

Zafarnama

A letter of victory

A Punjabi play written and directed by Surinder Singh Dhanoo

The play is based on the Sikh religious history. The play is based on the story of Guru Gobind Singh Ji. He was the 10th Guru of Sikhs. After his death Sikhs worship their holy book, Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

Scene 1 – Kashmir Pandit

In May 1675 Kashmiri (a place in North India) pandits (Hindu) went to Guru Tegh Bahadur. Guru Tegh Bahadur was Sikhs 9th Guru and father of Guru Gobind Singh Ji seeking his help.

During that time Aurangzeb (A Mughal Emperor) was in power. He had asked the Hindus to convert into Islam (become muslim) or they would be thrown out of their villages.

In this scene, there two Mughal soldiers forcing and threatening to villagers to convert their religion otherwise they would be thrown out of their village.

So, the villagers decide to go to Guru Tegh Bahadur. (We are not allowed to show a person play the role of a Guru in Sikh religion so you will see two lights on the screen “talking”).

As Kashmiri pandits ask Guru Tegh Bahadur for help. He says, someone of a good position in the society will have to go to Delhi and talk/fight with Aurangzeb.

When he says that his own son, Guru Gobind Singh Ji says, dad who could be a more fitting person than you. The thing to notice here is that at this point Gobind was only 9 years old and he knew if his dad went to Dehi he wouldn't return home. He will be killed. But such are the brave of Sikh religion!!! Ready to fight for what's right and justice.

Scene 2- Bhai Jeta

After Guru Tegh Bahadur goes to Delhi and fights for the rights of Hindus. He is beheaded. Bhai Jeta finds the head of Guru Tegh Bahadur and brings it home to his son Gobind.

This scene is Bhai Jeta telling everything to Gobind, who will soon take the throne.

-----Sutardhaar-----

Sutardhaar is a person who tells a story. Here the sutardhaar is just telling the audience a little bit of history.

Scene 3- Bai Dhaar De Raje

This is year 1704 now. Guru Gobind Singh Ji is a grown man and has four sons. And he has been getting stronger in the area and been fighting for poor people and preaching people not to differentiate people based on their caste. He is gaining popularity within people of which Hindu Raje (Kings) are not happy. So, in this scene a meeting is called to discuss what they can do of Gobind. In the end, it is decided that a letter should be sent to Aurangzeb seeking his help to do

something of Gobind. (An important point to note here is, Gobind's own father was martyred helping Hindu and today Hindu are against him).

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Scene 4 – Wazir Khan

So, Aurangzeb has decided to help Hindu Raje. He has asked Guru Gobind Singh to leave Anandpur quietly. If he does, he won't do any killings. After much thought Guru Gobind decides to leave. But, while him, his family and his army are leaving they are attacked by Wazir Khan's (Mughal Emperor) army. During this time, Guru Gobind with his two older sons gets separated from his two younger sons and his mom. Later Guru Gobind Singh's older sons die fighting a battle in Chamkaur.

In this scene you will see Wazir Khan upset. He is talking to Kazi (Muslim scholar/judge) and Suchanand (Hindu minister in Wazir Khan's court). In this scene he is upset because Gobind's family is still on the run. But during his meeting he finds out that the two younger sons and their grandma is found (they were cheated by a guy name Gangu, who was a Hindu).

Wazir Khan is happy and tells Suchanand to give the prize to Gangu and put the kids and grandma on the top floor courtyard of his palace. It is an open space and wintertime. Kazi tries to persuade Wazir Khan to not do that. But Wazir Khan doesn't agree and tells Suchanand to spread the word that if anyone tries to help the kids their whole family will be crushed in a Koloo (oil presser).

Scene 5 – Moti Ram Mehra

In this scene, Moti Ram comes home running and tells his mom and wife that Wazir Khan has put the kids and their grandma in an open courtyard on a wintry night. But after he served the food and water to the soldiers, he saved some warm mild and snuck it to the kids and their grandma. But while he was doing this Pamma Bamad saw him and might rattle him out.

And as it turns out two soldiers come to his house and tells him that they know what he has done and now his whole family one by one will be crushed in the Koloo (oil presser) starting with their small kid. And important thing to note he is that Moti Ram who helped Gobind's kids was a Hindu but Pamma and Gangu were Hindu, too.

Scene 6 – Sirhand

This is the scene of Wazir Khan's court. He has called upon another emperor, Sher Mohammad whose younger brother was killed in a battle with Guru Gobind. Here Kazi is telling Wazir Khan that they tried to tell the young sons (7 and 9 years old) of Guru Gobind to convert in Islam, but they wouldn't budge. They tried to give them sweets, clothes, told them they will be given beautiful women when they get older. But all in vain. Wazir Khan had thought if he convinces these two kids to change their religion their father will be crushed, too.

After all their attempts fail, they try to convince Sher Mohammad that he should punish the kids. But he says, that his religion (Islam) doesn't allow for this and Wazir Khan should also not do such

things. Wazir Khan is not convinced and Suchanand gives him an idea. The idea is to stand the kids and build walls around them. To which, Wazir Khan agrees.

While the walls are being put around the kids, Kazi asks them one more time to convert into Islam, but they refuse. After they were put inside the walls, the wall breaks down and they find out the kids are still alive which is when two prisoners are called upon to kill them.

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Scene – 7 Bedava

In this scene, women are belittling men for leaving Guru Gobind Singh alone in a battle who has done so much for them. Whose whole family was sacrificed. The women say, if you all can not fight, we will. After listening to all this the men get angry and say they are sorry, and they will fight for the right and support their Guru Gobind.

Scene – 8 Zafarnama

This is the scene where you see Aurangzeb is old and getting sick. While he is talking to his soldier in command. He is told two Sikh men have been waiting to see him for 6 months. They have brought Zafarnama, a letter from Guru Gobind Singh.

In Zafarnama Guru Gobind Singh praised the lord and Aurangzeb but he also challenged him and told him that he is not worthy of any success because he broke his promise. He had promised if Guru left Anandpur, his family and people wouldn't be attacked but they were. Due to which is family got separated and two of his older kids were killed in a battle and other two were murdered after which his mom and the kid's grandma jumped of a building and died.

Scene – 9 Aurangzeb

This is year 1707, Aurangzeb has become more ill after reading Zafarnama and is often hallucinating and is sick. He hears voices in his head and talks to them.

He also hallucinates his dead sister who tells him what he did was wrong. (girl in white) and his end is near.

He then talks to his wife. She consoles him but also questions him. (lay in yellow).

His daughter, Zeenat comes to see him, but he thinks that she has come to kill him. He loved his daughter Zeenat. He tells her to take him to Mosque. His wife then calls Hakim, medieval doctor.

Aurangzeb goes on to tell Zeenat that ever since he has read Zafarnama he has been sleepless. She asks him after all what is that Gobind has written in the Zafarnama that has made a powerful emperor weak. He tells her that he wants to meet Guru Gobind and wants to repent. She tells him to think how much he loves his own kids. That's how Guru loved his kids, too. Then questions him and asks him that Guru Gobind Singh's dad died for Hindus but then Guru Gobind gets betrayed by same caste, Hindu. She goes on to tell him that he should punish Wazir Khan. To which Aurangzeb says that he can not punish his own Mughal emperor. People will start going against them. She then

tells him you are such a big king, a man who believes in God yet your whole life you couldn't understand who God is. And he should meet Guru if he can, otherwise it might be too late.

-----Sutardhaar-----

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Scene 10- Banda Singh Bahadur

In this scene Guru Gobind Singh Ji asks Banda Singh Bahadur to stand with right and be the head of the army guru has made.....