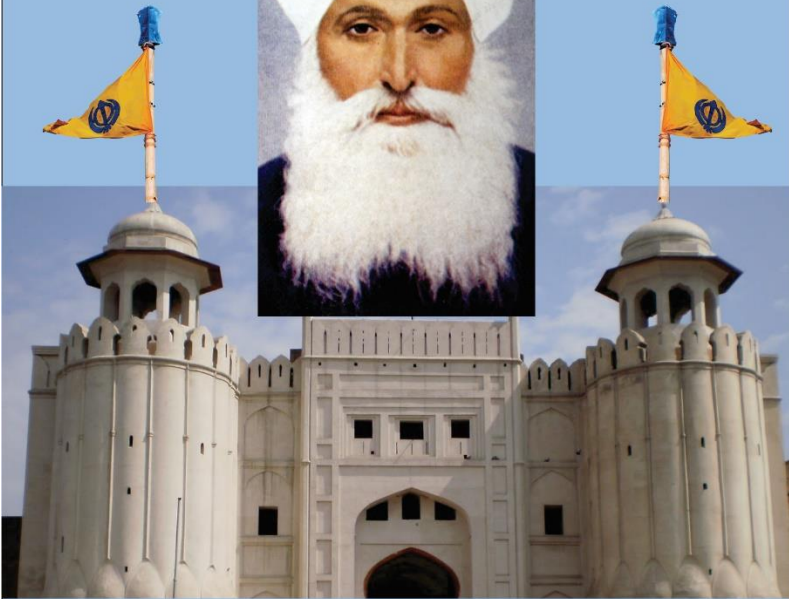


*The Short History
Of
The Sikhs
In
India & USA*



By H.S. SHERGILL

A Short History of the Sikhs in India & U.S.A.

by

H.S. Shergill

DEDICATED TO MY GRANDCHILDREN

Seerit, Baltej, Roshan, Asha, Avnoor

Amarveer, Liv & Jai

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Preface

I am not a historian or scholar. I am an ordinary Sikh interested in my roots. There are many excellent books about Sikh history and Sikhs which everybody cannot read. Most of the new generation, including my own children, do not know about Sikh history.

In 2012, on the centennial celebration of the founding of the Sikh temple in Stockton, California (the first temple in the USA), I was given the honor of making a Sikh museum in the original Gurudwara Sahib building. The building still stands, though it has been renovated over the past one hundred years.

While working on the museum, the thought came to me about writing a small booklet about the Sikhs. This booklet would tell about our home, our history, and our contributions.

Although I tried to use accurate dates for events, they vary in different books and sources. One reason for the variation is that the original dates are based on the Indian lunar calendar (Vikrami calendar), which varies each year compared to the Western calendar. For example, in 1699, Baisakhi was on March 30th. Now it is celebrated on April 13th each year. The Baisakhi date will change again in a few years. Mr. Purewal solved the problem by creating the Nanak Shahi calendar. What was done to this calendar by our honorable Jathedars? Every Sikh knows that. Anyway, I do not want to go into the controversy over calendars and dates. There are certain Punjabi words are used to show respect like BABA (old man, wise man) MATA (mother)

BIBI (nice, used for girls) ji (like yes sir or madam) SARDAR (Chief, leader. it is used in India to address any Sikh) SIRI (like sir) SAHIB (sir lord boss). This booklet is written more as a story and not a book of history. For anyone who wants to go deeper into Sikh history, good books are available. One excellent source is the Encyclopedia of Sikhism. It is a four-volume set by the Punjabi University of Patiala and is available online.

This booklet is kept simple so that any high school student can read and understand it. It is also for non-Sikhs, who may not want to spend time on a reading a longer or more complex books. Just by reading this, they will have some understanding about the Sikhs. It will also serve as a guide to Sikh Museum in Stockton (Gadar Memorial Museum). I am thankful to Nikki Kalra for typing it. I am also thankful to Neil Ranu for reviewing it and giving it the shape of book. Your suggestions are welcome at hsshergillmd@gmail.com

This is my humble effort. I hope my readers will accept it.

Harbhajan Singh Shergill M.D.
Stockton, CA
April 2018

The Sikh

Literally, the word, “Sikh,” means student or a follower and, “Guru,” means teacher. A person who is a Sikh is someone who believes in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji (the holy book of the Sikhs), the teachings of the ten Gurus, and does not believe in any other religion.

Sikhism is the fifth largest religion in the world. It originated in Punjab, India, in the later part of the 15th century. Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the founder of this faith, was born in 1469 in Punjab at Nankana Sahib, which is now in Pakistan. He believed all men were created equal and that we all are the children of the same father.

Sikhism is monotheistic in its fundamental belief. In the Sikh religion, the Creator is formless and eternal, transcendent and all pervasive. The three main pillars of Sikhism are:

1. Nam Japna (constant remembrance of God’s name).
2. Kirat Karni (earning one’s livelihood through honest labor).
3. Vand Shakna (sharing your good fortune with others).



GOD IS ONLY ONE
HIS NAME IS TRUE. HE IS THE CREATOR
HE IS WITHOUT FEAR. HE IS INIMICAL TO
NONE. HE NEVER DIES. HE IS BEYOND
BIRTHS AND DEATHS. HE IS SELF
ILLUMINATED. HE IS REALIZED BY THE
KINDNESS OF TRUE GURU. REPEAT HIS
NAME.

ੴ
ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰੁਖੁ ਨਿਰ
ਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰੁ
ਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਪੁਰਖੁ
ਨਿਰਾ ਸਾਖੀ ॥੧॥



ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦਾ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ GURU NANAK'S TEACHING		
ਨਾਮ ਜਪੋ	ਕਿਰਤ ਕਰੋ	ਵੰਡ ਛਲੋ
RECITE GOD'S NAME	WORK HONESTLY	SHARE YOUR BLESSING



ਏਕੁ ਪਿਤਾ ਏਕੁਸ ਕੇ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ॥
The one Lord is the father of all and
we are the children of one Lord.

ਮਾਨਸ ਕੀ ਜਾਤ ਸਬੈ ਏਕੈ ਪਹਚਾਨਬੋ।
All human beings, as a species,
are recognized as one and the same.

From Guru Nanak Dev Ji to Guru Arjun Dev Ji, the fifth Guru, things went smoothly. When Muslim rulers of India saw the popularity of Guru Nanak's message increasing, they felt threatened.

Guru Arjun Dev Ji was tortured to death in Lahore. After his death, the sixth Guru, Guru Hargobind Ji, gave new form to the Sikhs. He started dressing as royals of that time, wore swords and started keeping an army. Thus, the

Sikhs became saint-soldiers who have meditation beads in one hand and sword in the other.

The tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh Ji, gave the Sikhs their current form. After baptism (Amrit Shakna), he made it compulsory for the Sikh to keep five-Ks: uncut hair (kesh), iron bracelet (kara), sword (kirpan), undergarment (kachera), and wood comb (kanga). To abolish the caste system, which was prevalent in India (and still is), he gave the men the last name of Singh (lion) and to women, Kaur (princess).

Kirpan is the combination of two words, ‘kirpa’ (favor) and ‘aan’ (honor). It is not the weapon of offense. It is to be used to protect the weak against aggression and to protect one’s personal honor and property. Guru Gobind Singh Ji said, “When all peaceful means to resolve a conflict fail, then it is just to use the sword.”

The sixth and tenth Gurus fought many battles and won, but never acquired an inch of land or any other property. The battles they fought were in self-defense.

Now, there are about 30 million Sikhs in the world. Approximately 21 million are in India (of which, 16 million are in the Sikh homeland of Punjab .The rest are in other parts of the country) and the others are scattered all over the world.

In the United States, the Sikh population is estimated to be about half a million. Other countries with considerable Sikh populations are: United Kingdom (760,000), Canada (500,000), Malaysia, Australia, Italy, France, Thailand, Pakistan, and Philippines. You will

hardly find any country where there are no Sikhs. Sikhs make up 0.39% of the world population.

In the United States, you will find Sikhs in every field as scientists, professors, doctors, engineers, transportation professionals, businessmen, farmers, laborers, politicians, and military personnel. A handful of notable Sikhs in America include: Piara Singh Gill, a member of the Manhattan Project, Narinder Singh Kapany, a pioneer in fiber optic research and development, and broadcaster Ms Penny Sandhu. Everyone knows Nikki Haily who has Sikh roots (Randhawa). The Sikh place of worship is called the gurudwara (door of the guru). A gurudwara can be built in any shape, but they all are recognized by a saffron Sikh flag (Nishan Sahib) in front of the building and domes on top.

Inside the gurudwara, the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is placed on a raised platform and covered by a canopy. Persons belonging to any faith can go into the gurudwara as long as they cover their heads, walk with bare feet, and do not carry cigarettes or alcohol. A free langar (community kitchen) is attached to each gurudwara where anyone can come and eat. Gurudwaras also provide shelter to people who need it.

In the United States, Sikhs are the most misunderstood people. Most Americans believe they are Arabs or Afghans or followers of Osama Bin Laden. This is because of their beards and turbans. In fact, most of the people who wear turbans in this country are Sikhs. Many hate crimes have been committed against them due to mistaken identity. After 9/11, Balbir Singh Sodhi was shot dead. There was an attack on a gurudwara in Wisconsin on August 5, 2012, killing six people and wounding many

others. These tragedies were all due to ignorance and lack of understanding. There is a great need for us in America to understand each other.

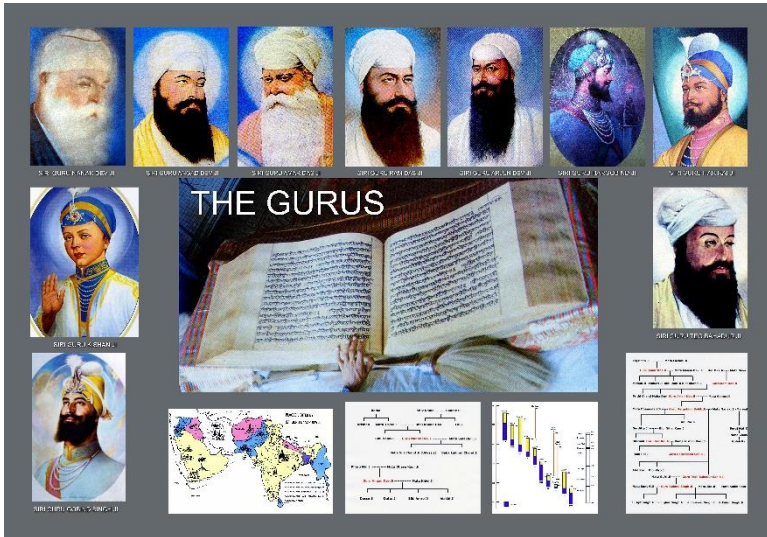
Sikhs have contributed a lot to India in every field despite being only 2% of the population. During the height of the World War II, they comprised 45% of the British Indian Army and gave their lives to defend Europe. For the freedom of India, this 2% of the population made more than 80% of the sacrifices. Out of the 121 hung by the British, 93 were Sikhs and out of the 2,646 who suffered life imprisonment, 2,147 were Sikhs.

Even now, these 2% of Sikhs in India contribute 33% of the total income tax and 67% of the total charity in India. There are more than 59,000 gurudwaras (Sikh temples) in India providing langar (free food) to approximately 5,900,000 people daily.

In the United States, Sikhs are contributing a lot to the economy. There are Sikhs in every field. Sikh youth are joining the army against all the odds. They have to fight every step to keep their identity.

I can say with certainty that Sikhs are not and will not be a burden on society. Initially, they came here to work and make some money and go back home to India, but current immigrants are here to stay. There is nothing to be feared. Their appearance might be different, but they have the same dreams as any other Americans. True to their tradition, they will not hesitate to lay down their life for their newly adopted country if the chance was given to them. So, the next time you see a turban wearing person, just say, "Hi," or, "Sat Sri Akal" (God is true).

Guru Period 1469 – 1708



The story of the Sikhs starts about the same time as the story of Europeans in America. Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh faith, was a contemporary of Columbus, Martin Luther, Michelangelo, and Babar.

The Guru period starts in the last third of the 15th century and ends in the first decade of the 18th century. The beginning of the period coincides with the death of William and the start of the reign of Queen Anne of Great Britain. Britain had made East Jersey and West Jersey crown colonies during this time.

Guru Nanak Ji's message was that all men are equal. We are all the sons of one God. He preached to meditate and remember God. Earn your living by honest labor and share it with the less fortunate.

Guru Angad Ji created the Punjabi alphabet and collected his writings and the writings of Guru Nanak into a book called “Pothis Sahib” (Small Book). The Pothis Sahib also contains the writings of Hindu and Muslim saints which Guru Nanak collected during his travels.

Guru Amardas Ji started the tradition of langar (community kitchen) in which everyone eats sitting together irrespective of social status. He also organized Sikhs into 22 divisions called Manjis and appointed men and women preachers to head those Manjis. He also spoke against the practice of sati and encouraged widows to remarry. (Sati was a practice in which women were forced to burn themselves alive with their husbands on the funeral pyre according to Hindu tradition.) He wrote in praise of God which is part of the S.G.G.S. now.

Guru Ram Das Ji was the founder of the city of Amritsar. He encouraged his Sikhs to enter into trade in addition to participating in agriculture. He also wrote in praise of the lord and this is now included in the S.G.G.S.

Guru Arjun Dev Ji compiled the writing of previous gurus and added his own and gave the Sikhs the Sri Guru Granth Sahib (the holy book of the Sikhs). He also constructed the Golden Temple at Amritsar. The foundation stone of the temple was laid by a Muslim saint, Mian Mir. Guru Arjun was tortured to death in Lahore by the orders of the emperor at the time.

SACRIFICES BY THE GURUS



GURU ARJUN DEV JI IN MAY 1606



BHAI DYALA JI IN NOV 1675



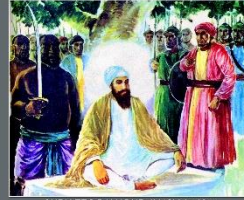
BHAI MATI DAS JI IN 1675



CHANDANI CHOWK MID 19th CENTURY



BHAI SATIDAS JI IN 1675

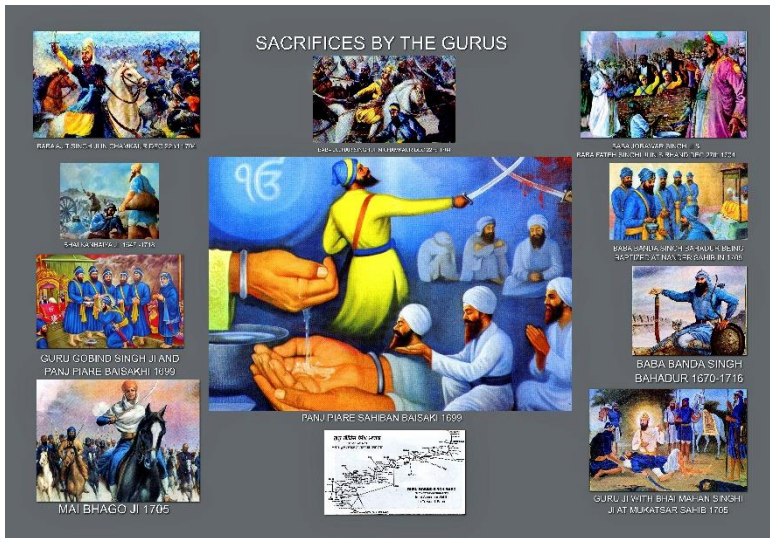


GURU TEG BAHADUR JI NOV 11 1675
IN CHANDANI CHOWK DELHI

Guru Har Gobind Ji was the son of Guru Arjun Dev Ji. After his father's death, he told the Sikhs to bear arms and he created the concept of the saint-soldier. He wore two swords representing Miri (temporal) and Piri (spiritual). He also sat on a throne and laid the foundation of the Akal Takhat (Throne of the Immortal). The Akal Takhat is still the supreme authority for the Sikhs.

Guru Har Rai Ji preached Sikhism. He did not keep a small army but mostly lived peacefully. He reorganized mission work and the number of Sikhs increased significantly. He also had a free medical clinic for the sick at Kiratpur and had good knowledge of herbal medicine.

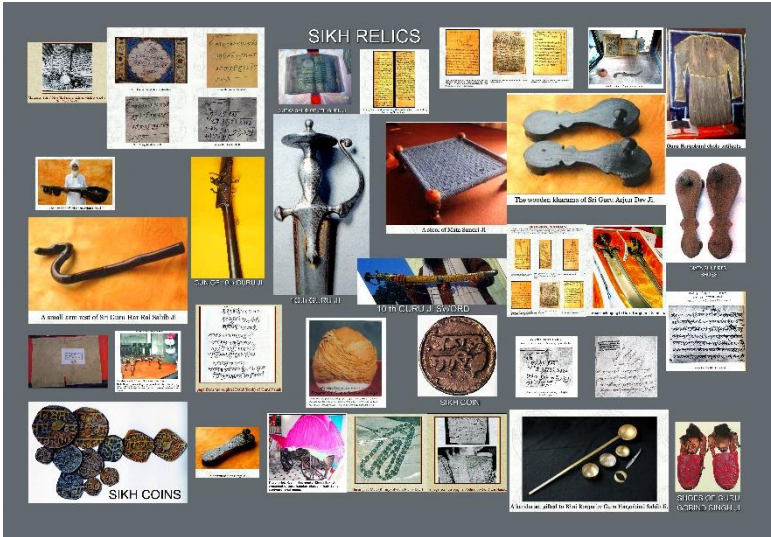
Guru Harkrishan Ji became guru at the early age of five. He was summoned to Delhi by Emperor Aurangzeb. He stayed in Delhi at Bangla Sahib. There was an outbreak of small pox. He served the sick people and died from small pox.



Guru Teg Bahadur Ji meditated a lot. In the early days, after assuming the guruship, he traveled and preached Sikhism. He went to the far east of India and finally established Anandpur Sahib. When Kashmiri Pandits came to him for help, he went to Delhi to meet the emperor on their behalf. His companions were tortured to death by boiling water and being burned and sawed alive. He refused to give up his faith. He was beheaded in Delhi (now Sis Ganj Sahib). His body was cremated in Delhi at Raisina Village (‘now called RAKAB GANJ SAHIB) near Indian Parliament while his head was taken to Anandpur Sahib and cremated there.

Guru Gobind Singh Ji gave new form to the Sikhs with baptism. He was an excellent leader, a great poet, a great philosopher, and a great general. He sacrificed his father and mother and his four children for the sake of Sikhs. He recompiled the Siri Granth Sahib ji and added to it his father’s (the ninth Guru) writing. It was written by

Bhai Mani Singh Ji. Then he went south to meet the Emperor and settled at Nader. There he met Baba Banda ji, whom he sent to Punjab after baptizing him. Guru Gobind Singh ji was stabbed by two Muslim brothers, and though his wound was healing, it opened again. He died there in Nader. He told the Sikhs to follow the Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, which has guided the Sikhs since then and will continue to until the end of time.



Guru Nanak Dev Ji
The First Guru: 1469 – 1539



More than five hundred years ago, a great man was born in the land of five rivers. His name was Nanak ji. He founded the Sikh religion. He was born to Mata Tripta ji on October 20, 1469, in the village of Talwandi in Shekhupura District (now in Pakistan and called Nankana Sahib). His

father was Baba Kalyan Das Bedi (popularly called Mehta Kalu). He had one older sister, Bebe Nanaki ji.

From childhood, Baba Nanak was different from other boys of his age. He was good in studies and always asked his teacher strange (at least, strange for his age) questions about God, religion, etc. His father saw that he was not interested in studies, so he sent him to graze family milk cattle.

One day while grazing the cattle, he got busy with his thoughts, and the cattle destroyed some other farmer's crop. Then his father gave him some money and sent him to a nearby town so that he could buy something to sell at a profit later. But Baba Nanak spent that money feeding some hungry saints. When he came home his father got angry and slapped him. His sister was the only one in the family who understood Baba Nanak. His father sent him to Sultanpur, where his sister was living. Her husband, Jai Ram ji, got a job for Baba Nanak as a storekeeper.

For a while, Nanak worked like an ordinary man. He got married to Mata Sulakhani Ji. They had two sons, Baba Siri Chand and Lakhmi Das Ji. Baba Nanak was well liked by the Nawab (Chief) of Sultanpur. He was accused of misappropriating groceries but was found innocent. One early morning he went to take a bath in the nearby river when he saw a vision. He was not seen for three days. People thought he had drowned or committed suicide, but his sister did not give up. Finally, he came back to town and declared, "There is no Hindu and no Muslim."

After this, Baba Nanak gave up regular work, leaving his children under the care of his sister. He went on long journeys. He traveled to Ceylon in the south, to Assam

in the east, to Mecca and Bagdad in the west, and to the Himalayas in the north.

He went to the well-known places of religions. He held discussions with religious preachers of that time and pointed out the fallacies that they were practicing. He did not believe in any rituals.

Guru Nanak had a teaching method unique only to him. In Hardwar, he saw Hindus throwing water to the east to the rising sun, but instead of criticizing them for that ritual, he started throwing water towards the west. It was they who asked him, “what are you doing?”, “I am watering my fields at Kartarpur in Punjab”, replied Baba Nanak. They all laughed and said, “How will your water reach Punjab?” Baba Nanak asked them, “why are you throwing water toward the rising sun?” “We are offering the water to the souls of our forefathers in the next world.” Baba Nanak responded, “If your water can reach the next world, surely mine could reach Kartarpur, which is in this world.”

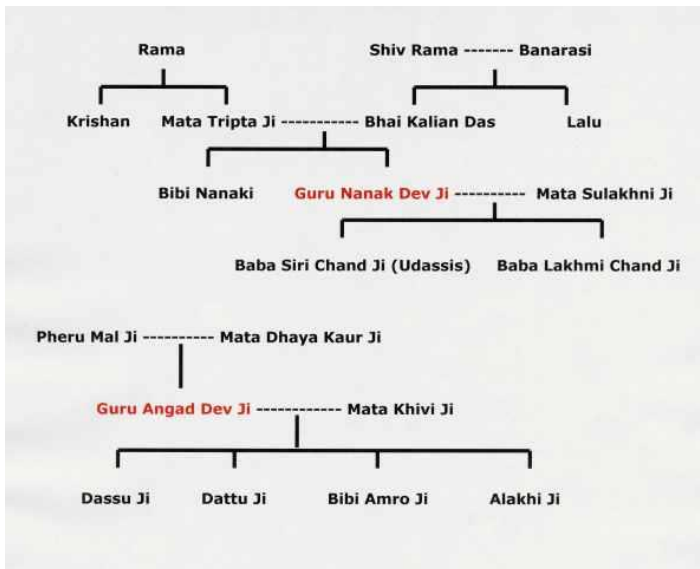
While in Mecca, he slept by putting his feet in the direction of Kabba. The Priests got angry and said, “How do you dare to dishonor the house of God?” He replied, politely, “Sir, I am too tired; you can turn my feet to the direction where there is no God.”

When Babar invaded India, he spoke boldly against his cruelty. He had excellent ways of communicating his point of view. He believed and practiced the concept of one God. He said God is everywhere, he is not confined to a temple or mosque.

Guru Nanak spoke against the caste system. He believed that all men are created equal. He believed in

basic human rights of every man. He preached to the kings to rule in the name of God. He preached to Muslims to be true Muslims and to Hindus to be true Hindus. He believed in universal brotherhood. He said that one can live a worldly life and still pray to God. One does not have to go to caves or mountains to pray, which was the custom among Hindus at the time. He said one should work honestly and should share his earnings with the needy. His companion, Mardana ji, accompanied him on all his travels.

In his later years he established a farming commune at Kartarpur. By now, he had many followers. His followers are called “Sikhs” (disciples). At Kartarpur, most of his writings were collected later. He composed 974 shabads in 19 ragas. His main compositions are Japji Sahib, Sohla, Sidh-Gosht, Dakhani Onkar, Asa Di War, Patt, and Baramaha. He died at Kartarpur in 1539 and appointed one of his followers, Bhai Lahna ji, as his successor.



Guru Angad Dev Ji
The Second Guru: 1504 – 1552



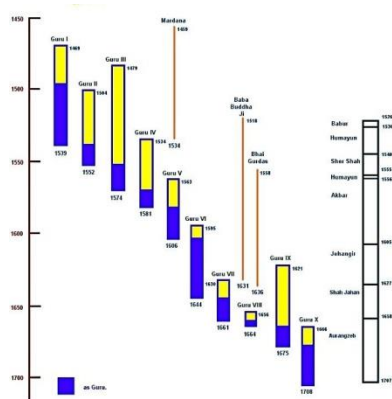
Guru Angad Dev Ji was born at Mate di Sarai in Ferozepur District on March 31, 1504. His real name was Lehna. His father's name was Pherumal Ji, who was a shopkeeper, and his mother was Daya Kaur Ji. He was married to Kheevi Ji. He had four children: two sons, Dasu and Dattu, and two daughters, Bibi Amro and Anokhi Ji.

His father was a very religious man. He was a worshipper of Durga. Lehna started helping his father in business and became a worshipper of Durga. During Babar's invasion, Mate Di Sarai was looted. So, Bhai Lehna's family moved to Khadur, the hometown of his mother. Bhai Lehna worked honestly and he grew rich. Every year, he used to lead a party of pilgrims to the sacred place of Durga in the Himalayan Jawala Mukhi (Fire-Faced) Temple.

Once, while on his way, he stopped at Kartarpur and met Guru Nanak ji. He was so impressed by Guru Nanak’s ideas of God that he gave up Durga worship. Soon he wrapped up his business and came to stay near Guru Nanak. He was a very obedient follower. If Guru Nanak told him to wash his clothes in the middle of the cold night, he did it without asking questions. He stayed at Kartarpur for seven years at the service of Guru Nanak. Impressed by his service, devotion and spirit of humility, Guru Nanak called him Angad (“part of myself”). He appointed Angad Dev ji as his successor in 1539 at Kartarpur.

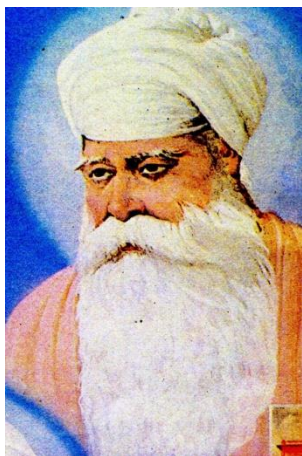
On assuming guruship, Guru Angad Ji put down the sayings of Guru Nanak in writing. Since most of his compositions were in Punjabi, in which no book had been written so far, Guru Angad developed the Punjabi Alphabet called Gurmukhi (“from the mouth of Guru”) and also completed a biography of Guru Nanak. He also introduced the tradition of the free kitchen. He wrote 63 shabads and sloks.

Guru Angad Dev ji was chiefly noted for patience and obedience. He said, “Thou should have patience like the earth, and firmness in pain and pleasure like a mountain; thou should bear pardon in thy heart and do good to all, no matter what they do to thee.” He died in 1552.



Guru Amar Dass Ji

The Third Guru: 1479 – 1574



Guru Amar Dass Ji was born at Basarke in Amritsar District on May 5, 1479. He was about 10 years younger than Guru Nanak ji, but somehow had met him. His father was Tej Bhan Bhalla Ji and his mother was Lakhmi Ji. He was married to Ramo Ji. He had four children: two sons, Mohan and Mohari Ji, and two daughters, Bibi Dani & Bhani Ji.

He lived the very simple life of a devout Hindu. He went to all pilgrimages but found no peace. He was 69 years old when one day, he heard in the early morning hours, a hymn of Guru Nanak being sung by Bibi Amro (Guru Angad's daughter who was married to his nephew). He was so impressed by those hymns that he came to Khadur and became a follower of Guru Angad ji. He started serving him with full dedication. At this old age he would go every morning to the river to fetch water for the Guru's morning bath. Then, he would go to the forest to collect wood for the kitchen and would work the entire day

doing one thing or another. He did this for 12 years. One morning, while he was bringing water for the Guru, he stumbled on the peg of a spindle, near a weaver's hut. Upon hearing the sound, the weaver woke up and when he asked his wife about the noise she said, "It must be Amru, the homeless."

When Guru Angad ji heard about it he said, "Amar Dass is not homeless, he is a home for the homeless." Finding him worthy to carry on Guru Nanak's mission, he appointed him his successor. He assumed the guruship on March 26, 1552, at Khadur. He was about 73 years old at that time. To avoid the jealousy of Guru Angad's sons, he left Khadur and settled in Goindwal. Once Datu (Guru Angad's son) came there and kicked him off from his seat. Even this did not anger Guru Amar Dass Ji. He said, "Sir, pardon me, my old bones must have hurt your tender foot." He preached to his disciples to use the same patience and humility. He used to say, "If one ill-treats you, bear it. If you bear it three times, God himself will fight for you for the fourth time."

Though he was old when he took over, he did a lot in the brief period of his guruship to reorganize Sikhism which was falling back into the folds of Hinduism:

1. He did a lot for women. He prohibited purdah (veil) and opposed the practice of sati (burning alive with the dead husband). He said true sati is one who suffers the torture of separation from the Creator, which is worse than death. He promoted the remarriage of widows, thus giving equal status to women.

2. He built bowli (a well with staircase) and said that Sikhs will find all the benefits of pilgrimage by taking a bath in it.

3. He continued the practice of the free kitchen. Anyone who came to see him first had to eat in the kitchen with everybody else. When Emperor Akbar came to see him, even he had to eat with commoners in the kitchen. Only then would Guru Amar Das ji meet him.

4. He organized missionary work, established twenty-two seats (manjis), and appointed 146 well trained missionaries, out of whom, 52 were women. Never in the history of India were women given such position and power.

5. He spoke against the priestly class. He preached that one could reach God without any mediator.

6. He started writing at the age of 73 and composed the Anand Sahib. His 907 hymns are included in the Guru Granth Sahib. Thus, he gave the Sikhs a well-organized institution and set the ball rolling which put Sikhism on the way to gradual dissociation from Hinduism.

He was an example of dedication and humility. He was the “Home to Homeless.” He was the hope of those without hope. He was an abode for those without any.

Guru Ram Das Ji

The Fourth Guru: 1534 - 1581



Guru Ram Das Ji was born on September 24, 1534, in Chuna Mandi, Lahore, in the house of Hardas Sodhi Ji and Daya Kaur Ji. He was married to Bibi Bhani ji (Guru Amardas's daughter) and had three sons: Baba Pirthi Chand, Mahan Dev and Arjun Dev Ji. Being the first child, he was called, "Jetha" (First born). He was still a child when he lost his parents. He moved to his maternal grandmother's home.

He started earning his living as a hawker, selling roasted grains. Here he met with Guru Amardas ji. When Guru Amar Das ji moved to Goindwal he also moved with him. In his free time, he would come and spend his time in the service of the Guru. He also helped in the construction of the bowli (well). Guru Amar Das ji was so impressed by him that he allowed him to marry his daughter, Bibi Bhani, and thus he became a member of the Guru's household. In

spite of being a son-in-law, there was no change in his behavior towards Guru Amar Das ji. He always served him with the same dedication and humility.

When the time came to choose his successor, Guru Amar Das ji chose Ram Das ji, not because he was his son-in-law, but because he was the only one worthy to carry on Guru Nanak's mission. He was 43 at the time of taking over the guruship (August 30, 1574).

When he assumed the guruship, Sikhism was still facing many challenges. Age-old Brahmin influence was still holding strong onto socio-spiritual life in Punjab. Even prior to his assumption of the guruship, Ram Das defended the claims of Sikhism against Brahmins in the court of Akbar. During his guruship he took the following steps:

1. He founded Amritsar. The land was given to Bibi Bhani by Emperor Akbar who came to see Guru Amar Das ji. The land was bought from a landlord, initially, it was known as Chak Ram Dass, but later came to be known as Amritsar. It gave the Sikhs the central seat to serve as Sikhism's base temple as well as spiritual base.

2. To promote Sikhism, he established new centers and sent missionaries, like Bhai Gurdas Ji, to Agra in the east and other missionaries to Kabul in the west. He also took new steps to consolidate, enrich, and protect the new faith.

3. He encouraged traders to settle in Amritsar and thus, strengthened the economy of the Sikhs.

4. He introduced new ceremonies of birth, marriage and death. through appropriate hymns composed by him, and thus, gave Sikhs a separate identity.

5. He appointed masands (preachers) to regularly collect funds from the Sikhs & use them for the propagation of Sikhism.

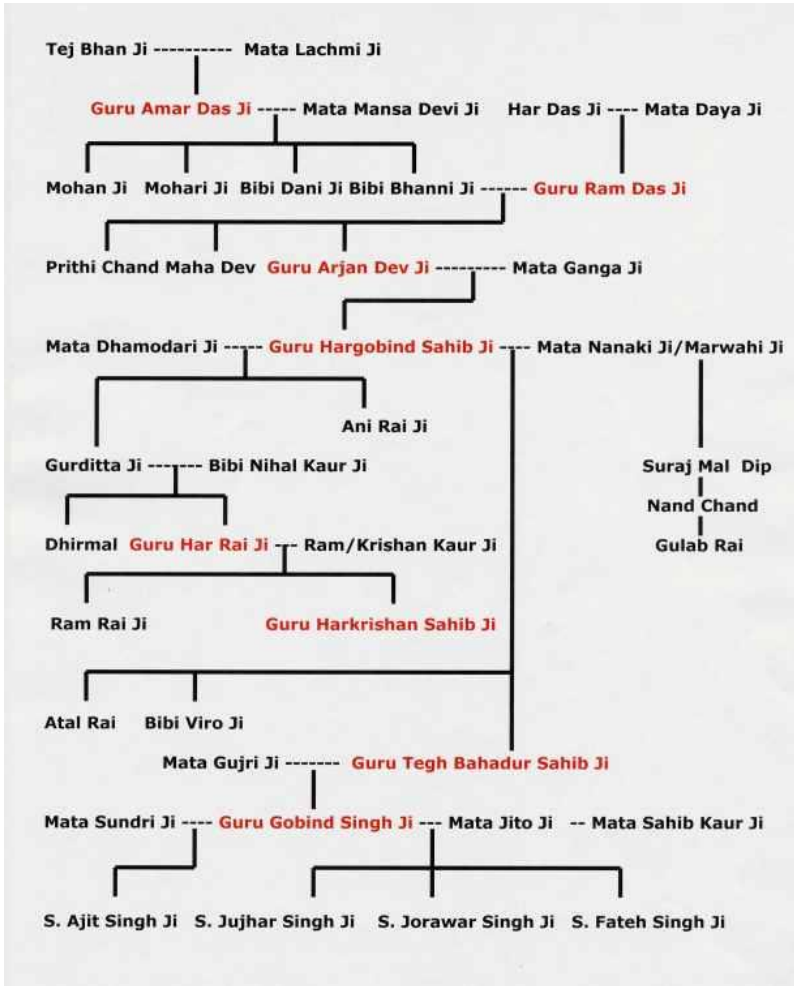
6. He won the support of the Udasis (a sect started by Guru Nanak's son, Baba Sri Chand), which helped to carry on Sikhism during a time of persecution of Sikhs.

7. He composed hymns. His 679 shalokas are included in the Guru Granth Sahib.

Even after becoming the Guru, he was as humble as ever. When Baba Sri Chand came to see him, pointing to his long beard he asked, "Why are you keeping such a long beard?" The Guru replied, "To wipe the feet of holy men like you." He attempted to actually do it but Sri Chand moved back and said, "You are in my father's place. This humility has won for you the spiritual throne of my father. I was superseded because I did not possess this quality. Your greatness is beyond description."

Guru Ram Das ji is known as Sodhi Patshah (Sodhi King) and as an apostle of love and humility. He died at

Goindwal in 1581 and appointed his younger son, Arjun Dev ji, to the guship.



Guru Arjun Dev Ji

The Fifth Guru: 1563 – 1606



Guru Arjun Dev Ji was the younger son of Guru Ram Das and Bibi Bhani Ji. He was born at Goindwal on April 15, 1563. He was married to Ganga ji, daughter of Kishan Chand of Village Meo in Jullundur District. He had one son, Hargobind Ji.

He was the first Guru who grew up in a Sikh environment. He learned Punjabi from his father, Guru Amar Das ji, and Sanskrit and Hindi from Pandit Beni. He learned many other things about life from Baba Buddha Ji. From early childhood, he started writing poetry. He was also very fond of fine arts. He learned the use of arms and horse riding. Though born in the same family, his older brother Pirthi Chand was an ambitious and vicious person. He was very possessive and worldly. Because of this, Guru Ram Das ji did not deem him fit for the guruship. His other

brother, Mahadev, was totally detached from the world. So, when the time of transferring the guruship came, Guru Ram Das Ji appointed him as the fifth Guru.

This created a great rift in the family. Pirthi Chand used mean tricks to establish himself as the Guru but slowly and slowly Sikhs recognized the true successor of Nanak.

During all this trouble in the family, Guru Arjan Dev Ji showed great tolerance and stayed calm under all circumstances. Sikhs, like Baba Budha Ji and Bhai Gurdas ji, also helped a great deal in controlling the situation. Pirthi Chand calmed down for a while with the hope that Guru Arjan would not have a child. He was sure the guruship would pass to his son Meharban. His hopes were never fulfilled, as a son was born in Guru Arjun's home. All his life Pirthi Chand tried all illegal means to claim the guruship for himself or his son. This caused the division amongst the Sikhs and helped the enemies of the Sikhs.

In spite of all these family troubles, Guru Arjan Dev ji did a lot for the Sikhs. He compiled the Guru Granth Sahib Ji, which he dictated to Bhai Gurdas Ji. It contains the compositions of the four preceding Gurus, Guru Arjun Dev Ji, and other Hindu and Muslim saints. Thus, he gave to Sikhs their "holy book," which was installed in the Golden Temple.

He completed the construction of the Golden Temple and the nectar pool around it, thus giving the Sikhs a central place of worship. Its foundation stone was laid by a Muslim Saint, Mian Mir. Thus, showing the broad base of Sikhism in which, everybody was equal, regardless of religion or caste.

He constructed many other Gurdwaras also. Among them are Taran Taran, Bowli (well) Sahib, Dewan Khana at Lahore, and Shish Mahal (House of Mirrors) at Kartarpur. He also reorganized the Sikh Missionary Center. During his time, it was said that there was no place in India where a Sikh was not found.

He also encouraged the Sikhs to do business. In Taran Taran, he made a place for the crippled and the chronically ill. Then during his short life time of the guruship, he did a lot to reorganize the Sikh faith and gave it a new shape.

During the time of Akbar, relations of the Guru with the Emperor were good, so Akbar came back again to pay a visit to Guru Arjan Dev ji. But after his death, his son Jahangir came to the throne. He did not tolerate any new popular movement. Enemies of the Sikhs finally got their say. Pirthi Chand supported the moves against Guru Arjan Dev ji directly and indirectly. Another Hindu minister of Lahore, Chandu, also played a vicious role in Guru Arjan's death. He offered his daughter to Guru Arjan's son for marriage. That proposal was not accepted as Chandu had made disrespectful remarks about the Guru. Chandu felt insulted and he started scheming to take the revenge.

The Guru was framed in a fictitious case and finally was tortured to death. He was made to sit in boiling water on a hot iron plate and burning sand was poured on his head. But he stayed calm and accepted the will of God. He finally went to the heavenly abode on May 30, 1606. Gurdwara Dera Sahib in Lahore is situated at that place now. He appointed his son Har Gobind ji as his successor.

He was the supreme example of non-violence. He did not just preach, but practiced all that he preached. He gave the Indian masses a new weapon of non-violence to fight against injustice. He encouraged the masses to fight for their rights even if it cost them their lives. He gave a new direction to Sikhism and started a revolution against the cruel government. He was the first Sikh martyr and his example of sacrifice was followed by Guru Teg Bahadur ji and many other Sikhs. Somebody has said: *The blood of martyrs is the seed of the church.*



Guru Hargobind Ji
The Sixth Guru: 1595 – 1644



Hargobind Ji was the only son of Guru Arjan Dev and Ganga Ji. He was born at Wadali near Amritsar on June 19, 1595. At that time, Guru Arjan Dev Ji, was staying in Wadali to avoid a clash with Pirthi Chand, who was dreaming to be guru himself and also to pass the guruship to his son. Pirthi Chand got upset when he came to know about Hargobind's birth. He started looking for the ways to kill Hargobind in his infancy by sending a maid to poison

him and later on a Brahmin and a snake charmer. Each time God saved Hargobind. Later on, he had an attack of small pox from which also he recovered. In those days it was rare to survive from an attack of small pox.

Baba Buddha Ji was his teacher. He taught him basic language and also taught him use of arms and horse riding. He got the religious training from his father. He was only eleven years old when his father Guru Arjun Dev Ji was summoned to Lahore by Emperor Jahangir's orders and was tortured to death. After his father's death, he assumed the guruship at that young age. He was surrounded by his hostile uncle's family but he also had very devout Sikhs like Baba Buddha ji and Bhai Gurdas Ji.

He changed the old traditions. He wore two swords, indicating temporal power (Miri) and spiritual power (Piri). He dressed himself in the royal style and sat on the throne. He laid the foundation of Akal Takht in front of the Golden Temple. The Akal Takht was made by Baba Buddha Ji, Bhai Gurdas and the Guru Ji himself. Thus, in the same compound there is the Golden Temple to give the Sikhs spiritual guidance and Akal Takht to give them guidance to resolve their political questions. He made the Sikh religion and politics inseparable. He ordered his Sikhs to arm themselves because he saw that the Sikh religion was in danger of extinction because of antagonism from both Hindus and Muslims.

The most popular arm of that time was the sword (which is called a Kirpan in Punjabi). He did not raise his sword to acquire a kingdom but for the protection of the Sikh religion and other minorities of that time. A Sikh is allowed to use the sword only under two circumstances: "Kirpa" (favor) to protect the defenseless and weak from

the oppressor, and “Aan” (Self-Respect) to protect himself and his faith. Sikhs used it to establish an empire (again to protect themselves and their faith) during the period of Banda Bahadur and Ranjit Singh. In Sikhism from the time of Guru Hargobind Ji, it is justified to use power to get justice when all other means of peaceful settlement fail.

The daily routine of the Guru was as follows: “He woke up before day break, bathed and dressed himself in full armour and then would go to Golden Temple for morning prayers. He then preached to the Sikhs. Later in the afternoon he used to sit on Akal Takht and listen to singers recounting the feats of heroism. Plans were made for hunting and political problems facing the Sikhs were discussed and resolutions passed. Personal conflicts of the Sikh were also decided by the Guru himself. So, no Sikh had to go to the courts for resolving his dispute.”

Soon, Guru Ji had a fair-sized army under the command of Bidi Chand, Pirana Jatha, Langa Ji, and Pinde Khan.

The Guru was imprisoned in the Gawalior Fort by the orders of Jahangir. Different reasons have been given by different writers but mainly he was arrested because of his increasing popularity among the Punjabi masses and because of the complaints by the enemies of the Sikhs. The period of his imprisonment also varies from a few days to twelve years. It is possible that initially he was ordered to be imprisoned for twelve years but later on released after a short time. Before he left for Delhi, he appointed Baba Budha Ji in charge of the Golden Temple and Bhai Gurdas Ji in charge of the Akal Takht.

During this time, Baba Budha Ji and Bhai Gurdas ji started the tradition of peace marches (called Chowkian). Sikhs would leave Amritsar and go singing hymns in small groups to Gawalior.

Later on, Jahangir's relation with the Guru became friendly. All the misunderstanding was cleared. When the Guru was released from jail, he asked Jahangir to release other princes along with him, which Jahangir did. The Guru was known as Bandi-Shor (the Liberator). During peace time, Guru Ji did not give up his military style. More and more Sikh youths came and joined his army. During this time, he also sent Sikh preachers to different parts of India.

After Jahangir's death in 1627, Shah Jahan ascended to the throne of Delhi. Enemies of the Sikhs again had their way. Guru Ji had to fight with the imperial army in self-defense. He fought and won all four battles.

The first battle was because of the royal hawk which was captured by the Sikhs. They refused to return it and the imperial army attacked. It was fought at the site of Hargobindpur. The second was fought at Nathana (Gurdaspur) in 1636 and the last one at Kartarpur in 1634. The Pinde Khan took part during the first battle and after that he became very proud and started saying that Guru Ji won the battle because of him. During the second and third battles, Guru Ji did not let him participate. Finally, he left the Guru Ji's army and joined the Mughal Army. Pinde Khan came against the Guru ji at Kartarpur and was killed by Guru ji during the fight. While dying he asked for forgiveness and was forgiven by the Guru ji.

After this, Guru Ji retired to Kiratpur which was established by his oldest son Baba Gurdita. He had six

children, five boys (Baba Gurditta, Anirai, Suraj Mal, Atal Rai, and Teg Bahadur Ji) and one daughter, Veero ji. Baba Atal Rai died in childhood in Amritsar. Baba Gurditta was adopted by Siri Chand (Guru Nanak's son and founder of Udasis sect). He preceded the Guru ji at Kiratpur with his family. He died at the age of twenty-four. Ani Rai and Suraj Mal were too worldly and Teg Bahadur retired into solitude. So, when the time came to pass the guruship, Guru Ji chose his grandson Har Rai ji, as his successor. Baba Gurditta's older son Dhirmal, started a new sect of Dhirmaliyas and Suraj Mal's family was founder of Gulab Rais.

After the wars were over, Guru Ji engaged himself in praying and preaching. For the last eleven years of his life, he lived like a fakir and did not even use pillows. He was a great soldier and commander. He raised the army of saint-soldiers. He was the founder of Akal Takht, Loh Garh fortress and Har Gobind Pur. He fought against the oppressor in self-defense only. He preached to the Sikhs to live a peaceful life but at the same time, he advised them to use arms if necessary.

Though he did not compose any hymns himself, he preached Sikhism at faraway places and asked the Sikhs to follow the Guru Granth Sahib ji. He always helped the needy. He used to say the mouth of a poor man is the Guru's Treasure, so whoever feeds a hungry person is donating to the Guru's Treasure. He gave the Sikhs a new direction.

Guru Har Rai Ji

The Seventh Guru: 1630 – 1661



He was the grandson of Guru Har Gobind Sahib Ji. His father was Baba Gurditta ji and mother was Nihal Kaur Ji. He was born at Kiratpur (in Hoshiarpur District) on January 16, 1630. He had an older brother, Dhirmal. He was married to Kishan Kaur ji and had two sons: Ram Rai and Har Krishan Ji. He had one adopted daughter, Anup Kaur Ji.

He grew up in a natural environment in Kiratpur. He got his basic education there. He was well trained in the use of arms and religious duties. So, when Guru Har Gobind ji was looking for a successor, he was the natural

choice. Guru Har Rai Ji assumed the guruship at the age of fourteen after the death of Guru Har Gobind Ji.

His older brother Dhirmal was very jealous of it. He started bothering Har Rai Ji. In contrast to Dhirmal, Har Rai was very polite and mild-natured. He simply ignored Dhirmal.

The Guru ji maintained a cavalry of 2,200 horses but he rarely engaged himself in war. He went for hunting but never to kill animal. He would catch them alive and keep them in his personal zoo at Kiratpur. He would also pick up orphaned and unwanted animals and take care of them. Once passing through a garden, his loose dress struck a flower off its stem. He felt so bad about it after that whenever he was wearing a loose dress he would keep it folded so that the gown could be tucked under his arms.

All his life, he served the sick and the poor. He maintained a free medical clinic for the poor. When Dara Shikoh, eldest son of Shah Jahan fell ill, no cure could be found for his illness. He was given medicine from Guru's clinic which cured him. At that time, Guru Har Rai Ji ignored the enmity of the Mughals with Sikhs.

He spent most of his time preaching and reorganizing missionary work. He went to Malwa for preaching. During this time, he blessed the poor orphans. With Guru's blessing, children of these orphans became the rulers of Patiala, Nabha and Jind. He also got more copies made of the Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

After Shah Jahan's death, there was a fight among his sons and Dara Shikoh fled from Delhi. Guru Har Rai Ji helped him with the army so he could safely cross the river

but later on he was caught by his younger brother Aurangzeb, and put to death.

After Aurangzeb got established, he started spreading the Muslim religion by force. He called Guru Har Rai Ji to Delhi. Guru Ji did not go himself but sent his eldest son, Ram Rai Ji. He was given instructions not to show any miracles and tell the truth. He misinterpreted a verse of Guru Nanak Ji just to please Aurangzeb. When Guru Har Rai Ji came to know about it, he felt so bad that he disowned his son for the sake of the principles of the Guru's House. He appointed his younger son, Har Krishan Ji, as the Eighth Guru.

One day, addressing his Sikhs he said, "Anyone may come to you at any time and should go back satisfied. You should do service in such a way that the poor guest may not feel he is partaking in some charity but as if he had come to the Guru's House which belonged to all in equal measure. He who has more should consider it as God's trust and share it in the same spirit. Man is only an instrument to serve God. The temple and the mosques may be repaired and rebuilt but not a broken heart." He died on October 6, 1661, at the age of 31 at Kiratpur.

Guru Har Krishan Ji

The Eighth Guru: 1656 - 1664



Guru Har Krishan Ji was born at Kiratpur on July 7, 1656. He was the youngest son of Guru Har Rai Ji and Kishan Kaur Ji. He had an older brother, Ram Rai Ji, who was disowned by Guru Har Rai Ji. Ram Rai established his own sect and established himself at Dehradun.

Har Krishan Ji assumed the guruship at the age of five, after Guru Har Rai Ji's death. He was surrounded by enemies. His uncle Dhirmal was still trying to take over the guruship by foul means. His older brother declared himself the Guru and also requested for Aurangzeb's help for this and claimed that as the oldest son, he should be the

successor of Guru Nanak's throne. But he did not know that the guruship was not a property which could be inherited. It was given to a Sikh who was most worthy of it by virtue of his personal qualities. Moreover, Aurangzeb himself became king by killing his older brother so he could not accept his claim that the oldest son had more rights.

Ram Rai pressed Aurangzeb to call Har Krishan Ji to Delhi and settle the claim himself. Aurangzeb saw in it a good opportunity to spread his own religion. He had full control over Ram Rai. If he could persuade Har Krishan Ji also, then his job would have been very simple. He called upon Raja Jai Singh of Amber (Jaipur) and asked him to bring Har Krishan Ji to Delhi. Ram Rai was very happy to hear these orders. He thought, "If my brother does not obey the order, the king will send an army and destroy him. If he does obey the king's order and come to Delhi, it will be against the wishes of his late father and he will be considered a greater sinner than I. If he runs away because of fear, then I will go to Kiratpur and take possession of his personal property and the guruship too."

Sikhs of Delhi were also pleased to hear this as they thought that they will have the chance to see the real Guru, Guru Har Krishan Ji, because they were quite upset with Ram Rai.

Raja Jai Singh sent high official with the order that he was to invite the Guru rather than summon and bring him to Delhi with full honors. When the Guru learnt about this, after counseling with the prominent Sikhs, he finally decided to go to Delhi. On his way, he kept on preaching Sikhism.

Guru Har Krishan Ji was received by Raja Jai Singh with great honor and he stayed in Raja Jai Singh's palace. There, he preached the God's word. Aurangzeb tried to meet him a few times but Har Krishan Ji did not see him for one excuse or another. He was put to various tests but with God's grace he established his credentials. He refused to show any magical tricks because they were against Almighty God's will.

Then there was an outbreak of small pox in Delhi. Guru Ji helped the sick people day and night. While doing so, he contracted small pox himself from which he did not recover. When he knew his time was coming near, he ordered his followers not to weep for him but to sing the Guru's hymns. In the chanting of God's name, he breathed his last on March 30, 1664. His last words were "Baba Bakala" and this was a signal to his followers that the next Guru would be found at Bakala.

He died at the young age of 8 years old. He was the youngest of all the Gurus. He stayed in Delhi in Raja Jai Singh's palace, where Gurdwara Bangala Sahib now stands. His body was cremated on the bank of Jamuna at a place called Tiokhari, south of Delhi, where Gurdwara Bala Sahib has been built. He was respected by Hindus and Muslims alike. He was also known to Muslims of Delhi as "Bala Pir."

Guru Teg Bahadur Ji

The Ninth Guru: 1621 – 1675



Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji was the youngest of five sons of Guru Hargobind Ji and Mata Nanaki Ji. He was born on April 1, 1621, in Amritsar.

He got his early training of archery and horse riding from Baba Budha Ji. Bhai Gurdas Ji taught him reading, writing and about religion. He was also interested in music and poetry. His childhood name was Teg Mall. He got married at the age of 12, on Feb 4, 1633, to Gujari Ji.

He took part in a battle of Kartarpur along with his father, the sixth Guru, Guru Hargobind Ji in 1635. Guru Ji was impressed by his use of sword in the battlefield. He started calling him Teg Bahadur. He spent some time in Keeratpur. After his father's death in 1644, he moved to Bakala to his mother's ancestral home, with his wife Gujari and mother Nanaki. He spent most of his time in meditation and stayed aloof.

Before Guru Harkishan passed away, he said, “Baba Bakala.”

Many other descendants from the Guru’s family had moved to Bakala and started claiming that they were the next guru. As the story goes, a businessman Makhan Shah’s ship got caught in a storm. He prayed to God and promised that he will give some coins in offering if he reached safely. He came to Bakala where there were twenty-two fake gurus sitting there. He started offering two gold coins to each one of them with the hope that true guru will know and question him. When he came to Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji and offered two coins and bowed, Guru Ji smiled and said that his offerings were short of what he had promised. He declared that he found the real Guru.

Dhirmal (Teg Bahadur’s nephew), who was claiming to be guru, got very upset. His men plundered the Guru’s house. Guru Ji stayed calm. When Makhan Shah came to know, he attacked Dhirmal’s house in retaliation and plundered his house. He also brought the scripts of Granth Sahib Ji which was in the possession of Dhirmal. Guru Teg Bahadur Ji made him return everything back to Dhirmal and forgave him. The Guru ji believed that forgiveness is the best charity.

During his tour to the east, his son was born. He was named Gobind Rai. Guru Ji reached Chak Nanaki (Anandpur Sahib) on Vaisakhi in 1672.

In May 1673, A group of Kashmiri Pundits came to Guru for help as they were forced to convert to Islam. Guru Ji promised them to intervene. He left Anandpur Sahib on July 11, 1675, for Delhi. Before he left, on July 8, 1675, he nominated his son Gobind Rai as his successor.

Some historians say that he travelled with his Sikhs and kept on preaching on the way and was captured by authorities in Agra. But according to *The Sikh Encyclopedia*, he was arrested in Ropar on July 12, 1675, and was taken to Sirhind. He was put in jail in Bassi Pathana for almost 3 months and tortured. He arrived in Delhi on November 4, 1675. He was tortured to accept Islam.

Of his three companions, Bhai Mati Das Ji was sawed alive, Bhai Sati Das Ji was burned alive, and Bhai Dayal Ji (brother of Bhai Mani Singh Ji) was boiled in water in front of Guru Ji's eyes. This was done in public to scare everyone in Chandni Chowk where there is a fountain now. When this did not shake Guru Ji, he was beheaded on November 11, 1675, in public in Chandni Chowk. Sees Ganj Gurdwara stands there now.

His mutilated body was left on the ground. It was a stormy night. Taking advantage of that, Lakhi Shah Lubana and his son Naghia put the headless body in the cart and cremated it by burning their house with all its contents. Gurdwara Rakaab Ganj is situated at that place now.

Guru Ji's head was picked up by Bhai Jaita Ji, who took it to Anandpur Sahib and it was cremated there. Guru Gobind Singh wrote about his father in his writings: "He protected their tilak and Janeu (signs of Hindus). In this age of darkness, he performed a grand deed." His sacrifice was for freedom of religion. It was against the state's interference into personal beliefs. For his sacrifice, he is called Hind Di Chadar (Protector of Hinduism). He Wrote 115 shabads which were added by Guru Gobind Singh Ji to the original Granth Sahib at Damdama Sahib.

Guru Gobind Singh Ji
The Tenth Guru: 1666 – 1708



Guru Gobind Singh Ji was the only son of Guru Teg Bahadur Ji and Mata Gujri Ji. He was born on December 22, 1666, at Patna, Bihar. He was born during his father's missionary tour to the east. He was given the name Gobind Rai at birth. At his birthplace now is Takhat Sri Harimandir Sahib. Gobind Rai spent his childhood years there. He came to Anandpur Sahib (Chak Nanaki) in March of 1672. After his father's martyrdom on November 11, 1673, he assumed the leadership of the Sikhs. He was formally appointed Guru on Baisakhi Day which was on March 29, 1676.

His education included Punjabi, Brij, Sanskrit and Persian. He did most of his writings in Paunta Sahib. He

also got training in martial arts, horse riding, archery and sword fighting. He had four sons: Baba Ajit Singh ji Born in 1687, Baba Jujhar Singh ji Born in 1691 ,Baba Zoravar Singh ji Born in 1696 and Baba Fateh Singh ji Born in 1699

On Baisakhi Day, March 30, 1699, he gave a new appearance to the Sikhs. After being baptized with “Khande di Pahul” (Baptized with Sword), Sikhs became the Khalsa. The name “Singh” (lion) was given to men and “Kaur” (princess) to women.

The first five Sikhs who answered his call and were sworn in, were called Punj Piare (Five Beloved Ones). After baptizing his Punj Piare, Guru Ji knelt down in front of them and requested to be baptized. After he was baptized, Gobind Rai became Gobind Singh. Mata Sahib Kaur is known as the “Mother of Khalsa.” She did not have any of her own children. She is also known as “Kawara Dola” as her marriage was never consummated.

By this time, Guru Ji had created and gathered many Sikhs and arms. He erected forts in and around Anandpur Sahib. As his popularity and power started increasing among the general public, the chiefs of surrounding areas started feeling jealous and threatened. They had a few battles with Guru Ji and had lost them.

The first battle was the War of Bhangani on September 18, 1688, with Raja Fateh Chand. Guru Ji fought many battles in Anandpur Sahib between 1700 to 1704. Then, the hill chiefs asked Aurangzeb for help. Aurangzeb sent a large army under the guidance of the Governor of Lahore and Nawaab of Sirhind. They were helped by the hill chiefs and they laid a siege to the fort of

Anandpur in May of 1705. It continued for a long time.

Some of the Sikhs deserted Guru Ji and left Anandpur. They disclaimed him as their Guru. The Muslim and the Hindu chiefs sent a message to Guru Ji. They promised a safe passage for Guru Ji by swearing on Quran and the cow. They wanted him to leave Anandpur and were ready to use fair or foul means. Guru Ji was aware of their wicked plan but he had to bow to the pressure of the Sikhs and his mother. Finally, he bade farewell to Anandpur.

On the night of December 5, 1705, he left Anandpur along with his family and a handful of Sikhs.

As soon as they left Anandpur, the promises made by Hindus and Muslims were broken. On the banks of River Sirsa, a fierce battle was fought. Prince Ajit Singh Ji, with a few Sikhs, was able to stop the advancing imperial army while the rest of the Sikhs crossed the Sirsa. Then the rest of the Sikhs along with the Prince crossed the river as well. Udai Singh, a proud Sikh soldier died there along with some other Sikhs. The Imperial Army did not dare enter the river in the cold night of December.

In this confrontation, the whole Sikh party got separated. Mata Sundari Ji and Mata Sahib Kaur Ji were with Bhai Mani Singh Ji. They reached Ropar and were able to reach Delhi safely. Guru Ji's mother and his two younger sons went along with their long-time servant, Gangu Brahmin to his village, Kheri. Guru Ji, with both his older sons and 40 Sikhs reached Ropar, and from there, on the next day, they reached Chamkaur Sahib.

In Chamkaur, Guru Ji stayed in a mud fortress of Bidhi Chand and waited for the advancing Imperial Army.

Soon Chamkaur was surrounded by the Mughal army. On December 7th, the battle began.

During this battle, Guru Ji's older sons (Baba Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh ji) and three of his "Beloved Ones" died. At night, the fight stopped. Mughals were very sure about their victory. In the mud fortress, only a few Sikhs remained. They requested Guru Ji to leave the fortress, but Guru Ji did not accept it. Then, five Sikhs, in the form of Guru Khalsa asked Guru Ji to leave the fortress.

Guru Ji did not have a choice but to listen to them. He agreed to their decision and exchanged his crested turban with Bhai Sangat Singh Ji, who had some resemblance with Guru Ji. He left the fortress with Daya Singh, Dharam Singh, and Mann Singh in the darkness of the night. Bhai Sant Singh and Sarjit Singh remained in the fortress and died fighting bravely.

Thus, in obeying the order of the Guru Khalsa, Guru Gobind Singh Ji vested the temporal powers in the Guru Khalsa. By giving his turban to Bhai Sangat Singh Ji, he crowned the Khalsa himself. As he had said earlier, "Khalsa is the life of my life." He proved that.

Moreover, it's a great honor to exchange turbans. It is a tradition that if two unrelated persons exchange, they are considered like real brothers. As the turban signifies self-respect, one gives his self-respect to the head of the one he trusts the most. Thus, Khalsa has the honor of exchanging its turban with the Guru.

In the darkness of night, the three Sikhs got separated. Guru Ji reached the forests of Machhiwara. He was tired and hungry. He had seen many of his Sikhs and

his older sons die in front of his eyes. His feet were blistered and had thorns in them. He slept on the ground and used a stone as a pillow. He was not aware of the whereabouts of the rest of his family. Still, he thanked God and submitted to His will. Here, he composed his famous Punjabi composition, “Mittar Piare Nu Haal Mureedan da Kehna” (“Tell my Bosom Friend, His Devotee’s Plight”).

As daylight broke, the Sikhs also reached Machhiwara. Here, Guru Ji stayed at Gulaba Masand’s house for two days. The Imperial Army was looking for Guru Ji when they found out that he had escaped. Two Pathaan brothers, Ghani Khan and Nabi Khan also lived there. They were in Guru Ji’s service for a while. They offered to help. Guru Ji disguised himself in a blue robe worn by Muslim holy men at that time. He was seated in a palanquin, which was lifted by the Pathan brothers in the front and Sikhs at the rear. This way they travelled.

Whosoever questioned, they told that they were escorting “Uch Ka Pir” (A High Saint). It could also be interpreted as holy saint of Uchcha, a well-known sacred place for Muslims near Multan. They travelled like that until one day they got stopped by a detachment of the army. The officer was not satisfied with the identity. He had his suspicions so he stopped them and sent for Pir Mohammad, who had been the Guru’s Persian tutor.

The Qazi told the officer that the man was not Guru Gobind Singh. The officer was satisfied and asked for forgiveness for the inconvenience and let them go. Later on, for his favor, Guru Ji gave Hukumnama (an autographed letter) to Pir Mohammad and the Pathaan brothers.

Guru Ji reached Hehar (in Ludhiana District) and stayed with Mahant Kirpal Das (follower of the Udassi Sect). From there, Guru Ji moved to Jat Pura and was welcomed by Muslim Rai Kalha. He was a rich and important person and was the chief of Jagraon and Raikot.

Here, Guru Ji received the sad news of the tragic deaths of his two younger sons and his mother. A messenger told him that “Gangu” had taken them to his house, stole money from Mata Gujri ji, and deceived them. He informed the Muslim officials of Morinda, who arrested Mata Gujri and Zoravar Singh and Fateh Singh ji and took them to Sirhind where they were kept in a cold tower for two days. Wazir Khan tried all means to convert them to the Muslim religion, but the little boys stayed firm in their belief. He was ready to let them go but another Hindu, Wazir of Sucha Nand, persuaded him to punish the “offspring of a snake.”

Wazir Khan ordered that they should be bricked alive. Sher Mohammad of Malerkotla objected to this cruelty and said that it was against the rules of Islam. Wazir Khan finally ordered them to be executed. He could not find anyone to kill two innocent children.

Finally, on December 20, 1705, they were bricked alive by two executioners Shishal Beg and Vishal Beg from Samana (who were in the court for some other murder). After each layer of brick, the children were asked to give up their faith. When they kept on refusing, Wazir Khan got upset and ordered them to be beheaded. When Mata Gujri ji heard of this news, she died of grief. Their bodies were cremated by a Sikh, Todar Mal by covering the required land by gold coins.

After staying at Jat Pura as Kalha's guest for some time, Guru Ji moved to Dina (Tehsil Moga, District Ferozepur). There, he was received by three brothers: Shamira, Lakhmira and Takhat Mal.

When Nawab of Sirhind came to know about this, he ordered Shamira to arrest Guru and bring him to Sirhind. Shamira ignored the orders. At this place, Guru Ji wrote his famous "Zafarnama" ("Epistle of Victory").

This showed his great confidence in Almighty and his tough personality. He lost all his sons, his mother, most of his Sikhs, and all his worldly riches, but still did not admit defeat. He made Aurangzeb aware of the situation as to how unjustly he was ruling, and how he deceived others by his false oaths. He challenged him to fight. In the letter he wrote, "When all the peaceful means fail to get justice, it is fair to draw the sword."

This letter was taken to Aurangzeb in Deccan by Bhai Daya Singh and Bhai Dharam Singh Ji. They went in the disguise of Muslim pilgrims. They were received with courtesy by Aurangzeb. By then, he was an ill man. He promised to look into the matter and sent an invitation to Guru Ji to meet with him personally. He also gave a letter (Parwana) to the Sikhs so they could return safely. Guru Ji accepted his invitation to meet with him but Aurangzeb died at Ahmednagar on February 20, 1707, and the two would never meet.

While the above correspondence was going on, the situation in Punjab was still explosive. Wazir Khan had decided to kill Guru Ji. After killing his two sons, Khan was scared about his own life. His life was in danger as long as Guru Ji lived, at least that is what he thought. So, he

planned to attack Dina. When Guru Ji came to know about this, he marched away with his Sikhs and received full information of Wazir Khan's activities. Guru Ji decided to move on to Khidrana and face the approaching army there. There was a small seasonal lake (Dhab) at that place (Mukatsar sahib).

In the meantime, the Sikhs, who had deserted Guru Ji at Anandpur Sahib, were rebuked by their wives and other relatives at their homes. Forty of them from Majha under the leadership of Mahan Singh and Mai Bhago, returned back to Guru Ji. When they came to know that Guru Ji had gone to Khidrana, they rushed to that place. It was not easy for them to travel without being noticed. The enemy army was everywhere. So, they traveled in small batches during the night via uncommon ways.

Finally, they reached Khirdana. When they heard about the approaching army, they decided to fight there so that Guru Ji would have more time to move away. What else could have been the better way of repenting than dying fighting for their Guru.

They spread sheets over the bushes. When Mughal Army approached, they thought that the Sikhs were camping there in large numbers. Battle started. Sikhs fought bravely until their end in small batches. Guru Ji had reached a small hill and from there he could see his brave Sikhs fighting. He and his other Sikhs kept on shooting arrows at the attackers. Finally, when all the Sikhs had died, Wazir Khan reached the lake. It was dry. His soldiers were dying of thirst.

There was water about 50 Km in the front and 20 Km at the rear. To save themselves, his soldiers decided to

retreat. Again, the victory was of the Sikhs. Guru Ji came down and cremated the dead ones. Then he found Mahan Singh ji, who was still breathing. He was very happy to see Guru Ji. When Guru Ji asked him what would he like, he asked Guru Ji to destroy the disclaimer which was in Guru Ji's possession. Guru Ji did that and Mahan Singh died peacefully in Guru Ji's lap.

Mai Bhago was also wounded but alive. Guru Ji took care of her wounds. After that, she spent all her life in Guru Ji's service and went to the south with him. She was always dressed like a man. Because of her old age, she died while in the south.

Guru Ji called these 40 martyrs the "Muktae" (the Saved Ones). Since then, that place is called Mukatsar and a Sikh shrine stands there today. (This shrine was also attacked and damaged by Indian Army in June 1984.) This battle was fought on December 29, 1705. That was the last battle that Guru Gobind Singh ji fought and won. After cremating the dead ones, Guru Ji moved further into wilderness and spent some time in the Lakhi Jungle.

He reached Talwandi Sabo (now known as Damdama Sahib). He stayed there for eight to nine months. There, he also met his devotee Dalla. Soon it became a center of learning. It is also called Guru Ki Kashi. Here, he recited the Granth Sahib, which he dictated from his memory to Bhai Mani Singh Ji. He added compositions of the Ninth Guru and gave the form which we now have. The Granth Sahib was copied by many others. Baba Deep Singh Ji also wrote a few volumes of this Granth. They were lying in the Golden Temple Library until June 1984. The original Granth Sahib written by Bhai Mani Singh ji was lost in the Sikh Holocaust.

Mata Sundari Ji and Mata Sahib Kaur Ji also joined him in Damdama Sahib. When Mata Sundri ji asked about her four sons, he pointed to the Sikhs and said, “For these sons, I have sacrificed our four sons. If four have died, do not grieve as many thousands are living.”

He decided to move to the south to see Aurangzeb on October 30, 1706. While he was at Baghor (in Rajasthan) he came to know about Aurangzeb’s death. He came back to Delhi. There was a fight among the Aurangzeb’s sons for the throne. Bahadur Shah asked Guru Ji to help, which he did by sending his 500 Sikh soldiers under the command of Bhai Dharam Singh. When Bahadur Shah became Emperor, he invited Guru Ji to Agra and received him with great honor and gave precious gifts. Though Bahadur Shah remained busy fighting against the rebellions, his relations with Guru Ji remained friendly.

Mata Sundari Ji was left in Delhi and Mata Sahib Kaur Ji accompanied Guru Ji to Deccan. Guru Ji and his soldiers did not take part in any other battles. In the beginning of August, 1708, he reached Nander. When he saw Bahadur Shah was too pre-occupied with the rebellions and had no time to look into the Punjab matters, he left the Emperor and settled in a beautiful place on the banks of Godavari.

There lived a hermit named Madho Das. He was a Rajput of Kashmir who renounced the world after he killed a pregnant deer. When he came in contact with Guru Ji, his whole life was changed. He found peace of mind after seeing the Guru and became his disciple. When Guru Ji asked him, “What is your name?”, he said, “I am your banda (slave).”

Guru Ji instructed him in Sikh teachings and he was baptized and named Gurbakhash Singh. Guru Ji sent him along with some of his Sikhs back to Punjab. He gave him his five arrows, five Sikhs, a flag, a drum (nagara), and a letter (hukamnama). He instructed him to punish the enemies of the Sikhs, which he did. He also established and founded the Sikh empire, though it was short lived. Mata Sahib Kaur Ji was also sent to Delhi to give company to Mata Sundari Ji.

Guru Ji spent most of his time in meditation. Wazir Khan wanted to kill Guru Ji. He could not kill him in the war. So, he conspired to get him murdered. He hired two Pathans who followed Guru Ji to Deccan, and finally, to Nander.

They started coming to the daily prayer. One day, after the evening prayer (on September 1, 1708), one of the Pathans (Jamshed Khan) stabbed Guru Ji. Guru Ji killed him at the spot and his companion was killed by a Sikh. Guru Ji had a deep wound. Bahadur Shah sent his personal physician, Mr. Cole, who stitched the wound. It started healing. It was not fully healed yet when Guru Ji tried to bend a stiff bow and the wound started bleeding again.

When he saw his worldly end near, he requested the Sikhs to bring the Granth Sahib and told the Sikhs that from then on, the Guru Granth Sahib would be the Guru of the Sikhs. Thus, he gave spiritual powers of the Guru to the Granth Sahib ji. He said, "So does the Akal Pursha (All Mighty) ordain, the word is a master now, the Song of Nam, the Guru Granth. All Khalsa should seek the Master in the word and bow to Guru Granth Sahib as my successor."

Since then, the Guru Granth Sahib ji is a Sikh's only and sole Guru and will be until the end of this world. Any decision taken by five Sikhs (Guru Khalsa) in the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib is called Guru Mata (the Guru's Decision). Every Sikh is supposed to follow that without any question.

After leaving the Sikhs under the guidance of the Granth Sahib, he bade farewell to his earthly body on October 7, 1708. Mata Sahib Kaur ji died soon after his death in Delhi. Mata Sundari Ji lived for a while. After Guru Ji's death, she along with Bhai Mani Singh ji and Banda Singh ji guided the Sikhs. Mata Sundari Ji adopted a son and named him Ajit Singh. He started claiming himself to be the Guru and was very arrogant. He killed one man and for that crime he was executed by the authorities.

Guru Gobind Singh Ji was less than 42 years of age when he died. He was a saint, a soldier, a poet, a commander and a leader. One writer (T.L. Wasvani) wrote about his personality as follows: "He had humility of Nanak, virtues of Jesus, wisdom of Buddha, bubbling energy of Muhammad, sun kissed glory of Krishna and homely grandeur of Rama. Even these words cannot describe his personality. Though he wished all the time to die in the battlefield, his wish was not fulfilled by the Almighty. He always accepted the will of God. He was against injustice whether that was done by a Hindu or a Muslim. He had many Muslim friends and followers who gave their lives fighting for him. Many Hindu chiefs and men like Gangu Brahmin and Suchanand were thirsty for his and his family's blood. He did not hesitate to help Bahadur Shah (whose father had destroyed Guru Ji's whole family and killed the Ninth Guru) because he knew it was

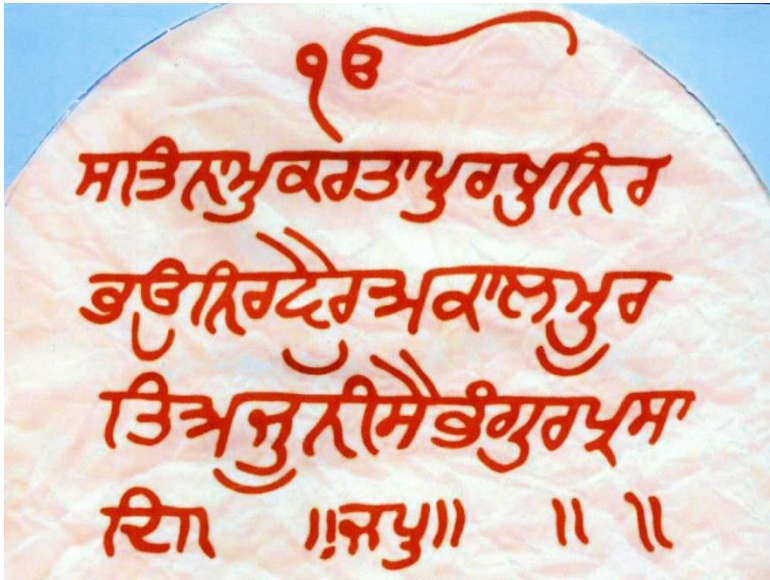
Bahadur Shah's right to be the emperor. During his fight (he fought about fourteen battles) he and his Sikhs never got an inch of soil or a penny for their personal use. It was fight for justice, fight for righteousness and fight for the truth."

Guru Ji fought all the time against heavy odds and never accepted defeat. His Khalsa will not be defeated either, no matter how heavy the odds may appear. The Khalsa will be victorious.



Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji

1708 Onwards



The holy scripture of the Sikhs and Eternal Guru has the writings of six Gurus and many Muslim and Hindu saints from all over India.

It was compiled by Guru Arjun Dev Ji. He included the writings of four Gurus and Hindu and Muslim Saints before him. Most likely, the writings of saints were collected by Guru Nanak ji during his four travels. All those writings were in two volumes (pothis) and were in the possession of Baba Mohan Ji, son of Guru Amar Das Ji.

Guru Arjun ji had to persuade Mohan Ji to give these volumes to him. Later on, more material was collected and edited by Guru Arjun Dev Ji. The first volume was scribed by Bhai Gurdas Ji under the supervision of Guru Arjun Dev Ji. He added his own

compositions in these collections. Later on, Guru Gobind Singh Ji added his father, Guru Teg Bahadur Ji's compositions at Damdama Sahib. That volume was written by Bhai Mani Singh Ji. The current Guru Granth Sahib is the exact copy of it. The original volume was destroyed during the Second Holocaust, which is also known as Vadda Ghallughara. Baba Deep Singh made many copies of that volume.

On October 7, 1708, before Guru Gobind Singh Ji left this world, he gave the guruship to the Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Since that time, it has been guiding the Sikhs and will guide them through the end of this world.

This volume is all in poetry, written in Sant Bhasha (Language of Saints) of those times. This language is the mixture of different dialects of Indian languages. It is organized according to musical measures (ragas) in which hymns are to be recited. There are thirty-one ragas. The Granth Sahib contains 5,894 hymns all together.

Guru Arjun was the largest contributor with 2,216 hymns. He is followed by Guru Nanak Dev Ji (976 hymns), Guru Amardas Ji (907), Guru Ram Das Ji (679), Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji (118), saints and bards (937) and Guru Angad Dev Ji (61). The volume has 1,430 pages.

This is the only book written during a time of prophets, (Gurus) under their supervision. They approved every single word of it. This is perhaps the biggest book of poetry ever written. It is the center piece of all Sikh ceremonies from birth to death.

It is installed prominently in every gurudwara. Dr. Trump has said, "It is the treasury of the old Hindi

Dialects.”

It is written in praise of God and teaches mankind how to live their lives. It also gives a glimpse of Indian culture and social life during those times.



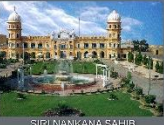
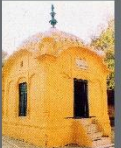



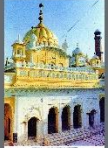








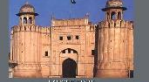






It starts with the Mool Mantar (Basic Lesson):

Ek Onkar	There is one God
Satnam	True is His name
Karta Purakh	Creative His personality and immortal His form
Nirbhau	Beyond fear
Nirvair	Beyond hatred
Akaal Moorat	Beyond death
Aajuni	Beyond birth
Saibhang	Self-existent
Gur Parsad	By Guru's grace
Jap	Recite.

It also says that we are all children of one Father, God, and that the whole human race is one. Its approach is universal and the message is for all of mankind.



HISTORICAL PLACES

 <p>AKALI TAKHAT SAHIB</p>	 <p>SIRI RAIVANDIR SAHIB II</p>	 <p>SIRI NANKANA SAHIB</p>		
 <p>BHAMBRA BHAI PRASAD SAHIB</p>	 <p>CHANDIMANDIR SAHIB</p>	 <p>DEWAN SAHIB</p>	 <p>FATEH SAHIB</p>	 <p>GANDHI PARK</p>
 <p>GANDHI PARK</p>	 <p>GANDHI PARK</p>	 <p>GANDHI PARK</p>	 <p>GANDHI PARK</p>	 <p>GANDHI PARK</p>
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Period of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur ji

1708 - 1715



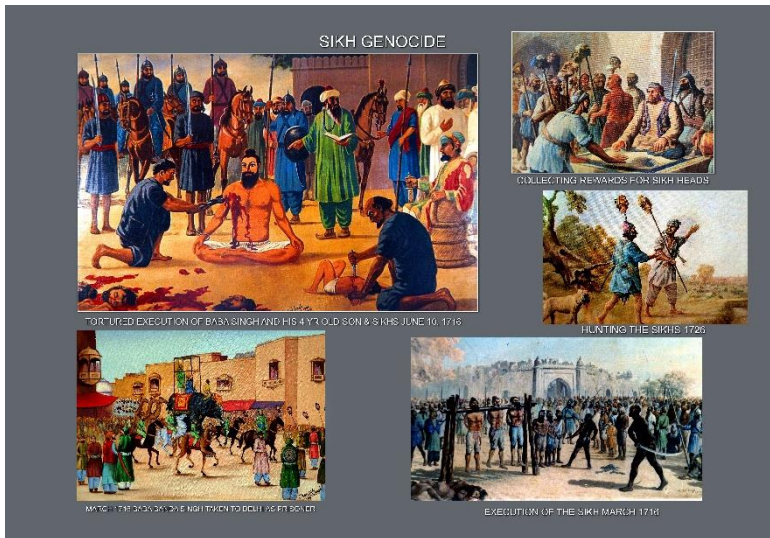
The beginning of this period coincides with the crowning of the East Jersey and West Jersey colonies in America and ends with the Yemasee War in the Carolinas.

Baba Banda Singh Bahadur (Lachhman Das) was born in a Rajput family of Kashmir. He was born on October 16, 1670, at Rajouri. Like many Rajputs, he was trained in using arms, hunting and horse riding. At the age of 14, he killed a female deer while hunting. When he opened her abdomen, he found out that she was pregnant and the fawn was still alive. It died in front of his eyes. He felt guilty and stopped hunting.

Lachhman Das started searching for peace of mind.

He met a wandering saint named Janki Prasad and became his follower.

Janki Parsad gave him the new name of Madho Das. He stayed with him for about one year and then left him after he found another saint named Ram Das at Ramthaman near Kasur. Finding no peace there either, Madho left him and after wandering around many different places, finally reached Panchvati Woods near Nasik. There, he learned yoga from Yogi Augar Nath. After his death, Madho Das became the head of his sect and established a monastery at Nanded on the left bank of River Godavari.



When Guru Gobind Singh Ji arrived in Nanded on September 3, 1708, he went to his monastery and met Madho Das. Madho was very impressed with Guru Ji's personality. When Guru Ji asked his name, Madho forgot his name and said that he was Guru Ji's Banda (man), hence he became known as Banda Singh. Because of his bravery, he was called Banda Singh Bahadur.

Guru Ji baptized him and gave him a new name of Gurbakhsh Singh, but the popular name that stayed with him was Banda Singh Bahadur. During the next few weeks, Guru Ji gave him a crash course in Sikhism. He also made him aware of what was happening in Punjab and who were trustworthy and who were not.

Finally, during the first week of October, Guru Ji sent him towards Punjab along with five Sikhs, some arrows, a nagara (war drum), and a Sikh flag along with an emblem of authority. He also gave him letters for prominent Sikhs.

Banda Singh Bahadur came to Punjab to conquer and punish the Nawab of Sirhind, Wazir Khan. On his arrival in Punjab, as the news spread, Sikhs came to join him. He attacked Samana, which belonged to the executioners of Guru Teg Bahadur Ji, Baba Jorawar Singh and Baba Fateh Singh Ji, on November 26, 1709. After destroying and punishing the officers of surrounding areas, he reached Chappar Chiri. By that time, more Sikhs from Duaba and Majha joined him. On May 12, 1710, a battle was fought with Wazir Khan's army and Wazir Khan was killed. Sikhs acquired Sirhind on May 14, 1710. Baj Singh was appointed the governor of Sirhind.

Banda Singh Ji got married at Sirhind and lived there like a king and had a son. He made Lohgarh his capital and issued a new coin in the name of Nanak. He abolished the land lordship and for the first time in history, gave ownership of the land to the workers.

Bahadur Shah, the Indian ruler, got angry when he saw Banda's increasing power and popularity among the

local people. He sent a big army and issued an order on December 10, 1710, to kill worshippers of Nanak. At that time, Banda Singh left Punjab and moved towards the hills temporarily. He got married there again and had another son.

After Bahadur Shah's death in February 1712, his son, Farrokh Siyar came to power and accelerated the campaign against the Sikhs.

Farrokh sent a big army to capture him. Baba Banda Singh was surrounded at Gurdas Nangal in a small mud fortress with his men and their families. The siege lasted for eight months and the Sikhs did not have enough supplies. They survived on anything and everything edible. They survived on animals, tree leaves or whatever they could eat or find. Hunger and dysentery took a great toll on them.

Finally, on December 7, 1715, the royal army was able to break in and they arrested Banda Singh with 740 other Sikhs. They took Banda and his Sikhs to Delhi. They arrived on February 27, 1716.

During the journey to Delhi, they killed every Sikh they could find. Farrokh Siyar took Banda Singh and his people in a procession through Delhi streets. They put Banda Singh in a cage and 740 Sikhs in chains followed. Behind them, came the heads of 2,000 killed Sikhs stuck on spears and 700 cartloads of Sikhs heads. CR Wilson, a Bengali civilian, in his *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, gave the following description of the entry of the Sikh captives into Delhi:

Malice did its utmost to cover the

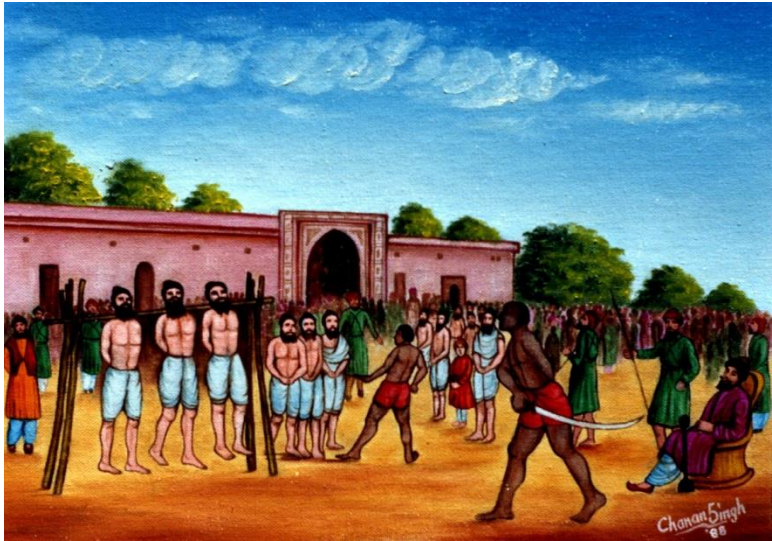
vanquished with ridicule and shame. First, came the heads of the executed Sikhs, stuffed with straw and stuck on Bamboos, their long hair streaming in the wind like a veil, and along with them to show that every living thing in Gurdaspur had perished, a dead cat on a pole. Banda himself, dressed out of mockery in a turban of a red cloth, embroidered with gold, and a heavy robe of brocade flowered with pomegranates, sat in an iron cage, placed on the back of an elephant. Behind him stood a mail-clad officer with a drawn sword. After him came the other 740 prisoners seated two and two upon camels without saddles. Each wore a high foolscap of sheepskin and had one hand pinned to his neck, between two pieces of wood. At the end of the procession rode the three great nobles, Muhammad Amin Khan, sent by the emperor to bring in the prisoners, Qamr-ud-Din, his son, and Zakariya Khan, his son-in-law. The road to the palace, for several miles, was lined with troops and filled with exultant crowds, who mocked at the teacher (Guru) and laughed at the grotesque appearance of his followers. They wagged their heads and pointed the finger of scorn at the poor wretched as they passed. 'Hu! Hu! Infidel dog worshippers your day has come. Truly, retribution follows on transgression, as wheat springs from wheat, and barley from barley!!' Yet the triumph could not have seemed complete. Not all the insults that they had invented could rob the teacher and his followers of his dignity.

Without any sign of dejection or shame, they rode on, calm, cheerful, even anxious to die the death of martyrs. Life was promised to any who would renounce their faith, but they would not prove false to their Guru, and at the place of suffering their constancy was wonderful to look at. 'Me deliverer, kill me first,' was the prayer that constantly rang in the ears of the executioner.

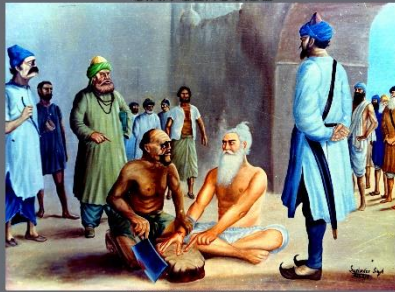
After torturing them in jail, they started public executions on the Kotwali Chabutara. This was the same place where Baba Satidas and Dyala Ji were killed.

Each day, they chopped heads off hundreds of Sikhs. It lasted for several days. After that, Banda Singh with some prominent Sikhs were taken near Kutab Minar on Khawasa Qutab Din's tomb. On their refusal to accept Islam, other Sikhs were tortured to death. Banda's four-year old son, Ajay Singh, was cut into pieces. His heart was taken out and pushed in his mouth. He remained calm and his eyes were pulled out. His flesh was also taken out with pinchers and he was cut up limb by limb. It all happened in June 1716.

Though this period in Sikh history is only eight years long, Banda Singh did a lot with limited resources and being new to the area. His name will keep shining in Sikh history forever.



SIKH GENOCIDE



BHAI MANI SINGH JI 1738



PHOTO: RAJESH KUMAR SINGH / THE BHOJ VANGI PANCHANG, 2017-18



PHOTO: RAJESH KUMAR SINGH / THE BHOJ VANGI PANCHANG, 2017-18

The Sikh Genocide

1710 - 1762



This period coincided with Queen Anne's reign and continued until Pontiac's Rebellion and the Treaty of Paris.

The First Sikh Genocide was started by Bahadur Shah to crush Baba Banda Singh's powers. It began with an order to kill the followers of Nanak on October 10, 1710. Thousands of Sikhs were killed in the following years.

Delhi rulers thought that they had finished the Sikhs. This was only eight years after the death of Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

The remaining Sikhs kept low profiles and stayed in isolated areas. Whenever the government came after them with force, they eloped in the forests, which they knew very well. A few isolated incidents happened here and there.

One of these incidents happened with Bhai Tara Singh. He belonged to Van Village. Tara Singh was a Butter

Jatt. He was a family man and helped Sikhs whenever he could.



It was reported to the Governor of Lahore that Tara Singh gave refuge to criminals. His property was enclosed with a fence made of thorny bushes. Initially, the governor sent a small force of 25 horsemen and 80 footmen to capture and arrest Tara Singh. They were all forced back with heavy casualties. Zakaria Khan got very upset and sent a larger unit of the army.

By this time, Tara Singh had about 22 companions with him. They all fought very bravely causing large casualties to the army. And in the battle, they all lost their lives as well. This incident happened on December 24, 1732.

It made the authorities very mad and the persecution of Sikhs started again. New laws were passed. Sikhs had no rights. It was made legal to rob or kill Sikhs at any given

time.

A special army of 10,000 soldiers was formed to go from village to village looking for Sikhs. They had orders to kill Sikhs and Sikh sympathizers right away. 5 Rupias were given to the informers of Sikhs and 80 Rupias were given for a Sikh's head. People started hunting Sikhs like wild animals for the prize.

The Sikhs who were captured alive were brought to Lahore where they were offered to embrace Islam or death. Most of them chose death. They were tortured very cruelly. For example, some had their scalps removed with cobbler's scrapers. Bhai Tara Singh was one of those who was tortured.

Bhai Mani Singh Ji was tortured by cutting his joints one by one. Bhai Shubeg Singh and his son Shaahbaz Singh were broken on wheels. They were hanged upside down, their skin removed while they were alive and their eyes pulled out. Nothing could scare the Sikhs. They accepted God's will. Most of these horrible scenes were played on Nakhas Chowk in Lahore. The severed heads of Sikhs were piled in Pyramids and exhibited to create fear in the minds of on lookers.

In spite of all this, when Zakaria Khan could not control the Sikhs, he offered peace by giving Jagir to Sikhs in 1733. A humble Sikh, Kapoor Singh ji, was chosen by the Sikhs for that honor. He accepted it as ordered by the Khalsa. This offer did not last for long time though. In 1735, the Jagir was confiscated by Zakaria Khan.

In 1739, Zakaria Khan declared that no Sikh should be spared. Sikhs were hiding in jungles and would come

out once in a while to visit Harmandir Sahib.

There were two Sikhs, Baba Bota Singh and Baba Garja Singh ji, who were coming back after visiting Harmandir Sahib. They hid behind the bushes in Taran Taaran to rest. Some travelers were passing by. They saw some movement in the bushes. One said, "It might be Sikhs." The other one said, "No Sikh is left. If someone is there, they must be a coward." Hearing this, they both came out and let their presence be known. They occupied a bridge near Sarai Nurdin and started collecting tax. None dared to refuse to pay the taxes.

Finally, they sent a letter directly to Zakaria Khan taunting him. He sent 100 horsemen to capture them. They fought against these horsemen very bravely, and after killing many enemies, reached to martyrdom.

In 1739, when Nadir Shah, the king of Persia, was going back, Sikhs came out from jungles and looted his army for arms and money and liberated thousands of Hindu women who he was taking along with him as slaves. This infuriated Zakaria Khan and he started a genocide with more brutal force, which he continued until he died in 1745.

The genocide was then carried on by his successor, his son, Yahia Khan. With the help of his Hindu Diwan, Lakhpat Rai, he hunted Sikhs down in the forests. One attack on Sikhs is called "Chhota Ghallughara" (Lesser Holocaust). Yahia Khan found out through his informer that 15,000 Sikhs were hiding in Kahanuwan. On one side, was a flooded river. He lit a fire in the forest on the other two sides, and on a third side, he sent his well-armed army. A few thousands of Sikhs were able to escape by fighting

through. The rest were killed or arrested. 7,000 Sikhs were killed in one day. It happened on 1 & 2nd of May of 1746. Those who were arrested were butchered publicly in Lahore at Nakhas Chowk. It included the sick, the wounded, women, children and elderly.

After Yahia Khan, in 1752, Mir Manu became the Governor of Lahore. He continued the Sikh genocide with even more brutality. Before him, the rulers went after Sikh men, but he started arresting women, children and elderly men. If they could not do forced labor, they were tortured to death.

On the day of Eid, he killed 1,100 Sikhs. Sikh women were forced to grind wheat on grinding stones. They were given a cup of water and a quarter piece of chapati (like Mexican tortilla) per day to survive. Their breast-fed babies were pulled out of their laps, thrown in the air like rag dolls and killed by piercing them with the spears. Then they were cut into pieces and a garland was made out of their body parts and put around their mothers' necks. When the women could not perform their task, they were put to death as well. This continued until 1753.

Near Amritsar, Mir Manu found out that some Sikhs were hiding in sugar cane fields. He himself went there with his army and surrounded the field. Sikhs attacked suddenly on his side. His horse bolted and he fell from his seat. His one foot got caught in stirrup and was dragged along by the horse. A few days later, on November 2, 1753, he died of severe injuries and pain.

In 1757, Abdali came back again. Sikhs looted him and liberated the enslaved Hindu women. He sent a large army after the Sikhs. Baba Deep Singh ji died to protect

Harmandir Sahib against Jahan Khan. This period produced Sikh leaders like Nawab Kapoor Singh and Jassa Singh Ahluwalia ji. After Abdali went back, Sikhs were able to defeat his governor of Lahore. By the end of 1761, the entire Punjab, between Satluj and Indus was under the control of Sikhs.

When Ahmed Shah Abdali came back in the beginning of 1762, Sikhs retreated to the forest areas. A large number of Sikhs gathered in Malerkotla and Kup area. Abdul Shah Abdali was informed about this and he left Lahore for Malerkotla on February 3, 1762. He reached Malerkotla on the morning of February 5th. About 50,000 Sikhs were surrounded from all sides by Abdali's forces.

Sikhs under the guidance of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Charat Singh Sukarchakia, and Sham Singh Karorisinghia fought bravely pushing towards Barnala. By the end of the day, some of the Sikhs were able to break through the strong hold. Women, children, and elderly who could not escape, were mercilessly butchered. Almost 25,000 lost their lives in one day. This is also called "Vadda Ghallughara" (Large Holocaust).

After this, Abdali went back to Lahore on March 3, 1762. With him, he carried 50 carts loaded with the heads of Sikhs and a large number of prisoners, who were executed in Lahore later.

Abdali attacked Harmandir Sahib on the day of Baisakhi in 1762 as a large number of Sikhs were going to be congregating there. When Sikhs heard that he was coming, they dispersed. Those who stayed behind under the command of Baba Gurbaksh Singh fought bravely until death.

Abdali ordered his troops to blow up the Harmandir Sahib. One brick flew and hit him on the face and that wound lasted on his face for rest of his life. He died a few years later.

The period between 1710 to 1767 is considered the darkest period in Sikh History. During this period, 300,000 to 400,000 Sikhs lost their lives. Almost 3 times it was declared that Sikhs were eliminated from the face of earth. Followers of Nanak were considered finished. People were not allowed to say guruh (name for raw sugar cake) because it sounded like Guru. Each time Sikhs bounced back stronger than ever and more determined than before.

This period gave Sikh History the greatest heroes like Baba Banda Bahadur, Baba Bota Singh, and Baba Garja Singh ji. It also gave great martyrs like Bhai Taru Singh and Bhai Mani Singh ji and thousands more whose name history could not remember. They are the unsung heroes of Sikh History. It also produced the leaders like S Nawab Kapoor Singh, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, and S. Baghel Singh Ji along with many more misal sardars.

During all this chaos, the State of Patiala which was under Baba Ala Singh, did not play much role. Yes, they did help the Sikhs here and there, but to keep peace with Abdali, kept on giving him precious gifts and a lot of cash.



SIKH GENOCIDE



BABA DEEP SINGH 11 NOV 1757



ABDULLI DESTROYING KIRPANA WALE KOTLAHE IN OCT 1762



SHOTA GHALLUGHARA JUNE 1745



WADDA GHALLUGHARA FEB 5, 1762

Rise of the Khalsa

1762 - 1799



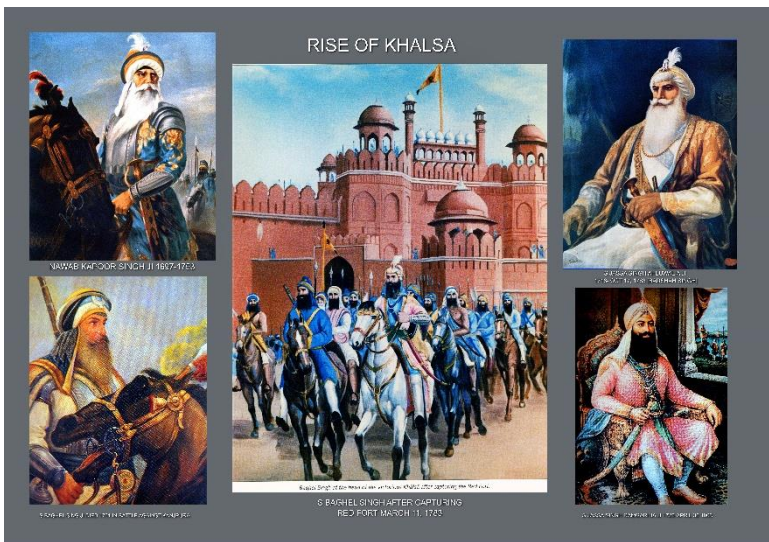
This period coincides with the death of George II in Great Britain and continues until the death of George Washington.

After the great holocaust and destruction of Harmandir Sahib, Abdali went back to Lahore, somewhat satisfied that he had achieved what he came for. He was surprised to know that 60,000 Sikhs assembled in Amritsar on Diwali and resolved to defend any attacks on Golden Temple. On October 16, 1762, he attacked Amritsar again and he felt heavy resistance. He was forced by the Sikhs to withdraw. Sikhs started rebuilding the Golden Temple. After cleaning the whole area and tank, the foundation stone was laid down by S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia.

Ahmed Shah came back seventh times in 1764. Very stiff resistance was given by the Sikhs. It took him 4 days to reach Amritsar from Lahore. When he reached Amritsar, he expected a large force but there were only 30 Sikhs under the command of Gurbakhash Singh. All of them got killed during the fight.

After Abdali left in March of 1765, Sikhs got together on the Vaisakhi of April 10, 1765, and passed the resolution (gurmata) to capture Lahore. They captured it on the same day and Multan was captured in 1766.

Abdali came back the eighth time to Punjab to destroy the power of Khalsa and attacked Amritsar again in January 1767.



Sikhs fought bravely and killed 5,000 Pathans. After pondering around, he went back to Afghanistan. When Abdali crossed the Indus River, Sikhs occupied Lahore again. By the end of 1767, Khalsa ruled all of Punjab. Sikhs started extending toward Delhi. Abdali came back again in 1769. This time, the Sikhs did not let him cross the Jehlum.

In February of 1783, Buddha Dal under S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Baghel Singh marched towards Delhi with 60,000 Sikhs. Finally, on March 11, 1783, the Sikh

army started entering the walled city by making a hole in the wall, now called “Mori Gate.” S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia sat on the throne of Delhi in the Red Fort. Then a treaty was signed by the king which gave control back to the Mughals, with the condition that they will give 37% of revenue to the Sikhs.

As a souvenir, S. Jassa Singh took a piece of stone out from Delhi Takhat and brought it back to Amritsar. It was kept in Akal Bunga until 1980, and now, it has been placed on one side behind the Langar Hall.

30,000 Sikh army soldiers stayed in Delhi under S. Baghel Singh’s leadership. During this time, Baghel Singh founded a historical site and constructed a Sikh shrine. Sikhs camped in the Sabzee Mandi. Now this site is called “Tees Hazari” and a court is there. Shah Alam the Second was pleased by the way S. Baghel Singh managed. He granted him one eighth Octroi for life and Baghel Singh left Delhi in December 1783.

If the Sikhs had wanted, they could have ruled all of India. The emperor in Delhi was weak and Abdali also was exhausted and the other threats had decreased.

After the death of S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia in October, 1783, there was a void in Sikh leadership. Misals did not appoint any supreme leaders. Then misal sardars started fighting with each other. Punjab was almost divided into 11 independent states (Misals). Among all the Misals, young Ranjit Singh of the Sukarchakia Misal emerged as the strongest leader.

In 1779, Lahore was under the control of the Bhangi Misals, who had liberated it from the Afghans in 1765. But

as power corrupts, they started doing some excess and the general population was not happy with them. The leaders of Lahore secretly approached Ranjit Singh. After discussing it with his mother-in-law, Rani Sada Kaur, he captured Lahore with her help on June 27, 1799, without much bloodshed. On April 12, 1801, in a coronation ceremony, he was proclaimed the Maharaja of Punjab.

RISE OF KHALSA



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RANI SADA KAUR LEADING HER ARMY TO ATTACK LAHORE
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The Sikh Raj

1799 - 1849



This period coincides with the death of George Washington and continues until the beginning of the California Gold Rush and the election of Zachary Taylor as President of the United States.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh was born in Gujranwala on November 2, 1780. His father was S. Mahan Singh and his mother was Raj Kaur. He was the grandson of S. Charat Singh of the Sukarchakia Missal. At the age of 12, he took control of his missal as his father died in 1792. In 1796, he was married to Sada Kaur's daughter, Mehtab Kaur of Kanhayia Missal.

At this time, Punjab was split into many small states under Sikh, Rajpoot, Muslim, and Pathaan chiefs. Sham Zaman invaded India four times between 1793 to 1798 but

was thrown back by Sikhs.

After capturing Lahore and declaring himself Maharaja of Punjab, Ranjit Singh started consolidating his empire. He started a mint and created the Nanak Shahi coin in the name of Guru Nanak. His seal did not have his name. Instead, it read, “Sarkar Khalsa Ji” (Government of Khalsa).



After dealing with the Majha Missals, he turned towards Malwa. Those chiefs went under British protection. In 1809, he signed a treaty with British and agreed upon making the Satluj his eastern boundary. He extended his kingdom to Peshawar in the west, Kashmir in the north, and Sind in the south.

The Maharaja had European generals in his army, including one American born general, and great generals like S. Hari Singh Nalwa and Akali Phula Singh JI. He acquired the world famous diamond, “Kohinoor,” which he

wore all the time. He treated all religions with respect. During his reign of 40 years, no one was given the punishment of death. He even let his enemies go after they accepted his sovereignty. He did not have any formal education but was an excellent warrior and ruler.

This was the golden period for the Sikhs and the people of Punjab. Maharaja Ranjit Singh had a stroke and died in 1839.

During his reign, the Dogras got into high positions and controlled the administration. After his death, his oldest son, Kharak Singh, was declared Maharaja but he was not so strong a person. Most of the time, the work was done by his grandson Naunihal Singh. Naunihal Singh was killed by the Dogras, who made his death seem like an accident.

Sher Singh became the new Maharaja of Punjab after the death of Naunihal Singh. He also played into the hands of crafty Dogras and Brahmins. After he was murdered, Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Maharani Jinda's youngest son, Dalip Singh, was declared maharaja.

At this time, the Sikh Empire was in the hands of non-Punjabis. Lal Singh, a Purbia Brahmin, was the Chief Minister of Punjab. Tej Singh, another Purbia Brahmin, was commander-in- chief of the Khalsa force. Dina Nath, a Hindu Brahmin, was in charge of overall Sikh Empire affairs.

Under such leadership, the Sikh army was fighting with the British army. Those leaders did not have any loyalty towards the Sikhs and made deals with Britishers.

After three major battles were fought at Mudaki,

Alliwal and Sabharaon, most of the loyal Sikh soldiers and sardars like S. Sham Singh Attariwala were killed.

Sikhs fought bravely under all odds and were winning. Britishers were retreating, but Teja Singh betrayed the Sikhs. He sent mustard seeds instead of gun powder to the army and destroyed the supply bridge on the Satluj. He also sent a message to the British Commander not to give up.

Shah Mohammad, a famous poet, wrote, “Because of the lack of one sarkar (Ranjit Singh), the Sikh army lost after winning all the battles.” One British Commander paid tribute to S. Sham Singh Attariwala by writing, “You did not lose, they made you lose. I did not win, they made me win.”

Britishers entered Lahore not as conquerors, but as caretakers of Maharaja Dalip Singh. First, they moved the Maharaja to Uttar Pradesh and then, with the excuse of education, to Europe. They arrested Maharani Jinda and rewarded the Sikh traitors for their services. On March 29, 1849, a public Darbar was held in Lahore and the proclamation was made declaring the end of the Sikh Empire.

Maharaja Dalip Singh stayed in England. His mother joined him later. After her death, Dalip Singh took her ashes to India, but he was not allowed to go to Punjab. He married “Bamba” and had two sons and three daughters. Like his grandfather, he had a stroke and died in a hotel in Paris on October 22, 1893. He was buried on his estate at Elvedon in Suffolk, England a week later. One of his daughters finally managed to get to Lahore to her ancestral home.

British Raj 1849 – 1947

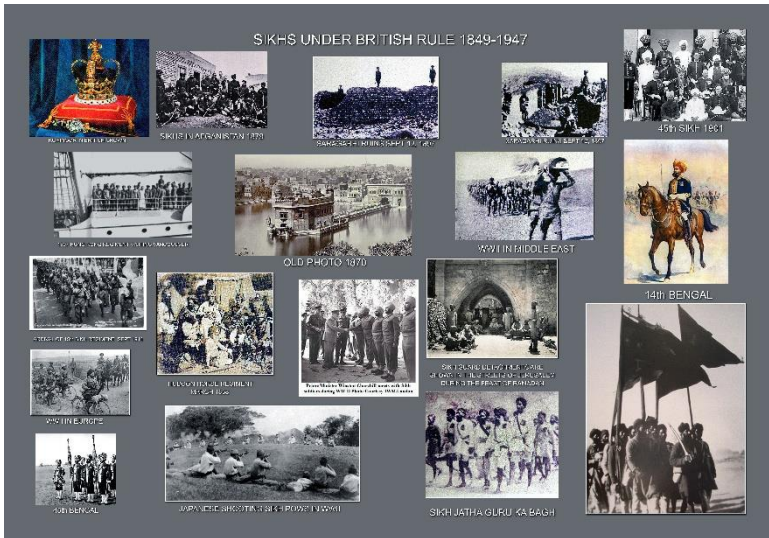


This period begins at the time of Zachary Taylor's presidency and the beginning of California's Gold Rush. It ended in 1947 when the National Security Act was passed, the Polaroid Camera was invented and Jackie Robinson broke racial barriers in Baseball. Harry Truman was the President of the United States at that time.

After Britishers took over Punjab by deceiving and breaking all their promises and ignoring all their treaties, they wanted to control the Sikhs. They absorbed most of the Sikh army of Ranjit Singh into their own. They started recruiting Sikhs for the army.

Britishers preferred to recruit Jatt Sikhs in the army so they started asking for family names. If you look at Sikh history from 1699 to 1849, you will not find the last names of Sikhs. If there were more than one person with the same name, they were identified by their village. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Jassa Singh Ramgarhia were such examples. The caste system as represented by last names had disappeared as it was supposed to.

When Britishers started asking for the last names, people started going back a few generations to dig for their last names. Since then, “Singh” has been a middle name for Sikhs. Sikhs started using their last names. Britishers also made separate Sikh regiments in the army. Sikhs in uniforms had to be baptized Sikhs. They carried Guru Granth Sahib Ji wherever they went. During World War I, Britishers prepared a mini Granth Sahib Ji which was only 1 ¼” in size



Because agriculture was not profitable due to high taxes and high interest rates by the lenders, young illiterate men from villages started joining the army in large numbers. Many Sikhs moved to other British colonies such as East Africa, Malaya, Singapore, and Hong Kong to do labor work. Some became watchmen to earn a livelihood. By doing this, they earned the respect from the British rulers.

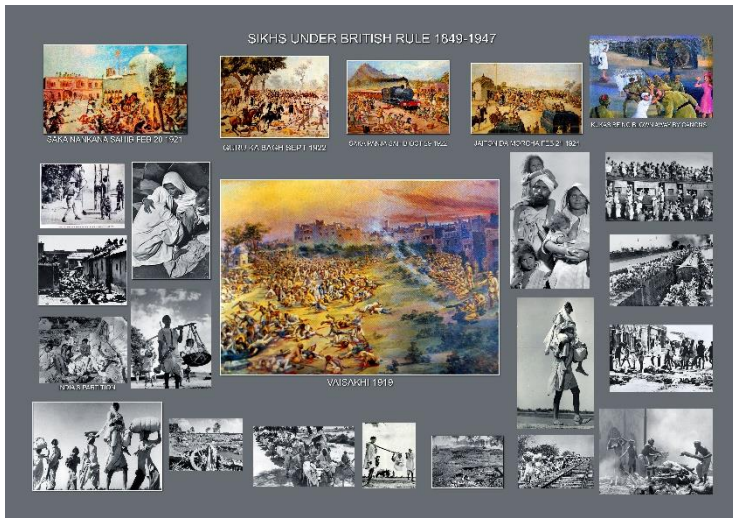
In September of 1897, in Saragarhi (a mud fortress), in the northwest frontiers of India, 21 Sikhs under the command of Havaldar Ishar Singh held the fortress against 10,000 Pathaans. They fought bravely until the last soldier died. It is considered as one of the greatest “last stands” by military historians.

After this, Sikhs served the British Army, fighting in Europe during the World Wars I & II. More than 83,000 Sikhs lost their lives and 109045 were wounded. Their ashes are scattered all over Europe and Asia. Sir Winston Churchill said “British people are indebted and obliged to the Sikhs for a long time. I know within this century we needed their help twice (in W W I & II) and they did help us very well. As a result of their timely help ,we are today able to live with dignity and independence. In the war, they fought and died for us , wearing the turbans.”

During the World War II, Sikhs also served in the Indian Liberation Army under Subhash Chandra Bose. They left USA, Canada, Singapore, and Hong Kong and went back to India to fight for the freedom of India. Persons like Bhagat Singh, Kartar Singh Sarabha were hanged to death and many were sent to the cellular jails where they suffered for many years. Many of them never came out alive.

In India itself, during the Freedom Movement, Sikhs played much bigger role than their share. In Jalian Wala Bagh, Guru Ka Bagh, Jaito da Morcha, Saka Nankana Sahib, Saka Panja Sahib, it was mostly Sikhs who lost their lives. In Guru Ka Bagh agitation, Sikhs showed what non-violence is. When you are weak and cannot fight, that is not non-violence. When you have a sword and you don't use it against the enemies, that is non-violence.

Every day, 100 Sikhs would leave Akal Takhat and they would be beaten cruelly, sometimes even to death. They never raised arms and stayed true to their traditions. It was a Sikh, S. Udham Singh, who killed General O. Dyer in England to take revenge of Jalian Wala Bagh.



The English Police Superintendent who had beaten the Sikhs in Guru Ka Bagh was killed by Babbar Akalis in Patiala. Sikhs will fight for justice. They never forget their enemies or friends. During the first half of the 20th century, Sikhs lost their lives on three fronts:

1. Fighting to defend British interests in the World Wars I & II in Europe.
2. Fighting for the freedom of India in the Freedom Movement.
3. Fighting against British allies in India during the World War II under Subash Chandra

Bose's Azad Hind Army

Finally, India got freedom on August 15, 1947. India was divided into two countries. Britishers caused the partition of India. In general, Punjabis and Bengalis suffered the most. In Punjab, 78% (11.2 million) of the population transfer took place. One million people lost their lives. Sikhs, who left Pakistan, were mostly farmers and big landlords. With a blink of an eye, they all became refugees. Hundreds of thousands lost their lives.

Sikh soldiers who fought for the British and survived did not get any pension. They fell through the cracks. The British refused to pay saying that it is the Indian government's duty to look after them and the Indian government said that Britishers should compensate them because they fought on their behalf.



Sikhs in Free India

1947 Onwards



This period coincides with the presidency of Harry Truman and continues until the presidency of Barrack Obama.

Even though Sikhs were only 2% of the Indian population, they paid the highest price for the freedom of India. Out of 121 hanged, 93 were Sikhs. Out of 2,646 who suffered life imprisonment, 2,147 were Sikhs (80%).

It was the Gadari Babas from California, USA, who started the freedom movement for India in 1912. The majority of them were Sikhs. They gave heroes to the freedom movement like Kartar Singh Sharabha, S. Bhagat Singh, and S. Udham Singh.

During the freedom movement, Nehru and Gandhi promised Sikhs an autonomous state in free India in their offer to join India. After independence, when India recognized states on the basis of language, Sikhs were ignored. When they reminded Nehru of his promise, his answer was, “now the situation has changed.”

Sikhs had to fight again in 1950 and 1960 to get their state. In fact, when Sikh refugees came from Pakistan, Nehru declared them criminals and told all his agencies to keep an eye on them.



The Constitution of Free India refused to recognize Sikhs as an independent religion. They are considered Hindus under the Constitution. The explanation is that Sikhs came out of Hindus. If Jews claim tomorrow that all the Christians are Jews because Jesus Christ was born into a Jewish family, it would be the same logic.

When they wrote the glorious history of India, they did not mention the sacrifices made by Sikhs. India claims Gandhi got freedom for India by non-violence. The role of freedom heroes like Sarabha, Bhagat Singh, Rajguru Sukhdev, and Udam Singh are all forgotten.

No credit is given to the Gadari Babas who ignited

the freedom movement. All the credit of the Gadar Party is given to Lala Hardyal in history books. There is no doubt that he played some role initially and ran the paper for a few months. But his association with the Gadar Party was only for five months. After that, he left the USA and went to Switzerland. He did not have any further contact or contribution to the cause. Bhai Parmanand once told Baba Bhakana, "You should not put much faith in Lala Ji. He is not reliable. You never know when he will quit suddenly."



I had the chance to meet Baba Makhan Singh Sandhu, the last Secretary of the Gadar Party. He was against putting the picture of Lala Hardyal in the Gurudwara Museum here. According to him, Lala Hardyal apologized to the British and played no role in the Freedom Movement after that.

And there was also General Bikram Singh who saved Kashmir for India in the war with China in 1962 and in the war with Pakistan in 1965. Sikhs paid a heavy price

in 1971 during the war with Pakistan again. It was General Shubeg Singh Ji and General Arora who got victory for India, and recently, in Kargill, Sikhs gave their lives for India.

Since the freedom of India, Sikhs have had to fight for their rights. Then came 1984 when Sikhs wanted more rights for Punjab and the issues of water use and the recognition of Anand Karaj (Sikh marriage) emerged.

In June 1984, Mrs. Gandhi (then Prime Minister of India), sent the Indian Army to teach a lesson to the Sikhs. The Indian Army, with all its mighty force and fire power attacked the Golden Temple, the holiest shrine of the Sikhs. Their excuse was to arrest Sant Jarnail Singh Bhinderwale and his associates who were in the Golden Temple at that time.

On one side, were about forty men armed with machine guns, rifles, and pistols to defend the Golden Temple, and on the other side, was the world's largest army with tanks and air support. The army practiced their attack thoroughly in Chakarta by making a life-size Golden Temple complex. In spite of that, those brave Sikhs kept the army at bay for three days. Not even a single person surrendered. Every Sikh fought to the last bullet and the last breath.

The day the army chose to attack was not a coincidence. It was planned by the government to teach a lesson to the Sikhs. At the same time, the army attacked another forty holy shrines in Punjab, killing almost ten thousand men, women, and children who were visiting the holy places to celebrate the martyrdom of Guru Arjun Dev Ji. The Sikh Reference Library was set on fire and many

manuscripts and other historical documents were taken away by the army and have not been returned.

Some Sikh soldiers revolted in the army and many villagers went to protect the Golden Temple. They all lost their lives. Sikhs felt the same way as a true Christian would feel if some country's army attacked Rome. Or how a Muslim would feel if Mecca was attacked by an army during Hajj.

As true to Sikh tradition, two brave Sikhs, Shaheed Beant Singh and Satwant Singh, punished Indira Gandhi for her crimes against the Sikhs and their shrines. Afterward, Hell came loose on the Sikhs.

By the direct orders of Rajiv Gandhi, in Delhi alone, more than 7,000 Sikhs were burned alive. Their properties were looted and houses were destroyed. Sikh women were gang raped by Hindu mobs. Police sided with the mobs and helped them in every way to teach a lesson to Sikhs. Wherever the Sikhs resisted, police reached there and arrested them for protecting themselves.

In some instances, they disarmed Sikhs and promised to protect them if they gave up their weapons. As soon as the Sikhs trusted and gave up their weapons, the police gave signals to Hindu mobs that those people did not have any arms. They were then attacked by these mobs and got killed by being beaten with iron rods. The rioters also put tires around their necks and burned them alive.

This was repeated all over India. Sikhs were pulled out of trains and buses and beaten to death or burned alive. Sikh women were assaulted publicly. Sikhs were thrown in fire chambers while alive in many foundries in India. Sikh

complaints were not registered in the police stations. The army was not called. This massacre lasted for 72 hours. Decades later, the victims are still waiting for the justice from the Indian Government.

Criminals like Sajjan Kumar Shastri and Jagdish Tytler were rewarded by Congress for their roles in these killings. No law worked against them. Official estimates are that 3,870 Sikhs were killed in Delhi. But certain agencies have calculated the numbers at more than 7,000 in Delhi alone. A conservative guess is that more than 10,000 Sikhs lost their lives in those 4 days throughout India. When Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was asked about it, his reply was, “When a big tree falls, the earth is bound to shake.”

Many Hindus tried to help their Sikh friends and neighbors by giving them shelters in their homes. A commission was appointed for these cases. Many Hindus did raise their voice against the government commission but the criminals are still wandering freely.

Mrs. Nayantra Sehgal, the first cousin of Indira Gandhi said, “I am talking about the first three days of November 1984, when areas in and around Delhi were turned into a slaughter house and more than 2,000 Sikhs were butchered like goats. The female of the species was kept alive. What earthly use is a dead woman to a festive frolic, that features rape as one of its attractions? Each girl was taken away by 10 or 12 boys, many of them in their teens. They would take her to the nearby mosque, gang rape her and send her back after a few hours. Some of these girls never returned. One girl said 15 men climbed on her. Most of these rapes took place while the bodies of their husbands, sons, fathers, or brothers were still burning. It

was instigated and blessed by politicians and workers of the ruling party and carried out by squads of their loyal constituents from resettlement colonies.”

In the words of Dharam Vir, Principal Secretary of India’s first Prime Minister, J.L. Nehru: “While Delhi was numbed by shock and sorrow, a wild frenzy of terror, murder, loot, and arson seized large sections on the city. Its prime target was a minority community (Sikhs). In large parts of the country, violence spread in various degrees of intensity, shaking faith in our secularism, not only on the part of the affected community but also other minorities. The administration appears to have been totally paralyzed for three critical days while hordes of hooligans went on looting, raping, killing and arson.”

All this is well documented by Chief Justice Sikri, Professor Ragini Kothari, and Manushi and many other justice loving citizens of India. Persons like Mr. Phulka are still fighting in courts to get justice for the victims of 1984. So far, many governments have come and gone and none of them has issued any sincere apology to the Sikhs.

The politicians often say that we should forget 1984. I ask these politicians, would they have forgotten if their wife, daughter or sister got raped and their father, son or brother would have been killed or burnt alive? Following that, Sikh youths were hunted and killed in fake encounters, or tortured to death by the police of Punjab for ten years.

Unfortunately, at that time, the President of India was Giani Zail Singh. He was a puppet in Mrs. Gandhi’s hands, just like our recent prime minister, Mr. Manmohan Singh, was in the hands of the Congress Party. Although he is a very intelligent man, his remote control was in the

hands of Mrs Sonia Gandhi. General K. S. Brar and Dyal, the leaders of the attack on the Golden Temple, were Sikh. KPS Gill a police officer, whose hands are colored with the blood of thousands of innocent Sikhs. Beant Singh was the C.M. of Punjab then. Though they were Sikhs, they played into the hands of the government. They were used as handle for the axe which they used to butcher the Sikhs. Even today some Sikhs are playing that role which is unfortunate.

Indira Gandhi is gone and so is General Vaidya who was Commander-in-Chief of Army in 1984. Sikhs will never forget or forgive their enemies, especially those who attacked the Golden Temple, which is evident by recent attack on General K.S. Brar 28 years after the incident.

In this third holocaust, more than 100,000 Sikhs lost their lives. In the 20th Century alone, half a million Sikhs have lost their lives in the World War I & II and wars of freedom and during the partition of India. Even after India's independence, the third holocaust took a big toll on Sikhs.

History is a witness and each time if Sikhs' enemies want to destroy the Sikhs, Sikhs come back stronger and more determined than ever. They have had to fight for their survival since their existence. And they will survive as long as they exist.

Sikhs are peace loving people. They do not oppress others; nor do they want to be oppressed.

Every Sikh carries a sword (kirpan) which is an arm of defense, not offence. The word "kirpan" is made up of two words: kirpa (favour) and aan (honor). It is only used to protect the weak people or to protect a Sikh's honor and

life. For a Sikh, honor for his religion or his family comes before anything else. Life is a secondary thing for Sikhs. He can give his life for the honor of his religion. He can take the life of anybody who tries to dishonor him or his religion.

A Sikh is a saint-soldier. He never raises his weapon to attack first, but raises it in defense. He remembers his Guru Ji's teachings. Guru Ji has said, "It is just to raise the sword only if all other peaceful means have failed to resolve the problem."

In this country, our forefathers and American Constitution have given the citizens the right to bear arms. Now, tell me one thing: You are in your home, minding your own business and a mob attacks you just because they don't like your appearance or the way you live your life. You called the police and instead of helping you and dispersing the mob, they start helping the mob. What will you do? Won't you shoot back at them until your last bullet or breath to protect your family and property? A similar thing happened to Sikhs in free India. All of their rights were taken away by the government. Nobody listened to them when they complained to the authorities. Under these circumstances, some young men and women took arms. They preferred to die fighting rather than be the sacrificial goats. And because of this, Sikhs are labeled terrorists or extremists by the Indian government.

Sikhs are part of India. Their homeland (Punjab) is in India. Now, Sikhs live all over the world, but a part of them is always attached to Punjab. Their soul is attached to their beloved Golden Temple and other Sikh shrines. When any bad thing happens in Punjab, it hurts them. They have survived against all odds and I am sure they will flourish in

India and all over the world. They will spread the Word of the Guru to the whole mankind.

Every Sikh abroad is an ambassador of Sikhs in India. So, it is a great responsibility on everyone to live up to the expectations in society.



Sikhs in the USA

By the end of the nineteenth century, the British empire was spread all over the globe. A large number of Sikhs were serving in the army as well as watchmen in various British colonies.

The Sikhs' first exposure to North America was in 1897 when Sikh soldiers, as a part of the Hong Kong Regiment, came to Vancouver. They were on their way to London to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond jubilee.



The first written proof of the Sikhs' presence in North America was found in an article published in the San Francisco Chronicle on April 6, 1899, under the headline, "Sikhs Allowed to Land." It mentions four names: Bakhshish Singh, Budh Singh, Wariam Singh and Suhava Singh.

After that, Sikhs started coming to Canada and the USA from Hong Kong and Singapore. Initially, they worked in lumber mills and farms in the Oregon area. Many came to Canada first and then moved south to the USA.



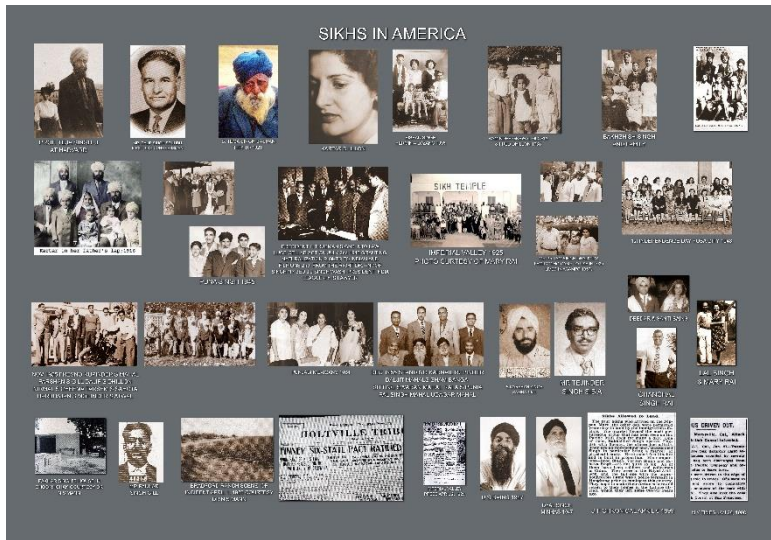
As their numbers grew, so did resentment among locals. It was all due to misunderstandings. Most of the immigrants back then were not educated. A few bad incidents happened in Bellingham, Washington State; Astoria, Oregon; and Marysville, California (January 28, 1908).

On May 13, 1914, 376 British citizens (among them 340 Sikhs) came to Canada on the ship Kama Gata Maru. They were not allowed to land and were forced back to India in July of 1914. On their return to Calcutta, they were greeted by the British army with bullets. Quite a few Sikhs died there and the rest of them were arrested and sent to

various jails by a special train.

By the time the first decade of 20th century was over, the presence of Sikhs was felt mainly in the Western United States. Some worked in mills in Oregon and Washington. In San Joaquin County, they were working on farms in the Holt area and on the construction of railway lines.

Being here in a free society, they felt that they were mistreated in their homeland by Britishers. But they also felt mistreated by Americans because they were considered slaves. They decided to stay in America to start a revolution to free India.



For this purpose, they formed the “Gadar Party” (the “Rebellious Group”) and started holding meetings and publishing newspapers and other pamphlets.

Around 1912, they formed the “Hindi Association

of Pacific Coast” in Portland, Oregon and “Pacific Khalsa Deewan Society” in Stockton, California.

The first Sikh Temple in the USA was established in Stockton on Grant Avenue. Baba Jawala Singh, Baba Vaisakha Singh and Professor Sant Teja Singh ji were among the founding members.

The Hindi Association moved from Oregon to California and became a part of the Gadar Party. A building was bought on 5-Wood Street in San Francisco and was named Yugantar Ashram. The first Gadar paper was published on November 1, 1913.

Sikhs like Baba Jawala Singh and Baba Vaisakha Singh ji were supporting the Gadar Party from the newly built Gurudwara in Stockton. They also bought a four-plex in Berkeley where Indian students could stay for free. Their tuition was paid by Baba Jawala Singh and all their groceries used to come from Holt. During the summer months, they were given jobs, free food and shelter.

With the start of the World War I, most Sikhs started going back to India to fight for the freedom of their country. People left their jobs and everything else they had to free their motherland. The population of Sikhs declined in the USA as a result.

Those who stayed had to struggle for every basic right. Due to a change in land ownership laws, no foreigner could own or lease land any more. Most of the Sikhs who were leasing land and making a living were now out of business. To circumvent that, they started to get married to Mexican women so they could lease land on their names. They also leased land in the name of Americans who they

paid a percentage of their earnings. Deception was common. Sikhs did not have any legal ways to address that.



One such incident happened in Imperial Valley in which Pakhar Singh Gill was deceived by three of his business partners. He tried everything. He went to the police and the courts. Everybody told him that they could do nothing to help him. In the end, he took the law into his own hands and killed two of his partners and went to attack the third one. It became a big issue. Some said Sikhs were violent and cruel. But there was another group of fair minded people who started thinking about why this had happened. Though Pakhar Singh Gill spent 30 Years in jail, it was an instrument for the change in the land ownership laws. You now see big land lords all over the USA. We owe that to Pakhar Singh Gill’s sacrifice.

Because of their appearance and long hair, Sikhs have been called “rag heads” and many other derogatory

names. Still, Dalip Singh Saundh became the first Sikh US Congressman. Now you will find Sikhs in almost every field of life. There are Sikh doctors, lawyers, engineers, professors, technicians, businessmen, teachers, bankers, etc. Some keep their Sikh appearance, some have given it up.

Sikhs are well respected in their fields. One such Sikh is Mr. N.S. Kampani, who is known as the “Father of Optics.” There were Sikhs serving in the US Army during the World Wars I & II. Today, there are quite a few Sikh men and women who have joined the US Army to serve and sacrifice for their new adopted country. Sikhs are joining politics too. Many Sikhs are running as candidates in elections. There are many Sikh mayors in different towns OF U.S.A.

Although we have come a long way in the last 100 years, a lot needs to be done. After 9/11, Mr. Sodhi’s murder and then the Wisconsin Sikh temple shooting are reminders that all is not well yet. It’s all due to misunderstandings. Perhaps we are unable to educate our neighbors about who we are and what we stand for. As the new generation is coming up, they might be able to tell our story to their American friends, which will lead to better understanding and mutual respect for each other.

One thing is for sure: our ancestors came here to earn money and then went back to India, but whosoever is coming now, is coming here to stay. Though we might look different, our dreams are the same as those of early Americans. To achieve those dreams, we have to educate our American friends and also have to understand their point of view. We need to have open discussions, not arguments with each other. Hopefully, one day, a

descendent of the early Sikh pioneers will sit in the White House as the President of the USA. Only on that day, will our American dream be fully accomplished.

I salute those early Sikh pioneers who opened the doors of this great country for us. They sacrificed their lives and comforts so we could enjoy the luxuries of life. We are indebted to all of them.



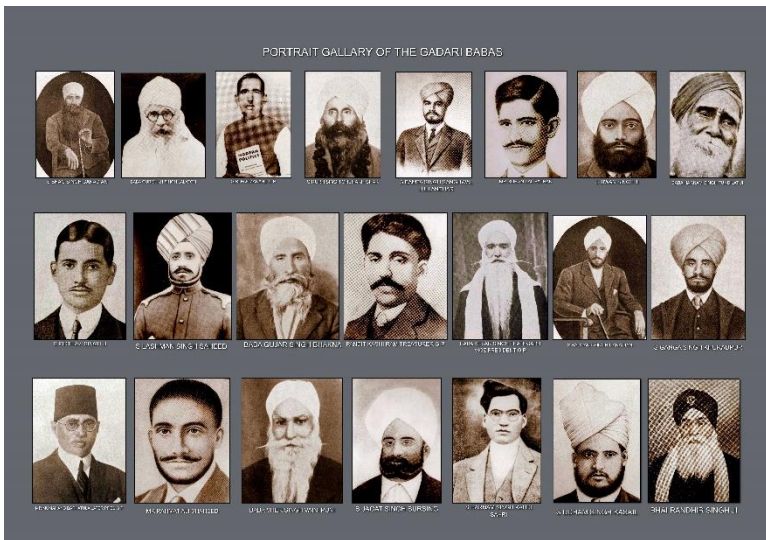
The Gadar Party



The word, “Gadar,” means mutiny. The Gadar Party was an organization formed by the Indians living in the United States. Its purpose was to instill patriotic feeling in young Indians and to train them for an uprising in India against the British.



In May 1913, in Astoria, Oregon, a meeting was held by the South Asian immigrants led by Sikhs. Then on December 31, 1913, a large meeting was held in Sacramento, CA. An organization was officially formed and it was named “Hindi Association of Pacific Coast.” Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna was the first president; Baba Jawala Singh, the founder of the Sikh Temple, was the vice president; Lala Hardial was the Secretary, and Pandit Kashi Ram was the Treasurer.



The aim of the association was to free India from British rule through armed struggle. Its head office was in San Francisco, California. They also started to publish a weekly paper, “The Gadar,” in Urdu and later on it was published in Punjabi, Hindi, and other languages too. Lala Hardial was the first editor of the paper. After him, it was taken over by Kartar Singh Sarabha.

There were twenty-one members in the first

committee. Then, branches of the association were established in different parts of the USA, Canada, and other countries. The newspaper was sent to these places and also to India.

Ultimately, when the World War I started, most of the members went to India to fight against the British, thinking that the British were occupied in the war in Europe and it would be easy to defeat them.

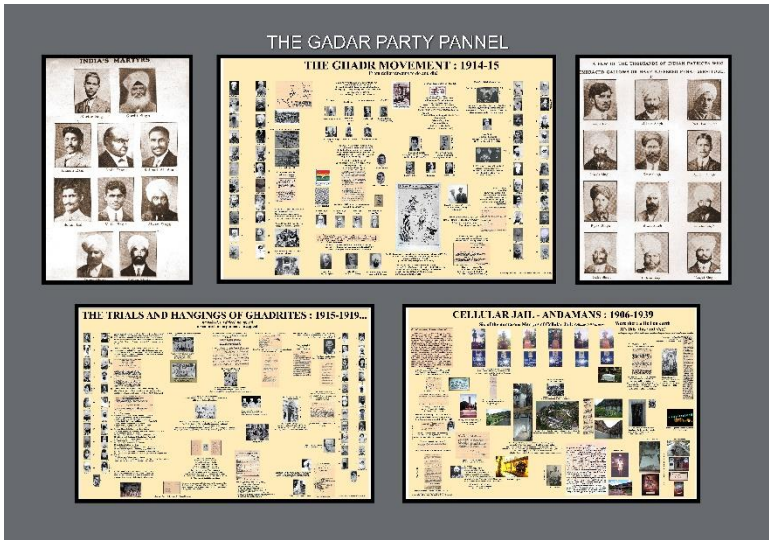


Almost 8,000 Indians (majority of them Sikhs) went to India to fight for their motherland. Many of them were arrested as soon as they landed in India. Some of them went on Komagata Maru. They were welcomed in Calcutta with bullets.

People like Kartar Singh Sarabha were hanged. Some were sent to life imprisonment.

There is no doubt that the Gadar Party played a

great role for the freedom of India. They are the forgotten heroes of Indian freedom movements. In Indian history books, the credit for the Gadar Party is given to Lala Hardial. No doubt he was a very intelligent man. He did help set-up the structure but his association with the party and the Gadar newspaper was only for a few months.



There are many good books lately on the Gadar Movement and Gadarites. In 2012, on the Centennial Celebration of the Sikh Temple of Stockton, two conventions were held at the University of the Pacific in Stockton and a museum was established at the Stockton Sikh Temple. The main attraction of the museum is the printing press which was used to publish the Gadar newspaper.

Komagata Maru



On January 8, 1908, the Canadian government passed a law to restrict non-white immigration. According to this law, they prohibited immigration of persons who did not come from the country of their birth or citizenship by continuous journey and have their ticket purchased before leaving their country.



Baba Gurdit Singh of Sarhali village in Amritsar was a businessman in Singapore. To meet all the requirements of the new law, he chartered a ship, the Komagata Maru, in January, 1914, to sail from Calcutta to Vancouver.



The ship had 376 passengers, of which, 340 were Sikhs, 24 Muslims, and 12 Hindus. It left Hong Kong on April 4, 1914, and reached Vancouver’s Burrard Inlet on May 23, 1914.

The ship was not allowed to dock. A dock shore committee was formed with Hasan Rahim and Sohan Lal Pathik. They raised \$22,000 and a case was fought and lost.

On July 19, 1914, there was a fight between the Canadian Navy and the angry passengers. The passengers threw bricks and coal lumps. In the end, only 20 passengers were allowed to land and the rest were sent back to India by the Canadian Navy by force. It left Vancouver by July 23, 1914, and reached India on September 27, 1914, at Budge Budge Ghat Calcutta.

They were received by the British police on arrival. They searched the ship and wanted to arrest Baba Gurdit Singh and some passengers. When they met resistance, the police fired shots and killed 19 of the passengers. Baba Gurdit Singh was able to escape and lived in hiding until 1922. He gave himself up by the advice of Gandhi at Nankana Sahib. He was imprisoned for five years. After release from jail, he participated actively in India's Freedom Movement.

He had one son, Balwant Singh, two grandsons and five granddaughters. He later settled in Calcutta. He died on July 24, 1954, in Amritsar and was cremated in his native village, Sarhali Kalan. His descendants now live in India, Canada and the USA.

On August 3, 2008, the Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. Stephen Harper, issued an apology in Surrey, B.C. on the behalf of the Canadian government. Memorials to this tragedy are erected at Vancouver, B.C., and Budge Budge Ghat in Calcutta, India. Now there are many Sikhs in Mr Trudeau's cabinet on very important positions.

Punjab

In the northwest of India is a state called Punjab. It is bordered by Jammu and Kashmir on the north, Himachal on the northeast, Haryana and Rajasthan on the south, and Pakistan on the west.



The word Punjab means “The Land of Five Rivers” (“Panj” meaning five and “Ab” meaning water). These rivers are the Ravi, Chenab, Jehlam, Beas and Sutlej.

Punjab has been the site of ancient civilizations as evident from the excavations at Harapa and Mohanjodaro (now in Pakistan). It has been the traditional route of entry into India through the northwest passes. The people of Punjab have had to defend themselves from invaders for centuries. This made its people fearless and warriors.

In the first part of the 19th century, all of Punjab was under the Sikh ruler, Maharaja Ranjit Singh. A few

years after his death, in 1839, it was occupied by the British. In 1947, at the time of the independence of India, the western part of Punjab become part of Pakistan, and the eastern part became a state in India.



In the mid-60's, further division of Punjab took place on the basis of language. The Hindi speaking area on the northeast side was given to Himachal and a new Hindi speaking state of Haryana was created. Current Punjab is very small and has only two rivers out of five. The map of Punjab looks like the “Bell of Liberty.”

The climate of Punjab is hot in the summer and cold in the winter with Mansoon rainfall. It is primarily an agricultural region and it grows all kinds of crops like wheat, rice, cotton, sugar cane, fruits and vegetables. You name it, it grows there. It has made great progress in agriculture through the “Green Revolution”. It is “The Food Basket” of India.

Most of the people live in villages. All villages are joined by a network of roads and have electricity. Houses are made from mud, sun-dried bricks, and regular bricks. There is no heavy industry in Punjab. There is a fair amount of small-scale industries, producing spare parts, hosiery, textiles, engineering goods, sewing machines, etc.

The people who live in Punjab are called Punjabi. The majority of them are Sikhs. Others are Hindu, Muslim, or ascribe to other religions. Sikhs are tall, strong and handsome people. They are easily recognized by their beards and turbans. The word “Sikh” means disciple. The Sikhs are the disciples of Guru Nanak (the founder of the Sikh religion) and the nine other Gurus who succeeded Nanak. Men have the middle or last name, Singh (Lion), and women have the middle or last name, Kaur (Princess). Sikhs greet each other by saying, “Sat Sri Akal” (God is Truth).

The Sikh baptism is called “Amrit Chakhana.” Amrit is prepared by mixing sugar in a bowl and stirring the solution with a double-edged dagger while reciting hymns from the Granth Sahib. Once baptized, they are supposed to wear five “K’s”: kesh (uncut hair), kangha (comb), kachha (shorts), kara (steel bangle), and kirpan (sabre).

The worship place of the Sikhs is known as the gurdwara (guru’s gate). It is recognized by a triangular yellow flag with the Sikh symbol of quoit, dagger and two swords.

In the Gurdwara, the Granth Sahib is placed on a

raised platform and covered with silken robes. Anybody can enter the Gurdwara as long as he or she covers their head and is barefoot. No one is denied entry on the basis of caste or creed.



The basic philosophy of the Sikh religion is that all men are created equal and all are children of the same father, the almighty God. Free food and accommodation is available at each Gurdwara.

The Sikhs are hard-working people. They are excellent farmers, fine sportsmen, and fearless soldiers. They are the backbone of India's defense, transportation and agriculture. They do equally good in technical fields and many other professions. Sikhs are found now all over the world. Wherever they went, they established themselves with their hard work.

The means of transportation in Punjab are old as well as new. You can see people riding horses, camels and

bullock carts, along with motorcycles, rickshaws, cars, buses and trains. Punjab has one international airport in Amritsar.

The capital of Punjab is Chandigarh. It is a modern city designed by the French architect, Le Corbussier. It lies at the foot of the Shiwalik range of the Himalayas. The whole city is divided into 50 sectors. It is known for its beautiful buildings and rose gardens. Other main cities of Punjab are: Amritsar (the place where the Golden Temple is located, which is the holiest shrine of the Sikhs), Jullandhar, Ludhiana, Ferozepur, Bhatinda, and Patiala.

The children of Punjab play all kinds of games. Almost in every village in the evening you will see kids playing khudo (ball), Khundi (a bent stick), gulli-danda, and kabbadi. Soccer, hockey and cricket are popular in cities, schools and colleges.

Punjab celebrates all kinds of festivals like Diwali and Holi, which are also celebrated in the rest of India. But there is one festival unique to Punjab. This is Baisakhi. It falls in the middle of April, and at that time, crops are ready for harvest. A huge fair is held. Men, women and children wear colorful dresses. Everybody is in a happy mood. The men dress in colorful Punjabi costume and perform vigorous Bhangra dance on the beat of the dhol (big drum). Bhangra starts with a slow beat and then the tempo gradually rises. The women perform an equally energetic dance called Giddha.

You can still see glimpses of old Punjabi life in the villages: ladies getting water out of wells and spinning charkhas (spinning wheels) and older men gossiping in the corners of the villages. But the old ways of life are being

replaced by modernization.

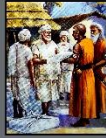
Punjab is much more colorful than this description. One can appreciate it much more if one goes and stays there for a while.



BHAGATS IN SIRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB JI



BHAI SAIKHAND JI BAKA
B. 1470-1500 (S)



BHAI MUKTANAND JI



BHAI AT RAI DAS JI



BABA SHEIKH FARID JI



BHAGAT DHANNA JI



BHAI BHAI PRABHDEEP JI



BHAI PHOL JI



BHAI AT RAI VAID JI



BHAI PRABHDEEP JI



BHAGAT PHOL JI



BHAI GANGA JI

HISTORICAL SIKH PERSONALITIES



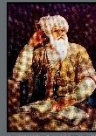
TARAN SINGH
SIBTOR OF 13 CRUISE, 1599 JI



SAHIB SINGH
SIBTOR OF 13 CRUISE, 1599 JI



SAHIB SINGH
SIBTOR OF 13 CRUISE, 1599 JI

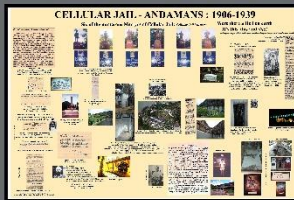
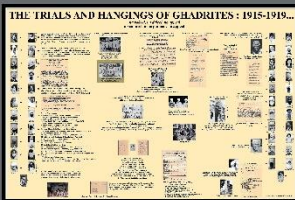
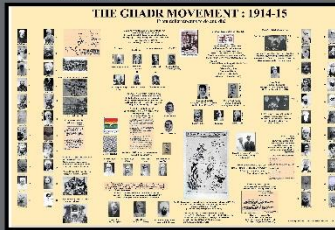
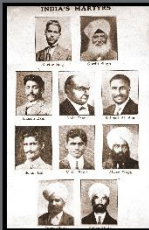


BHAI NAND LAL JI
SIBTOR OF 13 CRUISE, 1599 JI



BHAI GURBACHAN JI
SIBTOR OF 13 CRUISE, 1599 JI

THE GADAR PARTY PANNEL



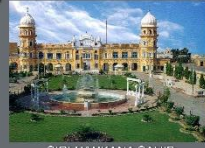
HISTORICAL PLACES



AKAL TAKHAT SAHIB



SIRI HARMANDIR SAHIB JI



SIRI NANKANA SAHIB



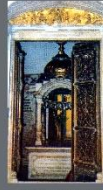
MEMORIAL BHAI TARI SINGH JI



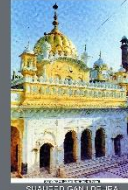
WELL OF BHAI BHAI SINGH JI



WELL OF BHAI BHAI SINGH JI



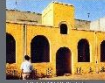
SHRINE OF BHAI BHAI SINGH JI



SHRINE OF BHAI BHAI SINGH JI



WELL OF BHAI BHAI SINGH JI



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SHRINE OF BHAI BHAI SINGH JI



TOWER OF BHAI BHAI SINGH JI



WELL OF BHAI BHAI SINGH JI



WELL OF BHAI BHAI SINGH JI



WELL OF BHAI BHAI SINGH JI



WELL OF BHAI BHAI SINGH JI



MEMORIAL OF BHAI BHAI SINGH JI

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1921



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INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS



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With William Walker Burton

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W. WALKER, SPEECH - APRIL 15, 1917

GADAR BABAS WITH AEROPLANES

Mass Meeting
INDIANS FIGHT FOR A REPUBLIC
 HASAN'S BOMBING BOY
EAGLES HALL
 Friday Evening, April 20, 1913
ADMISSION FREE

Constitution and By-Laws of the INDEPENDENT REPUBLIC OF INDIA
 Bayard, California

THE NEW REPUBLIC

THE NEW REPUBLIC

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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The Sikh Temple of Stockton



The first group of four Sikhs landed in San Francisco on April 6, 1899.

After that, Sikhs started coming to USA. Some directly by sea and others through South America. Some came to Canada first and then moved down to the USA. Wherever a few Sikhs get together, they want to establish a gurdwara (Sikh temple), a place to gather and worship.

Baba Jawala Singh and Baba Wasakha Singh ji settled in Holt, CA, near Stockton. According to a poem written by Baba Wasakha Singh Ji, they came to California at the end of 1910. He mentions 20 Keto (Queto) near Holt Station next to the Middle River. It was there they had the first Sikh holy scriptures brought. He mentions five names: himself, Baba Jawala Singh, Bhai Santokh Singh, Bhai Hazara Singh, and Bhai Nand Singh. They formed a company and were leasing land and doing cultivation. It

was known as “Bhaian Wala Dera” (Gathering of Brothers). Whosoever went there had free food and shelter. He also had work if he needed it.

In December of 1911 (Poh Sudi Seven), they had big gathering of Indians to celebrate the birthday of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the Tenth Master. In this gathering, there were thirty-five Muslims and twelve Hindus. Lala Hardial and Bhai Parmanad Ji were there too. They decided to establish the first Sikh Temple in the United States on that occasion and collected approximately \$5,000 in cash and some more was promised by others. Baba Jawala Singh was elected the president and Tara Singh was elected Secretary and Bawa Singh and Hari Singh were his assistants. There were a total of twelve members on the committee.

Finally, they found this place in Stockton and there was a house on the property. The holy scriptures were brought from the farm in Holt and established there and the Sikh flag was hoisted. Bhai Bhola Singh Ji was appointed the first priest and then Teja Singh came from Canada. He helped the temple to get registered with the State of California.

When the Sikh flag was hoisted, Americans objected. The police were called. Professor Teja Singh explained to them that this is a religious flag. It is hoisted in every gurudawara the same way as a cross on a church. Everyone was satisfied by his explanation.

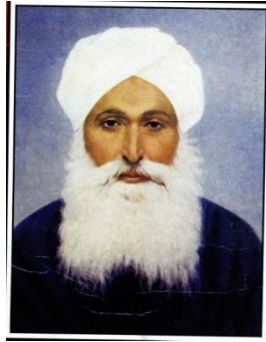
In 1916, a big hall was constructed. The basement was used for the kitchen and langar (dining) hall. It was used by every Indian irrespective of their religion. It was the main center for all gatherings of the Indian community.

The population continued to grow and in 1929 a new big brick building was erected and the old building was moved to the side, which houses the museum now. It was used to board students in the summers. They worked the farms in the area. Later on, wash rooms were added. Over the last hundred years many priests served this institution. But two of them were outstanding for community service. One was the first priest Baba Bhola Singh ji and other was Giani Wadhawa Singh Gill.

In 2012, during the centennial celebration, both buildings were renovated and the original building is now serving as a museum. I was given the honor to establish it. Along with photographs documenting Sikh history, which includes photos of the Gadari Babas, the main attraction is the printing press used by the Gadar Party.

There are numerous gurudwaras now all over the United States. But this has special significance being the first Sikh Temple in the country. It is a reminder of the sacrifices made by our forefathers.

Baba Wasakha Singh Ji



Baba Wasakha Singh Ji was born in the village Dadehar in Amritsar in 1877 (middle of Vaisakhi Samany, 1934 Bikrami). His father was Bhai Dyal Singh Ji and his mother was Ind Kaur. He learned Punjabi script from Sant Ishar Das. He was married to Bibi Ram Kaur at a very young age. She died four years after their marriage and had no children.

Perhaps he was named Wasakha Singh because he was born in Visku month of the lunar calendar. It was quite common to name a person after the month or day he or she was born.

He came from a religious family and initially did farming. Around 1900, he joined the army (11th cavalry) and served as a priest. In 1907, he left the army after staying for a short time in the village. He left for China and reached Hankon Island. He got a job as a policeman because of his army background.

In 1908, he reached San Francisco and worked on a farm around there. He came across Baba Jawala Singh. Together they formed a company that leased land around

Holt California near Stockton.

He was one of the Sikhs who established the first Sikh temple in Stockton, California. He also played an active part in the Gadar Party.

When the World War I broke out, the Gadar Party decided to go to India to start the revolution for the freedom of India. Baba Wasakha Singh left for India and reached Madras on January 7, 1915. He was arrested on arrival and was sent to Ludhiana and released from jail.

He stayed active in the freedom movement. When Kirpal Singh leaked a plan to the police, Baba Wasakha Singh was arrested and sent to the central jail in Lahore. His property was confiscated and he was sentenced to life imprisonment. He was sent to Andaman in December, 1915.

After the war ended, he was released. He was among the five beloved ones when the foundation stone of Gurudawara Panja Sahib was laid on October 14, 1932. He served as Jathedar of Akal Takhat Sahib, Amritsar in 1934. He resigned from that post when saropa was given to some government official. Then, he led the Kisan Movement (Farmer Movement).

He was arrested again during the World War II and was sent to Rajanpur Jail and then Deol Camp Jail. He was released in November 1941 because of poor health. He was arrested again and sent to Multan jail. He was kept there until February 14, 1942. He helped refugees during partition. He spent his whole life fighting for the rights of workers and farmers. He died on December 5, 1957.

Baba Jawala Singh Ji



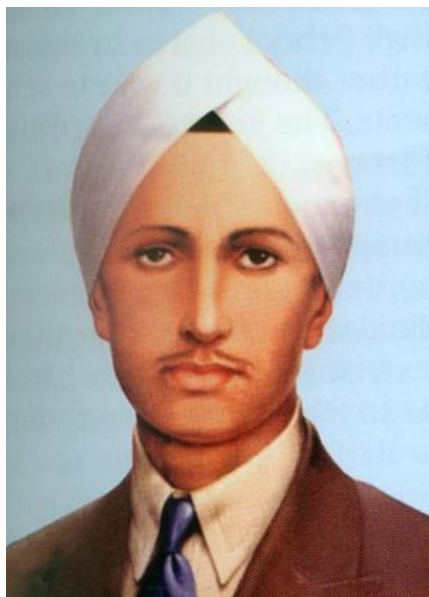
Baba Jawala Singh was born in 1866 in the village of Thathian in the District of Amritsar. His father's name was S. Ghanhia Singh. His father was a farmer. Jawala Singh left the village for a better life.

He reached California in 1908. He worked around San Francisco and later leased a 500-acre farm near Sacramento. He grew potatoes. By this time, he was joined by Sant Wasakha Singh Ji too. Their ranch was the center of Gadarite activities. On December 31, 1931, a meeting was held in Sacramento and he was elected as vice president of the Gadar Party.

He left San Francisco on August 29, 1914, on the ship, "Korea." He reached Calcutta on October 29, 1914. Police boarded the ship and he was arrested and sent by train to Ludhiana. After further investigation, he was sent to Montgomery Jail. He remained behind bars for 18 years. He was released in 1933. After his release, he worked for the families of those who died in service of the country. He organized the "Desh Bhagat Parwar Sahib Committee."

On May 18, 1938, he was going to Kamila (Bengal) and was in a bus accident. He was seriously injured and eventually died at the age of seventy-two years old.

Kartar Singh Sarabha



Kartar Singh Sarabha was born in 1896 in the village of Sarabha in Ludhiana District. His father's name was Sardar Mangal Singh Grewal, who was a farmer. He got his primary education in the village and then joined Malwa Khalsa High School in Ludhiana. After high school, he went to Orissa to live with his uncle and joined the college there.

In 1912, at the age of sixteen, he came to the USA and enrolled in UC Berkeley in chemistry. Due to his association with the "Nalanda Club" of Indian students at Berkeley, he became interested in patriotic activity. He saw that Indian immigrants, especially farm and manual workers, were treated badly in the USA.

When the Gadar Party was formed, he joined the

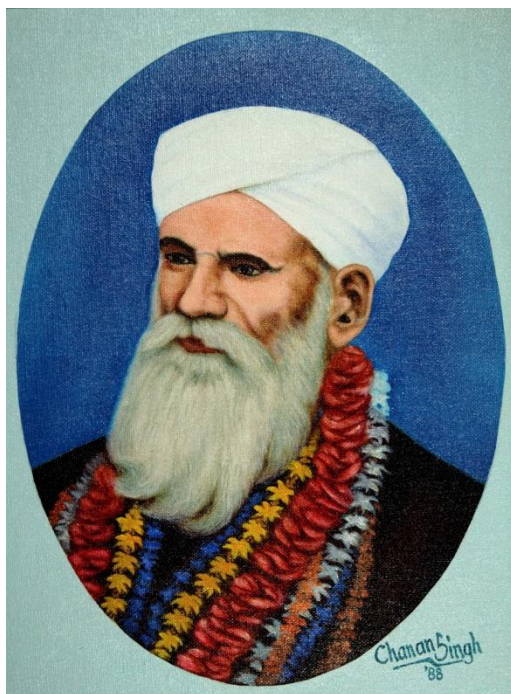
party. He edited the Punjabi edition of their newspaper and he wrote articles and composed patriotic poetry. At a meeting in Sacramento on October 31, 1913, he jumped on stage and sung a patriotic poem, “Chalo Chaliye Desh Nu Yudh Karne.” (“Let’s go to Our Country and Join the Battle of Freedom”). He was the first to follow this call when the time came.

He left the USA in September 1914. He went to India via Colombo and established a center in his own village. He went to Bengal and met other freedom fighters like Pingley, Sanyal, and Rash Bhari Bose. They were able to make bombs on a small scale. He participated in raids on rich people to get funds for the party.

They contacted various army units and planned a revolt in February 1915. Their plans were leaked by Kirpal Singh, who was able to infiltrate their party. Most of the Gadarites were arrested. Sarabha, Jagat Singh Sursing, and Harnam Singh Tundilat were able to escape to Afghanistan. After escaping, they changed their minds and came back to Punjab to continue their work and punish the traitors.

They were arrested on March 2, 1915, at Wilsonpur in Shahpur District. They were tried in Lahore on a conspiracy case. Sarabha was sentenced to death on September 13, 1915, and hung on November 16, 1915.

Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna



Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna was born in January 1870 in Khutrai Khurd at the home of his mother, Ram Kaur Ji, in the Amritsar District. His father was S. Karam Singh Shergill of the Village Bhakna in Amritsar District. He also had a step-mother, Har Kaur. His father died when he was only one year old. He was raised by his mothers and grandmother, Hukham Kaur.

He received his primary education in the village. He knew Urdu and Persian well. When he was sixteen years old, he was given the responsibility of the farm. He fell into bad company and started drinking. He mortgaged sixty-three acres of his total land of sixty-five acres. He had debt

of three thousand rupees. Then, he came into contact with Baba Kesar Singh of Village Mahawa (District Amritsar) and stopped drinking. But, by that time, he was financially ruined.

He was married to Bishan Kaur (daughter of Khushal Singh from Jandala in Lahore District). They did not have any children. He reached Seattle, Washington on April 4, 1909.

He worked in a lumber mill (Munarch Mill) near Portland, Oregon. When the Hindustan Association of Pacific Coast formed in 1912, he was the first president. Then, the headquarters were moved to San Francisco and the group's name was changed slightly. He was again made president.

When the Komagata Maru was returned to India by the Canadian government, Sohan Singh was sent to Yokohama, Japan, to meet the passengers of that ship. He took with him pistols, ammunition, and Gadar literature.

When he reached Calcutta, he was arrested and sent to Ludhiana. After an investigation, he was sent to Multan jail. In a conspiracy case tried in Lahore, he was given life imprisonment, but was eventually released.

After release, he served in the Desh Bhagat Sahik Committee (Patriotic Committee) to help the children of patriots who died for freedom. He also worked for the welfare of farmers. He died at Amritsar on December 21, 1968.

DEDICATED TO SIKH PIONEERS

a Poem by
H.S. Shergill

*Hundred years ago, here came some Punjabis bold,
Carrying tiny tin-boxes, their hearts holding dreams of gold;
They harbored hopes that after years of toil hard and long
With pockets full, they would return humming a song;*

*Some labored in fields, some worked in lumber chains,
But collectively they shared each others' jobs and pains.
Hated and called sometimes "Rag Head" sometimes "Brown-nigger"
Native bums would crack caustic comments and often snicker.*

*Working hard, some produced and sold vegetables bound in soft rings;
In San Joaquin Singhs like Jawala and Visakha became potato kings.
Feeling secure and confident, they recovered their wit
With twenty-five cent wages, a Guruduwara in Stockton they built.*

*Living in a land of liberty, they came to realize,
Slavery being a curse, for freedom they must strive;
For India's independence, a revolution banner they devise,
Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims joined to fashion their piece of paradise;*

*Resolved, they returned, but with bullets they were greeted,
No kith and kin their bodies found, none their last rites repeated;
One Pakhar Singh challenged and many a legal battle he begun,
Facing continued denial of justice, finally he resorted to a gun.*

*To the House of Representatives, Dalip Singh got himself elected,
From his relentless pursuit of human rights, he never deflected.
Under open skies they slept, to ensure roof over our head,
Amidst abundance around, everywhere we sense their fragrance spread.*

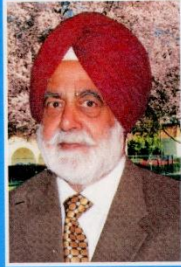
*Peach kings, raisin kings or lording over gas station chains
Doctors, engineers, scientists now offer jobs to yester-years vain brains
For us, they paved the way to fly into this promised land
Forgetting them would cancel redemption even by Divine Hand.*

*Those who let their youth flow down the sweat of their brow
All our present joys to their self-sacrifices we owe
Of their old village boundaries, they may have no recollection
But their souls must be rejoicing over their dreams consummation.*

*From Punjab to Smithsonian has been a long and tedious journey
Still innocent Sodhis get killed for lack of complete equality
Long strides have we taken yet still elusive is our goal
Compared to many nations in mazy marshes we still roll.*

*Hundred years old caravan will continue rolling in thunder and rain
Till some brave heir of the five rivers will in the White House reign.*

About the Author



Dr. Harbhajan Singh Shergill

Dr. Shergill was born in India, in a village 3SBB Dist. Sri Ganganagar Rajasthan. His Undergraduate Education was done in Rajasthan. He received his medical degree from the Government College Patiala Punjab in 1969.

Soon after graduation he left India. After spending some time in Canada and England, he settled in the United States. He moved to California in 1978 and started practicing medicine. After serving for 38 years he retired from practice in 2016.

He writes poetry and short stories and he has published 5 books of poetry.

1. Mein Han Dharat Punjab Di
2. Aurat
3. Rab
4. Mera Pind
5. Yaad Awe Nankana

Some of his poems have been recorded.

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