahi (ਸੰਤ-ਸਿਪਾਹੀ) = saint-soldier

Pause & Ask:

👉 What makes ordinary people brave when fighting injustice?

People become brave when:

- **They are treated unfairly**
- **They are inspired by Guru Jee, Sikh History, & brave Sikh leaders**
- **They believe in truth and justice**
- **They support each other**

6 Betrayal by Scottish Nobles

Movie: Nobles betray Wallace.

Sikh History Connection:

- Hill Rajas betraying Guru Gobind Singh Ji

Key Term:

- Gaddari (ਗੱਦਾਰੀ) = betrayal

Pause & Ask:

👉 Why is betrayal from inside more dangerous than enemies outside?

Betrayal from inside is dangerous because it breaks trust, weakens the group, and helps the enemy.

7 Refusal to Submit

Movie: Wallace refuses loyalty to the king.

Sikh History Connection:

- Sikhs refusing to convert to Islam
- Refusing Mughal authority over conscience

Key Term:

- Azadi of faith (ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ) = freedom to choose and practice your own faith

Pause & Ask:

👉 What does sovereignty of the Sikh faith mean?

It means Sikhs have the right to practice their religion freely and cannot be forced to change their beliefs.

8 Torture and Public Execution

Movie: Wallace is tortured publicly.

Sikh History Connection:

- Bhai Mati Das Ji
- Bhai Sati Das Ji
- Bhai Dayala Ji
- Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji

Key Term:

- Shaheedi by torture (ਤਸ਼ੱਦ ਨਾਲ ਸ਼ਹੀਦੀ)

Pause & Ask:

👉 Why is dying for truth seen as victory in Sikh philosophy?

It is seen as victory because the person stays true to their faith and values, even if they lose their life. Truth always wins in the end.

9 Final Word: “Freedom”

Movie: Wallace shouts “Freedom!”

Sikh Philosophy:

- Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji sacrificed his head, but not his faith

Key Term:

- Azadi (ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ) = true freedom

Pause & Ask:

👉 What kind of Azadi (ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ) were Sikh Shaheeds fighting for — political or spiritual?

They were mainly fighting for spiritual freedom, but also for fairness and justice in society.

10 Impact After Death

Movie: His death inspires Scotland.

Sikh History Connection:

- After Guru Gobind Singh Ji's Joti Jot, Banda Singh Bahadur travels to Punjab and establishes the Khalsa Raj.

Key Term:

Panth di Jaagriti (ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਜਾਗਰੂਕਤਾ) = awakening of the community

Pause & Ask:

👉 Why do truth-based movements grow after sacrifice?

Because sacrifice inspires others, brings people together, and makes the movement stronger.