

## PREFACE

This work on the Sikh Misals mainly relates to the eighteenth century which is, undoubtedly, the most eventful period in the Sikh history. It has been done at the instance of Dr Ganda Singh, one of India's top-ranking historians of his time and the most distinguished specialist of the eighteenth century Punjab history. For decades, there had been nothing nearer his heart than the desire of writing a detailed account of the Sikh Misals. Due to his preoccupation with many controversial issues of the Sikh history he kept on postponing this work to a near future. But a day came when the weight of years and failing health refused to permit him to undertake this work. He asked me to do it and magnanimously placed at my disposal his unrivalled life-long collection of Persian manuscripts and other rare books relating to the period. Thus, with the most invaluable source material at my working desk my job became easier.

I have always felt incensed at the remarks that the eighteenth century was a dark period of Sikh history. The more I studied this period the more unconvinced I felt about these remarks. Having devoted some three decades exclusively to this period I came to the irrefutable conclusion that it is impossible to find a more chivalrous and more glorious period in the history of the world than the eighteenth century Punjab. In the display of marvelous Sikh national character this period is eminently conspicuous. In utter resourcelessness and confronted with the mighty Mughal government and then the greatest military genius of the time in Asia, in the person of Ahmad Shah Durrani, the Sikhs weathered all storms for well-nigh half a century with utmost fighting capacity, overwhelming zeal and determination, unprecedented sacrifice and unshakable faith in their ultimate victory. With much larger numerical strength the enemies of the Sikhs could kill thousands after thousands of them but could not dispirit them. They were always unbending and uncompromising over their demand of a sovereign status in the Punjab.

The Sikh movement during this period remained under constant strain of a quadrangular contest. The Mughals were making every effort to perpetuate their rule over the Punjab and the Afghans wanted to make it a province of Afghanistan. The Marathas were making an all-out bid to occupy the Punjab and the Sikhs were waging a life and death struggle for their political emancipation. The Sikh leaders—Kapur Singh Faizullapuria, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, Charhat Singh Sukarchakia, Tara Singh Ghaiba, Jai Singh Kanaihya, Ala Singh Phulkian, Baghel Singh Karorsinghia, Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh Bhangis and others, whose achievements of bravery gave them a splendid halo, organised themselves into armed units and fought against their opponents to the finish. The Sikhs always grasped every opportunity that came their way, from its forelocks and despite heavy odds their power continued growing. Ultimately, one of the most brilliant conquerors of his time, Ahmad Shah Durrani, met his Waterloo in the Punjab and surrendered to the Sikhs the charge of their motherland and bowed out in abject humiliation after repeated attacks for two decades.

By 1768, having overpowered all their enemies, the Sikhs obtained possession of the major portion of the Punjab, extending in the east, from the bank of Jamuna, running from Buriya to Karnal, in the west, as far as the Indus, from Attock to the vicinity of Bhakkar, in the south, from the neighbourhood of Multan and Sind, to the foot of Shivalik hills and in the north, to the boundaries of Bihmbar, Jammu and Kangra, interspersed here and there with some petty independent chiefships.

In the words of Khushwaqat Rai, “The Sikhs secured possession and control over this country of the Punjab and every one of them seized upon the places which he could. It seems as if the agents of fate and destiny had distributed the land of the five rivers among them with their own hands. It was effected indeed neither by the generosity of Ahmad Shah (Durrani) nor by the kindness of Muhammad Shah (Emperor). Glory be to God, before whom no bravery, no heroism, no unmanliness and no cowardice count. What valour and prowess is there which was not exhibited by Ahmad Shah and his followers.”

The founders of the Misals were originally free lancers and veteran espousers of the cause of their oppressed countrymen. As their possessions and followings increased they acquired the character of chieftainship. In this way, they passed from the deliverers to the rulers of their territories. It has been elaborated in this study that the confederacies did not all exist in their full strength at the same time, but one Misal gave birth to another, and an aspiring chief could separate himself from his immediate *derah* to form, perhaps, a greater one of his own. The Misals were distinguished by the titles derived from the name, the village, the district or the primogenitor of the first or the most eminent chief or from some other peculiarity.

Some historians wrongly suggest that Ranjit Singh’s was the first and probably the only royal house in the Punjab, the others being just the feudal chiefs. But the other Sikh rulers were in no way, less sovereign. Each Sikh chief was independent of others and had direct dealings with the neighbouring independent states. The contemporary historiographers had no hesitation in mentioning the proud epithets of *Sultan-ul-qaum* and *Badshah* for the chiefs of the Misals and calling their principalities as the royal houses.

The eighteenth century Sikh Sardars were as independent rulers [in]; their territories as Ranjit Singh was in the nineteenth century, the only difference being in the dimensions of their states. Ranjit Singh’s administration differed from them in degree rather than kind. He was an offspring of the eighteenth century and was a ruler of the third generation in the Sukarchakia family. He was a born ruler, as the successor of Mahan Singh whose father, Charhat Singh, was the founder of a principality and a dynasty. The houses of the other Misals were similar to that of the Sukarchakia house. With the withdrawal of the Delhi government and Ahmad Shah Durrani from the stage of Punjab, a new political order came into being and the Sikhs became the masters of their land with full sovereign authority vested in their hands.

The contemporary and semi-contemporary Persian historiographers that wrote their accounts on the Sikh rise to power and their assuming sovereignty of the Punjab included Anand Ram Mukhlis (1748), Qazi Nur Muhammad (1765), Ghulam Husain (1781), Tahmas Khan Miskin (1782), Budh Singh Arora (1783), Kushwaqat Rai (1811), Bakht Mal (1814), Ahmad Shah Batalia (1724), James Skinner (1830), Diwan Amar Nath (1837), Sohan Lal Suri (1848-49), Bute Shah (1848), Ali-ud-Din Mufti (1754) and Ganesh Das Badehra (1855). We can easily name another two dozen earlier Persian authors who produced their works in the first half of the eighteenth century. These chroniclers give copious information about the activities of the Sikhs. But unfortunately these writers seem to have been obsessed with the prejudice that the Sikhs struggling for their emancipation were the rebels against the state and deserved to be suppressed with all possible means. Most of these writers, intentionally or unintentionally, failed to appreciate the spirit behind the Sikh struggle and the nature of the change they intended to bring about. Otherwise these works are very informative and valuable primary sources of this period. These writers had been either amidst the scenes they narrate or in their close proximity. It is often said that ‘those who create

history seldom live to write it.' This remark is clearly applicable to the leaders of the Sikh movement. The researcher in this field is handicapped to the extent that almost no contemporary records have been left by the Sikhs themselves whose version of the events would have been of utmost importance.

The English sources of information about this period as those of Col. Polier (1776), James Browne (1789), John Griffith (1794), George Forster (1798), William Francklin (1798), Col. Malcolm (1812), Henry Prinsep (1834), M' Greggor (1846), Cunningham (1849), Lepel Griffin (1865), Muhammad Latif (1891) and George Campbell 1893, have also been occasionally used but not without caution as, at places, these writers have made awfully sweeping statements, sometimes far from truth. The English authors who wrote before the annexation of the Punjab could not have close contacts with the Sikhs and they depended on the second hand information. And those writing their books after 1849, purposely underrated the administrative institutions of the Sikhs of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to establish the superiority of their administration.

I have used with advantage some Punjabi and Urdu books also as those of Rattan Singh Bhangu (1841), Kanaihya Lal (1877), Muhammad Hasan Khan (1878), and Gian Singh (1880).

Many things, hitherto confused and misstated by such writers as lacked the knowledge of Persian or were prejudiced against the Sikhs or were inadequately informed, have been clarified in this work. At a few places the readers may find repetition of certain events irksome. But it was unavoidable.

I have not allowed my personal bias, if any, to prejudice this work or influence the evaluation of the various factors that shaped the Sikh liberation movement in the Punjab. I have always kept before me Thomas H. Huxley's remarks that, 'the deepest sin against the human mind is to believe things without evidence.' I have always consciously avoided making a statement without evidence or corroboration.

This work, I believe, would meet an immense need of those scholars of the Punjab history who find themselves utterly incapacitated in respect of their access to the primary sources of information.

I offer my deep gratitude to Mr Parm Bakhshish Singh, Head of the Department of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala, for his keen interest in the speedy publication of this work. My heart-felt thanks are due to Dr Devinder Kumar Verma for assisting me in the preparation of the index of this book and to S. Tara Singh and S. Narinder Singh for helping me in reading the proofs assiduously.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AP	—	Archives, Government of the Punjab, Patiala
CPC	—	Calendar of Persian Correspondence
GS	—	Dr Ganda Singh Private Collection, Patiala
IHC	—	Indian History Congress Proceedings
IHQ	—	Indian Historical Quarterly, Calcutta
JPHS	—	Journal of the Punjab Historical Society, Lahore
JIH	—	Journal of Indian History, Kerala
JPUHS	—	Journal of the Punjab University Historical Society, Lahore
KCA	—	Khalsa College, Amritsar
MS	—	Manuscript
PHS	—	Punjab Historical Society, Pakistan
PUP	—	Punjab Historical Studies Department Library, Punjabi University, Patiala
RS	—	(Bhai) Randhir Singh, Private Collection, Patiala
SGPC	—	Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, Amritsar
SHS	—	Sikh History Society, Amritsar/Patiala
SPD	—	Selections from the Peshwa Daftars
VSA	—	(Bhai) Vir Singh Private Collection, Amritsar
VVRI	—	Vishveshwarananda Vedic Research Institute, Hoshiarpur
YSP	—	(Maharaja) Yadvindra Singh Private Collection, Patiala

## Chapter 1

### EVOLUTION OF THE SIKH COMMUNITY

A brief study of the evolution of the Sikh community, that took up the challenge of the Mughal rulers and the Afghan invaders and fought against them for a little above half a century before they got their land liberated from them, is necessary to understand their characteristics and the mould into which the Sikh Gurus had put and reared them. Under the Gurus the community assumed a distinct personality which made them unbending and unrelenting before injustice and oppression. An attempt has been made in the following pages to present the Sikh spirit of sacrifice, their code of conduct and discipline which enabled them to cope with immensely hazardous situations.

Guru Nanak (A.D. 1469-1539), the founder of the Sikh faith, was a great social revolutionary. He is considered to have preached 'liberal social doctrines.'<sup>1</sup> In Guru Nanak's philosophy an ideal man is a free, fearless and moral being. In the contemporary degenerated society man had lost his initiative. His mind was controlled by his faith in rituals and customs which further controlled his social actions in mechanical precision.

Confronted with such a situation Guru Nanak's sensitive mind thought of evolving a new social system which had to be different from that of the Hindus and Muslims. It was very clear to him that without mental and spiritual liberation there was no possibility of converting a man into a moral man. And so long as he was the member of the present community, he could not be liberated. Therefore, there was a great need of a distinct social group. But so strong were the socio-religious strings and so weak was the individual that it was an extremely difficult task to pull him out from the prevailing vicious social circle.

Guru Nanak wanted his moral man to live in an associative manner with a guarantee of freedom to form social relationship on the basis of equality. The idea of brotherhood of man was an important and active principle with Guru Nanak. He believed in the oneness of God. In the words of Fredric Pincott, "Nanak taught that all men are equal before God, that there is no high, no low, no dark, no fair, no privileged, no outcaste, all are equal both in race and in creed, in political rights and in religious aspirations."<sup>2</sup> All people were considered by Guru Nanak as members of the same human family. It was much wider in its scope than the equality of the followers of the same faith who held all non-members as inferior or the equality of a caste brotherhood who thought of the whole array of other caste groups in the social hierarchy as low. He could think of high and low in terms of merit only.<sup>3</sup>

As Guru Nanak clearly knew that man could not live in isolation from society, and society influenced the behaviour and attitude of man, he emphasized the significance of *sangat* or congregation. Thus he argued in favour of the formation of a social group which by practising common moral code would be a cohesive unit. He also considered the assembly or the organised fellowship to be the proper medium for the communication of his message. Wherever he went during his missionary travels, he established *sangats* with the instruction to his followers to build a place of congregation or *dharmshala*, where they could regularly meet and sing Lord's praises. Thus sprang up a network of *sangats* which became centres of Sikh missionary activities. The *sangats* helped the Sikhs in maturing their beliefs according to the instructions of the Guru.

Guru Nanak had also started the practice of *pangat* along with *sangat*. In Sikh terminology *pangat* means a row of men sitting together to partake of *langar* or food from community kitchen. It especially annulled caste. The need of a common mess was felt for the reason that as an institution it possessed the potentiality of a valuable instrument of social reform in a setting where caste taboos prevented people from sitting and eating together.<sup>4</sup> The Sikhs shared their earnings with others. In the words of Ganesh Das Badehra, "If a hungry person approached a Sikh for food *be* was served with it even if the Sikh himself were to go without it. And in order to entertain the visitor the Sikh would even pawn his clothes and utensils."<sup>5</sup> According to Malcolm, at the time of initiation a Sikh was told that "whatever he has received from God, it is his duty to share it with others,"<sup>6</sup> because the provisions belong to the Guru and the service in the *langar* is the privilege of the Sikhs.

In respect of Guru Nanak's response to religion his mission has been regarded as the promulgation of a new religion. However, much he might have retained from Hinduism or Islam in the matter of doctrine, "his religion remains distinct and complete in itself."<sup>7</sup> He was not a mere reformer but a revolutionary, an originator, and a founder of a new faith and a new community. A new community is born as a result of the alienation of some group from the inclusive society within which it has to carry on its life. It is a kind of a protest movement. Looking at the spiritual leader of the Sikhs, the Mughal government of the country could not but regard them as opponents of accepted religious and prevalent social order and considered it their right and their duty to either bring them into the fold of their own faith or destroy them.<sup>8</sup>

Guru Nanak was primarily a religious preacher but he observed with keen interest the functioning of the government in the country and felt deeply concerned about the political disabilities of the people.<sup>9</sup> He may be said to have been the first medieval Indian saint to condemn aggression and to denounce exploitation as grave social maladies which seriously hinder the evolution of a people's personality. He was an ardent advocate of honest earnings and he could not tolerate that the earnings raised by the sweat of labours should go into the coffers of the rich and the exploiters.

Guru Nanak upbraided the tyrannical rulers of his days. His political concern was closely related to his idea of society which he believed, must be organised on the healthy basis of justice, fellow feeling, liberty and equality and it should be free from every type of oppression. The sufferings of the people during Babur's invasion (1520-21) have been described by him with deep emotion. He called the invader "*yama* (the angel of death) disguised as the great Babur."<sup>10</sup> The Guru resented the Lodi's inability to discharge their duty of providing protection for their subjects. He said, "If a powerful person were to attack another powerful person there shall be no ground for anger. But if a ferocious lion were to fall upon a herd of cattle, the master (the protector) of the herd has to answer for it."<sup>11</sup>

Guru Nanak strongly condemned the cowardly Lodis who suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of Mughals: "The dogs of Lodis have thrown away the priceless inheritance. When they are dead and gone, no one will remember them with regard."<sup>12</sup>

Guru Nanak did not attach divinity to the office of the king though he believed that it was the gift of God. According to the Guru, if the ruler's orders were against justice and equality, it was not obligatory on the people to honour them and in that lay the seeds of defiance and challenge to the authority of an unjust ruler. Guru Nanak's approval of the people's right of rebellion against an oppressive ruler inevitably leads to the sanctioning of the use of force. Though the Guru was keenly

aware of the Muslim domination in the politics of the country he did not condemn the rulers as Muslims. He clearly identified himself with the ruled as against the rulers.

The period from Guru Angad Dev (1539-1552), the immediate successor of Guru Nanak, to Guru Arjan (1581-1606), fifth in the line of succession, formed the first phase in the development of Sikhism. During this period (1539-1606), it made rapid strides organisationally as well as in numbers and developed into a distinct community. Guru Angad popularised Gurmukhi letters to be used as a script for the hymns of the Gurus. He condemned asceticism and collected and preserved the spiritual writings of Guru Nanak. The *langar* further developed under Guru Angad whose wife looked after it.

Guru Amar Das (1552-1574) who succeeded to *Gurugaddi* after Guru Angad, was his senior in age by twenty five years. But he proved to be a true disciple. He initiated the Sikhs into new ceremonies regarding birth, marriage and death. He enthusiastically pursued and promoted the *langar* making it obligatory for every visitor, Hindu or Muslim, to partake of the common repast before seeing him. All had to sit in a line and eat together.<sup>13</sup> He proclaimed the sanctity of human life and forbade the practice of *sati* or immolation of widows at the funeral pyre of their dead husbands. According to Indubhusan Banerjee, "Guru Angad had, no doubt, done something to give the Sikhs an individuality of their own but it was under Amar Das that the difference between a Hindu and a Sikh became more pronounced and the Sikhs began, gradually, to drift away from the orthodox Hindu Society and form a class a sort of new brotherhood by themselves."<sup>14</sup> Since the number of the Sikhs had increased considerably, it was felt necessary by Guru Amar Das to organise the scattered *sangats* or congregations into a system. He partitioned his whole spiritual domain into 22 circles, called *manjis*, each *manji* under the charge of a devoted Sikh whose duty it was to preach the mission of the Sikh Gurus, and to keep the local body in touch with the centre.<sup>15</sup> Each of these *manjis* or bishoprics was further divided into small sections called *pirbis*. This measure went a long way in strengthening the foundations of the Sikh community and in carrying on its work in different parts of the country.<sup>16</sup> By virtue of his mission, the preacher occupied a little superior and distinctive position by sitting on a cot, a *manji*, while the laymen sat on the ground or carpet. But as a Sikh the preacher had the same status as enjoyed by the other Sikhs.

From the time of Guru Amar Das it began to be felt that the Sikhs should have their own seats of religion and pilgrimage. A *baoli* with *pucca* stair-cases reaching down to the surface of water was constructed at Goindwal under the personal supervision of Guru Amar Das.

Guru Ram Das (1574-1574) developed a seat of the Sikh faith which surpassed all previous ones in importance. It was Guru Ka Chak (Amritsar) which was soon throbbing with a new life. Merchants and artisans of 52 trades came from distant places to settle there. Trade flourished. Pilgrims arrived in large numbers. The fame of the town, which lay in the heart of the *majha* area—country between the Ravi and Beas rivers—spread far and wide and it grew to be the biggest centre of trade in the north.<sup>17</sup> As subsequent history witnessed, Amritsar played a significant part in the development of Sikhism. Guru Ram Das had created a town which was to become the religious capital of the Sikhs.

Under Guru Arjan (1581-1606) Sikhism became more firmly established. Its religion and social ideals received telling affirmation in practice. It added to its orbit more concrete and permanent symbols and its administration became more cohesive. By encouraging agriculture and trade and by the introduction of a system of tithe-collection for the common use of the community,



a stable economic base was secured. The *masands* not only collected the offerings of the Sikhs away from the important centres but also propagated the religion of Guru Nanak.<sup>18</sup> Guru Arjan gave Sikhism its scripture, the *Granth Sahib*, and its main place of worship, the Amritsar shrine. He taught, by example, humility and sacrifice. He was the first martyr of the Sikh faith. The work of the first four Gurus was preparatory. It assumed a more definitive form in the hands of Guru Arjan.<sup>19</sup>

The rapidly growing proportions of the Sikh movement created some new problems. The reaction of the Muslim orthodoxy towards the Sikhs suffered a radical change. To begin with, their attitude was one of indifference or tacit resentment. But as the Sikh movement advanced they began to see a danger in it and became openly hostile to it. The western Punjab had been Islamized and in the eastern Punjab too, a sizeable section of the population had accepted the creed of Islam. With the progress of Sikhism, which was also a missionary creed, like Islam, the pace of Islamization was considerably slowed down, if not halted. The prospects of improved status which Islam offered to the lower sections of the Hindu society were now available from Sikhism as well, because Sikhism, too, like Islam, made no distinction between the high and low. In so far as Sikhism was closer to the roots of the Hindu culture, for the Hindu masses it had an edge over Islam. Therefore, those who wanted to change their religion with a view to improving their position in the society preferred Sikhism to Islam.<sup>20</sup> Some of the Musalmans, generally former converts from Hinduism, began to show more interest in Sikhism than in Islam, as is referred to by Jahangir in his *Tuzak*.<sup>21</sup> All these trends naturally alarmed the orthodox elements of the Muslim population and they became progressively hostile to Sikhism.

However, the opposition of the Muhammadan orthodoxy could cause no immediate harm to the Sikh movement on account of Akbar's policy of religious liberalism. He met some of the Sikh Gurus, and showed his magnanimity towards them by making special grants. The present she of Amritsar was granted to Guru Amar Das for his daughter when Akbar met the Guru at Goindwal. On a subsequent occasion the Emperor met Guru Arjan at Goindwal on his way back to Agra and at his request remitted the land revenue of the area for a whole year. Akbar's favourable attitude did not merely save Sikhism from the fury of the Muslim orthodoxy at a time when it was just an infant, needing protection, it also provided the necessary conditions for its quick further progress.

The eclecticism of Akbar led to a sharp reaction among the conservative sections of the Muslim population. This reaction gave birth to a powerful revivalist movement with its headquarters at Sirhind. It was started by a Muslim divine Shaikh Faizi Sirhindi 'Mujaddad-i-Alf Sani' to whom even slight concession to the Hindus was an act of hostility to Islam. He advocated the view that "the glory of Islam consists in the humiliation of infidelity and the infidels. Anyone who held an infidel in esteem, caused humiliation to Islam."<sup>22</sup>

When Jahangir ascended the throne he was openly in a frame of mind to oblige the Muslim orthodoxy. When Prince Khusrau rose in revolt against his father in 1606 he hastened towards the Punjab in a bid to mobilize support. He was captured and produced before his father at Lahore. Guru Arjan was involved in the false charge of having helped the rebel prince. The Guru was soon taken captive and brought to Lahore where he was sentenced to death by *siasat* and *yasa*, i.e. death by torture involving no bloodshed.<sup>23</sup>

The tragedy of Guru Arjan's death on May 30, 1606 produced a sharp reaction in the small but growing community of the Sikhs. There was a general wave of indignation and protest against the official high-handedness and tyranny and the necessity of self-defence was strongly felt.

Guru Hargobind (1606-1644), who succeeded to his father, framed a policy of militarizing the community. Under him the Sikhs assumed certain additional responsibilities. Guru Arjan's martyrdom marked a turning point in the history of the Sikh faith. Instead of rosary and other saintly emblems of spiritual inheritance, his son Guru Hargobind wore a warrior's equipment for the ceremonies of succession. He sanctified steel as a will to resistance of tyranny. He put on two swords, declaring one to be the symbol of his spiritual and the other that of his temporal investiture.<sup>24</sup> This was a significant act crucial to the future evolution of the Sikh community. The Guru sat at Akal Bunga and administered justice to his followers. The congregational prayers, introduced by the Gurus, added religious fervour among the Sikhs and strengthened unity and cooperation between them. The *sangats* took upon themselves the financial and defence requirements of the Guru. Undoubtedly the Guru had no political objective to achieve, and the militant character, added to the Sikh movement, was purely a measure of self-defence.

An important factor operating in the transformation of the Sikh movement was the entry of the Jats in large numbers into the fold of Sikhism during the period of Guru Arjan and after. These people were the descendants of certain tribes that had originally come from foreign lands and settled in the country and were known for their tribal freedom and fighting traits. They were naturally an assertive and virile people who only needed a competent and gifted leader to rouse them to action. Guru Hargobind infused in them the confidence that they could even challenge the might of the Mughal government. Large number of them answered the Guru's call to arms, recognising in him the type of leader they desired. Their swelling the ranks of the Sikh community changed its complexion and necessitated certain readjustments within the system. The attitude of non-resistance, "did not suit the temper and tradition of these people,"<sup>25</sup> so that a new attitude to acts of high-handedness and tyranny had to be formulated in the light of the racial heritage of the new entrants, the Jats.

According to *Dabistan*, the Guru had seven hundred horses in his stables and three hundred cavaliers in his service.<sup>26</sup> The Guru is said to have constructed a wall around the city of Amritsar. A fort named Lohgarh was built in the town as a measure of security in the event of an attack on the Sikhs. The Guru also built the Akal Bunga (Akal Takht) where he used to discuss the secular matters with his Sikhs. In the eighteenth century Akal Takht served as a very important forum and hub of the activities of the Dal Khalsa for the Sikh struggle for their liberation.

Evidently, the Mughal Emperor, Jahangir, was a little alarmed at these measures of the Guru and he was made a state prisoner and sent to Gwalior. After some years the Emperor realised the futility of keeping him any longer in prison and released him. Jahangir died in 1627. Guru Hargobind had no trouble with him ever since his release from imprisonment.

With the accession of Shah Jahan the attitude of the new Emperor stiffened towards the Sikhs. The Mughals fought against the Guru at Amritsar in 1628, at Lahira in 1631 and at Kartarpur in 1634. The Sikhs won all the battles. Despite the Guru's unwillingness to fight against the Mughals he faced the heavy odds successfully which left a deep mark upon the future course of the community's development. In the words of Indubhusan Banerjee, "Success against innumerable odds could not but inspire the Sikhs with self-confidence and give them an exalted sense of their

own worth. They had hitherto been kept under the heels by the Musalmans, but now they learnt, for the first time, that under proper guidance and control, they could meet the Musalmans on an equal footing or even gain the better. The consciousness of their own worth, arising out of their own trying circumstances, became a great national asset. Guru Hargobind demonstrated the possibility—the possibility of the Sikhs openly assuming an attitude of defiance against the Mughal government and considerably prepared the way for the thorough reformation that they received in the hands of Guru Gobind Singh.”<sup>27</sup>

Guru Har Rai (1644-1661), the seventh Sikh Guru, preached humility and disfavoured a clash with anyone, though he kept the style of Guru Hargobind. He is said to have kept a strong force of 2200 horsemen ready to be employed whenever necessary.<sup>28</sup> The Guru also kept the daily practice of his predecessors including the *langar* which continued to be the central factor in the social transformation Sikhism had initiated. The Guru chose for himself the simplest fare which was earned by the labour of his own hands.

The closing years of Guru Har Rai's pontificate were marked by the revival of Mughal interference in the affairs of the Sikh community. It could be due to Aurangzeb's being a staunch Muslim of the Sirhindi or Naqashbandi brand and the Guru's open sympathy with the Emperor's elder brother and rival, Dara Shikoh, who was of Sufi persuasion. When Dara, after his defeat at the hands of his enemy, fled across the Punjab, Guru Har Rai is said to have covered up his retreat as against Aurangzeb's pursuing troops. This aroused the wrath of Aurangzeb who summoned the Guru to Delhi. Guru Har Rai, instead of proceeding personally to the capital, sent his elder son Ram Rai to answer the queries of the Emperor. Aurangzeb used the opportunity to win over Ram Rai who was likely to succeed his father. The Mughal ruler cherished the hope of bringing the prospective Guru under his thumb. Dissatisfied with Ram Rai's conduct at the Mughal court Guru Har Rai decided to appoint his younger son, Har Krishan, instead. Ram Rai feeling sore over his supersession made an appeal for Aurangzeb's intervention.

Guru Har Krishan (1661-1664), succeeded to the *Guru gaddi* at the early age of five. He had a rare ability in explaining passages from the holy Granth. On Ram Rai's complaint the Guru was summoned to Delhi where he was stricken with smallpox and died on March 30, 1664 at the age of eight.

Guru Tegh Bahadur (1664-1675), the ninth Guru, and the youngest child of Guru Hargobind, was born on April 1, 1621. He succeeded Guru Har Krishan, who was the grandson of his eldest brother. On false and totally untenable charge of inciting the peasantry of the Punjab for rebellion against the Mughal government, he was arrested, taken to Delhi and executed on November 11, 1675 under the orders of Emperor Aurangzeb who was then at Hasan Abdal.

Guru Tegh Bahadur, by offering himself to the Mughal tyrants sword at Delhi, registered his peaceful resistance against the policy of forcible conversion. The execution of the Guru was a staggering catastrophe in Sikh history and the minds of the Sikhs and Hindus, who held him in great esteem and reverence, were rudely shaken. Guru Gobind Singh has recorded the event of his father's death in *Vichitra Natak* in the following words:

Thus did the Master protect the frontal mark and the sacrificial thread of the Hindus:

Thus did he bring about a great event in the dark age. He did so much for God's people, giving up his life without uttering a groan. He suffered martyrdom for the sake of religion, laying down his head without surrendering his principles.<sup>29</sup>

In the words of Harbans Singh, "The martyrdom was no small happening. It was something of immense magnitude of immense consequence. A most sensitive and comprehensive genius of the age undertook to answer the challenge of the time with all his moral strength. He brought to his response spiritual insight and discipline of the highest order, a living experience which bespoke love, compassion and humility and an inheritance, descending from Guru Nanak, symbolizing the ideals of faith, self-giving service and freedom. The choice was deliberately made. It was no passive submission but a positive decision to confront an existing situation."<sup>30</sup>

Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom had its immediate implications as well as an eternal moral. It marked the disavowal of the prevailing oppression and bigotry and indicated the way of resistance. It pointed to a new future for society which would be free from tyranny and intolerance.

Guru Gobind Singh (1675—1708) felt that the Sikhs needed re-organisation in order to bring about internal cohesion and provide external defence. Retaining the basic idea of administering *pahul* to the Sikhs, a new ceremony of giving the nectar in place of the old practice, which some of the people had started misusing to create independent followings of their own, was started. Guru Gobind Singh wanted to strengthen the organisation of the community by making steel an integral limb of a Sikh and thus evolve out of the Sikhs a powerful engine of revolution, a force to fight tyranny and injustice. Within a few days of the adoption of the dramatic procedure of initiating the Khalsa, a little less than a lakh of people hailing from different parts of the country got themselves baptised. It worked a miracle in abolishing the old distinctions. After initiation, a person could claim and was readily given the status equal to any other member of the Khalsa Panth.<sup>31</sup> In the words of Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, "Even the people who had been considered as dregs of humanity were changed, as if by magic, into something rich and strange. The sweepers, barbers and confectioners, who had never so much as touched the sword and whose whole generations had lived as grovelling slaves of the so-called high classes, became, under the stimulating leadership of Guru Gobind Singh, doughty warriors who never shrank from fear and who were ready to rush into the jaws of death at the bidding of the Guru."<sup>32</sup>

The Guru Gobind Singh brought a new people into being and released a new dynamic force into the arena of Indian history.

Guru Gobind Singh invested the Panth with his personality or, in other words, the Khalsa Panth was to be the Guru in future. He told his Sikhs, "I have bestowed the Guruship on the Khalsa. Khalsa is my very self and I shall always live in the Khalsa."<sup>33</sup> The complete charge of the temporal leadership was given to the Sikhs in 1708 during the last moments of his earthly existence.

Of his close identification with the congregation Guru Gobind Singh provided a unique example at the initiation ceremony in which he, the supreme head of the religious organisation, voluntarily surrendered his authority to his disciples and adopted the usual procedure of being baptised by the same disciples, who a short while ago, had been baptised by him.<sup>34</sup> On the one hand poet Senapat, in his book *Sri Gur Sobha*, identified the Guru with God and on the other he identified the *sangat* or congregation with the Guru. In this way a divine character was attributed to the collective body of the holy assembly which became sacrosanct and authoritative for the individual

members of the congregation. As the tradition goes the Guru rated the congregation above the Guru saying that while the Guru was equal to twenty parts the congregation was equal to twenty one parts. The Guru had converted the *Guru-sangat* into the Khalsa of the *Wabe-guru*, the Supreme Lord and declared that the Sikhs belong to God and their victory belongs to Him. Thus the creator of the Khalsa raised his creation to a status superior to himself when he said:

It is due to them that I am holding an exalted place.

I was born to serve them.

Through them I reached eminence.

What would I have been without their kind and ready help.

There are millions of insignificant people like me.<sup>35</sup> According to Senapat the aim of Guru Gobind Singh, in founding the Khalsa Panth, was to build up a community that would live a virtuous life and be able to rescue the people from evil-doers and the tyrants.<sup>36</sup> The basic character of the Sikh Panth to be good and virtuous was never allowed to be changed. Once the Sikhs asked Guru Gobind Singh why the Sikh rules of conduct prohibited them from carrying away the women of the Muslims as captives as a retaliatory measure. To this the Guru replied, "I wish to raise the Panth—the Sikh community—to a much higher plane and not to push it down into the depths of hell." In their struggle for independence or sovereignty the Sikhs always maintained this lofty ideal of the Gurus.

According to Gokal Chand Narang, "Guru Gobind Singh was the first Indian leader who taught democratical principles and made his followers regard each other as Bhai or brother and act by *gurmata* or general councils."<sup>37</sup>

The Tenth Master brought Guruship on a level with his followers. It was a revolutionary and a democratic step when in 1699 after initiation he solemnly undertook to abide by the same discipline that had been enjoined upon the Sikhs to follow. Although the Khalsa was designed by the Guru himself yet the Guru was so much charmed and fascinated by his own creation that he saluted it as his own ideal and master. "It was introducing a spiritual socialism in the domain of religion."<sup>38</sup> The Khalsa Commonwealth did not belong to any individual, not even to the Guru—the creator of the order—but it belonged to those who constituted it. In this way a new type of democracy took birth in this land.

The Khalsa, as a combined body of the Sikhs, was made the supreme authority amongst the Sikhs in all matters. No leader, however, great, could challenge the authority of the Khalsa and introduce any innovation in the rules of conduct of the Khalsa Panth. The guidance of the community lay with their collective wisdom and decisions. The rulers that we come across in the pageant of Sikh history may be regarded as the servants of the Khalsa commonwealth in whose name, they functioned.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, it was the Khalsa who led the community through its trials and ordeals and finally won political power, the victory being of the Khalsa, of the community, as a whole, and not of the few leaders whatever their individual merit.

Guru Gobind Singh told his followers that the force by itself was no evil, it was its misuse that made it so. He felt that ideals of humility and surrender had no appeal to a tyrant whose soul was deadened by repeated acts of oppression and who used and understood the language of cold steel alone. He was thoroughly convinced that force had to be met by force and that is why he almost deified the sword. He considered it to be the hand of God to punish the evil-doers with:

Sword, thou art the protector of the saints.

Thou art the scourge of the wicked;

Scatterer of sinners, I take refuge in Thee;  
Hail to the Creator, Saviour and Sustainer, Hail to Thee, Supreme.<sup>40</sup>

This must not be understood to mean that Guru Gobind Singh believed in the dictum that 'might is right.' It was assumed that the wielder of sword must be imbued with a divine mission. It should be used for the protection of the oppressed and for the furtherance of righteous acts. The sword used for such purposes signifies divine beneficence. Guru Gobind Singh symbolized God in the weapons of war. He is Presented as the punisher of the evil and destroyer of the tyrant. But if the sword is used for oppression and for the attainment of power, it loses all its significance. Even where the use of the sword is permissible, it is to be used only as a last resort. "When all other means have failed, it is but righteous to take to the sword."<sup>41</sup> The Guru prayed to God that he might be able to use the sword for a righteous cause.<sup>42</sup> The Guru's sword, like the surgeon's knife, was not for shedding blood but for rescuing the healthy part of human body from the growing effect of the diseased one.

Guru Gobind Singh, besides advocating spiritual uplift, attempted to revive the spirit of valour by means of heroic literature, martial training and glorification of the weapons of war. To quote Malcolm, "Guru Gobind Singh wrote an account of his own wars in terms more calculated to inflame the courage of his followers than to inform the historian."<sup>43</sup> All this was done with (he clear object of *dharam-yudh* (a holy war) against the enemies of righteousness and goodness. *Dharam-yudh*, as the term suggests, means a war against unrighteousness and for the protection of good virtue. It does not mean a mad struggle for power. When the use of sweet reasonableness and gentle persuasion fails to bring about a change of heart in the oppressors, it is perfectly legitimate, according to the philosophy of *dharam-yudh*, to resort to armed resistance. *Dharam-yudh* was clearly opposed to militarism in which force is used for the sake of force, aggression or self-aggrandisement. But here force must be used for a legitimate and a noble cause and as a last resort.

The new organisation, Guru Gobind Singh's *magnum opus* was, in the words of Indubhusan Banerjee, "a fully democratic compact community armed to the teeth struggling to maintain what is right and fighting incessantly tyranny and injustice in all their forms."<sup>44</sup> The Khalsa was charged with the responsibility of promoting, with force if necessary, the cause of righteousness. One of the most interesting features of the Khalsa was the idea of commonwealth.

Before Guru Gobind Singh breathed his last he had taken every possible care to promote the corporate aspect of the Khalsa brotherhood. "It was in Sikhism alone," says Banerjee, "that a sense of corporate unity gradually evolved."<sup>45</sup> Guru Gobind Singh, after the creation of the Khalsa, advised the Sikhs to take decisions or pass *gurmata*s through a council and this measure gave a form of federative republic to the Sikhs.<sup>48</sup>

The personal Guruship was ended by Guru Gobind Singh himself. Succession now passed to the *Guru Granth* in perpetuity. This was the most significant development in the history of the community. The leadership of the community or the Sikh Panth was invested in the Panth itself.<sup>47</sup> The Khalsa ideals served as beacon light for the Sikh leaders. They dared not defy the Sikh ideals. In respect of their duties towards the Khalsa Commonwealth, no Sikh, including the Sikh chiefs, enjoyed any exemption. None could pose to be above the Panth. No single individual or a group of individuals could be considered as superior or equal to the entire body of the community. The Sikh leaders, time and again, declared that they were the humble servants of the Panth, subservient to its will, working for the good and pleasure of the Khalsa Commonwealth.

Thus we see that the community was now united and integrated as never before. All members of the community enjoyed equal privileges with one another. By receiving *amrit* from the *panj piaras* (five beloved ones) the Guru had exploded the myth of his superiority to his followers. This equality with one another, common external appearance, common leadership and common aspirations bound the Sikhs together into a compact mass, raising their strength manifold.

Neither the hill chiefs of the neighbourhood nor the Mughal government could tolerate the great revolution that the Sikh Gurus had effected with such tremendous success. Before and after the creation of the Khalsa, the government had made many attempts at destroying the growing power of the Sikhs. But they endured, suffered and survived. And the Sikh community, thus created and reared by the indefatigable efforts of the ten masters and blessed with noble traditions of intrepidity bravery, sacrifice and virtuous conduct, took up the challenge of the Mughal high-handedness, persecution and injustice under the leadership of Banda Singh Bahadur and there was no let-up from either side for the next half a century till the Sikhs threw the Mughals and other contestants out of the Punjab.

#### Footnotes:

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*Sakta sib mare pe wage Khasme sa pурсai.*
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25. Indubhusan Banerjee, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, Calcutta, 1947, p. 44.

26. Zulfiqar Ardistani Maubid (Mohsin Fani), *op. cit.*, pp. 235-36.
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39. Malcolm, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-15.
40. Guru Gobind Singh, *Vachitra Natak*, Adhya I, Chhand 2.
41. Guru Gobind Singh, *Zafarnama*, Verse 22.
42. Guru Gobind Singh, *Chandi Charitar*, Swaya 231.
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## Chapter 2

### FROM THE CROSS TO THE CROWN

#### Challenge to the Mughal Supremacy under Banda Singh

After the death of Guru Gobind Singh, the Sikhs soon developed into a political power under the leadership of Banda Singh who came to the Punjab, not as Guru but as commander of the forces of the *Khalsa*<sup>1</sup> and equipped with the Guru's *bukammamas* or letter to the Sikhs all over the country to join in his expedition. Before Banda Singh's departure from the Deccan the Guru bestowed upon him a drum and a flag as emblems of temporal authority and five arrows<sup>2</sup> from his quiver. He was blessed with victory provided he considered himself to be a comrade, a servant, of the *Khalsa* with whom would rest, in future, the supreme authority of the community. Persons like Binod Singh, Kahan Singh, Baj Singh, Daya Singh and Ram Singh,<sup>3</sup> who were to assist him in his activities and future programme, accompanied him to the Punjab.

Arriving in northern India Banda Singh despatched the *bukammamas* of Guru Gobind Singh to prominent Sikhs in the Punjab.<sup>4</sup> His main target, to begin with, was Wazir Khan, the *faujdar* of Sirhind, the killer of Guru Gobind Singh's young sons.<sup>5</sup> The cold-blooded murder of the innocent children of the Guru had given the Sikhs a shock and they were burning with rage against him. The leading Sikhs of the Punjab, Bhai Patch Singh, Karam Singh, Dharam Singh, Nagahia Singh, Ali Singh and Mali Singh flocked round him, along with their followers.

There were mainly two types of men that had rallied round Banda Singh. Firstly, there were those Sikhs who had previously been with Guru Gobind Singh and were always ready to fight with a spirit of devotion and self-sacrifice. The second category comprised those who had been supplied by persons like Ram Singh and Tilok Singh of the Phul family who liberally contributed to Banda Singh's resources and gave every possible help in the accomplishment of his mission."

According to Khafi Khan, in two or three months' time, four or five thousand horsemen and seven or eight thousand foot soldiers joined him, and their number soon rose to 40,000.<sup>7</sup>

Places like Samana, Kurham, Thaska and Shahabad fell without resistance. The battle against Wazir Khan of Sirhind was fought on the plain of Chappar-Chiri on May 12, 1710, and he was killed. The *Khalsa* flag was hoisted on the fort of Sirhind.<sup>8</sup> Baj Singh, the leader of the trans-Satluj Sikhs, was appointed governor of Sirhind, with Ali Singh, the leader of the cis-Satluj Sikhs, as his deputy.<sup>9</sup> Fateh Singh was appointed the governor of Samana and Ram Singh was posted to Thanesar as its governor, jointly with Binod Singh.<sup>10</sup>

According to *Akhbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla*, "the peasant followers of the Guru (Banda Singh) were in control of Sirhind. Muhammad Nasir Bakhshi, an imperial news writer, who fell into the hands of the Guru (Banda Singh) had been named as Nasir Singh and appointed treasury officer. There was no government *mutsaddi* left in Sirhind."<sup>11</sup>

As the Sikhs had been feeling very sore about Wazir Khan's role in the harassment of Guru Gobind Singh, their action at Sirhind was evidently instigated by a spirit of revenge.<sup>12</sup> But the Muslim writers have given exaggerated accounts of the activities of the Sikhs. "The *Siyarul Muntakbrin* and also the *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab* contain terrible details of the atrocious deeds of the

Sikhs” writes Thornton, “but a Mohammdan writers is not to be implicitly trusted upon such a point.”<sup>12</sup> Later writers, like Mohammad Latif,<sup>13</sup> have blindly followed the statements of Ghulam Husain Khan and Khafi Khan. The booty that fell into the hands of the Sikhs is estimated at two crores in money and goods, belonging to Wazir Khan, and some lakhs found in the deserted houses of Sucha Nand and others.<sup>14</sup>

The victory at Sirhind added to the enthusiasm of the Sikhs. Banda Singh was told that Jalal Khan and Ali Hamid Khan, the *faujdar*s of Deoband and Saharanpur, were harassing the Sikh converts there. He repaired to that part of the country and addressed a letter<sup>14A</sup> to Jalal Khan to release the Sikhs who had been taken prisoners by him and submit to the authority of the Khalsa. Far from accepting this demand, the Sikh messengers were mounted on asses, paraded through the streets of Jalalabad and then turned out of the town.<sup>15</sup> Jalalabad and Saharanpur were, therefore, attacked. The Sikhs were reinforced by the Gujjar peasants who had suffered long at the hands of the Shaikhzadas of Saharanpur. It assumed the form of a class struggle with the tenants on one side and the *zamindars* on the other. In the bloody fighting about three hundred Shaikhzadas fell dead in the courtyard of Sheikh Mohammed Afzal alone.

Now the Sikhs addressed a letter to Shamas Khan, the *faujdar* of Jullundur, calling upon him to effect some reforms and to personally hand over his treasury to the Khalsa. In reply, he declared a *jehad* or a crusade against the Sikhs in September-October 1710. According to Khafi Khan<sup>16</sup> more than a hundred thousand Muslims, mostly weavers, marched from Sultanpur. In addition to these, Shamas Khan could muster four or five thousand horse and thirty thousand foot. And according to Khafi Khan, the Sikhs had seventy to eighty thousand horse and foot (the number is obviously an inflated one). No doubt in the flush of victory a large number of Hindus also joined the forces of Banda Singh to reap the benefits and enjoy the fruits of success over their Mughal masters.<sup>17</sup> Many of the spirited and daring Hindus adopted Sikhism.<sup>18</sup> After a few days the Muslims dispersed and the Sikhs got an easy control over Jullundur and Hoshiarpur. This was done during the last quarter of the year 1710. Banda Singh, then, turned his attention to Batala and Kalanaur and some other Sikh leaders occupied the *pargana* of Pathankot.<sup>19</sup> Then the Sikhs went very close to the walls of Lahore and a little later a part of the territory of *Majha* and *riarki* also came under the Sikh control.<sup>20</sup>

The Sikhs now became the masters of the territory of the Punjab that lay to the east of Lahore. “There was no noblemen daring enough to march from Delhi against them.”<sup>21</sup> In the words of Malcolm, “If Bahadur Shah had not quitted the Deccan, which he did in 1710, there is every reason to think that the whole of Hindustan would have been subdued by these Sikh invaders.”<sup>22</sup> Emperor Bahadur Shah had the bearded Sikhs always on his nerves. On 8<sup>th</sup> September, 1710, the Emperor issued an order that “all Hindus employed in the imperial offices should get their beards shaved.” And again on the 10<sup>th</sup> December, 1710 (29<sup>th</sup> Shawwal, 1122 Hijri) the Emperor issued an edict ordering a wholesale genocide of the Sikhs—the worshippers of Nanak — wherever found, saying: “*Nanak prastan ra bar ja kih ba-yaband ba-qatl rasanand.*”<sup>23</sup> This order was later repeated by Emperor Farukh Siyar in almost the same words.<sup>23A</sup>

Hearing of the alarming news of the Sikh conquests in the Punjab Emperor Bahadur Shah personally came to the Punjab to deal with the Sikhs. The imperial forces attacked Lohgarh (the iron castle), the capital of Banda Singh’s government at Mukhlispur, at the foot of Shivalik hills, to the east of Sadhaura.<sup>24</sup> Khafi Khan writes, “It is impossible for me to describe the fight which followed. The Sikhs in their *fakirs’* dress struck terror into the royal troops. The number of the dead and the dying of the imperialists was so large that for a time it appeared as if they were going to

lose.”<sup>25</sup> But Banda Singh, finding it difficult to stand against the imperial forces, slipped away from Lohgarh under the cover of darkness. He went to Mandi and from there to Chamba.

Thereafter, Banda Singh attacked Jammu, Raipur, Bahrapur, Kalanaur and Batala. He was victorious everywhere but the occupation of these places was only short-lived.

Banda Singh was driven to take asylum in the enclosure of Duni Chand at the village of Gurdas Nangal. The Sikhs there were so closely besieged that ‘not a blade of grass or a grain of corn’ could find its way into that enclosure. The besiegers wanted to starve the Sikhs into submission. “The Sikhs were with blistered feet and empty hands (without provisions) but they displayed every type of bravery and intrepidity.”<sup>26</sup> Mohammad Qasim, the author of the *Ibratnama*, who was an eye-witness to these operations, writes that such was the terror of these people and the fear of the sorceries of their chief that commanders of the royal army prayed that God might so ordain things that Banda should seek his safety in flight from the *garhi* (fortress).<sup>27</sup>

Ultimately, Banda Singh, along with his companions, was captured on the 7<sup>th</sup> December, 1715. They were ordered by the Emperor to be brought to Delhi on camels with disgrace and humiliation.<sup>28</sup> Zakariya Khan feeling the number of prisoners to be too small, roped in more<sup>29</sup> from the villages on the way until the number of prisoners rose to about 800 and of the heads hoisted on spears to 2,000. Besides, seven hundred cart loads of the Sikh heads also accompanied the gruesome show.<sup>30</sup> The prisoners were executed at Delhi. As if insensitive to the pains of death, they would calmly offer their necks to the executioner’s sword and drink the cup of martyrdom with the name of God ‘*Wabe Guru, Wabe Guru,*’ on their lips.<sup>31</sup>

They refused reprieve contemptuously whenever offered. To them their cause was dearer than their lives.<sup>32</sup> Surman and Stephenson, who were then in Delhi write that, “to the last, it has not been found that one apostatised from this new-formed religion. It is not a little remarkable with what patience they under go their fate.”<sup>32A</sup> The Sikhs showed utter disregard of death. When they were told about their fate they said that if they had been afraid of death they could never have fought against such heavy odds. Fear was a thing unknown to them.<sup>33</sup>

It is said that the Emperor asked Banda Singh as to how he should be killed. The latter replied that he might be killed in the manner in which the Emperor proposed death for himself.<sup>34</sup> This shows Banda Singh’s faith in the ultimate victory of the Sikhs. Banda Singh was executed on June 10, 1716,<sup>35</sup> along with his suckling son, in the neighbourhood of the *dargah* (mausoleum) of Hazrat Khawaja Qutb-ud-Din Bakhtiyar Kaki near Mehraulli, Delhi.<sup>36</sup> In the words of Elphinstone Banda Singh died “glorying in having been raised up by God to be the scourge to the iniquities and oppression of the age.”<sup>37</sup>

Banda Singh shook one of the mightiest empires in the world to its very foundations with such terrible violence that it was never able to re-establish its authority as firmly as before.

Khuswant Singh has remarked that “the movement to infuse the sentiment of Punjabi nationalism in the masses received a setback with Banda Singh.”<sup>38</sup> But where was that movement of Punjabi nationalism? Nationalism of Khushwant Singh’s conception is a much later idea. Banda Singh reiterated the Sikhs’ determination of not taking the government policy of repression lying down and made a bid for the liberation of the land from their oppressive masters.

During the days of his successes Banda Singh was almost irresistible in the eastern Punjab. Normally the result of his achievements should have been the establishment of a personal monarchy with coins and seals engraved in his name. But that is what he did not do. He did establish a new state, no doubt, but he ruled not in his own name but in the name of the Khalsa and the *Guru*. According to Rattan Singh Bhangu, “The *Guru* had enjoined upon Banda to serve the *Panth*. And it was not he but the collective Sikh community that was blessed with the sovereignty by the *Sacha Padshah* Guru Gobind Singh.”<sup>39</sup> Banda Singh proved equal to the responsibility entrusted to him and he abided by his master’s instructions.

Banda Singh assumed royal authority, issued coins introduced an official seal and a new calendar dating from the capture of Sirhind.<sup>40</sup> His coins, however, bore the names of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh:

*Sikka zād bar bar do alam Tegh-i-Nanak wahib ast,  
Fateh Gobind Singh Shah-i-Shaban Fazal-i-Sacha Sabib ast.*

(By the grace of the True Lord is struck the coin in the two worlds. The sword of Nanak is the granter of all boons and the victory is of Guru Gobind Singh, the king of kings.)

And on the reverse of the coin was inscribed “Struck in the city of peace, illustrating the beauty of civil life and the ornament of the blessed throne.”

He also introduced an official seal for state documents and letters patent. The inscription on the seal is expressive of a deep sense of devotion and loyalty to the Gurus:

*Deg-o-Tegh-o-Fateh-o-Nusrat bedirang,  
Yaft az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh.*

The kettle and the sword (symbols of service and power), victory and ready patronage have been obtained from the Gurus, Nanak and Gobind Singh. He, thus, not only acknowledged the patronage of the great masters but also took upon himself the duty of serving the people through *deg* and *tegh*, the cauldron and the sword, the symbols of feeding the hungry and protecting the weak and helpless.

Ganda Singh’s remark that ‘with the establishment of his power, Banda Singh assumed regal state.’<sup>41</sup> presumably means that the Sikhs under Banda Singh established a state of their own.

In his letter of 12<sup>th</sup> December, 1710, addressed to the Sikhs of Jaunpur, Banda Singh writes, “The Guru will protect you. Call upon the Guru’s name. On seeing this letter repair to the presence, wearing five arms. Observe the rules of conduct laid down for the Khalsa. . . We have brought about the golden age (*Satya Yuga*). Love one another. This is my wish. He who lives according to the rules of the Khalsa shall be saved by the Guru.”<sup>42</sup>

This is very significant letter indeed, giving us a peep into Banda Singh’s polity. He strongly recommends that the conduct of the Sikhs, the Khalsa, in the liberated country, was to be in strict conformity with the principles laid down by Guru Gobind Singh at the time of their initiation ceremony into the order of the Khalsa. He pointed out that the golden age had been ushered in.

He meant to tell the people at large that a welfare state of their dreams had been established to the exclusion of the tyrannical government of the Mughal governors. He tacitly meant to convey to them that unjust officials had been substituted by the just, deserving and competent persons who could appreciate the aspirations of the oppressed and wronged people. He wanted to make them alive to the consciousness created in the masses for their rights and awaken them to a strong sense of resistance and defiance to oppression.

So, despite the fact that Banda Singh seemed almost like a king, with a capital at Lohgarh and an army standing at his beck and call, and palatial buildings for him to live in, the erroneous view held by some writers that he had tried to assume kingly power personally, to the neglect of the Khalsa, is not in consonance with the wishes of the last Guru to whom he ascribed all his success and with his own as expressed in the *bukammama* mentioned above.

Banda Singh could not get enough time to be able to evolve a concrete form of government. Besides being a war against the Mughal government the Sikh movement under Banda Singh also signified a powerful protest against the beneficiaries of the structure of authority. One measure which influenced the future fiscal history of the Punjab was the liquidation of the *zamindari* system. The Mughal *zamindars* or landlords were responsible for the payment of a fixed amount of land revenue from the villages entrusted to them. They extorted from the peasants any amounts they liked and the government did not interfere, with the result that the poor farmers were reduced to the position of slaves. On Banda Singh's suggestion<sup>43</sup> the tillers of soil ejected the landlords and the peasants themselves became the masters of their lands. Large estates were broken into smaller holdings in the hands of the Sikh or Hindu peasants. These agrarian changes, to a great extent, ameliorated the lot of the Poor peasantry.

With victory coming to the Sikhs, they began to be looked upon as defenders of the faith and the protectors of the land. Banda Singh's brief rule gave the Sikhs a foretaste of independence and from that time onwards they could not be satisfied with anything short of the emancipation of their territory from the Mughal yoke, in pursuit of which they launched a ceaseless struggle against the Mughal government of the Punjab, and, later, against the Afghan usurpers from across the Indus.

During the short span of Banda Singh's rule, there was both a political as well as social revolution in the Punjab which has been well summed up by William Irvine saying that: "in all the *parganas* occupied by the Sikhs the reversal of the previous customs was striking and complete. A low scavenger of leather dresser, the lowest of the low in Indian estimation had only to leave home and join the Guru (meaning Banda), when in a short space of time he would return to his birth-place as its ruler, with his order of appointment in his hand. As soon as he set foot within the boundaries, the well-born and wealthy went out to greet him and escort him home. Arrived there, they stood before him with joined palms, awaiting his orders. . . Not a soul dared to disobey an order and men who had often risked themselves in battle-fields, became so cowed that they were afraid even to remonstrate."<sup>44</sup>

Banda Singh ousted the Mughal officers from the various *parganas* of Sirhind division and put his own men in their places.<sup>45</sup> Hindu *qanungos* and *amils* that had been replaced by Muslims under Aurangzeb were dismissed and the jobs of the displaced Hindus were restored to them.<sup>46</sup>

There seems to have arisen some minor differences between Banda Singh and some of his companions, but these were of no moment. Later writers failed to discover that most of the differences referred to by them belonged to the period after Banda Singh's death. In his life time there was hardly any thing in his behaviour or policy that might be interpreted as schismatic. It is clear from the letters that he wrote to certain *sangats* that he never arrogated to himself the title or position of a Guru. Rather he took pride in being called the Banda or the master's slave and always exhorted the Sikhs to follow the tenets and injunctions of Guru Gobind Singh.<sup>47</sup> His conforming to the conduct of the Khalsa has been confirmed by Ghulam Husain also.<sup>48</sup>

It is true that he suggested *fateh darshan* but it was only a war-cry and was given up when he was told that it might, at some future time, replace the usual Sikh salutation: "*Wabe Guru ji ka Khalsa, Wabe Guru ji ki fateh.*" Banda Singh's strict vegetarianism might have created some whisperings among the meat-eaters. But over this issue there could be no serious split as meat-eating has never been compulsory or essential in Sikhism. No evidence is available to us to show that there was at any stage any quarrel between Banda Singh and his companions about religion or that his comrades parted company with him for any of his schismatic tendencies. In the last stage of his struggle against the government Binod Singh's desertion from Gurdas Nangal proves nothing more than a difference of opinion about tactics and strategy to be followed in a particular situation.

Banda Singh had received baptism of the Khalsa from the hands of Guru Gobind Singh and throughout his life remained a staunch believer in the Guru's mission. He followed with perfect strictness the Sikh rules of conduct. He used to point out to his officials that, "according to the holy *Granth* the best worship for a ruler is to be just. . . If you call yourselves Sikhs of the great man (Guru Gobind Singh), do not do any thing that is sinful, irreligious or unjust. Advance the cause of true Sikhism and smite those who behave in an un-Sikh manner."<sup>49</sup> Besides his love for justice, this also shows his devotion and attachment to the code of conduct prescribed by Guru Gobind Singh.

The negligible difference of opinion, if at all, that arose in view of any innovation envisaged by Banda Singh, seems to have been immediately patched up. From a constitutional point of view all this goes to assert the supremacy of the Khalsa over individual members, however great or popular they might have been; and no Sikh ever had the courage to challenge the Khalsa and its *rahit* (rules of conduct).

Banda Singh had converted a large number of Hindus and Muslims to Sikhism but he does not seem to have used any force to propagate his religion. Some people might have joined the Sikh fold to escape punishment for their former misdeeds or to promote their prospects of livelihood.<sup>50</sup> Throughout the history of the Sikhs it has been a glowing feature of the polity of various rulers to adopt a non-communal and tolerant policy towards those who agreed to be their subjects. Banda Singh was no exception to it. Banda Singh never allowed his struggle to be reduced to the level of a communal strife. His was a political struggle. He would not, therefore, impose any religious restrictions upon the Muslims as such and they flocked to him in large numbers.

According to a report made to Emperor Bahadur Shah by an official news-writer, "the follower of Nanak (Banda Singh) was in the Kalanur up to 26<sup>th</sup> April, 1711. He had assured the Mohammadans that he would not in any way interfere with them and those who would join his ranks would be duly paid. They would enjoy full religious liberty including that of saying *namaz* and *azan*. As a result of this five thousand Mohammadans enlisted themselves in his army."<sup>51</sup> A similar reference was made by Amin-ud-Daula in June 1710 that "the authority of that deluded sect (of the

Sikhs) had reached such extremes that many Hindus and Mohammadans adopted their faith and ritual. Their chief (Banda Singh) captivated the hearts of all towards his inclinations and, whether a Hindu or a Mohammadan, whosoever came into contact with him was addressed as a Singh. Accordingly Dindar Khan, a powerful ruler of the neighbourhood was named Dindar Singh and Mir Nasir-ud-Din, the official reporter of Sirhind, become Mir Nasir Singh. In the same way a large number of Mohammadans abandoned Islam and followed the misguided path (of Sikhism) and took solemn oaths and firm pledges to stand by Banda.<sup>52</sup>

Thus we see that the policy of religious toleration preached by the Sikh Gurus was strictly followed by Banda Singh and was pursued by the Sikhs during their ensuing struggle. The Gurus had organised the Sikhs to defend their rights and secure freedom of worship, freedom of expression and freedom of missionary activities. If they had taken up arms it was purely with the object of self-defence. Banda Singh was the first to organise the Sikhs and to build a political power. He fought battles not only to weaken the Mughal power but also to replace it by a better one. He had, therefore, no alternative but to oust the Mughal government officials, appoint his own men, introduce changes in the governmental set-up and adopt a polity that aimed at fulfilling the aspirations of the Sikhs.

During Banda Singh's period, "there was a revolution effected in the minds of the people, of which history often fails to take note. A will was created in the ordinary masses to resist tyranny and to live and die for a national cause. The example set by Banda Singh and his companions in this respect was to serve them as a beacon light in the days to come. The idea of a national state, long dead, once again become a living aspiration and although suppressed for the time being by relentless persecution, it went on working underground like a smouldering fire and came out forty years later with a fuller effulgence, never to be suppressed again."<sup>53</sup>

### **Relentless Struggle of the Sikhs**

After Banda Singh's death, with brief intervals of respite here and there, the history of the Sikhs is a record of a great struggle between the Sikhs on one side and the Mughals or the Afghans on the other. It ultimately resulted in the occupation of the Punjab by the Sikhs about the middle of the sixties of the eighteenth century. During this period, the successes of the Sikhs were interspersed with horrible persecutions at the hands of the Mughal government. At this time, differences among themselves were patched up in the interest of the community on the intervention of *Mata Sundari*—the widow of Guru Gobind Singh—who resided at Delhi. Instead of visiting her there, she advised the Sikhs to hold their periodical meetings at Amritsar.<sup>54</sup>

With the appointment of Bhai Mani Singh as the head priest of Harmandir, Amritsar, in 1721, the Lahore government set up a police post there to restrict the Sikhs from gathering there in large numbers. The pilgrims were harassed but they could not be completely overawed. The Delhi government replaced Abdus Samad Khan, the governor of Lahore, by his more enthusiastic son, Zakariya Khan, who took over the charge of his new assignment in 1726. Zakariya Khan, popularly known as Khan Bahadur, ordered that the hair and the beards of the Sikhs should be removed. This harsh order drove the Sikhs in thousands into the forests and the hills.<sup>55</sup> Zakariya Khan sent out moving columns in all directions to hunt them out,<sup>56</sup> and the punitive parties combed the villages and forests and daily brought batches of Sikhs in chains who were publicly beheaded at Lahore at the *nakhas* (horse market) now called the Shahidganj. The whole machinery of the government, including *muqadams*, *chaudharis* and non-official *zamindars*, were set into motion to see that the Sikhs found no shelter within their areas. When the captured Sikhs were offered the choice between Islam

and death they chose the latter. The Sikhs repaired to the deep forests, where, at times, they were driven to extremities and subsisted on vegetables and roots and blades of grass.<sup>57</sup> Their vow, however, was to keep the torch of freedom burning even in exile and they reconciled themselves to their lot. Once Zakariya Khan mockingly said about the Sikhs, “By God, they live on grass and claim kingship.”<sup>58</sup>

The government moved against the Sikhs, living in villages, on very flimsy and generally false and unjustified complaints. On a protest by Tara Singh of village Van against Sahib Rai of Newshehra Pannuan, letting loose his horses on the green fields of the village, the latter remarked, “You talk of my horses trespassing into your fields, let me tell you that my scissors shall trespass into your beards and long hair.” And shortly thereafter a contingent from Lahore arrived and extirpated Tara Singh along with his twenty-two companions.

Khan Bahadur fixed prices of the heads of the Sikhs. A regular and graded schedule of the rewards was set up for the persons who cooperated with the government to liquidate them. A person, providing shelter and food to a Sikh, suffered the death penalty or was forcibly converted to Islam. With renewed vigour in the villages and towns, and in hills and jungles, spies and informers plied their odious trade and the captured Sikhs were tortured and killed. Nadir Shah, the ruler of Persia, overran the Punjab and Delhi, in 1739. On his return journey from Delhi the Sikhs thought it an opportune time to enrich their depleted resources, and, falling upon his rear, relieved him of much of his booty.<sup>59</sup> When halting at Lahore Nadir Shah questioned Zakariya Khan about the whereabouts of the people who had dared to harass his men, “Who are these mischief-makers?” Zakariya Khan replied, “They are a group of *faqirs* who visit their Guru’s tank twice a year and bathing in it disappear.” “Where do they live?” asked Nadir Shah. “Their houses are their saddles” was the reply. Nadir warned him saying, “Take care, the day is not distant when these rebels will take possession of the country.”<sup>60</sup> In spite of Zakariya Khan’s all-out efforts to put the administration in proper gear the Sikhs were determined to ultimately establish their rule in the Punjab by totally paralysing state administrative machinery. Zakariya Khan died on July 1, 1745.

“High moral values, service, discipline and sacrifice were the ever guiding mottos of the Sikhs. To them their earthly belongings and bodies were not their own but belonged to the Guru who had merged his personality into the Khalsa. They believed that sacrifice made in the cause of the *Panth* would place them in the lap of their Guru. We do not find any instance in the Sikh history where a captured Sikh gave up his religion to save his life.”<sup>61</sup> To mock at their hardships they coined luxurious names for very ordinary things of daily use. For example, a single Sikh was called one lakh and a quarter, grams called almonds and one-eyed man an Argus-eyed lion.<sup>62</sup>

The murder of Jaspat Rai, when harassing the Sikhs at Eminabad, maddened his brother Lakhpat Rai, a *divan* of the Lahore government, with fury against the Sikhs.<sup>63</sup> He took a vow to destroy them root and branch. Backed by Yahiya Khan, the son and successor of Zakariya Khan, the *divan* adopted a ruthless policy towards the Sikhs, persecuting them, “with thousands of tortures.”<sup>64</sup> He said, “I am a Khatri, as was Guru Gobind Singh, the creator of the Khalsa, but I shall not call myself by that name until I have erased their name from the page of existence.”<sup>65</sup> He forbade the Sikhs from reading their scriptures, prohibited the use of the word *gur* for sugar candy as it sounded like Guru and as also of the word *Granth* which was to be replaced by *Pothi*.<sup>66</sup> According to Rattan Singh Bhangu, Diwan Lakhpat Rai of Eminabad ordered the destruction of all Sikh books— *Granth*s and *Pothi*s.<sup>67</sup> And as a result of the personal vendetta of Lakhpat Rai the Sikhs



suffered a very heavy loss of life, in June 1746, and this is known, in the history of the Punjab, as the first holocaust— *pahia or chbota ghallughara*.

Zakariya Khan's second son and governor of Lahore, "Shah Niwaz got the bellies of the Sikhs ripped open, got the iron pegs struck into their heads and got their brains removed in his presence. If ever a Sikh mother complained of her son's indifference towards her he would order the execution of the son, and in case the mother bewailed the order of execution of her son, both the son and the mother were killed."<sup>68</sup>

For the Sikhs a dip in the holy tank of Amritsar and homage at Harmandir were essential parts of their pilgrimage for which they came there from far and near on the occasions of Baisakhi and Diwali.<sup>69</sup> On these occasions, the Lahore government made special arrangements to capture them. And, not unoften, the Sikhs had to fight their way out of the town.

The period of governorship of Muin-ul-Mulk (1748-53), popularly known as Mir Mannu, was perhaps the darkest in the history of the Punjab when even Sikh women and children were seized and imprisoned, starved and tortured to death in the dark and narrow dungeons in the Landa Bazar of Lahore. The sufferings of the Sikhs at this time were very severe indeed, and alluring rewards were offered for destroying them. In the words of Miskin, "Every one who brought Sikh heads to Muin received rewards of rupees ten per head. Anyone who brought a horse belonging to a Sikh could keep it as his own; whosoever lost his own horse by chance in the fight with the Sikhs got another in its place from the government stable."<sup>70</sup> Adeena Beg, who was at one time considered to be a sympathiser of the Sikhs, reacted violently against them after Ahmad Shah's return in 1757, and ordered that no Sikh should be allowed to remain alive. The forests where the Sikhs hid themselves were ordered to be cut and the hiding Sikhs hunted down.<sup>71</sup> According to Forster, "such was the keen spirit that animated the persecution, such was the success of the exertions that the name of a Sique no longer existed in the Mughal dominion."<sup>72</sup>

Despite the fact that the Sikhs had been outlawed by the government Kapur Singh Faizullapuria divided the Sikhs into two *dais* (groups). One group was called *Budha Dal*, League of the Elders, which included men above the age of forty and the other was named *Taruna Dal*, League of the Young, which comprised the young Sikhs below forty. These *dais*, later named *Dal Khalsa*, spear-headed the Sikh movement in the Punjab and led its people to their liberation from the tyrannical Mughal government. The *Dal Khalsa* and its organisation may be studied in detail in the chapter entitled 'The Military system of the Sikhs.'

As the Sikhs had been inspired with the object of achieving political emancipation from the Mughal rule they would not accept any terms of the rulers. Grants of *jagirs* from the government could not placate them.<sup>73</sup> Their enthusiasm for their faith, their hatred for the Muhammadan rulers who had so long trampled them under foot, who had killed their prophets and thrown down their altars, gave them a certain dignity and to their objects and expeditions an almost national interest.<sup>74</sup>

The Sikhs are generally sensitive to the sanctity of their religious places. When Massa Ranghar of Mandiali converted the holy precincts of the *Durbar Sahib*, at Amritsar, into a stable and the inner sanctuary into a dancing-hall where he used to smoke and drink to the utter desecration of the holy place, Mehtab Singh of Mirankot rushed to Amritsar from the deserts of Bikaner and cut off the head of the offending Ranghar.

In spite of all the hardships they had to undergo, the Sikhs doggedly held out against their enemies. According to Ahmad Shah Batalia, the Sikhs were helped by the *zamindars* in four different ways. They provided them with protection, supplied them with means of living, bid them in their houses in small batches and joined their ranks.<sup>75</sup> The peasantry of the Punjab had grown restless because of the heavy revenue charges and the shabby treatment of the revenue staff and the Mughal troops.<sup>78</sup> And thus, many of them were obliged to give up cultivation. They joined the Sikh *dais* or adopted other means of subsistence. This state of affairs hindered the progress of agriculture and trade and considerably upset the economy of the province.<sup>77</sup>

Adeena Beg, the *faujdar* of Jullundur Doab, at times, entered into secret negotiations with the Sikhs,<sup>78</sup> and Kaura Mal, the *divan* of Lahore, sympathised with them.<sup>79</sup> On many occasions, the Lahore government felt that the Sikhs might be humoured. They offered to befriend them, provided they suspended their hostility towards the government. Thus, the Sikhs got intermittent respites which were utilised by them to strengthen their organisation. The government, after conducting their hunting expeditions against the Sikhs would, now and then, declare that they had been completely annihilated. But to their great surprise, they soon found the Sikhs very much alive. Many Hindus in the villages, harassed by the government, also preferred to adopt Sikhism. This kept the ranks of the Sikhs replenished,<sup>80</sup> and, with unsubdued spirits, they sang:

“Mannu is our sickle,  
And we are a crop for him to mow,  
The more he cuts us, the more we grow.”<sup>81</sup>

Their determined courage and unconquerable spirit of resistance always kept their flame in high splendour. It is an unforgettable lesson of history that persecution stimulates the spirit that it designs to suppress.

It may be mentioned here that the Sikhs did not entertain any enmity against the Mohammadans or their religion. Their struggle was against the government and not against the Muslim people. There is no instance on record of the *Dal Khalsa* or of any Misal force having ever attacked any Muslim village or place of worship as such. According to Ganda Singh, if at any time Muslim mosques came to be attacked by them it was because these were the nerve-centres of their *jehad* (religious war) against the Sikhs in these days. Otherwise, there are instances amongst the Sikh Gurus and Sikh chiefs building mosques for their Muslim friends and subjects.<sup>82</sup>

The Lahore government had been convinced that the Sikhs could not be cowed by a policy of ruthlessness; rather they would react adversely at the earliest opportunity. Therefore, the government always continued preparing themselves militarily for future collisions with them.

Kaura Mal, who had tried to keep the Sikhs pacified and had secured for them *jagirs* at Patti, Chunian and Jhabal, died in 1752, in an action against Ahmad Shah Durrani. Mir Mannu offered an abject submission to the Durrani invader and changed his allegiance from Delhi to Kabul and consequently the Punjab was made a part of the Afghan Empire. The Khalsa, who aimed at freeing the land from the Mughal yoke, could not like Mir Mannu take this somersault as it would make their task more difficult. The anti-Sikh activities of Mir Mannu, combined with Ahmad Shah's contempt for the Sikhs, could expose them to a much greater danger. But despite the fact that Mir Mannu struggled with the Sikhs for a little over five years he cannot be said to have succeeded. Several forces, internal as well as external, working during this period, were responsible for this state of

affairs. The organisation of the Sikhs stood them in good stead in such dangerous days. The common danger and strong religious feelings kept them under discipline and made every Sikh obey his leader in order to work for the cause of the Panth.

On the other hand, the peasantry of the Punjab had grown restless and discontented under heavy revenue charge and by the ill-treatment of the revenue officers of the Mughals. They preferred the adoption of Sikhism in order to get rid of their sad plight by joining the *Dal Khalsa*. Muin's keeping of a large army for crushing the Sikhs was itself a very potent cause leading to his failure. His large army entailed upon him a very heavy expenditure and to meet this he had to squeeze the people of their blood. This led to a large scale alienation and these people began to look to the Sikhs for their deliverance. The members of the *Dal Khalsa* came forward with the offer of the needed protection.

Thus, the very forces which were aimed at the destruction of the Sikhs, failing in hitting the mark, hurt the initiator of the plan and strengthened that which they meant to destroy.

The leaders of the *Dal Khalsa* were good judges of the situations. Finding Mir Mannu in a precarious condition they sacked the Bari and Jullundur Doabs and chastised such of the officials and their supporters there as had helped the government against the Sikhs. The Sikhs also extended their activities in the Rachna and Chaj Doabs. After Mannu's death, according to Col. Polier, the Sikhs "began to grow formidable and assume real independence. They formed themselves into a kind of republic and in the course of a few years possessed themselves of the full government of the province of Lahore and Multan."<sup>83</sup> And sometime about this period Sayid Bulhe Shah (1680-1758) wrote:

*Mughlan zahir piale pite,  
Bhurian male Raje kite;  
Sabb ashraf phirn chup kite  
Bhala unhan nun jhariai.*<sup>84</sup>

'The Mughals had drunk the cups of (destroying) poison, and the blanket-wearing Sikhs had become the Rajas. The nobles are all wandering about in silence, well have they been swept off.'

This refers to the establishment of the Sikh power in the Punjab on the debris of the fallen Mughal structure during the sixth and seventh decades of the eighteenth century. About the end of 1754, the *Dal Khalsa* carried their arms into the Ambala district and Sirhind and at the same time they continued threatening the provincial capital.<sup>85</sup> Even during Mir Mannu's days Nawab Kapur Singh had once entered Lahore and taken his seat on the platform of the city *kotwali*, quietly slipping away on the arrival of the government troops.<sup>86</sup>

Ahmad Shah Abdali came to the Punjab time and again between 1747, and 1769, which was a crucial period in the rise and growth of the Sikh power. Their conflict with the Durrani involved them in immense difficulties. They were driven from place to place, but they heroically held out against him. Jahan Khan, the Durrani commander, always kept his powder dry to fight the Sikhs. But the Sikhs were not to be disheartened. According to the *Tarikh-i-Muzafri*, the forces of Jahan Khan were occasionally defeated in the clashes between the Afghans and the Sikhs. Encouraged by these successes, the Sikhs found opportunities to expand in different parts of the country.<sup>87</sup>

The *Dal Khalsa*, at times, cooperated with Adeena Beg to oust the Afghans from the Punjab. The Sikhs did not mean to reconcile themselves to Adeena's rule in the country but they wanted to be rid of a more dangerous enemy first. With the help of the Sikhs and Marathas, Adeena attacked Sirhind, captured Abdul Samad Khan, Abdali's governor of that place, and sacked the town.<sup>88</sup> The allies, then, proceeded towards the provincial capital and, in April 1758, Jahan Khan and Timur Shah were driven away from Lahore. They were pursued and overtaken by the Sikhs and the Marathas,<sup>89</sup> and a number of Afghan captives were brought to Amritsar to clean the holy tank which Ahmad Shah and Jahan Khan had desecrated with rubbish. In this action ten to fifteen thousand Sikhs took part along with their leaders like Charhat Singh Sukarchakia, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, Tara Singh Ghaiba, Hari Singh, Lehna Singh, Gujjar Singh and Jhanda Singh Bhangis.<sup>90</sup>

The *Dal Khalsa* incessantly continued the struggle. In pursuance of a *gurmata* passed in early November 1760, at Amritsar, on the occasion of the Diwali festival, they attacked Lahore with 10,000 Sikhs. On the persuasion of the prominent citizens of Lahore the governor paid 30,000 rupees to the Sikhs as an offering for the *karah parshad* (sacred pudding) out of the revenues meant for Ahmad Shah Durrani. With this, the Sikhs retired from the capital.<sup>91</sup>

On the occasion of the Diwali festival which fell on 22<sup>nd</sup> of October, 1761, the Sikhs passed a *gurmata* in the general assembly, held at Amritsar, that Aqil Das of Jandiala, a supporter of Ahmad Shah Abdali, should be chastised and the provincial capital captured.<sup>92</sup> As the *Dal Khalsa* moved upon Lahore, the citizens, knowing the weakness of the governor, opened the gates of the city. Jassa Singh entered the capital and the Sikhs proclaimed him king with the title of *Sultan-ul-qaum* and struck coins in the name of the Guru.<sup>93</sup>

Aqil Das immediately wrote to Ahmad Shah for help.<sup>94</sup> Abdali, who was already on the march, came at once. The Sikhs were surrounded by the Afghan forces on February 5, 1762, near the village of Kupp, in the tract around Malerkotla. The Sikhs suffered a heavy loss of about ten to twelve thousand killed at the lowest estimate.<sup>95</sup> This dreadful carnage is known as *wadda ghallughara* or the Great Holocaust. During this invasion, Ahmad Shah blew up the building of the Sikh temple at Amritsar and filled up the sacred tank with the debris.<sup>96</sup> But the Sikhs did not accept things lying down and continued the life and death struggle till, not long afterwards, they became the masters of their land. The Sikhs led desperate expeditions against the Afghans of Sirhind in 1763-64, and of Lahore in 1764, and within two years drove away the agents and governors of Ahmad Shah from the Punjab. James Browne writes that Ahmad Shah sent a person to the Sikh leaders to negotiate peace with them but he was not listened to and was driven away.<sup>97</sup> No doubt, Ahmad Shah inflicted heavy defeats upon the Sikhs but he could not subdue them, and the tact and skill of the greatest military genius of the time, in Asia, gave way before the zeal and determination, of the Sikhs, born of religious fervour and spirit of sacrifice.<sup>98</sup>

The Jat Sikhs were the fighting arm of the community. By their tribal characteristics they were unamenable to a despotic rule, still more to a hostile foreign rule. They have always been nostalgically disposed towards their land and could never tolerate to part with it. When they were dispossessed of it and made to wander in the jungles or deserts it was very natural that they should try to come back to the lands which they and their ancestors had been ploughing for generations. And in a bid to get political freedom, they had paralysed the Mughal power in the Punjab and consequently the Mughals had abdicated for all intents and purposes. The Sikhs could not allow the opportunist foreign invaders—the Afghans—to steal a march over them in establishing sovereignty in the province. Being the sons of the soil and through a long-drawn struggle for dependence and a

series of sacrifices, the Sikhs had a genuine case for the possession of the Punjab both on moral and gal grounds.

### **Rakhi System Establishment of Virtual Parallel Government**

The most important development which took place during this period was the introduction of the *rakhi* system which sowed the seeds of the Sikh political authority in the land. In the early stages, the *rakhi* or protection was sought by the people from the Sikhs and later, in order to bring more territories under the *rakhi* system, the offer of *rakhi* was made to the people of the towns and villages of the Punjab and was actively pursued by the Sikhs, as a regular feature of their activities. The word *rakhi* literally means 'protection' and in practice, it was a tribute received by the Sikhs for the protection provided or guaranteed by them against external aggression to the people paying it. The circumstances which led to the creation of this system were correlated with the rise of the Sikhs power.

During the three years that followed Mir Mannu's death there were nine swift changes in the governorship of the Punjab<sup>99</sup> that resulted in chaotic conditions in the province. The Punjab was thrown into the trough of such political confusion and conflicting political claims that peace was completely shattered and the stability of this land wrecked. On Mir Mannu's death, Emperor Ahmad Shah appointed his three-year old son, Mahmud Khan, viceroy of the two provinces of Lahore and Multan, on the 13<sup>th</sup> November 1753, and, interestingly enough, the baby viceroy was provided with a two-year old deputy in the person of Muhammad Amin Khan, son of late Mir Mannu. It was a mockery of administration. Baron Hugel commenting upon it says, "It was a plain proof of the miserable state of affairs at Delhi that in such difficult times children and women were thought capable of being entrusted with places of such high importance."<sup>100</sup> Between the inefficient administration of Mir Mannu's widow, Mughalani Begum, and the intrigues of artful Adeena Beg, the land of the Punjab became a prize for which the hereditary claim of the political authority at Delhi contended with the military genius at Kabul. The people of Punjab were suffering from the evils of a dual monarchy, not knowing whether the province was a part of Indian Empire to be controlled in its administration from Delhi or from Kandhar or Kabul. During these years the state political apparatus had literally collapsed and, as such, the protection of law and life could not be given to the people by the nominal governments professing to be holding charge of the state. Trade had practically come to a standstill as the highways and trade routes were not safe.

Under these circumstances, the dire need of the people was an institution that should protect them from internal lawlessness and external danger which perpetually loomed large before the people. The province was divided into a number of principalities, their jurisdictions conflicted and the different authorities squeezed the poor peasants of their hard-earned money without any prospect of law and security. Economically, the people were being ruined, and politically, there was no hope of peace or Justice. This was a long-sought opportunity for the Sikhs from which they drew full advantage. As sons of the soil, the Sikhs knew how the people of the Punjab had suffered because of insecure and unstable conditions under the Mughals. Besides other considerations if any, they genuinely felt the need of providing asylum to their fellow-beings in the Punjab. The *Dal Khalsa*, being a well organised body of the Sikhs, devised the institution of *rakhi*. They considered themselves competent to extend their protection to the people where they required it.

Under this system the protection was granted to the people against foreign invasion and internal exploitation of *zamindars* and government officials and against the depredations of the local adventurers. It meant that the full safety of their persons and property was to be assumed.

Generally, in return they received one fifth of their income twice a year after each harvest, that is, *harbi* and *sauni* or *rabi* and *kharif*, but the rate of *rakhi* seems to be one-fifth of the revenue. James Browne writes, "In the districts not reduced to their absolute subjection but into which they make occasional incursions they levy a tribute which they call *Roukey* and which is about one fifth (as the Maratha *Chauth* is one fourth) of the annual rent; whenever a *zamindar* has agreed to pay this tribute to any Sikh chief, that chief not only himself refrains from plundering him, but will protect him from all others; and this protection is by general consent held so far sacred, that even if the grand army passes through a *zamindari* where the safe guards of the lowest Sikh chief are stationed, it will not violate them."<sup>101</sup> And according to Polier, "no further hindrance or molestation will be received from them, on the contrary the chief to whom the tribute or *rakey* is paid, takes the district under his protection and is ready to fight against any of, brethren who might think of disturbing it."<sup>102</sup>

According to Ghulam Muhyy-ud-Din (Bute Shah), "When even a Sardar of ten troopers placed an area under his *rakhi* even one of the biggest Sardars having five hundred or more troopers under him could not interfere in that area."<sup>103</sup>

On the other hand, according to Jadunath Sarkar, "the payment of *chauth* merely saved a place from the unwelcome presence of the Maratha soldiers and civil underlings, but did not impose on Shivaji any corresponding obligation to guard the district from foreign invasion or internal disorder. The Marathas looked only to their own gain and not to the fate of their prey after they had left. The *chauth* was only a means of buying off one robber; and not a subsidiary system for the maintenance of peace and order against all enemies. The lands subject to the *chauth* cannot, therefore, be rightly called spheres of influence."<sup>104</sup>

Thus *rakhi* system was certainly an improvement upon *chauth* as the Sardar offering *rakhi* to a village or an area considered himself under obligation to give protection to the people from oppression and attack from whichever quarter it came, as against the practice of *chauth*. Secondly, the areas under *rakhi* could rightly be called the spheres of influence and these areas formed the basis of the future Misals.

*Rakhi* has been conceived generally as a definite phase in the political career of the Sikhs, as a step that supplied them with the idea of raising themselves into territorial chieftains. This view finds support in Ali-ud-Din Mufti's conception of the phase of *nazarana-giri* or *aman* (The Persian equivalent of *rakhi*) as a prelude to the phase of annexation.<sup>105</sup> However, Bute Shah refers to Charhat Singh's conquest of one area and assertion of *rakhi* over another at the same time.<sup>106</sup> *Rakhi* did serve as a prelude to territorial occupation but not as a phase. Territorial occupation and *rakhi* could be established, at one and the same time, in two different areas. *Rakhi* was, thus, a transitional arrangement existing side by side with territorial occupation. The areas once brought under *rakhi* were, often but not always, actually occupied and directly administered sooner or later.

The units of the *Dal Khalsa* moved about offering the *rakhi* plan to each village individually. The *zamindars* readily accepted this offer as this system created a sense of security. The people, in general, were happy or, at least, were consoled with the thought that the militant *Khalsa* was there to protect them. This *rakhi* scheme opened out vistas of territorial sovereignty to the Sikhs. The leaders of the *Dal Khalsa* were assigned by the *Khalsa* organisation a number of districts for providing *rakhi* and each leader was required or expected to set up his *derah* (camp) at a strategic point, to build new *garhis* (mud fortresses) and to repair the old Mughal forts for his use.

“This practice worked successfully, partly for the reason that the interval between the successive invasions of the Abdali afforded the *Khalsa* leaders time enough to organise their territorial acquisitions, and partly for the reason that most of the central Punjab districts soon elected to come under the new ‘Protective System’ of the *Khalsa*. Having thus secured a habitat and a more or less regular source of income from the *rakhi* scheme and a wider field for recruitment to its ranks, the *dal* was in a better position to contest with the Abdali this transfer of their homeland.”<sup>107</sup>

This protection was extended equally to the Hindu and Muslim *zamindars* and people belonging to both the communities benefited from it. The Mughals and Muslim Rajputs, who rejected this offer on account of religious fanaticism and opposed the Sikhs otherwise, were squeezed out to find homes elsewhere.<sup>108</sup> In fact, these Muslims who were ousted included most of those people who had usurped the lands of the Sikhs, when they had, under government pressure, left their homes to seek shelter in jungles and deserts. Having recovered the possession of their lands and having entrenched themselves in their respective areas, the Sikhs began to organise some sort of government which became the basis of the administration known as the Misaldari system.

When the representatives of the *Dal Khalsa* came to collect the stipulated portion of the produce of the village due to them as protectors, they received the welcome due to the deliverer and not the frowns meant for the tax collector.

In a short time four out of the five Doabs of the Punjab came under the protection of the Dal Khalsa. To make the system function successfully one or more units of the *dal* could combine to take charge of a big slice of territory that came under their protection. To meet a situation in emergency a reserve force was stationed at Amritsar in addition to the moving units of the *dais*. According to Sohan Lal Suri, Amritsar began to be guarded by Nishanwalias and Dallewalias. The territory, south-west of Lahore, fell under the protection of Nakais; the Chaj and Rachna Doab territories came under the protection of Hari Singh Bhangi and Charhat Singh Sukarchakia. Some territories north of Amritsar also fell under the *rakhi* of Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and Jai Singh Kanaihya. The southern bank of the Satluj came under the protection of Deep Singh and Karora Singh, while the Ahluwalias and the Singhpurias occupied some territories on both banks of the Satluj.<sup>109</sup> To reward and humour the Sikhs for their help, Adeena Beg paid them a lakh and a quarter of rupees as *rakhi* or protection money for the Jalandhar Doab. To ingratiate and identify himself further with them, he acknowledged or styled himself to be a sort of round-head Sikh and brought *karah prasad* (communion food) worth a thousand rupees on festive occasions to be distributed among them.<sup>110</sup>

A little later, the Sikhs developed their power and influence in the Gangetic Doab; they levied tribute on many towns and villages between the Jamuna and the Ganga. Describing their method of operations, Franklin writes, “When having first demanded the *rakhi* or tribute, if it be complied with, they retire Peacefully, but when denied, hostilities commence.”<sup>111</sup> The Sikhs moved vigorously against those who showed hostility.

G.R.C. William writes, “As regularly as the crops were cut, the border chieftains crossed over and levied black-mail from almost every village, in the most systematic manner. The requisitions were termed *rakhi*, sometimes euphemistically *kambli*, that is, ‘blanket money,’ perhaps equal to the price of a blanket.<sup>112</sup> Each of them had certain well-known beat or circle so well-recognised and so clearly defined that it is not unusual for the peasantry at the present day to speak

of some places being, for instances, in Jodh Singh's *Patti*, others in Diwan Singh's or Himmat Singh's and so on."<sup>113</sup>

Economically *rakhi* was a large source of income to the Sikh leaders. The Sikhs of the neighbouring villages were coming under their protection voluntarily. The extent of the territory that the Khalsa had to protect was so large that it felt it necessary to divide itself into units or divisions called the Misals. On the territories which had hitherto served as their *rakhi* grounds they set themselves up as territorial chieftains. And these Misals continued to remain part of the national army or the Dal Khalsa ji and remained bound to the common decisions taken through the *gurmata* in the name of the Guru. The Khalsa always utilized the time to popularise its *rakhi* system whenever it got respite from the Durrani invasions and it went a long way in breaking the Afghan administration that the victor of Panipat sought to impose on the Punjab after the battle of Panipat in January 1761. By their rapid extension and development of the *rakhi* system the Sikhs became the undisputed masters of a large portion of the Punjab. They could very successfully and effectively resist the alien invader. They succeeded in acquiring new territories. They treated very generously the people whom they had placed under their subjection and treated their neighbours with regard and consideration.<sup>114</sup>

Thus, *rakhi* proved as a boon both for those who availed of it and for those who gave it. The former settled to their peaceful avocations and the latter laid the foundations of their independent principalities in the Punjab.

### **Assumption of Sovereignty**

After the exit of Ahmad Shah Durrani from the Punjab in the end of March 1765, Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh occupied the fort of Lahore on April 16, 1765. Sobha Singh also joined them, the following day, on April 17. On the request of a deputation of the grandees of the town, the Sardars issued a proclamation that persons who oppressed the people would be severely dealt with, and the plundering of the town was stopped forth-with. The town was divided by the above Sardars into three divisions and they took to administering it whole-heartedly.<sup>115</sup>

As a token of assuming power the Sardars struck coins in the name of the Guru and the Sikh rupees came to be called 'Gobindshahi.' The coin bore the old inscription:

*Deg o tegh o fateh o nusrat bedirang*  
*Yaft az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh*

The Sikhs extended their sway in the Bari, Rachna, Chaj and Sind Sagar Doabs. In the Bari Doab, the district of Amritsar had been divided amongst the four Sikhs Misals. The territory around Amritsar and Tarn Taran was under Bhangis; Jassa Singh Ahluwalia held the towns of Fatehbad and Goindwal; Ramgarhias held Sri Hargobindpur and Qadian, and the Kanaihyas held the territory about Batala. Amritsar was a common town of the whole Sikh community where all Sikhs assembled on important occasions and festivals.<sup>116</sup>

Charhat Singh Sukarchakia took the major portion of Rechna Doab under his sway. He entrusted Wazirabad to Gurbakhsh Singh Waraich and the *parganas* of Hafizabad, Shaikhupura and Naushehra were given to Bhag Singh Virk. The Bhangi Sardars, Tara Singh, Sahib Singh and Jiwan Singh, occupied the district of Sialkot. Karam Singh Bhangi had Firozki, Kaleki, Rurki, and Bajra in the Sialkot district besides holding Chhinah and the neighbouring villages.<sup>117</sup>



From 1741 to 1765, Muqarrab Khan, Gakhar chief, had been in complete control of Chaj Doab. Gujjar Singh Bhangi proceeded from Lahore and defeated Muqarrab who retired to his capital, Gujrat, and later left that town as well. Gujjar Singh established his capital there and conquered the whole of the district. The Salt Range fell to the share of Charhat Singh.

From September 1765 to May 1766, the Sikhs fought against Najib-ud-Daulah, Ahmad Shah's plenipotentiary, and virtually a dictator at Delhi. They defeated him in many clashes and ransacked his territories. This completely shattered the Afghan authority in India.

Ahmad Shah again invaded Hindustan in December 1766. Sobha Singh, Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh; who were at Lahore at that time, were obliged to leave their posts.<sup>118</sup> A deputation of the prominent persons of Lahore then waited upon Ahmad Shah Abdali and told him that Lehna Singh was a good ruler and was sympathetic towards his subjects. He made no distinctions between Hindus and Muslims. He bestowed turbans on the *qazis*, *muftis* and *imams* of the mosques on the festivals of *Id-ul-zuha*.<sup>119</sup> The Muslims of Lahore had no fear of the Khalsa, said the deputationists, and they had started looking upon them as their comrades rather than hostile enemies. This happy circumstance, said they, had made the Muslim leaders of Lahore recommend to Ahmad Shah the appointment of Sardar Lehna Singh as their governor in preference to a Muslim nominee of his. Ahmad Shah wrote to Lehna Singh, offering him the governorship of Lahore and sent him some dry fruit of Kabul. Lehna Singh declined the offer saying that to accept an offer from an invader was against the policy and honour of his community and returned the fruit saying that that was not his food as he lived on parched grams.<sup>120</sup>

Jahan Khan, the Afghan general, was defeated by the Sikhs of the central Punjab. And from the tough resistance that Ahmad Shah met at the hands of the Sikhs this time, he considered it advisable to return home without making much ado about it. The Sikhs would not give him easy headway into the Punjab. A despatch, issued from Calcutta to the Nawab Wazir of Oudh, dated 19<sup>th</sup> February, 1767, says, "Lord Clive (the British Governor of Calcutta) is extremely glad to know that the Shah's progress has been impeded by the Sikhs. If they continue to cut off his supplies and plunder his baggage, he will be ruined without fighting and then he will either return to his country or meet with shame and disgrace. As long as he does not defeat the Sikhs or come to terms with them, he cannot penetrate into India. And neither of these events seems probable since the Sikhs have adopted such effective tactics and since they hate the Shah on account of his destruction of Chak(Amritsar)." <sup>121</sup>

Ahmad Shah speedily returned to his country, leaving the whole of the territory of the Punjab in the hands of the Sikhs. After Ahmad Shah's departure, Gujjar Singh, Lehna Singh and Sobha Singh marched towards Lahore. The nobles of Dadan Khan, the new governor of Lahore, told him plainly that the people were satisfied with the Sikh rule and they might open the city gates and admit the Sikh chiefs into the town. Dadan Khan, therefore, on the advice of his friends, met the Sikh Sardars who treated him with respect and consideration and granted him a daily allowance of rupees twenty and occupied Lahore.<sup>122</sup>

In 1768, Najib-ud-Daulah fought many battles against the Sikhs and suffered terrible defeats at their hands. He was so shaken in his determination and weakened by the Sikhs that he thought of attaining political salvation by making a pilgrimage to Mecca or by retiring into some obscure corner.<sup>123</sup>

From the analysis of the above discussion of the Sikh struggle for sovereignty, the following four stages emerge distinctly. First, from 1708 to 1716, under Banda Singh, the Sikh movement was militantly offensive. Second, from 1717 to 1747, under the Lahore Mughal governors—Abdus Samad Khan, Zakariya Khan, Yahiya Khan and Shah Nawaz Khan—the role of the Sikhs was mainly defensive. Third, from 1748 to 1761, Ahmad Shah Durrani fought against the Mughals and the Marathas, providing opportunity to the Sikhs to recoup and organise themselves for a final bid for power. Fourth, from 1762 to 1768, there was a straight contest for power between the Sikhs and the Afghans in which the Sikhs emerged triumphant ultimately.

In the first stage, the Sikhs planned the destruction and replacement of the Mughal government. This period witnessed the first Sikh attempt, though unsuccessful, to carve out an independent state under the leadership of the valiant Banda Singh. In the second stage (1717-1747), the Mughal governors of Lahore made an all-out effort to stamp out the Sikh movement, which at times received staggering blows, horrible persecutions and martyrdoms of the Sikhs. The role of the Sikhs during this period was primarily defensive in nature. The situation compelled the Sikh leaders to plan some vigorous organisational changes. The emergence of the Dal Khalsa—the Sikh national army—was a highly significant consequence of the Sikh suppression by the state. In the third stage (1748-1761), the Sikh leaders moved into the vacuum created in the central Punjab by the Mughal-Afghan contest. In the fourth stage (1762 to 1768), only two contestants, the Afghans and the Sikhs, were left in the arena of the Punjab. The Afghan-Sikh contest was decisive; the Sikhs emerged victorious after a long-drawn and fateful struggle.

It goes to the credit of the Sikhs that they did not allow the struggle against the Mughals or the Afghans to degenerate into a vendetta against the Muslim population. Ahmad Shah Durrani was faced with the Sikhs who were possessed of sterling qualities of character and conduct. The Sikhs got released from the hands of the Afghans hundreds of Indian women, being carried away to Afghanistan and restored them to their families. Such noble behaviour of the Sikhs was bound to elicit respect for them in the Indian society. On the other hand Ahmad Shah Durrani, at the grandfatherly age, had stooped so low as to have forcibly married Hazart Begum, a sixteen year old daughter of the late Emperor Muhammad Shah, in 1756, in spite of the tearful protests of her widowed mother. Besides, he took away sixteen other ladies of the Mughal royal *harem* with 400 maidservants belonging to them. Thus, the Afghans alienated every regard and sympathy of the entire population of the country.

Amritsar played a very important role in the Sikh struggle for independence. It was a great source of their inspiration. The more the Durrani tried to destroy their temple and tank, the bolder and more revengeful they grew. Amritsar, to the Sikhs, was a symbol of their national unity and independence.

The second and third quarters of the eighteenth century produced a galaxy of valiant and very competent Sikh leaders as Kapur Singh Faizullapuria, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, Ala Singh, Tara Singh Ghaiba, Jai Singh Kanaihya, Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh Bhangis, Charhat Singh and Baghel Singh. These leaders made a notable contribution to wresting power from the hands of the Mughals and foiling all attempts of Ahmad Shah Durrani to make Punjab a province of his kingdom.

The immensity of sacrifice in human blood, made by the Sikhs to gain mastery over their own homeland was tremendously vast. Dr Hari Ram Gupta points out that at the most modest estimates Guru Gobind Singh, in several battles fought against him by the Mughals, lost about five thousand of his newly created Khalsa. Under Banda Singh, at least twenty five thousand Sikhs laid their lives in their fight against the Mughals. After Banda Singh's execution Abdus Samad Khan, governor of Punjab (1713-26), killed not less than twenty thousand Sikhs. His son and successor, Zakariya Khan (1726-45), was responsible for the death of an equal number. Yahiya Khan (1746-47) destroyed about ten thousand Sikhs in a single campaign called *chbota gballughara*. His brother Shah Nawaz Khan, in 1747, assassinated nearly one thousand Sikhs. Yahiya Khan's brother-in-law, Muin-ul-Mulk (1748-53), slaughtered more than thirty thousand. These rulers were all Turks from Central Asia. Adeena Beg Khan, a Punjabi Arain, put to death at least five thousand in 1758. Ahmad Shah Abdali and his Afghan governors killed around sixty thousand from 1753 to 1767. Abdali's deputy, Najib-ud-Daulah, also an Afghan, slew nearly twenty thousand. Petty officials and public must have killed four thousand. The total comes to two lakh men.

The Marathas had taken ten years to recover their losses at the battle of Panipat in January 1761. The Sikhs, took only ten weeks to make up their losses fully and regain their spirit of defiance after the February 1762 carnage. They rose like a suppressed flame with greater vigour, and repulsed all his governors and the Abdali himself.

Some times the government announced that the Sikhs had been completely liquidated but a few days later they received the intelligence that a large number of them had assembled at a particular place. In fact, chivalrous Hindus, who felt that the Sikhs were being wronged against and harassed unduly, got themselves baptised into Singhs with the double-edged sword and replenished the ranks of the Sikhs. The Sikhs believed that sacrifice made for the cause of the Panth would place them in the lap of their Guru. It is difficult to find any instance in Sikh history where a captured Sikh gave up his religion to save his life. Ultimately, their sacrifice bore fruit. The tremendous human loss, when linked with the achievement of sovereignty, does not match very unfavourably with the commendable gains of the Sikhs. The sacrifice is the price of such gains for which the Sikhs had put at stake, for six decades, everything including their domestic comforts, their belongings and even their lives.

Abdali failed against the Sikhs and like a shrewd statesman he realised his limitations to deal with them effectively. He, therefore, helplessly, left most of the Punjab, including the provincial capital, in the hands of the Sikhs. The Sikhs, thus, emerged victorious after a long-drawn and fateful struggle. N.K. Sinha has rightly remarked that "for the successful termination of the Sikh war of independence we should give the credit to the entire nation, not to any individual, That would be against the spirit of the whole enterprise."<sup>124</sup> A.C. Bunerjee observed that, "the war of independence brought out the internal strength of the community. Sikh democracy was put to a severe test and it was not found wanting. The community not only survived half a century of persecution and war it created a state."<sup>125</sup>

#### Footnotes:

1. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash* (1841), Amritsar, 1939, p. 68; Muhammad Latif, *History of the Punjab, Calcutta*, 1891. p. 294 Payne, C.H., *A Short History of the Sikhs*, London, n.d., p. 43.

2. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
3. *Ibid.*, Ganda Singh, *Banda Singh Bahadur* (Punjabi), Amritsar, 1964, pp. 24-25.
4. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
5. *Akbbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla* (MS. Ganda Singh Private Collection, Patiala), p. 122; Rattan Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
6. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.* p. 81; Karam Singh, *Banda Bahadur*, Amritsar, 1907 p. 41; G.C. Narang, *Transformation of Sikhism*, Lahore 1912, pp. 100-01; Ganda Singh, *Banda Singh Bahadur*, Amritsar, 1935, p. 83.
7. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*, Vol. II (1722), Calcutta, 1874, p. 652.
8. Karam Singh, *Banda Bahadur*, Amritsar, 1907, p. 77. Iradat Khan, *Tarikh-i-Iradat Khan* (1714), MS, PUP., p. 68.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 87; Mohammad Qasim, *Ibratnama* (1719), MS., G.S., pp. 38-39.
10. Mohammad Qasim, *op. cit.*, p. 21. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Bombay, 1950, p. 85.
11. *Akbbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla*, News-litter, July 23, 1710. The Persian manuscript is preserved in the private collection of Dr Ganda Singh, Patiala. The collection of news from the royal Mughal Court relating to the Punjab originally preserved at Jaipur is now shifted to the State Archives, Bikaner.  
 Besides Nasir, Qalandhar also mentions Dinar Khan having been named Dindar Singh (Yar, Muhammed Qalandhar, *Dastural Insha* (1710), MS., G.S., p. 3.
12. *Ibid.*, a. dateless entry to this effect after the entry dated February 13, 1712, Ahmad Shah Batalia, Appendix to Sohan Lal Suri's *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, p. 11, Irvine, *Later Mughals*, Calcutta, 1922, p. 94.  
 Thornton, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. I, London, 1846, p. 176.
13. Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, (edition 1964), pp. 274-75.
14. Kamwar Khan, *Tazkiratus Salatin-i-Chughtia* (1723), MS, PUP, p. 334.
- 14A. It was a practice with Banda Singh to ask the ruler or *Chaudhary* of the place that he proposed to proceed against to accept his allegiance. In the case of a negative reply he considered himself justified to make an assault. (Ganda Singh, *Banda Singh Bahadur*, p. 80).
15. *Akbbar-i-Darbar-i Mualla*, news dated July 2, 1710; Khafi Khan, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 655; Elliot and Dowson, *History of India as told by its own Historians*, Vol. VII, London, 1877, p. 416; Irvine, *Later Mughals* Vol. I, Calcutta, 1922, pp. 101-102.
16. Khafi Khan, *op. cit.*, Vol. II. p. 658, Elliot and Dowson, *op. cit.*, p. 417.
17. Karam Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 123.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
19. Muhammad Qasim, *op. cit.*, p. 22; Khafi Khan, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 660; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, p. 117.
20. Muhammed Qasim, *op. cit.*, p. 23; Ganesh Das Badehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, (1855), Amritsar, 1965, p. 119; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar I, Lahore, 1885, pp. 79-80.
21. Iradat Khan, *Tawarakh-i-Iradat Khan* (1714), M.S., PUP, p. 68.
22. Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, London, 1812, p. 79.
23. *Akbbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla*, December 10, 1710.
- 23A. *Miftab-ul-Tawarikh*, p, 398, Forster. *A Journey from Bengal to England* Vol. I. London, 1788, p. 312.
24. Karam Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 138.
25. Khafi Khan, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 669-70, Kamwar Khan, *Tazkirah-i-Salatin-t-Chughtal* (1723), MS., PUP., p. 352; Elliot and Dowson, *op. cit.* Vol. VII, p. 423.
26. Muhammad Shujah-ud-Din (ed.), *Asrar-i-Samadi* (1728-29), Lahore, 1965, p. 18.
27. Muhammad Qasim, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

28. *Asrar-i-Samadi*, p. 15; Muhammad Harisi. *Ibrat nama* (1719), M.S. PUP, pp. 86-87: Khafi Khan *op. cit.*, II, p. 765.
29. Kesar Singh Chibber, *Bansavalinama* (1780), M.S., R.S., p. 294.
30. Muhammad Harisi, *op. cit.*, 86-87; Kamwar Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 460; Ganesh Das Badehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab* (1855), Amritsar. 1965, p. 123., Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs* Bombay, 1950, p. 99.
31. Ganesh Dass Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 123.
32. Khafi Khan, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 766; *Haqiqat-i-Bina-o-Uruj-i-Sikhan*, M.S., p. 10. Ghazi-ud-Din Khan, *Tazkira Imad-ul-Mulk*, 1758 M.S., Khalsa College, Amritsar, p. 189.
- 32A. Letter dated March 10, 1716 written by John Surman and Edward Stephenson, members of the British Embassy to the Court of Farrukh Siyar and addressed to the President and Governor of Fort Williams (Calcutta). Relevant portion of the letter is reproduced in Ganda Singh (ed.). *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs*, p. 52.
33. Muhammad Harisi, *op. cit.*, M.S., PUP., p. 87.
34. *Abwal-i-Adeena* Beg, M.S., G.S., p. 20; Khushwaqat Rai, M.S., PUP p. 42b.
35. *Akbbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla*, News June 10, 1716; *Asrar-i-Samadi*, p. 15.
36. *Akbbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla*, June 10, 1716; Mirza Muhammad Harisi, *op. cit.*, p. 103. Muhammad Qasim Lahori *op. cit.*, p. 76; Muhammad Hadi Kamwar Khan, *Tarikh-i-Sikhan* (1811), p. 180; Muhammad Shafi Warid, *Mirat-i-Waridat*, pp. 168/122; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar I, Lahore, 1885, p. 91, Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 143.
37. Elphinstone, *History of India*, London, 1874; p. 670; Muhammad Harisi, *op. cit.*, p. 103; Elliot and Dowson, *op. cit.*, Vol. VII, pp. 458-59. Khafi Khan, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 765-66; cf. Irvine. *Later Mughals*, Vol. I. Calcutta. 1922, p. 319.
38. Kushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, Princeton, 1963, p. 118.
39. Rattan Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 117.
40. Irvine, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 110.
41. Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur*, Amritsar, 1935, p. 80.
42. *Hukamname* (ed. Canda Singh, Patiala, 1967), No. 67, p. 195.
43. According to the local tradition once farmers from the neighbourhood of Sadhaura came to complain to Banda Singh about their suffering at the hands of the land-lords. Banda Singh ordered Baj Singh to open fire on them. On being asked he told them that they deserved no better deal. They were thousands in number and still they allowed themselves to be harassed by a handful of landlords. They acted on the suggestion and did away with the big *zamindars* of *malwa* and Jullundur Doab.
44. Irvine. *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 98-99.
45. Khafi Khan, *op. cit.* Vol. II, pp. 652; Mirza Mohammad Harisi, *op. cit.*, p. 72; Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 118.
46. Karam Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-78.
47. Kesar Singh Chhibbar, *op. cit.*, p. 136.
48. Ghulam Husain, *Siyar-ul-Mufakbrin* (English translation), Raymond. Vol. I, London, 1789, p. 82.
49. Kesar Singh Chhibbar, *op. cit.*, p. 136.
50. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 96.
51. *Akbbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla* (Jaipur), news letter, April 28, 1711.
52. *Ruqaat-i-Amin-ud-Daula*, letter III; Yar Mohammad Qalandar, *Dastur-ul-Insha*, Letter III, M.S., KCA.; Budh Singh Arora, *Rasala-i-Nanak Shah*, M.S., PUP, p. 9.
53. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*; pp. 107-08; cf., George Forster, *op. cit.*; Vol. I, p. 313.
54. Kesar Singh Chhibbar, *op. cit.*; pp. 142.

55. Kanaihya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, Lahore, 1877, p. 71.
56. Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 124; cf. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, p. 218.
57. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 44., cf. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, I, p. 103; Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 124.
58. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
59. George Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England*, Vol. I (1798), reprint, Patiala, 1970, p. 313.
60. Porster. *op. cit.*, I, p. 272,- Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, London, 1812, p. 86; Abroad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 13; Gordon, *The Sikhs*, London, 1904, pp. 57-58; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 139-40; M'Gregor, *The History of The Sikhs*. Vol. I, London, 1846, p. 115.
61. Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 126; Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56; Bakhat Mal, *Khalsanama*, M.S., R.S.; p. 28; Budh Singh Arora, *Risala-i-Nanak Shab* (1783), M.S., PUP, p. 12; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 213.
62. Similarly they called onions silver pieces; a rupee—an empty crust, a blind man wide awake hero; death—an expedition to the next world, a fine by the Panth—getting one's salary, etc. For more such terms see Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*. Vol. I, pp. 366-67.
63. Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 124; Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, M.S.G.S., p. 59, Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, p. 375.
64. Khushwaqat Rai. *op. cit.*, p. 48.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 47, Rattan Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 291-293, Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 199.
66. Rattan Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 293-94; Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, p. 519; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 199; Mohammad Latif, *op. cit.*, P. 213; Gian Singh, *Shamsber Khalsa* (edition 1892), pp. 102-03.
67. Rattan Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 378, 395.
68. *Haqiqat-i Bina-o-uruj-i-Firqa-i-Sikhan*. M.S., PUP, p. 13.
69. Budh Singh Arora, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
70. Tahmas Khan Miskin, *Tahmasnama* (1779), M.S., G.S., pp. 35b, 42a.
71. Ahmad Shah Batalia, Appendix, *op. cit.*; Daftar I of *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Lahore, 1885, p. 18.
72. Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England*, London, 1798, Vol. I, pp. 312-13; cf. Browne, *India Tracts*, II, p. 13; Malcolm, *op. cit.*, p. 85; *Mitlab-ul-Tawarikh*, p. 398; Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, London, 1849, p. 95; M' Gregor, *The History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, London, 1846, pp. 113-14.
73. Gian Singh, *Shamsber Khalsa*, Part II, p. 30.
74. Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, p. 17; cf., Gordon, pp. 58-59.
75. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *Zikr-i-Guruan*, Appendix, Daftar I, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, p. 13.
76. Tahmas Khan, *op. cit.*, p 84; M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 114.
77. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
78. Browne, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 17; Malcolm, *op. cit.*, p. 92; Bakhat Mal, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-72; Forster, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 314.
79. Forster, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 314; cf., Malcolm, *op. cit.*, pp. 91-92.
80. *Siyar-ul-Mufakbrin*, Vol. III, pp. 50-51; Browne, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 16, Bakhat Mal, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68; Ahmad Shah Batalia. Appendix, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar I, p. 12; Budh Singh Arora, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
81. *Mannu asadi datri asin Mannu de soe, jion jion Mannu wadhda asai dun sawai boe.*  
cf., Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama* (1854), Lahore, 1961, Vol. I, p. 208.
82. Ganda Singh (ed.). *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs*, Calcutta, 1962, footnote 18, p. 58.
83. *Ibid.*, p. 58.
84. *Kafian Bule Shah*, Kafi No. 65.

85. Rattan Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 311-12; Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 713-15.
86. Khushwaqat Rai, M.S., G.S., p. 53, Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 209.
87. Mohammad Ali Ansari, *Tarikh-i-Muzafri* (1810), M.S., G.S., p. 364.
88. *Tarikh-i-Alamgir Sani*, p. 311; *Selections from the Peshawa* (SPD, XXVII p. 220), Daftar Vol. 27, p. 220; Budh Singh Arora, *op. cit.*, p. 26, Tahmas Khan, *Tabmas Nama* (1779), English translation, by P. Setu Madhava Rao, Bombay, 1967, p. 67. Ghulam Ali Azad Mir, *Khazana-i-Amra* (1762-63), Cawnpore, 1900. p. 100; J.D. Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs* (1849), Delhi, reprint 1955, p. 106, Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 97; Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, I, p. 144.
89. *Tarikh-i-Alamgir Sani*, p. 312; Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 37; Tahmas Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-83.
90. Budh Singh, Arora, p. 26., *Haqiqat-i-Bina-o-uruj-I-Firqai Sikhan*; p. 19; Ganda Singh *Ahmad Shah Durrani*, Bombay, 195V, p. 206.
91. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 226-27, Sohan Lal, *op. cit.*, Daftar I, p. 150; Kanaihya Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 83.
92. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 94; cf, Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 229; Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, Daftar I, p. 154.
93. Hari Ram Gupta's assertion, in his books, *Sikh History*, Vol. I, pp. 162-68, and *Studies in Later Mughal History of the Punjab*, pp. 307-17, that Jassa Singh Ahluwalia minted coins in his own name, has been examined under 'The Sikh Coins'.
94. Ali-ud-Din Mufti *op. cit.* Vol. I, pp. 229-30, *Gazetteer of Amritsar* (1892-93) p. 165; Kanaihya Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 85.
95. The Sikh losses in this battle have been variously estimated: Tahmas Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 106 (25,000); Ghulam Ali Azad, *op. cit.*, p. 114 (20,000); Ghulam Husain, *Siyar-ul-Mutakbirin*, III, p. 74 (20,000); *Tarikh-i-Husain Shabi*, p. 83 (30,000); *Tarikh- i-Ahmad*, p. 17 (30,000); Khushwaqat Kai, *op. cit.*, p. 61 and Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 125 (30,000); Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 230 (30,000); Forster, *A Journey From Bengal to England* (1798), Vol. I, p. 319 (25,000); Malcolm , *Sketch of the Sikhs*, p. 98 (Upwards of 20,000); Pricsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power* (1834), p. 24 (25 to 30,000); M'Gregar, *op. cit.*, Vol. I. p. 132 (17,000), Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 92 (12 to 25,000); Baron Hugel, *Travels in Cashmere and the Punjab* (1845), p. 271 (20 to 30,000); Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, p. 348, as told by the people out of one lakh Sikhs 50,000 Sikhs died and as he heard from his father and uncle, present in the battle, out of the total Sikhs, 20,000 came back to the camp in the evening and thus 10,000 killed; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 206 (13,000); Karam Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 221 (15 to 20,000); Jadunath Sarkar, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 486 (10,000).
96. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 65; Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 125; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, p. 232.
97. James Browne, *History of the Rise and Progress of the Sikhs*, London, 788, p. 25; Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, I, p. 160.
98. Browne, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 25.26; Forster, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 100-101.
99. Mohammad Amin Khan was the governor of the province from November 1753 to May 1754; Mughlani Begum from May 1754 to October 1754, Momin Khan from October to December 1754; Khawaja Mirza from December 1754 to April 1755; Mughlani Begum from April to July 1755; Khawaja Abdullah from July to September 1755; Adeena Beg Khan from September to December 1755; Mughlani Begum from January to March 1756; Adeena Beg Khan from March to October 1756.
100. Baron Hugel, *Travels in Kashmir and the Punjab* (1849), Patiala reprint, 1970, p. 265.
101. James Browne, *Introduction to the History of the Origin and Progress of the Sikhs* p. 16; reproduced in *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs* (ed. Ganda Singh), Calcutta, 1962, Browne-Introduction, vii.
102. Polier, Col. 'An Account of Sikhs' reproduced in *Early European Accounts of The Sikhs* (ed. Ganda Singh), p. 62.

103. Bute Shah, *Tarik-i-Punjab*, Daftar III, M.S., G.S., p. 97.
104. Jadunath Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. IV, Calcutta, Orient reprint, 1972, p. 186.
105. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, T, pp. 371-72., Sita Ram Kohli's 'Organization of the Khalsa Army,' *Maharaja Ranjit Singh—First Death Centenary Memorial* (ed. Ganda Singh) Amritsar, 1939, pp. 63-64.
106. Bute Shah, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, V, (1848), MS, PUP., p. 4; cf., Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar II, Lahore, 1885, p. 5.
107. Sita Ram Kohli, Foreword to the English translation of *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh* Daftar III, by V.S. Suri, Delhi, 1962, p. viii.
108. Browne, *op. cit.*, p. viii; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 312.
109. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 5.
110. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 158.
111. Franklin, *Shah Allum*, London, 1798, pp. 76-77.
112. This blanket money was meant to defray the expenses of the horse and the rider. During their excursions the Sikh chiefs were sheltered by only a small canopy of coarse cotton cloth while the soldiers rested on the bare ground under a blanket (*kambli*) spread over two lances in case of rain and sun. They used a saddle and blanket to serve the office of a mattress and pillow. In the winter they wrapped themselves in these blankets. On a march they put the blankets beneath the saddle and with this scanty accoutrement they could encamp or decamp in a few minutes time. (Forster, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 332-34; Browne, Introduction, ix, x; Franklin, *Memoirs of George Thomas*, Calcutta, 1803, pp. 71-73; Malcolm, *op. cit.*, pp. 141-42.)
113. G.R.C. William, *Calcutta Renew* (1875), pp. 28-29.
114. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, Daftar III, p. 97. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*; pp. 489-92; Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, pp. 750-51.
115. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 239; Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, Daftar L PP. 163-64; Mian Ahmad Yar Maulvi, *Shahnama-i-Ranjit Singh* (ed. Ganda Singh), Amritsar, 1951, p. 52.
116. *Amritsar Gazetteer* (1892-93), pp. 10-11.
117. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, pp. 133.34; Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Lahore, 1865, p. 373.
118. *Uruj-i-Firqa-i-Sikhsian*, MS., PUP., p. 20.
119. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 240; cf., Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 85.
120. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 240.
121. *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, Vol. II, 52; Also cf., Vol. II, 161A.
122. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 241.
123. *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, Vol. II, p. 847.
124. N.K. Sinha, *Rise of the Sikh Power*. Calcutta, 1936, p. 68.
125. A.C. Banerjee, *Anglo-Sikh Relations*, Calcutta, 1949, p. lxxvii.



## Chapter 3

### THE AHLUWALIA MISAL

Whatever the real origin of this Misal it appears first in history as of the Jat caste to which Sadao Singh, the founder of the villages of Ahlu, Hallu-Sadho, Tor and Chak, belonged.<sup>1</sup>

As the tradition goes, Sadawa,<sup>2</sup> the younger brother of Sadao Singh fell violently in love with a girl of the Kalal (or distiller) caste. The marriage of Sadawa with the Kalal girl was not approved by his relatives. But finding the lover getting dangerously ill the marriage was allowed. The parents of the bride imposed the condition on Sadawa that, in future, all their children would be married among the Kalals to which he agreed. Thus, Ahluwalias or residents of the village of Ahlu came to be called Kalals.<sup>3</sup> Four sons, including Gopal, were born to Sadawa. Later, Dewa Singh was born to Gopal. Dewa Singh had three sons named, Badar Singh, Sadar Singh and Gurbakhsh Singh. Badar Singh was married to the sister of Bagh Singh, a petty *zamindar* of the Lahore district.

#### Jassa Singh (1718-1783)

For many years, Badar Singh had no child. It is said that Badar Singh sought the blessings of the Guru imploring that if a son was born to him he would be made the disciple of the Guru. As a result of his father's prayers, Jassa Singh was born on Baisakh Sudi 15, Puranmashi, Samvat 1775, May 3, 1718.<sup>4</sup> Badar Singh died in 1722, when Jassa Singh was just five years of age.<sup>5</sup> Badar Singh's widow went to Delhi with her child to place him in the care of Guru Gobind Singh's widow, *Mata Sundari* who was living there. Jassa Singh and his mother remained at Delhi for quite some time.<sup>6</sup> *Mata Sundari* became much attached to both the mother and the son.

When Jassa Singh was seven years of age,<sup>7</sup> his maternal uncle Bagh Singh, who was issueless, requested *Mata Sundari* to spare the young boy to succeed him. *Mata Sundari* blessed and allowed Jassa Singh and his mother to go to Bagh Singh's house.<sup>8</sup>

According to Sohan Lal Suri, Bagh Singh raided and captured many villages and exacted tributes from the *zamindars*.<sup>9</sup>

On their return from Delhi Jassa Singh, his mother and his maternal uncle, Bagh Singh, stayed at Jalandhar where they were visited by Kapur Singh Faizullapuria. He was very much pleased to hear Bagh Singh's sister or Jassa Singh's mother singing *bani* (holy hymns) with melodious voice.<sup>10</sup> He demanded the custody of her son Jassa Singh who was entrusted to his care. Jassa Singh was baptised by Kapur Singh<sup>11</sup> who, later, put him on the duty of distributing grains to his followers for their horses. When he resented that duty he was told that, in future, he would be shouldering a much greater responsibility.<sup>12</sup> Kapur Singh always treated Jassa Singh as his own son.

Jassa Singh once brought a complaint to Nawab Kapur Singh, saying that the Sikhs in his camp ridiculed his manner of speech. Having spent his earlier days in Delhi he had acquired the habit of mixing Urdu words with his Punjabi. The Sikhs ragged him for this and called him '*ham ko—tum ko.*' Kapur Singh tried to console him with the words: 'Why should you mind what the Khalsa say? They got for me a *navabship*, and might make you a *padshah.*' The Sikhs at once caught up the words as a prophecy and began to call Jassa Singh a *padshah*.<sup>13</sup>

Soon after, Bagh Singh died. At the time of Bagh Singh's death Jassa Singh was only 13. He inherited the property of his maternal uncle.<sup>14</sup> He grew into a very brave and fearless youngman. His "political talent, religious zeal and lofty aspirations combined, rendered him one of the most powerful federal chiefs of the Punjab."<sup>15</sup>

The Sikhs considered it a privilege to take baptism of double-edged sword at Jassa Singh's hands. Raja Amar Singh, the successor of Ala Singh of Phulkian family, was one of the many prominent Sikhs to have been administered *pahul* by Jassa Singh.<sup>16</sup>

Like others, Jassa Singh created a *jatha* of his own and with the resources inherited from his maternal uncle, he became one of the leading Sikh Sardars.

Nadir Shah attacked India in 1739, and when, on his return, he was carrying away an enormous amount of money as booty he was attacked by the Sikhs and was dispossessed of most of his plunder. Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia is said to have played an important part in this enterprise. Shortly thereafter, the Ahluwalia chief built the fort of Dallewal on the bank of the Ravi. In 1743, he attacked and carried away a large government treasure that was being taken from Eminabad to Lahore. Jaspat Rai, the brother of Diwan Lakpat Rai, was killed by the Sikhs fighting under the command of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia.

By 1747, the Sikhs had created among them as many as 65 *jathas*, each under its respective leader. There was an imperative need of uniting these *jathas* into a lesser number and placing them under the overall command of a competent leader. In the words of Hari Ram Gupta, "Luckily for the Sikhs, a very capable leader who commanded high respect from all the Sikhs and possessed remarkable power of organization had appeared among them. This was Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, who had received his training under the famous leader Nawab Kapur Singh. The Nawab was the most venerable Sikh leader. Owing to the constant help and guidance of the Nawab and his own sterling virtues Jassa Singh Ahluwalia had come to occupy a very prominent position among the Sikh leaders. The Nawab was growing old and he wanted to give the leadership of the warlike Khalsa to somebody else. He had his eye on the promising Jassa Singh and he was on the look out for an opportunity to do so."<sup>17</sup>

After Ahmad Shah Durrani's return from the province, following his first invasion of India, the Sikhs met at Amritsar on the *Baisakhi* day, March 29, 1748, and on the proposal of Nawab Kapur Singh that the Panth needed solidarity and union, the entire fighting body of the Sikhs was named, the Dal Khalsa jio, and placed under the supreme command; of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia.<sup>18</sup> The various groups were leagued together under twelve prominent chiefs.

In 1749, Jassa Singh, whose reputation had, by then, become great because of his bravery and ability, was invited by Diwan Kaura Mal, to help him expelling Shah Nawaz Khan, the former governor of Lahore, who was, then, in occupation of Multan on the authority of Ahmad Shah Durrani. Mir Mannu, the governor of Lahore, could not stand a rival in the Punjab. Jassa Singh willingly offered help and cooperated with Kaura Mal in reducing Multan to Mir Mannu's submission. Shah Nawaz was killed in the battle and Jassa Singh received a rich share of booty and honours for him from Muin-ul-Mulk (Mir Mannu).<sup>19</sup>

The Lahore government again began to follow the policy of persecution against the Sikhs. In 1753, a large army under Aziz Khan was sent against the Sikhs and the government force was utterly

routed by Jassa Singh. In 1755, the Ahluwalia chief defeated Adeena Beg at Kadar, and snatched from him the territory of Fatehbad. He established his headquarters at Fatehbad on the right bank of river Beas, where he set up his military post in the *serai* which was developed into a fort and was called Khalwara. Fatehbad continued to be Jassa Singh's headquarters up to 1780, when it was shifted to Kapurthala. Shortly thereafter, Umed Khan and Aziz Khan were defeated in yet another trial. In 1756, Sarbuland Khan, one of the Afghan generals whom Ahmad Shah Durrani, the ruler of Kabul, had left behind him in charge of Jalandhar, was defeated by Jassa Singh and his comrades. In 1758, Adeena Beg invited the help of the Marathas and the Sikhs to occupy Lahore. Prince Timur and his minister Jahan Khan fled to Afghanistan.<sup>20</sup>

In October 1759, Ahmad Shah Durrani appointed Raja Ghamand Chand of Kangra as governor of Jalandhar Doab and the hill territory lying between the Ravi and the Satluj. Jassa Singh moved against Ghamand Chand and routed him in the battle of Mahilpur near Hoshiarpur and made him pay tribute to the Dal Khalsa. He realised tributes from the hill states of Mandi and Kulu. Nalagarh and Bilaspur were made tributary in March 1763.

He also placed under his control Jalalpur, Goindwal, Istala, Butala, Tarn Taran and Khadur.<sup>21</sup> After crossing river Beas he occupied Sultanpur, Talwandi and some other territories.

According to Ahmad Shah Batalia, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia gave away Nidala, Miani, Begowal, etc., totalling about hundred villages, to the Sikhs of Wazir village and Machunki, Dhilwan, Sidhwan, Haliwal, Brahmwal, Chakoki, Boh, Dogran and the surrounding areas and portions of the *pargana* of Nurmahal were conferred upon his *tumandars* and Misaldars. The *zamindars* of Phagwara, who were very affluent and maintained big contingents, accepted his fealty and conceded to pay regular annual revenue to him. The Afghans of Urmar Tanda and Yahiyapur had taken an employment under Jassa Singh. Crossing river Satluj he occupied Isru and Kot Isa Khan and their *zamindars* accepted to pay a fixed *nazarana*. Rai of Jagraon also came under his overlordship and accepted to pay revenue to him. In short, in the Bist Jalandhar Doab, Jassa Singh became the most important and powerful Sardar.<sup>22</sup>

After the celebration of *Diwali* Jassa Singh directed, the Dal Khalsa to attack Lahore in November 1761. Khawaja Ubaid Khan, governor of Lahore, sought protection in the fort. The prominent citizens of Lahore waited upon Jassa Singh and offered to admit the Sikhs into the city provided the people were promised safety and security. After occupying the city the Sikhs attacked the fort. Ubaid Khan was killed in the course of fighting and the fort was captured by the Sikhs.

Jassa Singh, very actively, participated against the Afghans luring the *wada ghallughara* in 1762.

After the departure of Ahmad Shah Abdali the Sikhs decided to turn upon Ala Singh, who had been taken a prisoner early in the year 1762, by the Afghans, but he had pleased the conqueror so much that he had been created a Raja and honoured with rich presents. But Jassa Singh's influence prevented an open quarrel and he tried to persuade his co-religionists that Ala Singh had no option as to his acceptance of the title, which had not, till then, been known among the Sikhs.<sup>23</sup>

The Sikhs now prepared to attack the Afghan garrisons which Ahmed Shah had left behind him. But before anything else they decided to try their strength against Kasur, a rich Pathan colony, and a very strongly fortified town which had long been the object of desire of the Sikhs. Kasur was invested by the combined forces of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh and Ganda

Singh Bhangi, Jai Singh Kanaihya, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and many more Sardars. Alif Khan, the Pathan leader, was beaten back with great loss, two of the Afghan chiefs, Kamal-ud-Din Khan and Hasan Khan were slain and the town was sacked. The fort, holding out for some days more, also fell. Kasur territory was made over to the Bhangi chiefs who held it till 1794,<sup>24</sup> when Nizam-ud-Din Khan occupied it.

Under the general command of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, the Karora Singhia, Bhangi, Shahid, Kanaihya and Phulkian chiefs led an expedition against Sirhind. Zain Khan, the governor of Sirhind, gave them battle but was defeated and killed on January 14, 1764.<sup>25</sup> The town was razed to the ground as the Sikhs nursed a deep-rooted hatred against it as the place where Baba Fateh Singh and Baba Zorawar Singh, the younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh, had been bricked alive. The whole of the surrounding territory fell into the hands of the Sikhs.

From Sirhind Jassa Singh proceeded to Naraingarh, 85 kilometres away. Raja Kirat Parkash of Nahan presented to him a horse and a sum of rupees 10,000 as a *nazar* through his Diwan Bulaqi Mal. The Mir of Garhi Kotla and Garib Das of Manimajra (near Chandigarh) also paid him *nazars*. The Raja of Garhwal came from Srinagar to pay homage to him.

In the district of Ambala Jassa Singh seized twenty four villages forming the *ilqa* of Suhoran. Some of these villages were given by him to Bundalia Sikhs who were in his train.<sup>26</sup> The villages retained by the Ahluwalia chief were seized by the chief of Patiala, shortly after his recrossing the Satluj.

Jassa Singh, then, returned to Amritsar where he contributed liberally towards rebuilding the Harmandir Sahib (the Golden Temple) which Ahmad Shah Abdali, before his departure to his country, had defiled with the blood of cows and then blown up with gun-powder.<sup>27</sup> He also built the Ahluwalia bazar.

Najib-ud-Doulah, the Rohilla chief, who had been stationed at Delhi by Ahmad Shah in 1756, had, in due course of time, become a powerful minister there. Jassa Singh had for sometime been a close ally of Suraj Mal, the Jat ruler of Bharatpur. When this chief was killed in a skirmish in 1764, his son Jawahar Singh invited Jassa Singh to join him to take vengeance on Sher Khan, the killer of his father, who had taken asylum with Najib Khan. Jassa Singh, accompanied by Maratha forces, marched against their common enemy Najib Khan who refused to surrender Sher Khan and the allies emerged victorious near Shahjahanabad.<sup>28</sup> Najib Khan took refuge in Delhi which was invested by the Sikhs and the Marathas and it would have fallen had not the besiegers learnt about the invasion of the Punjab by Ahmed Shah Durrani. The Durrani invader could come up to Sirhind from where he retired to Kabul, not without molestation from the Sikhs who captured almost the whole of his baggage at Chenab.

The Sikhs resented Jammu Raja Ranjit Deo's being tributary of Ahmad Shah Durrani. In 1765, on Durrani's return to Kabul the Jammu chief paid him a tribute. A section of the Dal Khalsa under Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, attacked Jammu and realised from Ranjit Deo, by way of fine, a sum of three lakh and seventy five thousand rupees and made him a tributary of the Dal Khalsa.<sup>29</sup>

On the death of Ala Singh in 1765, his grandson Amar Singh succeeded him. Since Amar Singh had been baptised by Jassa Singh the former had great regards for the latter, Amar Singh made a request to Jassa Singh to attend his coronation, as chief guest, to confer on him the emblems of

royalty which he did. Jassa Singh received the *pargana* of Isru as a *naẓar*.<sup>30</sup> This *pargana* remained with the Ahluwalias till the First Anglo-Sikh War when it was reverted to its former owner—the ruler of Patiala.

When Ahmad Shah entered the Punjab for the last time in the winter of 1766, he was constantly harassed by the Sikhs. He is said to have written letters to Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and other Sardars that they should meet him to conclude peace with him. The suggestion was spurned and the Afghan invader returned to Kabul.<sup>31</sup>

In 1766, Jassa Singh marched southward with the chiefs of Patiala and Jind and ravaged Jhajjar, Rewari and Baghpat. He captured Payal, etc., from the Kotla Afghans. During his last invasion in 1766-1767, Ahmad Shah found that it was not possible to reconquer the Punjab most of which had, by this time, come in the hands of the Sikhs. In 1768, Jassa Singh overran the neighbourhood of Delhi and Anupshahr defeating Mirza Sukhan, who was sent against him by the Emperor.

In 1769, Jassa Singh captured Jalandhar and the adjoining territory in collaboration with the Singhpuria chief, Khushal Singh. Jassa Singh kept Jalandhar with him and the neighbouring villages were given to Khushal Singh. After a few years, out of respect and affection which Jassa Singh had for his patron Newab Kapur Singh, he gave Jalandhar, also to Khushal Singh who made it his headquarters.

In 1771, Jassa Singh captured Raikot from the Pathans and Rajputs of Berowal. Next year, that is, in 1772, he marched against Kapurthala, held by Rai Ibrahim<sup>32</sup> who had promised to pay annual tribute. It was only after reducing thirteen forts in the neighbourhood of Kapurthala and investing the town itself, that the Rai paid what was due. But Jassa Singh's authority was not really established and in 1777, his son-in-law, Mohar Singh, was shot at from the fort and killed. It was pretended that this was an accident, and Jassa Singh was compelled to accept the explanation offered. In 1780, Jassa Singh took advantage of the tribute again falling into arrears to seize the town of Kapurthala and he made it his capital.<sup>33</sup> Rai Ibrahim Was allowed to leave the place with his moveable property and his family. According to James Skinner, Jassa Singh gave a village in *jagir* to Ibrahim's son and daughter for their subsistence.<sup>34</sup> Jassa Singh lived at Kapurthala till his death.

In 1775 one day when Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was on his way to Achal, near Batala, to attend a fair, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia's brother, Mali Singh, who was going from Sri Hargobindpur to Batala with his men, wounded him by a bullet. Mali Singh carried him to Batala. The Ahluwalia chief felt so much hurt in his mind and humiliated that during his two days' stay there he did not eat or drink any thing, nor did he talk to anybody. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia felt extremely sorry for the incident and sincerely apologized. On the third day the Ahluwalia chief was sent back to his headquarters Fatehbad in a *palki* (palanquin) with all honours and adequate escort.<sup>35</sup>

In 1776, to avenge an attack made on him by the Ramgarhia Sardars, Jassa Singh formed a coalition with the Bhangis, Kanaihyas, Sukarchakias and some others, to expel Jassa Singh Ramgarhia from the Punjab and seize his possessions. The expedition was a complete success. The Ramgarhias were utterly defeated and the Ramgarhia chief was forced to fly to cis-Satluj areas especially towards Hansi and Hisar in the Haryana<sup>36</sup> from where he returned later with the help of Mahan Singh Sukarchakia and Katoch chief of Kangra.

In September 1779, when Abdul Ahad, a minister of Delhi, invaded Patiala, Maharaja Amar Singh of Patiala invited help from Jassa Singh Ahluwalia who responded immediately and came to Patiala with his collaborators Khushal Singh Singhpuria and Tara Singh Ghaiba whose son was married to the princess of Patiala. The minister from Delhi got frightened and retired to the Mughal capital.

In 1782, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia attended the marriage of Raja Sahib Singh with the daughter of Ganda Singh Bhangi. He joined the marriage party when it passed through Kapurthala. He administered *pahul* to Sahib Singh at the Gurdwara of Tarn Taran.<sup>37</sup> The marriage was solemnised at Panjwar and, on the return of the marriage party, he gave rich presents to Sahib Singh.

Accompanied by Sardar Baghel Singh and others Jassa Singh Ahluwalia entered Delhi in early March 1783. On March 11, he made for the Red Fort. The Emperor and his courtiers hid themselves in their private apartments. The Sikhs entered the Diwan-i-Am. In a fit of enthusiasm they fulfilled the prophecy of Nawab Kapur Singh who had expressed his hope for *padshahi* for Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. The Sikhs made him sit on the throne and waved peacock feathers, tied in a knot, over his head.<sup>38</sup> Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and some other Sardars resented it. So the Ahluwalia chief immediately declined the honour thrust upon him, and he left the Durbar. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia discarded the distinction of royalty twice, once in 1761, and again in 1783.

Jassa Singh died on October 22, 1783,<sup>39</sup> at the age of 65, due to his having eaten a water-melon at Bandala which gave him colic pain of which he could not survive. His body was taken to Amritsar where it was cremated, and a monument to his memory was raised in the *derah* of Baba Atal, near that of Nawab Kapur Singh.

‘He was a man of the greatest ability, and much respected by the Sikhs.’ In person he was tall with a fair complexion, over-hanging eye-brows, broad fore-head, wide chest, sonorous voice and piercing eyes. He was famous as a marksman, both with the matchlock and the bow. He was a great warrior, a valiant general and a splendid organiser. He had nearly three dozen scars of sword-cuts and bullet marks<sup>40</sup> in the front part of his body and none on the back which he never turned to the enemy. Qazi Nur Mohammad who saw him fighting during Ahmad Shah’s seventh invasion in 1765, wrote in his *Jangnama*, “In the centre was Jassa Kalal, who fearlessly stood like a mountain.”<sup>41</sup>

Although a most successful general in the battlefield, it was rather as the most saintly and orthodox of their leaders that the Sikhs respected him and many powerful and prominent Sardars, including Amar Singh of Patiala, received *pahul* from his hands.<sup>12</sup> The rulers of Patiala and Jind stood before him in all reverence and humility. The Rajas of Jammu, Kangra, Bilaspur and Nalagarh touched his knees. The Nawabs of Malerkotla and Kunjpura paid him homage. This did not turn his head. He always considered himself a humble and docile devotee and disciple of Guru Gobind Singh.

Although the Ahluwalia Misal was not the biggest, yet the influence of Jassa Singh was great and whenever any combination of Misals took place he was made the commander-in-chief though each body of troops fought under its own leader.

Jassa Singh did more than any other chief to consolidate the Sikh power which after his death got disorganised, until the strong hand of Maharaja Ranjit Singh again forced it into cohesion.

Jassa Singh was an enlightened and liberal-minded man. He practised an utmost religious toleration. He was not an enemy of the Muslims or Islam. A very large number of Muhammadans were employed in his service and they were allowed to follow their own religious observances without any ban or molestation. In his behaviour he was never prejudiced against the Muslims rather his attitude towards them was praise-worthy.<sup>43</sup> He was opposed only to the Mughal or Afghan rule based upon deep religious bigotry and bitter fanaticism. He was always liberal and considerate. The Sodhis of Kartarpur, who had been boycotted by the Sikhs who neither ate nor drank anything from their hands, beseeched Jassa Singh to readmit them in the Sikh faith by publicly eating and drinking with them. Jassa Singh who was busy in his consolidation work deputed Bhag Singh along with some prominent Sikhs to go to Kartarpur to eat with them. They ate from their plates and readmitted them into Sikhism. He had strictly prohibited the slaughter of cow. He took expeditions against the cow-killers of Kasur and Lahore.

The liberality of the Ahluwalia chief was very great. He wore a new dress and when it was soiled in a day or so he would put it off and give it to his people to wear and thus never put on washed clothes.<sup>44</sup> He, at great expense, constructed a large reservoir at Anandpur and gave large grants to the Sodhis residing there. His hospitality was extended to all who asked for it and hundreds were fed daily in his *langar* or public kitchen.<sup>45</sup>

In normal days Jassa Singh had a very regular daily programme. At day-break he would rise, perform his ablutions, and dress himself, repeating the morning prayer and the *Sukhmani*. He, then, took his morning meal and set about the business of the day and at 3-00 p.m., held Durbar or assembly for all who chose to attend, where all matters of general interest were discussed. After the evening meal musicians played and sung hymns called *rabras* and an hour after sunset all retired to rest, having repeated the *ardas* or the evening prayer. And in the words of Lepel Griffin, "he was a Sikh by honest conviction," He never kept a visitor waiting and called him immediately without any consideration of time at his hands.

The city of Amritsar was, in a great measure, rebuilt and beautified by him. A bazar called Katra Ahluwalian was laid out by him.

Some writers believe that the Sikhs after the conquest of Lahore in November 1761, seizing the royal mint, struck the first rupee which bore the inscription:

*Sikka zad dar jahan ba fazle Akal,  
Mulke Ahmad grift Jassa Kalal.*

(Jassa Kalal having seized the country of Ahmad (Shah Durrani) struck coin in the world by the grace of God).

But it does not seem to be correct. It is very improbable that any Sikh ruler, much less a religious zealot like Jassa Singh, should have issued a coin in his own name, and that too a clipped name, i.e., mere 'Jassa' instead of 'Jassa Singh.' In reality the local Muslims and Mullahs felt very perturbed on Jassa Singh's occupation of Lahore and the establishment of his *badshabat* there. With a view to instigating the Durrani invader they struck a few coins and sent the same to Ahmad Shah.<sup>46</sup>

Since Jassa Singh remained the undisputed leader of the Sikh community they had begun to call him *Sultan-ul-qaum* or the *badshah*,<sup>47</sup> but he never arrogated to himself any prerogatives of the *badshah*. He only considered himself as one of the senior members of the Dal Khalsa.

Towards his later years he could not keep the whole Sikh community and their rulers united. They got split up into different groups and Jassa Singh joined one of them. He was friendly to the Kanaihyas and hostile to the Ramgarhias. Despite his open opposition to the Ramgarhias, the Ramgarhia chief had maintained personal regards for the Ahluwalia chief.

### **Bhag Singh (1783—1801)**

Jassa Singh Ahluwalia had no male child. He had two daughters of whom one was married to Mehar Singh and the other to Mohar Singh.<sup>48</sup> Jassa Singh's wife Raj Kaur had impressed upon him to nominate one of their sons-in-law or her brother to succeed him but he did not agree as he did not find the necessary qualities of a ruler in any of them.

Bhag Singh, a close relative of Jassa Singh and Diwan Burha Mal, had been responsibly shouldering most of the burden of the administrative affairs of the state. Bhag Singh believed that the Diwan was not an honest man who sometimes misappropriated the state funds. But since the Diwan was an important man Bhag Singh could not do any thing against him during Jassa Singh's time.<sup>49</sup>

After Jassa Singh's death, both of his sons-in-law claimed inheritance to his territory and property. The Sikhs assembled on condolence of Jassa Singh at Kapurthala and desired that the late Sardar's elder son-in-law should succeed him. But Jai Singh Kanaihya, who was friendly to Jassa Singh's cousin Bhag Singh, born in 1747, managed to get the latter appointed as the new ruler of the Ahluwalia Misal.<sup>50</sup> He was in his 38<sup>th</sup> year at the time of succession to the *gaddi*.<sup>11</sup> Bhag Singh had to face a constant challenge from the sons-in-law of his predecessor. Although Bhag Singh did not have high opinion of Diwan Burha Mal he did not like to take a drastic step of doing away with his services at the very outset of his rule.

Appointing Diwan Burha Mal and Sher Karim Din to look after his administration Bhag Singh came out of Kapurthala and toured the whole of the Doaba. He realised *nazaranas* from the *jagirdars* of Phagwara and Nurmahal.<sup>52</sup> The first quarrel that Bhag Singh found at his hands was one bequeathed to him by the late Ahluwalia chief who had joined Hakikat Singh Kanaihya in attacking Jammu, then ruled by Raja Brij Raj Deo. Bhag Singh renewed his alliance with the Kanaihya chief and his first expedition was, in company with Jai Singh Kanaihya, against Wazir Singh and Bhagwan Singh, chiefs of the Nakka territory between Lahore and Gogaira. In the next year Bhag Singh went to the assistance of Jai Singh, when Mahan Singh Sukarchakia, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra united to destroy him. His help could not be effective and Jai Singh suffered a defeat near Batala.<sup>53</sup>

In 1784, on the complaint of the people of Salan, Sardar Gurbakhsh Singh was removed from the territory placed under his care. Then, Bhag Singh took Sharkpur from the Nakkais. Accompanied by some other Sardars, he conquered Kasur. It was there that he learnt the news of the birth of his son who was named Fateh Singh in memory of their victory at Kasur.<sup>54</sup>



Shortly after this, he allied himself with Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra and their infant sons Fateh Singh and Anrodh Chand exchanged turbans in the fort of Kangra in token of brotherhood. Bhag Singh and Raja Sansar Chand are also said to have exchanged turbans.<sup>55</sup>

In 1787, Bhag Singh dismissed Diwan Burha Mal whom he had found to be a man of questionable character. He was insolent and disrespectful to the extent of smoking *huqa* at the Durbar.<sup>56</sup> In 1787, the Diwan occupied Begowal and came in open confrontation with the state forces. He was captured and later released. He again revolted in 1789, and occupied Chakoki. Encouraged by Burha Mal's action Diwan Sheikh Karim Allah also revolted and captured Sultanpur. Diwan Burha Mal was made captive from Chakoki and ordered to be beheaded but his life was spared on the intercession of Sayad Chirag Shah of Sultanpur.<sup>57</sup> A contingent was also sent against Sheikh Karim Allah who ran away from Sultanpur. He was overpowered by some robbers and killed near Mianwind village.<sup>58</sup>

Diwan Singh was appointed in Burha Mal's place. He made some changes on administrative grounds.<sup>58</sup> Hamir Singh was made the administrator of Sultanpur.

Bhag Singh then quarrelled with Gulab Singh Bhangi who owned Amritsar and the neighbouring areas and whose people had put to death an Ahluwalia agent at Jhubal. He occupied Jandiala and Tarn Taran but made no effort to retain these acquisitions and returned to Kapurthala satisfied with his success. This took place in 1793.<sup>60</sup>

After some time, Bhag Singh crossed river Beas and got the territory of Chamkaur for the Bedis who had been dispossessed of that area by Sardar Hari Singh Dallewalia.<sup>61</sup>

In 1796, Bhag Singh joined the Kanaihyas, under the leadership of Sada Kaur, in their attack upon Jassa Singh Ramgarhia who had entrenched himself at Miani in the present district of Jalandhar. But there was a sudden rise of the river Beas that compelled the allies to retreat in all haste with the loss of their baggage.<sup>62</sup>

In 1801, Bhag Singh, along with his son Fateh Singh, went to the *Akal Takht* ( at Amritsar ) and got his son baptised there by Sadhu Singh Akal Bungia.<sup>63</sup> Next year Fateh Singh was married with befitting pomp and show.<sup>64</sup>

In 1801, Bhag Singh sent a force under Hamir Singh against the Ramgarhias, who had been joined by Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra. The Ahluwalias were completely routed, Hamir Singh being severely wounded. Learning about this defeat Bhag Singh collected his remaining forces and marched as far as Phagwara against his opponents. He got a serious and painful trouble in his foot which grew worse day by day. He was taken to Kapurthala where he passed away soon after, on July 10, 1801.<sup>65</sup>

Sardar Bhag Singh was a man of docile and affable disposition which sometimes stood in the way of an efficient administration. Griffin considered him, "a man of very slight calibre." At times he could not exhibit the needed statesmanship and diplomacy which resulted in the alienation of some of his Misaldars and *tumandars* who got independent of the Ahluwalia chief.<sup>66</sup> Certain places as Begowal and Miani went out of his hands and the payments of revenue of some areas, including Jagraon, were withheld by the officials and *zamindars* of these places.<sup>67</sup> Bhag Singh was constantly on

war-path against Jassa Singh Ramgarhia. Sometimes he was defeated by the Ramgarhias and at other times he defeated them.<sup>68</sup>

The Ahluwalia Sardar even tried to befriend Sansar Chand Katoch of Kangra but they, mostly, ranged themselves on opposite sides in the event of a battle. The important battles of this period were those of Nagoke, Miani, Begowal and Garhdiwala. The assistance rendered to the Ahluwalia chief by the Kanaihyas and Sukarchakias against the Ramgarhias marked the continuing pattern of politics practised in this part of the Punjab.

Bhag Singh was given to constant meditation and he gave alms to Brahmans.<sup>69</sup> He got excavated at Kapurthala a Devi Tank and a Devi Dawara was also got repaired. The *pujaris* were provided with subsistence. All the new Sadhus entering Kapurthala were entertained sumptuously by him.<sup>70</sup> He was an extremely kind-hearted man and would not tolerate cruelty even to the animal and insect life. In his early days he was required to look after the needs of the mendicants.<sup>71</sup> This had made him sympathetic to the poor to whom he gave a great deal in charity. He ruled his Misal for nearly eighteen years.

### **Fateh Singh (1801-1837)**

As referred to earlier, according to Lepel Griffin and Giani Gian Singh, Fateh Singh was born in 1784, but according to Khushwaqat Rai<sup>72</sup> and Bute Shah,<sup>73</sup> Fateh Singh was twelve years of age at the time of his accession to the *Sardari* of the Misal in 1801. He was the only son of Bhag Singh. One of his first acts was to form an alliance, offensive and defensive, with Ranjit Singh, who was, then, gaining power in the Punjab. The young Ahluwalia and Sukarchakia chiefs exchanged turbans at Fatehbad and swore on *Guru Granth Sahib* to become each other's brothers.<sup>74</sup> They also exchanged some gifts including horses and dresses. In the presence of the holy *Guru Granth Sahib* they accepted to abide by three conditions. One, that the enemy of one would be considered as enemy of the other. Two, in the course of their meetings in the territory of Ranjit Singh or that of Fateh Singh, they would not claim any expenses from each other. Three, if they jointly conquered any territory, suitable *jagir* from the same would be given to Fateh Singh.<sup>75</sup>

Mehar Singh, son-in-law of Jassa Singh, and some Misaldars including Thakur Singh and Brar Singh, who had consolidated power during the period of Bhag Singh and had become independent of the Ahluwalia chief, were attacked and deprived of their estates and property by Fateh Singh.<sup>76</sup>

Fateh Singh appointed Qadar Bakhsh, a Rajput, and a resident of Talwandi, as his *mukhtar* or administrator, and then sent him to Maharaja Ranjit Singh as his envoy.<sup>77</sup>

When Jaswant Rao Holkar came to the Punjab in 1805, he met Ranjit Singh and Fateh Singh Ahluwalia at Amritsar. Holkar was obliged to make a treaty with the English. Ranjit Singh and Fateh Singh made a supplementary treaty with the English by which they caused Holkar to leave Amritsar, pledging themselves to maintain no connection or friendship with him, while on the other hand, the British government promised to them a peaceful possession of their territories so long as their conduct remained friendly.<sup>78</sup>

Fateh Singh accompanied Ranjit Singh in his expedition to the south of the Satluj in October 1806. In the next year he accompanied the Maharaja to Jhang, when its fort was captured and Sial chief, Ahmad Khan, expelled.

During Ranjit Singh's second expedition to cis-Satluj region in 1807, Fateh Singh also accompanied him.<sup>79</sup> The Ahluwalia chief requested Ranjit Singh to recover his territory of Naraingarh from Kanwar Kishan Singh of Nahan who held it. Mohkam Chand besieged the fort of Naraingarh. The Maharaja personally supervised the siege and the fort fell after a hard battle for nearly three weeks. Kanwar Kishan Singh ran into the hills. In the course of operations at the fort of Naraingarh Ranjit Singh lost a prominent commander, Fateh Singh Kalianwala. Tara Singh Ghaiba was also seriously wounded there and he died on his way back to Rahon.<sup>80</sup>

Fateh Singh also accompanied the Maharaja on his campaign against Kasur which was captured after an obstinate resistance. When Metcalfe came to Kasur in September 1808 to meet Ranjit Singh the Ahluwalia chief was deputed to meet him with Diwan Mohkam Chand and ten thousand troops, at a distance of four miles from the Maharaja's camp and escort him to his tents.<sup>81</sup>

Fateh Singh was present in the Kangra expedition of 1809, when Ranjit Singh took possession of the fort of Raja Sansar Chand, which had been long besieged by the Gurkhas under Amar Singh Thapa.

In February 1811, Fateh Singh accompanied the Maharaja to Rawalpindi to meet Shah Mahmud, the brother of Shah Shujah, who was on his way to Kashmir. In October 1811, the Ahluwalia chief marched against Budh Singh of Jalandhar along with Diwan Mohkam Chand and Jodh Singh Ramgarhia. Budh Singh fled across the Satluj and his estates were confiscated to Lahore.

After Jodh Singh's death, the Ramgarhia possessions were occupied by Ranjit Singh. The areas of Tanda and Yahyapur, which were formerly Ramgarhia possessions, were given over to Fateh Singh by the Maharaja. The Ahluwalia chief received the *pargana* of Phagwara from Ranjit Singh in return for Sharakpur.<sup>82</sup>

In the majority of Ranjit Singh's campaigns Fateh Singh served him with his contingents. He fought at the battle of Hazro on July 13, 1813,<sup>83</sup> when Fateh Khan, the Kabul minister, was utterly defeated. The Ahluwalia chief held a command in the Bhimbar, Rajauri and Bahawalpur campaigns. In 1818, he participated in the siege of Multan when the whole province fell into the hands of Ranjit Singh. During the Kashmir campaign of 1819, Fateh Singh remained in charge of Lahore.<sup>84</sup> In 1821, he assisted the Lahore Durber in the reduction of the fort of Mankera. In 1823, when Ranjit Singh went to Khushab he left Lahore in the charge of Fateh Singh.<sup>85</sup>

Besides the above mentioned expeditions Fateh Singh accompanied the Maharaja in the following expeditions also:

Jamke and Kathua (1802), Sujapur (1803), Kasur (1804 and 1807), Amritsar (1805), Jhang (1807), Sialkot (1807), and across the Satluj (1806-08). He was also present in the expeditions against Find Dadan Khan (1809-10), Jalandhar (1810-11), Mandi (1811), Kulu (1811), Hazara (1813), Kashmir (1814), and the Yusufzai territories (1824).

The estate of Bhirog which consisted of about one hundred villages was conferred by Jassa Singh Ahluwalia on a dependent, Mirza Singh, whose son Jawahar Singh fought and died under the Ahluwalia standard. When Jawahar Singh's son Mahan Singh was directed in 1810, and 1814, by the British representative to fulfil his engagements as a chief under the protection of the British

government, he declared to be the vassal of Fateh Singh Ahluwalia. In 1817, David Ochterlony, because of Mahan Singh's outrageous conduct, called upon Fateh Singh to confiscate his territory, who accordingly took possession of the whole estate. In consideration of Mahan Singh's young age of thirteen Ochterlony pardoned him and asked the Ahluwalia chief to reinstate him, who unwillingly did so. In 1825, Mahan Singh refused to acknowledge the supremacy of the Ahluwalia chief and also paid no attention to the remonstrances of the British agent who recommended the attachment of his *jagir* until he obeyed the orders conveyed to him. Mahan Singh was not prepared to acknowledge the supremacy of Fateh Singh. The British allowed Fateh Singh to enforce his supremacy by any measures he might see fit to employ but they would not give permission to the Lahore troops to cross the Satluj with those of Kapurthala.<sup>86</sup>

The small fort of Kotla was situated in the centre of Fateh Singh's cis-Satluj territories and was owned by a Pathan family, the eldest representative of which was Nihang Khan. The Ahluwalia chief was determined to assert his supremacy and in the summer of 1822, forcibly occupied the fort of Kotla and retained it despite the repeated orders of the British officer at Ambala. Balwant Khan, one of the younger brothers of the Kotla chief, was friendly to Fateh Singh and inimical to his own family members. He encouraged the Ahluwalia chief to continue retaining the possession of the Kotla fort. Ultimately, the British warned Fateh Singh against attempting to exercise any intervention in the affairs of the Kotla chiefship. Nihang Khan was reinstated in his rights and the fort was forfeited to his elder brother.<sup>87</sup>

Qadir Bakhsh, the *Wazir* of Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, had become very powerful. He visited Ranjit Singh very often, as envoy of the Ahluwalia chief. He wrongly conveyed to the Maharaja that Fateh Singh was planning to revolt against the Lahore Durbar. Ranjit Singh sent two battalions of the Lahore army to Doaba Bist Jalandhar. Qadir Bakhsh provoked and frightened Fateh Singh by telling him that Ranjit Singh had sent a force to conquer his territory and make him a captive.<sup>88</sup>

Fateh Singh got terribly alarmed and crossed river Satluj on December 27, 1825, and went to his possession of Jagraon in the cis-Satluj area and sought the British protection there. Ranjit Singh took possession of the territories of Fateh Singh in the trans-Satluj area and appointed Faqir Aziz-ud-Din to look after the same.<sup>89</sup>

The Ahluwalia chief wanted to obtain from the British government some sort of guarantee for the security of his trans-Satluj possessions. What Fateh Singh wanted was not possible for the British government to grant. Under the treaty of 1809, they could not interfere with the Maharaja's proceeding north of the Satluj nor were the whole of his cis-Satluj estates under British protection. These consisted at this time, of 454 villages of which 291 were held by Fateh Singh in sovereignty, and 165 were in possession of *jagirdars*. Naraingarh and Jagraon, consisting respectively of 46 and 66 villages, had been received by grant from the Maharaja in 1807, and over these two estates the supremacy of Lahore was admitted by the British.<sup>90</sup>

The apprehensions of Fateh Singh were totally baseless and Ranjit Singh was as sincere to him as ever. In the words of Lepel Griffin, "The fears of Fateh Singh were exaggerated and that he was one of the few men for whom the Maharaja had any sincere feeling of regard."<sup>91</sup>

Ranjit Singh sincerely wanted Fateh Singh to return. According to Ahmad Shah Batalia, Fateh Singh, unable to secure adequate support from the British, decided to approach Ranjit Singh and beg pardon from him for his conduct and entertaining baseless apprehensions regarding the

Maharaja's treatment towards him. He sent his *vakil*, Diwan Sher Ali Khan, to the Maharaja with the desired request which the latter accepted with utmost magnanimity.<sup>92</sup>

Ranjit Singh sent Dhian Singh, his seven-year old grandson Naunihal Singh, Desa Singh Majithia, Shiv Dyal and Jawahar Singh Bastini to Jagraon to convince Fateh Singh of his sincerity towards him and bring him to the Maharaja with all the honours due to him. Fateh Singh came back to Kapurthala in 1827, and met Maharaja at Lahore. His territories, including Kapurthala and Sultanpur, were restored to him. But Ranjit Singh retained his possession of some of the territory of Fateh Singh despite assurances otherwise.<sup>93</sup> His cis-Satluj possessions of Jagraon, Isru, Naraingarh, etc., remained in his hands.

During the later years of his life Fateh Singh remained at Kapurthala in comparative retirement. He died on October 20, 1837, with malarial fever.<sup>94</sup>

In the words of the contemporary British diplomat, Charles Metcaife, "The quiet character of Fateh Singh, who was the equal, if not the superior, in rank and power, of Ranjit Singh, has yielded to the bold commanding spirit of the other, and he has been the ladder by which Ranjit Singh has mounted to greatness. He now finds himself, not companion and friend of an equal as formerly, but the nominal favourite of a master. . . He marches with a considerable force in the train of Ranjit Singh without knowing whither or for what purpose. . . He is mild and good-natured, seemingly simple, and undoubtedly wanting energy."<sup>95</sup> Fateh Singh seems to have been reduced to the level, at the most, of a distinguished general of Ranjit Singh.

The beginning of a formal alliance between Fateh Singh and Ranjit Singh was made with the treaty of 1802, solemnised in the presence of *Guru Granth Sahib*, at Fatehbad. As referred to earlier, the *abd-nama* was accompanied by an exchange of turbans to mark the establishment of perpetual friendship and brotherhood. According to this treaty, Fateh Singh and Ranjit Singh were to join in defence and offence and regard each other's friends and foes as their own. Also they were to share equally in all the conquests made jointly, each bearing the expenses of his respective army in these ventures.<sup>98</sup>

Both the chiefs met frequently and in the meetings the usual formalities and protocol were observed. Besides a formal reception these meetings were particularly marked by exchange of costly presents including horses and riding of an elephant together. Fateh Singh paid *nazaranas* to Ranjit Singh and it was symbolic of an inferior position. The position is further clarified when one finds unintentional evidence furnished by Ram Sukh Rao on this point. Fateh Singh's *vakils* were always stationed at the court of Ranjit Singh while there is no reference to an accredited *vakil* of Lahore Durbar permanently stationed at Kapurthala.

A number of Lahore courtiers including Raja Dhian Singh, Fateh Singh Kalianwala, the Sandhanwalia Sardars, the Attariwalia Sardars, Dal Singh Kalianwala, Nand Singh Vakil, Sukh Dayal, Desa Singh Majithia. Mit Singh Bhadhania, Sewa Singh Kumedan and Ghaus Khan received *jagirs* from Fateh Singh.<sup>97</sup>

Even in the status of, more or less, a vassal, Fateh Singh seems to have held an important position in the affairs of the Lahore Durbar for a long time. The Maharaja publicly acknowledged Fateh Singh's bravery and diligence in accomplishing many of their joint ventures, Ranjit Singh often told his officers that there was no difference between him and the Ahluwalia chief and that his

orders should also be obeyed. The *vakils* of Fateh Singh were generally given a seat in the Durbar of the Maharaja and this was taken as a mark of special favour and distinction.<sup>98</sup> Ranjit Singh always addressed Fateh Singh as 'Bhai Sahib' and consulted him on all important matters.

According to Ram Sukh Rao, Fateh Singh was a powerful and enlightened ruler, a good administrator, a fearless general and a brave warrior. He was a seasoned horse-rider and horse-tamer and *chugan* (a sort of polo) was a game very close to his heart. It continued to be his favourite game throughout his life. He was exceedingly fond of horses and in memory of a black charger, for which he had taken a fancy, he erected a beautiful tomb which exists to this day at the entrance of Kapurthala.<sup>99</sup> He was known for his skill in marksmanship, archery and fencing. Ram Sukh Rao underlines Fateh Singh's valour in the battles of Miani, Duraha, Drauli, Kasur, Kangra, Attock, Hazara, Kashmir, Multan and Peshawar. He would always like to fight in the front line, quite oblivious of the dangers to which he was exposed. But he was always humble in regard to his own acts of bravery. He was a great patron of arts and letters. He was God-fearing, generous, charitable and magnanimous and a very dependable and sincere ally.

He started his education under the care of a Persian teacher and acquired a workable knowledge of Persian language. He is also said to have written a few books in the traditional style of Punjabi verse.

According to Ram Sukh Rao he was always kind and humane even to the defeated foes. He would provide full protection to the people of the conquered territories. He considered it meanness to plunder the property of the people who were in a state of utter helplessness and misery. He would never allow his people to avail themselves of the deplorable condition of the defeated. At the time of prolonged siege of Multan the parents started selling their children in slavery. Fateh Singh told his men not to purchase the children and, instead, he financially helped those who were found selling their children.<sup>100</sup> He visited the holy places of the Sikhs and the Hindus and gave liberal *jagirs* to them. He patronised the Muslim institutions also. He was an extremely religious person and performed his *nit-name* (daily prayers) even in the battle-field. He always shared the hardships and the war hazards with his men in the field of battle. During Ranjit Singh's first expedition to Kashmir Fateh Singh placed his elephant at the disposal of the wounded soldiers and he himself trudged some distance on foot.<sup>101</sup>

He had the bad habit of excessive indulgence in liquor. He had marked indifference towards amassing wealth. He was very kind to his officials and was always ready to forgive and overlook even serious lapses on their part. He constructed many buildings in his capital. To promote trade and commerce in Kapurthala he attracted many bankers, businessmen and traders from Jagraon, Ludhiana, Phagwara and Sultanpur and settled them there. He once remarked that he would be mightily pleased if the bazars of the capital town were so full of stocks of goods and salable commodities that his elephant might find it difficult to pass through them. He gave *kbillats* to the bankers and traders who had outstanding performance to their credit.<sup>102</sup> It eminently displays Fateh Singh's keen interest in the promotion of the economic condition of his state.

### **Raja Nihal Singh (1836-1852)**

After Fateh Singh's death, his elder son Nihal Singh, who was born on March 10, 1817, succeeded him. Amar Singh, the younger brother of Nihal Singh, hatched a conspiracy against his brother. When Nihal Singh was leaving his residence with only one attendant he was attacked by Amar Singh's men. The attendant threw himself before his master and was cut to pieces by the

enemies but the Raja was saved with a few wounds. Ranjit Singh called both the brothers to Lahore and expressed sympathy with Nihal Singh and directed him to allow Amar Singh a separate maintenance allowance of Rs. 30,000, a year. Amar Singh always remained insincere to his elder brother. Nihal Singh would have remained in fear of being dispossessed but for the premature death of Amar Singh.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of March, 1841, Maharaja Sher Singh went on a boating excursion on the Ravi along with Dhian Singh, Hira Singh, Jamadar Khushal Singh, Bhai Gurmukh Singh, Rai Kesara Singh, Attar Singh Kalianwala and Amar Singh Ahluwalia. The boat was suddenly filled with water. Amar Singh Ahluwalia was drowned and the rest of the party escaped with difficulty by means of their riding elephants which were waiting on the bank and which were driven into the river to their assistance.<sup>103</sup>

Nihal Singh assisted the British in their march to Kabul. In the First Anglo-Sikh war of 1845 Nihal Singh did not side with the British. He was ordered by the British to cross Satluj and join them but he did not comply with the orders. On 31<sup>st</sup> of November, 1845, news was received by Major Broadfoot to the effect that the Ahluwalia subjects had joined the Lahore forces. They fought against the British at Aliwal and Buddowal.<sup>104</sup> As a punishment for his conduct, Nihal Singh's territories, south of Satluj, estimated at Rs. 5,65,00, a year, were confiscated by the British. In the Second Sikh War, Nihal Singh offered to help the English. After the war was over the Governor-General of the East India Company visited Kapurthala. Nihal Singh died on 13th September, 1852.

“Raja Nihal Singh was popular with his subjects and was of benevolent disposition. He had little strength of character, and was completely in the hands of his favourites, whose influence was rarely for good. His apathy and vacillation were such that he was unable to carry out measures which he acknowledged to be advantageous and he brought on himself and his state troubles which the most ordinary energy and courage might have averted.”<sup>105</sup>

### **Raja Randhir Singh (1852-1870)**

Nihal Singh was succeeded by his eldest son, Randhir Singh, who was born in March 1831, and was then in his twenty-second year. He was an accomplished ruler. He sided with the British during the Mutiny of 1857. In Jalandhar his troops guarded the civil station, the treasury and the jail. Both in Jalandhar Doab and cis-Satluj he and his brother Bikarma Singh rendered important services to the British who acknowledging the same, remitted a full year's tribute of Rs. 1,23,000 payable by the Raja and also reduced the annual sum by Rs. 25,000. He got the honorary title of *farzand dilband*<sup>104</sup> and Prince Bikrama Singh was honoured with the title of 'Bahadur.' In 1858, both the Raja and his brother rendered valuable service to the British government in Oudh. For his services the Raja was given two estates called Boundi and Bithouli in Oudh, which yielded government one lakh of rupees per annum on *istimrari* tenure, at half rate. Prince Bikrama Singh received an estate worth Rs. 45,000, a year, in the Baraich district.<sup>107</sup>

After the annexation of the Punjab by the British the position of the Ahluwalia chief, although not strictly sovereign, had yet independent power, which had been confirmed to him by the English. The districts in the Jalandhar Doab, “will be maintained in the independent possession of the Sardar.” This was in perpetuity, and the government had no right to take away the police jurisdiction from the Raja.<sup>108</sup>

On 17<sup>th</sup> October, 1864, Randhir Singh was invested with the insignia of the most exalted order of the 'Star of India' at a Durbar held at Lahore which was attended by the rulers of Kashmir, Patiala, Jind, Faridkot and many others.<sup>109</sup>

Randhir Singh had for a long time been desirous of paying a visit to England. He left Kapurthala for Bombay on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March, 1870. When the ship reached Aden he became seriously ill and died there on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April. His body was brought to Bombay and handed over to his son, Prince Kharak Singh, who took it to Nasik where the ceremony of cremation was performed.<sup>110</sup>

Randhir Singh was a good scholar of English. He was interested in the promotion of education in the state.

By his first wife, who died in 1853, Randhir Singh had two sons, Kanwar Kharak Singh, born in August 1850, and Harnam Singh, born in November 1852. His only daughter, born in 1851, was married in 1863. His second wife bore him one son who died two months after his birth.<sup>111</sup>

### **Raja Kharak Singh (1870-1877)**

Kharak Singh was born in 1850. After his father's death his installation to the *gaddi* took place on the 12<sup>th</sup> May, 1870. The ceremony was attended by Col. Coxe, Commissioner of Jalandhar and a large number of visitors. On the request of his subjects Kharak Singh announced the opening of a college and a hospital in the name of his father and sanctioned the amount for the construction of the buildings of the college and the hospital.<sup>112</sup> Kharak Singh could not live long. In 1874, on his return from Bhagsu, (district Kangra) it was discovered on May 9, 1874, at Hoshiarpur that the Raja was suffering from some brain ailment. Treatment proved of no avail. In order to look after the administrative affairs of the state government. Council of Regency was formed. On April 18, 1875, Lepel Griffin was appointed in charge of this Council. The Raja died at Bhagsu on September 5, 1877.<sup>113</sup> He was cremated at Kapurthala.

### **Maharaja Jagatjit Singh (1877-1948)**

Jagatjit Singh, who was born on November 23, 1872, succeeded his father on November 17, 1877. Since he was just a child at the time of his father's death the administration of the state remained in the hands of the British superintendents for a number of years. He attained his majority on November 24, 1890, and was invested with ruling powers, with due ceremony, by Sir James Lyall, the then Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab. He was gifted with a gentle and an amiable disposition and was just and a considerate ruler of his subjects. He always took keen personal interest in the administration. It was due to this that Kapurthala had ranked as one of the foremost of the well-run states in India.

Jagatjit Singh was among the earliest to sanction free primary education throughout the state. Many High Schools for boys and girls were run in the state. Randhir College, Kapurthala, was also built during his regime.

He had full powers of life and death over his subjects and administered justice through properly constituted courts which were run on similar lines as those in British India. Sentences of death and life imprisonment were referred to him for confirmation. He never sanctioned the sentence of death in any case.<sup>114</sup>



For the benefit of the agriculturists, agricultural banks were spread all over the state, providing cheap capital for the *zamindars*. Cooperative societies did a lot of good to the people. Veterinary hospitals were opened at many places.

Besides building a remarkable Gurdwara in his capital, he gave a proof of his broad-minded sympathy with his Muslim subjects by adding a new mosque to Kapurthala. The mosque designed by a French architect is, indeed, a unique building in India, built in a Moorish style and its architectural effect is remarkably beautiful. It cost six lakh rupees and it was consecrated in the presence of Nawab of Bahawalpur and some of the leading Indian Muslims. Kapurthala can, thus, boast of not only the most magnificent palaces and villas but also of the most imposing places of worship for the subjects of all castes and creeds.

The Maharaja was a perfect host and his hospitality was proverbial. He had entertained some of the most prominent personalities of the world at his capital, which included the viceroys, royal princes, governors, Rajas, diplomats, etc.

The Maharaja was a great traveller. It was a hobby with him not only to visit distant lands but also to make personal acquaintances and friendships with the leading personalities of the places he visited. During his time he was not only the most travelled Indian ruler but also one with the widest circle of cosmopolitan friends. He had visited North Africa, Central and South America, China, Japan, Siam, Java, Indo-China, Egypt, Turkey and the Bali islands. Besides Great Britain and France he had visited Germany, Italy, Austria, Spain, Belgium, Greece, Holland and Norway. Amongst the travels undertaken by him on political and diplomatic missions he represented the princely order of India at the League of Nations in 1926, 1927, and 1929. The Maharaja had a long list of interesting anecdotes of his tours. At a social function in America, during his second visit in 1915, after an interval of twenty two years, a prominent American came up to him and mentioned that he had met his father when the latter had come there in the United States. The gentleman was surprised to be told in reply that he was addressing the same Maharaja whom he had met in 1893.

The Maharaja continued in office up to 1948, when the state lapsed into the Indian dominion. He was made an Up-Rajpramukh (Deputy Governor) of the Pepsu, which position he held till his death on June 19, 1949.

#### Footnotes:

1. Lepel Griffin, *The Rajas of the Punjab*, Lahore, (Second ed, 1873) p 452. Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa II*, reprint Patiala, 1970, p. 721.
2. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 452; Gian Singh names the boy as Wadhawa Singh (*op. cit.*, p. 721).
3. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 721.
4. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 454; Diwan Ramjas, *Tawarikh-i-Riast Kapurthala*, Lahore, 1897, pp. 97-98; Ganda Singh, *Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia* (Punjabi), Patiala, 1969, p. 22.
5. Ramjas. *op. cit.*, pp. 99-100.
6. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 454-55; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 722.
7. Khushwaqat Rai, *Tawarikh-i-Sikhan* (1811), (MS., Dr Ganda Singh collection, Patiala), p. 66.
8. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 77; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 455; Ramjas, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-102.
9. Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar I*, Lahore, 1885, p. 109.

10. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash* (1841), Amritsar, 1939, p. 204; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol. I (1854), Lahore, 1961, p. 310; cf., M'Gregor, *The History of the Sikhs*, I (1846), Allahabad reprint, 1979, pp. 146-47; Kanaihya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, Lahore, 1877, p. 99.
11. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, p. 204; Ahmad Shah Batalia. Appendix to Sohan Lal Suri's *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, I, p. 27; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, p. 810; Bute Shah, *Twarikh-i-Punjab. Daftar IV*, MS., Dr Ganda Singh collection, Patiala, p. 265; Kanaihya Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 99; Ramjas, *op. cit.*, p. 104.
12. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, p. 204.
13. *Ibid.*, Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 723; Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Bombay, 1950, p. 123.
14. Ali-ud-Din Multi, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 311; Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 66.
15. Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, Calcutta, 1891, p. 314.
16. Ramjas, *op. cit.*, p. 150; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 733.
17. Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, Calcutta 1939, p. 51.
18. Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, (5<sup>th</sup> edition), p. 907.
19. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 457; Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, II, p. 725; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 315; Ganesh Das Badehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab* (1855), Amritsar. 1965, p. 93.
20. Ghulam Husain, *Syarul Mutakbirin* (1782), Cawnpore, 1897, p. 909, *Haqiqat-i-bina-o-uruj-i-firqa-i-Sikhan*, MS., PUP., p. 19; Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, I, p. 144; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 220; Jadunath Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. II, Calcutta, reprint 1971, pp. 73-74.
21. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
22. *Ibid.*, Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 66.
23. *Tazkirah-i-Khandan-i-Rajah-i-Phulkian*, MS., GS., pp. 16-17; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 260; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 462; Ramjas, *op. cit.*, pp. 194-95.
24. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 463.
25. *Haqiqat-i-bina-o-uruj-i-firqa-i-Sikhan*. MS., PUP., p. 30; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 326.
26. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 464.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 464-65; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 316.
28. Qanungo, K.R., *History of the Jats*, Calcutta, 1925, p. 176.
29. Hari Ram Gupta, *op. cit.*, IV, Delhi, 1982, p. 35.
30. *Tazkirah-i-Khandan-i-Rajah-i-Phulkian*, p. 19; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 31; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, II, p. 563; Ramjas, *op. cit.*, pp. 231-32.
31. Ramjas, *op. cit.*, p. 236, cf., *Correspondence of Persian Calendar*, II, 50.
32. Ahmed Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 28; James Skinner, *Kitab-i-Haqaiq-i-Rajgan* also called *Tazkirah-ul-Umra*, Persian MS., 1830, Dr Ganda Singh collection, Patiala, p. 182; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 265; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. T, pp. 312-13.  
Formerly Kapurthala was a village in the *taaluqa* of Sheikhu pura. It developed into a town under Rai Ibrahim (*Kalfiat-i-Sardaran-i-Ablumalia*, Persian MS., Dr Ganda Singh collection, Patiala), p. 2.
33. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 467; Ramjas, *op. cit.*, p. 265; Gian Singh *op. cit.*, p. 731.
34. James Skinner, *op. cit.*, p. 182.
35. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 73; Ahmad Shah Batata, *op. cit.*, p. 27; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 56.
36. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 67; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 58.
37. Ramjas, *op. cit.*, p. 277.
38. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 730.
39. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 733; Ganda Singh, *Sardar Jassa Singh Ablumalia*, Patiala, 1969, p. 210.
40. Ramjas, *op. cit.*, p. 112.
41. Qazi Nur Muhammad, *Jangnama* (1765), ed. Ganda Singh, Amritsar, 1939, p. 50.

42. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 468.
43. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 27; M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, p, 147.
44. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 27; M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, p. 147.
45. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 472. According to James Skinner, pulses weighing 10 *maunds pukehta* were cooked in his *langer* daily for the consumption of those who partook food from there (*Tazkirah-ul-Umra*, p. 182); Ramjas, *op. cit.*, p. 110.
46. Ganesh Dass Badehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab* (1855), Amritsar, 1965, pp. 130-31; Lepel Griffin holds Ganesh Das Badehra's version as correct (*The Rajas of the Punjab*, p. 461); C.L. Rogers also agrees with Ganesh Das (*Asiatic Society Journal*, 1881-L (1), 71-93).
47. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 27; James Skinner, *op. cit.*, p. 182, Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 313; M' Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, p. 147.
48. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 313; cf., Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV p. 267.
49. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 268.
50. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 313. cf., James Skinner, *op. cit.*, p. 183. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 733, According to Ahmad Shah Batalia (p. 27) and Bute Shah (p. 267) Bhag Singh was Jassa Singh's nephew.
51. Ramjas, *op. cit.*, pp. 302-03.
52. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 317.
53. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 473; Ramjas, *op. cit.*, p. 312.
54. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, 735; cf., Lepel Griffin, *op. at.*, p. 473.
55. Ramjas, *op. cit.*, p. 313, 318-19.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 311.
57. *Ibid.*, pp. 314-17.
58. *Ibid.*, pp. 317-18.
59. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 735; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 268; Ramjas, *op. cit.*, pp. 311, 314, 316-18.
60. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 473; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 735; Ramjas, *op. cit.*, pp. 313-314.
61. Ramjas, *op. cit.*, p. 316.
62. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 20; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 308-09; Lepel Griffin, *Punjab Chiefs*, pp. 173-74; *The Rajas of the Punjab*, p. 473; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 238; Ramjas, *op. cit.*, pp. 325-26.
63. Ramjas, *op. cit.*, p. 324.
64. *Ibid.*
65. Lepel Griffin, *The Rajas of the Punjab*, pp. 473-74, Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 736. According to Khushwaqat Rai, Bhag Singh died of great uneasiness and regrets (*Tawarikh-i-Sikhan*, MS., GS., p. 67).
66. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 67; Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p 27; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 261.
67. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 67; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 268.
68. *Ibid.*
69. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 67; Ramjas, *op. cit.*; p. 329.
70. Ramjas, *op. cit.*, pp. 342-44.
71. *Kafiat-i-Sardaran-i-Ahluwalia*, MS., GS., p. 16.
72. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
73. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 268-69.
74. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 68; James Skinner, *op. cit.*, p. 185; Bute Shah *op. cit.*, IV, p. 269; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 474; *Kafiat-i-Sardaran-i-Ahluwalia*, p. 21; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 313.
75. *Kafiat-i-Sardaran-i-Ahluwalia*, p. 21.

76. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 68; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 269; Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-28.
77. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 28; M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 147-48.
78. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 474-75, cf., Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power in The Punjab and Political Life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh* (1834), reprint, Patiala, 1970, p. 46; Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*. (1849), reprint, Delhi, 1955. p. 120.
79. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 60; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 35-36.
80. According to Bute Shah, (*op. cit.*; p. 173), Lepel Griffin (*Rajas of the Punjab*, ed. 1873, p. 45 foot note 2) and Prinsep (*op. cit.*, p. 49), Tara Singh Ghaiba died at Naraingarh.
81. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, Daftar 11, pp. 72-73; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
82. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 269.
83. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 156.
84. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 171.
85. *Ibid.*, p, 204.
86. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 482-85; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 739-41.
87. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 485-86; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 742.
88. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 28; James Skinner, *op. cit.*, p. 186; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 270-71; M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, p. 148.
89. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 28. But according to Bute Shah, Budh Singh Sandhanwalia was appointed to administer the Ahluwalia territory, (*op. cit.*, IV, p. 271); Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 488; cf., Prinsep, *op. cit.*, P. 114; M'Gregor, *op. cit.*; I, p. 148; Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 164.
90. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 489; cf., James Skinner, *op. cit.*, p. 185.
91. *Ibid.*, Ram Sukh Rao, *Sri Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar*, MS., Archives, Patiala. p. 337 b.
92. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 28; Ramjas, *op. cit.*, p. 439; cf., M' Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, p. 148.
93. Ram Sukh Rao, *op. cit.*, folios 338a-339b; Prinsep. *op. cit.*, p. 114; Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-29; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 272; James Skinner, *op. cit.*, p. 187; Ramjas, *op. cit.*, pp. 439-40; Cunningham, *op. cit.*, pp. 164-65; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 743-45.
94. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 745; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 318.
95. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 478-79.
96. Ram Sukh Rao, *op. cit.*, f, 89 a-b.
97. *Ibid.*, f. 341 b.
98. *Ibid.*, f. 105 b.
99. M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, p. 149; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 319.
100. Ram Sukh Rao, *op. cit.*, f. 289 b.
101. *Ibid.*, f. 265 a-b.
102. Ramjas, *op. cit.*, pp. 458-59.
103. Ali-ud.Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol, I, p. 317; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 272-73; M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 148-49; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 492-93; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 746.
104. *Ali-ud-Din Mufti*, *op. cit.*, 1, Vol. I, pp. 499-500.
105. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 503.
106. *Ibid.*, pp. 526-28; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 320; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 760.
107. *Ibid.*, p. 529; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 320; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 760.
108. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 510-11.
109. *Ibid.*, p. 535; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 763.
110. *Ibid.*, pp. 537-38; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 764.
111. *Ibid.*, p. 504.
112. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 765.
113. *Ibid.*, pp. 765-66.
114. Raj Kumar, *Modern Kapurthala and its Maker*, p. 12.

## Chapter 4

### THE BHANGI MISAL

The Bhangi Misal was one of the most famous Misals of the Sikhs. Members of this Misal ruled Amritsar, Gujrat, Chiniot and a part of the city of Lahore. This Misal outshined the other Misals in its earlier stages and the Bhangis were probably the first to establish an independent government of their own in their conquered territories. Even in the initial stages of the Misal's history they had nearly twelve thousand horsemen.

#### Chajja Singh

The founder of the Bhangi Misal, Chajja Singh, a Jat, was a native of Panjwar village, eight *kos* from Amritsar.<sup>1</sup> He was the first companion of Banda Singh to receive Sikh baptism.<sup>2</sup> According to Kanaihya Lal, he had taken *pabul* at the hands of Guru Gobind Singh.<sup>3</sup> The Bhangi Misal is said to have its name from its founder's addiction to *bhang*—an intoxicating preparation of hemp.<sup>4</sup> After the death of Banda Singh, Chajja Singh administered *pabul* to Bhima (Bhuma) Singh, Natha Singh and Jagat Singh and made them his companions.<sup>5</sup> Accompanied by many others, he took to vigorous activities and harassing the tyrannical government officials. Chajja Singh's companions whole-heartedly cooperated with him in his armed operations in the face of grave dangers from the all-out efforts of the government to liquidate them.

A little later Chajja Singh was joined by Mohan Singh and Gulab Singh of Dhousa village, six miles north-east of Amritsar, Karora Singh of Choupal, Gurbakhsh Singh, a Sandhu Jat of Roranwala, Agar Singh Khangora and Sawan Singh Randhawa. They all took *pabul* from Chajja Singh and formed a strong band of anti-state activists.<sup>6</sup> They carried conviction in their heads that Guru Gobind Singh had destined the *rajor* sovereign power of the Punjab for them. With that mission before them they were vehemently inspired to pursue their activities against the Mughal government of the Punjab.<sup>7</sup> In due course of time Chajja Singh passed away.

#### Bhima Singh

After Chajja Singh's death Bhima Singh (or Bhuma Singh), a Dhillon Jat of village Hung, in the *pargana* of Wadni, near Moga, became his successor. Bhima Singh's latent genius as an organiser and commander of his men gave a fillip to the Misal. His old associates Natha Singh and Jagat Singh became his subordinates and a large number of Sikhs rallied round them.<sup>8</sup> Nadir Shah's invasion, in 1739, had caused great commotion in the country, Bhima Singh took full advantage of it and turned the small band of attackers, left by his predecessor, into a powerful confederacy.<sup>9</sup> He seems to have died in the *Chbota gballughara*, in 1746. It is said that Bhima Singh was of so arrogant a disposition that he was called by the Sikhs *bala-bash* (a high-head). This, being a Turkoman title, annoyed Bhima Singh so much that he begged his comrades to change it for some other. Accordingly, he was appointed to pound *bhang* for the Sikhs and began to be called Bhangi. This account is popularly believed.<sup>10</sup>

#### Hari Singh

Since Bhima Singh was childless, he adopted Hari Singh as his son. Hari Singh became the next chief of the Bhangi Misal. He had taken *pabul* from Bhima Singh and had become his close associate from an early life. Hari Singh, the resident of Panjwar village, possessed the qualities of bravery and intrepidity. According to Lepel Griffin, Hari Singh was the son of Bhup Singh, a

*zamindar* of Pattoh, near Wadni.<sup>11</sup> He organised a large band of his followers with which he embarked upon the career of a conqueror. The numerical strength of his followers increased considerably. The fighting strength of the Bhangi Misal at this time was, about 20,000 men who were stationed at different places of his territory.<sup>12</sup>

By the time of Hari Singh's succession to chiefship of the Misal, Natha Singh and Jagat Singh, the close associates of his predecessor, had died. He appointed Jhanda Singh in place of Natha Singh and Ganda Singh in place of Jagat Singh,<sup>13</sup> who made great contributions to his achievements. Hari Singh fought a number of times against Abroad Shah Abdali.<sup>14</sup> He was fond of keeping good horses in his stable.

Hari Singh had many Misaldars under him. It would not be out of place to differentiate here the respective positions of the Sardar and the Misaldar. A Sardar was the head of the whole Misal whereas there were many Misaldars in a Misal. The Misaldars had parts of the territory of the Misal assigned to them by the Sardar for their services to him in carving out a Misal or a state for him. The Misaldars used to join hands with the Sardar at the time of foreign danger or to fight together against a common enemy. They used to get share from the spoils according to the number of their men.

Hari Singh set-up his headquarters at Gilwali village in the Amritsar district. He captured Sialkot, Karial and Mirowal. He also led his expeditions to Chiniot and Jhang. In 1762, he attacked Kot Khwaja Saeed, two miles from Lahore, where Khwaja Ubaid, the Afghan governor of Lahore, had kept his large magazine containing ordnance, arms and munitions of war, the whole of which was carried away by him. He also took away from there the big gun, later known as *top Bhangian*,<sup>15</sup> manufactured by Sardar Jahan Khan. He conquered the fort of Kehlwar in the Sandalbar area. He returned the same to its former masters on the assurance of receiving one lakh rupees annually as a tribute from them.<sup>16</sup> He also subdued the surrounding areas of Bahawalpur.

He next invaded the territories of the Indus and the Derajat. His commanders also conquered Rawalpindi.<sup>17</sup> The Majha and Malwa areas were also subdued. He also took his arms to Jammu at the head of 12,000 horsemen, and made its ruler Ranjit Deo his tributary. On the Jamuna. Rai Singh Bhangi, Bhagel Singh Karora Singhia and Hari Singh harassed the old Najib-ud-Daula who wanted to restrain the progress of the Sikh chiefs with the help of the combined forces of the Rohillas and the Marathas. In 1763, Hari Singh joined the Kanaihyas and Ramgarhias in an attack on Kasur and the following year he fought Amar Singh of Patiala but was killed in the action.<sup>18</sup> He died of a gun shot which struck him at Lang-Chalella in Patiala state.<sup>19</sup> He held the Sardari of his Misal for eight years.<sup>20</sup>

Hari Singh had two wives, the first of whom was the daughter of Chaudhari of Panjwar, near Tarn Taran. He had two sons, Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh from the first wife and Charhat Singh, Diwan Singh and Desu Singh from the second.<sup>21</sup>

## **Jhanda Singh**

After the death of Hari Singh, his eldest son Jhanda Singh succeeded him. He appointed his younger brother Ganda Singh as the commander-in-chief of the forces of the Bhangi Misal.<sup>22</sup> The army was reorganised and its numerical strength was increased. In political power and military resources Jhanda Singh made a remarkable improvement on the position as it obtained under Hari Singh.<sup>23</sup> Jhanda Singh and his brothers, associated by many illustrious leaders like Sahib Singh of

Sialkot, Rai Singh and Sher Singh of Buria, Bhag Singh of Hallowal, Sudh Singh Dodia, Nidhan Singh Attu, Tara Singh Chainpuria, Bagh Singh Jalalwalia, Gujjar Singh and Lehna Singh, made great efforts to place the Misal on a very sound footing.<sup>24</sup> Jassa Singh Ramgarhia was one of the close friends of Jhanda Singh.<sup>25</sup>

One of the bravest men under Hari Singh Bhangi was Gurbakhsh Singh, an associate of Bhima Singh. He was a great warrior and had about forty villages under him. Being childless he adopted Lehna Singh, son of Dargaha, a Jat of Sadhawala in the Amritsar district, as his son. On Gurbakhsh Singh's death his son Lehna Singh succeeded him. Gujjar Singh was the son of Gurbakhsh Singh's brother. A dispute cropped up between Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh over the division of the estate left by Gurbakhsh Singh. Ultimately the estate was equally divided between these two Misaldars. These two chiefs, along with Sobha Singh, nephew of Jai Singh Kanaihya, accepted the subordination of Jhanda Singh, the Sardar of the Bhangi Misal.

According to Ahmad Shah Batalia, Ahmad Shah Durrani had left behind Kabuli Mal as the governor of Lahore. Gujjar Singh and Lehna Singh decided to occupy Lahore. They were joined by Sobha Singh. At the head of their forces they marched and besieged Lahore. As a measure of protection Kabuli Mal had bricked up all entrances and when he found it impossible to hold out against the besiegers he escaped from Lahore, leaving it in the hands of the above said trio,<sup>26</sup> in April 1765.

At the head of a large army, Jhanda Singh marched towards Multan in 1766, and declared war against Shujab Khan, the Muhammadan governor, and the Daudputras of Bahawalpur. An indecisive battle was fought on the banks of river Satluj. A treaty was concluded with Bhangi chief on one side and Mubarak Khan, the Daudputra chief, and the Multan governor, in the other. Jhanda Singh was acknowledged as the lord of the territories up to Pakpattan.<sup>27</sup> In 1767, he built a fort behind the Loon Mandi in Amritsar which has been known as *Qila-i-Bhangian*.<sup>28</sup>

Jhanda Singh, next, marched towards the Pathan principality of Kasur which was subdued. He made a fresh attack on, Multan, later in 1771,<sup>29</sup> but it was repulsed by the combined Forces of Multan and Bahawalpur.

The following year, a quarrel arose between the successive governors of Multan, Shujah Khan, Sharif Khan Suddozai and Sharif Beg Taklu. Sharif Beg had been looking after Multan since the days of Ahmad Shah Abdali. When Timur Shah ascended the throne of Kabul he demanded the revenue of Multan from Sharif Beg, who got refractory and asked for help from Jhanda Singh, in return for a *nazarana* of one lakh rupees. The help was readily given.<sup>30</sup> Jhanda Singh accompanied by his brother, Ganda Singh, and Lehna Singh, at the head of a well-equipped and strong army, marched to Multan on December 25, 1772, and achieved a complete victory over Shujah Khan and the Daudputras, subjecting them to heavy losses. Multan was divided among themselves by Jhanda Singh and Lehna Singh. Diwan Singh Chachowalia was appointed the *qiladar* of Multan, garrisoning the place with the Bhangi forces.<sup>31</sup> Sharif Beg, utterly disappointed, fled to Talamba and then to Khairpur where he died a brokenhearted man.

On his return from Multan, Jhanda Singh subdued the Baloch territory,<sup>32</sup> captured Jhang and conquered Mankera and Kala Bagh. He failed to capture Shujahbad built by the Afghans after the loss of Multan. He, then, recovered the famous *zamzama* or Bhangi gun from the Chathas of Ramnagar.<sup>33</sup>

According to Ali-ud-Din Mufti, a serious dispute arose between Raja Ranjit Deo of Jammu and his eldest son Brij Raj Deo, in 1770. The heir-apparent was of a dissolute character. The father, a man of great ability and sound judgement, wanted, therefore, his younger son Daler (Dalel) Singh to succeed him. The quarrel developed into an explosive situation. The immature and raw youth, not realising the consequences, sought assistance from Charhat Singh Sukarchakia and Jai Singh Kanaihya, both of whom readily agreed. Raja Ranjit Deo could not fight against this formidable coalition single-handed and invited Jhanda Singh Bhangi to help him.<sup>34</sup>

The united forces of the Sukarchakia and Kanaihya chiefs marched into the Jammu hills and encamped on the Basanter river, a little east of Jammu. Ranjit Deo collected an army of his own, as well as of his allies, such as the chiefs of Chamba, Nurpur and Basoli in addition to the forces of Jhanda Singh.

The contest took place at Dasuha, adjacent to Zafarwal. The fighting dragged on for some days without yielding any result. One day Charhat Singh Sukarchakia was accidentally killed by the bursting of his own gun which struck him on the forehead.<sup>35</sup> in 1770.

The loss of Charhat Singh was too great for the allies who found it difficult to maintain their position against the powerful Bhangi chief, Jhanda Singh. It was also felt by Jai Singh that Charhat Singh's son, Mahan Singh, was too young to be a match for Jhanda Singh who was deadly against the Sukarchakias. Jai Singh, therefore, decided that their safety lay in the murder of the Bhangi Sardar. Consequently he bribed a Rangretta or a Mazhbi Sikh in the service of Jhanda Singh whom he shot dead<sup>36</sup> from behind while he was walking in his camp unattended, soon after Charhat Singh's death.

Under Jhanda Singh the annual income of the Misal was estimated to be one crore rupees.<sup>37</sup> Jhanda Singh was a great organiser and an administrator. The Bhangi Misal made a considerable progress under his able stewardship. He headed his Misal for six years.<sup>38</sup>

### **Ganda Singh**

After Jhanda Singh's death, his brother, Ganda Singh, succeeded to the Sardari of the Misal. Ganda Singh completed the works of improvement which had been undertaken by his deceased brother at Amritsar. He strengthened the Bhangi fort and enlarged and beautified the town with many impressive buildings.<sup>39</sup>

Ganda Singh was feeling very uneasy in his mind due to the treachery of the Kanaihyas which had brought about the death of his brother. According to Ahmad Shah Batalia, Jhanda Singh had conferred Pathankot on one of his Misaldars, Nand Singh, also called Mansa Singh, who died about the same time as his chief, leaving behind him his widow and a daughter. The widow married her daughter to Tara Singh, brother of Hakikat Singh Kanaihya. She also gave away the *jagir* of Pathankot to her son-in-law. Since Ganda Singh was inimical to the Kanaihyas for their nefarious act of arranging the murder of his brother he felt severely annoyed over both the acts of Nand Singh's widow. He asked the Kanaihyas to hand over Pathankot to him but they insisted upon holding it as their rightful possession. Thereupon, Ganda Singh, at the head of a large army, and with the Bhangi gun, *Zamzama*, marched to Pathankot via Batala and was joined by the Ramgarhias who were friendly to the Bhangis and hostile to the Kanaihyas. Tara Singh and Hakikat Singh were joined by Gurbakhsh Singh, son of Jai Singh Kanaihya, and Amar Singh Bagga. The two armies



faced each other at Dinanagar where fighting continued for several days without any result. Ganda Singh, who was already not keeping good health, suffered from exhaustion due to his military actions and activities. He fell ill and in the course of ten days he passed away,<sup>40</sup> in 1774. Ganda Singh held the Sardari of the Misal for a few years.<sup>41</sup>

After the death of Ganda Singh, in preference to Desu (Desa) Singh, his younger brother Charhat Singh succeeded to the chiefship of the Misal. But shortly thereafter Charhat Singh was killed in an action.<sup>42</sup> These successive deaths of the Bhangi rulers broke the back of the Misal and the Kanaihyas had an upper hand in the contest for power. So helplessly, Desu Singh was installed to head the Misal.

### **Desu Singh**

Desu Singh, the new Sardar of the Bhangi Misal, appointed one Gujjar Singh as his minister with whose intercession he concluded peace with Kanaihyas and returned to Amritsar.<sup>43</sup> The fort of Pathankot remained in the hands of Tara Singh.<sup>44</sup> Since the Misal came in the hands of the stripling, much could not be expected from him immediately. Many Misaldars who had earlier been giving all the military assistance expected of them, became independent. Jhang ceased to pay tribute. Muzaffar Khan, son of Shujah Khan, helped by the Bahawalpur chief, made a bid to recover Multan in 1777. He was, however, repulsed by Diwan Singh, the governor of Multan.

Timur Shah, successor of Ahmad Shah, on the throne of Kabul, was determined to recover his lost territories in the Punjab. He sent his general, Faizullah Khan, to Peshawar to collect forces and attack the Punjab. He assembled a large force of the Afghans, particularly from the Khyber tribes with the avowed object of punishing the Sikhs but entered into a secret conspiracy with Mian Muhammad, son of Sheikh Omar of Chamkanni, a sworn enemy of Timur Shah, to kill the Shah. He marched his forces to the fort of Peshawar on the pretext of parading his troops before the Shah. But on reaching the fort they cut to pieces the Shah's guards at the gate and forced their entry into the fort. The Shah went to the upper story of the palace and conveyed to his personal bodyguards the seriousness of the situation. Shah's bodyguards and the Durrani attacked Faizullah's men and there ensued terrible slaughter. Faizullah and his son were also tortured to death.<sup>45</sup>

Now, Timur Shah decided to take vigorous steps in regard to Sind, Bahawalpur and the lower Punjab. In 1777-78, he sent two detachments of the Afghan troops to drive out the Sikhs from Multan but with no success. The Afghans were beaten back with heavy loss and Haini Khan, the commander of the expedition, was tied to a gun and blown off by the Sikhs.<sup>46</sup> But in the end of 1779, the operations of the Shah against Multan were successful. The Shah's troops, numbering 18,000, consisting of the Yusufzais, Durrani, Mughals and Kazalbashes, were under the command of Zangi Khan, the Durrani chief. The Sikhs were said to have suffered heavy casualties with 3,000, as killed in the battle-field and 2,000, drowned in the course of crossing the river. After the victory over Multan, it was placed under the governorship of Shujah Khan, father of Muzaffar Khan. The Shah subdued Bahawal Khan, the Abassi chief of Bahawalpur.<sup>47</sup>

The decline of the Misal started earlier, continued under Desu Singh. Some places got out of his control but he continued receiving revenue to the tune of fifty thousand rupees annually from the Sials.<sup>48</sup>

Desu Singh was not on good terms with Mahan Singh of Sukharchakia Misal which was now becoming very powerful. There were occasional skirmishes between the troops of Desu Singh and

Mahan Singh. The stars of the Sukarchakias were on the ascendant in those days. Desu Singh could not add any territories to his Misal, rather he lost Pindi Bhatian, Sahiwal, Bhera, Isa Khel, Jhang and Takht Hazara to Mahan Singh Sukarchakia and a part of Kasur and some other areas passed into the hands of Nizam-ud-Din Khan of Kasur.<sup>49</sup>

In 1782, Desu Singh marched to reduce Chiniot and had many skirmishes with the Sukarchakia chief, Mahan Singh. He died in action in the same year. He held the chiefship of the Misal for eight years.<sup>50</sup>

### **Gulab Singh**

Desu Singh was succeeded by his minor son, Gulab Singh, who looked after the affairs of the Misal with the help of his cousin, Karam Singh Dulu. Gulab Singh enlarged the city of Amritsar where he lived.<sup>51</sup> During the period of his minority Karam Singh worked as the administrator of Amritsar and on coming of age Gulab Singh dismissed him.<sup>52</sup> A little later, Gulab Singh conquered the Pathan colony of Kasur and Nizam-ud-Din Khan and Kutb-ud-Din joined the service of the conqueror. In 1794, the Afghan brothers recovered Kasur with the help of their countrymen. Gulab Singh, despite his repeated attempts, could not expel the Afghans. He was a weak man and did not possess influence and energy sufficient to keep together the possessions which his father had left for him. Year by year these territories diminished, till at last, the town of Amritsar and some villages including Kuhali, Majitha, Naushehra and Sarhali in the Majha alone remained in his hands.<sup>53</sup> Even the revenue accruing from the Sials got alienated.<sup>54</sup> He had only to live on the income from the city of Amritsar and a few villages.

Ranjit Singh occupied Lahore in July 1799. His successes were creating alarm in the minds of the Punjab chiefs. Gulab Singh called all his Misaldars and supporters to fight against Ranjit Singh. Consequently, an alliance or a cabal was formed with Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, Nizam-ud-Din of Kasur, Sahib Singh and Gulab Singh Bhangi as its members, the last being the leading man behind the whole plan.<sup>55</sup> In 1800, the allies collected their forces at the village of Bhasin, twelve *kos* east of Lahore. Ranjit Singh also advanced and encamped his forces opposite to his enemies. After a minor skirmish the contending armies stood apart waiting for a bigger clash. For some months the things lingered on and none could take initiative in attacking the other. In the meantime mutual jealousies developed in the camp of Gulab Singh. In the midst of confusion Gulab Singh died of excessive indulgence in drinking.<sup>56</sup>

The allies dispersed forthwith, without fighting against Ranjit Singh. It was indeed a great political and psychological victory for Ranjit Singh who now found himself clearly on road to monarchy in the Punjab. The constituent chiefs of the alliance, thus dispersed, could not meet again to challenge Ranjit Singh's power.

### **Gurdit Singh**

After the death of Gulab Singh his ten-year old son, Gurdit Singh, succeeded him. The Misal was on its downward march and the new ruler was in a helpless condition. Gurdit Singh was married to the daughters of Sahib Singh Bhangi and Fateh Singh Kanaihya.<sup>57</sup>

The gun, called *zamzama*, had been taken away by Charhat Singh Sukarchakia from Lehna Singh Bhangi. For some time it remained lying at Ramnagar. When Jhanda Singh Bhangi came back from Multan he removed the gun to his place. Since then the gun remained in the possession of the Bhangis.<sup>58</sup>

At this time, Maharaja Ranjit Singh demanded the famous *zamzama* gun from Gurdit Singh whose mother Sukhan flatly refused to part with it as its possession had assured glory and prestige to the Misal.<sup>59</sup> *Mai* Sukhan got prepared to fight against Ranjit Singh. Jodh Singh Ramgarhia sent a secret reinforcement to Sukhan to the tune of three hundred soldiers. At the same time he advised her that either she should hand over the *zamzama* gun to the Sukarchakia chief and purchase peace or destroy the gun. *Mai* Sukhan did not accept either of the suggestions and decided to face Ranjit Singh. The Lahore chief, accompanied by his mother-in-law, Sada Kaur, and Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, marched upon Amritsar and besieged the town.<sup>60</sup> When the opposing forces were at the point of coming to a severe clash Jodh Singh Ramgarhia and Akali Phula Singh came in between them. *Mai* Sukhan surrendered without much opposition.<sup>61</sup> On the advice of the Ramgarhia chief and the Akali leader the fort and the city of Amritsar were evacuated by *Mai* Sukhan on 14 Phagun, 1861 BK (February 24, 1805).<sup>62</sup> *Mai* Sukhan and her son remained under the protection of the Ramgarhia chief for some time. Then, on the recommendation of the Ramgarhia chief *Mai* Sukhan and her son Gurdit Singh were granted Panjore and five or six villages in *jagir* for their subsistence.<sup>63</sup>

The *top-i-Bhangian* was taken by Ranjit Singh to Lahore and is still lying there. It was manufactured in 1761, by Shah Nazir, a famous mechanic, for Ahmad Shah Abdali. It was composed of brass and copper. Ahmad Shah had left it in the possession of Ubaid Khan, governor of Lahore. In 1762, when Hari Singh Bhangi and the other Sardars plundered the arsenal of the governor of Lahore, they also took away the gun. Ranjit Singh used it in the battles of Daska, Kasur, Sujapur, Wazirabad and Multan.

Gurdit Singh died at his ancestral village of Panjwar in the Tarn Taran *pargana* of Amritsar district where his descendants, later, lived as simple peasants.

Besides the main House of the Bhangi Misal, there were some Misaldars also who had risen to prominent positions. As mentioned earlier the Sardars of the Misal bestowed a number of villages on their comrades-in-arms who had assisted them in carving out their Misals. These Misaldars, sometimes, by sheer dint of their arms, became as strong in their respective areas as the Sardars of the Misals themselves. The Bhangi Sardars had as their powerful associates in the persons of Lehna Singh, Gujjar Singh and Sahib Singh who always stood by them. These men are also known to history as Bhangis.

### **Lehna Singh**

Lehna Singh's grandfather was a *zamindar* of minor consequence. He, in the time of scarcity, left his native village of Sadhawala in the Amritsar district for Mastapur near Kartarpur in the Jalandhar Doab.<sup>64</sup> He belonged to the Kahlon sub-caste of the Jats.<sup>65</sup> Lehna Singh, the son of Dargaha, was a high-spirited youngman. Once he was beaten by his father for allowing cattle to stray into the green fields. He ran away from home and, after wandering for some time, reached the village of Roranwala, one mile from Attari, where a Bhangi Misaldar Gurbakhsh Singh lived.<sup>66</sup> This man was one of the best warriors under Hari Singh Bhangi. He owned about forty villages and helped Hari Singh to maintain law and order in his territory with a band of his horsemen. Gurbakhsh Singh took a fancy to young Lehna Singh and enlisted him among his horsemen and later, having no male issue of his own, adopted him.<sup>67</sup> Gurbakhsh Singh died in 1763, and dissensions arose between Lehna Singh, the adopted son, and Gujjar Singh, the son of Gurbakhsh Singh's brother,<sup>68</sup> each claiming the property.<sup>69</sup>

Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh came to Vanyeki to settle their dispute but Gujjar Singh was not prepared to listen to the terms of settlement and set out with his followers for Roranwala. Lehna Singh pursued and came up with him. There was a fight between the followers of the two which resulted in the death of a few men on either side. At last the estate was divided by Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh. The former kept Roranwala and the latter founded a new village between Bharwal and Ranni, which he called Ranghar, in remembrance of his fight with Lehna Singh, with whom he now became the fast friend.<sup>70</sup>

When Ahmad Shah Abdali left India he appointed a Hindu, named Kabuli Mal, as the governor of Lahore.<sup>71</sup> The governor was a timid and, at the same time, a tyrannical man. Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh formed a design to expel Ahmad Shah's representative from Lahore and capture the city for themselves. When Kabuli Mal obtained secret intelligence of the Bhangi plot he fled from Lahore, leaving it in charge of his nephew (sister's son), Amir Singh (or Amar Singh). Kabuli Mal plundered the city before leaving it. He took road to Jammu and on the way he was roughly handled by some of the persons who had left Lahore because of his tyranny. He would probably have been killed, had not some troops, sent by Raja Ranjit Deo as his escort, saved him.<sup>72</sup> The Raja sent him to Rawalpindi where Ahmad Shah's rearguard had halted and there he died shortly afterwards.

Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh collected their men and decided to surprise Lahore. Bhaia Nand Ram Purbia, who was the *thanedar* of Lahore fort and who had been hostile to Kabuli Mal, secretly joined with the Bhangi chiefs. He sent a message to the Sikh Sardars through Dyal Singh that entry into the city by the gates was doubtful and they were asked to enter at night by causing a breach in the wall at a specific point. The Bhangi chiefs agreed and they did likewise<sup>73</sup> and before morning the whole city was in their possession. The occupation of Lahore took place on April 16, 1765. Amir Singh, the deputy governor, was captured and put in irons. Early next day Sobha Singh Kanaihya, nephew (brother's son) of Jai Singh Kanaihya, arrived.<sup>74</sup> He had been, since the last Afghan invasion, staying at his native village Kanah. Though he was late to participate in capturing the city, he was allowed to share the prize. Then came the other chiefs of the Bhangis, Kanaihyas, Sukarchakias, etc. But Charhat Singh Sukarchakia would not go away without having got the *zamzama* gun from the Bhangis, which he carried to Gujranwala, The three chiefs then divided Lahore amongst them.<sup>75</sup> Lehna Singh took the fort with the Masti, Khizri, Kashmiri and Roshani gates. Gujjar Singh built for himself a fort without the walls, which he called Qila Gujjar Singh.<sup>76</sup> On the request of a deputation of grandees of the town, the Sardars issued a proclamation that persons who oppressed the people would be severely dealt with. The plundering of the town was stopped forthwith. They took to administering it whole-heartedly.<sup>77</sup>

Lehna Singh and Sobha Singh remained in Lahore in peace till Ahmad Shah Abdali made his final descent upon the Punjab in December 1766, when they retired from Lahore.<sup>78</sup> But the Afghan ruler feeling the infirmity and old age creeping upon him and having no such general as should successfully deal with the Sikh chiefs, decided to, conciliate them. A deputation of the prominent persons of Lahore, then, waited upon Ahmad Shah Abdali and told him that Lehna Singh was good ruler and was sympathetic towards his subjects. He made no distinction between Hindus and Muslims. He bestowed turbans on the *qazis*, *muftis* and *imams* of the mosques on the festival of *id-ul-zuba*.<sup>79</sup> The Muslims of Lahore had no fear of the Khalsa, said the deputationists, and they had started looking upon them as their comrades rather than hostile enemies. This happy circumstance, said they, had made the Muslim leaders of Lahore recommend to Ahmad Shah the appointment of Sardar Lehna Singh, as their governor, in preference to a Muslim nominee of his. Ahmad Shah

wrote to Lehna Singh offering him the governorship of Lahore and sent him some dry fruit of Kabul. Lehna Singh declined the offer saying that to accept an offer from an invader was against the policy of his community and returned the fruit saying that it was not his food as he lived on parched grams.<sup>80</sup>

Ahmad Shah speedily returned to his country leaving the whole of the territory of the Punjab in the hands of the Sikhs. After Ahmad Shah's departure Gujjar Singh, Lehna Singh and Sobha Singh marched towards Lahore.<sup>81</sup> The nobles of Dadan Khan, the new governor of Lahore, told him plainly that the people were satisfied with the Sikh rule and they might open the city gates and admit the Sikh chiefs into the town. Dadan Khan, therefore, on the advice of his friends, met the Sikh Sardars who treated him with respect and consideration and granted him a daily allowance of twenty rupees and occupied Lahore.<sup>82</sup>

For the next thirty years the Bhangi and Kanaihya Sardars remained in possession of Lahore till 1797, when Shah Zaman, who had succeeded to the throne of Kabul, invaded the Punjab and Lehna Singh again retired from Lahore. On account of the goodness of his heart, the people of the town invited Lehna Singh to come and shoulder the administration of the place after the departure of the Shah. He came and died the same year.<sup>83</sup> Sobha Singh also died the same year and was succeeded by his son, Mohar Singh, while Chet Singh succeeded to Lehna Singh.

### **Gujjar Singh**

Much has been said about Gujjar Singh in the account of Lehna Singh. He was more successful and much more powerful than Lehna Singh or Sobha Singh. Independent of his above said comrades he first occupied Gujrat which was then held by Sultan Mukarrab, a Ghakhar chief. According to Ganesh Das Badehra, Mukarrab was besieged in the town of Gujrat. The fighting raged for a few days. Finding himself insecure in the fortress he came out and recruited a number of citizens of Gujrat in his farce. He, then, tried to escape to some safe place and planned to flee towards Pothohar. He had hardly covered a distance of half a *kos* from the town when he was surrounded by the Khalsa army. Sultan Mukarrab, riding an elephant, tried to cross a rivulet adjacent to the village of Gheduwal. When the elephant crossed over to the other side it was without its rider. Nothing was later heard about the Sultan<sup>84</sup> and in all probability he was washed away. It is said that the town of Gujrat was given to plunder and its inhabitants went away to different places as Jalalpur, Shadipur, Akhnur, etc. A few days later Gujjar Singh reached Gujrat and repopulated the town and since then he firmly established himself there. Charhat Singh Sukarchakia got the fort of Kunjah and the areas upto Miani. The town of Kunjah was given to Sardar Mal Singh and the areas of Kalra and Kuthala were assigned to Sardar Himmat Singh and similarly other Sikh leaders occupied some other territories there.<sup>85</sup> Gujjar Singh made Gujrat his capital and next year, i.e., in 1766, he marched to Jammu, which he overran and held tributary with Jhanda Singh Bhangi and then successfully reduced Punchh, Islamgarh, and Deva Batala.<sup>86</sup> In 1767, Ahmad Shah made his last invasion of India. Gujjar Singh was obliged to leave Gujrat. He went to Lahore and thence, as Ahmad Shah advanced to Firozpur, and on the Durrani chief's finally turning his back on the Punjab, he received back his part of the city of Lahore. According to Ganesh Das Badehra, during this invasion Ahmad Shah had occupied areas up to the villages of Daudpur, Patala, Sohian and the areas of Kunjah. Because of their incapacity to contend with the heavy hordes of Ahmed Shah the Sikhs desisted from confrontation. When Gujjar Singh and Charhat Singh were in the Majha area, Nawab Sarbuland Khan, a relative of Ahmad Shah, occupied Rohtas and launched upon a career of conquest. He took possession of Gujrat. Rehmat Khan Waraich, Chaudhari of the *pargana* of Herat, and the *qanungos* of Gujrat went to Rohtas obviously to make an appeal to

Sarbuland Khan to restore Gujrat and the adjoining areas to their Sikh masters. They were imprisoned and Chaudhari Rehmat Khan and Diwan Shiv Nath were done to death on the allegation that it was due to them that the Sikhs had occupied Gujrat.

In the meantime Charhat Singh and Gujjar Singh took a firm resolve that unless the Nawab of Rohtas was not driven out of his possessions they would not be able to set-up their principalities. In order to cement his relations with Gujjar Singh, Charhat Singh engaged his daughter with Gujjar Singh's son, Sahib Singh. Having thus concluded a matrimonial alliance, the two Sardars recrossed river Chenab with a view to fighting against the Nawab of Rohtas. The Nawab's forces, after some initial skirmishes with the Sikhs and defeat at their hands, took asylum in the fort of Rohtas. The Khalsa army besieged the fort and the inmates, including the Nawab, were made prisoners after about four months time. The fort of Rohtas was captured in 1770. The territories of Rohtas, Dhan Baloki, Ghebb and Mukhad fell to the lot of Charhat Singh and the *taluqas* of Wangal, Bharwal, Pindi Rawal and Khanpur, up to the boundary of river Attock, were annexed by Gujjar Singh. But Gujjar Singh gave Rawalpindi to Milkha Singh as a *jagir* and *tapa* of Narli and the fortress of Rutala were conferred upon his brother Chet Singh. Ran Singh Pidah was appointed *tapadar* in Sarai Kala and Jodh Singh Attariwala was made the *thanedar* of (the fort of) Kalar and a *tehsildar* or collector of Pothohar.<sup>87</sup>

For the defence of the holy city of Amritsar Gujjar Singh laid the foundation of Qila Gujjar Singh. Charhat Singh Sukarchakia also built a fort to the north of the Durbar Sahib, while that of Jassa Singh Ramgarhia lay to the east and that of the Bhangis to the south. Gujjar Singh married his eldest son, Sukha Singh, to the daughter of Bhag Singh Hallowalia. He married his second son, Sahib Singh, to a daughter of Charhat Singh.

Gujjar Singh divided his territories between his two elder sons, Sukha Singh and Sahib Singh and the youngest son, Fateh Singh, was left out. Sukha Singh and Sahib Singh quarrelled and fought<sup>88</sup> and the younger (Sahib Singh), at the instigation of Mahan Singh Sukarchakia, attacked his elder brother who was killed in the action. Gujjar Singh was much enraged when he heard of the death of his eldest son. He decided to dispossess Sahib Singh of all the territories under his charge. Sahib Singh openly revolted against his father and shut himself up in Islamgarh. But Gujjar Singh did not wish to proceed to extremities and forgave his son the moment he showed a disposition to sue for pardon. Sahib Singh was confirmed in his old possessions and Gujjar Singh made over those which had been held by Sukha Singh to his younger brother Fateh Singh.<sup>89</sup> Another cause of displeasure between Gujjar Singh and his son, Sahib Singh, cropped up. Mahan Singh Sukarchakia was besieging Rasulnagar, the capital of his enemies, the Chathas. A principal officer of the Chathas, escaping from the town, took shelter in Gujjar Singh's camp. Mahan Singh asked for his surrender which was refused. In order to oblige his brother-in-law, Sahib Singh banded over the demanded person to the Sukarchakia chief. Gujjar Singh felt very much annoyed with Sahib Singh's conduct. It so deeply preyed upon his mind that he fell ill. He retired to Lahore where he died in 1788.<sup>90</sup> His tomb is situated near the Samman Burj. He ruled his territory for twenty four years.<sup>91</sup>

### **Sahib Singh**

Despite the utter displeasure of his father, Sahib Singh took possession of the family estates without active opposition from his younger brother, Fateh Singh, who went to Gujranwala to live with Mahan Singh. For some time there was peace between the brothers-in-law, Mahan Singh and Sahib Singh. Shortly thereafter, Mahan Singh demanded *haq-i-bakmana* or succession money or tribute from Sahib Singh who refused to give any. The famous maxim that "kingship knows no

kinship” so aptly applied to the situation. To promote the interests of one's principality even close-blood relationship was disregarded. Sahib Singh was the husband of Mahan Singh's real sister. In 1789, they quarrelled and remained in constant hostility for some time. At last in 1790, Mahan Singh besieged Sahib Singh in the fort of Sodhra and reduced him to great straits.<sup>92</sup> Sahib Singh sought the help of Lehna Singh of Lahore and Karam Singh Dulu. Lehna Singh did not move but Karam Singh came with a large force. There was some fighting but the Sukarchakia chief was not keeping good health at this time. When Mahan Singh put Sahib Singh in a tight corner at Sodhra the former's sister (Raj Kaur), who was the latter's wife, came to see her brother and sue for peace. The meeting could not take place as due to ill-health Mahan Singh had fainted on the elephant outside Sodhra and the *mahabat* had turned back and carried his master to Gujranwala where he died three days later on the 5<sup>th</sup> Baisakh, 1847 BK., April 15, 1790.<sup>93</sup> He had deeply taken to mind the desertion of his old friend, Jodh Singh Wazirabadia.

In 1797, Shah Zaman invaded the Punjab and Sahib Singh was obliged to retire to the hills. The Shah remained only a few days in the Punjab and then returned to Afghanistan. According to Bute Shah the Shah left behind him an officer, named Ahmad Khan Shahanchi, with 8,000 Afghan troops. The Shahanchi forcibly took a Brahman woman to his *harem*. There was wide resentment against him. Sahib Singh came back to Gujrat and marched against the Shahanchi. Sahib Singh, in collaboration with Nihal Singh and Wazir Singh Attariwala, Jodh Singh Wazirabadia and Karam Singh Dulu, completely defeated the Afghan forces, killing the Shahanchi. The Sikhs plundered the Afghan camp and Sahib Singh gathered huge booty.<sup>94</sup>

Since Sahib Singh was very humble and docile by disposition the Sikhs addressed him as if he were an effeminate character. But as he emerged victorious against the Afghans twice he began to be treated as a manly and masculine character.<sup>90</sup>

Zaman Shah, the ruler of Kabul, again marched to the Punjab in the beginning of the winter of 1798, and reached Lahore on November 27. The chiefs of Lahore left the town before the Shah entered it. Every night Ranjit Singh visited, with a few *savars*, the suburbs of the city of Lahore and attacked the forces of the Shah at night with a view to harassing him.<sup>90</sup> According to Sohan Lal Suri,<sup>97</sup> Ranjit Singh, at this time, thrice rushed upon the Samman Burj of the Lahore fort with a few men, fired a number of shots, killed and wounded a number of Afghans, and on one occasion challenged the Shah himself to a hand to hand fight. “Come out you, o grandson of Ahmad Shah,” shouted Ranjit Singh to him, “and try two or three hands with the grandson of the great Sardar Charhat Singh.” But as there was no response from the other side Ranjit Singh had to retire without a trial of strength with the Durrani. At this time the Shah was receiving disquieting news from Qandhar and Herat. Under the circumstances he thought it proper to retire from the Punjab.

According to Ali-ud-Din Mufti, Zaman Shah left for Kabul after a month's stay at Lahore as Mahmud Shah, in collaboration with Baba Qachar, had attacked Kabul. Diplomatically enough, Ranjit Singh did not harass Zaman Shah on his return march rather facilitated his return so that he might not get annoyed with him and think of hitting back at him at the earliest opportunity. Since the Shah had to go back hurriedly 12 of his guns sank in river Jhelum, that was in spite because of rainy season. On the Shah's request Ranjit Singh extricated all the 12 guns from the river. He despatched 8 of them to Kabul and retained the four with him in his arsenal, one of which was of iron and three of brass.<sup>98</sup>

## **Bhangis lose Lahore**

Twenty six days after Zaman Shah's exit from Lahore, on January 4, 1799, the Bhangi Sardars re-entered it. The three rulers of Lahore were not functioning in collaboration with one another. Their mutual dissensions adversely affected the law and order situation in the city. The people were feeling insecure and unhappy about the condition created by their rulers. Finding the situation in Lahore fluid, Nawab Nizam-ud-Din of Kasur started toying with the idea of possessing it. But in view of Ranjit Singh's growing power the Nawab of Kasur was obliged to drop the idea of occupying Lahore. According to Ali-ud-Din Mufti some of the Arains of Lahore were imprisoned and deprived of their belongings by its rulers. They invited Nizam-ud-Din Khan to deliver them of the bondage. The Nawab got ready for Lahore but he shortly realised that it would not be possible for him to keep Lahore in his hands for long. So he did not dare to come." According to Munshi Sohan Lal Suri, the people of Lahore were suffering hardships under the mis rule of their chiefs.<sup>100</sup> The respectable people of Lahore including the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs met secretly and decided to address an invitation to Ranjit Singh to come to Lahore and arrange its occupation. Ranjit Singh accepted the invitation.<sup>101</sup> The letter of invitation sent to him was signed by Muhammad Ashaq, Gurbakhsh Singh, Hakim Rai, Mufti Muhammad Mukarram, Muhammad Bakkar, Mir Shadi and Mehr Mohkam Din. It was sent through Hakim Rai.<sup>102</sup>

Ranjit Singh started from Rasulnagar, reached Batala and discussed the matter of occupation of Lahore with his mother-in-law. Rani Sada Kaur.<sup>103</sup> She accompanied him to Lahore. They had, at their command, an army of about twenty five thousand horsemen and foot-soldiers. The people of Lahore had earlier promised Ranjit Singh to open the Lohari Gate at his arrival there. On the day Ranjit Singh reached Lahore, Lohari Gate could not be opened as it was strongly defended by Chet Singh. Ranjit Singh repaired to Wazir Khan's garden and Anarkali's mausoleum in the south of Lahore.<sup>104</sup> He was told by the people who had invited him that he should come to Lohari Gate early next morning.

The rulers of Lahore were not aware of the intentions or plans of Ranjit Singh. Sweets were sent to Ranjit Singh by Mohar Singh—one of the chiefs of Lahore.<sup>105</sup> In order to put them off their guard Ranjit Singh went to river Ravi in the evening and made arrangements for the boats to be available to him next morning.<sup>106</sup> He just wanted to give an impression that he was on his way to Gujranwala. Next morning, that is, on July 6, 1799,<sup>107</sup> he led his men to Lohari Gate which was opened unto him. He entered the city triumphantly. First, the victors repaired for the *haveli* of Lakhpatt Rai where Sardar Mohar Singh, son of Sardar Sobha Singh Kanaihya, was residing.<sup>108</sup> Mohar Singh fled from the *haveli* and concealed himself in the house of a hay-seller.<sup>109</sup> Ranjit Singh entered the Badshahi Masjid adjoining the fort. His army started plundering the city but as soon as he came to know of it he announced with the beat of drum that complete peace should be restored in the town and people's fears from his side should be put to rest and all the plunderers and robbers should keep their hands off the town.<sup>110</sup>

Mohar Singh was captured and produced before Ranjit Singh. He allowed him to proceed to his *jagirs* along with his goods.<sup>111</sup> Chet Singh Bhangi, who was in possession of the fort of Lahore, continued exchanging fire from within the fort with Ranjit Singh's men. On Sada Kaur's suggestion negotiations were conducted and Chet Singh was asked to vacate the fort. He was offered to be treated kindly and permitted to take all his movable property with him to his *jagir* at Vanyeki (in the *pargana* of Ajanala) where he could live in peace and comfort.<sup>112</sup> Chet Singh accepted the offer and evacuated the fort next morning, that is, on July 7, 1799 (29th of the month of Har, Samat 1856), and Ranjit Singh occupied the fort the same day.<sup>113</sup> Chet Singh held the annual *jagir* of 60,000 rupees in Vanyeki till his death in 1815. He left no son by any of his eight wives, but four months after his



death Hukam Kaur gave birth to a son, named Attar Singh, in favour of whom Ranjit Singh released an estate of 6,000 rupees at Vanyeki and the same was, afterwards, much reduced.<sup>114</sup>

Sahib Singh Bhangi was not in the town at the time of Ranjit Singh's attack and occupation of Lahore. None of the contemporary or semi-contemporary writers including Khushwaqat Rai, Bute Shah, Amar Nath, Sohan Lal Suri, Ali-ud-Din Mufti and Ganesh Das Badehra had made a mention of him. In Ranjit Singh's career the capture of Lahore was of the greatest significance and this possession made him the most powerful chieftain in northern India. Lahore had always been a provincial capital and it gave Ranjit Singh an edge over the other chiefs in the Punjab and enhanced his political prestige considerably at the cost of the Bhangis.

Sahib Singh's brother, Fateh Singh Bhangi, joined Ranjit Singh and the latter got from the former the possession of Fatehgarh and Sodhra. When Sahib Singh heard of the fall of Lahore, he moved with a large force against Ranjit Singh. The Ramgarhias and the Kasur troops marched from the east and the south to Bhasin but nothing came out of that assemblage of forces. Fateh Singh became reconciled to his brother Sahib Singh but this friendship did not last long. Fateh Singh favoured Raj Kaur, wife of Sahib Singh, who, disgusted at her husband's third marriage, held the fort of Jalalpur against him. Fateh Singh went back to Ranjit Singh who would not do any thing for him as he had left the Maharaja in the middle of a campaign. Fateh Singh remained at Lahore in poverty for an year and then he was compelled to return to his brother at Gujrat who gave him Daulatnagar and other estates.<sup>115</sup>

In the later part of his life Fateh Singh was given to excessive drinking which sapped his energy. He quarrelled with Nihal Singh Attariwala and his Diwan, Mohkam Chand, afterwards so celebrated a courtier of Ranjit Singh.

Bhangi Sardar Sahib Singh Gujrati and Dal Singh of Akalgarh started their preparations for an invasion of Lahore. Ranjit Singh got enraged and, accompanied by Sada Kaur, led ten thousand soldiers to Gujrat, in 1801. The Bhangis started firing from within the fort. Ranjit Singh had also carried 20 guns with him to Gujrat. Bhangis, finding themselves no match for Ranjit Singh, sued for peace through Baba Sahib Singh Bedi, and fighting was stopped.<sup>116</sup>

Although Sahib Singh accepted the overlordship of Ranjit Singh, he exercised great influence in his territories which had strong forts at Jalalpur, Manawar and Aslamgarh.<sup>117</sup> He had a lot of wealth and war material also. About 1809, he developed strained relations with his son, Gulab Singh,<sup>118</sup> who occupied a couple of forts against the wishes of his father. Ranjit Singh availed himself of this opportunity and, in the course of two or three months, he occupied the whole of Gujrat including the towns of Gujrat, Aslamgarh, Jalalpur, Manawar, Bajwat and Sodhra.<sup>119</sup> Sahib Singh escaped to the hilly areas,<sup>120</sup> and took refuge in Deva Batala.<sup>121</sup> In 1810, when Ranjit Singh was engaged in the siege of Multan, *Mai* Lachmi, mother of Sahib Singh, proceeded thither and interceded for her son with such effect that the *ilaqa* of Bajwat, with an annual income of one lakh rupees, was released in his favour.<sup>122</sup> This *jagir* was held by him till his death which took place in 1814. His mausoleum was built at Bajwat.<sup>123</sup> Sahib Singh ruled Gujrat for a period of twenty two years.<sup>124</sup> Ranjit Singh took two of Sahib Singh's widows, Daya Kaur and Rattan Kaur, into his *harem*, marrying them by the ceremony of *chadar pauna*, Daya Kaur was the mother of Princes Peshaura Singh and Kashmir Singh and Rattan Kaur was the mother of Multana Singh.<sup>125</sup> Faqir Aziz-ud-Din was appointed to look after the administration of Gujrai<sup>126</sup> and he was succeeded by Faqir Nur-ud-Din.

Fateh Singh Gujratia, after the death of his brother, went to Kapurthala where he remained in the service of the Ahluwalia chief<sup>127</sup> for two years till, on the death of his mother Mai Lachmi, he received a grant of Rangher and some other villages in the Amritsar district. He entered the service of Sham Singh Attariwala, in whose contingent he served for many years. He was killed in Bannu in 1832, during the siege of the fort of Malik Dilasah Khan. About the same time Sahib Singh's son, Gulab Singh, also died and his *jagirs* were resumed.<sup>128</sup> Fateh Singh's son, Jaimal Singh, was, for some time, in Sham Singh Attariwala's force and served on the frontier and at Peshawar. Through his enmity with Sham Singh he lost his *jagir*. When the British occupied the Punjab Jaimal Singh, was in great poverty. This representative of the great Bhangi house, which possessed more power and ruled over a larger territory than any other family between the Satluj and the Indus, lived without pension or estate.<sup>129</sup>

### Footnotes:

1. Ahmad Shah Batalia, Appendix to Sohan Lal Suri's *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*. Daftar I, Lahore, 1X85, p. 15; Bute Shahs *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, Daftar IV, (1848), (MS., Ganda Singh's personal collection. Patiala), p. 6; Kanaihya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, Lahore, 1877, p. 88; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol. I, (1854), Lahore, 1961, p. 244. Muhammad Latif, *History of the Punjab* (1891), Delhi, 1964, p. 296.
2. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 15; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
3. Kanaihya Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 89.
4. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 15; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 6; Kanaihya Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 89; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, pp. 244-45; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 298.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, p. 245; Kanaihya Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 89.
7. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash* (1841), Amritsar, 1939, p. 199; Kanaihya Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 89.
8. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 15; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
9. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 15; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, Calcutta, 1891, p. 296.
10. Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*. Lahore, 1865, pp. 385-86.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 385.
12. Muhammad Latif. *op. cit.*; p. 296.
13. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 15; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*
16. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
17. *Ibid.*
18. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 386; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, pp. 296-97; cf., Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 15; Bute Shah. *op. cit.*, pp. 7, 10; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 246.
19. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
20. *Ibid.*
21. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, (ed. 1964), pp. 296-97; Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Part II, reprint, Patiala, 1970, p. 227.
22. According to Bute Shah, Jhanda Singh was one of the illustrious followers of Hari Singh Bhangi. He was a Dhillon Jat of Majitha village. (*Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, IV, p. 10.)

23. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 16; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 7; Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs* (1849), Delhi, 1955, p. 103.
24. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 386; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 285; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, part II, p. 228.
25. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
26. Ahmed Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 7; cf., *Haqiqat-i-bina-o-uruj-i-firqa-i-Sikhan*, MS., PUP., p. 31; M'Gregor, *The History of the Sikhs*, I (1846), Allahabad reprint, 1979, p. 122.
27. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*; p. 386.
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid.*; p. 387.
30. *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, p. 387.
31. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 16; *Haqiqat-i-bina-o-uruj-i-firqa-i-Sikhan*, MS., PUP., p. 21; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, pp. 7, 11; Ganesh Das Badehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab* (1855), Amritsar, 1965, p. 132; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 248; M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 122-23; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 387, Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, ed. 1916, p. 86.
32. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 86.
33. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 387.
34. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 246; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 387.
35. *Ibid.*
36. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 247; cf., Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 16; M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, p. 123.
37. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, part II, p. 228.
38. Bute Shah, incorrectly believes that Jhanda Singh ruled for fifteen years (*op. cit.*, p. 14).
39. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 16; M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, p. 123.
40. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 16; cf., Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 14, 40; cf., Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 250; M'Gregor, *op. cit.*; I, pp. 123-24; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 338-39.
41. Bute Shah wrongly writes that Ganda Singh ruled for ten years, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 14.
42. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 14; Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 16; M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, p. 124; Bute Shah writes that Desu Singh was Ganda Singh's son and Charhat Singh was his nephew (Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 10).
43. Ahmad Shah Batalia, Appendix, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
44. *Ibid.*
45. *Tarikh-i-Ahmadi*, p. 19, cited by S.M. Latif, *History of the Punjab*, (1891), p. 299.
46. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 299.
47. *Ibid.*
48. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 15.
49. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 251.
50. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 15; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 389.
51. Ahmad Shah Batalia, Appendix, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
52. *Ibid.*
53. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 15; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 231.
54. *Ibid.*, Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 390; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 231.
55. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 16; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
56. Khushwaqat Rai, *Tawarikh-i-Sikhan* (1811), (MS., Dr Ganda Singh private collection, Patiala), pp. 82a-b; Bute Shah; *op. cit.*, IV, p. 16; Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 142; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 390. According to Ahmad Shah Batalia, Gulab Singh fell ill at Bhasin. He came back to Amritsar where he passed away (*op. cit.*, pp. 16-17); cf., Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 404.

57. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 16; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 390.
58. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 16.
59. *Ibid.*, Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 390.
60. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 16-17.
61. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 404; Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 146; Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, f. 142.
62. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 56-57. The date of occupation of Amritsar by Ranjit Singh has been given differently by different authors. According to Ali-ud-Din-Mufti, (*op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 404) and Ganesh Das Badehra (*op. cit.*, p. 146), Ranjit Singh conquered Amritsar in 1803, and according to Amar Nath, the occupation of Amritsar took place in 1802 (*Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, (1836), Lahore, 1928, p. 27). Though these three writers had the privilege of being Ranjit Singh's contemporaries their dates of the occupation of Amritsar do not seem to be correct. In this regard Sohan Lal Suri is accepted to be correct.
63. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 57; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 359.
64. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 17; cf., Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 207.
65. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 391; cf., Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
66. Bute Shah. *op. cit.*, p. 17.
67. *Ibid.*
68. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 85; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*; p. 19; Lepel Griffin and Muhammad Latif write Gujjar Singh to be the son of Gurbakhsh Singh's daughter.
69. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 391.
70. *Ibid.*, Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
71. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 18; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 255; Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, I, p. 165; Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 15., Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 300.
72. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*; I, p. 164; Mohammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 300.
73. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, p. 255; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
74. *Ibid.*, pp. 237-38; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 217.
75. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 18; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 300.
76. Lepel Griffin *op. cit.*, p. 392.
77. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, p. 239; Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 163-64; Mian Ahmed Yar Maulvi, *Shahnama-i-Ranjit Singh* (ed. Ganda Singh), Amritsar, 1951, p. 52.
78. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 239-40.
79. *Ibid.*, p. 240; cf., Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 85.
80. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 240.
81. *Ibid.*, pp. 240-41; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
82. *Ibid.*, cf., Sohan Lal Sun, *op. cit.*, I, p. 165.
83. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 18; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, ed. Lahore, 1916, p. 93.
84. Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, pp. 129-30.
85. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
86. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 394.
87. Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-31.
88. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
89. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 395.
90. *Ibid.*, p. 396; Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 133.
91. Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 133.
92. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 27; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 16.
93. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 28; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 17; cf., Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
94. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 20; Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, pp. 133-34.

95. Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 133.
96. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 39; Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 140.
97. *Ibid.*, cf., Bute Shah, IV, *op. cit.*, p. 22; Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 140.
98. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 397.
99. *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*; pp. 397-98.
100. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 40; cf., Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 22.
101. *Ibid.*
102. *Ibid.*, p. 41; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 23; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 349.
103. *Ibid.*; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 349; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 290.
104. *Ibid.*; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 290; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 350.
105. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
106. *Ibid.*
107. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
108. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 400.
109. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 42; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 400.
110. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 42-43.
111. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
112. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 43; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 19; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 350-51; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 291.
113. *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.
114. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 394.
115. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 397.
116. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 48-49; Ganesh Das, p. 163; Amar Nath, *Zafar-nama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 18.
117. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 95.
118. Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 152; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 21.
119. *Ibid.*, Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
120. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 100-01.
121. Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 152.
122. Ahmad Shad Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 17; Bate Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 21; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 398; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 306.
123. Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, pp. 168-69.
124. *Ibid.*
125. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 306.
126. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
127. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 306.
128. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 98.
129. *Ibid.*, cf., Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 306.

## Chapter 5

### THE RAMGARHIA MISAL

The founder of the Ramgarhia Misal was a Jat Sikh, named Khushal Singh<sup>1</sup>, of Guga village, near Amritsar. He received *pabul* (baptism) from the hands of Banda Singh. During the Sikh revolt against the Mughal tyranny he came into prominence through his daring adventures. Khushal Singh was succeeded by another Jat, Nand Singh, who belonged to village Sanghani, near Amritsar.<sup>2</sup> Under Nand Singh's command the band grew more powerful and they expanded their activities considerably. Nand Singh, after his death, was succeeded by a much more enterprising and a valiant man, named Jassa Singh, under whose stewardship the band assumed the status and the name of the Misal.

Hardas Singh, the grandfather of Jassa Singh, a carpenter by caste, was the resident of Sur Singh<sup>3</sup> which is situated about nineteen miles east of Khem Karan, in the present district of Amritsar. Hardas Singh was initiated into the Khalsa faith by Guru Gobind Singh himself from whose hands he took *pabul* and fought some battles from the Guru's side. When the Guru proceeded towards the Deccan Hardas Singh retired to his village. When Banda Singh organised the Sikhs to fight against the Mughals Hardas Singh joined his followers and participated in most of the battles fought by him. He died in the battle of Bajwara in A.D. 1715 (B.K. 1772).<sup>4</sup>

#### **Jassa Singh (1723-1803)**

Bhagwan Singh, the only son of Hardas Singh, was of a still more adventurous disposition. He had also mastered, the *Adi Granth*, the Sikh scripture, and was called *Gyani*. He shifted to village Ichhogil which lay about twelve miles east of Lahore.<sup>5</sup> He preached the Sikh faith in the neighbouring villages. He was an intrepid soldier. Bhagwan Singh had five sons, named. Jai Singh, Jassa Singh, Khushal Singh, Mali Singh and Tara Singh.<sup>6</sup> Bhagwan Singh, who was in the service of Adeena Beg Khan, commanded a contingent of one hundred horsemen. In 1739, during the invasion of Nadir Shah, Bhagwan Singh saved the life of the governor of Lahore at the cost of his own. To reward his brave deed the governor gave a village each to all of his five sons. The villages gifted were: Valla, Verka, Sultanwind, Tung and Chubhal.<sup>7</sup> Of these villages Valla came to the share of Jassa Singh.

In the battle fought between Nadir Shah and Zakariya Khan, at Wazirabad, Bhagwan Singh fought very bravely but lost his life. Jassa Singh and his two brothers Mali Singh and Tara Singh are also said to have fought against Nadir Shah.

Adeena Beg, the *faujdar* of Jalandhar Doab, was strengthening his position in the territory under his control, despite the rising power of the Sikhs. The Sikhs were determined to restrain Adeena Beg's power under all circumstances. As a conciliatory measure, the Sikhs sent Jassa Singh to Adeena Beg as their representative for negotiations. Adeena Beg was very much impressed by the sharp intelligence, winning eloquence and brave and manly bearing of Jassa Singh. He persuaded him to join his service as an officer.<sup>8</sup> He was appointed *tehsildar* of a sizeable territory.<sup>9</sup> He gained a lot of administrative experience while in the service of Adeena Beg.

A little later, Jassa Singh, along with his two brothers, Mali Singh and Tara Singh, joined the band of Nand Singh. He soon earned the distinction of being the most daring and fearless of the band. After Nand Singh's death he was acknowledged as the leader of the band.

After some time, Jassa Singh was again invited by Adeena Beg, *faujdar* of Jalandhar Doab, to join his service as an important officer which he did. Jassa Singh, along with his two brothers, fought on the side of Adeena Beg when the latter launched upon hostilities against Ahmad Shah Abdali. Jassa Singh's gallantry was so conspicuous that Adeena Beg gave him the command of his own troops.

### **Besieged Ram Rauni**

In October 1748, when the Sikhs assembled at Amritsar to celebrate Diwali, Adeena Beg was ordered by Muin-ul-Mulk, popularly known as Mir Mannu, the governor of Lahore, to march against them. The fort of Ram Rauni at Amritsar, where 500 Sikhs were staying, was besieged by Jassa Singh, accompanied by Adeena Beg and Aziz Khan. The siege lasted nearly for three months<sup>10</sup> and two hundred of the besieged Sikhs laid down their lives fighting against the besiegers. Since all supplies of foodstuffs, etc., from outside had been cut off and the inmates of the fort were pushed into the state of stark starvation, the Sikhs saw death staring them in the face.<sup>11</sup> Jassa Singh, who was fighting against the Sikhs from outside, was feeling very sore about the plight of his co-religionists inside the fort. The besieged Sikhs wrote a letter to Jassa Singh that if he joined them in their hour of difficulty he would be excused of his previous lapses and readmitted into the fold of Sikhism otherwise he would stand excommunicated for all time to come. Honouring the invitation from the Sikhs he joined the inmates of the fort of Ram Rauni.<sup>12</sup>

From within the fort Jassa Singh addressed a personal letter to Diwan Kaura Mal at Lahore, requesting him to save the lives of the besieged Sikhs. Kaura Mal, who was sympathetically disposed towards the Sikhs, prevailed upon Mir Mannu, the governor of Lahore, to order the withdrawal of the forces besieging Ram Rauni. Jassa Singh's appeal to Kaura Mal had the desired effect. The Punjab was, just at this time, threatened with an invasion of Ahmad Shah Durrani. Under Kaura Mal's advice, Muin-ul-Mulk agreed to lift the siege and grant the Sikhs a *jagir* to settle down as peaceful citizens.

Jassa Singh remained in the fort of Ram Rauni or Ramgarh for quite sometime. He repaired it after its destruction and his Misal took its name from the name of this fort. And he began to be called Jassa Singh Ramgarhia. It is amusing to note that the whole of the carpenter community began to call itself Ramgarhias which is a misnomer.

In due course of time, the relations between the Sikhs and Mir Mannu again got strained. Mir Mannu commissioned Adeena Beg and Sadiq Beg to attack Ramgarh and give a crushing blow to the Sikhs. Jassa Singh fought valiantly against his foes and finding further resistance to the Mughal forces extremely difficult he managed to escape to a place of safety. The fort was destroyed by the Mughals. Availing himself of the disorder caused in the Punjab after the death of Muin-ul-Mulk in 1753, Jassa Singh rebuilt the fort of Ramgarh.<sup>13</sup> It was again destroyed in 1757, now by Timur, the Durrani governor of Lahore. But after the expulsion of Timur in 1758, by the combined forces of the Sikhs, the Marathas and Adeena Beg, the fort was again rebuilt by Jassa Singh.

### **Territorial Acquisitions of Jassa Singh**

Jassa Singh actively participated in the battles against Jahan Khan of Lahore and Zain Khan of Sirhind. He joined the Sikhs in their incursion of Bharatpur. Accompanied by his brother Mali Singh, he launched upon a career of conquests in the Shivalik hills and the Majha areas. He placed under his control the *parganas* of Batala, Kalanaur, Mastiwal, Dasuha, Talwara Lakhpur, Sanguwala, Sharif Chak, Miani, Begowal, etc. These territories fetched him an annual income of seven lakh rupees.<sup>14</sup> Jassa Singh also subordinated Raja Ghumand Chand Katoch of Kangra and the Rajas of Haripur, Jaswan, Datarpur and many other petty hill chiefs that yielded him a revenue of two lakh rupees.<sup>15</sup> Jassa Singh entrusted Batala and its surrounding areas to his brother Mali Singh and Kalanaur and its adjoining territories to his other brother, Tara Singh. He himself would not confine himself to one place. He kept on visiting regularly the various places under the Misal's control.<sup>16</sup> If on a certain day he was at Rahilla, next day he would be at Batala and on the third day he would go to Meghowal. Most of their relatives lived at Meghowal where they had *pucca havelis*. He constructed a fort at Talwara on the bank of river Beas so that he could keep the hill chiefs under awe. He also realised one-fourth of the produce from the *zamindars* of Phagwara. His influence increased considerably. He had under his command ten thousand horsemen.<sup>17</sup> The Ramgarhias reduced Batala to submission in February-March 1763. All the *zamindars* of the *taaluqa* of Batala, including Saran Das of Jandiala, Dharam Das of Toli and Mirza Nur Muhammad of Qadian, accepted the overlordship of Jassa Singh and started paying revenue to him.<sup>18</sup> He had also captured Urmar Tanda, Yahyapur and some territories in the neighbourhood of Hoshiarpur. The new additions, referred to above, brought him an additional income of about ten lakh rupees. In due course of time, his possessions included almost the whole of Shivalik territories between the Ravi and the Beas and the territories of the Jalandhar Doab in the plains. Now Ramgarh could not serve as his ideal headquarters, so he made Sri Hargobindpur, near Batala, on the river Beas, his capital.<sup>19</sup> He built many forts at strategic places within his territories, and extended full protection to his subordinate principalities. For example, Chamba was protected against Ranjit Deo of Jammu. Jassa Singh established his reputation as one of the strongest chiefs of the Punjab.<sup>20</sup> He had been actively participating in all the Sikh incursions and displaying deeds of gallantry in all the battle-fields wherever he fought.

### **Differences with Kanaihyas**

The rising power of Jassa Singh Ramgarhia could not remain unchallenged even from his best friends. He had very friendly and cordial relations with Jai Singh Kanaihya. They had jointly led many expeditions against their enemies. Jassa Singh joined by his ally, Jai Singh, had subjected the territories, north of Amritsar, and those in the neighbourhood of Batala, to his rule. Jai Singh had also participated on the side of Jassa Singh in the protection and later reoccupation of the fort of Ramgarh, at Amritsar. They had also jointly attacked Kasur. Their relations remained smooth and unruffled till 1763. It is said that during their joint attack of Kasur they got huge amount of booty. Mali Singh, brother of Jassa Singh, was alleged to have concealed a valuable part of the booty against Jassa Singh's wishes. When this fact was discovered later the friendship between the Ramgarhia and Kanaihya chiefs came to an end.

It is said that Ghumand Chand Katoch, who was one of the subordinates of Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, once remarked that the Ramgarhia chief's influence in the hills was due to him. Jassa Singh told him that it was because of the grace of Lord and not because of him. He asked the Katoch chief to be careful in future, in respect of such remarks. Raja Ghumand Chand got enraged and decided to shed off the overlordship of Jassa Singh, by fighting against him. The Raja, who was defeated, solicited the help of Jai Singh Kanaihya by offering to pay the expenses. The Kanaihya chief gave assistance to the Katoch Raja. Jassa Singh defeated both of them and



plundered the *derahs* of Ghumand Chand and Jai Singh. From that day onwards, Jai Singh nursed a deep-seated hostility against Jassa Singh.<sup>21</sup>

When Jassa Singh happened to fight against Charhat Singh Sukarchakia the latter was defeated and his power was shattered. His *zamburks* and other goods were taken away as booty by the Ramgarhia chief. So, Ghumand Chand, Jai Singh and Charhat Singh turned hostile to Jassa Singh to the extent that they decided to completely crush his power and turn him out of the Punjab.<sup>22</sup>

In the meantime Ghumand Chand died and he was succeeded by his son Nek Chand. The allies, referred to above, jointly continued their hostilities for a period of four years with indecisive skirmishes between the contestants. This resulted in the loss of revenue accruing to Jassa Singh from the hill areas.<sup>23</sup> But the Ramgarhia chief's power remained unbroken. He stood the strain caused by the allies.

In 1774, Jai Singh Kanaihya occupied the fort of Kangra by a clever stratagem. This impaired the supremacy of Jassa Singh in the Shivalik hills. The widow of Nand Singh, a Bhangi Misaldar, gave away Pathankot as *jagir* to her son-in-law, Tara Singh, the brother of Hakikat Singh Kanaihya. Ganda Singh, Bhangi Sardar, asked the Kanaihyas to return him Pathankot which, he said, had been bestowed by his brother Jhanda Singh on Nand Singh. Kanaihyas refused to accept the proposal and, assisted by Jassa Singh, Ahluwalia, prepared for a battle. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia came to the help of Ganda Singh. The two armies met each other at Dinanagar. Ganda Singh fell ill in the course of fighting and died.<sup>24</sup> Jassa Singh also met with an accident though not seriously hurt. The Bhangis dispersed from the battle-field, and it served as a big blow to the prestige of the Ramgarhia chief also. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia's enmity with the Kanaihyas was now extended to that of the Ahluwalias also.

### **Relations with Ahluwalias**

Till 1766, the relations between the Ramgarhias and the Ahluwalias remained very cordial and friendly. They jointly fought against the internal enemies and foreign or external invaders. They had cooperated with each other against Ahmad Shah Abdali. In the battle-field of Dinanagar they found themselves arrayed in the opposite camps. The escalation of hostilities between the two resulted in their open warfare.

Jassa Singh Ramgarhia was wounded by a gun-shot fired by Jassa Singh Ahluwalia in the battle fought between the two at Zahura, on the river Beas. A little later, in 1775, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was passing near Gurdaspur on his way to Achal, a place of pilgrimage, or, as some say, he was hunting somewhere around Batala when he was attacked by Jassa Singh Ramgarhia's brothers—Khushal Singh, Mali Singh and Tara Singh. The troops of the Ahluwalia chief were dispersed and he was taken prisoner.<sup>26</sup> Since Ahluwalia Sardar was a very revered Sikh leader he was duly honoured by Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and released with rich gifts, including a robe of honour (*akhillat*) and a palanquin in which he was sent back.<sup>26</sup> As Lepel Griffin puts it, 'the old Sikh barons had much of the spirit of chivalry.' But Jassa Singh harboured a deep animosity against the Ramgarhias for the indignity suffered by him on account of his imprisonment at their hands.<sup>27</sup> He was not going to be appeased. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, whose followers called him *sultan-ul-qaum* (the Sikh king), felt deeply wounded in prestige and insulted in self-respect by the Ramgarhia youths. He swore an oath to seize all the possessions of the Ramgarhias and drive them out of the Punjab. Many chiefs came to Ahluwalia Sardar's aid. They included Ganda Singh and Jhanda Singh Bhangis

and Jai Singh and Hakikat Singh Kanaihyas who were the old friends of the Ramgarhias, Charhat Singh Sukarchakia, Nar Singh Chamariwala and many others.<sup>28</sup>

Gurbakhsh Singh, son of Jai Singh Kanaihya, attacked Dasuha and the adjoining areas on the other side of river Beas and occupied the same. Then, he attacked Batala, in 1780, which was under Jassa Singh's brother, Mali Singh. Mali Singh had been branded as a cruel man and had earned the displeasure of the people of the town. To the chagrin of Mali Singh, and relief of the people, Gurbakhsh Singh secured an easy entry into the town.<sup>29</sup> Raja Singh, Deva Singh and Mansa Dhari *qanungos* and Tara Singh Brahman, Kala and other *muqadams* and *zamindars*, by a joint decision, opened the gate of the fort.<sup>30</sup> Hakikat Singh Kanaihya forcibly snatched Kalanaur from Jassa Singh's brother, Tara Singh.<sup>31</sup>

Gradually, the Ramgarhias lost all their possessions, one by one, until not a village was left with them and were forced into exile in the territory of Malwa.<sup>32</sup> He had four thousand horse-men with him. Raja Amar Singh of Patiala gave away Hisar and Hansi to Jassa Singh as a *jagir*. His son, Jodh Singh, stayed with Amar Singh and the Ramgarhia chief crossed river Jamuna and realised revenue from the *parganas* of Sambhal, Chandausi, Kash Ganj, Khurja, Sikandra, Meerut, etc.<sup>33</sup> Zabita Khan, the Nawab of Meerut, paid a tribute of 10,000 rupees, a year, to save his territory from the occupation of Jassa Singh.<sup>34</sup> The Ramgarhia chief entered Delhi and plundered Mohalla Mughlan and some places were set on fire. He carried off four guns from the Mughal arsenal and many other things from there. The Mughal Emperor Shah Alam, in utter helplessness, sent message to Jassa Singh that he would gain nothing by burning down the city of Delhi and implored that he should not do it. The people of Delhi made an offering of five hundred rupees to him and escaped the ruination.<sup>35</sup> He remained in the cis-Satluj areas for nearly five years.<sup>36</sup>

It is said that one day a Brahman complained to Jassa Singh that the governor of Hisar had carried off his two daughters by force. Jassa Singh collected his men and marched against Hisar, recovered the girls and restored them to their father.<sup>37</sup>

At times, the Ramgarhia chief was reduced to great straits. There is a story which may be true as Lepel Griffin believes, that at Sirsa, a servant of the Sardar happening to drop his vessel down a well, a diver was sent to fetch it. He discovered at the bottom four boxes full of gold *moburs*, to the value of five lakhs of rupees enabling Jassa Singh to pay his troops and enlist new followers.<sup>38</sup>

In the year 1785, Mahan Singh came to Amritsar, on the occasion of Diwali. Most of the chiefs of the Misals, including Jai Singh Kanaihya, had assembled there.<sup>39</sup> Jai Singh was held in high esteem by all other Sardars of the Misals. Mahan Singh visited Jai Singh to pay his regards to him. In the course of the meeting Jai Singh, who was jealous of the growing power of the Sukarchakias, insulted Mahan Singh by his remarks, "Go away you *bhagtia* (dancing boy); I do not want to hear your sentimental talk." "This was too much to be borne in silence by so haughty and impervious a young chief as Mahan Singh was."<sup>40</sup> Jai Singh demanded a share from the booty which Mahan Singh had brought from Jammu.<sup>41</sup>

Mahan Singh felt highly enraged at the rude treatment meted out to him by the Kanaihya chief, but he was not in a position to proceed against him single-handed. Mahan Singh knew that without Jassa Singh Ramgarhia's help he could not have success against Jai Singh. Mahan Singh sent him a word that in case of his cooperation and support his former possessions would be restored.<sup>42</sup> Jassa Singh availed himself of the invitation from his exile into which he had been driven by Jai

Singh.<sup>43</sup> Sansar Chand Katoch, the ruler of Kangra, was called by Mahan Singh to join him. The three chiefs, with their combined forces, marched against the Kanaihyas. The battle was fought at Batala and Jai Singh's son Gurbakhsh Singh was killed<sup>44</sup> in the course of fighting and the Kanaihyas were routed, thus humbling the old Kanaihya chief. The Ramgarhia and the Katoch chiefs got back their territories already captured by the Kanaihyas. Jassa Singh occupied the *parganas* of Rahilla, Sri Hargobindpur, Kalanaur, Mastiwal, Wadyal, Dhoot and Hajipur, which fetched him an annual revenue of three lakh rupees.

According to Khushwaqat Rai, when all the possessions of Jai Singh Kanaihya had gone out of his hands he retained the occupation of the fort of Kangra.<sup>45</sup> Jassa Singh was of the opinion that with the fort of Kangra in his hands Jai Singh would again strengthen his possessions. So, in order to subdue him completely the Ramgarhia chief suggested to Sansar Chand, ruler of Kangra, that he (Jassa Singh), along with his allies, would harass Jai Singh, and on the other hand he, the Katoch chief, should get closer to the Kanaihya chief and get the fort of Kangra from him. That was the most opportune time for the same. The strategy worked and Jai Singh handed over the fort of Kangra to Sansar Chand. But soon after it Jai Singh engaged his son Gurbakhsh Singh's daughter to Ranjit Singh, son of Mahan Singh. Thus Jai Singh won over to him Sansar Chand and Mahan Singh.<sup>46</sup>

Shortly thereafter, the towns of Batala and Kalanaur went out of the hands of the Ramgarhias. Due to the oppressive rule of the Ramgarhias the Bhandaris, Khatri of Batala, joined Sada Kaur, the widow of Gurbakhsh Singh Kanaihya. They made an opening in the outer wall of the town and admitted the Kanaihyas into it. For two or three days the Ramgarhia contingent remained entrapped in the *haveli* of Dasondhi Mal, inside the fort. When they lost all hope of reinforcement from outside they escaped from the fort and joined Jassa Singh who had gone to subdue Haqiqat Singh's son, Jaimal Singh.<sup>47</sup>

Jassa Singh's last and most severe struggle with the Kanaihyas took place in 1796. Sada Kaur, widow of Gurbakhsh Singh Kanaihya, was, then, heading the Misal. With all her own forces and those of her young son-in-law, Ranjit Singh, she besieged the Ramgarhia chief in the Miani fort, in the Hoshiarpur district, near river Beas. Jassa Singh defended himself for some time but his provisions ran short and he sent a messenger to Sahib Singh Bedi at Amritsar, requesting him to interpose between him and his opponents. Sahib Singh sent a word to Sada Kaur and Ranjit Singh asking them to raise the siege of Miani. But Sada Kaur was intent upon taking revenge for her husband's death. So, she took no notice of Sahib Singh's advice. Again, Jassa Singh sent a messenger, and Sahib Singh said, "they will not mind me; but God Himself will aid you." The messenger returned to Miani and that very night river Beas came down in flood and swept a large portion of the Kanaihya camp, men, horses and camels. Sada Kaur and Ranjit Singh escaped with difficulty and retired to Gujranwala.<sup>48</sup>

After Ranjit Singh occupied Lahore, many chiefs of the Sikh Misals and others became apprehensive of his rising power. They joined hands to restrain Ranjit Singh from his policy of territorial aggrandisement. After the festival of *boli*, in 1800, Sahib Singh of Gujrat, Gulab Singh Bhangi, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and Nizam-ud-Din of Kasur assembled their forces at the village of Bhasin, about 9 *kos* on the east of Lahore.<sup>49</sup> Ranjit Singh came from Lahore. Both sides arrayed themselves in the battle-field and no action took place between the contending forces for two months.<sup>50</sup> Gulab Singh Bhangi drank himself to death.<sup>51</sup> The leaders of the confederacy dispersed

without achieving anything. During the next couple of years the Ramgarhia chief lived at Sri Hargobindpur. He continued having friendly relations with the Bhangis till his death.<sup>52</sup>

Jassa Singh died on April 20, 1803, at the ripe age of 80, after having led his band and later his Misal for 60 years.<sup>53</sup> No recorded contemporary evidence is available about Jassa Singh's date of birth. But the contemporary records are unanimous about his death in 1803, at the age of 80. From this, it can be deduced that he was born in 1723.

According to Khushwaqat Rai, Jassa Singh possessed winning manners. He was bounteous to the strangers as well as his officials who sought his protection even after committing crimes. He helped the needy even at heavy costs to him. He provided asylum to the strangers even for years together. Nawab Bhambu Khan, grandson of Najib-ud-Daulah, the dictator of Delhi (1761-70), after having been charged with a murder, took protection under Jassa Singh who bestowed upon him the needed care. The position and honour due to the Nawab, on the basis of his earlier status, were maintained. The Sikhs told the Ramgarhia chief that Bhambu Khan was a robber in the eyes of the Emperor of Delhi, therefore, he should not be given an asylum. The Sardar told them that they were also considered robbers by the Delhi rulers. This country had not been under the Mughal rulers for ever. Once a Brahman, named Lal Singh, earning the displeasure of Ranjit Singh, sought asylum with Jassa Singh. Ranjit Singh expressly demanded the restoration of the Brahman to him but he was not repatriated though the Ramgarhia chief had to face hostilities from the Sukarchakia ruler.

Khushwaqat Rai further writes that in the event of fighting, with his small numbers against the heavy odds of the enemies he would display extraordinary bravery and intrepidity. He would jump into the battle-field amidst booming guns, totally indifferent and insensitive to the grave hazards to his life.<sup>54</sup> Out of deep regards Jassa Singh was addressed by his followers as 'Baba ji'. At times, his generosity and magnanimity knew no bounds. He was a staunch Sikh and was always ready to lay down his life for the cause of Sikhism. During Abroad Shah's invasions of the Punjab Jassa Singh always fought in the front ranks against the foreign invader.

### **Jodh Singh (1803-1815)**

Jassa Singh Ramgarhia had two sons, Jodh Singh and Bir Singh. Jodh Singh succeeded to his father after his death. He contracted friendship with Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra with whose help he occupied *parganas* of Batala, Bhunga, Hoshiarpur and the surrounding areas.<sup>55</sup>

When Maharaja Ranjit Singh demanded the *zamzama* gun from Mai Sukhan, the widow of Gulab Singh Bhangi, in 1805, she gave a flat refusal to hand over the gun and prepared to fight against the Maharaja. Jodh Singh sent a secret reinforcement of three hundred soldiers to Sukhan. At the same time he advised her either to hand over the bone of contention—the *zamzama* gun, to Ranjit Singh or destroy the gun. She did not accept either of the suggestions. The Maharaja, accompanied by his allies, Sada Kaur and Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, besieged Amritsar. When the opposing forces were at the point of severely clashing, Jodh Singh and Akali Phula Singh intervened and persuaded Sukhan to surrender. Thus, they were able to avert the bloodshed.<sup>56</sup> Mai Sukhan and Gurdit Singh accepted the hospitality of Jodh Singh and stayed with him for some time.<sup>57</sup> In earlier stages, Jodh Singh was very friendly towards Sansar Chand Katoch but later their relations got strained due to the former's inability to help the latter against the Gurkhas.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh felt that unless Ramgarhias were befriended he could not occupy the whole of the Punjab. So, with this thing in view, Ranjit Singh wrote a letter to Jodh Singh, soliciting his friendship and cooperation. After the things were settled the Maharaja sent Hishan Singh Munshi, Mehar Singh Lamba and Patch Singh Kalianwala to conduct Jodh Singh to Lahore. Jodh Singh told them that he would join Maharaja Ranjit Singh on the acceptance of two conditions. First, that Batala, Kalanaur, Bajwara, and Sangowal which previously belonged to them and, of late, were in the hands of their opponents, should be restored to them. Second, Gurdit Singh Bhangi, who was lying at his door, should be provided with a *jagir* for his subsistence. The Maharaja accepted both the conditions. Jodh Singh, accompanied by his close associates, came to Amritsar and met Ranjit Singh at Harmandir Sahib and he was duly honoured by the latter.<sup>58</sup>

The demanded territories were restored to Jodh Singh and Panjore and five or six villages were given in *jagir* to Mai Sukhan and her son, Gurdit Singh.<sup>59</sup> Jodh Singh was very much known for his magnanimity of heart and lavish generosity. Any defeated chief or impoverished person could go to him and enjoy his hospitality. He always sympathised with those on whom the fortunes frowned. In his Misal, he had introduced strict discipline and anybody found guilty of theft or any other crime was strictly dealt with. He would never sell justice but administer it with utmost honesty.<sup>80</sup> He was very keen to give neat and clean administration to his people and there was nothing nearer his heart than the welfare of his subjects.

Jodh Singh participated in the battle of Kasur on the side of Ranjit Singh. After the occupation of Kasur the Maharaja gifted an elephant to the Ramgarhia chief. Later Jodh Singh always sided with Ranjit Singh in his expeditions against Multan and his other adversaries.<sup>61</sup>

Maharaja Ranjit Singh gave away in *jagir* the *pargana* of Ghuman to Jodh Singh. It gave an annual revenue of twenty five thousand rupees. Formerly, this area belonged to the Ramgarhias and at that time it was in the bands of Gulab Singh Bhangi.<sup>62</sup>

In 1811, Ranjit Singh gave to Jodh Singh eleven villages from the *pargana* of Sikhowala (Sikhowala, according to Khushwaqat Rai, and Sheikhpura, according to Gian Singh) which was in the possession of the sons of Fateh Singh Kanaihya, which fetched an annual revenue of twelve thousand rupees.<sup>63</sup> Of all the Sikh Sardars the Maharaja had the greatest regards for Jodh Singh Ramgarhia and addressed him as 'Baba Ji.' When he came to see Maharaja Ranjit Singh the latter would go out a few steps to receive him and seated him by his side." Jodh Singh, mostly, lived at Lahore or Amritsar and he always mobilised his forces according to the instructions of the Maharaja.<sup>65</sup> Because of his unstinted loyalty to the Maharaja the Ramgarhia chief retained his possessions intact till his death on August 23, 1815. He remained hostile to the Ahluwalias and Rani Sada Kaur.<sup>66</sup>

### **Jodh Singh's Successors**

After Jodh Singh's death, the members of his family began to quarrel for the division of the Misal's possessions. Diwan Singh (son of Tara Singh), cousin brother of Jodh Singh, Vir Singh (brother of Jodh Singh) and widow of Jodh Singh were all claimants to the principality. Maharaja Ranjit Singh, hearing of their dispute, called the three claimants: Vir Singh, Diwan Singh and Mehtab Singh (son of Khushal Singh and cousin brother of Jodh Singh) to him at Nadaun, with a view to settling their dispute by arbitration. The Maharaja received them with courtesy but they misbehaved towards one another so rudely that Ranjit Singh was obliged to keep them in detention.<sup>67</sup> Then, the Maharaja marched on Amritsar and after some fighting took the fort of

Ramgarh. He seized all the Ramgarhia *jagirs* and, in a short time, reduced all their forts, upwards of a hundred and fifty in number. They contained abundant provisions in them. Almost all of them were pulled down.<sup>68</sup>

On the intercession of Sardar Chanda Singh Kanaihya the Ramgarhia Sardars were released from the jail and an annual *jagir* of 35,000 rupees was granted to them. Diwan Singh refused to accept his share. He fled to Patiala where he was well received. He also left that place and moved about for some time. Maharaja Ranjit Singh sent a word to Diwan Singh, through Desa Singh Majithia, assuring him the grant of a big *jagir*. He was respect fully received by the Maharaja at Lahore and was given command of 700 men in the expedition then setting out for Kashmir. There, he remained in charge of Baramula, a difficult hill post, till his death in 1834.<sup>69</sup> The widows of Jodh Singh were given *jagirs* of four villages for their maintenance. Vir Singh was given Dharmkot Randhawa in *jagir*. These were service-free *jagirs*.<sup>70</sup> Vir Singh had died six years earlier, in 1828, when two-third of his *jagirs* were resumed by the Maharaja.<sup>71</sup>

After Diwan Singh's death his son Mangal Singh, who was born in 1800, succeeded to his father's estate. During his younger days he served Ranjit Singh on his personal staff. The Maharaja gave him *jagirs* in Dharmkot, Kalowala, Tibrah and Kundilah worth 9,000 rupees of which 3,600 rupees were personal, and 5,400 rupees for service.<sup>72</sup>

After his father's death Mangal Singh was sent to Peshawar in a command of 400 foot and 110 *smars*. There, he did commendable service under Hari Singh Nalwa and Tej Singh and fought in the famous battle of Jamrud in April 1837, where the brave Hari Singh Nalwa laid down his life.<sup>73</sup>

In 1839, Mangal Singh was recalled and sent to the hill territories between the Beas and the Satluj under orders of Lehna Singh Majithia and during the absence of that chief at Peshawar he was placed in charge of the hill forts, and was active in the suppression of the insurrection of 1840.<sup>74</sup> During the reign of Maharaja Sher Singh he was employed under Lehna Singh in Suket, Mandi and Kulu and he remained there till the close of the Satluj Anglo-Sikh war in 1846. During the second Sikh war, Mangal Singh remained loyal to the British and served them in guarding the roads and maintaining order in the Amritsar and Gurdaspur districts. Later, he worked as a manager of the affairs of Harmandir Sahib, Amritsar.

Mangal Singh was a man of education and liberal ideas. It was mostly owing to his influence that the cause of female education was systematically taken up in Amritsar.<sup>75</sup> Mangal Singh's two sons, Gurdit Singh and Mitt Singh, served the British government in the police and civil departments respectively.

#### Footnotes:

1. Ahmad Shah Batalia, Appendix, Sohan Lal Suri's *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Lahore, 1885, p. 18; Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, (1891), Delhi, 1964, p. 306. According to M'Gregor Khushal Singh belonged to Guga village (*A History of the Sikhs*, I, (1846), Allahabad reprint, 1979, p. 130. According to Ahmad Shah, Khushal Singh belonged to Kukarpur (p. 18).
2. *Ibid.*, M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, p. 130.
3. Lepel Griffin, *Punjab Chiefs*, Lahore, 1865, p. 170; Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Part II, reprint, Patiala, 1970, pp. 233-34; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 306.

4. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*; II, p. 334.
5. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama* (1854), Vol. 1, Lahore, 1961, p. 304; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 171; Kanaihya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, Lahore, 1877. p. 91.
6. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 171; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 234. According to some writers Bhagwan Singh had three or four sons. See Bute Shah *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, IV, Dr. Ganda Singh's private collection, Patiala, p. 55. Ahmad Shah Batalia names three sons. He excludes Jai Singh and Khushal Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 18. It is probable that only three or four of them actively participated in the Sikh movement.
7. Gian Singh, *op. cit.* II, p. 234; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, IV, Delhi, 1982, p. 276.
8. Kanaihya Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 94; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, II, p. 234; cf., Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 18; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 304.
9. Kanaihya Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 94; Suraj Singh and Darbara Singh, *Ithas Ramgarhian*. Vol. I, Lahore, 1915, p. 411.
10. Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Sikhan* (1811), MS., Dr Ganda Singh, private collection, Patiala, p. 72; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 55.
11. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 304-05; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, n, pp. 163, 234.
12. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 72; Bute Stiah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 55. The Sikh writers believe that Jassa Singh's conscience smote him for having deserted his brethren. He decided to rejoin them. A message was sent in the fort by him, requesting his comrades-in-faith to forgive him and to have him back. They welcomed him with open arms and he came in with a hundred followers. (Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash* (1841), Amritsar, 1939, pp. 311-15; Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Bombay, 1950, p. 139; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, II, p. 163).
13. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 72, Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 56.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73; Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 19; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 56; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 305; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, II, p. 235.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 73; Bute Shah. *op. cit.*, IV, p. 56; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 235.
16. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 19; M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, p. 134; cf., Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, II. p. 235; Muhammad Latif. *op. cit.*, p. 308.
17. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 73; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 56.
18. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
19. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, II. 235.
20. *Ibid.*
21. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 73; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*; IV, pp; 56-57.
22. *Ibid.*, Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 57.
23. *Ibid.*
24. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 16; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 14; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*; Vol. I, p. 250.
25. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 172; Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*; p. 27.
26. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 73; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 56.
27. *Ibid.*
28. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 172; cf., Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
29. Ahmad Shah Bataila, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
31. *Ibid.*
32. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 74; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV. p. 58; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 308.
33. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 74; Bute Shah *op. cit.*, IV, p. 58.
34. *Ibid.*, Lepel Gaiffin, *op. cit.*, p. 172; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, 11, p. 237.

35. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 74; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*; IV, p. 58; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, II, p. 237.
36. *Ibid.*, Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, II, p. 237.
37. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-73; cf., Gian Singh. *op. cit.*, II, p. 236.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 173; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*; II, pp. 236-37; Suraj Singh and Darbara Singh, *op. cit.*, p; 423-24.
39. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 21.
40. Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, New Delhi, reprint 1964. p. 343.
41. Bute Shah. *op. cit.*, V, p. 10.
42. *Ibid.*, IV, p. 59; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, p. 307; cf., Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
43. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 22; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 11-12.
44. *Ibid.*, Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 308; Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 20; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 308.
45. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 75; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 60.
46. *Ibid.*
47. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 20; Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 76.
48. Ahmad Shah Batalia. Appendix, *op. cit.*, p. 20; M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I. pp. 135-36; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 308-09; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.* pp. 173-74; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, II, p. 238.
49. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 76; Amar Nath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh* (1836), Lahore, 1928, p. 11; Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 46.
50. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 139; Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 140; Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 46; Ganesh Das Bادهرا, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab* (1855), Amritsar, 1965, p. 142.
52. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 76; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV. p. 56.
53. *Ibid.*
54. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 76.
55. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 77; Bute Shah. *op. cit.*, IV, p. 61.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 142; Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 146; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 404.
57. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 17.
58. *Ibid.*, pp. 78-91; cf., Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
59. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 57.
60. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 62-63.
61. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 79; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 62.
62. *Ibid.*, Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, II, p. 240.
63. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 79; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 62; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 240.
64. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 79; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 62; *Ibid.*, p. 240.
65. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 21; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 62.
66. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 63.
67. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, 174; cf., Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 21; M'Gregor *op. cit.*, I, p. 136; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 240; cf., Bute Shah, IV, p. 63; cf., Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, p. 404.
68. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 21, M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 136-37; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 309.
69. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 175; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 240; cf., Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 21; M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, p. 137.
70. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 310.
71. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
72. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*; p. 175; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 240-41.
73. *Ibid.*
74. *Ibid.*
75. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-76.



## Chapter 6

### FAIZULLAPURIA OR SINGHPURIA MISAL

#### Kapur Singh

Kapur Singh, the founder of this Misal, was the son of Chaudhary Dalip Singh Virk, Jat, of Faizullapur,<sup>1</sup> situated near Amritsar. He was born in A.D. 1697 (BK. 1754)<sup>2</sup>, two years before the foundation of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh. Because of his inability to pay the government revenue all his domestic articles were sold away by the government officials to make good the amount due from him.<sup>3</sup> In utter penury he left his place. He collected some followers, equipped them with horses and weapons, and launched upon a career of chivalry, fighting against the Mughal government that was harassing the Sikhs. Kapur Singh was fired with the enthusiasm of a crusader. He had strong conviction in the ultimate success of the Khalsa. He was always full of optimism that was unsurpassed. He always entertained high aims and made plans to achieve them. Of the two men referred to in the following maxim he belonged to the second category. 'Two men looked through prison bars, one saw the mud, the other stars.' He attacked Faizullapur, killed its chief, Faizulla, and occupied the place and its surrounding areas.<sup>4</sup> He changed the name of Faizullapur to Singhpur and the Misal which took its name from the village also began to be called Singhpuria Misal.<sup>5</sup> The revenue of the area was used by Kapur Singh for equipping his men with horses and weapons.

Kapur Singh is also said to have been with the companions of Banda Singh in his early life. Because of his intrepidity and bravery some of the Sikhs took him as their Sardar.<sup>6</sup> He was a tall and stoutly built man and always seemed full of life, dynamism and dash. He possessed sharp intellect, penetrating shrewdness and power of quick grasp. He had learnt the use of weapons as sword, spear, arrow and gun and had become an expert in horse-riding from his early days. In his free time he indulged in sham fights, in which once, by an accident, he got a stroke of a companion's sword on his shoulder. He was so seriously wounded that it seemed that he would not survive the wound. But ultimately he recovered from the injury after a long time and resumed his activities.<sup>7</sup> Kapur Singh took baptism of the double-edged sword from Bhai Mani Singh in 1721, at Amritsar.<sup>8</sup>

Zakariya Khan succeeded his father, Samad Khan, to the governorship of the Punjab in 1726, and continued in that office till 1745. From 1726 to 1732, the young governor spared no pains in inflicting the heaviest punishments on the Sikhs. When Tara Singh of village Van was killed in 1726, along with his 22 companions, by a contingent of 2200 horsemen, sent from Lahore by Zakariya Khan, the Sikhs all over the central Punjab got stirred up. They accepted the challenge of the new governor. They vowed to wreak their vengeance on the government. Kapur Singh, who was very much exercised over the tragedy, came to Amritsar, accompanied by many youngmen, and joined the *jatha* of Diwan Darbara Singh. In the following years he distinguished himself as a brave, sagacious and prudent man. He led the Sikhs on many occasions into dangerous situations and his success established him as an able organizer and a successful and competent leader. The Sikhs under Kapur Singh waylaid and looted the revenue money taken from the *pargana* headquarters to the provincial treasury at Lahore. The state machinery sometimes found itself helpless against the activities of the Sikhs and at times there were serious confrontations between the state contingents and the Sikhs resulting in heavy human losses.

The persecution by the state and the revenge by the Sikhs continued for some years until the government found this method of dealing with them as ineffective. Then, the government tried to placate them. In 1733, Zakariya Khan, the governor of Punjab, gave a suggestion to the Delhi government for a grant and a title for the Sikhs. The proposal was endorsed by the central government. Subeg Singh, a government contractor (according to some a Persian-knowing clerk in a government office at Lahore), was deputed by Zakariya Khan to negotiate with the Sikhs. He met the Sikhs assembled a Akal Takht and offered them the title of 'Nawab' on behalf of the government, along with a *jagir*, comprising the *parganas* of Dipalpur, Kanganwal and Jhabal of which the total annual income was about a hundred thousand rupees.<sup>9</sup> The immediate reaction of the Khalsa was that of rejection but on further consideration they accepted it. The offer was made to Diwan Darbara Singh, a prominent leader, but he declined the offer saying, "What is the *Nawabship* to us who have been promised a kingdom by the Guru? The word of the Guru must be fulfilled. The Khalsa, meant to rule independently cannot accept a subordinate position."<sup>10</sup> The offer was rejected by some other Sikhs also. Then, the *Nawabship* was decided to be conferred upon some one noted for service. Kapur Singh Faizullapuria, who was then waving a big fan over the assembly, was selected for the honour. He accepted it only after it had been sanctified by the touch of the feet of five members of the Khalsa in 1733.<sup>11</sup>

The *khillat* presented by the envoy comprised three pieces, a *dastar* or turban, a *jama* or gown and a *patka* or girdle. The envoy also handed over the letter granting the *jagir* and the title. Thus, Kapur Singh became a Nawab as well as a *jagirdar* on the condition that he would never be called upon to attend the court either at the capital or in camp.

Nawab Kapur Singh was placed in charge of the *langar*, general stores and stables of the horses. It was really a difficult job to feed thousands of men and horses but he acquitted himself of his duties wonderfully well. Darbara Singh looked after the order and discipline among the Sikhs. After Darbara Singh's death in 1734, the whole burden and responsibility devolved upon the shoulders of Kapur Singh. According to Rattan Singh Bhangu 'after the: conferment of Nawabship on Kapur Singh, he began to be revered by the Sikhs as a spiritual leader.'<sup>12</sup> Kapur Singh began to be honoured by the Muslims also. The revenue of his *jagir* was collected by them and deposited with him.<sup>13</sup>

The agreement with government gave a little breathing time to the Sikhs who again began to live in their homes. But it was a short-lived peace. Zakariya Khan suggested to Nawab Kapur Singh that the government was willing to enlist the young Sikhs in the imperial army. The proposal was rejected. The government expected of the Sikhs to beat their swords into ploughshares and live as peaceful and law abiding citizens. The governor suggested that the government would remit full revenues if they settled as peaceful agriculturists. Kapur Singh did not give any assurance as they were not of such pliable stuff.<sup>14</sup> Shortly, thereafter, they again went out of government's favour. The government confiscated the *jagir* in 1735, and the hostilities, between the two, were resumed and the Sikhs were declared outlawed. They secretly moved about in small groups. In 1734, Kapur Singh divided the disintegrated fabric of the Sikhs into two *dais* (groups).

The word *dal* is a Punjabi expression meaning a horde and suggests the notion of a group with a definite mission or objective before it. One group was named *Budha Dal*, the League of the Elders, which comprised men above the age of forty and the other was named *Taruna Dal*, the League of the Young, which consisted of the young Sikhs below forty. The *Budha Dal* was assigned the duty of looking after the Sikh holy places and the propagation of the Sikh faith. The *Taruna Dal*

was to undertake the more difficult task of the defence of the community. Though Kapur Singh was in charge of the first section, but because of his respectful position amongst the Sikhs, he acted as a common link between the two *dais*, that were organised under the leadership of the seasoned Sikh soldiers of the days of Banda Singh.<sup>15</sup> Some of them had seen the days of Guru Gobind Singh. Later, Kapur Singh reorganised the *Taruna Dal* into five sections, each led by a separate *jathedar* (group leader). Gradually the number of the *jathas* (groups) rose. As ambitious and spirited youngmen formed their separate *jathas* they were welcomed by the leading Sardars who encouraged them to carry on a guerrilla warfare against the government. The *dais* served a very useful purpose of providing a number of leaders.<sup>16</sup>

Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was introduced to Kapur Singh at an early date. In the words of Muhammad Latif, "When Kapur Singh went to Bagh Singh's house he was greatly pleased at seeing the latter's widowed sister playing on the *rubab* with her long loose hair dishevelled, singing ballads in adoration of the Guru, her beautiful little son, Jassa Singh, playing by her side. Kapur Singh blessed her for devotion to the faith, and asked her to give him the little boy, whose gestures gave promise of a brilliant future. The mother, according to the wishes of the Sikh chief, gave him charge of the boy, and from that moment Kapur Singh treated Jassa Singh as his own son."<sup>17</sup> Under Kapur Singh's guidance Jassa Singh rose to be the leader of the Sikh community.

With the conferment of a *jagir* on the Sikhs it was not believed that the peace between the government and Sikhs would last very long. The Sikhs could not remain satisfied, for all time to come, with a small *jagir* granted to them by Zakariya Khan. And at the same time the government could not be a passive spectator to the rapidly growing power and the number of the Sikhs. Under the orders of Zakariya Khan and under the pretext that the Sikhs had violated the promise of remaining peaceful, the government contingent occupied the *jagir* just before the harvest of 1735.

Under the command of Kapur Singh, the *Budha Dal* moved away to Malwa and encamped at Thikri village. There, Kapur Singh was received with a warm welcome by Ala Singh, who took baptism at his hands.<sup>18</sup> In memory of the performance of the ceremony of *amrit* at the Thikri village a well was dug there. "He (Kapur Singh) converted a large number of people, Jats, carpenters, weavers, *jhivars*, *chhafris* and others to the persuasion of Gobind, and the religious respect in which he was held was so great, that initiation into the *pahul* of the Guru with his hands was considered a great distinction."<sup>19</sup> Jai Singh Kanaibya<sup>20</sup> and Jassa Singh Ahluwalia<sup>21</sup> also took *pahul* at the hands of Kapur Singh. The Sikhs used to pride themselves on having been baptised by such a revered and undisputed leader of the Sikh community as Kapur Singh was.

Kapur Singh led the community through very difficult times. The Sikhs faced heroically the oppressive rule of the Lahore government and their all-out campaign to destroy the Sikh community, root and branch, and they met bravely a chain of foreign invasions under Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali. Kapur Singh led the community from one success to another till the Sikhs became a force to be reckoned with.

But the Sikhs suffered immensely during Zakariya Khan's period. Zakariya Khan, knowing full well the veneration in which the Sikhs held their hair, ordered that their hair and beards be removed. This order drove the Sikhs, in thousands, into the forests and the hills.<sup>22</sup> Zakariya Khan sent out moving columns in all directions to hunt them out,<sup>23</sup> and the punitive parties combed the villages and forests and daily brought batches of Sikhs in chains who were publicly beheaded at Lahore at the *nakhas* (horse market), now called the Shahidganj. The whole machinery of the

government, including *muqadams*, *chaudharis* and the non-official *zamindars*, was set into motion to see that the Sikhs found no shelter within their areas. Under the inspiring guidance of Kapur Singh, “High moral values, service, discipline and sacrifice” were the ever guiding mottos of the Sikhs. To them their earthly belongings and bodies were not their own but belonged to the Guru who had merged his personality into the Khalsa. They believed that sacrifice made in the cause of the *Panth* would place them in the lap of their Guru. We do not find any instance in Sikh history where a captured Sikh gave up his religion to save his life.<sup>24</sup>

Despite immense hardships the Sikh community took further strides in challenging the government authorities, under the stewardship of Kapur Singh.

Sardar Kapur Singh was a very brave and fearless man.<sup>25</sup> He would always fight against his enemies in the front ranks. He had a large number of wounds dotting his body. Some times he jumped into very dangerous situations showing utter disregard for his personal safety. Once, accompanied by a handful of men, he entered Lahore and sat on the seat of the *kotwal* of the town for some time, apparently to get a portion of the revenue of the city. Before a contingent, under the command of Izzat Khan, the acting deputy of Muin, stirred into action against Kapur Singh he managed to move out safely.<sup>26</sup>

During Nadir Shah’s return march in 1739, he was taught a lesson by the Sikhs under the command of Kapur Singh. The invaders were relieved of their booty.<sup>26A</sup>

During one of his campaigns in the cis-Satluj areas Nawab Kapur Singh went up to Delhi. On his way he realised tribute from the Nawab of Jhajjar and Ismail Khan, *rais* of Dadri. Then, he chastised the Nawabs of Dojana and Pataudi. Faiz Talab Khan of Pataudi paid heavy amount as *nazarana* to Kapur Singh and Shamsheer Khan of Bahadurgarh also paid big tribute to him. Then came the turn of Faridabad, Balabgarh, Maraili and Gurgaon. He went up to the outskirts of Delhi and none had the courage to obstruct his progress.<sup>27</sup>

To the east and west of river Satluj Kapur Singh’s possessions yielded an annual income of six lakh rupees.<sup>28</sup> Many other Misals had wider areas under them with larger income accruing from them as compared to that of Kapur Singh, but Kapur Singh was, undoubtedly, the most distinguished of the Sikh leaders before the days of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Ala Singh of Patiala. All the Sardars of the Misals paid utmost regards to Nawab Kapur Singh and considered him as their leader.<sup>29</sup> He commanded an army of 2500 horsemen.<sup>30</sup> Kapur Singh’s possessions included the *parganas* of Jalandhar, Haibatpur, Singhpur and Patti.<sup>31</sup>

The period from 1726 to 1753, in the history of the Punjab, was the most difficult time for the Sikhs. With brief periods of respite, here and there, the Sikhs passed through a terrible agony, always under fear of most cruel death. Kapur Singh, as leader of the Sikh movement during this period, weathered the storm very bravely, not allowing the community to sag’ under the government oppression.

After Ahmad Shah Durrani’s exit from the province, following his first invasion of India, the Sikhs met at Amritsar on the sacred day of Baisakhi, March 29, 1748, and discussed the situation facing the *Panth*. At the suggestion of Nawab Kapur Singh, a *gurmata* was passed that the *Panth* needed solidarity and union and the entire fighting body of the Sikhs was named the *Dal Khalsa jio* and placed under the supreme command of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. The various groups were leagued

together under twelve prominent chiefs. Each had a banner of his own. They, later on, established their principalities.

Nawab Kapur Singh died issueless, at Amritsar, in 1753, bequeathing the honours, which he enjoyed among the Khalsa, to the Ahluwalia Sardar.<sup>32</sup> His body was cremated near the monument raised in honour of Baba Atal.

Sardar Kapur Singh was a tall, well-built and highly impressive man. He was a fine shot and adept in the latest contemporary art of fighting. He was sweet-tongued and possessed a winning and affable disposition.<sup>33</sup> People felt enamoured when listened him speaking. In the battle-field he was like a brave lion.<sup>34</sup> After Banda Singh's death he was the most outstanding leader that the Sikh community had. Through his indomitable capacity for organisation he was able to weld together the weakened and scattered Sikhs into a strong force. He put the disorderly rabbles of the Sikhs into *jathas* and channelised their energies in the proper direction. In the words of Muhammad Latif, "The *dal* of the Khalsa or the army of the theocracy of Singhs whose foundation was laid in the times of Furrukhseer, reached the height of their power under the leader-ship of Kapur Singh who really organised this *dal* or multitude of soldiers. He was, undoubtedly, the most distinguished of the Sikh leaders who paved the way for greatness of the nation as an independent ruling power. His followers, who numbered thousands, gave him the title of *Nawab*, as a compliment to his genius, this being almost the only instance of a Sikh assuming a Mohamedan title."<sup>35</sup> He created a strong bond of unity among the various *jathas* and gave them a sense of oneness. He did not allow the *jathedari* or leadership of a group to become hereditary. He was always for the fittest man to lead and for others to follow.

Kapur Singh took special interest in looking after the *langar* where meals were available throughout the day and night,<sup>36</sup> and also administering baptism of the double-edged sword to the people and bringing them into the fold of Sikhism. He gave *pahul* to thousands of people belonging to different communities and high and low social groups.<sup>37</sup> Kapur Singh extended all possible help to Bhai Mani Singh to expound Sikhism and preach it among the people. His personal character was above reproach. In the midst of his life-long pre-occupation with war and fighting, he maintained an irreproachable ethical standard. In the words of Ahmad Shah Batalia, 'Kapur Singh was very generous and magnanimous and an embodiment of humility and humanity.'<sup>38</sup> One day he was bathing at a well in Faizullapur. A *mirasi* said that if he was a philanthropist he should bestow on him so much wealth that he was not able to carry it. Kapur Singh granted him that well along with its adjoining land. His slogan was: in *Guru-gbar*, there was *deg* for friends and *teg* for enemies.

As pointed out by Hari Ram Gupta, Kapur Singh had five firsts to his credit. Firstly, he was the only Sikh to have the title of Nawab. Secondly, he was the initiator of dividing the Sikhs into age groups, the *Budha Dal* and the *Taruna Dal*. This division lasted for a long time after him. Thirdly, he was the founder of the *Dal Khalsa* in 1748. Fourthly, he was the first Sikh chief to control Lahore, the provincial capital, though only for a few days. Fifthly, he was the first Sardar to seize territory to the west of river Satluj after Banda Singh Bahadur.<sup>39</sup>

### **Khushal Singh**

Kapur Singh was succeeded by his nephew (brother's son) Khushal Singh,<sup>40</sup> who equalled his uncle in wisdom and bravery and extended his conquests on both sides of the Satluj.<sup>41</sup> His possessions included Jalandhar, Narpur, Bahrapur, Bulandgarh, Haibatpur, Singhpur, Patti,

Ghanoli and Bhartgarh.<sup>42</sup> Jalandhar Doab and adjoining areas yielded an annual income of three lakh rupees.<sup>43</sup>

Khushal Singh had occupied the town of Jalandhar by defeating its ruler Shaikh Nizam-ud-Din. He made Jalandhar his headquarters and started living there.<sup>44</sup> Khushal Singh added more *ilagas* to the territory which he had inherited from his predecessor. His associates also captured many places. He was very active against the Muslim rulers and it was one of his troopers who killed the Afghan governor of Sirhind, Zain Khan, in January 1764. He seized Ludhiana and Banur with the help of Amar Singh, the ruler of Patiala, who, afterwards, received half of the district of Banur.<sup>45</sup> During the troubles which followed the death of Amar Singh, Khushal Singh seized the whole district. He, however, could not make much resistance to the force brought against him, and Diwan Nannu Mal was able to recover the Patiala share of the territory.<sup>46</sup>

Khushal Singh constructed a *katra* at Amritsar,<sup>47</sup> which was named after his Misal. He, realised tribute from Rai Ibrahim and many other *zamindars*.<sup>46</sup> He fought in the battles against Ahmad Shah Abdali in collaboration with other Sardars.

When Ahmad Shah Abdali made his eighth invasion of the Punjab in December 1756, Khushal Singh, accompanied by Tara Singh Ghaiba, with 6000 horsemen, was stationed at Taragarh to check his progress eastwards after the Durrani left Lahore. On the 15th January 1767, Ahmad Shah wrote letters to the Sardars, including Khushal Singh, to the effect that if they were desirous of entering his service they should come and join him, but if they had any hostile intentions they should meet him in the field.<sup>49</sup> Khushal Singh and others spurned at Durrani's proposal of joining him and told to meet him in the field of battle. The Sikhs gave him no rest so long as he remained in the Punjab and he returned homeward disappointed.

Most of the areas under him which had been depopulated due to the repeated incursions of the Sikhs and the Afghan invaders were once again populated under the efficient administration of Khushal Singh.<sup>50</sup> He had a big army comprising about twenty thousand horse and foot.<sup>51</sup> With this army Khushal Singh had become irresistible and all the petty chiefs were at his mercy. He was in a position to liquidate them completely or make them his tributaries.

Khushal Singh had taken some territories of the other chiefs who were ill-disposed towards him. Diwan Nannu Mal of Patiala was induced by Hari Singh of Sialba to make another attack upon Khushal Singh who had taken Awankot and other villages of the Sialba territory. Their joint forces first attacked Kotla, a small fort held by Man Singh, son-in-law of the Singhpuria chief, and reduced it without much difficulty. Then, they besieged Awankot but Budh Singh, son of Sardar Khushal Singh, accompanied by Tara Singh Ghaiba, Rai Singh Bhangi and other chiefs, compelled the raising of the siege. The Patiala army, reinforced by Nabha and Kaithal troops, could not succeed in their attempt to get Awankot released from the Singhpurias.<sup>58</sup> Like his uncle Nawab Kapur Singh, Khushal Singh was also deeply interested in preaching Sikhism and administering baptism of the double-edged sword to his followers. Khushal Singh died in 1795.

### **Budh Singh**

Khushal Singh had two sons, named Budh Singh and Sudh Singh, of whom the latter died in the life-time of his father.<sup>53</sup> Budh Singh succeeded to the Misal after his father's death.<sup>54</sup> Sudh Singh's only daughter was married to Lehna Singh Bhangi.<sup>55</sup> As the tradition goes Guru Arjan Dev had got manufactured bricks for the *sarovar* (tank) at Tarn Taran. The government official, Nur-ud-Din,

carried away those bricks and used them in building his mansion. The Guru had remarked that ultimately these bricks would be used in the construction of the said *sarovar*. Budh Singh pulled down the buildings of Nur-ud-Din and used the bricks for the purpose for which these had been manufactured, and in doing so the Singhpuria Sardar spent about one lakh ruppees.<sup>56</sup>

Ranjit Singh occupied most of the territories of Budh Singh in the Majha and Doaba and most of the movable property, including domestic articles and fighting material, lapsed to the Lahore Durbar.<sup>57</sup>

In an entry, made in his book in May 1811, Khushwaqat Rai, writes that Ranjit Singh intended to occupy Jalandhar. Therefore, Budh Singh was collecting the necessary provisions in the fort of Jalandhar and the adjoining areas and trying to strengthen the same against the designs of the Lahore chief.<sup>58</sup>

In October 1811, Ranjit Singh's forces, under Diwan Mohkam Chand, Fateh Singh Ahluwalia and Jodh Singh Ramgarhia, marched against Sardar Budh Singh of Jalandhar. The ostensible excuse for the expedition against Budh Singh was his persistent refusal to attend on Ranjit Singh with a contingent in the field. The Singhpuria chief offered no resistance but fled across the Satluj and took protection under the British. All his estates in the trans-Satluj areas were confiscated to Lahore.<sup>59</sup> Budh Singh's possessions near Tarn Taran were captured by the Maharaja's artillery officer, Ghaus Khan.

Budh Singh owned the north-western corner of Ambala district, on the bend of Satluj, from Kiratpur to Machiwara. A portion of this territory, the *ilaga* of Bharatgarh, descended to his son, Amar Singh. Budh Singh remained in the cis-Satluj areas under the British asylum till his death in 1816.<sup>60</sup>

After dispossessing Budh Singh of Jalandhar Doab Ranjit Singh appointed Faqir Noor-ud-Din as its administrator, who served there for four years.<sup>61</sup>

Budh Singh had seven sons. Amar Singh, being the eldest, succeeded to the estate of his father.<sup>62</sup> The Misal's territory had already been reduced considerably, and that too had been shared with his brothers by Amar Singh who gave Ghanoli to Bhupal Singh, Manoli to Gopal Singh, Banga to Lal Singh, Bela to Hardial Singh, Atalgarh to Gurdial Singh and Kambola to Dial Singh. He retained only Bharatgarh with him. The death of Amar Singh's only son, Kirpal Singh, who was issueless, made him very unhappy. Amar Singh died in 1847, at Sahant Tirath, near Thanesar.<sup>63</sup>

Since Amar Singh died heirless his *jagir* was divided between the Sardars of Ghanoli and Manoli and the share of the Sardari was given to Jai Singh of Manoli who was the elder brother. There arose a dispute between the brothers over the sharing of the *jagir*. A decision was taken that in case a Sardar died issueless his widow would get an amount of one thousand rupees for subsistence and half of his *jagir* and the movable property would go to the successor and the other half would be divided among the remaining brothers. This practice continued for a long time in their family.

After Jai Singh's death in 1877, his blind son, Avtar Singh, became his successor. The family enjoyed a big *jagir* worth about seventy five thousand rupees annually under the British.<sup>64</sup>

## Footnotes:

1. Khushwaqat Rai, *Tawarikh-i-Sikhan*, M. S., Dr Ganda Singh, Private Collection Patiala, p. 69; Ahmad Shah Batalia, appendix to Sohan Lal Suri's *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Lahore, 1885, p. 17; Bute Shah, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, IV, (M.S. Dr Ganda Singh, Private Collection, Patiala, p. 1; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, I, (1854), Lahore, 1961, p. 207; Kanaihya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, Lahore, 1877, p. 106; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Prakash*, (1841), Amritsar, 1939, 202-03.  
Prem Singh writes in his book *Nawab Kapur Singh* (p. 12), that Kapur Singh was the resident of village Kaloke in the *pargana* of Sheikhupura. He asserts that his information is based on the evidence of Baba Asa Singh who belonged to Kapur Singh's Virk family.
2. Prem Singh, *Nawab Kapur Singh*, p. 17.
3. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 1.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Muhammad Latif, *History of the Punjab*, Calcutta, 1891, p. 322.
6. Ahmad Shah Batalia, Appendix, *op. cit.*, p. 17; W. L; M'Gregor, *The History of the Sikhs* (1846), Allahabad reprint, 1979, p. 128.
7. Prem Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20.
8. Gian Singh, *Panth Prakash*, (5<sup>th</sup> edition), p. 907.
9. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh. *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Bombay, 1950, p. 121; cf., Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, II, Patiala reprint, 1970, p. 268.
10. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, p. 199.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 199-200.
12. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, p. 32; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 4.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 200.
14. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 121-22.
15. Ahmad Shah Batalia, Appendix to *Daftar I of Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, p. 16.
16. Bhagat Singh, *Sikh Polity in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, Delhi, 1978. p. 62.
17. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 314.
18. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-06; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, II, p. 268; Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 123.
19. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, pp. 322-23; cf., Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 268; cf., Kanaihya Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 106.
20. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 271.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 310; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
22. Kanaihya Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 71.
23. Ganesh Das Bادهhra, (1855), Amritsar, 1965, p. 124; cf., Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, p. 218.
24. Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 126; Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 48; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 213.
25. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 69; Ahmad Shah Batalia, Appendix, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
26. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, p. 203.
- 26A. George Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England*, London, 1798, Vol. I, p. 313.
27. Prem Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-15; cf., Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 269; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 323.
28. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 268-69. According to Lepel Griffin, the annual income in the form of land revenue was four lakhs (*Rajas of the Punjab*, Lahore, 1870, p. 57), and according to Khushwaqat Rai it was two lakh rupees (p. 69).
29. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 268-69; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 57; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 323.
30. Kanaihya Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 106; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 323.
31. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 69; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 269.



32. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 57, fn. i; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 269; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 323; Kahan Singh, *Mahan Kosh*, Vol. I, Patiala, 1930, p. 580.
33. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 69.
34. *Ibid.*; Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
35. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 322.
36. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 2; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 269.
37. Muhamad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 322; Kanaihya Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 106; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 268; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 1-2.
38. Ahmad Shah Batalia, Appendix, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
39. Hari Ram Gupta, *The History of the Sikhs*, Vol. IV, Delhi, 1982, p. 76.
40. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 2; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 328; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 57, fn. i; Muhammad Latif, p. 323. Khushwaqat Rai wrongly considers Khushal Singh to be the son of Kapur Singh (p. 69) and Gian Singh wrongly takes him to be the younger brother of Kapur Singh (*op. cit.*, p. 269).
41. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 323; cf., Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 57, fn. 1.
42. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.* p. 57, fn. 1; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 323; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 269-70.
43. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 270.
44. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 5; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 270; cf., Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, I, p. 111; Ahmad Shah Batalia, Appendix, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
45. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 57, fn. 1; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 323.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
47. Ahmad Shah Batalia, Appendix, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
48. *Ibid.*
49. *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, Vol. II, Calcutta, 1914, p. 50.
50. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 5.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
52. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-60.
53. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 18; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 57, fn. 1.
54. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 69; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 5.
55. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
56. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 270.
57. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-70.
58. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 70.
59. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 480-81.
60. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, II, p. 270; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, (reprint Delhi, 1964), p. 323.
61. Ahmad Shah Batalia, Appendix, *op. cit.*, p. 18, M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, p. 129.
62. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 5; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 270.
63. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 270.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 271.

## Chapter 7

### THE KANAIHYA MISAL

Amar Singh Kingra or Sanghania was the founder of this Misal. Some of the valorous Sikhs rallied round him and accepted him as their leader. He established his own *derah*. He considered it absolutely necessary to baptise a person into a 'Singh' before accepting him into his *derah*.

#### Jai Singh

A Sandhu Jat cultivator, named Khushal or Khushali or Khushal Singh, lived at the village of Kanah, situated at some ten *kos* or about fifteen miles to the south of Lahore.<sup>1</sup> His two sons, Jai Singh and Jhanda Singh left their village and first joined the *derah* of Amar Singh Kingra and then joined the confederacy of Kapur Singh Faizullapuria or Singhpuria about the year 1739,<sup>2</sup> and took *pahul* from him. From the native village of the Misal's leader, Jai Singh, the confederacy took its name. It is also said that when the young Jai Singh went to Amritsar to be baptised as a Singh, the assembled Sikhs were so much struck with his beauty that they asked him the name of the village from which he had come. "I am of Kanah" he said. "Well is your village named Kanah" was the reply "for you resemble Kanaihya himself." Kanaihya is one of the names of the beautiful Lord Krishan.

The four real brothers: Haqiqat Singh, Mehtab Singh, Jiwan Singh and Tara Singh, who belonged to the village Julka, situated about two *kos* from the village Kanah, came and joined Jai Singh.<sup>3</sup> On the death of Kapur Singh, Jai Singh and his brother Jhanda Singh retired to Sohian, the village of Jai Singh's father-in-law, situated in the north-west of Amritsar, at a distance of seven *kos* or about nine or ten miles.<sup>4</sup> Haqiqat Singh, along with his other three brothers and their companions, shifted to Sangatpur about three *kos* from Sohian.<sup>5</sup> Jai Singh collected about 400 horses<sup>6</sup> and in collaboration with Haqiqat Singh took possession of the surrounding areas. Five years later, in 1754, Jhanda Singh was killed in a fight with Nidhan Singh Randhawa at Rawalkot. Jai Singh succeeded to his brother's share in the estate, marrying his widow, Desan, by the rite of *chadar pauna*.<sup>7</sup> Jai Singh became a powerful chief. He occupied Nag, Mukerian, Hajipur, Datarpur, Kerrot, Pathankot, Dharamkot, Sujampur, etc.<sup>8</sup>

Jai Singh had, among his followers, many well-known persons as Amar Singh and Jhanda Singh Bakarpurias, Lakha Singh Kanhowalia, Amar Singh Khokhra, Budh Singh Dharamkotia, and Jhanda Singh Kerch.<sup>9</sup> Jai Singh was known for his daring and dash. In the beginning of 1754, Jai Singh, accompanied by Charhat Singh Sukarchakia, entered Lahore through Shah Alami Gate, one dark evening, in the guise of a Muslim and dispossessed the rich merchants and jewellers of their money and valuables.

In 1759, Desan, the widow of Jhanda Singh and wife of Jai Singh, gave birth to a son, named Gurbakhsh Singh, who was betrothed at the age of seven and married at nine, to Sada Kaur, daughter of Dasonda Singh (Dhaliwal) of Alkolwala.<sup>10</sup> Jai Singh had first married the daughter of Hamir Singh of Nabha.

Haqiqat Singh Sangatpuria was the leader of one great section of Kanaihya Misal. He was a friend and a close associate of Jai Singh and participated in many expeditions led by the latter. Jai Singh arranged the marriage of his associate Haqiqat Singh's son Jaimal Singh to Sahib Kaur,

daughter of Maharaja Amar Singh of Patiala. He occasionally visited Patiala to help in solving some of their problems. After Ahmad Shah Abdali's retirement from the Punjab in 1763, the Kanaihya Sardars, allied with Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Hari Singh Bhangi and Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, attacked the Pathan town of Kasur.

According to Bute Shah, a Brahman woman was taken away by the Afghans of Kasur and forcibly taken in wedlock by one of them. Feeling dishonoured, the Brahmans of Kasur came to Amritsar and related the story of their woes to Jai Singh, Haqiqat Singh and the Ahluwalia, Ramgarhia and Bhangi Sardars. Enraged over the conduct of the Afghans of Kasur they decided to sack the ruler of Kasur and teach a lesson to the guilty. The Sikh Sardars besieged the *kot* (fortress) of Sultan Abdul Rahim Khan and occupied it shortly. Four or five hundred Afghans were killed and the chief of Kasur, Ghulam Muhayy-ud-Din Khan, was also shot dead in the course of fighting. The Sikh Sardars imposed war indemnity of four lakh rupees on the Afghans which they accepted to pay.<sup>11</sup> The Sikhs got huge booty from Kasur. According to Ahmad Shah Batalia, the allies plundered the town and the booty included cash, gold and silver utensils, various kinds of pearls and precious stones, very costly silk and *pashmina* clothes and valuable rugs. Jai Singh Kanaihya's share comprised gold, silver, emeralds and richly studded ornaments which were carried with difficulty by four strong and sturdy persons. Similarly the Ramgarhias also received a rich share from the booty. It is said that most of the booty was buried in the jungle near the village of Begowal.<sup>12</sup>

All the fourteen fortresses, built outside the walls of the town of Kasur, were occupied by the Sikhs. These were divided into four groups out of which two groups were received by the Bhangis, one group was taken over by the Ramgarhias and the fourth group was possessed by the Kanaihyas. And for many years to come the town of Kasur remained in the hands of the Sikhs.<sup>13</sup>

Jai Singh Kanaihya and Jassa Singh Ramgarhia were very friendly to each other and had jointly undertaken armed operations against the Mughals and Afghans. But, after the sack of Kasur a dispute arose between the two Sardars, over the division of booty. Some time later, Jai Singh quarrelled with Hari Singh Bhangi and they clashed near Eminabad, without a decisive victory for any of them. Jai Singh marched to Sirhind and participated in the battle where Zain Khan was defeated and killed on January 14, 1764. In 1765, Qazi Nur Muhammad wrote in his *Jang Nama* that Jai Singh Kanaihya had extended his territory up to Narol lying in the southern parts of Jammu. He worked in collaboration with Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and both of them shared the territory of Batala between themselves.<sup>14</sup>

### **Kanaihyas Occupied Kangra**

The fort of Kangra was surrounded on three sides by steep and high precipices. It was a grand edifice of stone. The hill on which the fort stood was nearly 5 kms in circuit. With a view to dominating the Kangra hills the Mughal government had appointed an officer who resided in the Kangra fort. At this time, the fort was under Saif Ali Khan. During Ahmad Shah Abdali's invasions Ghamand Chand Katoch had risen to power. His son, Tegh Chand, paid tribute to Jai Singh Kanaihya. In 1782, Ghamand Chand's grandson, Raja Sansar Chand Katoch, became anxious to secure possession of the fort. He attacked Saif Ali Khan many a time but could not achieve his object.

On the death of Nawab Saif Ali Khan, the Muhammdan governor of Kangra, in 1784, Raja Sansar Chand Katoch laid siege to the famous fort of Kangra. But the Katoch chief was unable to occupy it. He, then, sought the help of Jai Singh Kanaihya. Jai Singh sent his son, Gurbakhsh

Singh, accompanied by Sardar Baghel Singh and a considerable force. After ----- studying the position of the fort ----- who possessed the Kangra fort would ----- whole of the hill country and decided to win it ----- He asked the Raja to offer the garrison very favourable terms which included free pardon of the inmates of the fort, money and lands. Gurbakhsh Singh, by throwing hints of Raja's treacherous intentions, induced the besieged Jiwan Khan, son of Saif Khan, to allow his troops to take possession of the fort so that their obtaining what was promised was assured. Thus, by a clever move, Gurbakhsh Singh occupied the fort and Sansar Chand was obliged to retire. The other hill chiefs also came under Jai Singh.<sup>15</sup> Earlier to this the hill states, including those of Jasrota, Basohli and Jammu, had been tributary to Haqiqat Singh. Now, Jai Singh became paramount and all the hill chiefs solicited his alliance. The possession of the fort of Kangra turned the head of Jai Singh Kanaihya. Earlier, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia exercised great influence in the Shivalik hills.

### **Sikh Chiefs and Jammu Affairs**

In 1770, Ranjit Deo (Dev) of Jammu, a tributary of Jhanda Singh Bhangi, quarrelled with his eldest son, Brij Raj Deo, whom he wanted to exclude from the succession in preference to his younger son, Dalel Singh.<sup>16</sup> Brij Raj Deo called to his assistance Jai Singh and Haqiqat Singh Kanaihya and Charhat Singh Sukarchakia. Raja Ranjit Deo called Jhanda Singh Bhangi and some hill chiefs including those of Chamba, Kangra and Nurpur. The rival forces fought occasionally for some six months near Jammu without any conclusive results. Charhat Singh died from the bursting of his gun.<sup>17</sup> The Bhangis found the new situation ----- chiefs, then, decided to assassinate ----- They bribed a Mazhabi Sikh who shot him dead as he was riding in the evening, attended by only three horsemen, through the camp, to see some Sardars.<sup>18</sup> The death of Jhanda Singh ended the quarrel. The rival forces retired from Jammu which became tributary, paying one lakh and twenty-five thousand rupees annually to Haqiqat Singh.<sup>19</sup>

The hostilities between the Bhangis and Kanaihyas were renewed shortly. Jhanda Singh Bhangi had bestowed Pathankot on one of his Misaldars, Nand Singh, also called Mansa Singh, whose widow gave the *jagir* of Pathankot to her son-in-law, Tara Singh, a near relation of Haqiqat Singh Kanaihya. Ganda Singh Bhangi insisted that Tara Singh should give up the *jagir* but he refused. There was a fighting between the Bhangis and Kanaihyas and during the armed operation Ganda Singh fell ill and died.<sup>20</sup> The Bhangis withdrew and it further strengthened the position of the Kanaihyas.

Raja Ranjit Deo of Jammu died in 1781, and his son Brij Raj Deo succeeded him. On the succession ceremony of Brij Raj, Jai Singh and Haqiqat Singh Kanaihya sent turbans and *doshalas* through their agents, Lachman Das and Dyal Singh, accompanied by a contingent of fifty horsemen. Similarly the other Sardars and hill chiefs sent turbans and *doshalas* to be presented to the new ruler of Jammu, during the ceremony. Sardar Mahan Singh sent his *kul mukhtar*, Diwan Daya Ram, on condolence and a few days later himself went there and exchanged his turban with Brij Raj Deo.<sup>21</sup> The new ruler of Jammu decided to win back some of his territories from the Bhangis. Brij Raj Deo sent a word to Haqiqat Singh through Mahan Singh that if he helped him get *taalnqa* of Karianwala and the towns of Jalalpur and Islamgarh released from Gujjar Singh Bhangi, he would give him (Haqiqat Singh) thirty thousand rupees.<sup>22</sup> In the heart of their hearts the Kanaihya Sardars did not like the proposal as the Bhangis were their friends and Jai Singh had recently married the daughter of Bagh Singh Hallowalia a Bhangi chief, but outwardly they felt compelled to accept it. Mahan Singh came to assist Brij Raj Deo to capture Karianwala. Haqiqat Singh did not join in the beginning but on repeated invitations he joined Brij Raj against the Bhangis. But he had his sympathies with

Gujjar Singh who was assisted by Karam Singh Doolo, Bagh Singh Hallowalia, Tara Singh Chainpuria and Jiwan Singh Sialkotia. Haqiqat Singh did not put his heart in the fighting on the side of Brij Raj. It was with a lot of effort for two months that the Jammu chief was able to occupy Karianwala.<sup>23</sup>

Raja of Jammu did not pay the stipulated *nazarana* to Haqiqat Singh probably on the suggestion of Mahan Singh. This led to an estrangement between Mahan Singh and Jai Singh Kanaihya and Haqiqat Singh. The friendship between Karam Singh Doolo and Gujjar Singh Bhangi was further strengthened with the passage of time.

After the lapse of two or three months Mahan Singh marched towards Rasulnagar and Jaialpur Pindi and reduced Ghulam Muhammad Chatha and other Pathans to submission. He besieged the town of Chiniot also. Karam Singh Doolo was stationed at the fort of Bhangian, situated about five *kos* from Chiniot, with a force of four or five hundred horse and foot. Finding himself no match for Mahan Singh he left the fort and came to Sialkot.<sup>24</sup>

Gujjar Singh Bhangi, accompanied by his Misaldars and Haqiqat Singh and his other associates, made a bid to get the *taaluqa* of Karianwala released from Brij Raj Deo of Jammu. They besieged Shakargarh. Brij Raj Deo immediately invited Mahan Singh to come to his assistance. The Sukarchakia chief hurriedly responded to the call and attacked the *derah* of Haqiqat Singh who was readily helped by Karam Singh Doolo, Gujjar Singh Bhangi and others. Mahan Singh, along with Brij Raj Deo, was beaten back and the siege of Shakargarh continued.<sup>25</sup>

Haqiqat Singh, who had emerged victorious, demanded his previous *nazarana* of thirty thousand rupees from Brij Raj Deo, and the territory of Karam Singh Doolo along with Chiniot, from Mahan Singh. Both of the vanquished chiefs had to concede the demands of the victor.<sup>26</sup> A few month's later Brij Raj Deo refused to pay the stipulated *nazarana* to Haqiqat Singh, and accepted to pay the same to Jai Singh. This annoyed Haqiqat Singh who wrote to Mahan Singh about Brij Raj Deo's backing out from the previous commitment with him regarding the tribute and also told him that, ultimately, his relations with the Jammu chief would land him in dishonour and disappointment. Haqiqat Singh invited Mahan Singh to join him in his attack on Jammu. They would divide among themselves the booty and the territories captured.<sup>27</sup>

Since Jai Singh had turned hostile to Mahan Singh due to the latter's assisting the Jammu chief, Mahan Singh thought it advisable to change his loyalty from Brij Raj Deo to the Kanaihya chiefs. So he accepted the proposal of Haqiqat Singh for a joint action against Brij Raj. Mahan Singh marched from Gujranwala, in the later half of 1783, towards Chitral. Starting from Fatehgarh, Haqiqat Singh entered the district of Zafarwal.<sup>28</sup> The day for entering Jammu was fixed in January 1784. But Mahan Singh stole a march over his ally, Haqiqat Singh, and entered Jammu which he plundered. The Raja of Jammu, finding no help coming from any quarter, fled from the town. Mahan Singh is said to have plundered lakhs of rupees (according to some writers more than a crore of rupees) from the town and most of the affluent residents of Jammu were made captive. The palace of the Raja and many other houses were committed to fire. The booty was sent to Gujranwala before Haqiqat Singh reached Jammu in the next two or three days. He felt defrauded on account of having been deprived of any share from the great spoil. But shortly thereafter, Haqiqat Singh died (in 1784) of pneumonia at Fatehgarh, his headquarters.<sup>29</sup> Jai Singh demanded from Mahan Singh half of the booty for Haqiqat Singh's son, Jaimal Singh, a part of which he

desired to offer to the Harmandir Sahib, Amritsar. Mahan Singh refused to part with any amount on the plea that the booty was the fruit of his own labour.<sup>30</sup>

Mahan Singh was said to be happy in his heart over the death of Haqiqat Singh, but outwardly he was expressing grief and sympathy with Jaimal Singh, the son of the deceased. To meet the day to day expenses Mahan Singh was giving five thousand rupees daily to Jaimal Singh. He had also persuaded him to accompany him, along with his army, to Gujranwala where the last rites of his deceased father would be performed.<sup>31</sup> During these days Jai Singh was staying at Hajipur. When he learnt about the plunder of Jammu and death of Haqiqat Singh he felt very enraged and sad. Jai Singh told that he had considered Mahan Singh as his son but he had brought dishonour to him. After Charhat Singh's death he had taken the youthful Mahan Singh into his care and assisted the aspiring chief in capturing Rasulnagar, on river Chenab, from a Muhammadan family.<sup>32</sup> Jai Singh solemnised the marriage of Mahan Singh with the daughter of Raja Gajpat Singh of Jind, in 1774.<sup>33</sup> Having secured his position, Mahan Singh threw off his allegiance to Jai Singh. Nursing in his mind ambitious plans, Mahan Singh started undertaking independent military operations. Jai Singh despatched his son, Gurbakhsh Singh, along with a contingent of one thousand horsemen, towards Chitral with the instruction that he should immediately bring Jaimal Singh with him. On the persuasion of Mahan Singh, Jaimal Singh was ready to accompany the former to his headquarters—Gujranwala. On Gurbakhsh Singh's meeting him Jaimal Singh agreed to cancel his visit to Gujranwala, Gurbakhsh Singh told Mahan Singh that. God willing, the booty of one crore rupees, got by him from Jammu would be taken back. There was an altercation of uncharitable words between them.<sup>34</sup>

### **Relations between Jai Singh and Mahan Singh got strained**

A little later Jai Singh, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Gujjar Singh Bhangi and many other chiefs assembled at Fatehgarh to observe condolence on the death of Haqiqat Singh. Mahan Singh did not go there personally due to the hostile attitude of Jai Singh Kanaihya towards him. On his behalf, his official, Diwan Daya Ram, attended the condolence ceremonies.<sup>35</sup> After the ceremonies were over Jaimal Singh, a young boy of 13, was unanimously installed on the *gaddi*, as the successor of his father, Haqiqat Singh, by the Sardars before they departed for their respective places. But Jai Singh stayed there for the next two months and guided Jaimal Singh in the conduct of his domestic affairs and administrative problems of his territories.<sup>36</sup>

In the meantime, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia passed away and was succeeded by Bhag Singh. Jai Singh and Jaimal Singh attended the condolence ceremonies at Fatehabad. Now, Jai Singh decided to march against the Nakka area and Multan with the support of the Majha Sikhs. Jai Singh declared that if Mahan Singh reinforced his relatives of Nakka he would fight against him and bring him under his subordination. Thus, in 1783, Jai Singh, accompanied by his associates, along with their contingents, marched from his headquarters and entered the district of Jandiala. Bhag Singh Ahluwalia, at the head of all his forces, also joined him. They sacked the districts of Rasulpur, Mandiala and Jandiala. Realising *nazaranas* from the places falling on the way Jai Singh reached the Nakka territory. The Nakkai Sardars, Wazir Singh and Bhagwan Singh, the relatives of Mahan Singh, finding none coming to their assistance, submitted to the Kanaihya chief.<sup>37</sup>

After dealing with the Nakkais Jai Singh entered the district of Multan and after receiving some tribute from Nawab Muzzafar Khan, crossed over to the territories of Jhang and Chiniot. The affected chiefs wanted to request Jai Singh for the restoration of their territories but it was postponed to Diwali when he would visit Amritsar.

On the festival of Diwali of 1784, Bhag Singh Ahluwalia, Karam Singh Doolo, Baghel Singh, Tara Singh Ghaiba and Gujjar Singh reached Amritsar, on the invitation of Jai Singh. Mahan Singh, accompanied by his force and artillery, also arrived at Amritsar and encamped in the fort there.<sup>38</sup> Mahan Singh visited Jai Singh and offered sweets to him but the latter who was highly incensed against the former did not accept the sweets and expressed his extreme anger against him. Mahan Singh apologized to him for misconduct if he was guilty of any. Mahan Singh made every effort to reconcile with the Kanaihya chief but to no avail. Jai Singh totally refused to talk to him. When Mahan Singh was still sitting in Jai Singh's presence the latter lay on his bed and pulled a *chaddar* (a sheet of cloth) on his body and posed to have gone to sleep. Mahan Singh kept sitting there for hours together but Jai Singh would not listen or talk to him. Ultimately, disappointed, Mahan Singh went to his *derah*.<sup>39</sup>

Next day, Jai Singh sent a word to Mahan Singh through Bhag Singh Ahluwalia and Tara Singh Chainpuria that he should give one crore rupees to him out of the Jammu spoils and he should also restore the territories of the Sikh chiefs that he had forcibly taken possession of otherwise he would not be allowed to return from Amritsar. This made Mahan Singh extremely upset.<sup>40</sup> Assisted by Wazir Singh and Bhagwan Singh Nakkai, who had a force of 1500 horsemen with them, Mahan Singh left Amritsar at dead of night and marched towards Majitha. Jai Singh ordered his associates that 'the dancing boy' (Mahan Singh) should not be allowed to go and he should be made a captive and produced before him. But they failed to capture him despite the fact that they engaged him in a severe fighting till he reached Majitha.<sup>41</sup>

During the last many years Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, who had been driven out of his territories in October 1778, consequent upon a dispute between the Kanaihyas and Ramgarhias over the division of some lands, had been moving about in exile in the cis-Satluj areas. He had suffered much at the hands of Jai Singh. These days he was just on the other side of river Satluj.<sup>42</sup> Sansar Chand Katoch had also lost most of his territories to Jai Singh. Mahan Singh, who was determined to take revenge upon Jai Singh, decided to have a truck with the Ramgarhia and Katoch chiefs for a joint action against the Kanaihyas. In consultation with Sansar Chand Katoch, Mahan Singh sent a communication to Jassa Singh Ramgarhia through Rai Ahmad Manjh to join them in defeating Jai Singh and getting back his territories.<sup>43</sup>

After getting necessary assurances from them Jassa Singh crossed river Satluj and headed towards Batala. From the other side, Mahan Singh also marched into the Kanaihya territory. He was joined by Amar Singh Nakkai, along with Fateh Singh, son of Mehtab Singh—his son-in-law. Sansar Chand also, as agreed upon, came down from the hills.

Jai Singh first sent his son, Gurbakhsh Singh, at the head of a big force to resist Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and he himself stayed back in Batala. The rival forces clashed at Ramdevpura, near Achal, about four *kos* from Batala, in February 1785. The fight continued for six hours. Gurbakhsh Singh Dodia died fighting and shortly thereafter, a gun shot, fired by one of the men of Guru Sundar Das of Jandiala, struck Gurbakhsh Singh, son of Jai Singh, in the chest and wounded him mortally.<sup>44</sup> Gurbakhsh Singh was a very beautiful, tall, brave, generous and a promising young man.<sup>45</sup> The Kanaihya troops, having lost their leader, got disheartened and were routed.

Gurbakhsh Singh's death broke the back of his father who made no further resistance,<sup>46</sup> 'He burst into tears, emptied his quiver of its arrows and dismounting from his horse, exposed himself

to the enemy's fire. Such was the respect for the old veteran that none dared approach him in his grief and all, quietly, withdrew.<sup>47</sup> He restored to Jassa Singh Ramgarhia his old possessions excepting Batala. After staying at Batala for a few days after the fight against the allies, Jai Singh went towards Pathankot to get assistance from Tara Singh and Jaimal Singh to defend himself against further losses at the hands of Jassa Singh. Gurbakhsh Singh's widow, Sada Kaur, was at Batala. Fearing, that she might not be captured by the Ramgarhias through a surprise attack, she, accompanied by some prominent and brave persons, left Batala at night and went to Sohian. When Jassa Singh came to know that Batala was without a Kanaihya chief he despatched Bhag Singh Amin and Hakumat Singh to take possession of Batala. As soon as Jassa Singh's men reached Batala, Dharam Singh, who had been appointed to look after the town by Jai Singh, left the place and Ramgarhias, once again, occupied it.<sup>48</sup> The Kanaihyas lost their possessions of Batala, Kalanaur and Hajipur.<sup>49</sup>

Sansar Chand Katoch captured the Kanaihya possessions of Hajipur and the adjoining areas and also placed Mukerian under his control. The fort of Atalgarh remained in the hands of Jai Singh. With the help of a contingent of 1000 men sent by Mahan Singh, under the command of his two officers, Daya Ram and Muhammad Salah, Sansar Chand besieged the fort of Kangra. The siege continued for six months, Mahan Singh's men who had run short of money were refused any payment before the fall of the fort. The allies began to fight amongst themselves. Muhammad Salah was killed in the engagement. Daya Ram returned to Gujranwala. Sansar Chand suggested to Jai Singh that both of them should join to fight against Mahan Singh. Jai Singh accepted the proposal. When Jai Singh came out of the fort Sansar Chand's men rushed into it and after a brief resistance occupied it.<sup>50</sup>

Excepting Sohian and some minor areas Jai Singh lost all his possessions to his opponents.<sup>51</sup> The death of his son and the loss of his territories made Jai Singh a very disappointed and a very sad man.

Sada Kaur, widow of the deceased Gurbakhsh Singh, was an intelligent and a shrewd lady. She found it in the interest of the Kanaihya Misal to bring about reconciliation with the Sukerchakia chief. She happened to meet Mahan Singh's mother and wife at Jawalamukhi. She is said to have proposed the hand of her daughter, Mehtab Kaur, to Mahan Singh's son, Ranjit Singh. The proposal matured and good relations between the two Misals were re-established.<sup>52</sup> Sada Kaur accepted the demands of Amar Singh Nakkai also and contracted cordial relations with him.

The Kanaihyas again started improving their position which had received a tremendous set back. Jai Singh wanted to have friendly relations with Sansar Chand Katoch and at the same time desired to retain the possession of the fort of Kangra. Both sides started negotiations through their *vakils*. A face to face dialogue between Jai Singh and Sansar Chand was arranged at the village of Sherpur, at the bank of rivulet Uja. Many of the hill chiefs, including those of Jasrota and Nurpur and Jaimal Singh and Tara Singh of Pathankot, assembled there. Dialogue about Kangra was started through the mediation of the chief of Jasrota. Ultimately it was decided that Sansar Chand should return to Jai Singh the *taaluqa* of Hajipur and such of the villages of Mukerian as had been captured by the former and Kangra be restored to the Katoch chief with a commitment from him to help the Kanaihya Sardar against Jassa Singh Ramgarhia.<sup>53</sup>

Consequently, Jai Singh got back his territories occupied by Sansar Chand and handed over the possession of the fort of Kangra to the latter. At the head of an army Jai Singh marched on



Batala which was in the hands of Jassa Singh Ramgarhia. The Rajas of Nurpur and Jasrota also helped him. Mahan Singh, Jaimal Singh and some other Sardars also joined Jai Singh. They besieged Batala. Jassa Singh was present in the town. The siege and fighting continued for twenty two days. Finding no chance of victory over the Ramgarhias Jai Singh lifted the siege and retired from there. Jassa Singh planned to fortify the town but before it could be accomplished he went towards the fort of Nathu Singh where he was besieged<sup>54</sup> and prevented from returning to Batala.

Jai Singh availed himself of the absence of Jassa Singh from the town of Batala, sent his men to the *qanungos* and the *punches* of the town and settled the plan of occupying the town. One night Jai Singh sent one of his trusted men, named Chanda Singh, with a contingent. He entered the town from the side of the Mohalla Bhandarian by making a breach in the outer wall of the town. Jassa Singh's brother Tara Singh, Bhag Singh Amin and Mohkam Chand were inside the fort. After the fighting they went out and joined Jassa Singh and the town came in the possession of the Kanaihyas.<sup>55</sup> Later, there were more clashes between the Kanaihyas and Ramgarhias but the former emerged victorious.

In the meantime, Mahan Singh died on April 15, 1790<sup>56</sup> at the young age of 30. Jai Singh felt deeply grieved. Ranjit Singh was too young at that time and the Sukarchakia Misal was placed under the care of some very competent administrators. Jai Singh and his daughter-in-law, Sada Kaur, were keenly interested in Ranjit Singh's smooth succession to the Sardari of his Misal.

We have conflicting dates of the death of Jai Singh and the marriage of Ranjit Singh with Sada Kaur's daughter, Mehtab Kaur. According to Khushwaqat Rai, Jai Singh died in B.K. 1850 corresponding to A.D. 1793.<sup>57</sup> According to Bute Shah, Jai Singh solemnised the marriage of his grand-daughter, Mehtab Kaur, with Ranjit Singh in A.H. 1204 or A.D. 1789-90. He spent a lot of money on this marriage. He died in A.H. 1205 or A.D. 1790-91, at Batala.<sup>58</sup> Ali-ud-Din Mufti writes that the marriage of Ranjit Singh with Mehtab Kaur took place in A.H. 1205 or A.D. 1790-91, and death of Jai Singh occurred two years later, that is, in A.H. 1207 or A.D. 1792-93.<sup>59</sup> According to Muhammad Latif, the marriage between Ranjit Singh and Mehtab Kaur took place in A.D. 1796, and Jai Singh died four years later, that is in 1798.<sup>60</sup> Sohan Lal Suri writes that Ranjit Singh got himself married to Mehtab Kaur in B.K. 1852, corresponding to A.D. 1795-96.<sup>61</sup> But he does not mention the date of Jai Singh's death. Since Sohan Lal Suri is a more reliable author we should accept A.D. 1796, as the date of Ranjit Singh's marriage with Mehtab Kaur, daughter of Gurbakhsh Singh Kanaihya. Ahmad Shah Batalia, Bute Shah, Ali-ud-Din Mufti, Lepel Griffin, Giani Gian Singh, Kanaihya Lal and Muhammad Latif are unanimous in confirming that the above mentioned marriage took place in the life time of Jai Singh. So his death might have occurred after 1796. The exact date of his death still needs to be determined on the basis of some irrefutable evidence which still awaits to be unearthed. According to Khushwaqat Rai, Jai Singh lived up to the age of 80 and he headed his house for 55 years.<sup>62</sup>

At the time of Jai Singh's death his sons, Nidhan Singh and Bhag Singh, were too young to handle the state affairs. In order to avoid any dispute in the family Jai Singh divided his possessions among his wife Raj Kaur (mother of Nidhan Singh and Bhag Singh) and his eldest son Gurbakhsh Singh's widow, Sada Kaur.<sup>63</sup> Raj Kaur was satisfied with the possession of the *taaluqa* of Hajipur and Sohian. Batala, Mukerian and some other territories were placed in the hands of Sada Kaur.<sup>64</sup>

Haqiqat Singh and Mehtab Singh were real brothers. Mehtab Singh had a son, named Fateh Singh. The sister of Fateh Singh was married to the son of Tara Singh Chainpuria. When an year

after the marriage she was going to live in her in-laws house many Kanaihya Sardars assembled at Fatehgarh, in the district of Gurdaspur, to see her off. Haqiqat Singh's son, Jaimal Singh, also came there with gifts of clothes and ornaments for the girl. Fateh Singh, in consultation with Sada Kaur and Diwan Lachman Das, confined Jaimal Singh.<sup>65</sup> When Jaimal Singh's wife, Sahib Kaur, daughter of Amar Singh, the ruler of Patiala, came to know of the detention of her husband she deputed Diwan Dhanpat Rai to strengthen Fatehgarh and other places. She collected the forces and got ready to fight. She entered Doaba, along with her forces. Tara Singh Ghaiba and Baghel Singh Karorsinghia also reached Fatehgarh. In these very days, Fateh Singh had married his daughter to Gulab Singh Bhangi. Hearing about the coming of forces against him and finding himself unable to resist, Fateh Singh, along with Jaimal Singh, hastened to Amritsar, during the night,<sup>66</sup> where his son-in-law, Gulab Singh, was ruling. Next day, Sardar Baghel Singh, and some others followed him to Amritsar. Baghel Singh sent a word to Fateh Singh that, not caring for the position of Jaimal Singh, he had done a wrong thing by detaining him. Baghel Singh asked him to send Jaimal Singh to their side and whatever the price for his release would be paid by him (Baghel Singh). Baghel Singh further told him that if the above proposal was not acceptable to him Jaimal Singh be brought to the Gurdwara — a common place, for a meeting and discussion of a few things with them and then he would be sent back to them. But Fateh Singh and Gulab Singh did not accept the proposal.<sup>67</sup> Later, he was released.

At the time of Jai Singh's death his son, Nidhan Singh, was only seven years of age and Bhag Singh was two years younger. From the points of intelligence and age both of them were not [fit to succeed to their father's possessions. Nidhan Singh had been engaged to the daughter of Tara Singh Kang and Bhag. Singh to the daughter of Khushal Singh Faizullapuria. These matrimonial relationships had been established by Jai Singh some time before his death.<sup>68</sup>

Sada Kaur had deep resentment against Jassa Singh Ramgarhia who was responsible for the murder of her husband, Gurbakhsh Singh. She collected many Sikh chiefs, including Nidhan Singh and Bhag Singh Kanaihya, Tara Singh Ghaiba, Khushal Singh Faizullapuria, Bagh Singh Halluwalla, Baghel Singh and Bhag Singh Ahluwalla, and dispossessed Jassa Singh Ramgarhia of most of his territories in the Majha. She besieged the Fort of Miani (then under Jassa Singh) on the other side of river Beas.<sup>69</sup> She also invited Ranjit Singh to participate in the operations against the Ramgarhia chief. Ranjit Singh reached Amritsar and Sada Kaur met him there. Baba Sahib Singh Bedi, a revered Sikh, was at Amritsar at that time. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, finding himself incapable of resisting the Kanaihyas, approached Baba Sahib Singh, through a *vakil*, for reconciliation with them. Next day, when Ranjit Singh paid a visit to the Baba the latter said to him. "Both the parties, involved in the fighting, are the followers of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh. You have lost your senses as you shed each other's blood. It is sinful on your part. You should feel ashamed of the fact that at a short distance from here the Pathans of Kasur are indulging in cow-slaughtering and harassing the Hindus and you are doing nothing to prevent them. You tell Sardarni Sada Kaur to be-considerate and reasonable. I shall call Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and bring about reconciliation between you. In collaboration with each other you should proceed against Kasur and then plan to conquer Multan and Peshawar."<sup>70</sup> Dal Singh and Jodh Singh who had accompanied Ranjit Singh to Baba Sahib Singh assured him that his feelings would be conveyed to Sada Kaur. When Sada Kaur was told about it she said that Jassa Singh's men might have briefed Baba ji wrongly, "Since we have to function as rulers such proposals are not acceptable to us. I shall accept the proposal for an amicable settlement only after Jassa Singh's son, Jodh Singh, is killed at our hands and his wife is made a widow like myself."<sup>71</sup>

Next day, very early in the morning, she took Ranjit Singh, along with her, to Miani and tightly converged on Jassa Singh in the fort. Immediately thereafter Jassa Singh sent his *vakil* to Baba Sahib Singh informing him of Sada Kaur and Ranjit Singh's taking positions around the fort. Baba ji sent a word to Jassa Singh to firmly stick to the fort and not lose heart. The *sat* Guru would come to his assistance and the besiegers would disperse in dismay.<sup>72</sup>

After three days, with God's will, flood in the river inundated Sada Kaur's camp at night resulting in the drowning of many of their men and horses. Their supporters ran away leaving behind their horses. Ranjit Singh, then marched towards Ramgarh. Nidhan Singh and Bhag Singh, sons of Raj Kaur, went to Sohian, and Sada Kaur to Batala.<sup>73</sup> The territories of the Kanaihya Misal lay in the districts of Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur, Kangra and Sialkot. Many of their villages and towns lay in the Jalandhar Doab, Bari Doab and Rachna Doab. In its hey-day this Misal had a large territory under its control. But with the passage of time their possessions diminished.

### **Relations of Sada Kaur with Ranjit Singh**

Sada Kaur had been a unique lady of the age. Her family had a long tradition of courageous and brave enterprises. She was born in 1762, to Sardar Dasondha Singh Dhariwal.<sup>74</sup> Coming of age she was married to Gurbakhsh Singh, son of Jai Singh Kanaihya, but she was not destined to enjoy her married life for long. She bore a daughter, named Mehtab Kaur, in 1782. She lost her husband at the young age of 22. Thus widowed, whereas an ordinary woman would have resigned herself to her fate and vanished in oblivion, Sada Kaur decided to fight the destiny and carve out for herself a place known only to administrative and diplomatic talents. After her husband's death the first diplomatic plan which struck her was the reconciliation between the Kanaihyas and Sukarchakias. And that she successfully achieved by a matrimonial alliance between the two Misals. Her daughter, Mehtab Kaur, was married to Mahan Singh's son, Ranjit Singh. She also saw in this alliance a good opportunity to make Ranjit Singh a stepping-stone to carving out for herself a kingdom, by uniting the resources and strength of the two houses. But in the game of diplomacy, her son-in-law was more than a match for her. In the words of C. H. Payne, "Her real aim was to render the whole of the Punjab subject to her own dominion; and she sought, by keeping Ranjit Singh under her control, to make his power subservient to her plans. But she mistook both the nature and the capabilities of her son-in-law. The Lion of the Punjab had no intention of becoming a stepping-stone for others; and Sada Kaur soon found that the role she had designed for him was the very one she was destined to play herself."<sup>75</sup>

In 1790, while at his death-bed, Mahan Singh handed over the charge of his ten-year old son to Sada Kaur. For about six or seven years, she helped in the conduct of the affairs of Sukerchakia Misal.

Due to the internal dissensions of the three rulers of Lahore, the law and order situation in the city had been adversely affected. In response to an invitation from the prominent citizens of Lahore Ranjit Singh decided to occupy it. He started from Rasalnagar and reached Batala and discussed the matter of occupation of the political capital of the Punjab with Sada Kaur.<sup>76</sup> She accompanied him to Lahore, at the head of her army. The combined forces of Sukarchakias and Kanaihyas entered Lahore on July 6, 1799. On Sada Kaur's suggestion negotiations were conducted with Chet Singh Bhangi who was in possession of the fort. Chet Singh was offered to be treated kindly and permitted to take all his movable property with him to *his jagir* at Vanyeki, in the *pargana* of Ajnala. Chet Singh accepted the offer and evacuated the fort on the morning of July 7, 1799, and Ranjit Singh occupied the fort the same day.<sup>77</sup>

We find that in the early stages of Ranjit Singh's political career Sada Kaur was greatly instrumental in the building up of his power and laying the foundation for much of his future greatness.<sup>78</sup>

With the passage of time, relations between the two became less cordial. Not long after marriage, Ranjit Singh and Mehtab Kaur got estranged from each other. It is said that sometimes the Maharaja was too harsh towards his wife, Mehtab Kaur. Sada Kaur felt very unhappy over it.<sup>79</sup> Therefore, she called her daughter back to Batala where she remained most of her time. Sada Kaur made her best efforts to remove estrangement between her daughter, Mehtab Kaur, and Ranjit Singh but she succeeded partially. The Maharaja agreed to Mehtab Kaur's staying on at Batala where he occasionally visited her. A son, named Ishar Singh, was born to her in 1802.<sup>80</sup> He was engaged to the daughter of Mehar Singh, son of Jodh Singh Nakkai, at the age of an year and a half but shortly thereafter he died. Twin sons—Sher Singh and Tara Singh—were born to Mehtab Kaur in 1807. Both of them remained at Batala and grew under the care of their mother and grandmother.

Ranjit Singh wanted Sher Singh to succeed to Sada Kaur's possessions and, thus, he desired to unite the two Misals under the leadership of the Sukerchakias. But Ranjit Singh's indifference towards Mehtab Kaur was painful to Sada Kaur. Accompanied by her daughter, Sada Kaur went to Hardwar and happened to meet Samru Begum there. Sada Kaur and Samru Begum exchanged their clothes and expressed solidarity with each other. The courtiers of Ranjit Singh told him that Sada Kaur, being an ambitious lady, was planning to build her political power with the help and cooperation of others, including Samru Begum.<sup>81</sup> Ranjit Singh got annoyed with her. During these days Mehtab Kaur was having a failing health. She died in 1810.<sup>82</sup>

At the time of Mehtab Kaur's death Ranjit Singh was at Amritsar where the death of the former had taken place. Ranjit Singh did not attend the cremation and other condolatory ceremonies. After a lot of appeals and persuasions Diwan Mohkam Chand was able to take the Maharaja to Sada Kaur's *derah*, where he performed some of the important ceremonies of condolence.<sup>83</sup>

Because of the Maharaja's lack of necessary attention to Mehtab Kaur's sons, Sher Singh and Tara Singh, and due to some other unpleasant things Sada Kaur was, in the heart of her hearts, displeased with Ranjit Singh but outwardly she was posing to be on good terms with him.<sup>84</sup>

In 1811, in consultation with Sada Kaur, Ranjit Singh annexed the *taaluqa* of Hajipur, Sohian and other possessions of Nidhan Singh and Bhag Singh, sons of Jai Singh. These younger sons of the Kanaihya chief were living there along with their mother, Raj Kaur. The Maharaja gave them the *taaluqa* of Budha Pir which yielded an annual income of ten or twelve thousand rupees. Nidhan Singh was addicted to excessive drinking of which he died an year later.<sup>85</sup>

After Nidhan Singh's death Ranjit Singh took over the *taaluqa* of Budha Pir and, instead, gave seven or eight villages in the *taaluqa* of Jandi to Bhag Singh and his mother, Raj Kaur.<sup>86</sup> Nidhan Singh and Bhag Singh died childless.<sup>87</sup> Because of bad blood and mistrust created between Ranjit Singh and Sada Kaur the latter refused to attend the marriage of Prince Kharak Singh in 1812, nor did she allow her grandsons, Sher Singh and Tara Singh, to participate in the marriage ceremonies.<sup>88</sup>

Ranjit Singh was not happy with Sada Kaur. He was on the look out of an opportunity to annex her territories. As referred to earlier, Ranjit Singh wanted of Sada Kaur to give a sizeable *jagir* to Sher Singh. But she was not prepared for that. The estrangement between Ranjit Singh and his mother-in-law escalated. Sada Kaur crossed river Satluj<sup>89</sup> and had a dialogue with the British for help against her son-in-law. The Maharaja was a shrewd man. He wrote a conciliatory and a pleasing letter to Sada Kaur and called her back to Lahore. She came and was interned. This had taken place in 1821.<sup>90</sup> Sada Kaur made a bid to escape but was made a captive. Ranjit Singh annexed the Kanaihya territories. The town of Batala was conferred on Prince Sher Singh and other parts of the Misal were entrusted to the care of Desa Singh Majithia.<sup>91</sup>

When Desa Singh proceeded to take charge of the Kanaihya possessions he took Sada Kaur along with him, first, to Batala and, then, to Mukerian. The relatives of Sada Kaur strengthened their position in the fort of Atalgarh and started fighting with guns against the Lahore forces.<sup>92</sup> The territories of the Sardars and Misaldars of the Kanaihya Misal were seized.

On return from Mankera, Ranjit Singh called Sada Kaur's *zamindars* and officials to him. They were honoured with *jagirs* and *khillats*- Ahmad Shah Batalia, the famous contemporary writer, along with many other residents of Batala, was also called to Lahore and honoured.<sup>93</sup> Faqir Aziz-ud-Din's son. Shah Din, was appointed to supervise Prince Sher Singh's *jagir* of Batala.<sup>94</sup>

Rani Sada Kaur remained confined in the fort of Lahore and later in Amritsar, for the rest of her life till 1832. On her imprisonment in 1821, by the Maharaja, Sada Kaur appealed to the British to grant her asylum in her possession of Wadni in the cis-Satluj area.<sup>95</sup> The British accepted to give her protection and drove away the Maharaja's men from the fort of Wadni. Ranjit Singh fretted and fumed but "prudently avoided a collision with the British."<sup>96</sup>

Captain Wade, the British Superintendent of the Sikh and hill affairs, at Ludhiana, supported Ranjit Singh's claim that Wadni belonged to him and not to Sada Kaur.<sup>97</sup> His argument was that Sada Kaur had never been accepted by the British as an independent sovereign. She was always introduced by the *vakil* of Ranjit Singh, which clearly meant that she was only dependent of the Maharaja, with all her possessions in the trans and cis-Satluj areas. But the British government of India considered the protection of Wadni, in 1807, by Sada Kaur, as an indication that she enjoyed sovereign power, and was the head of the Kanaihya Misal in her own right and as such independent of Lahore suzerainty. Therefore, the grant of Wadni in 1808, by Ranjit Singh was invalid and she was entitled to claim the British protection. Thus, Ranjit Singh's claim on the territory was not accepted. Her possessions in cis-Satluj areas were declared to have lapsed into the British territories. The matter of Wadni was reopened by Lahore government in 1827, and Ranjit Singh's claim over that territory was admitted by the British<sup>98</sup> on the plea that the Rani's territories could not be considered under British protection as she, in her relations with the British, had always acted through the Lahore government. Ranjit Singh appointed Hakim Imam-ud-Din to look after the territories of cis-Satluj areas earlier possessed by Rani Sada Kaur.<sup>99</sup> On her death in 1832, at Amritsar, where she had been held as a close prisoner, her funeral ceremonies were performed by Prince Nau Nihal Singh and Maharaja Ranjit Singh came to Amritsar to condole her death.<sup>100</sup>

In the words of Latif, "Thus fell, after having figured prominently in Panjab politics for about thirty years, the high-spirited Sada Kaur, one of the most remarkable women in the history of the Panjab. She had been the mainstay of Ranjit Singh's power, the ladder, whereby that monarch had been enabled to reach the summit of his greatness. She was the companion of his toils, and to

her energy, intrigues, and influence he chiefly owed his success in his early exploits. She maintained an unbending disposition to the last, and her ruin was brought about by the course of events, not less than by the high tone she was in the habit of assuming and the independence of character she asserted, both of which the Sikh monarch had become incapable of tolerating by the growth of his power. She bore the calamity of her confinement with great restlessness and impatience, upbraiding and execrating her ungrateful son-in-law, beating her breast with vehemence, and renewing her curses and lamentations every day.”<sup>101</sup>

All the possessions of Sada Kaur had been taken over by the Maharaja in her life time. Hem Singh, the nephew of Sardar Jai Singh, had received the grant of the area of Rukhanwala, worth forty thousand rupees, from Ranjit Singh after the capture of Kasur, and again after the last campaign of Kasur in 1807, he received another estate at Khodian worth ten thousand rupees. He died in 1820. His descendants served the Lahore Durbar and enjoyed *jagirs* given by the Maharaja.<sup>102</sup> A little reference to an other branch of the Kanaihya Misal would not be out of place here.

Jaimal Singh Kanaihya married his only daughter Chand Kaur, a girl of ten years of age, to Prince Kharak Singh. The marriage was celebrated with the greatest splendour, at Fatehgarh in the Gurdaspur district, on the 6<sup>th</sup> February, 1812. Besides a large number of noted guests it was attended by the chiefs of Kaithal, Nabha and Jind and by Colonel Ochterlony, Agent of the Governor-General. Jaimal Singh made very lavish arrangements for the reception and entertainment of the marriage party and very rich presents were given to the Maharaja and other guests.<sup>103</sup> In February 1821, Chand Kaur gave birth to Nau Nihal Singh.

Jaimal Singh had died in 1812, leaving no son. Ranjit Singh decided to seize his wealth supposed to be stored up in the fort of Fatehgarh. Ranjit Singh sent one Ram Singh on a pretended mission of condolence to the widow of Jaimal Singh. As soon as he was admitted into the fort he took its possession in the name of Ranjit Singh. He obtained from the fort nine lakh rupees in the form of *ashrafis* and silver and about four lakh rupees worth ornaments. The Maharaja allowed the revenue of the district of Fatehgarh as subsistence allowance to the widow of Jaimal Singh and all their -remaining territories ‘were conferred on Kharak Singh.’<sup>104</sup>

Three months after the death of Jaimal Singh his widow gave birth to a son named Chanda Singh who held the estate until the accession of Sher Singh who resumed much of it. The annual *jagirs* of the value of 60,000 rupees were left to Chanda Singh, 45,000 rupees of which were withdrawn after the murder of Rani Chand Kaur. Later, Hira Singh, son of Raja Dhian Singh, confiscated the whole of the remaining estates of Chanda Singh, the reason given being that he had illuminated his house on hearing the death of Dhian Singh. Later, Jawahar Singh restored to him family *jagir* worth 3060 rupees. Chanda Singh died in 1861, leaving two sons.<sup>105</sup>

#### Footnotes:

1. Bute Shah, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, IV, MS., Dr Ganda Singh, Personal Collection, Patiala, p. 35; Ganesh Das Badehra. *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, (1855), Amritsar, 1965, p. 129; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol. I, (1854), Lahore, 1961, p. 271; Kanaihya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, Lahore 1877, p. 93; Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Lahore, 1865, p. 314; Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, II, reprint Patiala, 1970, p. 242.

2. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 35. According to Lepel Griffin, they joined Kapur Singh in 1749 (*The Panjab Chiefs*, p. 316). Ahmad Shah Batalia, Kanaihya Lal and Giani Gian Singh write that the name of Jai Singh's brother was Chanda Singh.
3. *Ibid.*; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 242; Khushwaqat Rai believes that Jai Singh and Haqiqat Singh were real brothers (*Tawarikh-i-Sikhan*, Dr. GS. personal collection (Patiala), p. 91).
4. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 91; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 316; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 243. According to Bute Shah (*op. cit.*, IV, p. 35) and Ali-ud-Din Mufti (*op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 271), Sohian was the village of Jhanda Singh's father-in-law.
5. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 36; Mufti Ali-ud-Din, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 271; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 243.
6. *Ibid.*; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 243; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 316.
7. *Ibid.*; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 316; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 243.
8. *Ibid.*, Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 91; Ahmad Shah Batalia, Appendix Sohan Lal Suri's *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar I, Lahore, 1885, p. 23.
9. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 316; Gian Singh *op. cit.*, p. 243.
10. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 37; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 316. Some writers think that Dasonda Singh Dhaliwal belonged to the village of Rauke Kalan in the present Moga tehsil of Faridkot district.
11. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 35; cf., Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 370.
12. Ahmad Shah Batalia, Appendix, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Qazi Nur Muhammad, *Jang-Nama* (edited by Dr Ganda Singh), p. 59.
15. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 41-42; Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 91; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 272-73; Kanaihya Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 94; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 243-44; Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, Calcutta, 1891, pp. 309-10; Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs* (1849), reprint Delhi, 1955, p. 103.
16. Baron Hugel, *Travels in Kashmir and Punjab*, London, 1845, p. 358.
17. Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, II, p. 13; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 6; Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 29. Some writers say that Charhat Singh died in 1774 when he was encamped on the bank of Basanti river where he had gone to support the cause of Brij Raj Deo, the eldest son of Ranjit Deo, the ruler of Jammu, against his younger brother Dalel Singh. But none of the contemporary Persian writers corroborates it. Murray seems to be the originator of this information which was followed and copied by the later writers like Kanaihya Lal and Muhammad Latif. But all writers are unanimous about the cause of death, which took place in 1770.
18. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 39-40; cf.. Baron Hugel, *op. cit.*, 359, Muhammad Latif., *op. cit.*, reprint, Delhi, 1964, p. 298.
19. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 40.
20. Ahmad Shah Batalia, Appendix, *op. cit.*, p. 16; cf., Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 40. Bute Shah wrongly writes that the widow of Mansa Singh herself married Tara Singh, a relative of Haqiqat Singh. In fact, she had married her daughter to Tara Singh.
21. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 43-44.
22. *Ibid.*, Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 274.
23. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 44; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 274.
24. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 45; cf., Ali-ud-Din, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 274; Lepel, Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 318.
25. Bute Shah *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 45-46; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 274.
26. Bute Shah *op. cit.*, IV, p. 46; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 274-75.
27. Bute Shah *op. cit.*, IV, p. 47; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 275, Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, (ed. 1916), p. 154.

28. *Ibid.*
29. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-48; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I. 275; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 318. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, (ed. 1891), p. 343.
30. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 21.
31. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 48; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 275-76.
32. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 106.
33. Lepel Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, p. 155; Prinsep places this marriage in 1776 (*Political Life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*), (1834), Patiala reprint. 1970 p. 32.
34. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 48-49; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 276.
35. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 276.
36. *Ibid.*
37. *Ibid.*, pp. 276-77.
38. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 49; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 277.
39. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 277-78; cf., Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 49; Baron Hugel, *op. cit.*, p. 361; Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 106.
40. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 49; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 278; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 319; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 310.
41. *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.
42. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 50; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 278.
43. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 92; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 50; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 278; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, pp. 310-11.
44. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 50; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 278-79; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 319; Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 92.
45. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 91.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
47. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 311; cf., Khushwaqat Rai *op. cit.*, p. 22; cf., Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
48. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
49. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 92.
50. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 24-26; Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 106.
51. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
52. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 25; Baron Hugel, *op. cit.*, pp. 361-62; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 311.
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Ibid.*
55. *Ibid.*
56. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 28; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 17; DYMR-II Letter No. 15, dated May, 1790, refers to Mahan Singh's death; James Skinner's *Haqaiq-i-Rajgan* (1830), Dr Ganda Singh's personal collection, Patiala). p. 105 Some writers depending on later or unreliable sources fix Mahan Singh's death in 1792, which is incorrect.
57. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 92.
58. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, 51-52. According to Lepel Griffin, Jai Singh's death took place in 1789, but he writes that the marriage of Ranjit Singh with Mehtab Kaur was performed in 1786. (*Punjab Chiefs*, ed. 1865, p.319).
59. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 279-80; cf., Baron Hugel, *op. cit.*, p. 275; Cunningham *op. cit.*, p. 157.
60. Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, Calcutta, 1891, p. 312.
61. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, Daftar II, pp., 32-33.



62. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 92.
63. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p., 92; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*; IV, p. 52; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 280.
64. Ahmad Shah Batalia, Appendix, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-26.
65. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 280.
66. *Ibid.*
67. *Ibid.*, pp. 280-81.
68. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 51-52.
69. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 281.
70. *Ibid.*, cf., Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 238.
71. *Ibid.*, p. 282.
72. *Ibid.*, cf., Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 92.
73. *Ibid.*, Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 93; Lepel Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, Oxford, 1905, pp. 158-59.
74. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 345.
75. C.H. Payne, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, London, n.d., pp. 72-73; cf., Lepel Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, p. 158.
76. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, Daftar II, p. 41; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 23.
77. *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 266.
78. Baron Hugel, *Travel in Kashmir and Punjab*, London, 1845, p. 274.
79. Ahmad Shah Batalia, Appendix, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
80. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 52; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 282.
81. *Ibid.*, p. 50; *Ibid.*, p. 283.
82. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 26; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 53; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 283.
83. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-54.
84. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
85. Bute Shah *op. cit.*, IV, p. 54; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, p. 283; cf., Ahmad Shah Batalia, Appendix, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
86. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 54; Ali-ud-Din Mufti *op. cit.*, I, p. 283.
87. Ahmad Shah Batalia, Appendix, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
88. Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh*, London, 1962, p. 136.
89. Diwan Amar Nath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, (1837), Lahore, 1928, p. 148.
90. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 26; Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 158.
91. *Ibid.*, cf., Muhammad Latif. *op. cit.*, ed. 1916, p. 108.
92. *Ibid.*
93. *Ibid.*
94. *Ibid.*, cf., Khushwant Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 137.
95. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 149.
96. G.L. Chopra, *Punjab as a Sovereign State*, Lahore, 1928, p. 68.
97. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 149.
98. Ahmad Shah Batalia, Appendix, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
99. *Ibid.*
100. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 459.
101. *Ibid.*, p. 424.
102. Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, p. 320; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 246.
103. Sohan Lal Suri *op. cit.*, II, pp. 123-25. Jaimal Singh's daughter, Chand Kaur, was born to a wife other than Sahib Kaur of Patiala.
104. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 54; cf., Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 392.
105. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 337-38.

## Chapter 8

### THE SUKARCHAKIA MISAL

#### **Budha Singh**

Budha Singh,<sup>1</sup> an affluent Jat farmer of the village of Sukarchak in the Majha tract of the Punjab, was the first historically known ancestor of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. His original name was Desu.<sup>2</sup> He was born in 1670.<sup>3</sup> He possessed 25 acres of land and three ploughs and a well. On this land he had built a couple of houses for his family and cattle. The place was named Sukarchak. *Sukar* means small and narrow and *chak* signifies a petty tract of land. It also assumed the meaning of a village. On account of this Desu began to be called Sukarchakia.<sup>4</sup> According to a tradition, it is also said that Sukarchak was so named as it was founded on Friday (Shukarwar).<sup>5</sup> Sukarchak was situated near Gujranwala, 70 kms, north of Lahore.

It is said that in his early days Desu sometimes indulged in cattle-lifting. Once Desu carried off some good cattle from the village Narkhona. After a few days he met an old woman in the jungle. She enquired of Desu's whereabouts. She told him that Desu had taken away her buffaloes and a pair of oxen and she was going to get them back. He told her that Desu was a man of fierce nature and he would maltreat her. She said that when he knew her miserable condition he would take pity on her. She could not find Desu in the village but on return to her place she was surprised to find all her cattle tied up there safe and sound.<sup>6</sup> One of his ancestors was initiated into Sikhism by Guru Gobind Singh in 1692.<sup>7</sup> Budha Singh was a daring adventurer and is said to have taken part in the battles of Guru Gobind Singh and Banda Singh Bahadur. The success, which attended his exploits, won him the reputation of being one of the boldest and the most resolute of the Sikhs of the Punjab. He built a fortress-like mansion at his village. He was always held in high esteem by the Sikhs.<sup>8</sup>

He used to ride a piebald mare called after him as Desi which had crossed with its rider the rivers of Jhelum, Ravi and Chenab fifty times. It is said that sometimes Budha Singh covered on his mare's back a distance of over one hundred miles a day. The brave and courageous Budha Singh, who was a giant in strength, is said to have received during his life time some forty sword cuts and nine matchlock wounds, without his physical strength failing him.<sup>9</sup> In the words of Carmichael Smyth, Budha Singh "was distinguished for the most intrepid courage; for his sagacity and shrewdness which bore him successfully through all his schemes, and for his ready wit and good humour. He was also famed for his regard to the rights and property of the poor."<sup>10</sup> He was very kind and sympathetic to the *faqirs*, the poor and the travellers. He died of apoplexy in 1716.<sup>11</sup>

#### **Sardar Naudh Singh**

On his death, Budha Singh left behind two sons, named Naudh Singh and Chanda Singh, the latter being the ancestor of the Sandhanwalia Sardars of Raja Sansi. Naudh Singh grew up into a healthy and beautiful youngman. During the time of drought he used to bring his cattle to graze to the Majitha village in the present Amritsar district. Gulab Singh, a baptised Sikh of Majitha, married his daughter Lali to Naudh Singh in 1730, on the condition that he should get himself duly baptised.<sup>12</sup> Gulab Singh was a devoted follower of the *Khalsa Panth*. Under the inspiration of his father-in-law, Naudh Singh joined the *Dal Khalsa* under the command of Kapur Singh Faizullapuria.<sup>13</sup> He left his home and moved about in the inhospitable jungles along with his

companions.<sup>14</sup> He came into prominence when, in the accompaniment of Kapur Singh, he relieved Ahmad Shah Durani of his baggage and heavy booty in 1749.

Sultan Khan Chatha, Pathan of Rasulnagar, forcibly converted six Sikhs to Islam. Naudh Singh and Chanda Singh attacked Rasulnagar, plundered Sultan Khan's property and brought back the Sikhs and baptised them again. Shahab-ud-Din of Firozwala captured a few Sikhs of village Karyala and removed the hair of their heads and beards. Naudh Singh and Chanda Singh plundered his village and put Shahab-ud-Din to death.

In 1749, Naudh Singh was wounded by a gun-shot in the head while fighting against the Afghan invaders. The wound did not prove fatal but he was incapacitated and he lingered on for a few years without participating in the Sikh movement in the Punjab and died in 1792.<sup>15</sup>

### **Sardar Charhat Singh (1732-1770)**

Naudh Singh had four sons: Charhat Singh, Dal Singh, Chet Singh and Maghi Singh. At the time of his father's death in 1752, Charhat Singh was 20 years of age. At that time Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Hari Singh and Jhanda Singh Bhangis were well on their way to carve out their Misals. They had their *dais* at their command and had established *rakhi* in certain areas. The *rakhi* system sowed the seeds of the Sikh political authority in the land. In the early stages, the *rakhi* or protection was sought by the people from the Sikhs and later, in order to bring more territories under the *rakhi* system, the offer of *rakhi* was made to the people of the towns and villages of the Punjab, and was actively pursued by the Sikhs as a regular feature of their activities. The word *rakhi* literally means 'protection' and in practice, it was a tribute received by the Sikhs to provide or guarantee protection against external aggression to the people paying it. The circumstances which led to the creation of this system were correlated with the rise of the Sikh power.<sup>16</sup>

Charhat Singh, to start with, was in the Bhangi *dal* but soon thereafter he began to nurse, in his heart, political ambition (*bu-i-riyast*) and came out of the Bhangi contingent and declared himself as holding an independent status.<sup>17</sup> In a short time he collected about 100 followers, and the number of his men began to grow rapidly, and soon he had, at his command, 400 horse and foot.<sup>18</sup> He placed the tracts of Rohtas, Dhani and salt mines under his *rakhi* (protection) and received the due revenue of protection money from them.<sup>19</sup> Though young in years he started his career as a very active, ambitious and pushing youngman with a good fund of intelligence and capacity to take decisions immediately. He was resourceful and very influential among the Sikhs.

His father-in-law, Amir Singh, and brother-in-law, Gurbakhsh Singh, helped him in the execution and fulfilment of his political designs. Amir Singh, though in the grip of old age, exercised tremendous influence on the people of his native place, Gujranwala. He had been a very brave and a fearless soldier. His guidance facilitated Charhat Singh's rise considerably.<sup>20</sup>

Charhat Singh's essential condition, for recruitment to his contingents, was that the incumbent must be a duly baptised 'Singh.' Those who were not already initiated into Sikhism with the baptism of the double-edged sword received the *amrit* from his hands before joining his ranks.<sup>21</sup> He made his headquarters at Gujranwala. He placed, the *taaluqas* of Gujranwala, *qila* Didar Singh, *qila* Mian Singh and *qila* Sahib Singh and a number of villages around Akalgarh, under his control. He named his Misal after the name of his native village Sukarchak.

The Muslim governor of Eminabad harassed the Hindu and Sikh population. Charhat Singh, at the head of his young companions, besieged Eminabad. A lot of cash, arms, including rifles and war munition and hundreds of horses, fell into his hands.<sup>22</sup> Flushed with victory, he planned more ambitious enterprises.

For Charhat Singh's action against Eminabad, Khwaja Ubaid Khan, the governor of Lahore, decided to teach a lesson to the former. Charhat Singh took asylum in his fortress newly constructed at Gujranwala in 1758. It was besieged by the forces of the Lahore governor in September 1761. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Bhangi chiefs Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh, Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh. Jai Singh and Sobha Singh Kanaihyas came for the relief of Charhat Singh and encamped about 6 kms away from Gujranwala. Charhat Singh's men resorted to night-attacks on the besiegers. Ubaid Was compelled to lift the siege and retire to Lahore. Charhat Singh, accompanied by his daring young followers, made an assault on the returning forces of Ubaid. They plundered much of the war material, camels and horses from the fleeing forces of Lahore<sup>23</sup>, and many soldiers of Lahore were murdered or wounded. In 1762, during the *Wada Ghallughara* Charhat Singh played a dominant role in opposing the enemy and raising the morale and spirits of the Sikhs.

### Conquests

Charhat Singh strengthened his fortress at Gujranwala. His possession began to assume the shape of a strong Misal, not so easy to reckon with. Right from his early days, he had been imbued with plans of creating a state for himself. He drove away the Muslim ruler of Wazirabad and placed it under his control, appointing his brother-in-law. Bakhshish Singh, as its *thanedar* or administrator.<sup>24</sup> Crossing river Jhelum, Charhat Singh extended his sway over Find Dadan Khan and its surrounding areas, including Ahmedabad, Khushab, Soen, etc., which were formerly held by Chanda Singh and Ganda Singh.<sup>25</sup> He also constructed a fortress at Find Dadan Khan.<sup>26</sup> He captured the salt mines of Kheora<sup>27</sup> as well from the Bhangis, that proved a good source of income to him. He also conquered the areas of Dhani and Pothohar. The *zamindars* of Chakwal, Jalalpur and Sayidpur also accepted his overlordship.<sup>28</sup> He conquered Rohtas about which Qazi Nur Muhammad wrote in 1765, "Chartu holds Rohtas in his *jagir* and this has grown into a city by his efforts"<sup>29</sup> He attained victory, in August 1761, over Nur-ud-Din Bamzai, a military commander of Ahmad Shah Durrani, on the left bank of the Chenab at Sialkot.<sup>30</sup> After holding out for eight days, against Charhat Singh, Nur-ud-Din escaped to Jammu in the disguise of a beggar. His troops, that surrendered, were allowed to go in safety. This victory made Charhat Singh a front-rank leader among the Sikh Sardars. He also seized some war material including guns and other arms.

There are many incidents on record to show Charhat Singh's utter fearlessness and dauntless courage. After the *faujdar* of Sirhind was killed by the Sikh Sardars in 1764, Ahmad Shah Abdali appointed one of his brave generals, Jahan Khan, to head an expedition against the Sikhs. When the Afghan general reached Sialkot, Charhat Singh, accompanied by Jhanda Singh and Gujjar Singh Bhangis, inflicted a crushing defeat on him.<sup>31</sup>

In December 1764, when Ahmad Shah invaded India for the seventh time he was joined by Naseer Khan Baluch, chief of Kalat, with 12,000 Baluchi troops. Qazi Nur Muhammad, who had accompanied his protegee Naseer Khan, writes that in a battle at Lahore Naseer Khan was opposed by Charhat Singh Sukarchakia. Naseer Khan's horse was killed by a bullet and he escaped to his camp. On his return journey also he was harassed by Charhat Singh.<sup>32</sup>

Jhelum town stood on the right bank of river Jhelum. In May 1767, Charhat Singh and Gujjar Singh marched upon it. Its Gakhar chief fled away to the fort of Rohtas for shelter. Charhat Singh entrusted Jhelum town to Dada Ram Singh.

A little later, Sarbuland Khan, paternal uncle of Ahmad Shah Durrani, after having been relieved of his charge as governor of Kashmir, left for Kabul, accompanied by 10 or 12 thousand troopers. When he was encamped near Attock, Charhat Singh and Gujjar Singh Bhangi marched towards Rohtas to attack its *Afghan faujdar* in the early summer of 1764. The two Sardars crossed the Chenab into the Chaj Doab, overpowered the Afghan resistance and pushed forward beyond the Jhelum. Sarbuland Khan came out to confront the Sikhs, but was forced back to seek shelter in his fort. The Sikhs laid siege to Rohtas, but there was no reduction of the fort for four months. The Sikhs under Charhat Singh pretended to raise the siege and move away. Sarbuland Khan pursued the Sikhs and fell into their trap. Charhat Singh suddenly turned back and took the fort unawares. Sarbuland Khan was made a captive but was treated with respect due to his position both as a highly placed Afghan official and as an uncle of Ahmad Shah Durrani. Pleased with the kindness received at the hands of Charhat Singh, Sarbuland Khan offered to serve under him as a governor, if he (Charhat Singh) proclaimed himself king. Charhat Singh said, "The kingship is already bestowed on us by the Guru, we want to keep you as a prisoner so that the world may know that Charhat Singh had captured the uncle of the Shah." "But there is a still greater name in releasing me," said Sarbuland Khan. "They will say," he continued, "that Charhat Singh captured the uncle of Ahmad Shah and, then, set him at liberty." The Khan then paid two lakh rupees to the Sardar, who allowed him to return to his country.<sup>33</sup>

Consequent upon the victory of the Sikhs, the entire territory between the Jhelum and Indus came into the hands of Charhat Singh and his Bhangi allies.

In a short period of fifteen years, Charhat Singh became the master of Gujranwala, Wazirabad, Ramnagar, Sialkot, Rohtas, Pind Dadan Khan and the areas of Dhani and Pothohar which gave him a good amount of revenue. Charhat Singh had on his administrative staff a number of efficient *kardars* which included Dal Singh Gill, Bhag Singh Virk, Budh Singh, Gaur Singh, Dharam Singh Batasa, Tahal Singh Chhachhi, Nirmal Singh, Himat Singh, Dada Ram Singh and Sahaj Singh.<sup>34</sup>

The Awans, the Janjuas, the Ghebas, the Alpials, the Bhandials, the Jodras and the Sagri Pathans of Makhad also accepted the overlordship of Sardar Charhat Singh.

Ever since Charhat Singh took possession of Find Dadan Khan and the salt mines of Kheora Bhangis became his deadly enemies. The biggest salt mine was at Kheora, 8 kms from Pind Dadan Khan, in Jhelum district. The others were at Nurpur in Jhelum district, at Warcha in Shahpur district and at Kalabagh in Mianwali district. The mineral exists in vertical layers. The hills are nearly 400 metres high from the valley of river Jhelum and about 8 kms in breadth. The work in the mines could be conducted for nine or ten months in the year.<sup>35</sup>

Bhangis and Sukarchakias took hostile postures and there were occasional confrontations between the two. In 1827 Bk. corresponding to A.D. 1770, when Jhanda Singh Bhangi and Charhat Singh were facing each other for a clash, Charhat Singh was mortally wounded by the bursting of his own matchlock.<sup>36</sup> At the time of Charhat Singh's death his successor, Mahan Singh, was only ten years of age.<sup>37</sup> Mahan Singh's younger brother Sahaj Singh had died in his early boyhood. During

his life time Charhat Singh had contracted some matrimonial alliances which strengthened his position. Dal Singh of Alipur, renamed Akalgarh, was married to the sister of Charhat Singh. Sahib Singh Bhangi was married to the daughter of Charhat Singh. Charhat Singh's son Mahan Singh was married to the daughter of Jai Singh Mann. Some more matrimonial alliances followed Charhat Singh's death.

Charhat Singh left behind a son, a daughter and his widow, Mai Desan. Mahan Singh being too young to handle the state affairs, his step-mother Desan took over the reigns of the administration of the Sukarchakia Misal. In the words of Gordon, "Sikh ladies played an important part in the history of these warlike times. . . and Mai Desan ruled with vigour and diplomacy."<sup>38</sup> Her brothers, Gurbakhsh Singh and Dal Singh, rendered her great service in this regard. Desan was a worldly-wise, experienced and an intelligent lady. In order to strengthen her position she married her daughter, Raj Kaur, to Sahib Singh, son of Gujjar Singh of Gujarat.<sup>39</sup> Shortly thereafter, she married her son Mahan Singh to the daughter of Gajpat Singh, ruler of Jind, in 1774.<sup>40</sup> These matrimonial relations united the three Misals for the purpose of combined action.

### **Sardar Mahan Singh (1760-1790)**

Mahan Singh was born in 1760.<sup>41</sup> He inherited a state from his father, though small in size, but had all the attributes of an independent principality. Jai Singh Kanaihya, a close friend of Charhat Singh, became foster-father of the young Sukarchakia chief. As soon as he found himself strong enough to strike, Mahan Singh snatched the fort of Rohtas from the hands of Nur-ud-Din Bamzai and occupied Kotli Ahangaran, near Sialkot. The artisans of this place were very adept in manufacturing rifles.<sup>42</sup> Mahan Singh benefited of this possession by arming his soldiers with new rifles. Then, he proceeded against Pir Muhammad, the ruler of the Chathas, on the eastern bank of river Chenab.<sup>43</sup> Assisted by Jai Singh Kanaihya, Mahan Singh marched at the head of 6,000 troops and besieged Rasulnagar in 1799. Pir Muhammad surrendered himself along with his family. His territory was occupied. Rasulnagar was renamed as Ramnagar.<sup>44</sup> Dal Singh was appointed as the administrator or the governor of the place. The victory added luster to the Sukarchakia Misal, and many other chiefs who were the dependents of the Bhangis offered to transfer their allegiance to the Sukarchakias.<sup>45</sup>

In the words of Muhammad Latif, "Mahan Singh's fame spread throughout the length and breadth of the country, owing to his having captured Rasulnagar, and the reputation for valour obtained by him was so great that many Sardars who had hitherto been dependent on the Bhangi Misal, now acknowledged the Sukarchakia Sardar as their chief, and transferred their allegiance to him, and deemed it an honour to fight under his banner."<sup>46</sup> The Chathas did not accept the defeat lying down and soon got refractory against Mahan Singh. The army had again to be led against them. This time, Alipur and Mancher were also occupied and Alipur was renamed Akalgarh.<sup>47</sup>

Chet Singh, the younger brother of Gujjar Singh Bhangi, had come to help the Chathas. Mahan Singh, captured and imprisoned him in the fort of Gujranwala. Sahib Singh's wife, Raj Kaur, who was the sister of Mahan Singh, came from Gujrat to Gujranwala to secure Chet Singh's release. Mahan Singh paid no attention to her implorings and did not liberate the Bhangi Sardar.

On his return from Rasulnagar, Mahan Singh received the happy tidings of the birth of a son who was originally named Budh Singh<sup>48</sup> but later named Ranjit Singh as he was born in the days of conquest. The birth took place on November 13, 1780,<sup>49</sup> at Gujranwala.

Mahan Singh led his next expeditions against Pindi Bhatian, Sahiwal, Jhang, Isa Khel and Musa Khel. Desa Singh Bhangi failed to protect his territories. He asked his brother-in-law Sahib Singh's help. Sahib Singh could not help because of his own strained relations with his younger brother, Sukha Singh.

In 1783, Punjab passed through a very critical period. For the past three years not a drop of rain had fallen, and one of the severest famines had broken out in northern India. *Adam adam ra me kburd, wa madar bachchan ra firo me burd. Jahan talaf sbud.* (Men ate men and the mothers sold their children. Every thing was ruined). Mahan Singh distributed grains to every body who approached him.<sup>50</sup>

Ranjit Deo, the ruler of Jammu, died in 1782. His death was followed by a dispute of succession between his sons, Brij Raj and Dalet Singh. Brij Raj emerged victorious. But Brij Raj Deo proved to be a weak and an inefficient ruler. The Kanaihyas and Bhangis, taking advantage of this position, occupied some of the territories of Jammu. Brij Deo made an appeal to Mahan Singh for help. He marched at the head of his army to Jammu but the powerful combination of his enemies compelled Brij Raj Deo to pay tribute of 30,000 rupees to the victorious Haqiqat Singh Kanaihya<sup>51</sup> and thus the Sukarchakia chief could not be of any help to Brij Deo.

About six months later, Mahan Singh again got a chance to go to Jammu, this time not in support of Brij Raj Deo but against him. Brij Deo refused to pay the stipulated tribute to the Kanaihyas who invited Mahan Singh to join them in their invasion of Jammu. Brij Raj Deo, finding himself unequal to the situation, ran away into the hills of Vaishno Devi. This took place towards the close of January 1784. Haqiqat Singh Kanaihya and Mahan Singh had made a pact to attack and plunder Jammu jointly, but the Sukarchakia chief did it alone. Mahan Singh came back with a heavy baggage of booty from Jammu.<sup>52</sup> It is said that Mahan Singh's booty was worth a crore of rupees.

In the year 1784, Mahan Singh came to Amritsar<sup>53</sup>, on the occasion of *Diwali*. Most of the chiefs of the Misals, including Jai Singh Kanaihya, had assembled there. Jai Singh was held in high esteem by all other Sardars of the Misals. Mahan Singh visited Jai Singh to pay his regards to him. During the meeting, Jai Singh, who was jealous of the growing power of the Sukarchakias, insulted Mahan Singh by his remarks, "Go away, you Bhagtia (dancing boy); I do not want to hear your sentimental talk." This was too much to be borne in silence by so haughty and impervious a young chief as Mahan Singh was."<sup>54</sup> Jai Singh also demanded a share from the booty which he had brought from Jammu.<sup>55</sup> Mahan Singh felt highly enraged at the rude treatment shown to him by the Kanaihya chief who ordered his men that Mahan Singh should not be allowed to go out of Amritsar. He should be made captive and produced before him. After a minor clash outside Amritsar both sides withdrew and went to their respective places, but Mahan Singh was not in a position to take revenge single-handed. He invited Jassa Singh Ramgarhia from Hansi and Hissar where he was living in a sort of exile as he had been driven out of his possessions by Jai Singh.<sup>56</sup> Sansar Chand Katoch, the ruler of Kangra, who was another enemy of the Kanaihyas, was also called by Mahan Singh to join him. The three chiefs, with their combined forces marched against the Kanaihyas. The battle was fought at Achal Batala, and Jai Singh's son Gurbaksh Singh, who had advanced with a force of 8,000 to oppose Mahan Singh, was struck by a bullet at the very first charge and was killed.<sup>57</sup> In the course of fighting the Kanaihyas were routed, thus humbling the old Kanaihya chief. After the battle of Achal Batala, Jai Singh retired to Naushehra where another battle was fought against Mahan Singh. Both sides sustained heavy losses, but Jai Singh suffered a defeat. The Ramgarhia and Katoch chiefs got back their territories already captured by the Kanaihyas.<sup>58</sup>

Finding the Sukarchakia Misal in its ascendancy, Sada Kaur, widow of Gurbakhsh Singh Kanaihya, proposed in 1786, the betrothal of her only daughter, Mehtab Kaur, to Ranjit Singh, the young son of Mahan Singh.<sup>59</sup> After Ranjit Singh's recovery from an attack of small pox and high fever at Jammu during Mahan Singh's campaign to that place in 1786, the latter held a magnificent function at Gujranwala. Many Sardars came to offer congratulations. Jai Singh Kanaihya also attended the function. There, he made a formal proposal of his granddaughter's betrothal with Mahan Singh's son, which was accepted. With this matrimonial alliance peace was restored between the two contending Misals. This alliance proved very helpful to Ranjit Singh in his future conquests and consolidation of Punjab under his sway.<sup>60</sup>

As referred to above, Mahan Singh's sister was married to Sahib Singh of Gujrat. After the death of his father, Gujjar Singh, in 1788, Sahib Singh became the ruler of Gujrat. Mahan Singh demanded *haq-i-bakmana*, succession money, or tribute from Sahib Singh who refused to give any. The hackneyed maxim that, "kinship knows no kinship" so aptly applied to the situation. To promote the interests of one's state even close blood relationship was disregarded. Sahib Singh was the husband of Mahan Singh's real sister. Hostilities commenced between the two. Sahib Singh took asylum in the fort of Sodhra which was besieged by Mahan Singh.<sup>61</sup> Mahan Singh's sister, Raj Kaur, waited upon her brother and tried to dissuade him from fighting. Mahan Singh did not care to heed to her entreaties. The Sukarchakia chief was having a failing health due to overwork and exhaustion and in the course of the siege of Sodhra when the victory was just insight he was suddenly taken ill by a violent attack of fever. Handing over the charge of the siege to his ten year old son Ranjit Singh, Mahan Singh retired to Gujranwala where he expired on the 5<sup>th</sup> Baisakh, 1847 Bk., corresponding to April 15, 1790,<sup>62</sup> as a result of severe dysentery.<sup>63</sup> Thus, the death removed the ambitious and courageous Sukarchakia chief from the stage of history in early youth at the age of thirty. According to Hari Ram Gupta, "There is not the least doubt about it that if he had lived ten years longer, he would have become the sole monarch of the whole of northern India from the Khyber Pass to the Ganga, and from the Himalyas to the Arabian sea, and Emperor Shah Alam II would have become his protegee"<sup>64</sup>

In the words of Muhammad Latif, "Mahan Singh was brave, enterprising and prudent beyond his years; and the age in which he lived highly favoured his ambitious schemes. . . . His early feats in arms had acquired for him so great a reputation that many influential independent Sardars joined his banner. His rapid successes gave him an ascendancy over all the Sikh chiefs. His military genius, undaunted courage, stern temper and rigid observance of the rules of delicacy and honour, at times, involved him in serious trouble, but he honourably acquitted himself on all such occasions. At an early age, he shook off the trammels of his mother's guardianship to pave the way for his own greatness."<sup>65</sup>

James Browne, in 1787, estimated the military strength of Mahan Singh at 15,000 horse and 5,000 foot in the Rachna Doab and about 5,000 horse and foot in the Chaj and Sind Sagar Doabs.<sup>66</sup> Imam-ud-Din Husaini wrote in 1796 that Mahan Singh commanded about 22,000 horse and foot.<sup>67</sup> "He left to his son and successor a state beset with danger; but he bequeathed to him at the same time the qualities by which dangers are best overcome— courage combined with a natural genius for command and enterprise tempered by prudence and foresights."<sup>68</sup>

After his father's death Ranjit Singh succeeded to the chiefship of his Misal. Only at the age of nineteen he occupied Lahore and put his Misal on the road to glory of a consolidated kingdom of



the Punjab. His rule gave to the history of Punjab a remarkable era of independence, pride, magnificence, security and stability.

### **Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780—1839)**

Ranjit Singh was born on November 13, 1780<sup>69</sup>, at Gujranwala. Very little is known about his childhood except that he had a virulent attack of small pox which deprived him of his left eye.

Right from the beginning he had displayed a spirit of bravery and adventure. Even at the young age of six he, along with other boys, did swimming in river Chenab.<sup>70</sup> In his early boyhood he was sent to Bhagu Singh's *dharamsala* at Gujranwala to learn Gurmukhi but he did not assimilate anything at school.<sup>71</sup> Later, he received training in shooting from a Brahman, named Amir Singh, who was matchless in that art.<sup>72</sup> At the time of his father's death he was a young boy of ten years old.<sup>73</sup> It is said that the *pagri* or turban-tying ceremony, in respect of Ranjit Singh, had already been performed in the life time of Mahan Singh. Ranjit Singh was too young to handle the state affairs but he had no difficulty in accession to his father's *gaddi*.

As told earlier Ranjit Singh had been engaged to the daughter of an intelligent and a brave lady. Rani Sada Kaur, widow of Gurbakhsh Singh<sup>74</sup> of Kanaihya Misal. In his early years Ranjit Singh was fortunate in having the help of a shrewd and far-sighted woman as Sada Kaur was. Sardar Dal Singh Gill and Gurbakhsh Singh of Wazirabad were appointed to look after the army and the administrative affairs were conducted by Diwan Lakhat Rai, popularly known as Lakhu.<sup>75</sup> Ranjit Singh's mother, Raj Kaur, also supervised the administrative business.<sup>76</sup>

In 1795<sup>77</sup>, at the age of 15, Ranjit Singh got himself married to Mehtab Kaur, daughter of Sada Kaur.

He had his second marriage with Datar Kaur, sister of Sardar Gian Singh Nakkai, in 1798. She was popularly known as Mai Nakkain. Kharak Singh was born to her on February 22, 1801.

At the time of Ranjit Singh's accession to power, the Punjab was divided into a number of petty principalities and some of the leaders were not on happy terms with one another. The people of the province were generally devoid of a sense of unity. The Sikh confederacies had already been weakened. The Afghans under Zaman Shah were again threatening to establish their overlordship in the Punjab. The English had also started to take interest in this part of the country as their future sphere of influence. Besides, there were some Pathan possessions, adjoining hill states under the Hindu Rajas and several small and petty principalities that dotted the map of the Punjab. "In the 1790s, the Punjab looked like a jig-saw puzzle consisting of fourteen pieces with five arrows piercing it from the sides. Twelve of these fourteen pieces were the Sikh *Misals*; the other two, the Pathan-controlled district of Kasur in the neighbourhood of Lahore, and Hansi in the south-east under the English adventurer, George Thomas. The five arrows were: The Afghans in the north-west; the Rajputs of Kangra in the north; the Gorkhas in the north-east; the British in the east; and the Marathas in the south-east."<sup>78</sup>

The province was a congeries of small disintegrated states and there was no individual power in the province which could pose any formidable danger to the adventures of a strong man. As early as 1783, George Forster had predicted that "we may see some ambitious chief, led on by his genius and success, absorbing the power of his associates, display from the ruins of their commonwealth the standard of monarchy,"<sup>79</sup>

Anarchy and political upheaval always hold out an opportunity to men of genius. In the words of Lepel Griffin, "There is perhaps no more notable and picturesque figure among the chiefs who rose to power on the ruins of the Mughal Empire than Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the founder of the short-lived Sikh kingdom of Lahore. In the stormy days at the beginning of the century, amid a fierce conflict of races and creeds, he found his opportunity and, seizing it with energy, promptitude and genius welded the turbulent and warlike sectaries, who followed the teachings of Gobind Singh into a homogeneous nation."<sup>80</sup>

Young Ranjit Singh, who was aspiring for the consolidation of the Punjab, had to face an ambitious aggrandiser, Zaman Shah Durrani, who succeeded to the throne of Kabul in 1793, and had plans to seize the Punjab.

Zaman Shah marched to the Punjab in the winter of 1798, and reached Lahore on 27<sup>th</sup> November.

The Shah despatched a contingent of Afghans to Amritsar. Ranjit Singh issued out of the town and gave a tough fight to the Afghans and forced them to retire to Lahore.<sup>81</sup> Every night Ranjit Singh visited, with a few *sawars*, the suburbs of the city of Lahore and attacked the forces of the Shah at night with a view to harassing him.<sup>82</sup>

According to Sohan Lal Suri,<sup>83</sup> Ranjit Singh, at this time, thrice rushed upon the Samman Burj of the Lahore fort with a few Sardars, fired a number of shots, killed and wounded a number of Afghans, and on one occasion challenged the Shah himself to a hand to hand fight, "Come out you, O, grandson of Ahmad Shah," shouted Ranjit Singh to him, "and try two or three hands with the grandson of the great Sardar Charhat Singh." But as there was no response from the other side, Ranjit Singh had to retire without a trial of strength with the Durrani.

During the four-week stay of the Shah at Lahore some of the Sardars met him there.

During his visit to the Shah, Ranjit Singh's representative probably negotiated for the *subedari* of Lahore.<sup>84</sup> But at this stage the revered Sikh Baba Sahib Singh Bedi pleaded with the Sardars to stop negotiating with the Durrani invader. They agreed to abide by his decision and when the Shah's agents came to the Sikh Sardars again, Sahib Singh Bedi told them on behalf of the Sikhs, "We took the country by the sword and will preserve it by the same."<sup>85</sup> Then, the Shah gave up the plan to win over the Sikhs.

According to Ali-ud-Din Mufti, Zaman Shah left for Kabul after a month's stay at Lahore as Mahmud Shah, in collaboration with Baba Khan Qachar, had attacked Kabul. Diplomatically enough, Ranjit Singh did not harass Zaman Shah on his return march rather facilitated his return so that he might not get irritated against him and think of hitting back at him at the earliest opportunity. Since the Shah had to go back hurriedly 12 of his guns sank in river Jhelum that was in spate because of rainy season. It is said that Shah addressed a letter to Ranjit Singh that after the level of the river water went down he might extricate his guns and get them sent to Kabul. Ranjit Singh brought out all the 12 guns from the river. He despatched eight of them to Kabul and retained four with him in his arsenal one of which was of iron and three of brass.<sup>86</sup>

### **Ranjit Singh's occupation of Lahore (1799)**

Twenty six days after Zaman Shah's exit from Lahore, on 4<sup>th</sup> January 1799 the Bhangi Sardars re-entered Lahore. The three rulers of Lahore were riot functioning in collaboration with one another.

According to Munshi Sohan Lal, the people of Lahore were suffering hardships under the misrule of their chiefs.<sup>87</sup> The respectable people of Lahore, including the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, met secretly and decided to address an invitation to Ranjit Singh, to come to Lahore and arrange its occupation. Ranjit Singh accepted the invitation.<sup>88</sup> The letter of invitation sent to him was signed by Muhammad Ashaq, Gurbakhsh Singh, Hakim Rai, Mufti Muhammad Mukarram, Muhammad Bakar, Mir Shadi and Mehar Mohkam Din. It was sent through Hakim Rai.<sup>89</sup>

Ranjit Singh started from Rasulnagar and reached Batala and discussed the matter of occupation of Lahore with Rani Sada Kaur.<sup>90</sup> She accompanied him to Lahore. They had at their command an army of about twenty five thousand horsemen and foot soldiers. The people of Lahore had earlier promised Ranjit Singh to open the Lohari Gate at his arrival there. On the day Ranjit Singh reached Lahore, the Lohari Gate could not be opened as it was strongly defended by Chet Singh.

Next morning, that is, on July 6, 1799<sup>91</sup>, Ranjit Singh led his men to Lohari Gate which was opened unto him. The eighteen year old conqueror entered the city triumphantly.

Mohar Singh was captured and produced before Ranjit Singh. Graciously enough, he allowed him to proceed to his *agirs*, along with his goods. Chet Singh evacuated the fort next morning, that is, on July 7, 1799 (29<sup>th</sup> of the month of Har, Samat 1856), and Ranjit Singh occupied the fort the same day.<sup>92</sup>

### **Confrontation at Bhasin (March 1800)**

Ranjit Singh's power was growing day by day. With the occupation of Lahore—the traditional capital of the Punjab, Ranjit Singh's power received a fillip. Other Sardars got jealous of him.

So, they joined hands to restrain Ranjit Singh from his policy of territorial aggrandisement. After the festival of *boli* Sahib Singh of Gujrat, Gulab Singh Bhangi, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and Nizam-ud-Din of Kasur assembled their forces at the village of Bhasin, about 9 *kos* on the east of Lahore.<sup>93</sup> Ranjit Singh came from Lahore. Both sides arrayed themselves in the battle-field and no action took place between the contending forces for two months.<sup>94</sup> Each side was apprehensive of the other and did not consider proper to initiate fighting. After the expiry of about eight weeks, Gulab Singh Bhangi, who had invited the other chiefs to fight on his side, drank himself to death.<sup>95</sup>

The death of their leader dispirited the confederate army which dispersed without achieving anything and their plans fizzled out.

### **Invasion of Jammu (1800)**

After he was free from the expedition of Bhasin, Ranjit Singh attacked Jammu. The ruler of Jammu had an audience with Ranjit Singh and offered him a *nazarana* of 20 thousand rupees and an elephant.<sup>96</sup>

### **Possession of Akalgarh (1801)**

Akalgarh had been conferred on Dal Singh by Sardar Mahan Singh. Since Dal Singh had become hostile to Ranjit Singh the former was brought to Lahore by the latter and interned there in 1800.<sup>97</sup> Dal Singh assured Ranjit Singh of his perfect innocence and he was released on the intercession of Sada Kaur and Baba Kesra Singh Sodhi.<sup>98</sup> Dal Singh died shortly after arriving back at Akalgarh. Ranjit Singh visited Akalgarh for condolence. He granted a *jagir* of two villages to Dal Singh's widow for her subsistence,<sup>99</sup> and placed Akalgarh under his control.

### **Assumed the Title of Sarkar (April 12, 1801)**

A grand *darbar* was organised on *Baisakhi* day, Sunday, April 12, 1801, in which many Sardars and notables and prominent citizens were invited to participate. Ranjit Singh assumed the title of *sarkar* or *sarkar-i-wala*, and not that of 'Maharaja' as some writers believe.<sup>100</sup>

### **Siege of Kasur (1801)**

It has already been referred to that the Pathan ruler of Kasur was keen contestant for Lahore but Ranjit Singh had stolen a march over him. Nawab Nizam-ud-Din had come to Bhasin along with the Sikh chiefs. He had also been inciting Sahib Singh of Gujrat against Ranjit Singh. The Maharaja wanted to punish the Nawab for his intrigues against him. According to Amar Math, the Maharaja sent a big army against him under the command of Sardar Fateh Singh Kalianwala. The Nawab suffered a defeat at the hands of the Lahore army and obtained peace through submission. He became a tributary *subedar* of the Maharaja and paid a huge amount as war indemnity. He also sent his younger brother, Qutab Din, and Haji Khan and Wasil Khan to Lahore as hostages.<sup>101</sup>

### **Attack on Kangra (1801)**

Some of the territories of Rani Sada Kaur had been usurped by Sansar Chand Katoch of Kangra. In the words of Khush-waqat Rai, "Sansar Chand often uttered these remarks from his tongue: from the hair of the Sikhs I shall prepare the ropes for my horses, and spoke very ill of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh."<sup>102</sup> He was planning to further penetrate into Sada Kaur's territories. She informed Ranjit Singh of Sansar Chand's designs. Sansar Chand captured the fort of Garhdiwala and gave it to Jodh Singh Ramgarhia and Bhunga to Nawab Fatu Khan, brother of Ghulam Qadar.<sup>103</sup>

The Maharaja led an army of six thousand horsemen into Kangra. Sansar Chand ran away for his life. The territories of Sada Kaur occupied by Sansar Chand were restored to her. Nurpur was also taken from Sansar Chand.<sup>104</sup>

### **Exchange of Turban with Fateh Singh Ahluwalia (1802)**

When the Maharaja went to Tarn Taran for a dip in the holy tank he expressed a desire to have a meeting with Fateh Singh Ahluwalia. Both the rulers met in the presence of the holy *Guru Granth Sahib* and exchanged turbans to profess brotherhood.<sup>105</sup>

### **Occupation of Chiniot (1802)**

Territory of Chiniot was in the hands of Jassa Singh, son of Karam Singh Dullu. His subjects were sick of him. The Maharaja led an army to Chiniot. Jassa Singh closed the gates of the fort. The siege continued for about two months. At last Jassa Singh evacuated the fort and Ranjit Singh placed it under his own control. The Maharaja gave Jassa Singh a suitable *jagir*.<sup>106</sup>

### **Occupation of Amritsar (1805)**

It was, then, held by Mai Sukhan, widow of Gulab Singh Bhangi, who had died at Bhasin by excessive drinking in 1800. She had the support of the Ramgarhia Sardar.

On the advice of Jodh Singh, the Ramgarhia chief, and the A kali leader Phula Singh, the fort and the city of Amritsar were evacuated by Mai Sukhan on February 24, 1805.<sup>107</sup> The occupation of Amritsar, the religious capital of the Sikhs, brought additional lustre to Ranjit Singh's name.

### **Jaswant Rao Holkar's Visit (1805)**

Jaswant Rao met Ranjit Singh and requested him for help against the British. Ranjit Singh made all arrangements for his comfortable stay at Amritsar. After consultations with some other Sardars, Ranjit Singh advised Jaswant Rao to sue for peace with the English. General Lake was also told that it was in the interest of both to conclude peace. Both agreed and the fighting between them was avoided.<sup>108</sup>

### **Malwa Campaigns (1806-08)**

From 1806 to 1808, Ranjit Singh led three campaigns into the cis-Satluj areas. In 1806, there cropped up a sharp dispute between Patiala and Nabha over the possession of village Daladi, barely 2 kms from the town of Nabha. Ranjit Singh was invited to mediate in the dispute.<sup>109</sup> On his way to Patiala and back he placed a large number of villages and territories under his own control in the cis-Satluj areas.<sup>110</sup>

In 1807, the Maharaja was again invited to settle the dispute between Rani Aus Kaur and Sahib Singh, the ruler of Patiala.<sup>111</sup> During this visit also Ranjit Singh followed the same policy of territorial aggrandisement.

In 1808, again he entered the cis-Satluj areas with a view to subjugating the cis-Satluj region. During all the three incursions he conquered and distributed a large number of villages and territories among his followers including Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, Mai Sada Kaur and Diwan Mohkham Chand.

### **Ranjit Singh Helped the Ruler of Kangra (1807)**

The Gurkhas of Nepal planned the conquest and occupation of the whole of Himachal Pradesh. After conquering Sirmur, Garhwal and Nalagarh the Gorkhas proceeded towards Kangra under the command of Amar Singh Thapa. Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra sent his brother Mian Fateh Chand to meet Maharaja Ranjit Singh and seek help against the Nepalese who were encamped near Kangra. Ranjit Singh expressed his readiness to help Sansar Chand.

Amar Singh Thapa, finding himself no match for the allies, that is Sansar Chand and Ranjit Singh, retired quickly from Kangra.<sup>112</sup>

### **Occupation of Kasur (1807)**

After the death of Nawab Nizam-ud-Din in 1807, his brother, Qutb-ud-Din Khan, succeeded him. He did not like to remain under the overlordship of Ranjit Singh and got refractory. On the other hand, Ranjit Singh did not like an independent Afghan state to function so close to his capital. So he decided to occupy Kasur at the earliest. Lahore forces attacked Kasur on the 10th of February 1807, and the siege of the fort continued for a month and during this time a mine was laid under a wall of the fort which was battered. The captured Nawab was produced before Ranjit Singh

who received him graciously and gave him the *jagir* of Mamdot that brought an annual income of one lakh rupees.<sup>113</sup>

### **Occupation of Jhang (1807)**

Jhang was under Ahmad Khan Sial. In 1807, the Maharaja came to know that Ahmad Khan had concluded a secret treaty with Nawab Muzaffar Khan of Multan. The Maharaja sent a heavy force against Jhang and it was annexed to the Lahore kingdom in 1807. Ahmad Khan was provided with a *jagir* for a decent living.<sup>114</sup>

### **Submission of Bahawalpur and Akhnur (1807-08)**

As a result of Maharaja's invasion of Bahawalpur in 1807, Nawab Bahawal Khan submitted to the Maharaja and promised to pay annual tribute regularly.<sup>115</sup> In 1808, Alam Singh, the ruler of Akhnur, accepted the overlordship of the Maharaja.<sup>116</sup>

### **Annexation of Dallewalia Misal (1807)**

Dallewalia Misal was annexed by Ranjit Singh in 1807. It had been under Tara Singh Ghaiba who was supporter of Ranjit Singh. He had accompanied the Maharaja to Patiala a few days earlier. On learning about Tara Singh's death the Maharaja went to Rahon to condole Ghaiba's death to his widow. Ranjit Singh occupied the entire territory of Tara Singh and gave a *jagir* of a few villages to his widow.<sup>117</sup>

### **Occupation of the Fort of Kangra (1809)**

For some time past Amar Singh Thapa had been busy fighting against Sansar Chand of Kangra.<sup>118</sup> According to Diwan Amar Nath, the Gurkha army, thrown against Sansar Chand, was about 50 thousand with two guns.<sup>119</sup> The Kangra chief sent his brother Fateh Chand as his emissary to Ranjit Singh for help against the Gurkhas. Ranjit Singh demanded a heavy price for the help in the form of possession of the fort of Kangra. Sansar Chand agreed to surrender the fort and it passed into the hands of Lahore forces on August 25, 1809.<sup>120</sup>

On September 24, 1809, Ranjit Singh valiantly entered the Kangra fort and held a grand Durbar there in which the rulers of Kangra, Chamba, Nurpur, Kotla, Shahpur, Jasrota, Basohli, Mankot, Jaswan, Guler, Mandi, Suket, Kulu and Datarpur participated. All the hill chiefs offered *nazaranas* to the Maharaja, and on their return they received robes of honour from him. Ranjit Singh appointed Desa Singh Majithia in charge of the fort of Kangra with Pahar Singh Mann, as its deputy *nazim*.<sup>121</sup>

### **Occupation of Gujrat (1810)**

Gujrat was under the control of Sahib Singh Bhangi. He developed strained relations with his son, Gulab Singh,<sup>122</sup> who occupied a couple of forts against the wishes of his father. Ranjit Singh availed of this opportunity and in the course of two or three months he occupied the whole of Gujrat. Sahib Singh escaped to the hilly areas.<sup>123</sup>

### **Conquest of Khushab and Sahiwal (1810)**

The territories of Khushab and Sahiwal were inhabited by the Baloch tribes and they had built, at many places, very strong forts. On the arrival of Lahore forces near Khushab its ruler Jafar Khan Baloch, finding himself no match for the Sikhs, fled from the town of Khushab.<sup>124</sup> After a severe fighting, the Maharaja conquered the fort of Sahiwal on February 10, 1810.<sup>125</sup>

### **Conquest of Jammu (1810)**

Before the Maharaja started for Khushab he had despatched a contingent to Jammu under the command of Hukma Singh Chimni. After a brief resistance the chief administrator, Mian Mota, handed over the state to the Maharaja.<sup>126</sup>

### **Annexation of Wazirabad (1810)**

Jodh Singh, the ruler of Wazirabad, died in November 1809. The Maharaja appointed the former ruler's son, Ganda Singh, as the successor of his father. In June 1810, there were riots between Ganda Singh and his relatives.<sup>127</sup> The Maharaja ordered Faqir Aziz-ud-Din, the administrator of Gujrat, to go and occupy Wazirabad.<sup>128</sup> Ganda Singh was relieved of his charge and was given a reasonable *jagir* for his subsistence.

### **Annexation of the Territories of Faizullapurias (1811), Nakkais (1811) and Kanaihyas (1821)**

The territories of the Faizullapurias were situated on both sides of river Satluj. Budh Singh, the Sardar of this Misal, was not willing to accept Ranjit Singh as his overlord. The Maharaja ordered Mohkam Chand to mobilize forces against Budh Singh. Mohkam Chand, accompanied by Jodh Singh Ramgarhia and Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, besieged Jalandhar. Budh Singh escaped to Ludhiana and sought the protection of the British. The fort of Jalandhar and its surrounding areas were conquered by Mohkam Chand.<sup>129</sup> Budh Singh's possessions near Tarn Taran were also captured by the Maharaja's artillery officer, Ghaus Khan.

The territory under the Nakkais was situated between Multan and Kasur. Sardar Kahn Singh, son and successor of Gian Singh Nakkai, had gone to Multan to realise the tribute from Muzaffar Khan on behalf of the Lahore Durbar.<sup>130</sup> Ranjit Singh sent Mohkam Chand and Prince Kharak Singh to the territory of the Nakkais to take charge of the same.<sup>131</sup> Mohkam Chand conquered the fortresses of Chunia, Dipalpur and Satgarha in 1811. Sardar Kahn Singh came back from Multan to find his Misal gone out of his hands. He was given a *jagir* worth twenty thousand rupees annually.<sup>132</sup>

Kanaihya territory was in possession of Sada Kaur, the widow of Gurbakhsh Singh.

Sada Kaur, who had been greatly helpful in Ranjit Singh's coming to power, was estranged from him in 1821, due to some domestic circumstances, and her territories were annexed to the Lahore dominion.<sup>133</sup>

In the scheme of having a strong and a united Punjab there could have been no place for many independent and semi-independent chieftains. And evidently it was, therefore, of urgent necessity that they had all to be brought into the fold of the new power.

It must, however, be said to the credit of Maharaja Ranjit Singh that he was always considerate and sympathetic towards the vanquished and granted to them *jagirs* sufficient for their decent and comfortable living. He knew how to handle a situation. When he was organising an expedition against Multan, he released Ahmed Khan Sial of Jhang and gave him a substantial *jagir* and, thus attached him and his Muslim followers to himself.<sup>134</sup> Ranjit Singh was the political architect of the new Punjab and he never allowed his campaign a religious colour in spite of the Wahabis leading a crusade against him.

It is true that Ranjit Singh's policy of absorption, at times, estranged some of the Sardars into his opponents but he was always tactful enough to win them over to his side. He was thus, able to create a new Punjab with a strong and compact kingdom with natural and dependable frontiers on all sides, as large a kingdom as France.<sup>135</sup>

Divergent views have been expressed regarding Ranjit Singh's policy of unification. However, there could be much justification in his favour when we find that he united all the wavering elements together and converted the Sikh bands into a strong political entity. Moreover, by digging out a kingdom from the debris of confusion in the Punjab Ranjit Singh canalised the annual revenue of Punjab amounting to over three crores of rupees, using it for social and economic progress of the country.<sup>138</sup>

## **Conquests and Consolidation of Multan, Kashmir, Attock and Peshawar**

### **Conquest of Multan**

During Ranjit Singh's time Multan was considered to be invulnerable, but due to its importance, particularly on strategic and commercial grounds, Ranjit Singh was determined to annex it. It was situated on the highway leading to Qandhar and was linked with Delhi through Bathinda. It was one of the major trading centres between India and Central Asia. Ranjit Singh's state was surrounded by a ring of Muslim principalities. By conquering Multan the Maharaja could drive a wedge between the Muslim states of Bahawalpur and Dera Ghazi Khan as these states could always plan a common cause against the Lahore Durbar. Financially too, the conquest of the province of Multan was very beneficial to Ranjit Singh. With all these considerations in mind Ranjit Singh set his heart on the annexation of Multan. He had to lead about half a dozen campaigns to Multan in the course of a decade and a half.

### **First Expedition (1803)**

According to Amar Nath, Muzaffar Khan, the *nazim* (governor) of Multan, nursed rebellious plans in his head. Ranjit Singh ordered that all his army be marched in the direction of Multan. On the way he received *nazaranas* from the nobles of Nakka territory. When Muzaffar Khan got the news about the invasion of his territory by the Durbar forces he invited his friends to support him. Though the Afghans were out to help him but he got frightened and sent his representatives to meet the Maharaja about 25 *kos* away from Multan. Some amount was paid to Ranjit Singh who returned to Lahore.<sup>137</sup>

### **Second Expedition (1805)**

According to Sohan Lal Suri, after the rainy season was over in the month of Asuj (September), Ranjit Singh led his forces towards Multan. He encamped at village Mohtam, 2 *kos* from Multan. He sent his envoys to the Nawab and insisted for immediate payment of the *nazarana* otherwise his army would attack the town. Just then, Ranjit Singh received the message of Jaswant Rao Holkar's visit to the Punjab and the Maharaja returned to Lahore immediately.<sup>138</sup>

### **Third Expedition (1807)**

Muzaffar Khan of Multan had been secretly helping the Nawab of Kasur. He had also provided asylum to Ahmad Khan Sial whom Ranjit Singh had defeated only some time back. The Maharaja wanted to punish the Nawab of Multan for his disloyal and treacherous behaviour. The Durbar forces destroyed some buildings outside the town of Multan. Peace was settled and Muzaffar Khan offered 70 thousand rupees as *nazarana* to Maharaja Ranjit Singh who returned to Lahore.<sup>139</sup>



#### **Fourth Expedition (1810)**

On February 20, 1810, the Maharaja started against Muzaffar Khan, and in the next four days the Durbar forces reached the outskirts of Multan. The Nawab was ready to fight the Maharaja's forces. The Sikh forces captured the town on February 25, 1810. Then, they laid siege to the fort which lasted nearly for two months and mines were laid beneath the western wall of the fort.<sup>140</sup> In utter despair and disappointment, the Nawab raised the white flag and agreed to pay a huge amount as war indemnity and *nazarana* which, according to Amar Nath, was Rs. 180,000.<sup>141</sup>

#### **Fifth Expedition (1816)**

After 1810, Ranjit Singh could not pay any attention to Multan for the next many years. During this time he was busy against Attock and Kashmir. Misar Dewan Chand led an army to Multan in 1816. Akali Phula Singh also commanded his forces to Multan. Phula Singh tried to make an opening in the outer wall of the citadel. The Nawab paid a *nazarana* of 80 thousand rupees immediately and promised to pay forty thousand more within the next two or three months.<sup>142</sup> The Sikh forces returned from Multan.

#### **Sixth Expedition (1817)**

The Maharaja sent a contingent to realise the stipulated *nazarana* from the Nawab of Multan. On the hesitant attitude of the Nawab an army was despatched to conquer Multan which was besieged but soon, thereafter, the siege was lifted.<sup>143</sup>

#### **Last Expedition and Occupation of Multan (1818)**

The Maharaja appointed Prince Kharak Singh to be the nominal commander of the expedition, though the operational part of the whole campaign was to be managed by Misar Diwan Chand.

The Maharaja personally supervised all the preparations for the expedition.

The Nawab laid down his life fighting along with two of his sons, Shah Niwaz Khan and Shahbaz Khan.<sup>144</sup> Nawab's two sons, Sarfraz Khan and Zulfiqar Khan, were captured alive.<sup>145</sup> The Multan fort capitulated on June, 2, 1818.

The booty worth 2 lakhs,<sup>146</sup> included *mohars*, diamonds, rare swords, rifles, shawls, rings, etc. All these things were sent to Lahore to be deposited into the royal *toshakhana*.<sup>147</sup> Lahore Durbar also got many good horses and camels and five big guns from Multan.

#### **Occupation of Kashmir and Attock**

The Durrani government of Kabul was disintegrating. The governors of Peshawar, Attock and Kashmir had declared themselves independent of Kabul. On regaining power, Shah Mahmud, the ruler of Kabul, and Wazir Fateh Khan decided to oust Ata Muhammad Khan, governor of Kashmir, from power. At that time, Ranjit Singh was in full control of the Punjab. The nobles of Jammu, Jhelum and Gujrat, through which entry into Kashmir was possible, were in the control of the Maharaja. Therefore, without the cooperation of Ranjit Singh, it was dangerous, from a military point of view, to attack Kashmir.

A meeting was held between Ranjit Singh and Fateh Khan in November 1812, at Rohtas, in Ranjit Singh's camp.<sup>148</sup>

Ranjit Singh accepted to help Fateh Khan against the Kashmir governor, Ata Muhammad Khan. Murray says that the Maharaja agreed to help the Afghan Wazir, with an army of 12,000, in return for a detachment of the Afghans against Multan, and nine lakhs of rupees from the spoils of Kashmir.

It is believed that Ranjit Singh's main object was not that of exacting heavy money or getting Kashmir by some strategy. He wanted to acquire local knowledge which could be put to use in future. The real aim, as events were to show soon, may be found bound up with the critical situation that was created by the Kabul Wazir's attempting to get across the river Indus and to extend his effective control to territories so close to Ranjit Singh's kingdom. Fateh Khan's attempt against Kashmir was only the first step in this connection. Kashmir would be followed by Multan and that would soon be followed by Bahawalpur and, then, many other areas one by one.<sup>149</sup>

Both the Afghan and the Sikh forces crossed Jhelum in December 1812, and entered Kashmir valley via Bhimber, Rajauri and Pir Panjal. Afghan forces were six *kos* ahead of the Durbar forces.<sup>150</sup>

According to the Lahore report, the spoils of Kashmir amounted to forty lakhs of rupees and some jewels. Shah Shujah, who was also imprisoned there, was brought into Diwan Mohkam Chand's camp and his chains were removed.

Fateh Khan also tried to get possession of the person of Shah Shujah who had already come under the custody of Diwan Mohkam Chand. Fateh Khan made many alluring offers to Shah Shujah to go over to their camp.

There were negotiations going on between Ranjit Singh and Jahandad Khan, governor of Attock, even before launching of the joint expedition of the Maharaja and Fateh Khan.

### **Occupation of Attock by the Maharaja (March 1813)**

Jahandad Khan, *nazim* of the fort, now felt that after the conquest of Kashmir it was his turn to be thrown out of the fort by Wazir Fateh Khan. He knew his limitations and clearly felt that he was no match for Shah Mahmud and his Wazir, Fateh Khan. He approached Ranjit Singh and agreed to surrender the fort on the condition of getting a decent subsistence allowance.<sup>151</sup> Ranjit Singh immediately offered the *pargana* of Wazirabad as a *jagir* to Jahandad Khan,<sup>152</sup> and despatched his army under the command of Faqir Aziz-ud-Din, Sardar Mit Singh Naherna and Diwan Bhawani Das<sup>153</sup> to take charge of the fort of Attock.

The negotiations between Jahandad Khan and the Maharaja remained a guarded secret from Fateh Khan. When Fateh Khan came to know about it he was very much upset and annoyed.<sup>154</sup> Handing over the charge of Kashmir to his brother Azim Khan, Fateh Khan reached Peshawar and sent a message to Ranjit Singh to evacuate the fort of Attock.<sup>155</sup> The Maharaja refused.

### **First Sikh-Afghan Battle (1813)**

At the head of a large force Fateh Khan laid siege to the fort of Attock. On the other hand, Diwan Mohkam Chand crossed river Jhelum to reinforce the fort.<sup>156</sup> Both the Sikh and the Afghan forces lay face to face for three months without action. With the permission of the Maharaja, the Sikh forces attacked the Afghans on July 12, 1813,<sup>157</sup> at Hazro, about 8 *kms* distant from Attock.

This battle is also known as the battle of Chuch. There was a terrible fight between the rival forces. Ultimately, the Lahore forces emerged victorious. Fateh Khan ran away<sup>158</sup> to Peshawar. Hukma Singh Chimni was appointed as *qiladar* of the fort of Attock.<sup>159</sup>

### **Second Campaign of Kashmir (1814)**

In April 1814, again Ranjit Singh marshalled his forces for a march against Kashmir. The tributary chiefs were ordered by him to join the Durbar forces with their contingents. The Maharaja held an inspection of the entire Durbar army at Wazirabad. The Sikh army reached Rajauri on June 11, 1814. Ram Dayal, accompanied by Jiwan Mal, Dal Singh and their contingents, reached Behram Gala<sup>160</sup> and conquered it and established a *thana* there and took possession of the hills of Pir Panjal. Ram Dayal was confronted with the forces of Azim Khan, the governor of Kashmir. There was a severe fighting between the forces of Ram Dayal and Azim Khan, on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1814. There was again bloody fighting at Shopian. Prince Kharak Singh's brave officer, Jiwan Mal, died fighting there.<sup>161</sup> Mit Singh Padhania also died fighting and his son, Sardar Jawala Singh, was given his father's place.<sup>162</sup> Ram Dayal acquitted himself very honourably. Two thousand Afghans were killed there.<sup>163</sup> Azim Khan was impressed by the bravery and intrepidity of Diwan Ram Dayal. Dwelling upon the friendly relations with Mohkam Chand, grandfather of Ram Dyal, Azim Khan is said to have considered it worth while to contract cordial relations with Ram Dyal and Lahore Durbar. He sent valuable presents for the Maharaja and assured Ram Dyal of wishing well of the Maharaja and his kindom.<sup>164</sup>

### **Third and the Last Campaign of Kashmir (1819)**

In the beginning of May 1819, a large army assembled at Wazirabad. The army was divided into three big sections. One was led by Misar Diwan Chand, Zafar Jang Bahadur, and Sardar Sham Singh Attariwala and second contingent was placed under the command of Prince Kharak Singh. The third contingent, under the command of the Maharaja, stayed back at Wazirabad, as a reserve force.<sup>165</sup>

The overall command of the expedition was entrusted to Prince Kharak Singh.<sup>166</sup> The Maharaja released Sultan Khan, the chief of Bhimber, who had been in prison of the former for the last seven years and sent him along with his expedition to Kashmir. He was useful to the Sikhs.

The Sikhs were confronted with Jabar Khan, the governor of Kashmir, who had 12000 horsemen and foot-soldiers at his command.<sup>167</sup> There was a fierce fighting and the Sikh forces were reinforced by the Nihang contingent of Phula Singh. Jabar Khan was wounded and he escaped to Peshawar.<sup>168</sup> The Khalsa army captured the fort of Shergarh and other outposts. The Sikh army entered Srinagar on July 4, 1819.<sup>169</sup>

## **Conquest of Peshawar**

### **First Invasion (1818)**

A dispute between Kamran, the son of Shah Mahmud, and Wazir Fateh Khan, resulted in the torturous murder of the latter in 1818.<sup>170</sup> This provided the Maharaja with needed opportunity to move his forces to Attock.

Ranjit Singh personally led an army across Attock wading through the swollen river.<sup>171</sup> Many Pathans were murdered and the alive raised the white flag accepting a humiliating surrender. Akali Phula Singh fought bravely in this battle.

## Second Expedition (1818)

An army was sent towards Peshawar again in 1818. Yar Muhammad, the governor of Peshawar, evacuated the town and the Sikh army entered it<sup>172</sup> on November 20, 1818. With the beat of drum it was announced that peace was to be restored in Peshawar.<sup>173</sup> The Maharaja appointed Jahandad Khan, the former *qiladar* of Attock, as the governor of Peshawar.<sup>174</sup>

Ranjit Singh had earlier taken Kashmir from Jabar Khan and Attock from Jahandad Khan. Therefore, Azim Khan was incensed and exercised against Ranjit Singh. He wanted to engage himself in a decisive battle with the Maharaja.

The Maharaja demanded tribute from Yar Muhammad, the governor of Peshawar, in December 1829. He sent a few good horses to Lahore Durbar. Muhammad Khan, resenting the humiliating attitude of his brother Yar Muhammad, started from Kabul for Peshawar, at the head of a large army. Yar Muhammad evacuated Peshawar under the plea that he was unable to check the progress of the Afghan forces towards Peshawar. He hid himself in the hills of the Yusufzais.

Muhammad Azim Khan occupied Peshawar without any resistance and declared a crusade against the Sikhs.<sup>175</sup> The services of hundreds of *maulvis* and religious preachers were secured to preach religious frenzy among the Muslims against the Sikhs.

General Ventura was for immediate attack on the crusaders.<sup>176</sup> The memorable and most bloody fighting took place at Naushehra, between Attock and Peshawar, on March 14, 1823. It is also known as the battle of Tibbi Tehri. In this battle the strength of the Lahore army was estimated to be between 20,000 and 25,000 and that of the Afghans about 20,000.<sup>177</sup> The contending forces came face to face with each other. Akali Phula Singh, Garbha Singh, Karam Singh Chahal and Balbhadur (of Gurkha platoon), all of them men of distinction, died fighting and Mahan Singh Kumedan was seriously wounded.<sup>178</sup> The Sikh forces became very furious and the crusaders took to their heels. Azim Khan got unnerved on the death and desertion of his crusaders.<sup>179</sup> He died of a broken heart on his way to Kabul.

The Sikhs captured many tents, guns, horses and camels belonging to the Afghans. As a result of this victory all territory from Jamrud to Malakand and from Banner to Khattak passed into the hands of the Maharaja. According to Lepel Griffin, "It was a critical contest and decided, once for all, whether Sikhs or Afghans should rule east of the Khaiber, the mountains of the N.W.F."<sup>180</sup> The Maharaja entered Peshawar ceremoniously on March 17, 1824.<sup>181</sup>

## Expeditions against Sayyid Ahmad (1827-31)

In 1827, news came from Peshawar that one Khalifa Sayyid Ahmad had created a stir among the Yusufzais.<sup>182</sup> Sayyid Ahmad, formerly known as Mir Ahmad, was the resident of Barelli.<sup>183</sup>

Khalifa incited his followers against Sardar Yar Muhammad who was accused of having accepted fealty to the Sikhs and had become an apostate.<sup>184</sup> An army of forty thousand crusaders attacked Peshawar and occupied it. Yar Muhammad was killed<sup>185</sup> in the fighting and his artillery was captured by Sayyid Ahmad in 1830.

The occupation of Peshawar by Sayyid Ahmad upset the Maharaja. He immediately ordered Prince Sher Singh and General Ventura to reoccupy Peshawar. There was a sanguinary fighting in

Peshawar, Sayyid Ahmad and his men fled away and Peshawar came into the hands of Lahore forces.<sup>186</sup>

When the Lahore army returned from Peshawar Khalifa Sayyid Ahmad again raised insurrection in May 1831. The Khalifa and his adviser, Maulvi Asmail, were killed in an action<sup>187</sup> and the Afghan rebellion came to an end.

### **Annexation of Peshawar to Lahore Kingdom (1834)**

Dost Muhammad led a large army towards Peshawar. He gave the slogan of a crusade against the Sikhs and also sought the help of the chiefs of Kunduz, Qandhar, Derajat, Bahawalpur, etc., but received cold response as none wanted to risk his position against Ranjit Singh. The English were also approached for help but Dost Muhammad had to fight single-handed and lost Peshawar to the Sikhs.

No doubt, the occupation of Kabul by the Lahore Durbar forces was within their reach but Ranjit Singh never wanted it for the simple reason that he did not like to be always amidst warfare with the Afghans. He was keen to deliver the blessings of peace and calm to his subjects which could never be conferred on them in case his forces crossed the Khyber Pass. Ranjit Singh's march into Kabul would have been branded as a naked aggression and he was also not sure of the role of the British in the eventuality of such an invasion.

In the early stages Ranjit Singh wanted to keep himself away from having the direct control of the Afghans or the tribesmen. Therefore, he kept the North West Frontier tribes and the Peshawar province under the local chiefs. But they did not prove strong, efficient and true to their salt, being indolent, shifty and undependable. The Maharaja also did not very much trust them. His Afghan governors of Peshawar, Jahandad Khan, Yar Muhammad Khan, Sultan Muhammad Khan and the Barakzai Sardars proved weak and unreliable. The Maharaja had chosen this course to prevent the flaring up of the Afghan's emotional association with their land and their national feelings. He was keen to mellow down their antagonistic and irreconcilable behaviour and their open insubordination to the Sikh authority.

Ranjit Singh's North West Frontier policy yielded historic results. The Afghans could not dare to invade from beyond the Indus during Ranjit Singh's reign.

In fact, the Maharaja was not so much swayed by considerations of territorial gains as by his keen desire to have a scientific North West Frontier—a frontier that would not, at any point of time, pose any threat to the security of the Sikh kingdom.

From the critical analysis of the contemporary, semi-contemporary and modern writers regarding the Maharaja's policy towards the British the following categories of views emerge. (1) He was convinced that his friendship with the English should best serve his interests. (2) 'He could never show courage of statesmanship.' 'He looked pathetic, helpless and inert.' (3) He was convinced of the superior might of the British and he was awfully afraid of them. (4) He was a great statesman and knew his limitations. He adopted conciliatory policy toward the British as he understood the hard realities of the situation. His policy was not based on the fear of the British or cowardice.

According to Fauja Singh, the Anglo-Sikh relations under Ranjit Singh do not seem to lend support to the views conventionally admitted. It would be unjust to the Maharaja to say that he acted pusillanimously or unwisely in his dealings with the British. The views which attribute lack of courage or lack of statesmanship or Anglo-phobia to him seem to be quite unwarranted. Undoubtedly, he considered the British as a superior power, more efficient, better organised and commanding greater resources but that does not necessarily mean that he was mortally afraid of them. Similarly, the fact that his resources were smaller than those of the British does not essentially establish that he lacked the capacity or power to confront them in the battle-field. The Maharaja had raised and trained the Khalsa army in such a way as to be rated equal to the army of the East India Company. And also, there is not much justification in saying that the Maharaja had taken such a view of his friendship with the British as to allow his attachment to them to outweigh all other considerations. Diplomatic statements made on formal occasions cannot be taken as a true index to the inner working of a statesman's mind.<sup>188</sup> When the British friendship served his interests he maintained and honoured it. When this friendship was no more helpful to him there was a change in the tone and temper of the Lahore chief as noticed by Captain Wade in November 1837. The Maharaja was feeling uneasy about the British manoeuvres in Sind and Afghanistan. From 1836 onwards, he adopted a friendly attitude towards Nepal which was bitterly anti-British at that time.

From 1827 onwards, the Maharaja had lot of troubles from the side of the north-west frontier. Dost Muhammad wanted to capture Peshawar by force. So, under these circumstances, if the Maharaja had to take a decision regarding the British he must keep in mind the situation in the north-west of his kingdom. "Whether it was Ferozepur or Shikarpur or the Navigation Treaty or the signing of the Tripartite Treaty he had to make his decisions in full consciousness of the fact that he would surely be stabbed in the back in case he chose to go to war with the British. In such a case while his success against the British would be problematical, his loss of the Peshawar region to the Afghans was something which could not be avoided."<sup>189</sup> So, to be able to fight against the British Ranjit Singh must come to terms with Dost Muhammad and that was not possible without surrendering Peshawar to him and the surrender of Peshawar meant virtually losing the whole of the trans-Indus Afghan belt. Then, the Afghans could also think of crossing Indus in a bid to make territorial gains from the Maharaja's kingdom. By fighting two enemies at the same time, that is, the British on the eastern front and the Afghans on the western front, Ranjit Singh could not risk the very existence of his kingdom. Thus, Ranjit Singh had to deal with the British pressures under extremely difficult circumstances and the policy he adopted in respect of the British was, undoubtedly, the best-suited and the wisest one and at any stage of his life the reversal of this policy would have, in all probability, led to the liquidation of his kingdom carved out so diligently and strenuously.

### **Place in History**

Ranjit Singh has been likened to many historical personages as Sher Shah Suri, Napoleon, Bismarck, Abraham Lincoln, Shivaji and Haider Ali. In fact a person cannot be compared reasonably to another person so long as the circumstances of both were not similar. The circumstances under which Ranjit Singh carved his way to a kingdom were more unfavourable than those faced by most of the above mentioned great men of history. The Indian rulers, as referred to above, had to fight only against the Mughals but Ranjit Singh created a big state despite the opposition and hostile attitude of the Marathas, the British, the Afghans and the Sikh chiefs of the various Misals of the Punjab. He was a great conqueror who got liberated permanently the north-west frontier of the Punjab from the control of Afghanistan.

He gave a very efficient administration to the people and united the scattered and divided portions of the Punjab into a strong and well-welded kingdom. He re-organised his army on the western style and transformed it into an invulnerable force to reckon with. He was a statesman par excellence. He exhibited a wonderful grasp of the political and military situations confronting him. Undoubtedly, Ranjit Singh was the last great constructive genius among the Sikhs. He died on June 27, 1839, in the full blaze of glory.

### **Maharaja Kharak Singh**

Ranjit Singh's eldest son, Kharak Singh, formally ascended the *gaddi* on September 1, 1839.<sup>190</sup> In the words of Murray, Kharak Singh "was weak, almost imbecile and utterly incapable of controlling the elements of disorder which the removal of firm hand of Ranjeet would release from confinement."<sup>191</sup> According to Syad Waheed-ud-Din, "Prince Kharak Singh was utterly lacking in ambition and worldly sense. His real interest lay in praying, reading the *Granth* and sitting with legs folded and head bowed in the company of holy men."<sup>192</sup> Before his death on June 27, 1839, Ranjit Singh nominated Kanwar Kharak Singh as his successor and Raja Dhian Singh as his *wazir*.<sup>193</sup> Dhian Singh conducted the affairs of the state according to the rules and laws practised under Ranjit Singh. Kharak Singh strictly enjoined upon all his courtiers to route every representation through Dhian Singh. Prince Naunihal Singh could not be present at the investiture ceremony of his father as the latter was apprehensive of his son's designs. So, the ceremony was gone through hurriedly, without waiting for the arrival of Naunihal Singh who had to come from Peshawar. The Kanwar was against Dhian Singh. A serious danger to Dhian Singh's authority was posed by Chet Singh Bajwa, a relation of Kharak Singh's wife, Ishar Kaur, whom the Maharaja appointed his counsellor. At the time of his appointment Chet Singh was a raw youth in his early twenties. He lived in the palace with the Maharaja. He wanted to become an independent minister and was contriving to remove Dhian Singh.<sup>194</sup> In the words of M'Gregor, "Chet Singh had nothing to recommend him but arrogance and sycophancy."<sup>195</sup> The appointment of Chet Singh was a great blunder on the part of Kharak Singh as none liked him. The Dogras felt angry because Dhian Singh had been degraded. Another factor, which turned the scales against the Maharaja, was his being too soft or lenient towards the British. He was said to have yielded to every demand of theirs, whether it was reasonable or unreasonable.

The Dogra Sardars, Faqir Aziz-ud-Din and a few other important courtiers implored the Maharaja to keep Chet Singh away from him. At a secret meeting Dhian Singh showed two letters written by Chet Singh, bearing the seal of Kharak Singh. Through these letters the Maharaja wanted British help and expressed willingness to pawn his kingdom at 38 per cent of the revenues.<sup>196</sup> In all probability, these were forged letters but were accepted as genuine. A decision was made to murder Chet Singh and to divest the Maharaja of all powers and to entrust Kanwar Naunihal Singh with the responsibility of running the administration.<sup>197</sup>

The decision was carried out in full, on October 8, 1839.<sup>198</sup> From this time onwards, Kharak Singh was deprived of all his administrative powers, and all authority passed into the hands of Naunihal Singh. He reinstated Dhian Singh as his *wazir*. The Kanwar had "all the energy and talents of his grandfather, though with less tact and caution." He insisted on the British to remove the British agent Col. Wade from his post which was done. He was popular among all classes, especially the military. Kharak Singh died on November 5, 1839, at the age of thirty nine, The Kanwar (born on February 11, 1820) met a fatal accident on the very day of his father's cremation. Mian Udham Singh, son of Gulab Singh, who was with him, was also killed on the spot. It seems that there was no intrigue behind it. In the absence of any unassailable evidence to the contrary Kanwar's death

may be accepted as a result of an accident.<sup>199</sup> Some recent writers like Sita Ram Kohli, Hari Ram Gupta and Khushwant Singh have also concluded after thorough investigation that the Kanwar's death was the result of an unfortunate tragic accident.<sup>200</sup>

### **Maharaja Sher Singh**

Kanwar Sher Singh, the second son of Ranjit Singh, was the next choice for the *gaddi* of Lahore. But Naunihal Singh's mother, Chand Kaur, staked a claim of her own, telling that till the Kanwar's pregnant wife delivered a child she should be accepted as a ruler.<sup>201</sup> Sher Singh retired to Batala and Dhian Singh went to Jammu.<sup>202</sup> The administration of the state under Chand Kaur suffered an immense setback. In her helplessness Rani Chand Kaur sent an urgent message to Dhian Singh to come to Lahore but he did not pay any heed to it. Rather he asked Sher Singh to proceed to Lahore at the head of an army to put an end to the Rani's weak rule. Sher Singh entered the Lahore fort and was recognised as the Maharaja and Dhian Singh as the Prime Minister.<sup>203</sup>

When Sher Singh ascended the throne on January 20, 1841, all the chiefs, excepting the Sandhanwalias made, their obeisance to him.<sup>204</sup> The Sandhanwalias were afraid of being penalised because of their opposition to Sher Singh. The new ruler had difficulties from the rank and file of the army. In order to seek their support the Maharaja had promised to raise their salaries. But there was not enough of money in the treasury to satisfy the soldiery. Sher Singh and Dhian Singh had to make strenuous efforts to bring about normalcy. Rani Chand Kaur was first poisoned and then battered with stones on June 9, 1842.<sup>205</sup> Undoubtedly, Sher Singh and Dhian Singh were party to this heinous crime. The Sandhanwalia Sardars murdered Sher Singh, his son Kanwar Partap Singh and Dhian Singh on the same day, September 15, 1843.<sup>206</sup> Within the next twenty four hours, Ajit Singh and Lehna Singh, the Sandhanwalia Sardars, who were the assassins of Sher Singh and others, were done to death by Dhian Singh's son, Hira Singh, with the help of the army. The third leader, Attar Singh Sandhanwalia, escaped, to the British territory.

### **Maharaja Duleep Singh**

Prince Duleep Singh, who was just a five year old child at that time, was proclaimed the next Maharaja and Hira Singh was appointed special counsellor or the Prime Minister. Hira Singh's elevation was not liked by his uncle, Suchet Singh. Hira Singh's persistent harassment of Princes, Kashmira Singh and Peshaura Singh aroused strong feelings against him. A deputation of the army *panchayats* met Hira Singh and asked him to stop the campaign against the above referred to princes and release Rani Jindan's brother, Jawahar Singh. Hira Singh immediately accepted the demand. In the next few months the army *panchayats* renounced their allegiance to Raja Hira Singh who, on the morning of December 22, 1844, secretly left Lahore, accompanied by his adviser Pandit Jalla, on his way to Jammu. They were pursued by Jawahar Singh, Sham Singh Attariwala and Mewa Singh Majithia, at the head of a large army, overtaken and killed.<sup>207</sup>

Rani Jindan wanted her brother Jawahar Singh to hold the office of *wazir*. The troops consented to Rani's decision and he was formally installed in the office of the *wazir* on May 14, 1845.<sup>208</sup> The appointment induced Prince Peshaura Singh to revolt against Lahore Durbar and proclaim himself the Maharaja instead of Duleep Singh. Jawahar Singh got Peshaura Singh captured and strangled to death on August 31, 1845.<sup>209</sup> At the news of Peshaura Singh's death Jawahar Singh expressed his joy by ordering the illumination of the city. This annoyed the army which issued orders in the name of the Khalsa summoning the Rani, Maharaja Duleep Singh and Jawahar Singh. On September 21, 1845, they proceeded to the camp of the army. Jawahar Singh was immediately separated from the party and killed.<sup>210</sup> The Rani and her son were allowed to return.



Out of the three contestants for the office of the Prime Minister, Gulab Singh, Lal Singh and Tej Singh, Lal Singh was appointed the next Prime Minister and Tej Singh became the Commander-in-Chief of the Sikh army.<sup>211</sup> The English were watching the happenings at Lahore Durbar with keen interest. Colonel Wade, Political agent at Ludhiana, while returning through the Punjab after Afghanistan's expedition, collected political and geographical information relating to the Sikh territories.

Many factors led to the First Anglo-Sikh War which started in December 1845. Supremacy of the Khalsa army, British campaign of Rani Jindan's vilification, Home Government of British East India Company's pressure to go ahead with the conquest of the Punjab, war preparations of the British and their disregard to the protests of the Lahore Durbar, overtures of Gulab Singh, Broadfoot's claim to the Lahore Durbar's possessions in the cis-Satluj areas, etc., provoked the Sikh forces to meet the challenge of the British.

On December 12, 1845, the Sikhs crossed the Satluj and on December 13, the Governor-General, Lord Hardinge, issued a proclamation announcing war on the Sikhs.<sup>212</sup> On December 18, a battle took place at Mudki, twenty miles from Ferozepur<sup>213</sup> where the British suffered heavy casualties, amounting to 872 killed and wounded. The second action was fought three days later, i.e., on December 21, at Ferozeshahr,<sup>214</sup> ten miles from Ferozepur. Lal Singh and Tej Singh joined the English. The British loss was 694 killed and 1721 wounded. Major Broadfoot, the political agent, was also killed in this battle. The Sikhs lost about 2000 men. The British suffered a severe reverse at Baddowal on January 21, 1846,<sup>215</sup> but retrieved their position at the battle of Aliwal, a week later, on January 28, 1846.<sup>216</sup> The last battle was fought at Sabraon on 10<sup>th</sup> February, 1846.<sup>217</sup> Sham Singh Attariwala, a symbol of the unflinching will and valiant spirit of the Khalsa, fell fighting heroically in the foremost ranks. The British emerged victorious.

The Governor-General entered Lahore on February 20, and on March 9, 1846, a treaty of peace was concluded between the English and the Lahore Durbar. All territories between the Beas and the Satluj were annexed.<sup>218</sup> The strength of the Sikh army was limited to 20,000 infantry and 12,000 cavalry. Kashmir was sold to Gulab Singh to recover war indemnity from the Durbar, On December 16, 1846, a new treaty was signed at Bharowal<sup>219</sup> and ratified on December 26. Henry Lawrence was appointed Resident at Lahore, "with full authority to direct and control all matters in every department of the state." This treaty was to remain in operation till Maharaja Duleep Singh attained the age of 16, on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1854. The Sikh Sardars resented this gradual liquidation of the sovereignty of the Sikh state. On the night of August 19-20, 1847, Rani Jindan was taken to Sheikhpura where she was interned in the fort.<sup>220</sup>

The new British government faced a rebellion in the Sikh province of Multan. When Kahan Singh, accompanied by two British officers. Vans Agnew and W.A. Anderson, went to Multan to take charge from Diwan Mool Raj the soldiers rebelled and killed both the English officers.<sup>221</sup> The Multan challenge was deliberately ignored by the Governor-General, under the pretext of the approaching hot weather. The real reason for inaction was the desire of the British to let the insurrection spread so that they could finally resort to a large scale offensive and abrogate the sovereignty of the Sikhs. The British further provoked the Sikhs by exiling Rani Jindan to Banaras. Her annual allowance of one and a half lakhs of rupees was reduced to twelve thousand and her jewellery worth fifty thousand rupees was forfeited. From Banaras she escaped to Nepal.<sup>222</sup>

Captain James Abbott, who was an adviser to Chattar Singh Attariwala, the governor of Hazara, started instigating the Muslim population of the province against the Sikh ruler. Chattar Singh's daughter was engaged to Maharaja Duleep Singh. The Resident of Lahore was requested to fix the date for the royal wedding. The Resident regarded this proposal with disfavour and did not concede the request of the Sardar. Captain Abbott's constant instigation led up to a crisis in Hazara. When the Muslims attacked Chattar Singh, Commandant Canora, an American officer, at Hazara, refused to obey the orders of the Sardar saying that he would take orders only from Abbott. In the fray with the Sikhs, Canora was killed. Chattar Singh was forced to relinquish the governorship of Hazara and was deprived of *hisjagir*.<sup>223</sup> His son, Sher Singh, who was a member of the Resident's Council, joined his father.<sup>224</sup> The situation suited Lord Dalhousie to carry out his designs of annexing the Punjab. Battles were fought at Ramnagar on November 22, 1848, at Chelianwala on January 13, 1849, and at Gujrat on February 21, 1849.

Chattar Singh and Sher Singh were finally defeated. On March 14, 1849, the Sikh soldiers surrendered Rawalpindi before Major General Gilbert. Lord Dalhousie proclaimed annexation of the Punjab on March 29, 1849, and young Duleep Singh affixed his signatures to the fatal document which deprived him of his crown and kingdom. He was reduced from a sovereign ruler to an exile, to be at the mercy of the British government of India and England.

Of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's seven sons, Duleep Singh was the youngest, having born on September 6, 1838. At the time of his father's death he was only two years, five months and twenty four days old. Duleep Singh was in the thirteenth year of his age when he was deprived of his ancestral kingdom.

Dr Sir John Login, a man of kindly disposition and amiable manners, was appointed to look after Duleep Singh. Soon after, the young Maharaja was shifted from Lahore to Fatehgarh, in the district of Farukhabad in U.P. He was thoroughly surrounded by Christians and he played only with the Christian children. He is said to have himself abandoned the idea of marrying Chattar Singh's daughter. For some time, two daughters of the Raja of Coorg were considered for the purpose but later that proposal was also dropped. Duleep Singh was turned against his mother. Rani Jindan, by Mr Login and others. He refused to see her. In November 1850, Duleep Singh suddenly announced his desire to embrace Christianity. He was kept on probation for two years and on March 1, 1853, he was admitted into the Christian Church by baptism.<sup>225</sup>

On April 19, 1854, the young Maharaja sailed from Calcutta for England where he was given the honour due to a Maharaja. Soon after his arrival in London, the Maharaja was given a special audience by Queen Victoria and her husband, Prince Albert.<sup>226</sup> When he visited Rome he was honoured by the Pope.

When mutiny broke out in India in 1857, he showed no sympathy for the mutineers, nor any ambition for the recapture of his position as a king. In 1861, he came to India to take his mother to England, where both the son and the mother were kept apart. She died on August 1, 1863. Her dead body was allowed to be brought to India but the funeral rites of his mother were performed in the Bombay state under orders of the government and her ashes thrown in the Narbada river. He was not allowed to take her body to the Punjab lest there be a wave of sympathy for Duleep Singh.

On his return from India, he married, on June 7, 1864, Bamba Muller, the daughter of a German merchant, Ludwig Muller, stationed at Cairo. She produced six children—three sons and

three daughters. On March 25, 1886, Duleep Singh addressed a letter to his countrymen expressing his desire to come to his land and become a Sikh again. When he was on his way to India he was arrested at Aden on April 21, 1886, by the orders of the viceroy, Lord Dufferin.<sup>227</sup> His wife returned to England with her children. She died on September 18, 1887. The Maharaja went to France, where, with the help of the French government, he unsuccessfully tried to reach Pondicherry, the French colony in India. He, then, went to Russia from where he addressed a letter to Indian newspapers, which was published in October 1887, appealing to his countrymen to contribute one pice per person, a month, and the Punjabis to contribute one anna each, to help him to fight for his throne in the Punjab. But his plan fizzled out. He returned to France on November 3, 1888, and married on May 21, 1889, an English lady, Ada Douglas Wetherill. Despite the royal pardon to return to his family and home in England he continued to stay in a hotel in Paris. Duleep Singh died on October 22, 1893,<sup>228</sup> poor and destitute, the former Maharaja of the Punjab. His body was removed to England by his son. Prince Victor, and laid to rest in the churchyard of Elveden Hall. All his children died issueless and the Sikh royalty, which Maharaja Ranjit Singh had established with great toil and statesmanship, came to an end but not without a flicker that momentarily burnt in Duleep Singh's heart to show the path to freedom.

#### Footnotes:

1. Khushwaqat Rai, *Tawarikh-i-Sikhan* (1811), MS., Ganda Singh collection, Patiala, p. 130; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar II, Lahore, -1885, p. 2; Ganesh Das, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab* (1855), Amritsar, 1965, p. 134; Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Part-11, reprint 1970, p. 277; Lepel Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, Oxford, 1905, p. 153; Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, (1891), reprint, Delhi, 1964, p. 337. Some modern writers wrongly name him as Budh Singh.
2. Some writers believe that Desu was the nickname given to Budha Singh after his mare called Desi (Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 337; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 227; Prem Singh Hoti, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Amritsar, 1931, pp. 17-18).
3. Carmichael Smyth, *A History of the Reigning Family of Lahore* (1847), Patiala reprint, 1970, p. 14.
4. Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. IV Delhi, 1982, p. 293.
5. Kirpal Singh, 'Maharaja Ranjit's Birth place, Gujranwala, *The Panjab Past and Present*. Vol. XVI-II, October, 1980, p. 20.
6. Carmichael Smyth, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
7. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 277; Waheed-ud-Din, *The Seal Ranjit Singh*, reprint, Delhi, 1976, p. 56.
8. Carmichael Smyth, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
9. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 153; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 337.
10. Carmichael Smyth, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab and Political Life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh* (1834), Patiala reprint, 1970, p. 18; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol. I (1854), Lahore, 1961, p. 369; Carmichael Smyth, *op. cit.*, p. 6; Muhammad Latif *op. cit.*, p. 388.
13. Carmichael Smyth, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
14. Ganesh Das Bادهbra, *op. cit.*, p. 135; cf., Prinsep, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
15. Carmichael Smyth, *op. cit.*, p. 6; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*; p. 338; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 154; Prem Singh Hoti, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
16. Bhagat Singh, *Sikh Polity in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, Delhi, 1978, pp. 77-78.
17. Ganesh Das Bادهbra, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

18. Bute Shah, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, Daftar, V (1848), MS., Ganda Singh collection, Patiala, pp. 2-3; Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 5; cf., M'Gregor, *The History of the Sikhs*, I (1846), Allahabad reprint, 1979, p. 149.
19. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
20. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 338.
21. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 5; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, pp 2-3.
22. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, pp. 338-39; Prem Singh Hoti, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
23. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 8; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 3-4; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 373; Prinsep, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19; Baron Hugel, *Travels in Kashmir and Punjab* (1845), Patiala reprint, 1970, pp 270, 358; Lepel Griffin *op. cit.*; p. 154.
24. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 339.
25. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 375.
26. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 9; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 4; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 339.
27. Sohan Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 10; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 5; Ahmad Shah Batalia, Appendix to Sohan Lal Suri's *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar I, p. 29.
28. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 4; Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, 11, p. 9.
29. Qazi Nur Muhammad, *Jang Nama* (1765), (ed. Ganda Singh), Amritsar, 1939, p. 60.
30. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 3.
31. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 11; Bute Shah. *op. cit.*, V, p. 5.
32. Qazi Nur Muhammad, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31.
33. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 11-12; Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 131; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Prakash* (1841), Amritsar, 1939, p. 390.
34. Hari Ram Gupta, *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 303-04.
35. Prem Singh, *Punjab da Samajak Ithas*. Patiala, 1979, pp. 68-70.
36. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 13; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 6; Ahmad Shah Batalia, Appendix Sohan Lal Suri's *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, p. 29; Prinsep, *op. cit.*, p. 31; M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, p. 150; Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 135; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, 154. Some writers say that Charhat Singh died in 1774, when he was encamped on the bank of Basanti river where he had gone to support the cause of Brij Raj Deo, the eldest son of Ranjit Deo, the ruler of Jammu, against his younger brother Dalel Singh. But none of the contemporary Persian writers corroborate it. Murray seems to be the originator of this information which was followed and copied by the later writers like Kanaihya Lal and Muhammad Latif. But all writers are unanimous about the cause of death.
37. Prinsep, *op. cit.*, p. 31; Baron Hugel, *op. cit.*, p. 359.
38. Gordon, *The Sikhs*. London, 1904, p. 81.
39. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V., p. 7; Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 9; Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 131; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 378; Carmichael Smyth, *op. cit.*, p. 9; M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, p. 152.
40. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 378; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 155.
41. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 29; Carmichael Smyth, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
42. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 15; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 8.
43. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 9.
44. Prinsep, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-42; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 382-84; Carmichael Smyth, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
46. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 341.
47. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 20; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 9-10; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 99.

48. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 19.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
50. Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. IV, Delhi, 1982, p. 309.
51. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 156; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 342; C.H. Payne, *History of the Sikhs*, London, n.d., p. 68.
52. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 10; Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 21; Prinsep, *op. cit.*, p. 34; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 156-57.
53. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 21; Prinsep, *op. cit.*, II, p. 34, Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 343.
54. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 343; Prinsep, *op. cit.*, p. 35; Baron Hugel, *Travels in Cashmere and Punjab*, London, 1845, p. 361.
55. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 10; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 278; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 157.
56. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 22; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 12; Prinsep, *op. cit.*, p. 35; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 343.
57. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 92; Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 22; Prinsep, *op. cit.*, p. 36; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, 1, pp. 278-79; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 12; Baron Hugel, *op. cit.*, p. 361.
58. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 24; Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, 11, pp 24-26.
59. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 26; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 15-16.
60. Prinsep, *op. cit.*, p. 36; Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 25; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, II, p. 285.
61. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 27; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 16; Prinsep, *op. cit.*, p. 37.
62. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 28; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 17; Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 137; J. Skinner, *Haqaiq-i-Rajgan*, (MS, GS, collection), (1830), p. 105. A letter written by a Maratha *vakil*, at Delhi, to the Peshwa, at Poona, in May 1790, conveyed the news that, "a great Sikh Sardar, named Mahan Singh, died." (DYMR-II, letter No. 15 dated May 1790, English version in Ganda Singh's private collection, Patiala); Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, II, p. 285. Some writers, depending on later or unreliable sources, fix Mahan Singh's death in 1792, which is incorrect.
63. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
64. Hari Ram Gupta, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 313.
65. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 344-45; cf., Prinsep, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-38.
66. James Browne, "History of the Origin and Progress of the Sicks." *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs*, (edited Ganda Singh), p. 43.
67. Imam-ud-Din Husaini, *Tarikh-i-Husain Shabi*, (MS. 1798), quoted by Hari Ram Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 313.
68. C.H. Payne, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-70.
69. Some writers wrongly consider Novembers, 1780, to be the date of his birth in place of November 13, 1780. The following books give November 13, as the date of Ranjit Singh's birth: Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 17, 19; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 8; Diwan Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 6; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 282; *Tarikh-i-Makhzan-i Punjab* by Mufti Ghulam Sarwar (1867-68); *Tarikh-i-Gujranwala* by Gopal Das (1873); *Tarikh-i-Punjab* by Kanaihya Lal (1877) and *Maharaja Ranjit Singh* by Sita Ram Kohli (1933).
70. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 8.
71. *Ibid.*
72. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.
73. As told earlier Mahan Singh died in 1790, when Ranjit Singh was 10 years old and not 11 years as written by Ali-ud-Din Mufti or 12 years as written by Muhammad Latif and Prinsep. But Mufti agrees with Amar Naih and Sohan Lal that at the time of assumption of turban of royalty Ranjit Singh was 10 years old.
74. *Bute Shah, op. cit.*, V, pp. 1-16; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 346.
75. Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 137; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 390.

76. Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 137; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 346.
77. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, Daftar II, pp. 32-33; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 19.
78. Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh*, London, 1962, p. 28.
79. Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England*, Vol. I, London, 1798, p. 295.
80. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
81. *Imperial Records, Foreign Department*, 24<sup>th</sup> December, 1798, No. 24.
82. Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 140; Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, Daftar II, p. 39. Ranjit Singh gave this information to Captain Wade in 1827 (Wade's letter, 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1831).
83. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, Daftar II, p. 39; cf., Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V p. 22; Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 140.
84. *Imperial Records, Political Proceedings*, 1799, No. 24; cf., Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 22-23.
85. Khushwant Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
86. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 397.
87. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, Daftar II, p. 40; cf., Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 22; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, I, p. 397; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 290.
88. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
89. *Ibid.*, p. 41; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 23; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.* I, p. 398; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 290.
90. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 41; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 23; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 349.
91. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 24.
92. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 42-43.
93. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 46; Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 11; Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, 138-39; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 402-03.
94. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 12; Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 139.
95. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 46; Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 140; Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 142; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 352.
96. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
97. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 13; Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 49, Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 354.
98. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 49.
99. *Ibid.*, p. 50; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 354.
100. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*; p. 16; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 293; Bhagat Singh, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh and His Times*, New Delhi, 1990. pp. 35-36.
101. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
102. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 144.
103. *Ibid.*, pp. 143-44.
104. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
105. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 51; Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 20; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 27; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 317.
106. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-55.
107. *Ibid.*, pp. 56-57. The date of occupation of Amritsar has been given differently by different authors. According to Ali-ud-Din Mufti, (Vol. I, p. 404) and Ganesh Das (p. 146), Ranjit Singh conquered Amritsar in 1803, and according to Amar Nath the occupation of Amritsar took place in 1802 (p. 27).
108. Amar Math, *op. cit.*, p. 36; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 408-09.
109. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 60; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 35.
110. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 60-61; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 35-36.
111. *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.
112. *Ibid.*, p. 62; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 38-39.

113. *Ibid.*, p. 64; Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 40, cf., Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 40.
114. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 212.
115. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 65.
116. *Ibid.*, pp. 68-69.
117. *Ibid.*, II, p. 67. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 42; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, pp. 369-70; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 253.
118. *Ibid.*, II, p. 86; Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 151; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 60.
119. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 52.
120. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 87.
121. *Ibid.*, p. 90; Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-54; Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 151.
122. Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 152.
123. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 100-01; Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 134.
124. *Ibid.*, pp. 97-98.
125. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
126. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
127. *Ibid.*, p. 101.
128. *Ibid.*, pp. 101-02.
129. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 34; Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab* (1870), pp. 480-81.
130. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 108.
131. *Ibid.*, p. 109; Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 61; M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, p. 168.
132. *Ibid.*, p. 109; Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
133. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 26; cf., Prinsep, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-02.
134. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 212.
135. Bhagat Singh, *Sikh Polity in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, New Delhi, 1978, pp. 153-54.
136. *Ibid.*, p. 155.
137. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-23; Ahmad Shah Batalia, Appendix, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
138. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 57-58; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 32-33.
139. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, pp. 307-08.
140. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 421; Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 99; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 74.
141. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 55. According to Ali-ud-Din Mufti, the amount was one lakh rupees, (*op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 421).
142. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 140; M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 176-77.
143. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 410.
144. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 217; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 257; cf., Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 448; Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 115; Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 308.
145. Prinsep, *op. cit.*, p. 93.
146. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 116.
147. *Ibid.*, Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 219-20.
148. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 431; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 85.
149. Fauja Singh. *Some Aspects of State and Society under Ranjit Singh*. New Delhi, 1982, p. 298.
150. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 132; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 85.
151. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 88-89.
152. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 140.
153. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 89.
154. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 135.
155. *Ibid.*, p. 140.
156. M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, p. 170.
157. According to N.K. Sinha, this battle took place on June 26, 1813, (*Ranjit Singh*, ed. 1945, p. 48).

158. Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 155.
159. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 86; Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 156; M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, p. 175.
160. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 82; M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, p. 172.
161. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 160; Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 360.
162. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, II, p. 84.
163. *Ibid.*
164. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 84; cf., Prinsep, *op. cit.*, p. 85.
165. M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, p. 184.
166. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, PP. 253-54.
167. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 130.
168. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 132; Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*; pp. 40-41; M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, p. 185.
169. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 132.
170. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*; p. 119; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 160.
171. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 237; Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 119; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 161.
172. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 119; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 161.
173. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 238; Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 119; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 162.
174. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 238; Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 119.
175. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 202.
176. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 304.
177. cf.. Foreign Dept. Miscellaneous No. 128, 1823.
178. Sohan Lal, *op. cit.*, II, p. 304; Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 154; Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 316; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 201-02; Ahmad Shah Batalia, Appendix to Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, Daftar, I, p. 44; Prinsep, *op. cit.*, p.139.
179. Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 316.
180. Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 209.
181. Sohan Lal, *op. cit.*, II, p. 304; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 202.
182. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 234.
183. Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 317.
184. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 179.
185. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 279.
186. Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 318.
187. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, pp. 193-94; M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, p. 198.
188. Fauja Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 368-69.
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190. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 25.
191. Murray, W., *History of the: Punjab and of the Rise and Progress, and Present Condition of the Sect and Nation of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, London, 1846, p. 200.
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195. M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, II, p. 5.
196. Carmichael Smyth, *op. cit.*, p. 28; Debi Prasad, *Gulshan-i-Pmjab* (1872), p. 42; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 497.
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198. Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs* (1849), Delhi, 1955, p. 203; Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 330; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 498.
199. *Ibid.*, p. 203.



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201. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 501; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 411.
202. Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 332; Carmichael Smyth, *op. cit.*, p. 38; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 502; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 411.
203. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 212; Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 334; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 507.
204. Muhammad Naqi Peshawari, *Sher Singh Nama* (1843), ff. 26a-26b, MS., GS., English version published in *Journal of the Punjab University*, Historical Society, Lahore, Vol. VIII, April 1944, p. 107.
205. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 35-36.
206. Cunningham, *op. cit.*; p. 231; Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 335; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 418-19.
207. Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 344; Carmichael Smyth, *op. cit.*; pp. 129-31.
208. Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 344; Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 242; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 532.
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217. *Ibid.*, p. 282; Dewan Ajudhia Parshad, *Waqai-i-Jang-i-Sikhan* (1850), English version published in *Journal of the Pan jab University Historical Society*, Vol. VIII April 1944, p. 88; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 473.
218. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 286.
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220. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 52; cf., Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 379.
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223. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 507-11.
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225. Logan, Lady, *Sir John Logon and Duleep Singh*, London, 1890, pp. 297, 303-06.
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## Chapter 9

### THE DALLEWALIA MISAL

#### **Gulab Singh alias Gulaba**

The founder of this Misal was Gulaba, a Khatri, resident of the village of Dallewal, near Dera Baba Nanak, in Doaba Bist Jalandhar. His father's name was Sardha Ram who was running a grocery shop in his village.<sup>1</sup> After his father's death Gulaba took over the former's profession. One night the thieves broke into his shop. They decamped with all his goods and cash, leaving him in utter penury.<sup>2</sup> He tried to get some money to refurnish his shop but could not arrange the same. He took *pahul* and became an active member of the *Dal Khalsa* in A.D. 1726 (1783 Bk.),<sup>3</sup> and launched upon a career of chivalry, fighting against the tyrannical government of the Punjab. He is said to have been baptized by Sardar Kapur Singh Faizullapuria.

Gulab Singh was a promising and gallant young man at the outset of his political career. He joined the Sikh *jathas* that took action against Lahore, Kasur and Jalandhar. He, then, formed a *jatha* of his own. He was sweet-tongued and social in his behaviour which won him respect and deep regards from his companions.<sup>4</sup> Gulab Singh, with his two brothers, Dayal Singh and Gurdyal Singh and two sons, Jaipal Singh and Hardyal Singh, actively participated in the *chbota ghallughara* in June 1746. In 1748, Gulab Singh was declared to be the head of the Dallewalias with Gurdyal Singh and Tara Singh Ghaiba as his deputies.

He was so brave and courageous that once in A.D. 1750 (1807 Bk.), accompanied by one hundred and fifty followers, he entered Jalandhar city and fought with the contingent of the *fanjdar* of this place, killing many of them. He, then, joined the Sikh *jatha* encamped at Kartarpur. From that very day the reputation of his bravery spread far and wide among the Sikhs.<sup>5</sup>

Seeing the fortunes of Gulab Singh on the ascendant many people got themselves baptized and joined the *jathas* being organized to carry forward their movement for the liberation of the Punjab from the hands of the Mughals.

#### **Gulab Singh Attacked Muslim Rulers and Their Treasures**

In the year 1756, in collaboration with his friend, Sardar Karora Singh, Gulab Singh attacked Najib Khan Rohilla of Najibabad. Nawab Dode Khan offered a stiff resistance in the beginning but shortly thereafter he escaped from the battlefield. Later, Gulab Singh chastized Nawab Zabita Khan of Meerut. Then, he turned his attention towards Muzaffarnagar, Deoband, Miranpur and Saharanpur. Finding themselves unable to face him, the rulers of these places offered *nazaranas* and paid obeisance to him.<sup>6</sup>

In 1756-57, when Ahmad Shah Abdali, after plundering Delhi, was carrying with him a huge booty and many young Hindu girls, he was obstructed by the Sikhs at river Ravi and dispossessed of much of the booty. All the girls were got released from the Afghans and restored to their parents. Gulab Singh, accompanied by his men, actively participated in this enterprise. The same year, an intelligencer of the Sikhs gave them an information that revenue, to the tune of five lakh rupees, collected from the area between Sarai Rawalpindi and Rohtas, was being carried to Lahore. Hearing this news Gulab Singh and Karora Singh, at the head of their men, attacked the guard that was

escorting the treasure near Jhelum and took away the money with which they purchased provisions and distributed the same among the *dais* of the *Khalsa*.<sup>7</sup>

Gradually, the strength of Gulab Singh's *jatha* rose to four hundred horsemen. Bute Shah gives an inflated number of six thousand horsemen. Gulab Singh successfully raided Panipat, Rohtak, Hansi and Hisar. In collaboration with Karorsinghias he plundered Saharanpur and Jawalapur and, then, passing through Hardwar they crossed over the Ganga into Rohilkhand and realised tribute from Dunde Khan.

Gulab Singh died in 1759, in the battle of Kalanaur, 27 kms west of Gurdaspur, fighting against Ambo Khan. His two sons, Jaipal Singh and Hardyal Singh had died earlier in the battle of Basohli. So the leadership of the Misal was entrusted to Gurdyal Singh, one of the close associates of Gulab Singh. Gurdyal Singh also died about an year after the assumption of the *Sardari* of the Misal. Tara Singh succeeded Gurdyal Singh.<sup>8</sup>

## SARDAR TARA SINGH GHAIBA

### His Early Life

There was a Jat *zamindar*, named Sadhana, of Kang sub-caste. He lived in Kang village which was situated on the bank of a rivulet called Kang Chella or baen.<sup>9</sup> He had two sons, Amrika and Bhumia. After Sadhana's death both of his sons engaged themselves in the profession of agriculture like their father and cultivation of land was the main source of their livelihood. Amrika was so poor that he had only one he-buffalo and could not afford to purchase another to form a yoke of two animals to cultivate his land with. He joined another farmer who had also one buffalo and they jointly cultivated their lands with one yoke.<sup>10</sup> In due course of time, Tara Singh was born to Amrika and Dharam Singh and Kapur Singh were born to Bhumia. At the time of his death in 1807, Tara Singh was said to be 100 years old. So, we can approximately fix his birth in 1707-08. When Tara Singh was still in his childhood, hardly four years of age, his mother died and his father married another woman who treated Tara Singh shabbily and often gave him flogging.<sup>11</sup>

When Tara Singh grew up into a young man he purchased a few goats and sheep and also made available his services as a shepherd to other *zamindars*<sup>12</sup> and started living by the meagre income that he had from his calling. There was a rivulet flowing by the side of his village. Before rainy season he improvised a bridge with ropes and pieces of wood covered with earth to pass his cattle over it to the other side for grazing. With this device he would cross over to the other side of the stream with his herd and disappear in the jungle. This earned him the title of Ghaiba.<sup>13</sup> He passed his early days in difficulty and poverty.

One day, it so happened that Salima (or Sulaiman) Gujjar, a notorious robber, forcibly took away all the sheep of Tara Singh whose only property was these cattle. He got extremely upset and told the robber that he had nothing else to lay back upon except his goats and sheep and he would not be able to live without them. Salima took pity on him and offered to return one goat. On Tara Singh's repeated requests the robber left five goats for him and took away the rest.<sup>14</sup>

When Tara Singh came to his house he found that he did not have food even for a single day and had no utensils except a brass plate. At this very time, the *pyada* (foot-soldier) of the *tehsildar* came to Tara Singh's house to realise revenue from him. Since Tara Singh had nothing except a plate with him the *pyada* took away the plate. This condition of utter helplessness drove Tara Singh

out of his home and he reached the village of Dallewal, adjacent to the town of Sultanpur.<sup>15</sup> He took *pahul* from Gurdyal Singh, Khatri of Malanh sub-caste, who lived at Dallewal<sup>16</sup> and, then, joined Gulab Singh.

### **Tara Singh joined Dal Khalsa**

Many people, including Man Singh, Sucha Singh and Dan Singh, who were the real brothers and sons of Tara Singh's sister, joined him. They hailed from Majha. Their parents had already died. The three brothers came to Kang village and lived on petty income they earned from manual labour. Charhat Singh Kandhranwala, who was a Kang Jat, also joined Tara Singh. They all unitedly came out to seek fortunes for themselves.<sup>17</sup>

During the rule of Adeena Beg, when Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded India, one day, the four comrades—Tara Singh Ghaiba, his cousin Dharam Singh, Tara Singh Kakar and Sujan Singh Badichah, sat by the bank of a stream called Baen which flowed adjacent to the village of Kang. It so happened that four *swars* of the Durrani army, loaded with huge booty, lost their way and came over to the place where the above mentioned four persons were sitting. The *swars* were in search of a place from where they could safely cross the stream. They requested Tara Singh Ghaiba to help them cross the Baen. He knew the ford. But he took them to the place where the water was very deep and told them that that place was safe and convenient for crossing the rivulet. They asked the Sikhs to cross the Baen first which they did by swimming. When the Afghans entered the water they found it difficult to cross because of its depth. They requested the Sikhs to take their goods and horses to the other side of the stream. Tara Singh and his companions considered it the best opportunity to dispossess the Afghans of their booty. After crossing the Baen, with the horses and the goods of the Afghans, these Sikhs decamped, leaving the enemies physically unhurt. Reaching their village they divided the booty among themselves.<sup>18</sup>

### **He Launched upon Territorial Conquests**

With this booty they became rich and purchased more horses. Tara Singh gathered around him another ten or fifteen men and they declared themselves independent of the chief of that place. During the *Baisakhi* days Tara Singh, accompanied by his comrades, went to Amritsar and offered his services to Ahluwalia and Singhpuria leaders and launched upon territorial conquests. In a short time, he gathered two hundred *swars* in his contingent. The prominent comrades of Tara Singh included Sujan Singh Badichah, Tara Singh Kakra, Dharam Singh and Kanwar Singh Kang who headed twenty *swars* each. All of them were under the overall command of Tara Singh Ghaiba.<sup>19</sup>

Tara Singh, then, captured Dakhni from the Afghans of Jalandhar and farmed it out to Sharaf-ud-Din, its former chief. Some time later, he was removed from that place and Tara Singh brought it under his direct control. Then, he occupied Rahon and made it his headquarters.<sup>20</sup> A little later, Phillaur and its surrounding areas were also conquered. The Rajputs of Nakodar were also defeated and the place was annexed. In the battle of Nakodar, Sujan Singh Badichah was killed. As blood-money, Tara Singh took over Kot Saida and sixty other places which he gave to Sujan Singh's son Mehar Singh and his (Sujan Singh's) two brothers—Man Singh and Dan Singh.<sup>21</sup>

Tara Singh was in possession of most of the area around Nakodar and his cousin Dharam Singh received Sohian and eighty other villages. Charhat Singh occupied Kandharan and twelve other villages. Thus, all the relatives and his prominent companions became possessors of territories and armed contingents. But all of them were under Tara Singh. In due course of time, he occupied Kot Badal Khan and Mehtapur.<sup>22</sup>

Tara Singh married three wives. His first marriage was solemnised with Raj Kaur, in the village of Mokha, which was situated in the jungle area. Tara Singh made arrangements for her stay at Dakhni in Jalandhar doab. A son, named Dasondha Singh, was born to her. When Dasondha Singh grew of age he became refractory and raised the banner of revolt at Dakhni-All the wealth that Tara Singh had collected through his conquests had been treasured at Dakhni. Dasondha Singh took possession of the entire wealth stored there.<sup>23</sup>

Tara Singh collected all his followers, including the *zamindars* of the area and the Rai of Ahmad Kot and besieged Dakhni but the place could not be conquered. Ultimately, through the mediation of other Sardars reconciliation was brought about between the father and the son. Thus, Dasondha Singh remained in occupation of Dakhni and its *taaluqa*. Nakodar, Mehtapur, Malanh, Kot Badal Khan and an adjoining *taaluqa* were given to his second wife, named Rattan Kaur whom Tara Singh had married from Dooda Matta. She was the daughter of Gurdas Singh. Rattan Kaur produced a son, named Jhanda Singh,<sup>24</sup> and a daughter.<sup>25</sup>

Ghungrana, along with an adjoining *taaluqa*, was conferred on his third wife, Rajinder (Kaur), who was the daughter of a Jat, named Dargahi, resident of Narangwal. Dargahi belonged to Raipurian's tribe. Tara Singh's son Gujjar Singh, was born to Rajinder (Kaur). One fourth of the Ghungrana district was conferred on the Raipurias. Rahon, Nawanshahar, Dharamkot and the other areas remained under Tara Singh. One fourth of the *taaluqa* of Rahon was given to the Rajputs who were its old owners.<sup>26</sup>

On his way to Anandpur to attend *hola* festival in March 1763, Tara Singh plundered, near Morinda, a government convoy going to Sirhind.

In the plunder of Kasur, in May 1763, he obtained cash and jewellery worth four lakh rupees.<sup>27</sup> At the fall of Sirhind in January 1764, Tara Singh acquired the possession of Ramuwala and Mari in Moga *tehsil* and he built forts at both of these places.

### **In the Ganga Doab and at Delhi**

Tara Singh actively participated in most of the Sikh incursions in the Ganga Doab, Rohilkhand and Delhi in the company of Rai Singh Bhangi of Buria and Baghel Singh Karorsinghia. On April 22, 1775, they crossed the Jamuna at the Begi Ghat. They realised money from Kunjpura, Lakhnauti, Gangoh, Ambehta, Deoband and Ghausgarh. On their way towards Delhi they plundered Barah Sadat, Shamli, Kairana, Kandhla and Mirath. They set fire to Paharganj and Jaisinghpura on 15 July 1775, In March 1783, he was at Delhi along with other Sikh Sardars. He brought two guns from the Red Fort and kept them at Rahon. He helped Baghel Singh in constructing seven Gurdwaras at Delhi.<sup>28</sup>

### **Tara Singh's Relations with Patiala**

Tara Singh Ghaiba maintained cordial relations with the Patiala house. He helped Raja Amar Singh in suppressing the revolt of Prince Himmat Singh in 1765. In 1777, Kanwar Himmat Singh's daughter Chand Kaur was married to Tara Singh's son, Dasondha Singh. The marriage party comprising 12,000 men stayed at Patiala for ten days. It cost the state five lakh rupees. In 1778, Tara Singh helped Raja Amar Singh in repelling the attack of Hari Singh Sialba and Jassa Singh Ramgarhia.

In 1779, when Nawab Majad-ud-Doulah Abdul Ahad, minister of Delhi, planned to conquer Malwa territory Raja Amar Singh invited Tara Singh Ghaiba, along with some other Sikh chiefs, to help him against Abdul Ahad. Tara Singh came to Patiala at the head of 15,000 troops. The Nawab was frightened to hear of the combined force of the Sikh Sardars and beat a retreat to Delhi. In April 1789, Mahadaji Sindhia sent an expedition under Rane Khah who attacked Patiala. Tara Singh strongly opposed him and made him retreat to Delhi. Tara Singh also helped the rulers of Patiala against the Bhattis of Bhatinda. He also supported Phulkian chiefs against George Thomas in 1799.<sup>29</sup>

### **Ranjit Singh Occupied Rahon**

When Tara Singh was growing very old Ranjit Singh was on his way to carving out a kingdom. The Maharaja had planned to annex the Sikh Misals and the Muslim principalities of the Punjab. Tara Singh's Misal could be no exception to it. When Ranjit Singh crossed over to the cis-Satluj areas in 1807, with territorial designs in his mind, Tara Singh accompanied him there, along with his contingent, and participated in the battle of Naraingarh, when he was about hundred years old.<sup>30</sup> Naraingarh was conquered and handed over to the Ahluwalias. Tara Singh died at Naraingarh.<sup>31</sup> His men secretly and hurriedly brought the dead body to Rahon and cremated it there. Ranjit Singh, at the head of his army, came to Rahon to mourn the death of Tara Singh. He waited upon Tara Singh's widow, Rattan Kaur, and said, "Tara Singh was my father and you are my mother. He was also my teacher as I learnt the art of using arms from him. I have come for condolence." Rattan Kaur made an offering of an elephant, five horses and six lakh rupees to him.<sup>32</sup> The Maharaja wanted to go inside the fortress at Rahon and occupy it but Tara Singh's widow did not allow him to do so. Fighting started from both sides and Ranjit Singh's forces met with terrible resistance. In the words of Cunningham, "The widow of the aged leader equalled the sister of the Raja of Patiala in spirit, and she is described to have girded up her garments, and to have fought, sword in hand, on the battered walls of the fort of Rahon."<sup>33</sup> Ultimately, some servants of Tara Singh treacherously opened the gate of the fort from inside and Ranjit Singh's forces entered it.<sup>34</sup> The dependants of Tara Singh were deprived of most of their possessions. Thirty five lakhs of rupees in cash and large quantities of gold and jewellery and other valuable goods fell into the hands of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Tara Singh's family was reduced to a state of sheer penury. Khushwaqat Rai writes that the family of Tara Singh was ruined (*kehandan-i-o ra barbad kard*).<sup>35</sup> Dakhni was left with Dasondha Singh and Nakodar and Mehatpur with his brother Jhanda Singh.<sup>36</sup> Gujjar Singh possessed the *pargana* of Ghungrana.

### **Tara Singh's Character**

Tara Singh was a God-fearing man and always kept the welfare of his subjects uppermost in his mind. The peasants, during his time, passed their days in peace and plenty. He ruled his possessions for a long time and reached 100 years of age. He took very simple diet. He always wore *kachha* or half trousers. He was an outstanding man among other Sardars. He never wore *doshala* (a precious shawl) rather he used only a *dhusa* (. a rough blanket). He put on his feet simple leather shoes. He was a man of unostentatious habits and was humorous in his disposition.<sup>37</sup>

There is a very interesting story about Tara Singh's relations with a woman who left him due to his sheer poverty. She married another man. When Tara Singh created a principality for himself, the village, in which that woman was living with her new husband, came under him. Once, it so happened that Tara Singh, when on a hunting expedition, passed by that village. The woman, along with some other women, was drawing water from a well outside the main gate of the village. Tara Singh recognised her from some distance. He galloped his horse to the well and asked her if she

had recognised him. On her reply in the affirmative he asked about her new husband and children, if any. She told him that her husband was a goldsmith and she was mother of two sons. Tara Singh asked her to call her sons there which she did. Tara Singh gifted two horses to the young boys and took them along. That village was given away in *jagir* to the woman.

When Tara Singh's *derah* (camp) reached Rahon the Rajputs of that place enquired about the young recruits. His men narrated the whole story. Ranjeh Khan and Pannu Khan, who were very informal with Tara Singh, enquired of him as to what relationship with the boys had placed them under his favours. This favour, they told him, was an act of shamefulness and it would make him a butt of public mockery. Thus, on the suggestion of the Rajput Sardars of Rahon, Tara Singh asked the young boys to go home and live on- the revenue of their village. They were promised more concessions also. The horses they were riding on were conferred on them.<sup>38</sup> This shows how sensitive Tara Singh was to public criticism. He would immediately undo an act that, would bring disgrace to him and his position.

If a bare-headed peasant, with tattered clothes, appeared in his presence, he called and seated him by his side on the cot and asked him as to what problems he was facing. If out of Sardar's awe and fear that peasant tried to hide his difficulties Tara Singh would insistently ask him if he had been harassed by his *mutsaddis*. Tara Singh would not get satisfied until he was sure that the peasant was happy and had no problem from his officials.<sup>39</sup>

Tara Singh was a zealous Sikh and believed in converting people to Sikhism by love and goodwill. He was always liberal and generous to the people who needed his help. He had opened *langars* (free mess) in all the villages under him, for the poor and the needy.<sup>40</sup> He was respected by all the Sardars including Ranjit Singh who called him '*Babaji*'.

Many people were drawing subsistence allowance during his time. Most of the *pirs* and *faqirs*, who had *jagirs* bestowed upon them by the state since long, continued to avail themselves of the grants under Tara Singh also. He had identified himself with the peasantry. A Rajput *zamindar*, Bhikhan Khan, who realized one fourth of the revenue of his village under Tara Singh, died issueless. Tara Singh visited the widow to condole Bhikhan Khan's death. He offered her five *ashrafis* as a mark of mourning and told her that she would continue to receive one fourth of revenue of the village as was received by her husband. The widow offered a filly to him but he refused to accept it telling her that he was a big Jat and it would be shameful for him to receive a gift from a widow and also said that the people would say that the Sardar who came to condole her husband's death took away the filly—the only property left with the poor woman.<sup>41</sup> This shows his attitude towards his subjects and his regard for the public opinion.

There is another incident on record that emphasises the same quality of his character. After the solemnisation of the marriage of his daughter his *mutsaddis* (*munshis*) suggested to him that all the *zamindars* of Rahon and Bharatgarh, who were mostly the Muslim Rajputs and Gujjars and some of them the Hindus, should be called to him and asked to make an offering to him according to their status, as a *neonda* (marriage cess). The *zamindars* assembled at Rahon and presented themselves to the Sardar and made a submission that he was the ruler of a state and petty contribution from them was nothing for him and the demand had made them astonished and perturbed. He laughed and told his *munshis* that he had earlier expressed to them his apprehension regarding the feasibility of their proposal. He knew that the people would not like it. He immediately excused them of the payment of the proposed marriage-cess. He, then, invited all the eight hundred *zamindars* assembled

there to his *divan-khana* (an audience-hall). He distributed pots, containing sweets, to all of them and kept a plate of sweets for himself. He told them that unless all of them ate the sweets he would not partake any from his plate. His request was complied with.<sup>42</sup> Many more such instances can be quoted from his life.

His territory was thickly populated. The *zamindars* were supposed to give one fourth or one fifth of their produce as state share. But generally they gave one tenth of the produce. Besides the *zamindars* all the Mahajans and craftsmen also lived in peace and prosperity.<sup>43</sup>

### **Tara Singh's Successors**

When Dasondha Singh died his widow retained the possession of some places of Dakhni. Later, Sahib Singh Bedi occupied Dakhni.<sup>44</sup> Dasondha Singh's wife, who succeeded to his property and territories after his death, was a woman of a low family. Before coming to Dasondha Singh's *harem* she was the wife of a gardener, named Husain. Her name was Saheli. She was an extremely beautiful woman. Sahib Singh Bedi did not like the Sikh territories coming into the hands of such a woman. He planned to dispossess her of her territory. He asked her to admit a few of his men into the fort of Dakhni and in that event, it would be declared to have come under his protection. This would save her from the onslaught of Ranjit Singh. She accepted the proposal and, shortly later, more of Sahib Singh's men entered the fort and drove out her men from there and occupied it. She was also deprived of her wealth.<sup>45</sup> Ranjit Singh took over Nakodar and Mehatpur from Jhanda Singh who was left with four villages for his subsistence. Two villages were conferred on him by Ranjit Singh. One of these villages was Sharakpur near Nakodar, half of which was in the hands of the Akalis. The second village named Sarhala, near Batala, was conferred by Rani Sada Kaur on Jhanda Singh and the third was Lehalke near Batala and fourth one, Lal Chappar, situated on the bank of river Jamuna, was given to Dulcha Singh because Inder Kaur, wife of Dulcha Singh, was the daughter of the brother of Rattan Kaur, wife of Tara Singh and mother of Jhanda Singh.<sup>46</sup> Later, when Jhanda Singh's position became financially unsound he became a trader and a businessman. He built a *pucci haveli* at Amritsar and pursued the profession of trade very vigorously.<sup>47</sup>

Tara Singh's third son, Gujjar Singh, was in possession of the *taaluqa* of Ghungrana. Ranjit Singh occupied the fort of Ghungrana, driving Gujjar Singh out. He lost all his territory. He went to Sahib Singh, ruler of Patiala, and lived on his generosity.<sup>48</sup> Sahib Singh conferred four villages on him. Due to some domestic dispute he was left with only two villages and the other two were given over to his wife. Tara Singh's two wives. Raj Kaur and Rajinder Kaur, died earlier and his third wife, Rattan Kaur, lived for a long time. Rattan Kaur sometimes lived with her son, Jhanda Singh, and sometimes at Ludhiana where she received a monthly allowance of thirty rupees sanctioned by Ochterlony. Later, she died at Ludhiana.<sup>49</sup>

The subordinates and Misaldars of Tara Singh maintained their positions. The Badichahs of Kot Siad, Kakras of Phillaur, Dharam Singh Kang of Lohian, Kanwar Singh and his sons, Vir Singh and Hari Singh of Kankana, kept their former positions in their respective areas. Since they came under the overlordship of Ranjit Singh they were obliged to offer *nazaranas* to him which had reduced their financial position considerably. According to Bute Shah, Tara Singh maintained an army of two thousand horsemen and his territory yielded to him an annual income of twenty five lakh rupees.<sup>50</sup>

### **Territories under Dallewalias**



Dallewalia Misal had a sizeable territory on both sides of river Satluj. Tara Singh had placed under his control one hundred and fifty three villages of Rai Ibrahim on the east and west of Satluj.<sup>51</sup> His possessions on the west of Satluj included Kang in Doaba Bist Jalandhar, Lohian, Rasapur, Kotshah, Qila Mohar Singh, Qila Dayal Singh, Pasla, Kot Bawal Khan, Nakodar, Qila Mehatpur, Qila Dakhani, district Phillaur, Nawanshahar, Rahon, Moran and Kang Sani Goharwala. His territories on the east of Satluj, adjoining Sirhind, included Morinda, Khamanon, Machhiwara, Bharatgarh, Fatehgarh, Singhan Sothiwala and Singhan Bariwala.<sup>52</sup>

Besides these places mentioned by Ali-ud-Din Mufti, Hari Ram Gupta has included many more places under the Dallewalia Misal in the cis-Satluj region as: Akalgarh, Arnauli, Awankot, Bahrampur, Bangar, Barara, Berian, Chanderi, Dharamkot, Dharamsinghwala, Ghungrana, Indri, Kaithal, Kakrala, Khairabad, Khizarabad, Korali, Maccholi, Mustafabad, Nurpur, Pundri, Ramuwala, Ropar, Shahkot, Sialba, Sidhuwal, Tihara and Wadni, and in the Jalandhar Doab region as: Garhdiwala, Garhshankar, Haibatpur, Taiwan and Takhtgarh.<sup>53</sup>

Tara Singh was the only renowned ruler of Dallewalia Misal.

### **Tara Singh Kakra and his Descendants**

According to Bute Shah, Tara Singh Kakra also belonged to the Dallewalia Misal. Originally he hailed from the Kang village and was a Jat farmer of Kang sub-caste like Tara Singh Ghaiba. The Kakra is said to have murdered a *panch*, named Labha who had insisted on the payment of land revenue. He had a redish (*kaki*) beard which earned him the title of *Kakar* or *Kakra* (a man with a redish beard).<sup>54</sup> His father, Mal Singh, lived on cultivation and Tara Singh Kakra was one of his parents' four sons.

At the time of the Sikh invasion of Kasur Tara Singh Kakra was also with the Sikh army. He got a lot of booty with which he created a contingent of horsemen. When Tara Singh Ghaiba occupied the *taaluqas* of Rahon and Nakodar Tara Singh Kakra placed the *taaluqa* of Phillaur under his control. He also took possession of some villages in the *bet* (area situated on the bank of river Satluj), including the village of Nurpur.<sup>55</sup>

Labha, the *panch* of village Kang, who had been murdered by Tara Singh Kakra, was a relative of Tara Singh Ghaiba. It led to the ouster of the Kakra from all his possessions. Tara Singh Kakra had earlier received a serious wound in his thigh in the battle of Sirhind. When he recovered from the wound he went to Amritsar on the occasion of *Diwali* and there he met Jassa Singh Ahluwalia who got him back his *taaluqa* from Tara Singh Ghaiba.<sup>56</sup> Jai Singh and Ram Singh of Khamanon, who originally belonged to the village of Kang, also joined Tara Singh Kakra. After the plunder of Sirhind Tara Singh occupied the *taaluqas* of Kotla and Kakrala. Jai Singh took possession of the *taaluqa* of Khamanon and the adjoining villages. Tara Singh gave one village each in the Kang district to his brothers Himat and Baka. They lived like *zamindars*.<sup>57</sup>

Tara Singh Kakra died in A.D. 1784 (BK 1841) and left behind a son, named Sudha Singh. Since Sudha Singh was of young age Tara Singh's brother Kapur Singh succeeded him, who gave half of the *taaluqa* to his nephew Sudha Singh.<sup>58</sup> After the death of Sudha Singh his son Megh Singh succeeded to his father's estate. Later, Megh Singh and Kapur Singh were dispossessed of their territory by Ranjit Singh and were given some villages for their subsistence. Sarai Phillaur remained in the hands of Megh Singh for some time. Ranjit Singh sent Diwan Mohkam Chand to Phillaur and concluding an agreement with Megh Singh not to interfere in his possessions any more, got

Lahore Durbar's *thana* established at Sarai Phillaur.<sup>59</sup> Megh Singh served the Lahore Durbar army as a colonel. He got a big house constructed at Ludhiana also where he, sometimes, came to stay with the permission of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Kapur Singh died in A.D. 1816 (BK 1873). Kapur Singh's son, Gujjar Singh, also served the Maharaja. Once, when Gujjar Singh was at Attock, along with his contingent, he came back without the permission of Kanwar Sher Singh. The Maharaja ordered the confiscation of his *jagir*.<sup>60</sup>

Megh Singh died at his house in Ludhiana on April 20, 1839.<sup>61</sup>

#### Footnotes:

1. Kanaihya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, Lahore, 1877, p. 103; Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, II, Patiala reprint, 1970, p. 250; cf., Muhammad Latif, *History of the Punjab*, Calcutta 1891, p. 321.
2. Kanaihya Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 103.
3. *Ibid.*, Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 250; cf., Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 250; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, reprint Lahore. 1916, p. 121.
4. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 250.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.* p. 251.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*, p. 253.
9. Bute Shah, *Tarikh-i-Punjab, Daftar IV*, MS., Dr Ganda Singh's personal collection. Patiala, p. 69; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol. I, (1854), Lahore, 1961, pp. 317-18.
10. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 69.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Khushwaqat Rai, *Tawarikh-i-Sikhan*, MS., Ganda Singh's personal Collection, Patiala, p. 71; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 69; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 318; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 252; Kanaihya Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 104.
13. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 318. According to Khushwaqat Rai, Tara Singh began to be called Ghaiba from the day he attacked the town of Jawalapur near Hardwar. People of that place believed that he had mysteriously appeared from an invisible and unknown place (*ghaib*), *Tawarikh-i-Sikhan*, MS., GS, p. 72.
14. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 69-70.
15. *Ibid.* p. 70.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 70, 92.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
20. Ganesh Das Bادهhra, *Char-Bagh-i-Punjab* (1855), Amritsar, 1965, p. 128; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 252.
21. Bute Shah. *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 72-73.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 73-74.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
27. Kanaihya Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

28. Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. IV, Delhi, 1982, p. 55.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 55-57.
30. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 72; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 253; cf., Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 74.
31. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 173; Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, 1873, p. 45, fn. 2. According to Khushwaqat Rai Tara Singh was wounded in this battle and he died on his way back before reaching Rahon *op cit* p. 72.
32. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 253.
33. Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs* (1849), Delhi reprint, 1955, p. 122.
34. *Ibid.*, cf., Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
35. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
36. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 79; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 320; cf., Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, II, Lahore, 1885, p. 67.
37. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 74.
38. *Ibid.*, pp. 74-76.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
40. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 252-53.
41. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 77.
42. *Ibid.*, pp. 77-78.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 79; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 320.
45. *Ibid.*, Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 320-21.
46. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 79.
47. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 320.
48. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
49. *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 80. According to some later sources Tara Singh had a big and strong army of ten thousand horsemen (Kanaihya Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 105; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, Part II, (ed. 1970) p. 252; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 322. According to H. T. Prinsep, 7,500 horsemen. *Origin of Sikh Power*, Calcutta, 1834, p. 24.)
51. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, I, p. 321.
52. *Ibid.*, pp. 320-22.
53. Hari Ram Gupta, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 68.
54. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 81.
55. *Ibid.*, pp. 174-75, (second copp).
56. *Ibid.*, p. 175.
57. *Ibid.*
58. *Ibid*, p. 179.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 176.
60. *Ibid*, p. 177.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 178.

## Chapter 10

### THE SHAHID OR NIHANG MISAL

#### Deep Singh Shahid

Deep Singh Shahid, a Sandhu Jat and resident of the village of Pohuwind of the *pargana* of Amritsar, was the founder of this Misal.<sup>1</sup> He was born in A.D. 1682 (14 magh, 1739 BK), His father Bhai Bhagata ji and mother Jioni ji were devoted Sikhs. Deep Singh remained with Guru Gobind Singh from 1700 to 1706. After the battle of Khidrana Guru Gobind Singh went to Talwandi Sabo, to the south of Bhatinda, and stayed there for some time. After the Guru's<sup>1</sup> death, to commemorate the memory of his stay at Talwandi, a Gurdwara was built there. The name of the place was changed to Demdama which signifies 'a breathing place.' The first *mahant* or priest put in charge of the shrine was Deep Singh. He had the privilege of remaining in the company of the Guru for some time. Deep Singh is said to have been a man of scholarly disposition with a thorough knowledge of Sikh scriptures. Deep Singh got prepared four copies of the *Guru Granth Sahib* which Guru Gobind Singh had finalised at Damdama. These copies, one each, were sent to Akal Takht, Amritsar, and the Takhts at Patna, Anandpur and Damdama. The volume prepared by Guru Gobind Singh remained with the Guru himself. During the big holocaust of 1762, that volume is said to have been taken away by the Durrani invader to Kabul.<sup>2</sup>

When Banda Singh came to the Punjab, to wreak vengeance upon Wazir Khan of Sirhind for his most heinous act of bricking alive the younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh, Deep Singh joined him. In most of the operations of Banda Singh in the Punjab and the adjoining areas Deep Singh was mostly with him. He always displayed remarkable feats of bravery and fearlessness.<sup>3</sup> His prominent companions included Gurbaksh Singh of village Leel, in the *pargana* of Khem Karan, Sudh Singh of village Dakoha, in the *pargana* of Jalandhar and Prem Singh, Sher Singh, Dargaha Singh and Hira Singh.<sup>4</sup>

When the strength of the *Taruna Dal* grew to as many as 12,000 men, for efficient administration of the organisation, Kapur Singh split the *dal* into five sections, one of them being led by Deep Singh.

Deep Singh occupied some territory of Sialkot which was under Muhammad Amin and handed over the same to his companions, Dayal Singh and Natha Singh.

Deep Singh remained with Banda Singh Bahadur from 1708 to 1715. From 1715 to 1757, he remained mostly at Damdama Sahib, all the time preaching Sikhism and teaching scriptures to the Sikhs. He spent about ten years, from 1716 to 1726, in preparing four copies of the holy *Guru Granth Sahib* referred to above. He kept himself fully posted with the activities of the Sikhs and maintained his deep interest in the Sikh movement for their liberation.

Having lived in the close association of Guru Gobind Singh Deep Singh attained high proficiency in Punjabi (Gurmuki); Urdu and Persian. He is also said to have learnt Hindi, Marathi and Arabic. Having a beautiful hand-writing he was considered an appropriate person for preparing copies of the Sikh scriptures. In such works he helped Bhai Mani Singh as well.

Since his life was completely dedicated to the cause of the Sikh Panth and imparting of education in Sikh scriptures he could never think of marriage and lived a life of single-blessedness.

On his fourth invasion, Ahmad Shah moved to Lahore on December, 20, 1756, and, then, shortly, therefore proceeded towards Delhi. After plundering the Mughal capital, and some other places, the Shah, on his homeward march, arrived at Tarori on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 1757. Here, Jahan Khan was ordered to move in advance along with Prince Timur, to Lahore.

On their way to Lahore, Prince Timur and Jahan Khan sacked the Sikh town and temple of Kartarpur in the Jalandhar Doab. The importance of the town lay in its Gurdwaras or the Sikh temples, sacred to the memory of the fifth and the sixth Sikh Gurus, Arjan and Hargobind. The Afghans, guided by Naseer Ali Khan of Jalandhar attacked the unsuspecting residents, all of a sudden, and subjected them to indiscriminate massacre and plunder. The Gurdwaras were set on fire and the buildings, including the historic pillar, called the Thamm Sahib, were all reduced to ashes and desecrated with the blood of slaughtered cows. On his arrival at Lahore, the Shah stayed there only for a short time. He sent out a detachment against the Sikhs at Amritsar. The city was sacked, the buildings were razed to the ground, the tank was profaned and a number of Sikhs killed. This happened about October 1757.

This was too much for the Sikhs to tolerate. As the festival of Diwali approached, the Sikhs who had taken refuge in the Malwa were inspired by Deep Singh to march to Amritsar to get the city vacated from the Afghans. Five or six thousand of them collected at Tarn Taran, mostly from the villages of Jaga, Bahman, Nahanwala, Banjhoke, Guruchautra, Phul, Mehraj, Daraj, Bhachhu, Gobindpura, Kot and Lakhi Jungle. At Tarn Taran they tied festal ribbons round their wrists and sprinkled saffron on their turbans, “as if they were out to fight for and win brides for themselves.”<sup>5</sup> They prepared themselves for extreme sacrifices.

The Sikhs under Deep Singh reached Amritsar where there was a severe fighting between the forces of Lahore under Jahan Khan and the Sikhs. Tahmas Khan Miskin, who had witnessed the fighting, wrote a detailed account of the action, in his *Tazkirah-i-Tahmas Miskin*. He recorded in his chronicle that “the Sikhs closely besieged the Muslim forces and from every side kept the fighting hot and distressed them so much that many of their men turned to flee in desperation.”<sup>6</sup> Ultimately before the heavy odds of the Afghans the Sikhs suffered huge losses.

In the battle of Gohalwarh Deep Singh and Jamal Shah, one of the Afghan Commanders, engaged in a hand to hand fight in which both of them received mortal wounds. It is said that at this moment, one of Deep Singh’s companions reminded him as to how his vow to lay down his life at the feet of the Guru i.e. in the precincts of Harmandir Sahib, which was at a distance of two *kos* from there, would be fulfilled. Even at the ripe age of seventy five hi, unswerving valour and unshaken faith in the ultimate victory of the Sikhs kept his spirits high. Supporting his wounded head Deep Singh went on fighting until he fell dead in the precincts of the Golden Temple,<sup>7</sup> where a cenotaph stands in his honour. The place, outside Ramsar, where he was wounded is also marked with a memorial temple.

The important Sikhs who laid down their lives there included Dharam Singh, Khem Singh, Man Singh, Ram Singh, Sant Singh, Sajjan Singh, Bahadur Singh, Hira Singh and Akharh Singh.<sup>8</sup> Deep Singh’s *jatha*, henceforth, began to be known as *shahid jatha*. Later, they carved out a Shahid Misal. It was also called Nihang Misal as its members and Sardars wore “blue, chequered clothes,

put bangles of steel round their wrists and a circular, sharpened, bright sword round their head.”<sup>9</sup> The word *Akali*, meaning ‘immortal’, had been used for a particular order of the Sikhs which claims its origin to Guru Gobind Singh. These Akalis also called Nihangs were dedicated to the service and defence of the faith. According to Malcolm, “The Akalis have a great interest in maintaining both the religion and government of the Sikhs as established by Guru Gobind Singh as on its continuance in that shape, their religious and political influence must depend. Should Amritsar cease to be a place of resort or be no longer considered as the religious capital of the state in which all questions, that involve the general interest of the commonwealth, are to be decided, this formidable order would at once fall from that power and consideration, which they possess, to a level with other mendicants.”<sup>10</sup>

In the words of Gordon, “They exercised a fierce scrutiny as censors in upholding strict compliance with the militant creed of the Singhs, constituted themselves defenders of the faith against all innovations, took a prominent part in the councils in the planning and arranging of expeditions for averting national danger and in educating the people in the doctrines of the Sikh religion.”<sup>11</sup>

Through their extraordinary zeal and enthusiasm, they acquired the character of priests in which capacity they acted effectively while directing the conduct of the Sikh councils at the Akal Takht. They did not like the Europeans and the Muslims because of their anti-Sikh practices. According to Malcolm they were, “insufferable to strangers for whom they entertain a contempt which they take little pains to conceal.”<sup>12</sup>

To serve a foreign master was against their creed. In fact, it was a practice with them to be a little uncharitable to the powerful and the rich while serving and helping the poor and the weak. In the matter of religious doctrine and practice, they were uncompromisingly orthodox. According to Ali-ud-Din Mufti, the Akalis were an order that never cared about death and misery. And because of the respect for this order the Sikhs were strictly forbidden from oppressing these people or shedding their blood and doing so was considered a sinful act.<sup>13</sup> The Akalis have, ever since their origin, been held in high esteem by the Sikhs. Their contingents were called the forces of Guru Gobind Singh.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, they enjoyed the regard of the whole Sikh community. Hence the deep veneration in which the Shahid or Nihang Misal was held.

### **Sudh Singh Shahid**

After the martyrdom of Baba Deep Singh, his associate Sudh Singh succeeded him at the shrine at Damdama Sahib. As referred to earlier he belonged to Dakoha in the *pargana* of Jalandhar. He died fighting against the Muhammadan governor of Jalandhar,<sup>15</sup> in 1762, near his native place Dakoha.<sup>16</sup>

### **Karam Singh Shahid**

Karam Singh, the companion of Sudh Singh, succeeded him. He was the son of Chaudhry Bir Singh, a Sidhu Jat, resident of the village Marana (Marhaka) in the *pargana* of Lahore. After Zain Khan of Sirhind was killed the Sikh Sardars occupied the surrounding territories. Karam Singh also occupied *parganas* of Shahzadpur, Majri and Kesari in Ambala district from which an income of one lakh rupees accrued annually.<sup>17</sup> Nawab Zabita Khan of Ranniawala was ruling his territory near Damdama Sahib. He was in constant warfare with the Sikhs. In order to pacify them he transferred twelve villages in the name of the Gurdwara, including the villages of Dadu, Dharampura, Rampura, Talokewala, Kewal and Huna Pucca.<sup>18</sup> Karam Singh later took possession of Rannia, Damdama,

Khari, Jaroli, Faizullapur and the adjoining areas.<sup>19</sup> He lived at Kesari. His brother Dharam Singh was given Shahzadpur. Dharam Singh died issueless. After Dharam Singh's death his widow Mai Desan was given a village Baragaon for her subsistence. Karam Singh himself shifted to Shahzadpur, and brought Mai Desan, the widow of Dharam Singh, into his wedlock.<sup>20</sup> After Mai Desan's death her possessions also passed into the hands of Karam Singh.

During Karam Singh's time a contingent of 404 Sikhs, with two guns and 10 *zamburs*, was stationed at Damdama. Natha Singh was the *mukhtar* of the place. He was replaced by the orders of Karam Singh.

When in 1768, on the complaint of a Brahman whose married daughter had been forcibly seized by Hasan Khan, the Nawab of Jalalabad Lohari, the Sikh forces marched on Jalalabad under the command of Karam Singh Shahid who emerged successful in the fighting. The Nawab was tied to a cot and burnt alive. Nawab's agent, a Hindu Kalal, who informed him of the beautiful girls, was publically executed. The Brahman's daughter was restored to her husband and the Sardar saw that the food cooked by the girl was served to all the Brahmans of her husband's village. The Sikhs gave a sufficient amount of money to the girl's husband to assure good treatment for her.<sup>21</sup> Karam Singh ruled his territory very efficiently. He kept under his control, the *parganas* of Bankhandi and Bartha Jawai (in the Saharanpur district) with an income of one lakh rupees annually, for a period of thirty years.<sup>22</sup>

Towards the end of 1779, Karam Singh arrived in the camp of Prince Abdul Ahad at Karnal and presented two horses and some other gifts. He was awarded a *khillat* of five pieces, a *sarpech* and a sword. Some other chiefs, including Baghel Singh Karorsinghia and Sahib Singh Khundawala, also met the prince. These chiefs were joining the imperial camp partly to crush their opponents with the assistance of the king's forces and partly to plunder the territory of the Raja of Patiala at whose domination they were chafing.<sup>23</sup>

Due to his hobnobbing with the Marathas Diwan Nanumal of Patiala fell from royal favours. When he was returning from Karnal he heard of all that his enemies had accomplished against him. He thought it unwise to return to Patiala where he could only expect imprisonment or death. He, therefore, took refuge with Sardar Karam Singh Shahid.<sup>24</sup>

The forces of the Shahid Misal comprised 2000 horsemen.<sup>25</sup>

Karam Singh died in 1794.

### **Gulab Singh Shahid**

Karam Singh was succeeded by his eldest son Gulab Singh who was an inefficient man. He could not retain the possessions of his father. On January 4, 1804, he met colonel Ochterlony of the East India Company, at Karnal, when the British proceeded up to that place, and offered assistance to the British and appealed to place him under their protection.<sup>26</sup>

Ochterlony gave him a recommendatory letter in which he wrote that, "Sardar Gulab Singh of Kesari came here and sought asylum under the East India Company. Whosoever follows me to command the company's forces he must take Gulab Singh as a faithful follower of the British and watch his interests."<sup>27</sup>

The Sikhs paid great regards to the Shahid Misal as its early leaders had fought very bravely in the campaigns of the Dal Khalsa. When Ranjit Singh conquered Naraingarh in 1807, during his second cis-Satluj campaign, he passed through Shazadpur, 10 kms west of Naraingarh. Out of great regards for the Shahids the Maharaja did not interfere in the affairs of Shahzadpur. Gulab Singh died in 1844.<sup>28</sup>

### **Gulab Singh's successors**

Gulab Singh was succeeded by his son, Shiv Kirpal Singh, who was, then, only six years old. He sided with the British in the Indian mutiny and earned their goodwill. He held estates worth 30,000 rupees, a year and continued to be the guardian of the Damdama Sahib Gurdwara, which brought in about 1000 rupees a year, in offerings. After Shiv Kirpal Singh's death in 1871, his son Jiwan Singh became his successor. Jiwan Singh was married to Bachittar Kaur, daughter of Maharaja Mahendar Singh of Patiala. He received about 20 lakh rupees from Patiala in the form of dowry.<sup>29</sup> Later also, he continued receiving great financial assistance from the Maharaja of Patiala. Jiwan Singh's annual income from the revenue was only 48 thousand rupees. On January 10, 1890, he received the title of the 'Star of India' from the governor of Punjab.

### **Footnotes:**

1. Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, (ed. 1970), p. 261.  
According to Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha, Deep Singh was a Jat of Khera sub-caste.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 262.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 261.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Lakshman Singh, Bhagat, *Sikh Martyrs*, Madras, 1928, pp. 195-97.
6. For details see Miskin, *Tazkirah-i-Tabmas Khan Miskin, or Tabmas Nama*. MS., GS., pp. 162-65.
7. Ganda Singh and Teja Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Bombay, 1950, p. 155, fn, 2; Lakshman Singh, Bhagat, *Sikh Martyrs*, Ludhiana ed. pp. 195-98.
8. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 263.
9. Muhammad Latif, *History of the Punjab*, Calcutta, 1891, pp. 324-25.
10. Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, London, 1912, pp. 119-20.
11. Gordon, *The Sikhs*, London, 1904, p. 73.
12. Malcolm, *op. cit.*, p. 134.
13. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol. I, (1854), Lahore, 1961. p. 365.
14. Amar Nath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, (1836-37), Lahore, 1928. p. 115.
15. Lepel Griffin, *The Rajas of the Punjab*. Lahore, 1870, p. 44, fn.
16. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 263.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 264.
18. *Ibid.*
19. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 44, fn.
20. *Ibid.*
21. Rattan Singh Bhangu (1841), Amritsar, 1939, pp. 431-33.
22. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 264.
23. *Tazkirah-i-Khandan-i-Rajahai Phulkian*, MS., GS., p. 40; Muhammad Hasan Khan, *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, Amritsar 1878, p. 114.
24. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, p. 61.



25. Prinsep, *Origin of Sikh Power and Political Life of Rujeeet Singh*, Calcutta, 1834, p. 31; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 325.
26. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 44. fn.
27. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 265.
28. Lepel Griffin, *op., cit.* p.44. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 265.
29. Gian Singh. *op. cit.*, p. 265.

## Chapter 11

### THE NIKKAI MISAL

According to Lepel Griffin, there is a legend believed at Bahrwal that runs as under: About the year 1595 Guru Arjan, travelling with a few followers in the Lahore district, reached the small town of Bahrwal which had been founded by an Arora Khatri, named Bahr. The Guru was not received with due hospitality. So he passed on to the neighbouring village of Jambar where he lay down on a *charpai* (cot) under a shady tree. By this time, Hem Raj, a Sandhu Jat, *chaudhari* or headman of Bahrwal, who was absent when the Guru passed through his village, heard of what had occurred and ashamed of his town-men's inhospitality went to Jambar and brought the Guru to his town. The Guru blessed Hem Raj and prophesied that his son and successor, Hira Singh, would be a great and powerful chief.<sup>1</sup>

This legend would have been more correctly applied to Alam, the father or to Mahmana, the grandfather of Hem Raj, for Hira Singh, who was certainly the first man of note in the family, was not born till nearly a hundred years after the death of Guru Arjan which took place in 1606.<sup>2</sup>

#### Hira Singh

Hira Singh, was the son of Hem Raj, of Bahrwal village in the *pargana* of Fasilabad and in the province of Multan. He was born in A.D. 1706 (BK. 1763). He was initiated into the Khalsa in 1731,<sup>3</sup> and he joined the Sikh movement in the Punjab in 1748.<sup>4</sup> In the course of a few days time about two hundred Sikhs gave him i following and remained in attendance on him, day and night.<sup>5</sup> Hira Singh gathered power about the middle of the eighteenth century. He took possession of the Nakka territory lying between Lahore and Gogaira and between the rivers, Satluj and Ravi, which has given its name to the family of Hira Singh and to the Misal which he commanded. In 1749, he took Satghara and Chunian from the Afghans and augmented his resources considerably.<sup>6</sup> Shortly thereafter, the number of his horse and foot rose to three thousand.<sup>7</sup> His territorial possessions included Bahrwal, Faridabad, Jethpur, Chunian, Khudian, Mustfabad and Shergarh and areas from river Ravi to Dogran and Manwan, situated on the bank of river Satuj.<sup>8</sup> Day by day, Hira Singh's status and position increased.

At that time. Sheikh Subhan was the *gaddi-nashin* of Baba Parid-ud-Din of Pak Pattan. He hid, at his command, one thousand horsemen and two thousand *pyadas*. He was carrying on the administration of the estate attached to the *dargah*.<sup>9</sup> According to Gian Singh and Muhammad Latif, Subhan Khan Qureshi, the *rais* (landlord) of Pak Pattan wanted of Muslims to slaughter the cows in large numbers, without compunction. His Hindu subjects felt deeply hurt over it. They made appeals to Hira Singh to ask Subhan Khan to desist from hurting the feelings of the Hindus. But Subhan Khan cared neither for the Hindus nor for Hira Singh's request.<sup>10</sup> Hira Singh launched an attack on Sheikh Subhan. Hira Singh received a gun-shot on his forehead and died instantaneously. His companions brought his dead body to Bahrwal where it was cremated.<sup>11</sup>

#### Nahar Singh

Hira Singh had a suckling son, named Dal Singh. But the Sikhs of the *derah* assembled and unanimously decided to place his nephew Nahar Singh<sup>12</sup> on the *gaddi* of the Nakkai house. Nahar Singh died nine months after his succession,<sup>13</sup> in a fight at Kot Kamalia in 1768.<sup>14</sup> His younger brother, Ran Singh, became the next Sardar of the Misal and he administered his territory in his own way.<sup>15</sup>

## Ran Singh

Under Ran Singh, Misal rose to a strong and important position. The Misal was, no doubt, not very powerful as compared with some other Misals but it could play an effective role in the battle-field when needed, with a sizable army equipped with the adequate arms. The Jats of the Nakka *derah* were known for their strength and bravery and this small Misal always did good fighting with the Afghans and other neighbours, till, at last, a tract worth nine lakhs of rupees was in the hands of Sardar Ran Singh and his Misaldars.<sup>16</sup>

They held Chunian, part of Kasur, Sharakpur, Gogaira *pargana* and Kot Kamalia, at one time, the headquarters of the Kharral tribe.<sup>17</sup>

During this time, Kamar Singh was the chief of Sayidwala, Satghara and Kot Kamalia and had four hundred horsemen at his command. Ganga Singh Gill looked after the villages of Bujaki and Baga Sudha and maintained two hundred horsemen. Lal Singh was living in his ancestral village of Jamsher Bandu and commanded one hundred horsemen.<sup>18</sup>

After some time, all these Sardars assembled at a place and proposed an alliance. Since Kamar Singh, Ganga Singh and Lal Singh had seven hundred horsemen at their command and Ran Singh Bahrwalia had one thousand horsemen under him, they decided to pool their military resources and carry out conquests into the territories of others and later distribute their gains among themselves according to their shares.<sup>19</sup> In that case the area would be populated and it would yield full produce and all of them would live in plenty.<sup>20</sup>

Sardar Kamar Singh of Sayidwala married his daughter to Dal Singh, son of Sardar Hira Singh. Kamar Singh got interested in Dal Singh's succeeding to the command of the Misal. This led to a hostility between Kamar Singh and Ran Singh. In the conflict that ensued between them<sup>21</sup> Lal Singh Panthi sided with Ran Singh and Ganga Singh Gill joined Kamar Singh. A big *zamindar*, named Amir, the Sardar of Janan community, who had the following of two or three thousand peasants, had been for a long time the subject and a tenant or revenue payee to Kamar Singh. He alienated his allegiance from Kamar Singh and joined Ran Singh.<sup>22</sup> The conflict between the above referred to contending parties continued for three years and there were occasional fightings. In the hostilities Ran Singh had an upper hand and Kamar Singh was dispossessed of his territories excepting Sayidwala and Satghara and the adjoining villages.<sup>23</sup>

Ultimately, Kamar Singh became helpless and he extended the hand of friendship towards Amir in 1776. Sardar Amir sent him a word that it was not possible for him to come to him under the circumstances. He should first come to him and after the ill-will and bad-blood created between them was removed he (Amir) would visit him (Kamar Singh) and pay him his due regards and offer his services.<sup>24</sup>

Since Kamar Singh was in need of Sardar Amir's help he visited his place, accompanied by nineteen horsemen. He was received very hospitably and with very respectful regards. At night, when Kamar Singh was asleep his head was cut off and the weapons and horses of his companions were usurped and they were allowed to go. They took away the dead body of Kamar Singh to Sayidwala where it was cremated.<sup>25</sup>

Kamar Singh's son-in-law, Dal Singh, succeeded him to the estate. Wazir Singh, the son-in-law of Kamar Singh's sister, also lived at Sayidwala. He was a very influential man. Most of the affairs relating to the estate particularly the revenue administration were referred to him and no body bothered about Dal Singh.<sup>26</sup>

With the passage of time, when the administrative affairs were straightened Wazir Singh decided to wreak vengeance on the enemies of Kamar Singh. The warfare continued for quite sometime. In the course of fighting Sardar Amir died of a gunshot. His followers were turned out of Sandal Bar.<sup>27</sup> When Wazir Singh felt relieved from the side of Sardar Amir he turned his attention to Ran Singh Babrwalia and started armed operations against him. Ran Singh died at Bahrwal in 1781.<sup>28</sup>

### **Bhagwan Singh**

Ran Singh was succeeded by his eldest son, Bhagwan Singh, who was not able to hold the territory his father had acquired. Wazir Singh continued fighting against Bhagwan Singh also, and occupied most of his territories. Sardarni Karmo, wife of Sardar Ran Singh, accompanied by her three sons—Bhagwan Singh, Gian Singh and Khazan Singh, came to a garden in Sayidwala and accepted allegiance to Wazir Singh and got her villages released.<sup>29</sup>

After some time, Sardarni Karmo, in consultation with her people, betrothed her daughter. Raj Kaur, also called Datar Kaur, and popularly known as Mai Nakkain, with Sardar Mahan Singh's son, through Diwan Tek Chand.<sup>30</sup>

Hearing about this matrimonial relationship Wazir Singh got apprehensive lest the Sukarchakia chief should help Karmo and put him into trouble. Wazir Singh tried to mislead her saying that the Sandhu Jats were much superior to Sansi Jats as the Sukarchakias were called. Wazir Singh advised her to snap matrimonial connections with the Sukarchakias who were at the bottom among the Jats and engage her daughter in some superior sub-caste of Jats. Sardarni Karmo did not accept the advice<sup>31</sup> and refused to break off this match.

At last, Wazir Singh sent a *vakil*, named Sangat Rai, a confidant of his, to Mahan Singh to create and cement friendly relations with him. Wazir Singh also sent a word to Mahan Singh that he had one thousand horsemen under his command and whenever the need arose he could come to serve him with his contingent. Mahan Singh, who was a wise and a capable man, decided to avail himself of this offer and in order to strengthen the bonds of friendship he sent a reliable and trustworthy Brahman, named Naunihal, to stay with him<sup>32</sup> as his *vakil* or an envoy. The two *vakils* performed their duties very well and their efforts went a long way in bringing Wazir Singh and Mahan Singh closer.

Ganga Singh Gill had died in a battle and Lal Singh, avoiding the companionship of Bhagwan Singh, passed his days at his place peacefully. In 1840 Bk. or A.D. 1783, Wazir Singh, Bhagwan Singh and Rupa Singh, brother of Ganga Singh Gill, assembled their forces and attacked Dayalpur and occupied all the adjoining villages.<sup>33</sup>

Jalal-ud-Din Khan, the Afghan ruler of Dayalpur, who had forty horsemen and fifty *pyadas* at his command, sent a communication to the above mentioned invaders that all the villages occupied by them were attached to the fort which was still under him. So long as he was in possession of the fort none could take away any part of his territory. He told them that as soon as they returned to

their places he would get his villages released and in the course of his bid to recapture his lost villages there would be plundering and setting places on fire. Therefore, it was in the fitness of things that they should take a part of the revenue of that territory and retire from there.<sup>34</sup> Wazir Singh and Bhagwan Singh, in consultation with each other, got some revenue fixed for themselves. Then, they entered Burki and Murki and, occupying areas that yielded an annual revenue of about fifty thousand rupees, returned to their places. One fifth of the total revenue, that they received from the newly annexed places, was given to Rupa Singh, brother of Ganga Singh, and the remaining was divided among themselves equally by the two Sardars.<sup>35</sup>

After some time, Jai Singh Kanaihya led his forces into the territories of the Nakkais and sent a message to Wazir Singh and Bhagwan Singh to present themselves to him. Helplessly, they joined him and in his company they reached Chiniot via Multan and Jhang. From there, Jai Singh headed for Amritsar and Wazir Singh and Bhagwan Singh retired to their places. In 1842 BK. corresponding to A.D. 1785, Jai Singh Kanaihya demanded the booty obtained by Mahan Singh from Jammu and threatened him with dire consequences in the event of his refusal to part with plunder. Mahan Singh, finding himself in a tight corner, wrote a letter to Wazir Singh to come to his help with all possible haste.<sup>36</sup>

When Wazir Singh received the invitation from Mahan Singh he was short of funds. He plundered the town of Hujra, and accompanied by Bhagwan Singh, by quick marches, reached and set up his *derah* at about five *kos* from Amritsar. Mahan Singh went to Wazir Singh's *derah* to welcome him and offered him sweets as a token of love and regards. Wazir Singh accompanied Mahan Singh to the latter's *derah* and helped him in ruining Jai Singh,<sup>37</sup> At the time of his return to his place Wazir Singh was highly honoured by Mahan Singh who gave him horses and precious dresses out of gratitude for his help.

In the above affair, Bhagwan Singh was completely ignored. He felt slighted. When he returned to Bahrwal Bhagwan Singh, in collaboration with Mehtab Singh Assal, Dharam Singh Bhaiya and Rupa Singh Jatariwal, made a stir against Wazir Singh.<sup>38</sup> When Mahan Singh heard about the hostilities between the two he came, all the way, from Gujranwala and brought about reconciliation between them. Outwardly, they posed to have patched up their differences but in the heart of their hearts they had a deep-seated and lingering animosity between them. After some time the hostilities again erupted which resulted in the death of Bhagwan Singh in the battle-field.<sup>39</sup>

### **Gian Singh**

Bhagwan Singh was issueless, so his younger brother, Gian Singh, succeeded him in 1789. After some time Gian Singh was blessed with a son, named Kahan Singh.<sup>40</sup>

In the meantime Dal Singh, son of Hira Singh, who lived with Wazir Singh, came of age. He chopped off the head of Wazir Singh when he was asleep. In his attempt to escape he was overpowered by one of the servants of Wazir Singh and done to death.<sup>41</sup>

Wazir Singh had two sons, named Mehar Singh and Mohar Singh. The Sikhs of his *derah* assembled and appointed Mehar Singh the elder son, to succeed his father. Mehar Singh kept the *taaluqa* of Sayidwala and Kot Kamalia in his hands and conferred Satghara to his younger brother Mohar Singh. Some years after the death of Mahan Singh, Gian Singh solemnised the marriage of his sister, Raj Kaur, with Ranjit Singh. She became the mother of Kharak Singh.

When Ranjit Singh was on his way to creating a kingdom and was gaining power day by day, Sardar Mehar Singh of Sayidwala engaged his daughter to Ishar Singh, son of Ranjit Singh and grandson of Sada Kaur. But the young prince died when he was hardly one and a half years of age.<sup>42</sup>

### **Khazan Singh and Kahan Singh**

After the death of Gian Singh, his younger brother Khazan Singh succeeded to the Sardari of the Misal. In 1807, after annexing Kasur, Maharaja Ranjit Singh headed towards Multan through the territory of Nakka. Jalal Khan, ruler of Dipalpur, fled his territory along with his children and relatives. The Maharaja occupied these territories and conferred the same on Khazan Singh and his brother-in-law, Kahan Singh, and proceeded further.<sup>43</sup>

The same year (i.e. in 1807), twin sons were born to Mehtab Kaur, daughter of Sada Kaur. After the death of Mehar Singh of Sayidwala his widow married her daughter to Prince Sher Singh but the girl died an year later. The Maharaja occupied Sayidwala and other possessions of the widow of Mehar Singh and also that of Mohar Singh. He gave a *jagir* of seven villages, including Nokra, to the dispossessed persons for their subsistence.<sup>44</sup>

Kahan Singh accepted the overlordship of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. When the Nakkai chief had gone to Multan in 1811, to realise the tribute from Muzaffar Khan on behalf of the Lahore Durbar, Ranjit Singh sent Mohkam Chand and Prince Kharak Singh to the territories of the Nakkais to take charge of the same.<sup>45</sup> The Nakkai administrator (*vakil*) Diwan Hakim Rai immediately approached Ranjit Singh with the request that it was not proper for the Lahore forces to take military action against the Misal. In case the territory of the Nakkais was allowed to continue in the hands of Sardar Kahan Singh, a big *nazarana* would be given to the Maharaja.<sup>46</sup> In the words of Munshi Sohan Lal Suri, the Maharaja told Hakim Rai, "I have nothing to do in the matter. Prince Kharak Singh is the maternal grandson of the Nakkais. Only he knows as to what is to be done."<sup>47</sup>

Mohkam Chand conquered the fortresses of Chunia, Dipalpur and Satghara. Sardar Kahan Singh came back from Multan to find his territories gone out of his hands. He was given a *jagir* worth twenty thousand rupees annually.<sup>48</sup> Khazan Singh was also given a *jagir* at Nawankot which was situated in Doaba Rachna, adjoining Sharakpur. The *jagir* yielded an annual income of twelve thousand rupees.<sup>49</sup>

Kahan Singh always lived at Bahrwal and remained loyal to Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Jamiat Singh, son of Khazan Singh, and Chet Singh, son of Gian Singh, served in the *ghhorcharras* under Ranjit Singh.<sup>50</sup> After the Maharaja's death Kahan Singh did not participate in politics. In 1848, his troops and his second son, Attar Singh, who were with the army at Multan, joined the rebels but Kahan Singh, who was, then, an old man, was not suspected of being a party to his son's disaffection. In 1860, he was made a *jagirdar* Magistrate by the British.<sup>51</sup> He died in A.D. 1874 (1931 Bk.). His eldest son Chattar Singh had died earlier in 1857. After Kahan Singh's death his grandson, Ranjodh Singh, succeeded to the *jagir*. His brothers, Thakur Singh and Partap Singh, and cousin brother, Lehna Singh and other members of the family lived on petty *jagirs*.<sup>52</sup>

### **Footnotes:**

1. Lepel Griffin, *The Panjab Chiefs*, Lahore, 1890, pp. 118-19.
2. *Ibid*, p. 119.

3. Khazan Singh, *History and Philosophy of the Sikh Religion*, part I, Lahore, 1914, p. 272.
4. Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, IV, MS., Ganda Singh collection, Patiala, p. 63; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, I, (1854), Lahore, 1961, p. 283.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 63; Ali-ud-Din, *op. cit.*, p. 283.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 64; *Ibid.*, p. 284.
7. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 282.
8. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 61; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 284.
9. *Ibid.*, *Ibid.*
10. Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, reprint, Patiala, 1970. p. 248; Muhammad Latif, *History of the Punjab*, Lahore, ed. 1916, p. 108.
11. *Ibid.*, *Ibid.*
12. According to Bute Shah, his name was Tara Singh (*op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p.64). Ali-ud-Din Mufti names him as Nar Singh (Vol. I, p. 284) and Gian Singh calls him Nahar Singh (*op. cit.*, p. 248).
13. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 64; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, I, p. 284.
14. According to Gian Singh and Kanaihya Lal, Nahar Singh died of tuberculosis. (Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, 11, p. 248; Kanaihya Lal, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, Lahore, 1877, p. 97.
15. Bule Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
16. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 120; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 109.
17. *Ibid.*, Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
18. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 63; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 284.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 63-64. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*, p. 64. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*, *Ibid.*, p. 285.
22. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 64; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 285.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 64. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.* *Ibid.*
25. *Ibid.* *Ibid.*, cf., Khushwaqat Rai. *Tawarikh-i-Sikhan*, MS., GS. collection, pp. 88-89.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, p. 285. According to some writers Kamar Singh and Wazir Singh were brothers Mohammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 109; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 248).
27. Bute Shah; *op. cit.*, IV, p. 65; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*; I, pp. 285.
28. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 120.
29. Bute Shah. *op. cit.*, p. 65; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 286.
30. *Ibid.* *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.* *Ibid.*
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.
33. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 287; Buta Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 66.
34. *Ibid.*, Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 66.
35. *Ibid.* *Ibid.*
36. *Ibid.*, Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 120; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
37. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, pp. 287-88; *Ibid.*, p. 67.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 288; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 120.
39. *Ibid.* *Ibid.*; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68.
40. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 89; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 288.
41. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I p. 288; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 121; Gian. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 249; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 68.
42. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 28E-89; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 68.
43. *Ibid.*, Bute Shah *op. cit.*, pp. 68-69.
44. *Ibid.* *Ibid.*, p. 69.

45. Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, II, Lahore, 1885, pp. 108-09; Amar Nath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, (1836-37), Lahore, 1928, p. 61.
46. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 108.
47. *Ibid.*, pp. 108-09.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 109; cf., Ali-ud-Din Mufti, I, p. 289; cf.. Bate Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 69; cf., Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 89.
49. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 121.
50. *Ibid.*
51. *Ibid.*, p. 122; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 249.
52. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 249; Kanaihya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, Punjabi version, Patiala, 1968, p. 93.



## Chapter 12

### THE NISHANWALIA MISAL

#### Dasaundha Singh

Chaudhary Sahib Rai, a Jat of Gill sub-caste, was the resident of Surdev which was situated at a distance of 5 *kos* (15 kms) from Kot Isa Khan towards its south. His two sons, Dasaundha (Saundha) Singh and Sangat Singh, who lived on, cultivation of land, took baptism of the double-edged sword and joined the Dal Khalsa.<sup>1</sup> A little later, they founded a village, named Singhanwala, near Zira (in the present district of Faridkot), and took up their residence there.<sup>2</sup>

In 1734, Dasaundha Singh was one of the leaders of the *Taruna Dal*. Since he was a strong and sturdy man, he was generally entrusted with the duty of carrying the flag in front of the Dal Khalsa when moving from one place to another. He was very much respected by the *Sikh jathas*. Dasaundha Singh, being the flag-bearer of the Dal Khalsa, or the Khalsa army, was given the name of Nishanwalia. *Nishan* means a standard or a banner and Nishanwalia means standard or flag bearer. The national flag of the Sikhs was of saffron colour. Dasaundha Singh was baptised by Diwan Darbara Singh. He wielded his sword like Rustam.<sup>3</sup> He participated in the battle of Sirhind in January 1764. He took possession of the *ilaqas* of Singhanwala, Sanehwal, Sarai Lashkari Khan, Doraha, Amloh, Zira, Liddhar, Shahabad and Ambala and made the last named place his headquarters. Dasaundha Singh died in 1767, of a gun-shot in the battle of the Brars at Droli which is situated at a distance of 5 *kos* from Singhanwala, in its west.<sup>4</sup>

#### Sangat Singh

Dasaundha Singh was succeeded by his brother, Sangat Singh. He was still more chivalrous and brave as compared to his brother. Accompanied by his men, he attacked Sirhind for the second time. He built a brick wall around the town of Ambala, his capital, to provide it protection against robbers. This town did not have sufficient water of good quality. Sangat Singh chose to leave Ambala for want of drinkable water and also the climate of this place did not suit him. He, therefore, shifted to Singhanwala. He handed over the possession of Ambala to his brother-in-law (wife's brother), Dhian Singh, who appointed Gurbakhsh Singh and Lal Singh as the *thanedars* of Ambala and the adjoining possessions. Dhian Singh went to Singhanwala. Sangat Singh died soon after and Dhian Singh paid no attention to Ambala and the other possessions there. When he returned to Ambala he found Gurbakhsh Singh and Lal Singh to have become independent there. Jai Singh, resident of Kairon, and Kaur Singh of Dhand Kasel of the *pargana* of Tarn Taran, were Gurbakhsh Singh's close associates. They had taken *pahul* at the hands of Diwan Darbara Singh.<sup>5</sup> The number of troops under Sangat Singh was 12,000.<sup>6</sup>

Sangat Singh did not live a long life. He died in 1774, due to a natural death, while on a march in the hills, after ruling his territories for a few years.<sup>7</sup>

#### Mohar Singh

Sangat Singh left behind three sons, Mohar Singh, Kapur Singh and Anup Singh. They were very young and ignorant of statecraft. Mohar Singh, who was nominated to succeed his father, was hardly eight years of age and, thus, unfit to handle state affairs. He obtained Ambala and Zira. Kapur Singh settled at Singhanwala and Anup Singh got the possession of Sarai Lashkari Khan. Mohar Singh's maternal uncle, Dhian Singh, became the administrator of his territories. The duty of

flag-bearing was also entrusted to Dhian Singh. When Sirhind was attacked by the prominent Sardars of the Sikh Misals Mohar Singh got a good share of booty from there and he also placed under his control more places including Bejad Chak and Jatana.<sup>8</sup>

After some time when Mohar Singh visited his mother at Singhanwala his *thanedars* and subordinate officers revolted against him. After the lapse of some time Mohar Singh and his brother Anup Singh came back from Singhanwala. Diplomatically enough, they went to Jai Singh's house at Sarai Lashkari Khan, as his guests. Originally, Jai Singh had been appointed *thanedar* of Sarai Lashkari Khan by Mohar Singh's father. At night, they took hold of Jai Singh and threw him out of the Sarai and confiscated whole of his movable and immovable property.<sup>9</sup> Some of his adjoining territories were also annexed.

Mohar Singh solemnised his first marriage with Bhagan of Bilaspur. She lived at Singhanwala. Anup Singh married Darhai who was kept at Sarai Lashkari Khan.<sup>10</sup>

Mohar Singh became prominent among the cis-Satluj Sikh chiefs. On September 14, 1779, Mohar Singh waited upon Prince Abdul Ahad Khan at Thanesar when the latter was leading an expedition against Patiala. He made an offering to Abdul Ahad and was awarded a *khillat*. When another Mughal general, Shafi, led a campaign against the cis-Satluj Sikh chiefs in 1781, grains and food-stuffs were sent to him from Delhi through the *banjaras*. Mohar Singh plundered the same.

At Ambala, the two brothers—Gurbakhsh Singh and Lal Singh had recruited two hundred horsemen each and had placed the *taalugas* around Ambala under their control.<sup>11</sup> They also charged *rakhi* from an area under Raja Amar Singh of Patiala. Lal Singh populated a deserted village, named Loh Shibli, and started building a fortress there. Raja Amar Singh sent an army to prevent the fortress from being completed; But Lal Singh was able to fully fortify the fortress.

Raja Amar Singh of Patiala collected larger forces including his own army, the contingents of Gajpat Singh of Jind, of Bhais of Kaithal and of Rais of Ahmad Kot to the tune of 20,000 horsemen and marched against Lal Singh with a view to destroying his fort. On the other hand, Lal Singh, Gurbakhsh Singh, Raja Singh of Jandaliwala, Sudha Singh, Mohar Singh and Anup Singh collected 12,000 horsemen to face the Patiala forces.<sup>12</sup> There was fierce fighting between the contending forces and both sides suffered big human loss during the two-day fighting. The forces of Patiala and their allies, were surrounded by the army of the Nishanwalias and put in a tight corner. During this time Jhandu Singh, an associate of Raja Amar Singh, made an attempt to have a forced entry into the fort of the Nishanwalias. But Lal Singh, who was a very brave and fearless man, blocked the entry of the Patiala forces into the fort. Jhandu Singh died fighting against the Nishanwalias. Jhandu Singh's brother Dulcha Singh, in utter desperation, on the death of his brother, attacked the forces of the Nishanwalias. Lal Singh was killed in the course of fighting.<sup>13</sup>

With the death of some important leaders from both sides the fighting came to a stop and Raja Amar Singh and Sardar Gurbakhsh Singh concluded peace between them and they never fought again.<sup>14</sup> On the assumption of power and possession of Ambala by Mohar Singh, Gurbakhsh Singh remained at Morinda for some time.

Mohar Singh is said to have a haughty and arrogant disposition. People were generally unhappy with him. They looked to Sayid Mir Munir for advice and help as he was known for his saintliness. Mohar Singh did not like the popularity of the Sayid and killed him with an arrow-shot

in 1785. On this account, there was a wave of deep anger against Mohar Singh. The people invited Gurbakhsh Singh from Morinda with his force. In the engagement Mohar Singh was killed and his widow retired to Zira from where she was later driven out in 1806, by the Lahore contingent under Mohkam Chand. Gurbakhsh Singh stayed on at Ambala, as its ruler. He ruled his territory efficiently. Gurbakhsh Singh died of paralysis in 1786.

The *taaluqas* of Mohar Singh were divided into four parts. One part was given to Anup Singh's widow, Darhai, second part to the brothers of Desu, third part to the brothers of Mohar Singh's aunt (sister of Sangat Singh), and fourth part to a horseman, Ramdas Singh.

Both Mohar Singh and Anup Singh had died issueless. Bhagan remained in possession of Singhanwala and Darhai in control of Sarai Lashkari Khan.<sup>15</sup>

After some time, first Darhai and an year later Bhagan passed away. Then, the *taaluqa* of Sarai Lashkari Khan was occupied by the British.

Sangat Singh's son, Kapur Singh, along with his (Kapur Singh's) son, Fateh Singh, died in 1797, in a battle with Dayal Singh.<sup>16</sup>

### **Daya Kaur**

Since Gurbakhsh Singh died issueless he was succeeded to his territory by his widow, Daya Kaur.<sup>17</sup> She administered her possessions with the help of Diwan Sipahimal (Sahi Mal) Bhandari. There were no dacoities or murders during her period, The British government always treated her with due consideration and courtesy. When Ranjit Singh visited cis-Sutluj areas in 1807, during his second incursion, Daya Kaur, widow of Gurbakhsh Singh, gave presents to the Maharaja.<sup>18</sup> When Ranjit Singh visited that area during his third cis-Satluj expedition in 1808, he drove out Daya Kaur from Ambala. Ranjit Singh distributed her territory between Raja Bhag Singh of Jind, his maternal uncle, and Bhag Singh's ally Lal Singh of Kaithal. To ward off any popular rising in favour of Daya Kaur Ranjit Singh deputed one of his servants, named Ganda Singh Safi, to stay on at Ambala with a strong force of 5,000 men.

Rani Daya Kaur appealed to Ochterlony to force the chiefs of Jind and Kaithal to withdraw their troops from her territory. Ochterlony reached near Patiala on February 4, 1809, and demanded the evacuation of Ambala by occupying troops which the Lahore garrison commandant did. Rani Daya Kaur of Ambala thanked Ochterlony for the restoration of her possessions. With the Treaty of Amritsar in 1809, the British placed her under their protection.

After Daya Kaur's death in 1823, her territory lapsed to the British government.<sup>19</sup> Captain Mathews who passed through her territory in April 1808, was all praise for her administration. Lepel Griffin writes, "She was an excellent ruler and her estate was one of the best managed in the protected territory."<sup>20</sup>

### **Santu Singh and Sodha Singh**

Sangat Singh's nephew, Santu Singh, leaving his village Surdev (Mansur), founded a village, named Dahaleke, adjoining Singhanwala. He became an active member of the Dal Khalsa. He occupied the *taaluqa* of Sahnewal and became its chief.<sup>21</sup> He ruled that territory for some time. He died at Dahaleke. Santu Singh was succeeded by his brother, Sodha Singh. He populated his territory with special efforts. He ruled his possessions with justice and equity for a long time. In

due course of time, he fell on bad days and incurred the displeasure of his people. In 1797, all the surveyors and *mutsaddis* of his territory gave in writing that each one of them would be responsible for giving hundred *maunds* of grains to the Sardar by way of the ruler's share assessed by the method of *kankut*. Sodha Singh increased the government's share from each of them from hundred *maunds* to one hundred and fifty *maunds*. Thus, the state share was raised by fifty percent in the case of both the cash and kind payments.<sup>22</sup>

One of these days, Sodha Singh happened to visit Shahabad. All the *zamindars* and the tenants of the area made a humble petition to withdraw the increase in the revenue. But the Sardar did not agree and ordered them to be forcibly removed.<sup>23</sup> He, then, came to Ambala and at the time of his march from there on elephant, he was told by the *mahabat*, Nabi Khan, that the animal was feeling restive and displaying a violent temper. The *mahabat* requested the Sardar not to mount the elephant but he did not heed his request. On the way the elephant became violent and the rider—the Sardar, fell down and was trampled to death under the feet of the animal. The elephant was shot dead by the Sardar's men. The Sardar's dead body was taken to Sanehwal where it was cremated.<sup>24</sup> He left behind a son, named Daya Singh, born to his first wife, called *Sahib-i-Diwan*. Even in the presence of his son, Sodha Singh's second wife, named Lashmi, became the owner of his entire property. Daya Singh was given some villages and the fort of village Mundian which was situated at a distance of three *kos* from Sanehwal, on its west. There were incessant clashes between Daya Singh and Lashmi for a long time. Both sides continued disturbing peace in each other's villages till the occupation of the fort of Ludhiana in 1806, by Ranjit Singh who got the possessions of both Daya Singh and Lashmi vacated from them. Lashmi, the widow of Sodha Singh, was dispossessed of her fort of Sanehwal.<sup>25</sup> Ranjit Singh ordered half of the revenue of the following five villages to be given to them. Four of these villages that is, Pattiwara, Mongat, Sasrali and Machhian were situated in *bet* and the fifth village, Kashike Barania was near Sanehwal.<sup>26</sup> The services of some of the horsemen of Diwan Mohkam Chand were placed at their disposal. They were under Mohkam Chand. Lashmi died in 1821, and a little later, Daya Singh also died. Some time later, their possessions passed under the control of the British. Lashmi's son, Chaman Singh, lived on an income from some villages.<sup>27</sup>

I Another branch of the Nishanwalias descended from? Jai Singh Gurm of village Karanke Dhirke near Attari in Amritsar district and Kaur Singh of village Dhand Kasel in the *pargana* of Tarn Taran. These two leaders were the followers of Sangat Singh Nishanwalia. They were very brave and courageous. Sangat Singh gave them two blue-coloured Standards (*nishans*). They occupied Sarai Doraha, Lidhran and Chahal along with their *taaluqas*. For some time they administered their territory jointly. Later, they divided their possessions and parted company.<sup>28</sup> Sarai Doraha and its *taaluqa* came to the share of Kaur Singh and Lidhran and Chahal to that of Jai Singh. According to Lepel Griffin the Lidhran Sikhs were independent members of the Nishanwalia confederacy, and when Sardar Jai Singh seized Lidhran, with twenty-seven adjacent villages, he was still an independent chief. Jai Singh made an alliance with Nabha by marrying his daughter, Daya Kaur, to Raja Jaswani Singh of Nabha.<sup>29</sup> Jai Singh had two sons, Charhat Singh and Kharak Singh.

Jai Singh was administering the *taaluqa* of Lidhran for which he was paid one fourth of the revenue of eight villages by Maharaja Amar Singh. Jai Singh had been receiving this share of the revenue from these villages before they passed under the control of the Maharaja of Patiala. Amar Singh later gave more villages to Jai Singh with whom he was very much pleased. Jai Singh died in 1773, and was succeeded by his son, Charhat Singh, who later accepted the protection of the British in 1809.

Kaur Singh of Doraha and his son, Fateh Singh, died fighting against Daya Singh and Lashmi at Tajpur. Kaur Singh's wife (also named Lashmi) married away her daughter to Punjab Singh, son of Bhag Singh of Thanesar. Punjab Singh started living at Doraha. Two years later Punjab Singh's elder brother, Mehtab Singh, came to Doraha and both the brothers hatched a conspiracy against Lashmi and threw her out of Doraha and took charge of the place.<sup>30</sup>

Four years later, in 1805 (when Jaswant Rao Holkar came to the Punjab), Punjab Singh was deprived of his possessions by Charhat Singh of Lidhran and Karam Singh Nirmala. Two parts of Punjab Singh's territory were occupied by Karam Singh and one by Charhat Singh. When Ranjit Singh crossed river Satluj for the third time in 1808, he got Doraha vacated from them and handed it over to Chain Singh who was one of the confidants of Patiala house.<sup>31</sup>

### Footnotes:

1. Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, IV, MS., GS., collection, Patiala, p. 110; Bute Shah writes his name as Saundha Singh and according to Giani Gian Singh it was Dasaunda Singh (*Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, reprint Patiala, 1970, p. 278.) Gian Singh and Hari Ram Gupta write that Dasaundha Singh's father was the resident of Mansur in the Ferozpur district (Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 272; Hari Ram Gupta. *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, Lahore, 1944, p. 29).
2. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 110; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 272.
3. Bute Shah, *op. cit.* p. 110.
4. *Ibid*, According to Gian Singh, Dasaundha Singh died fighting against Zabita Khan at Meerut, (*op. cit.*, p. 272), cf., Khazan Singh, *History and Philosophy of the Sikh Religion*, Part I, Lahore, 1914, p. 280.
5. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 272.
6. Prinsep, *Origin of Sikh Power and Political Life of Ranjeet Singh*, Calcutta, 1834, p. 31; Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, Calcutta, 1891, p. 322; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 272; cf., 'Kanaihya Lal', *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, Lahore, 1877, p. 105.
7. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 110.
8. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 111.
9. *Ibid*.
10. *Ibid*.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 238.
12. *Ibid*.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 239.
14. *Ibid*.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 111.
16. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 272.
17. Khushwaqat Rai, *Tawarikh-i-Sikhan*, MS., GS., p. 130; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 239.
18. Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, II, Lahore, 1885, p. 66; Bute Shall, *op. cit.*, V, p. 41.
19. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 273; Khazon Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 280; cf., Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 239.
20. Lepel Griffin, *The Rajas of the Punjab*, 1873, p; 93, fn. 1.
21. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 112.
22. *Ibid*.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
24. *Ibid*.

25. *Ibid.*, V, pp. 36-37.
26. *Ibid.*, IV, p. 114.
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 114-15.
29. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 394.
30. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 115.
31. *Ibid.*

## Chapter 13

### THE KARORSINGHIA MISAL

#### Sham Singh

It is said that during the rule of Emperor Muhammad Shah (1719-1748), Sham Singh, a Sandhu Jat, of village Narli, dissatisfied with the treatment of his parents, left his place and joined the *derah* of Kapur Singh Singhpuria, who was, at this time, up in arms against the Mughal government of the Punjab. For a few days, Sham Singh remained without arms and other equipment necessary for such a career. He called on Kapur Singh and took *pabul* (baptism) at his hands. He was also able to procure an old sword and a small horse from Sardar Kapur Singh.<sup>1</sup> He started actively participating in the activities of the Dal Khalsa. All the Sikhs sallying out from Majha joined Kapur Singh.<sup>2</sup>

In due course of time, Sham Singh became one of the most prominent men of Kapur Singh's *derah*. He formed a group of ten or fifteen men and managed five or six horses and independently started his activities. Shortly, he was able to gather around him about three hundred horsemen. He came to Doaba and carried out the programmes chalked out by the Dal Khalsa. He took certain places under his protection and later occupied the same.<sup>3</sup>

According to Rattan Singh Bhangu, Sham Singh was his paternal grandfather (his mother's father). He fought in many skirmishes against the Mughal government forces, always in the front ranks. He was never afraid of death. He always shared his meals with others and never ate alone. If ever he found that the *langar* was not enough for the men sitting in the *pangat* he would eat after all had taken their meals. He also partook of *langar* along with the non-Sikhs, the down-trodden, and untouchables to keep himself identified with all people irrespective of their castes and also to drive home to them that all were equal in the *pangat*.

He was sweet-tongued and a very devoted Sikh and for most of his time he recited the *gurbani* (holy scriptures). Whosoever came to him was duly baptised and converted into a Singh.

#### Karam Singh

Sham Singh was issueless. After his death in 1739, during Nadir Shah's invasion, his nephew (brother's son) Karam Singh, who was a member of his *derah*, became his successor.<sup>4</sup> Before joining the *derah* he took *pabul* at the hands of Diwan Darbara Singh. Under Karam Singh the Misal progressed considerably. Besides making additions he was able to keep the possessions of Sham Singh intact.

The men of Zakariya Khan, governor of Lahore, forcibly converted into Musalmans most of the relatives of Sham Singh and Karam Singh. In due course of time, Karam Singh, accompanied by Barbara Singh, adequately chastised the guilty Muslims and brought back their relatives into the fold of Sikhism.

In the battle fought at Jalandhar against its administrator Naseer-ud-Din, Karam Singh participated on the side of Adeena Beg. He cut off the head of Naseer-ud-Din's *sipahsalar* Khair Shah, and established his position as a brave and fearless warrior and inspired awe into the hearts of his enemies.

In due course of time, Karam Singh also died without a son.<sup>5</sup>

### **Karora Singh**

Karam Singh was succeeded by Karora Singh who was a Virk Jat *zamindar* of Majha. He was also called Barqa after the name of his village Barki in Lahore district. He was a member of the Panjarhia *derah*. He had taken baptism at the hands of Sham Singh. Karam Singh's *derah* unanimously decided to appoint him his successor.<sup>6</sup>

Karora Singh added more *ilaqas* to his possessions as Hariana and Sham Churasi (now in Hoshiarpur district of Punjab). He collected an army of seven or eight thousand horsemen including that of his Misaldars.<sup>7</sup>

This Misal took its name from Karora Singh, the third and one of the most important leaders of the Misal. Karora Singh was an intelligent and a very influential leader. Under his stewardship his *derah* made rapid strides. Maharaja of Bharatpur fought some battles successfully with the help of Karora Singh. None was able to resist him up to Farrukhabad.

Once, an Afghan *sipahsalar*, Buland Khan, clashed with the Sikhs near Batala. Karora Singh routed the Afghans and he unburdened them of their treasures and booty and distributed the same among the Sikh *jathas*. It was Karora Singh who had cut off the head of Diwan Bishambar Das in the battle of Umar Tanda (in the present district of Hoshiarpur).

In those days, the Raja of Dek Kumher (in the present Rajasthan state), came to the Sikhs and asked for their assistance. He promised to give ten rupees per *swar* per day. With a view to providing military assistance to the Raja, Sardar Karora Singh led five thousand horsemen to his place. On the way, when the Sikh army encamped at Azimabad, which is popularly known as Tarawari, the *tehalias* (menial servants) went out to bring grass or fodder for the horses. They began to cut the crops of the *zamindars* of Tarawari for their horses. The *zamindars* resisted the reaping of their crops. Karora Singh, with a few of his companions, went to confront the *zamindars*. He died there as a result of a bullet-shot fired at him by a *zamindar*.<sup>8</sup> According to another version, he was killed in 1761, in the battle of Tarawari fighting against the Nawab of Kunjpura. He was issueless. Sardar Baghel Singh

After the death of Karora Singh, Baghel Singh was unanimously elected to head the Misal. Baghel Singh, a Dhaliwal Jat, was the resident of Jhabal,<sup>9</sup> near Amritsar. Some writers believe that he belonged to Malwa and his sister, Sukhan, was married at Jhabal where he lived. On this account he began to be called Jhabalia.<sup>10</sup> He was displeased with his brothers over cultivation and the payment of revenue to the government officials. Baghel Singh left his place and joined the *derah* of Karora Singh.<sup>11</sup> He took *pahul* and became an active member of the Dal Khalsa. For some time he served Karora Singh as his *gadwai* (attendant).

In pursuance of Karora Singh's death-bed announcement that Baghel Singh would succeed to the Sardari of the Misal the latter assumed charge of the same. After having gone through the formalities of taking over the reins of the Misal Baghel Singh ordered their *derah* at Tarawari to proceed further as scheduled. When the Sikh forces reached near Dek Kumher, its Raja got frightened on the sight of the huge army. He feared that the presence of such a big army in his territory might cause turmoils and disturbances there.<sup>12</sup>



The Raja planned to fight against the Sikhs and obstruct their entry into his territory. The Sikhs demanded the stipulated amount, otherwise, they threatened to resort to plundering. Hearing this, the Raja sent his *vakils* to Baghel Singh who requested him to send back his forces. Sardar Baghel Singh expressed his inability to do so. The Raja invited the Sardar in the fort and entertained him honourably and lavishly. He was given ten thousand rupees in cash and some valuable presents. It is said that there was a skirmish also between the Sikhs and the forces of the Raja. In the fight Jassa Singh Ahluwalia is said to have received two wounds by swords inflicted by the Raja's men. Baghel Singh stayed in that area for a few days and then returned to Jalandhar Doab, which earlier belonged to Karora Singh.<sup>13</sup> More territory was brought under his occupation and he administered his areas very well.

Mian Mahmud Khan Rajput was the chief of Taiwan. Formerly, this place had been largely populated, and had very big and beautiful buildings. Rich *shabukars* or money-lenders lived there.<sup>14</sup>

Mahmud Khan maintained a force of three hundred horsemen. When Karora Singh visited the Mian once a year or so he was, each time, presented with a horse by the latter. Karora Singh always supported Mahmud Khan in governing his territory. He also provided the Mian with protection from the attacks of the Sikhs.<sup>15</sup> After Karora Singh's death, his successor Baghel Singh also extended protection to Mahmud Khan and received *nazarana* from him.

When Ahmad Shah Abdali visited the Punjab on his last invasion, the Sikhs, being numerically very small, left their places and sought asylum in their usual hiding places. Mian Mahmud Khan took possession of the *sarai* of Nur Mahal. After Abdali's return the Sikhs besieged the *sarai*. The Mian sought help from Baghel Singh who sent his nephew, Hamir Singh, at the head of two or three thousand men to help the Mian. The joint action of the various Sikh leaders prevented the army of Hamir Singh to reach the *sarai*. Hamir Singh was wounded at the hands of the Sikhs and the *sarai* was occupied by them. Mian Mahmud returned to Taiwan. During this time, Baghel Singh stayed at Taiwan for six months.<sup>16</sup>

Jassa Singh Ahluwalia wrote a confidential letter to Baghel Singh that Karora Singh had been always on the look out of occupying Taiwan but he could not do it due to the strong contingent of Mian Mahmud. Now, as he (Baghel Singh) was in a better position he was advised to capture the place before it was occupied by some one else.<sup>17</sup>

The proposal of the Ahluwalia Sardar encouraged Baghel Singh to devise a plan to take possession of Taiwan. He asked the Mian to give him a place where he could construct a fortress in which an army could be kept to guard against the invaders. The Mian accepted the proposal and Baghel Singh built the fort in the course of a month. He set up his *thana* in the fort, but he did not occupy Taiwan till the lifetime of Mian Mahmud. As settled, Baghel Singh continued realising one fourth of the revenue of Taiwan.<sup>18</sup>

In the district of Karnal, now in Haryana state, Baghel Singh made the town of Chhalondi his headquarters. He retained the possession of Bist Jalandhar and Hoshiarpur district.<sup>19</sup> According to Kanaihya Lal, Baghel Singh had a strong and a brave army of 12,000 horsemen.<sup>20</sup>

Muhammad Hasan Khan of Jalalabad, who had forcibly admitted to his *harem* the daughter of a Brahman, was killed by Baghel Singh. On different occasions the Sardar attacked Aligarh, Khurja, Chandausi, Etawa, Farrukhabad, Muradabad, Anupshahar, Bulandshahar, Bajnaur, etc.<sup>21</sup>

Raja Amar Singh of Patiala was encroaching upon the territories of the other Sikhs. Baghel Singh was also deprived of some of his village's such as Lalru, Bhuni and Mullanpur. In collaboration with some of the other Sardars, who had suffered at the hands of the ruler of Patiala, Baghel Singh planned to attack the territories of Patiala house. Amar Singh was also joined by some other chiefs including the ruler of Nahan. The rival forces confronted each other at Ghurram, 23 kms south of Patiala, in 1769. Some of Baghel Singh's men secretly appeared outside Patiala and attacked the town but were driven back. Baghel Singh stepped up his activities against the territory of Amar Singh. This compelled the ruler of Patiala to yield.

He sued for peace through his *nakil* Chain Singh. Amar Singh met Baghel Singh at Lahal village. Amar Singh got his son baptised by Baghel Singh and, thus, cemented his friendly relations with the latter. Amar Singh granted *khillats* to Baghel Singh's companions. Since then, Baghel Singh continued rendering help to the Patiala house whenever need arose.<sup>22</sup>

Baghel Singh launched his first attack on Delhi on January 18, 1774, and "devastated Shahdara till mid-night, and departed with fifty children (boys) when there still remained an hour and a half of night."<sup>23</sup> The Emperor tried to buy them off. He invited the Sikhs to join his service with a force of 10,000 horse and offered to allot to them the district of Shahbazpur for their maintenance. He also sent *khillats* (robes of honour) for the Sikh chiefs.

In 1775, Baghel Singh attacked Delhi for the second time and went as far as Paharganj and Jaisinghpura. A battle was fought between the Mughal and the Sikh forces in the areas which now comprise New Delhi.

In October 1779, the Delhi minister, Nawab Abdul Ahad, accompanied by Prince Farkhunda Bakht, attacked Patiala. There was severe fighting between the combined troops of Amar Singh and Tara Singh Ghaiba on one side and the Delhi imperial forces on the other. The imperial forces emerged victorious. They laid siege to Patiala town on the 8th of October 1779, but despite severe fighting the imperialists failed to take the fort of Patiala.

A little earlier, the ruler of Patiala had invited the Majha Sikhs under the leadership of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, promising to give one rupee per day per horseman.<sup>24</sup> They immediately responded. "At that time, Jassa Singh was at Batala. He immediately wrote to the Sikh Sardars not to delay any longer as Abdul Ahad had marched from Delhi into their country. Jai Singh, Hakikat Singh, Trilok Singh, Amar Singh Bagha, Amar Singh Kingra and the other Kanaihya Sardars were asked to come to Achal. . . . They crossed the Satluj at *Taiwan ka patan* where they were joined by Sada Singh, Tara Singh Kakar, Mohar Singh Nishanwalia and his brother Anup Singh."<sup>25</sup> Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, Tara Singh Ghaiba, Jodh Singh of wazirabad, Phulkian chiefs of Jind, Nabha, Bhadaur and Malod also joined Raja Amar Singh.<sup>26</sup>

When the news of the coming Sikh army, rumoured to be two lakhs in number, reached the Nawab, who was a timid and weak-willed man, he was terribly frightened.<sup>27</sup> He consulted Baghel Singh who posed to be neutral in the whole affair. He told him of the formidable force under Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, then encamped at Malerkotla. The Nawab, then told Baghel Singh that he had

been asked by the Emperor to return to Delhi immediately. Baghel Singh approved of this action. Baghel Singh suggested to the Nawab to bribe the Majha Sikh chiefs before his flight to Delhi. Abdul Ahad, being awfully terrified, at once gave three lakh rupees, which he had realised from Desu Singh of Kaithal,<sup>28</sup> to Baghel Singh to be distributed among the Sikh chiefs. Baghel Singh paid 10,000 rupees to Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, 5,000 rupees to Tara Singh Ghaiba, 7,000 rupees to Jai Singh Kanaihya and the rest of the money was appropriated to himself.<sup>29</sup>

In February 1783, at the head of 60,000 troops, the Sikhs marched towards Delhi under the leadership of Baghel Singh and Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. Ghaziabad, Bulandshahar and Khurja were attacked and plundered. According to Gian Singh, "When the Sikhs entered Khurja, the people ran away. The rich men of the town were tied to the pillars and compelled to disclose their hidden treasures. After the plunder Baghel Singh and Jassa Singh spread a cloth on the ground and asked the Sikh chiefs to give away one tenth of their booty, in cash, for the service of the Guru. An amount of one lakh rupees was collected and the money was sent to the Harmandir Sahib at Amritsar."<sup>30</sup>

Aligarh, Tundia, Hathras, Shikohabad and Farrukhabad were also sacked and huge quantities of spoils were acquired. A good deal of diamonds, pearls, gold, ornaments and many precious articles, including a stick studded with diamonds worth Rs. 33,000, fell into the hands of Baghel Singh. The immense booty, laden on camels, carts, horses and ponies, escorted by 20,000 Sikhs, was sent to the Punjab. All these articles came into the hands of the British at the time of escheat of Baghel Singh's estate, later on.

### **Baghel Singh Enters Delhi**

At the head of 40,000 troops, Baghel Singh advanced towards Delhi in the beginning of March 1783. He lay encamped at Barari Ghat on the Jamuna, 16 kms north of Delhi, on March 8, 1783. With this place as his base Baghel Singh attacked Malka Ganj and Sabzi Mandi. Many people were killed at Mughalpura. Prince Mirza Shikoh tried to resist them near Qila Mahtabpur but he suffered a defeat. On March 9, Fazal Ali Khan's attempt to check them proved of no avail. The Sikhs, passing through Ajmeri Gate, sacked the area of Hauz Qazi. The government thought of recruiting more men for the army but the people, who were much alarmed, did not come forward to replenish the ranks of the army. Mirza Shafi and his brother Zain-ul-Abidin were expressly called to relieve the capital of the Sikh invaders.<sup>31</sup> But the situation did not improve.

The Emperor, Shah Alam II, invited Begum Samru to Delhi for negotiations with Baghel Singh.

Begum Samru was the ruler of Sardhana, about 90 kms east of Delhi. Her original name was Zeb-un-nisa. She was the daughter of Asad Khan, a Muslim of Arab descent, settled at Kutana. She was born in 1753. She was married to Reinhard, better known as Samru, a German adventurer, who had received the *jagir* of Sardhana from Najaf Khan. After his death in 1778, she took over as the head of Sardhana. She maintained a force consisting of five battalions of infantry, a body of irregular horse and about 300 European officers and gunners with forty guns. Gifted with masculine gallantry and a precise and accurate judgement she managed the affairs of her territory. Compton writes, "Contrary to the practice of women in this country, Begum Sumroo always wears a turban, generally of damson colour, which becomes her very much, and is put on with great taste."<sup>32</sup>

She was a very faithful and loyal subject of the Mughal Emperor and was at his beck and call. The Sikh Sardars seldom unheeded her request.

The Sikhs deposited their booty from Delhi at *Majnu-ka-tila* under a strong guard. Just at this stage Jassa Singh Ramgarhia arrived at Delhi from Hisar hoping to get share in the spoils from the capital. On March 11, 1783, the Sikhs entered the Red Fort. The Emperor and his courtiers hid themselves in their private apartments. The Sikhs made Jassa Singh Ahluwalia sit on the throne and waved peacock feathers, tied in a knot, over his head and made him a king.<sup>33</sup> Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and other chiefs condemned this action and the Ahluwalia chief appreciated the feelings of Sikh chiefs regarding his assumption of the distinction of royalty. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia captured four guns and a large variegated slab of stone, 6' x 4' x 0.75' in dimension. It is still preserved in the Ramgarhia *Bungab* at Amritsar.

Begum Samru reached the capital on March 12, 1783, and she was informed about the activities of the Sikhs by the Emperor. He asked for her help in persuading the Sikhs to retire from Delhi and also to spare Rohtak and Karnal from plunder. She immediately opened negotiations with Baghel Singh whose camp she visited. The Sardar readily agreed to make peace with the Emperor. The following terms were settled under the signatures of the Emperor and the royal seal:

Firstly, the bulk of the Sikh army would immediately return to the Punjab. Secondly, Baghel Singh would stay on in the capital with 4,000 troops. Thirdly, he was allowed to build seven Gurdwaras at places connected with the Sikh Gurus in the city of Delhi. Fourthly, his headquarters would be located in the Sabzi Mandi. Fifthly, to meet the expenses on the construction of the Sikh shrines and the maintenance of his troops Baghel Singh was permitted to charge six annas in the rupee (i.e., 37.5%) of all the income from octroi duties in the capital. Sixthly, the Sikhs would not misbehave in any way during their stay in the capital. Seventhly, the Gurdwaras were to be constructed as soon as possible but not beyond the current year under any circumstances.<sup>34</sup>

Baghel Singh took over the charge of all the octroi posts as well as that of the Kotwali in Chandni Chowk. Five-eighths, that is 62.5% of the daily collection was punctually deposited in the government treasury every day. The Sikh horsemen patrolled the streets and the suburbs, day and night, and perfect peace and order was established in the city.

The main body of the Sikh forces retired from Delhi on March 12, 1783. The Sikhs were given a cash present of three lakh rupees for the *karah prashad*. With his contingent of 4,000 troops Baghel Singh remained at Delhi to build the Gurdwaras. First, he built a Gurdwara at Teliwara, a place where Mata Sundari and Mata Sahib Devan, the wives of Guru Gobind Singh, had stayed during their visit to Delhi.<sup>35</sup> The second Gurdwara was constructed in Jaisinghpura where Guru Har Krishan had stayed in the house of Raja Jai Singh of Jaipur.<sup>36</sup> It is now called Gurdwara Bangla Sahib. The memorials were erected on the bank of the Jumuna where Guru Har Krishan, Mata Sundari and Mata Sahib Devan were cremated.<sup>37</sup> A Gurdwara was also built there.

Two places were connected with Guru Tegh Bahadur. One was at Kotwali where the Guru was martyred and the other was at Rikabganj where his headless body was secretly cremated by Lakhi Singh Banjara. According to Rattan Singh Bhangu, mosques had been erected at both these places. Baghel Singh first planned to build a Gurdwara at Rikabganj and it could not be constructed without demolishing the mosque. This created a sensation among Muslims who, in a huge body, waited upon the Emperor. They represented that under no circumstances the mosque could be

allowed to be demolished. The Emperor, who had approved, in writing, the Sikh proposal of building a Gurdwara there, referred the matter to Baghel Singh who agreed to meet the *mullas* and other prominent men. He convinced them of the Sikh claim to the site and according to some, he threatened them of dire consequences if they did not accept the genuine claim of the Sikhs. He secured written approval from them for dismantling the mosque and informed the Emperor accordingly. The *wazir*, then, gave orders for the demolition of the mosque. It is said that the Sikhs demolished the mosque in half a day.<sup>38</sup> The Gurdwara was built there.

Baghel Singh took the help of an old lady Sakhan Mai (*mashkan*)—a Muslim water-carrier woman, to trace the site of Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom. The place had been shown to her by her father who had washed the place after the Guru's martyrdom. The Muslims made preparations to offer resistance to Baghel Singh as a mosque had also been erected close to the site. Baghel Singh assured the Muslims that no harm would be done to the mosque. A portion of the wall was pulled down and, in the compound, the Gurdwara Sisganj was allowed to be built.<sup>39</sup>

A Gurdwara was also built at *Majnu ka tila* where Guru Nanak and Mardana and Guru Hargobind had stayed. The seventh Gurdwara was built in Moti Bagh where Guru Gobind Singh had stayed for some time. These Gurdwaras were endowed liberally by grants of a number of villages to every one of them.<sup>40</sup>

The construction of all the Gurdwaras in Delhi was completed by Baghel Singh by the end of November 1783. *Pul mithai* in Delhi was named after Baghel Singh who was very fond of sweets. An exhibition of sweets was held there. He gave prizes to the best sweet-makers. This place came to be named as *pul mithai*. He decided to retire from Delhi in the beginning of December. Baghel Singh could not plan to stay on in Delhi for various reasons. He had only a small force of 4,000 men with him, at Delhi, with which he could not control the civil population. Secondly, though the Sikhs were seasoned people in the technique of fighting they did not have any administrative experience. The Sikh *jathas* also lacked coordination among themselves. Thirdly, in the event of his continuing indefinitely in Delhi, there was every likelihood of losing his territories in the Punjab at the hands of the other Sardars who were keen to expand their possessions.

He thanked the Emperor for his government's cooperation in the building of the Gurdwaras and his permission to stay on in the capital for all these months. Till then, there was no meeting between the Emperor, Shah Alam II, and Baghel Singh. All the courtiers were happy with the behaviour of the Sardar and his men during their stay in Delhi. The Emperor was keen to have a meeting with Baghel Singh. According to Rattan Singh Bhangu, a royal messenger conveyed to the Sardar the Emperor's desire to see him. The Sardar told him that the meeting with the Emperor was not an easy matter. The Sikhs had pledged not to bow before any Mughal. Secondly, he would not go to the Emperor all alone. He would be accompanied by an armed contingent. Thirdly, while passing through the streets any unbecoming remark or action by the people, in respect of the Sikhs, would enrage them who could, then, go out of control. The Emperor accepted all his conditions and a meeting was arranged between Baghel Singh and Shah Alam II.<sup>41</sup> Along the route, the inhabitants were asked to keep indoors and the butchers' shops were to remain closed for the day. A minister, a number of mace-bearers and announcers accompanied the Sikh procession<sup>42</sup> which started from the Sabzi Mandi. A body of Sikhs in arms riding on fine and decorated horses comprised a part of the procession. Baghel Singh, fully armed, followed his contingent, sitting in a *bowdaw* on an elephant. Having approached the Emperor's Durbar Baghel Singh and five to seven Sardars including Dulcha Singh and Sada Singh dismounted while the troops remained on

horsebacks. They were led to the Diwan-i-Aam. Their guide performed obeisance on their behalf. The Sikhs shouted loudly their greetings of *Sat Siri Akal*. The Prime Minister offered a chair to Baghel Singh. Usual courtesies were exchanged between the Emperor and the Sardar.

In reply to a question Baghel Singh told the Emperor that although the Sikhs were divided into various *jathas* and Misals they got together in the face of a national danger, forgetting their separate identities.<sup>43</sup>

It is said that the Emperor expressed a desire to see the Sikhs in the act of plundering. Baghel Singh gave a demonstration in a sugar-cane field near the Red Fort on the bank of river Jamuna. Some of the Sikhs pulled up sugar-canes, while the others forcibly snatched them, leading to mutual scuffles.<sup>44</sup>

Before his departure from the Emperor's court Baghel Singh was given a *kehillat*, fully caparisoned elephant and a horse and a necklace of pearls. The other Sardars, accompanying Baghel Singh, were also given *kehillats*. Baghel Singh was granted 12.5 per cent of the octroi duties of Delhi to be remitted to him at his headquarters at Chhalondi annually on the condition that he would prevent the Sikhs from attacking Delhi.<sup>45</sup> He continued receiving that money till his death.<sup>46</sup>

In May 1783, Baghel Singh and Bhag Singh, at the head of their forces, crossed the Jamuna at the Buriya Ghat and realised their *rakhi* from many places in Saharanpur and Muzaffarnagar districts. There was some disagreement between them as regards the proper division of their shares which they settled later.

In the beginning of 1785, a large force of Sikhs, numbering about 30,000, under the leadership of Baghel Singh, Gurdit Singh and Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, crossed the Jamuna and swept over the upper Doab with irresistible fury and ferocity. The Barha Sayyid town, which lay right on their line of march, suffered much. Zabita Khan, to whom this territory belonged, was unable to stem the tide and lay trembling within the ramparts of Ghausgarh. Miranpur, 32 kms south-east of Muzaffarnagar, was particularly signalized for a victim of their wrath. They soon crossed over the Ganga into the country of Oudh.<sup>47</sup>

On January 13, 1785, Baghel Singh and his companions razed to the ground the villages of Barsi and Mahmudpur, inhabited by the Sayyids. They decided to attack Moradabad but they were advised to attack Chandausi, instead, as it lay upon their route. Banne Khan, the chief of the place, had retired, for fear of the Sikhs, to a distance of two days' journey. His deputies, Chhattu Lal and Sobharam, had also left the town and bankers and merchants were removing their property to places of safety. Baghel Singh was told that Chandausi would bring them greater riches as it was a famous market place where 2,000 bankers and merchants had their business firms and where transactions of crores of rupees were carried on.<sup>48</sup>

Chandausi was attacked on 14<sup>th</sup> January 1783. After a feeble resistance the guards were killed and the Sikhs "rushed in and set fire to all the houses and markets and plundered all the property worth lakhs of rupees." After devastating the town for two days they retired on the 15th January.

Towards the end of January, Harji Ambaji, an agent of Sindhia, arrived in the Sikh camp to negotiate with Baghel Singh and his companions for peace on behalf of his master. But the

negotiations lingered on for some time. On the 30<sup>th</sup> March 1785, a provisional treaty was concluded between the Sikhs and the Marathas, according to which the friends and enemies, and the prosperity and adversity of each were to be mutual. No jealousy or difference was to subsist between them and God was witness that there would be no deviation. The contracting parties were to unite their forces to repress any disturbances that might be excited by their enemies.

Ghulam Qadir Khan Rohilla, son of Zabita Khan, was growing hostile to the Emperor of Delhi. On 30<sup>th</sup> August 1787, the Emperor wrote a letter to Baghel Singh asking him “to seize all the territories of Ghulam Qadir Khan, as we have appointed him our agent of that country.” Ghulam Qadir entered Delhi on the 5<sup>th</sup> September. The Emperor found it impossible to resist him. He conferred upon the Rohilla chief the office of Mir Bakhshi with the title of *Amir-ul-Umara*. The Emperor desired of Baghel Singh to fight against Ghulam Qadir but the Sardar joined the latter. Through his letter Baghel Singh informed the Emperor that he had done so because Sindhia had not cared for them. Later the Sikhs turned against Ghulam Qadir also and ravaged his territory.

When George Thomas, an Irish adventurer, directed his campaign against Jind (November 1798—May 1799), Bibi Sahib Kaur of Patiala was joined by Baghel Singh on her march with forces, to the aid of Jind.

Baghel Singh had a very brilliant career of military activities to his credit and, undoubtedly, he was one of the most prominent and outstanding Sikh chiefs of his age.

Baghel Singh remained in the districts of Panipat and Delhi for twelve years and gave a neat and clean administration to the areas under him.<sup>49</sup> The territories of Jalandhar Doab and areas adjoining the Shivalik hills were governed by Hamir Singh, son of Baghel Singh’s sister. After Hamir Singh’s death Baghel Singh came to the Jalandhar Doab. He brought more territories under his control. He placed the *zamindar* of Alawalpur, Rai Alias Kot of Jagraon and the *zamindars* in the areas on the foot of the Shivalik hills under fixed annual tribute and made Haryana (presently in the Hoshiarpur district) his headquarters.<sup>50</sup>

Baghel Singh had, throughout, maintained good relations with most of the Sardars of the Misals. He had great regards for Jai Singh Kanaihya whom he always gave unstinted support whenever need arose. Even after Jai Singh’s death Baghel Singh continued supporting the Kanaihyas. A few examples of his support to the Kanaihyas may not be out of place here.

When Saif Ali Khan, the Mughal *thanedar* of Kangra, died, the fort of Kangra was placed in the hands of Sehaj Ram, a *hazari*, and Jamadar Zorawar Singh. Sansar Chand Katoch, finding himself incapable of snatching the fort from them, solicited Jai Singh Kanaihya’s help. Jai Singh called Baghel Singh and asked him to lead a campaign to Kangra, accompanied by his son, Gurbakhsh Singh, to help Sansar Chand. Diplomatic as Baghel Singh was, he asked the new custodians of the fort to get subsistence allowance from Sansar Chand and vacate the fort for him. They agreed on written assurance to that effect from the Katoch chief and left the fort which was occupied by Baghel Singh and Gurbakhsh Singh and not handed over to Sansar Chand. The Kangra fort passed under the control of the Kanaihyas<sup>51</sup> and Baghel Singh did not claim any share from it.

When Jaimal Singh, son of Haqiqat Singh Kanaihya, was imprisoned by Fateh Singh, son of Mehtab Singh, supported by Gulab Singh Bhangi, Baghel Singh raised a serious objection to it and demanded his immediate release<sup>52</sup> which was later done.

In the expulsion of Jassa Singh Ramgarhia from his territories Jai Singh Kanaihya was substantially helped by Baghel Singh. The Karorsinghia chief was given a share from the territory from which the Ramgarhia chief was dispossessed.<sup>53</sup>

When Jai Singh Kanaihya visited Amritsar in 1784, on the occasion of Diwali, Baghel Singh also reached there on the invitation of the Kanaihya chief.<sup>54</sup>

In BK. 1851 (A.D. 1794) when Rani Sada Kaur Kanaihya besieged Jassa Singh Ramgarhia in the fort of Miani, situated on the bank of river Beas, Baghel Singh was on the side of the Rani.<sup>55</sup>

After shifting to Haryana (in Hoshiarpur district), Baghel Singh lived only for two years and died there in BK. 1859 (A.D. 1802).<sup>56</sup> He ruled his territories nearly for sixty years.<sup>57</sup> Since he had no son to succeed him a vacuum was created in his state. The law and order situation in his principality suffered a set back. Baghel Singh's two widows, Ram Kaur and Rattan Kaur, looked after their territories for some time.<sup>58</sup> Ram Kaur, the elder Sardarni, maintained her control over the district of Hoshiarpur from which a revenue of two lakh rupees accrued annually and Sardarni Rattan Kaur, the younger one, continued to be in possession of Chhalondi, fetching an annual revenue of three lakh rupees. When the British proceeded towards Satluj Rattan Kaur saved the *parganas* of Behlolpur and Chhalondi by paying a *nazarana* of five thousand rupees.<sup>59</sup>

Sometime later, Ranjit Singh usurped Rattan Kaur's territory of Khurdin which yielded an annual revenue of one lakh rupees and handed it over to Jodh Singh of Kalsia and gave the *pargana* of Behlolpur to his official, Vir Bhan.<sup>60</sup>

Jodh Singh, born in 1751, was the son of Baghel Singh's friend and associate, Sardar Gurbakhsh Singh (1710-1775), the founder of the Kalsia family. After Baghel Singh's death in 1802, Jodh Singh declared himself to be the head of Karorsinghia house. Jodh Singh helped Baghel Singh in the battles of Jalalabad, Bharatpur, Taiwan and Ghurram.<sup>61</sup> Jodh Singh was a man of great ability. He conquered Chichroli and took possession of Dera Bassi from Khazan Singh. Raja Sahib Singh of Patiala married his daughter, Karam Kaur, to Hari Singh son of Jodh Singh, in 1803, and thus saved himself from a strong neighbour. In 1807, Hari Singh fought under Ranjit Singh at the siege of Naraingarh and was rewarded with estates at Budala, Kaneri and Chubbal. He died during the siege of Multan in 1817, and Karorsinghia territories were absorbed into the Kalsia family. His elder son, Sobha Singh, held the estate till his death in February 1858. Sobha Singh and his son, Lehna Singh (1858-69), remained loyal to the British and Lehna Singh's son, Bishan Singh (1869-1883), inherited an estate worth Rs. 1,30,300 per annum, with a population of 62,000.<sup>62</sup> Bishan Singh was succeeded by Jagjit Singh (1883-86), Ranjit Singh (1886-1908), Ravisher Singh (1908-January 1947), and Karam Sher Singh (Jan. 1947-May 1948), when Kalsia territories joined Patiala and East Punjab States Union. By 1948, the population of the Kalsia state rose to 15 thousand and income to rupees ten lakhs.<sup>63</sup>

There was one Sukhu Singh Pohli, resident of village Rai. Fed up with the ill-treatment of his brothers Sukhu, Singh left his village Rai which was situated near the Afghan town of Kasur. He met Baghel Singh and received baptism at his hands and became the Sardar's attendant (*garwai*). He soon became a *ghurcharra* and rose to be one of the prominent followers of the Sardar.<sup>64</sup>



When Baghel Singh moved over to Panipat he made Sukhu Singh the chief of the territories of Rohtak, Jind and Gohana. He was provided with the necessary force. Sukhu Singh ameliorated considerably the administration of that territory. He carried fancy in his head to become independent of Baghel Singh. The Sardar called him into his presence. Sukhu Singh refused to come and became a rebel. Baghel Singh acted diplomatically and pleased him with his practical wisdom. He again called him for interview. After a couple of days Sukhu Singh was reprimanded and imprisoned. He was kept in captivity for five or six days and his possessions were declared as confiscated. Then, he showed his pardon and conferred a *doshala* (shawl) and a horse on him and his *ilaqa* was restored to him.<sup>65</sup> After Baghel Singh's death Sukhu Singh went to Haryana to mourn the death of the Sardar, finding things in disorder in the Karorsinghia house Sukhu Singh declared himself to be Baghel Singh's successor. All the Misaldars and *tabedars* of Baghel Singh accepted Sukhu Singh as their chief. The Sardarnis disagreed over this issue. Later, Sukhu Singh joined the elder Sardarni and all the Misaldars sided with the younger one. This resulted in great harm to the Misal.<sup>66</sup> Some of the Misaldars revolted and declared themselves independent of the Sardar of the Misal. Sukhu Singh entered the fort of Taiwan. The territory that was under Mahmud Khan also went out of the control of the Karorsinghias, and fell in the hands of Tara Singh Ghaiba. Later, this area passed under the control of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.<sup>67</sup>

The elder widow of Baghel Singh died at her husband's headquarters —Haryana. After her death the town of Haryana and the adjoining areas were taken over by Ranjit Singh. He also took possession of her movable property as elephants, horses, domestic articles, etc.<sup>68</sup>

When Rattan Kaur died in BK. 1905 (A.D. 1848), the British occupied the possessions of Chhalondi. A huge amount of her wealth, in the form of cash, ornaments, invaluable diamonds and many costly articles, was confiscated by the English.<sup>69</sup> Thus, came to an end the Misal of Sardar Baghel Singh who had built and raised it to a high level of glory.

#### Footnotes:

1. Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, IV, MS., Dr Ganda Singh's personal collection, Patiala, p. 216. According to Rattan Singh Bhangu, Sham Singh joined the *derah* of Mastan Singh from whom he took *pahul*. In due course of time he became the *jathedar* of that *derah*. Later on, he affiliated his *jatha* to that of Kapur Singh. Mastan Singh was a close companion of Banda Singh who had made him/ay/War. He died fighting against the Muslims (*Prachin Panth Parkash*, ed. 1939 p. 421).
2. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash* (1841), Amritsar, 1939 p. 422.
3. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 216.
4. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, p. 422.
5. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 216-17.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 217; cf., Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, reprint Patiala, 1970, p. 255.
7. *Ibid.*, Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 255.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 217-18; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 255.
9. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, p. 423; Khushwaqat Rai, *Tawarikh-i-Sikhan*, (1811), MS., GS.; p. 70; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama* (1854), Lahore, 1961, p. 207.
10. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 241.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 241.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 218.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 219.
14. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 94.
15. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 219.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 219-20.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 220; cf., Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 256.
19. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 255.
20. Kanaihya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, Lahore, 1877, p. 107.
21. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 255-56; cf., *Delhi Chronicle*, MS., GS. p. 99.
22. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, (ed. 1914), pp. 540-50; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 256, 563-64.
23. *Delhi Chronicle*, p. 122.
24. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 280.
25. *Jassa Singh Binod Punjabi*, MS., Archives, Patiala, p. 220.
26. Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, Lahore, 1870, p. 49.
27. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 280-81.
28. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, 49-50.
29. Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. III, Delhi, 1380, p. 117.
30. Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, (ed. 1923), p. 912.
31. *Delhi Chronicle*, p. 152; J.N. Sarkar, *Foll of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. III, Calcutta, 1938, p. 255.
32. Compton, H. *A Particular Account of the European Military Adventurers of Hindostan from 1784 to 1803*, London, 1893, pp. 400-01.
33. Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*. Patiala reprint, 1970, p. 257.
34. *Ibid*, p. 258.
35. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, p. 435.
36. *Ibid.*
37. *Ibid.*
38. *Ibid.*, pp. 436-37.
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 437-38.
40. Sewa Singh, *Sardar Baghel Singh*. Urdu, Amritsar, 1925, p. 181.
41. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, p. 438.
42. *Ibid*; p. 439.
43. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 259.
44. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, pp. 440-41.
45. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 259; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, p. 440.
46. Khushwaqat Rai, *Tawarikh-i-Sikhan*, (1811), MS., Dr Ganda Singh, private collection, Patiala, p. 70.
47. Hari Ram Gupta, *op. cit*, Vol. III, pp. 198-199.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 199.
49. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 220.
50. *Ibid.*, pp. 220-21.
51. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 272-73.
52. *Ibid.*, pp. 280-81.
53. *Ibid*, p. 306; cf., Ahmad Shah Batalia, *Appendix*, Sohan Lal Suri's *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Lahore, 1885, p. 23.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 277.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 281.
56. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 259.
57. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

58. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 259; cf., Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 221; Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 70. According to Khushwaqat Rai, the names of Baghel Singh's widows were Ram Kaur and Raj Kaur. These are corroborated by Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, (ed. 1873), p. 47.
59. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 70; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 259.
60. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 71; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 260.
61. Bhag Singh, *Tarikh-i-Khandan-i-Riast Kalsia*, (ed. Thakar Nagina Ram, 1930), pp. 533-37.
62. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 71, *fn. I*; Muhammad Latif, *History of the Punjab*, Calcutta, 1891, p. 324.
63. *Naresh*, weekly, Ferozepur, dated August, 10, 1948, p. 172.
64. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 221.
65. *Ibid.*
66. *Ibid.*, pp. 221-22.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 222.
68. Ahmad Shah Batalia. *Appendix*, *op. cit.*, p. 34; Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-71.
69. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 260.

## Chapter 14

### THE PHULKIAN MISAL

The Phulkian rulers descended from the Bhatti Rajputs. They trace their ancestry to Jesal, the founder of the state and city of Jesalmer, who was driven from his kingdom in 1180. He wandered northwards where Prithvi Raj was the king of Ajmer and Delhi and the most powerful ruler in Hindustan. Jesal wanted to settle near Hisar. He had four sons and the third of these, Hemhel, sacked the town of Hisar, seized a number of villages in its neighbourhood and overran the country up to the walls of Delhi.<sup>1</sup> He was beaten back by Shams-ud-Din Iltutmish, the Sultan of Delhi, but was afterwards received into favour and made governor of Sirsa and Bathinda in 1212. He died two years later. He was succeeded by his son Jandra, the father of twenty one sons. The succession continued till Khiwa became the head of the clan. Khiwa's Rajput wife could not bear any child. He married a second wife, the daughter of one Basir, a Jat *zamindar* of Neli. The marriage was considered a disgrace by his Rajput kinsmen and Khiwa was, ever afterwards, called *khot* which signifies an inferior and degrading admixture.<sup>2</sup>

Khiwa was blessed with an heir, but the first wife, jealous of her rival, bribed the mid-wife to substitute a girl for the boy, whom she took into the jungle and placed in a dry water-course. A man, passing by, saw the infant, took it home and adopted as his son. The mid-wife could not keep the secret and the Rajput wife was compelled to confess her guilt. After a long search, the boy was found and restored to his father. He was named Sidhu and from him the Sidhu tribe derived its name.<sup>3</sup>

Sidhu, who was, according to Rajput custom, reckoned as of the caste of his mother, a Jat, had four sons from whom descended the families of Kaithal and Phulkian chiefs. When Babur invaded India in 1524, Sanghar, a descendant of the Sidhus, waited on him at Lahore and joined his army with a few of his followers. But shortly thereafter he was killed at the battle of Panipat, on 21<sup>st</sup> April 1526. After gaining the empire of Delhi, Babur gave the *chaudharyat* of the territory to the south-west of Delhi, to Sanghar's son, Beeram. The office was confirmed to him by Humayun. Beeram, mostly, lived at Neli, the village of Sidhu's maternal relations. He rebuilt Bedowal (Bedowali) which had become deserted. He was killed about the year 1560, fighting against the Bhattis.<sup>4</sup>

From his two sons, Beeram was succeeded by Mehraj to the *chaudharyat*. Mehraj's son, Sattu, succeeded his father. He was followed by his son, Pakhu. Pakhu was also killed in a skirmish with the Bhattis. He was succeeded by his son, Mohan.<sup>5</sup>

Due to the harassment of the Bhatti Rajputs, Mohan moved to Nathana. The Bhullars and Dhaliwals who were becoming the *tappedars* of that territory would not allow Mohan and his people to found a village and settle there.<sup>6</sup>

In these very days. Guru Hargobind happened to visit that area. All the Sikhs paid homage to the Guru. Mohan made an appeal to him to ask the Bhullars to allow them to settle. When the Guru pleaded for Mohan and his men Bhullars refused to spare even an inch of land for them. The Guru asked Mohan to go and found a village which he did in 1627, and named it Mehraj after the name of his great-grandfather.<sup>7</sup> The opposition and hostility of the Bhullars was to no avail due to

the armed aid by the Guru's men. It was at Mehraj that Guru Hargobind fought against the Mughals in 1631. Mohan and his men actively participated in the battle of Mehraj on the side of the Guru.<sup>8</sup>

Mohan, along with his eldest son, Rup Chand, was killed in a fight against the Bhattis. After Mohan's death, the next surviving son, Kala, succeeded to the *chaudharyat* and also to the guardianship of his deceased brother's sons, Phul and Sandali.<sup>9</sup>

### **Chaudhary Phul and his successors**

The Phulkian rulers of Patiala, Nabha and Jind descended from Phul. He was the second son of Rup Chand, by *Mai* Ambi, a Jat woman.<sup>10</sup> The dates of his birth and death are not known with certainty. As discussed by S.N. Banerjee,<sup>11</sup> according to the official note preserved in the Foreign Office Records, Phul was born in 1619, and he died in 1689. (Sir) Attar Singh and Lepel Griffin while accepting this date of birth, place his death in the year 1652. Giani Gian Singh, the author of the *Tavarikh Guru Khalsa*, gives the date of birth as 1688 BK. which corresponds to A.D. 1631. From yet another source, which supplies the horoscope of Phul, he was born on *Chaitra Sudi* 9, 1699, which corresponds to April 17, 1643, and that his death occurred in *Har, Sudi* 6, 1739, which corresponds to July 29, 1682. The year of birth taken from the horoscope appears to be highly probable and is confirmed by the story that Phul was a mere boy when he was conducted by his uncle Kala to the presence of Guru Har Rai in 1654. From all the dates of Phul's birth, April 17, 1643, seems to be more plausible.

The date of death has also been variously given as 1652, 1682 and 1689. The first may be ruled out as impossible in view of the date of birth accepted above. Out of the remaining two, 1689<sup>12</sup> appears to be more probable as it is consistent with certain acknowledged facts of Phul's career.

As the tradition goes when Guru Har Rai went to the Malwa on a preaching mission, Kala, accompanied by Phul and Sandali, came to pay his respects to the Guru. In the presence of the Guru, the young Phul patted his stomach. On the Guru's asking, Kala told him that he did so when he felt hungry. The Guru blessed Phul by saying that, "what mattered the hunger of one belly Phul would satisfy the hunger of thousands. The horses of Phul's successors would drink water from the Jamuna and their *raj* would extend to it."<sup>13</sup> Prophecy was amply fulfilled as is borne out by the history of the Phulkians.

Kala died in April 1661, when Phul was yet in his teens-Possessed of the qualities of leadership and having received the necessary training, Phul, however, did not find himself unequal to the task that confronted him after the death of his uncle.<sup>14</sup>

At the very outset of his career, Phul realised the need of a place, separate from Mehraj, where he could establish his headquarters and carry on his activities unhampered. So, he founded a village, five miles east of Mehraj to which he gave his own name Phul.<sup>15</sup> Though the village Phul was founded in 1663, it was not till 1671, that Phul grew sufficiently populous with a fort befitting its position.

An anecdote is related in connection with the founding of Phul. Close to Mehraj there lived an ascetic, named Sumerpuri, who subsisted only on milk. One wet evening when Phul took milk to him he found the *sadhu* in trance. It continued raining for the whole night and Phul kept standing by the side of Sumerpuri covering him by a blanket. When the *sadhu* opened his eyes in the morning he

found Phul standing near him with the pot of milk brought for him. Pleased with Phul's devotion the ascetic blessed him to found a new village for his residence.<sup>16</sup>

The *chaudhariyat* had been duly confirmed by the Mughal government.<sup>17</sup> Phul was required to credit the government revenue to the Sirhind treasury. For about a quarter of a century Phul remained the *chaudhary* at the newly founded headquarters. The period was marked by two events. One was the customary war with the Bhattis and the other was a more serious conflict with Daulat Khan and his son, Isa Khan. The Bhattis of Bhatner and the Brars of Talwandi Sabo were hostile to each other. The Bhattis made large-scale preparations under the leadership of Mahabat Khan and Mahbub Khan. On the other side Dalla Brar of Talwandi Sabo, invoked the help of Chaudhary Phul who readily responded to the call from a kinsman for aid against the hereditary enemies. The two Brar Sardars assumed the offensive, attacked the Bhattis, killed their leaders, Mahabat Khan and Mahbub Khan, and won a victory over them.<sup>18</sup>

Chaudhary Phul's fast rise excited the jealousy of his neighbours. One of them, the *chaudhary* of Kangar, represented to Isa Khan who sent one Chacho Khan Manj with a contingent, who occupied Phul and made the *chaudhary* a prisoner. Jhanda, a relative of Chaudhary Phul came with 100 men, killed Chacho Khan and expelled his men.

Isa Khan felt very irritated over this disaster and conducted a raid of village Phul personally. Unable to hold against the powerful enemy, Chaudhary Phul retired to Bedowali, the former seat of his ancestors. The village of Phul was plundered. But shortly after, Chaudhary Phul recovered his village and made a counter raid upon the territory of his enemies, whom he defeated. The Mughal officer, stationed at Jagraon, demanded the revenue from Chaudhary Phul. The latter refused to pay. The Mughal officer, accompanied by his men, came and plundered the village of Phul and took with him some persons as hostages. The *chaudhary* was absent from his headquarters at that time. On return, he led his men against the Mughal officer and brought him as a prisoner to his headquarters. The *chaudhary* treated the prisoner with kindness and sent him back safely. This raised Chaudhary Phul in the estimation of the people.<sup>19</sup>

For his inability to pay the land-revenue of the area under him, ultimately, Chaudhary Phul, fell a prisoner in the hands of the *faujdar* of Sirhind. He was taken to Sirhind where he was placed under surveillance.<sup>20</sup> It seems that, owing to frequent disturbances or skirmishes, he could not collect the revenue or had to incur expenditure which left him with no balance to pay the fiscal dues.

In concert with Sher Muhammad Khan of Malerkotla, Chaudhary Phul devised a means of securing his release. He resorted to the yogic exercise of suspending his breath which he had learnt from the ascetic, named Sumerpuri. The state of suspended animation was taken for death and the body was handed over to the Nawab of Malerkotla who agreed to have it sent to village Phul. When, however, the body was being carried, Phul's sons, Tilok Chand and Ram Chand, who were on their way to Sirhind, met the party at Bahadurpur, near Dhanaula, presently in the Sangrur district. Unaware of the actual position of suspended animation Chaudhary Phul's sons cremated him with due ceremonies. Thus, Chaudhary Phul died under deplorable circumstances when yet in vigour of manhood.<sup>21</sup> According to Karam Singh, before suspending his breath the *chaudhary* concerted with Gidiya<sup>22</sup> (a *mirasi*) that he would take his body to his home and hand it over to his elder wife, Bali, who knew how to restore the breath. Gidiya took the body and it was taken over by Phul's sons. It is said that *Mai* Bali and Sumerpuri who knew how to revive breath were away from the village. So the needful could not be done. There is yet another version given by Bute Shah that

Chaudhary Phul went to the hut of Sumerpuri and, not finding him there, practised *pranayam* or stopping the breath but carried it too far. The sons took him for dead and his body was burnt.<sup>23</sup> Still another version is that he died of apoplexy contracted while a prisoner of the governor of Sirhind.<sup>24</sup> But the first version of death having been caused by *pranayam* is based on more reliable evidence and may be accepted as true.

When Phul's elder wife, Bali, arrived, hearing of what had taken place, she declared that her husband had been burnt alive. Raji, the younger wife, who had ordered the cremation of her husband's body, was so much disconcerted by her mistake that she abandoned the village and went to live with her brother-in-law, Sukhan Lal, a Brar, while Bali and her children continued to live in the village of Phul.<sup>25</sup>

Chaudhary Phul's elder wife, Bali, was the daughter of one Jassa Dhillon, belonging to village Dhilwan. The second one, Raji, was the daughter of Dadu of village Sodhana.<sup>26</sup>

From the first marriage Chaudhary Phul had three sons: Tilok Chand, Ram Chand and Raghu; and from the second wife also three sons: Jhandu, Chato and Takht Mal.<sup>27</sup> Of the three sons by the first wife, Raghu was killed in a clash at Panjgrian, about 9 miles south-east of Faridkot. Between Tiloka and Rama on the one hand and their step-brothers on the other, there were constant bickerings. Ultimately, the step-mother along with her sons withdrew from Phul, first to Harnam Singhwala (three miles north of the village of Phul) and then further north, to Gumti where the family settled down. But Lepel Griffin thinks, that the step-brothers of Tiloka and Rama had to give up all claim to the ancestral property on account of their inability to pay their share of the dues demanded by the imperial government and they were assigned the village of Gumti.<sup>28</sup> The first version seems more probable.

The domestic disputes kept Tiloka and Rama busy for some years after the death of their father in 1689. Then, they started setting their house in order. Both the brothers were attracted by the lofty teachings and magnetic personality of Guru Gobind Singh. They became the devoted followers of the Guru and rendered him assistance on more than one occasion. The names of the two brothers were usually mentioned together. They always acted in concert and there existed the best of brotherly feelings between them for many years.

We cannot exactly say as to when they first came in contact with Guru Gobind Singh but as early as 1696, we find the Guru appreciating their devotion in a letter addressed to the two brothers. This *bukamnama* was issued by the Guru to the two brothers when he was fighting against the hill chiefs. The *bukamnama* reads:

“It is the order of Shri Guru ji that *Bhai* Tiloka and *Bhai* Rama, may the Guru protect you all, should come to our presence with your troops. We are much pleased with you. Your house is ours. Immediately on the receipt of this order you should come here. . . . Come with your horsemen. Come without fail. My blessings are on you. . . . Do come. I have sent a dress for you.” 2<sup>nd</sup> Bhadon, 1753 (i.e., August 2, 1696).<sup>29</sup>

This shows a link between the Phul's house and the *Guru-ghar*. It is believed that Tiloka was present at Chamkaur in December 1705. There is another version which seems more probable. It is said that the two brothers, while at Sirhind for paying the revenue, heard of the disaster at Chamkaur and reached there in disguise. They searched the bodies of the Guru's sons and duly

cremated them, as also the corpses of the other Sikh martyrs. Later, while staying at Damdama (Talwandi Sabo) the Guru called the two brothers and blessed them. Receiving *pabul* the two brothers got admitted to the fold of Sikhism.<sup>30</sup> Before their departure the Guru gave them a few weapons— swords, daggers, battle-axes and a *nishan sahib*, which remained preserved in their family over the centuries.

In 1710-11, Tilok Singh and Ram Singh sent, at their own expense, a number of recruits to fight under Banda Singh though they did not go personally. It is very probable that due to the confusion caused by Banda Singh's vigorous action in the Punjab the two brothers consolidated their position in the area under them.

Tilok Singh was, by nature, quiet and peaceful and punctually credited the revenue to the *faujdar's* treasury. Ram Singh, on the other hand, was self-assertive and bellicose and these qualities were requisite for a man who had to create a state. He is said to have first distinguished himself by attacking and dispersing a large body of marauders who were passing by the village of Phul laden with plunder.<sup>31</sup> He unburdened them of their looted and stolen booty including cattle. He founded the village of Rampur. He made a raid into the Bhatti territory and defeated Hasan Khan, one of the old enemies of his family, and carried off much spoil—money, horses and cattle. His next victory was over the Muhammadan chief of Kot whom he defeated and plundered.

It is said that Ram Singh was taken captive about the year 1707, by the *nazim* of Hisar from where he soon made good his escape and returned to Phul. After some time he left Phul and retired to his father-in-law's village Dhapali, three miles to the east of Phul. Soon after, he shifted to Bhadaur and from there to Rampur which is situated about 4 ½ miles to the south of Phul. In all probability, he made Rampur his usual place of residence in 1708, where he lived for the rest of his life.<sup>32</sup>

It seems that for the first few years Sardar Ram Singh, slowly but not quietly, felt his way for establishing his authority in the territory in the vicinity of Phul and Bhadaur which were situated at a distance of ten miles each other. Then, he managed through his cousin, Chain Singh, to secure the grant of the *chaudharyat* of the jungle *ilaqa* from the *faujdar* of Sirhind.<sup>33</sup> It seems that the appointment was secured about 1710, during the time of uncertainty and disorder which was caused by Banda Singh Bahadur and when a policy of pacifying local men was followed.

Chain Singh, who presumably enjoyed the favour of the *faujdar* of Sirhind, became the joint-collector of revenue with Ram Singh. Chain Singh was a man of haughty and interfering nature. His demands grew from day to day till at last his partnership with Ram Singh became impossible. No persuasion could dissuade Chain Singh from his objectionable behaviour. Ram Singh, in consultation with Tilok Singh, took the drastic step of getting Chain Singh liquidated and for the rest of his life he remained the sole collector of revenue of the *ilaqa*. The *faujdar* of Sirhind took no serious notice of the murder of Chain Singh but the sons of the latter, Biru and Uggar Sain, carried out the vendetta by killing Ram Singh at Malerkotla in 1714.<sup>34</sup> According to an account he was fifty years of age when he met with his violent end.<sup>35</sup>

Ram Singh was married to Sabi (Sahib Kaur) who was the daughter of Nanu Singh Bhutta of village Ghunas. By her, he had six sons—Duna, Sabha, Ala, Bakhta, Budha and Ladha, of whom the last two died young<sup>38</sup> and childless. Sardar Duna became the ancestor of Sardars of Kot Duna



and Bhadaur. The other sons, excepting Ala Singh who founded the Patiala house, could not get any prominence.

### **Sardar Ala Singh** (1695-1765)

Ala Singh was running his twentieth year when his father was murdered in 1714.<sup>37</sup> The inscription regarding his birth on his *samadh* at Patiala, noting the date as 1695, corroborates it. According to Gian Singh, he was born in 1691,<sup>38</sup> but 1695, seems more plausible.

The active career of Ala Singh roughly covered half a century. Besides his capacity to lead and ability to take advantage of the situation, he had the privilege of being served by the Malwa *Jats*, who were reputed for their martial qualities. The career of Ala Singh was mostly concerned with or confined to the *sarkar* of Sirhind. Every *sarkar* was administered by a *faujdar*. The *faujdar* of Sirhind was helped by functionaries stationed at places like Sunam and Samana. The officials called estate-holders or *jagirdars* or farmers of revenue were in touch with the people and dominated the places where they held lands. It was with these local men of influence that Ala Singh had much to do for the first thirty years of his career.

Isa Khan Munj held land on both sides of the Satluj. He was a terror to the tract from Tihara to Dhuri. In 1718, he was killed along with his father, fighting against the imperial army. The Afghans of Kotla were at this time under Jamal Khan who raised the chiefship to prominence. In Raikot and Jagraon, Rai Kalha III was the contemporary of Ala Singh. The area around Barnala was held by Saundha Khan Rajput. The country side of Samana and Dhodian comprised the *jagir* of Farid Khan of Kakra, and the *ilaqa* of Sunam was a part of the *jagir* of Amir Khan. Patiala and the neighbouring villages formed the jurisdiction of the *taaluqadar*, Muhammad Saleh Khokhar, with his headquarters at Sanaur, four miles from Patiala. Saifabad (Bahadurgarh), was in the hands of the descendants of Saif Khan. Bathinda was held by Sardar Jodha.<sup>39</sup>

Ala Singh was barely out of his teens when his father was done to death. He and his brother, Sabha Singh, avenged the blood of their father by murdering Kamala and Biru—sons of Chain Singh, along with eighteen of their followers.<sup>40</sup> Ala Singh also sacked Sema, the village of Chain Singh. Uggar Sain could not recover his paternal property till about 1746, when Ali Muhammad Khan, *faujdar* of Sirhind, gave him permission to reoccupy and populate the village.<sup>41</sup>

Ala Singh took possession of Barnala in 1722-23. Leaving his elder brother, Duna Singh, in possession of Bhadaur, Ala Singh shifted to Barnala.<sup>42</sup> It marks the real beginning of his career and Barnala remained his headquarters for the next forty years. According to *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, there is a story about Ala Singh's leaving Bhadaur. One day, Ala Singh visited the holy *faqir*, Baba Charan Das, who advised him to leave Bhadaur and move to the east and populate a *theb* which would result in his progress and prosperity. Bir Bhan, *zamindar* and *muqadam* of village Sanghera, joined Ala Singh in rebuilding Barnala, which had fallen into ruins.<sup>43</sup>

At Barnala, one of Ala Singh's most powerful and troublesome neighbours was Saundha Khan, a Muhammadan of Rajput origin, who owned the village of Nima, whose occupation was robbery rather than husbandry. He, besides three hundred horseman of his own, could count on the assistance of Rai Kalha, the chief of Kot, his relation. Saundha Khan died in 1731, and his adopted son, Nigahi Khan, disgusted at being refused a share with the two sons of the deceased, took service with Ala Singh and persuaded his son, Sardul Singh, to join him in an attack upon the village of Nima, which they captured and destroyed.<sup>44</sup>

Hearing of the complete effacement of Saundha Khan's power, Rai Kalha issued an appeal to the Muhammadan chiefs for assistance against Ala Singh. Fateh Khan of Talwandi, Dalel Khan of Halwara, Qutab-ud-Din Khan of Malsian and Jamal Khan of Malerkotla responded to the call. They placed their soldiers, numbering 40,000, under the command of Nawab Asad Ali Khan, *fanjdar* of Jalandhar Doab.<sup>45</sup> Ala Singh obtained help from Majha and Malwa Sikhs to fight a combination of the Muhammadan chiefs. Kapur Singh, Diwan Barbara Singh and Deep Singh Shahid came from Majha with a force of 15,000 men. Mehrajian Sardars, Shahzada Singh and Kehar Singh and Lakhna Doggar from Malwa joined with their contingents. Asad Ali was killed and the other Muhammadan chiefs took to flight. This victory of Ala Singh against heavy odds marked a turning point in his career.<sup>46</sup> Ala Singh was baptised to Sikhism by Sardar Kapur Singh Faizullapuria.<sup>47</sup>

According to the *Tazkirah*, after building Barnala, Ala Singh decided to build Longowal. He pitched a *mobri* (a trunk of wood) at a place where he proposed to lay out the village of Longowal. Some person pulled out the *mobri* and threw it into a well. Ala Singh sought the advice of Bhai Mul Chand, a famous *faqir*, as to the desirability of going ahead with the village. Bhai Mul Chand favoured the project and it was built and populated in due course of time. He also founded Dirbah. He founded more villages in the deserted *jungle* areas and also occupied many villages from the *parganas* of Sunam and Samana.<sup>48</sup>

In 1745, Ali Muhammad Khan Rohilla was appointed *fanjdar* of Sirhind. On assuming charge he summoned the prominent *taaluqadars* to Sirhind. Ala Singh was among those who obeyed the summons. Rai Kalha of Kot did not attend. An army was sent against him under Hafiz Rahmat and Ala Singh accompanied the expedition with his troops. The Rai's power was destroyed. He fled with his family and took shelter in Pakpattan. Raikot and Jagraon were occupied. With the victorious army Ala Singh also returned to Sirhind where he found himself landed in prison. He was, then, shifted to Sunam where he was kept in close confinement. Ala Singh's quick strides in conquering more and more areas had resulted in his imprisonment. Ala Singh escaped from the prison in the guise of his faithful servant, Karam Singh. He hastened to Longowal and thence to Barnala.<sup>49</sup>

Both Samana and Sunam were the important *parganas* and these two towns ranked equal, in importance, to Sirhind. Ala Singh was slowly feeling his way towards the establishment of his overlordship over these *parganas*. In 1749, he erected a fort at Dhodian (which came to be called Bhawanigarh) which fell within the jurisdiction of Farid Khan of Kakra and *rakhi* was also levied on seventeen other villages belonging to the same landlord. This was naturally resented by him. Accompanied by some 70 horsemen, Farid Khan was proceeding to Samana to arrange aid against Ala Singh when he was seen and attacked by the latter's men. Farid Khan, along with 20 men, was killed in the fray- His movable property was given to his sons and his landed estate passed to Ala Singh who occupied a quarter of the *pargana* of Samana.<sup>50</sup> The construction of the fort of Bhawanigarh eclipsed the importance of Longowal and Ala Singh made it his place of frequent residence.

In the fifties, Ala Singh was well on his way to rulership. In this decade extensive territories, which in Mughal times were included in the *pargana* of Sunam, Samana, Banur and Ghurram, were brought within his sway. He even went beyond the boundary of the *sarkar* of Sirhind and occupied a portion of northern Hisar. Sanaur, once a village, was better known, being the seat of a *taaluqadar*, a Sherwani Afghan, whose name was Muhammad Saleh Khokhar. The Khokhar chief voluntarily

offered 84 villages called *chaurasi* including the site of modern Patiala which was then a small village, to Ala Singh, probably by way of propitiating a man who was occupying villages far and near and might any day march on his territory. Ala Singh despatched Gurbakhsh Singh Kaleka with a body of 1000 horsemen to take formal possession of the ceded villages including Sanaur.<sup>51</sup> This happened in 1753.

At the suggestion of Sukhdas Singh Kaleka and Gurbakhsh Singh, Patiala was selected for the construction of a building known as *deobri*, for the occasional residence of Sardar Ala Singh, and for the erection of a mud fort, for its defence. This fort, traditionally known as *Sodbian ki Garhi* or *Gher Sodbian*, was situated to the east of the present fort called *Qila-i-Mubarak*,<sup>52</sup> which began to be constructed in 1763 with the custom dues collected from Sirhind.

The Patiala *garhi* was attacked by the chief of Saifabad. Ala Singh issued out of the *garhi* and defeated the invaders.<sup>53</sup>

Jodha attacked Bathinda in 1753. Bugga Singh, nephew of Ala Singh and son of Duna Singh, was sent to Bathinda against Jodha's unsocial behaviour. Bugga Singh could not do much. Ala Singh ordered a force of three to four thousand strong to march on Bathinda. Jodha was defeated and his territory was overrun and many of the captured villages, including Bhuchhu and Jhumba, were given to Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh who laid the foundation of the Kaithal family.<sup>54</sup>

Kanwar Lal Singh and his father, Ala Singh, then, overran Sohana, Jamalpur, Dharsul and Shikarpur, belonging to Muhammad Amin Khan and Muhammad Hasan Khan Bhattis. These chiefs solicited the help of the imperial governor of Hisar, who sent a detachment but in the engagement which followed at Khodal, near Akalgarh, the Bhattis were defeated. On their second venture also, after three days' skirmishing Ala Singh made a night attack on the Bhatti camp which was completely successful and Muhammad Amin Khan escaped to Hisar. He, then, to secure cordial assistance from Nawab Nazeer Khan, gave him his daughter in marriage. The Sikhs and the Bhattis supported by the imperial forces met at Dharsul. Fighting continued for eight days. Nawab Nazeer Khan, governor of Hisar, was killed and the imperial forces, disheartened by the loss of their leader, left the field and the Bhattis were, then, at once attacked by Ala Singh with all his troops and put to flight with a heavy loss. This engagement, which did much to consolidate Ala Singh's power and increase his reputation, took place in 1757.<sup>55</sup>

In the end of 1758, the towns of Sunam and Samana also passed into the possession of Ala Singh.

Since the capture of Barnala and Sanghera Ala Singh had been almost in continual conflict with the chiefs of Malerkotla and Raikot. Jamal Khan and Bhikhan, the Nawabs of Malerkotla were contemporaries of Ala Singh.

In 1760-61, Ala Singh captured Sherpur and Bhasaur which were the possessions of Nawab of Malerkotla. Nawab Bhikhan Khan collected his forces and advanced towards Lalaucchi (15 *kos* west of Patiala) where the Patiala forces were camping. Kanwar Himmat Singh, grandson of Ala Singh, was encamped at the village of Sadarpur. The clash between the contending forces took place near Kakra. The Afghan chief, Bhikhan Khan was killed in the course of fighting and the Patiala forces returned victorious.<sup>56</sup>

### Ala Singh and the Durranis

From 1747 to 1766, Ahmad Shah Abdali came to India for a number of times. During his first invasion a decisive battle was fought at Manupur., 16 kms. north-west of Sirhind, on March 11, 1748. The Wazir of Delhi was killed by a shell but due to the dauntless and fierce attack of the dead Wazir's son, Muin-ul-Mulk, the Afghan forces beat a retreat. This was Ahmad Shah Abdali's first appearance in the tract where Ala Singh was struggling to carve out a principality for himself. Daya Lal, Ala Singh's agent at Delhi, suggested that it was the time when the Phulkian chief, by helping the imperial forces, could win the support of the Mughal government. Ala Singh reached Manupur and participated in the foraging attacks on the Afghan invaders.<sup>57</sup> This was the first occasion when Ala Singh came in direct touch with the Imperial government.

When, after the fourth invasion of India by Ahmad Shah Abdali in 1755-57, his son, Timur Shah, was returning to his country, with heavy booty from Delhi, Ala Singh in concert with other Sikh Sardars barred Timur's path at Sanaur and relieved him of half of his precious burden.<sup>58</sup>

Ahmad Shah Durrani appointed Abdus Samad Mohammadzai as the governor of Sirhind in April 1757. Ala Singh's possessions were mostly situated within the jurisdiction of Sirhind. Abdus Samad wanted to punish Ala Singh for his having intercepted the looted treasures of Timur Shah. The Phulkian chief, knowing the intentions of Abdus Samad, retired to Dhodian where there was a much stronger fort. Abdus Samad followed Ala Singh to Dhodian and besieged him there. The Pathan governor was defeated. Abdus Samad Khan reached Sirhind on January 12, 1758, and it was attacked and captured on March 21, 1758, by the combined forces of the Marathas, Ala Singh, Adeena Beg and his other Sikh allies. The Marathas appointed Sadiq Beg as the new governor of Sirhind.<sup>59</sup> Before the occupation of Sirhind Ala Singh, who was pro-Maratha and anti-Abdali, was requested to send help and to meet Sadiq Beg Khan at Sanaur and Malhar Rao on his march to Sirhind. The help was given in the shape of two thousand soldiers who participated in the attack on Sirhind. But the meeting could not take place as Ala Singh did not agree to go to the Maratha camp.

During the third battle of Panipat, fought between the Marathas and the Durranis, in January 1761, Ala Singh sent provisions for the Maratha army and fodder for their horses. The Afghans partially succeeded in preventing the same from reaching the Marathas. Ahmad Shah Durrani's allies like the Nawab of Malerkotla and Rai of Kot duly informed him about the convoys of grains which were being supplied by Ala Singh to the Marathas. We notice that before the battle of Panipat Ala Singh had actively helped the foes of Ahmad Shah Abdali and after the disaster many Marathas were given ready shelter in his territory.<sup>60</sup>

According to the *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, Ahmad Shah sent a detachment for an attack on Barnala. Ala Singh was, then, residing at Munak and the capital was in the charge of his wife, *Mai Fato*, and her grandson, Kanwar Amar Singh. The *Mai*, realising the impossibility of successfully opposing the Afghan army, despatched four trusted emissaries: Bhola Singh, Kashmiri Mai, Kanaihya Mai and Bairam Dhillon, to meet Shah Wali Khan, the Wazir of Ahmad Shah Durrani, to sue for peace. She vacated Barnala, along with her grandson, and went to Munak to join her husband. Barnala was given over to plunder but the above mentioned emissaries purchased the withdrawal of Afghans by payment of four lakh rupees as *nazarana*. Influence appears to have been brought to bear upon Wazir Shah Wali Khan who, from now always, pleaded with the Shah for the ruler of Patiala. In consequence, Ala Singh was warmly received by Ahmad Shah, confirmed in his possessions and awarded a robe of honour and the title of *Raja*, with *tabl-o-alam*, as insignia of royalty.<sup>61</sup> The *faujdar* of Sirhind was ordered to regard Ala Singh's possessions separate from the

territory under his jurisdiction. Ala Singh's jurisdiction was acknowledged to extend over 726 villages. The names of the *parganas* and the number of villages in each were as under: Sunam 224 villages, Samana 226, Haveli Sirhind 52, Sanaur 89, Karyat Rai Semu 4, Chhat 8, Banur 36, Massingan 17, Ghurram 6 and Mansurpur 23.<sup>62</sup> In 1723, he possessed only 30 villages.

Ala Singh's status as territorial magnate was recognised and his position stabilised by the all-powerful man of the time— Ahmad Shah Abdali. The Sikhs felt enraged at the conduct of Ala Singh in receiving favours from Ahmad Shah Abdali. An attack on his territory was contemplated by the Sikhs, but they were restrained from implementing their designs by the friendly intervention of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. Ala Singh justified his submission on the ground of expediency and assured his coreligionists that his views were in accordance with theirs and in proof thereof got his grandson, Amar Singh, formally baptised to Sikhism by Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and in atonement of his conduct paid a fine of one lakh rupees.<sup>63</sup>

On the invitation of Aqil Das of Jandiala the Dorrani chief again came to the Punjab in the beginning of 1762, and there was a bloody carnage or *wada ghallughara* near Malerkotla, killing, at a very modest calculation, ten thousand Sikhs. He marched upon Barnala also. The fort was taken and the place was set on fire.

In January 1764, Zain Khan, the governor of Sirhind, was killed by the Sikhs. They captured Sirhind and handed over the same to Ala Singh." Ala Singh shifted to Patiala in February 1764.

Qazi Nur Muhammad, who accompanied Ahmad Shah Abdali's expedition of 1764-65, writes of Ala Singh: "He is a *bakim* (ruler), a *zabit* (governor) and an *amin* (commissioner). No body else is so resourceful in the countries of the Punjab, Lahore and Sirhind as he is. He serves the Shah in his absence as well as in his presence and carries out his orders with wisdom and dignity."<sup>65</sup> The Shah gave recognition to Ala Singh's possession of the territory of Sirhind, subject to the payment of an annual tribute of 3 ½ lakh rupees.<sup>66</sup>

From a small beginning the territorial acquisition of Ala Singh underwent, through a long period of fifty years, a steady process of expansion which continued almost to the end of his life. After a very eventful career Ala Singh died of fever, at Patiala, on August 22, 1765, at the age of seventy.<sup>67</sup>

There was a considerable decline in agriculture in the cis-Satluj areas during the first half of the eighteenth century. It was due to two major factors: political instability and frequent famines. The Sikh movement under the Dal Khalsa, suppression of powerful *zamindars* like Isa Khan and continued inefficient and tactless *faujdar*s of Sirhind as Ali Muhammad Rohilla, Sadiq Beg, Abdus Samad Khan Muhammadzai and Zain Khan and various political upheavals created insecurity among the peasants.

The famines and their devastations have been vividly described in *Sakbian Bhai Mool Chand*, a Punjabi manuscript of 1793. There were famines in 1694, 1713 and 1722. During these famines Bhattis carried on depredations by organising bands. The villages had already been ruined by famines. The loot and plunder compelled the peasants to seek asylum else where. It was at this critical stage of economic crisis that Ala Singh started his career by populating the ruined villages and founding new ones, to help the famine-stricken peasantry, to increase his area of jurisdiction and build strategic points for further expansion. The land thus colonized was to belong to the

founder of the village. There is a definite evidence from the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries that persons who brought new areas under cultivation were recognised as *malik* or proprietors. The Mughal Emperors freely bestowed *zamindari* rights on those who would bring forest land or waste land under cultivation. In pursuance of the new policy Ala Singh founded a large number of villages including Longowal, Chhajli, Dirbah, Sheron, Hadiana and Patiala. This measure of colonization provided a number of benefits to Ala Singh. The inhabitants of the new villages and towns brought reclamation of land around these settlements.

This resulted in enabling Ala Singh to spare food grains for the contingents of his political allies, when on march, and also for the Dal Khalsa, whenever they visited the cis-Satluj areas.

In giving lands in his new villages Ala Singh made no discrimination against the Muslims. His secular and sympathetic outlook encouraged the Muslim *zamindars* outside his control to seek his overlordship.

### **Ala Singh's Character**

Ala Singh was a virtuous man with a high sense of moral values. When staying at Longowal, one day, he went upstairs and happened to see a carpenter's daughter naked while taking her bath on the roof of her house. He took it as sinful and atoned for it by telling her father to adopt her as his own daughter. He himself met all the expenses of her marriage.<sup>68</sup> Once an old Brahman woman appealed to a saintly person, Bhai Mool Chand, for financial assistance for the marriage of her daughter. The saintly Bhai, turning to the people assembled before him, told them that whosoever helped the old woman would get, with the grace of God, the same number of villages as the rupees given to her. Ala Singh brought all the rupees available with him at home to give to the woman. When asked by the Bhai as to the amount of the rupees he told that he did not count. The holy Bhai told him that he would also receive countless villages.<sup>69</sup> He continuously ran *langars* for the poor and the needy. His wife, Fato, an equally virtuous lady, also looked after *langar*.<sup>70</sup> He was very hospitable and magnanimous. He wore a simple dress. He was a very tolerant and kind-hearted man. As the tradition goes, once, when his wife, Fato, was serving in the mess she offered hot *ghee* to a man partaking food from the *langar*. The man told her as to what should he do with the hot *ghee*. She told him to pour it on her head, which he did. When the matter was reported to Ala Singh he pacified her by saying that she was lucky to have *ghee* poured on her head by one of their own men in place of hot oil at the hands of the Muslims.<sup>71</sup> This speaks for Ala Singh's tolerant disposition.

In diplomacy, Ala Singh was par excellence. He plundered Ahmad Shah Durrani's foraging parties in 1748, robbed his son, Timur Shah, in 1757, and annoyed the Durrani in 1760, by supplying grains to the Marathas. In 1764, he joined the Dal Khalsa in attacking Sirhind and killing its governor, Zain Khan. Despite all this, he obtained the title of *Raja* and governorship of Sirhind from the Durrani. Ala Singh had pleased the Mughal Emperor, the Durrani invader and the Dal Khalsa. In the words of Hari Ram Gupta "Ala Singh may rightly be called Bismarck of the Sikhs. He had three balls in his hands, and by throwing them simultaneously into the air, he always caught them, never allowing any one to fall."<sup>72</sup>

Ala Singh had married only one wife, Fatto, who, bore three sons: Sardul Singh, Bhuma Singh and Lal Singh, all of whom died in the life time of their father, and had a daughter, Bibi Pardhan Kaur, who was born in 1718. She was married to Sham Singh Randhawa of village Ram Das in the Amritsar district. She became a widow, a short time after her marriage. She came back to live under the affectionate care of her father. She passed her life at Barnala and spent most of her

income from a *jagir* of seventeen villages on charities. She died in 1789. Sardul Singh, the eldest son, was born on June 16, 1715. He married as his first wife, the daughter of Chaudhary Suraj Mal, Sardar of Bhikhi, who became the mother of Kanwar Amar Singh. His second wife was the widow of his first cousin, Jodh Singh, whom he married according to *kerewa*, or *chadar pauna*. Sardul Singh died in 1753.<sup>73</sup>

Bhuma Singh, the second son, born on August 21, 1721, left one daughter, Bibi Rajinder Kaur. The youngest son, Lal Singh, born in 1723, died in 1757. He was childless.<sup>74</sup>

When Ala Singh died there were two claimants to the chiefship, Himmat Singh and Amar Singh, the sons of Sardul Singh. Of these Himmat, Singh was older by several years. He was born to the widow of Jodh Singh. Amar Singh, the second son of Sardul Singh, was born on June 7, 1748, and was consequently seventeen years old when his grandfather died.<sup>75</sup>

### **Maharaja Amar Singh (1765-1781)**

#### **Amar Singh's Succession to Gaddi**

When Ala Singh died at Patiala *Mai* Fato and Kanwar Amar Singh were at Barnala. Accompanied by Amar Singh, she came post-haste to Patiala and installed Amar Singh on the *gaddi* as the successor of his grandfather. The Sardars who presented themselves on the occasion included Gurbakhsh Singh Kaleka, Hamir Singh Kaleka, Sukhdas Kaleka, Desu Singh Jaid, Phula Singh, Qandhari Mal, Gulab Rai, Bakhshi Lakhna Doggar, Hari Singh Guhar, Kanha Mal, Gurdas Singh Sekhon, Mehar Singh Gurusaria, Nanu Singh Grewal and Surat Singh Sameka. They swore allegiance to the new Patiala ruler—Amar Singh.<sup>76</sup>

#### **Rebellion of Himmat Singh**

At the lime of Ala Singh's death Himmat Singh was at Hadiaya. When he reached Patiala Amar Singh had already been installed as the Raja. He is said to have taken possession of a great part of the town of Patiala and the neighbouring areas. Amar Singh, with the help of the rulers of Jind, Nabha and Kaithal, compelled Himmat Singh to retire from Patiala.<sup>77</sup> He came back to Hadiaya and planned war against his brother, Amar Singh. He captured the fort of Dhodian (Bhawanigarh).<sup>78</sup> Amar Singh, in order to avoid the escalation of war, sent emissaries to Himmat Singh to negotiate a settlement. He expressed his willingness to grant half the territory to Himmat Singh and the other half, including Patiala, was to be retained by him. The offer was declined by Himmat Singh. An attempt at pacification was made by Bibi Rajinder Kaur, cousin of Amar Singh, by going on hunger strike at Bhawanigarh for seven days. Himmat Singh released all the men made captive during the occupation of the fort of Bhawanigarh. Amar Singh marched against Himmat Singh and besieged the town of Bhawanigarh. The opportune intercession, of *Mai* Fato brought about the submission of Himmat Singh, who received the town of Bhawanigarh and certain villages as *jagir* from Amar Singh.<sup>79</sup> This took place in April 1767.

Amar Singh captured the town of Payal, near Ludhiana, from the Kotla Afghans, with the help of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, and after that took Isru which belonged to the same masters—Jassa Singh got one fourth of the revenue of the town. But later, by an arrangement with Amar Singh, the Ahluwalia chief became possessed of the whole of Isru.<sup>80</sup>

Because of Patiala house's alignment with the Durrani invader, Ahmad Shah, the Sikhs, particularly of trans-Satluj areas of the Punjab, had turned hostile to the Phulkian chief. More than once, they had been prevented from marching against Patiala. According to *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*,

after the accession of Amar Singh, Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Baghel Singh visited Patiala in 1766. Perceiving the weak state-defence of Patiala Baghel Singh suggested to the Ahluwalia chief a surprise attack on the place with a view to occupying it. The suggestion was brushed aside by Jassa Singh and they soon left Patiala.<sup>81</sup>

Ahmad Shah Durrani, during his last invasion of India in 1767, honoured Amar Singh with the title of *Raja-i-Rajgan Bahadur*. At Kara Bowana, 24 miles south of Ambala, a meeting took place between the Afghan king and Raja Amar Singh, when valuable presents were given to the latter with a flag and a drum, the insignia of an independent ruler. He was also permitted to strike coins in his name and he, in his turn, presented the king with a *nazarana* of a lakh of rupees.<sup>82</sup>

After Amar Singh's row with the ruler of Malerkotla for a short while peace was restored between the two. In 1768, a punitiva expedition was sent against Sardar Jodh Singh who was the chief of Kot Kapura. He was indiscreetly provocative in his conduct and utterances. It is said that he had a horse and a mare (both stolen from Phul) which he named as Ala and Fato. Raja Amar Singh was highly incensed on hearing this intolerable affront to his grandfather and grandmother.<sup>83</sup> Jhanda Singh was sent against Jodh Singh with a force. In the course of fighting which lasted only for three hours the Brar chief, Jodh Singh, died and his eldest son, Jit Singh, was also mortally wounded. Raja Amar Singh was very much distressed to hear of the death of the chief whose life he never intended to take.<sup>84</sup> The object was to chastise Jodh Singh for his puerile imprudence. Pinjore was captured, by the Patiala chief with the help of Hari Singh of Sialba, about 1770. Garib Das, the chief of Manimajra, also submitted to Patiala. Later, Sailba was also occupied and Gurbakhsh Singh Dhillon was appointed *qiladar* of the place. The chief of Sialba appealed to some of the Sikh Sardars for help. They got Sialba released from the Patiala forces inflicting heavy human loss on them. Among the slain was Bakhshi Malik Lakhna. Jhanda Singh and Mahan Singh were made captive and Nanu Mal received a wound.<sup>85</sup>

Then came the turn of Bathinda. The Raja accompanied the army to Bathinda and after an encounter the town was occupied. On being defeated Sukhchain Singh Saboka withdrew to the Fort of Gobindgarh which was close to the town of Bathinda and made a bid to defend it against the Patiala forces which had besieged it.<sup>86</sup> Sukhchain Singh, finding himself closely invested, sent a message of surrender on condition that the siege was immediately raised and he was promised safety. Raja Amar Singh agreed to this and taking Kapur Singh, son of Sukhchain Singh, and five others as hostages for the fulfilment of the promise of surrender he returned to Patiala. For four months Sukhchain Singh evaded the evacuation of the fort, and then he approached the ruler of Patiala and informed him that he was ready to hand over the fort if hostages were released. Amar Singh detained Sukhchain Singh and released Kapur Singh who entered the fort of Bathinda and made preparations for defence.<sup>87</sup> Sukhchain Singh, unable to bear the rigours of imprisonment, wrote to his son to make over the fort to the Patiala officers. The fort was surrendered to Patiala and, for his maintenance, Sukhchain Singh was given twelve villages.<sup>88</sup> The whole affair, from the inception of the siege of Bathinda to the final occupation of the fort, took about two years from the end of 1769 to that of 1771.

Shortly thereafter, the Marathas, under Janko Rao marched in the direction of Patiala in October 1772. Against the advice of *Mai Fato*, Raja Amar Singh sent off all his treasure and family jewels to Bathinda which, lying amidst sandy wastes, was not likely to be attacked. The Marathas did not come beyond Pihowa (near Thanesar). In the absence of Raja Amar Singh from Patiala, it was attacked by Himmat Singh who was admitted into the fort by Sukhdas Kaleka who was, then, in



charge of the fort.<sup>89</sup> Amar Singh hurried to Patiala. Finding himself unable to resist, Himmat Singh, on assurance of life and liberty, surrendered and died two years later, in 1774, from excessive drinking at Longowal, and his estates of Bhawanigarh and Dirbah were resumed by Amar Singh.<sup>90</sup>

About four miles to the north-east of Patiala there was a strong fort which had been built by Nawab Saif Khan and called Saifabad after his own name. Gul Khan, the principal follower of Saif Khan, became its *qiadar* after the death of the latter. Raja Amar Singh besieged the fort and battered its walls. Gul Khan surrendered the fort to Amar Singh.<sup>91</sup>

In 1774, Amar Singh also captured the fort of Begran in the Hisar district from the Bhattis.<sup>92</sup>

In the year 1777, Raja Amar Singh sent a force under Chaudhary Daya Singh to overrun the districts of Faridkot and Kot Kapura but made no attempt to take formal possession of the same.

In 1778, Raja Amar Singh again decided to attack Manimajra and Sialba. Garib Das purchased peace by paying a huge sum to the Patiala chief. Hari Singh, the ruler of Sialba, called Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, Gurdit Singh and Diwan Singb Ladwa, Karam Singh Shahid of Shahzadpur, Gurbakhsh Singh of Ambala and some smaller chiefs to his help. The forces of Patiala were repulsed.<sup>93</sup> A little later, when Hari Singh's supporters dispersed, Amar Singh decided to avenge his defeat.

He collected his friends and relatives along with their contingents. By making payments to the few supporters of Hari Singh, Amar Singh was able to make Sialba chief to come to Patiala where peace was concluded without bloodshed.<sup>94</sup> The territory of Desu Singh, supporter of Hari Singh Sialba, was restored to him.

Nawab Majad-ud-Doula Abdul Ahad, minister at Delhi, was determined to make an effort to recover the Malwa country from the Sikhs. He departed from Delhi in November 1779, with a big force and was accompanied by Prince Farukhanda Bakht.<sup>95</sup> He reached Karnal without meeting any resistance and, there, he was joined by Sardar Baghel Singh Karorsinghia, Sahib Singh Khundawala and Karam Singh Shahid.<sup>96</sup> The envoys of Bhai Desu Singh of Kaithal had accompanied the Nawab from Delhi. Desu Singh was reputed to be rich. On a charge of not having paid his arrears of revenue he was seized and an amount of four lakh rupees was demanded from him as a fine. He was able to pay three lakh rupees and for the payment of the balance he sent his son, Lal Singh, as a hostage.<sup>97</sup>

The Nawab marched on, thinking, that he would not meet with opposition and, at the village of Ghurram, about 25 kms from Patiala, he was met by Diwan Nanu Mal whom the Raja had sent to express his devotion to the Delhi government. In the meantime Raja Amar Singh had invited Jai Singh and Haqiqat Singh Kanaihyas, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, Tara Singh Ghaiba, Jodh Singh of Wazirabad, Dal Singh, Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh Bhangis and many others,<sup>98</sup> while at Patiala, the Phulkian chiefs of Jind, Nabha, Bhadaur and Malod had collected all their troops. The Nawab was terrified and he thought of immediate retreat. Baghel Singh told him that the Sikhs would not allow him a safe retreat unless they were given money. Baghel Singh got the greater portion of the three lakhs of rupees which he had extracted from Desu Singh. He gave a part of that amount to the Sikh chiefs,<sup>99</sup> who retired to their places and the Nawab retreated to Delhi.

Raja Amar Singh died on Februarys, 1781, of dropsy brought on by excessive drinking,<sup>100</sup> He lived only up to thirty four years of age.

In a short span of life, Amar Singh made Patiala the most powerful state between the Jamuna and the Satluj. He had a quick intelligence, firm determination and a strong arm, and his success was well-deserved.

### **Maharaja Sahib Singh (1781-1813)**

The new ruler of Patiala, Raja Sahib Singh, who was born on August 18, 1773,<sup>101</sup> was a young boy of a little more than Seven at the time of his accession to the throne in 1781.<sup>102</sup> Through the influence of Rani Hukman, the grandmother of the young Raja, Diwan Nanu Mal was appointed Prime Minister.

Soon after his accession the young chief had to face rebellions at Bhawanigarh by its governor Mahan Singh, the brother of *Mai* Deso, step-mother of Raja Sahib Singh, at Kot Sumer, headed by Rajo, the widow of Bakhsho Singh of Saboka and at Bhikhi by Ala Singh, brother of Raja Amar Singh's widow. *Rani* Khem Kaur. All these rebellions were suppressed by Nanu Mal by his timely and adequate action.<sup>103</sup>

Rani Hukman's death gave a set-back to the position of Diwan Nanu Mal. The Diwan's enemies, Rani Khem Kaur, Soman Lal Dhali, Bibi Pardhan Kaur, grand-aunt of Raja Sahib Singh, and some others got him arrested as he was lying at Anandpur where he was wounded by Khurram Beg, and sent him a prisoner to Patiala. Rani Rajinder Kaur of Phagwara, a first cousin sister of Raja Amar Singh, came to Patiala and got Nanu Mal released and reinstated in his post as Prime Minister.<sup>104</sup>

Nanu Mal, finding that he could not depend upon the support of the Patiala nobles, to restore order, opened negotiations with Dhara Rao, a Maratha leader, who had been moving about near Delhi. Some Sikh chiefs as Baghel Singh, Diwan Singh Ladwa, Bhanga Singh and Mehtab Singh of Thanesar had joined Dhara Rao. Baghel Singh arranged matters with the Marathas who consented to assist Nanu Mal for a consideration of two lakh rupees against those who had revolted against the Patiala state. Dhara Rao came to Karnal and was joined by Nanu Mal, Rani Rajinder Kaur and Raja Gajpat Singh of Jind. The opponents and rebels of the state got frightened. The Patiala allies attacked Banur. It was under Singhpurias who had earlier been paying half share of the revenue to Patiala as Raja Amar Singh had helped them to conquer it. Khushal Singh, the Singhpuria chief, stopped the payment of Patiala share. Nanu Mal, by forced contributions from the chiefs and the *zamindars* of Banur and the adjoining areas, managed to pay the Marathas two lakh rupees as agreed. The Marathas returned to Karnal.<sup>105</sup>

In 1787, Raja Sahib Singh was married to Rattan Kaur, daughter of Sardar Ganda Singh Bhangi.<sup>106</sup>

In 1788, another Maratha leader, Amba Rao, assisted by Ghulam Qadir Khan, son of Zabita Khan Rohilla, invaded the territory of Patiala but could not achieve much as the Rohilla chief had retired towards Delhi probably after a quarrel with the Maratha invader.<sup>107</sup>

When Raja Sahib Singh was fourteen years of age, on the instigation of some of his men, he began to hate Nanu Mal bitterly.

The Marathas again marched northwards, under the command of Rane Khan Dadaji and Ali Bahadur. Patiala was their target. Nanu Mal advised the ladies at the palace to leave Patiala for Munak or Bathinda. Rani Rajinder Kaur did not agree.<sup>108</sup> She asked Diwan Nanu Mal to negotiate with the invaders and if necessary to buy them off from his own pocket. The Diwan had no money to pay. The Maratha army appeared before Patiala and encamped at Sular, less than three kms from the town. Nanu Mal was not able to pay sufficient amount to the Marathas. They besieged the fort of Saifabad known as Bahadurgarh. The Marathas demanded *nazarana* which Rani Rajinder Kaur was not willing to pay. She sent her forces against them to Saifabad. After occasional skirmishes between the Marathas and the Patiala forces for a month and a half the Marathas retired to Delhi.<sup>109</sup>

When Nanu Mal was accompanying the Marathas out of the Patiala state. Sahib Singh confiscated his property. When Nanu Mal was returning from Karnal, he heard about the Raja's action against him and took refuge with Karam Singh of Shahabad.<sup>110</sup>

Rajinder Kaur, who had accompanied the Marathas to Mathura to settle things with Scindia himself, came back to find Raja Sahib Singh turned against her due to the instigation of the Raja's supporters that her growing power was a danger to his safety and dignity.<sup>111</sup> Despite her serious attempts to see Sahib Singh he persistently avoided her. She took it as an insult and took to bed and died in Patiala after a short illness, in 1791.<sup>112</sup> "Rani Rajinder (Kaur) was one of the most remarkable women of her age. She possessed all the virtues which men pretend are their own—courage, perseverance, and sagacity—without any mixture of the weakness which men attribute to women."<sup>113</sup>

Nanu Mal, losing all hope to re-establish his position, died at Malerkotia in 1792. Sahib Singh called his sister. Sahib Kaur, to Patiala. She was married to Jaimal Singh Kanaihya of Fatehgarh near Dinanagar in Gurdaspur district, and proclaimed her as his Prime Minister,<sup>114</sup> at the age of 18. She managed the affairs both in office and in the battle-field most successfully. As an administrator, general and diplomat she was in no way less than her aunt, Rani Rajinder Kaur.

When she was at Patiala, her husband, Jaimal Singh, was imprisoned by his cousin, Fateh Singh. At the head of a strong contingent, she hurried to Fatehgarh and after a vehement assault she got her husband released and restored to him the charge of Fatehgarh.

In 1794, a large Maratha force under Anta Rao and Lachhman Rao, crossed the Jamuna and marched towards Patiala. Sahib Kaur, at the head of 7000 men, marched to meet the Marathas near Muradpur, leaving her brother. Raja Sahib Singh, in his *zanana* (*harem*) at Patiala. Even in the face of heavy odds she did not lose heart and inspired her soldiers to victory against the Marathas who were much larger in number and superior in equipment. The invaders retired towards Karnal.<sup>115</sup> Sahib Kaur's role was indeed noble and exemplary. In character, in statesmanship and in bravery she occupied a very prominent place.

In due course of time, Sahib Singh started showing coldness towards Sahib Kaur. She was charged of having kept the elephant given by the Raja of Nahan in return for the services rendered by her in restoring order in the state. It was also alleged that she had built, in 1795, a fort near Sunam, in her *jagir*, without her brother's permission.

Sahib Kaur left Patiala in disgust and went to Bharian, where her new fort stood. The Raja wanted her to go to her husband at Fatehgarh but she was not prepared to submit. Sahib Singh led his forces against her but some courtiers made him return telling him as to how bad it would look to attack his sister.<sup>116</sup> During the period of her illness Sahib Kaur is said to have come to Patiala of her own in 1799, and died there a few days later,<sup>117</sup> at the young age of 26.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh visited Patiala in July 1806, to mediate between Sahib Singh and Jaswant Singh of Nabha, in a dispute over a village, named Doladi. Ranjit Singh visited Patiala again next year, that is, in 1807, on the invitation of Sahib Singh to resolve the dispute between the Raja of Patiala and his Rani Aus Kaur.<sup>118</sup> On both the occasions. Sahib Singh gave a befitting reception to Ranjit Singh.

With the Treaty of Amritsar (25 April, 1809), concluded between Ranjit Singh and the East India Company, the cis-Satluj territories, including Sahib Singh's state of Patiala, passed under the protection of the East India Company. Patiala came under the advice of a British Resident.

Sahib Singh's state included the *parganas* of Bathinda, Hudiaya, Barnala, Sherpur, Sunam, Mansurpur, Dhodhian, Munak, Dirbah, Samana, Sanaur, Patiala, Ghanaur, Rajgarh, Murdanpur, Lalru, Rohru, Banur, Chhat, Sirhind, Payal, Amargarh, Lasoi and Ghurram.<sup>119</sup>

Raja Sahib Singh suddenly fell ill and died on the 26<sup>th</sup> of March 1813.<sup>120</sup> In the words of Albel Singh who was one of the favourite courtiers of Sahib Singh, "whether the Raja is an *antur* or what he is; but though, at times, he is a fool and at others a madman, he yet sometimes possesses uncommon quickness, and whatever he determines on himself he pursues with uncommon obstinacy; and he often acts himself when he is supposed to be governed by others, and when, in fact, we dare not oppose him, lest he should suppose us inimical and rob us of our heads. The admitted loss or gain of lakhs or the ruin or prosperity of his country, are of no consideration in competition with his will or humour."<sup>121</sup> His contemporary writers held him subject to 'habitual derangement of intellect.'

### **Maharaja Karam Singh (1813-1845)**

Karam Singh was born on October 12, 1797, and ascended the *gaadi* of Patiala on June 30, 1813, at the age of fifteen.<sup>122</sup>

During the fight between the Gurkhas under Amar Singh Thapa and the East India Company in 1814, the Patiala forces helped the British.

Rani Aus Kaur, the mother of the new Raja, had been looking after the administration of the state for some time.<sup>122</sup> She had herself increased the *jagir* of Rs. 50,000, which had been granted in 1807, for her maintenance, and that of her son to two lakhs of rupees. Finding her son, Karam Singh, showing displeasure with her, Aus Kaur, moved to Sanaur and shifted her *toshakhana* to that place. Raja Karam Singh complained to the Political Agent of the East India Company to ask his mother to surrender the surplus estate and the valuable effects of the *toshakhana*. She decided to leave Patiala but she was persuaded not to go, and she consented to have good relations with her son. Here ended the political career of Rani Aus Kaur in 1823.<sup>124</sup>

Soon thereafter, Raja Karam Singh was confronted with the extravagant claims and pretensions of his half-brother, Kanwar Ajit Singh. The Kanwar went to reside at Delhi. In 1823,

he adopted the title of 'Maharaja Rajgan Maharaja Ajit Singh Mohinder Bahadur.' He had no right to adopt any title. Raja Karam Singh was anxious to make friends with him. Ajit Singh desired the territory to be divided and a great portion of the revenue alienated for his benefits. Ultimately, he agreed to accept Rs. 50,000, a year, and later came back to Patiala.<sup>125</sup>

The old dispute between Patiala and Nabha over the village of Doladi, which had been settled by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1807, was again revived in 1827. Nabha was accusing the Doladi villagers of encroaching on the disputed land, and Patiala was retorting. Captain Murray fixed the boundary-line which pleased neither of the parties. It was slightly in favour of Patiala. Nabha appealed against it but captain Murray's decision was confirmed by the special commissioners appointed to review Murray's decision.<sup>126</sup>

With the coming of Patiala under the protection of the East India Company, with effect from 1809, the ruler of the state became subservient to the will of the British. Every major or minor matter relating to the state was referred to the Resident or the British government. Hence it ceased to exist as an independent state.

Raja Karam Singh died on December 23, 1845,<sup>127</sup> the day after the battle of Ferozshahar, at the age of forty seven. According to James Skinner, during Raja Karam Singh's time, the annual revenue of the state amounted to about 24 lakhs of rupees and the strength of his army, comprising cavalry and infantry, was about 5000.<sup>128</sup> He was succeeded by his son, Narinder Singh.

### **Maharaja Narinder Singh (1845-1862)**

Narinder Singh was born on November 26, 1824, and succeeded to his father on January 18, 1846.<sup>129</sup> He was, then, twenty three years of age. In the war between the Lahore Durbar and the British government he sided with the British and received a *sanad* from the Governor-General in September 1847, in recognition of his services to them. Narinder Singh bound himself to the suppression of *sati*, infanticide and dealings in slaves within his territories. He made the greatest contribution to the development of Patiala town. The Motibagh palace, designed on the pattern of Shalamar of Lahore with terraces, fountains, canals and the Sheesh Mahal, was built by him in 1847, at a cost of five lakhs of rupees. The Motibagh Gurdwara built on a spot sacred to the memory of the ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur, was also built by this ruler at the initial cost of one lakh of rupees with an endowment of another one lakh and a quarter. The other buildings which came up during his reign were the famous Nirmala Centre (*Dharam Dhruja*) and the *samadh* of Baba Ala Singh. The ten gates of the city and the ramparts were also built by this ruler.

In 1857-58, the Raja of Patiala stood boldly on the Side of the British and showed conspicuous loyalty to them. The king of Delhi sent him a letter seeking his aid against the British government and promising rewards, but the Maharaja forwarded the letter, in original, to the British authorities. Narinder Singh was given the following title in 1858, by the English: "*Farzand-i-Khas, Doulat-i-Englisbia, Manzur-i-Amir-ul-Zaman; Omerah, Maharaja Dhiraj, Rajeshar Sri Maharaj-i-Rajgan Narinder Singh Mahendar Bahadur.*"<sup>130</sup> He died of fever on November 13, 1862,<sup>131</sup> in the thirty ninth year of his age and the seventeenth ear of his reign.

### **Maharaja Mahendar Singh (1862-1876)**

Mahendar Singh, who was born on September 16, 1852, succeeded his father Narinder Singh, on January 29, 1863, at the age of only a little above ten and the affairs of state were entrusted to a Council of Regency.<sup>132</sup> On February 26, 1870, the Council of Regency was dissolved and

Mahendar Singh, having completed his eighteenth year, was invested with full administrative powers.<sup>133</sup> His education was conducted by Ram Chandra, the great mathematician of Delhi. In May 1870, he was created a Knight of 'The Most Exalted Order of the Star of India' by the British.<sup>134</sup> He introduced many reforms in his state. In May 1870, he made a donation of Rs. 56,600, to the Punjab University College, Lahore, besides the amount already given.<sup>135</sup> He also subscribed liberally to many charitable institutions. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of October of the same year he formally opened the Satluj bridge at the request of Henry Durand, Lt. Governor of the Punjab. The foundation-stone of Mahendra College, Patiala, was laid during his time on March 30, 1875, by Lord Northbrook, the then Viceroy of India.<sup>136</sup> He died in the night intervening April 13 and 14, 1876, in the twenty fourth year of his age, of disease contracted through excessive use of alcoholic liquors.<sup>137</sup>

### **Maharaja Rajinder Singh (1876-1900)**

Rajinder Singh, who was born on May 25, 1872, succeeded his father at the age of four.<sup>138</sup> The installation ceremony was performed on January 6, 1877, by Lord Lytton, the then Viceroy of India.<sup>139</sup> The affairs of state were entrusted to a Council of Regency which was dissolved in October 1890,<sup>140</sup> and the Maharaja was handed over the administrative powers of the state. Rajinder Singh was an intelligent, educated and a capable ruler. He was very fond of polo and hunting. He was known for his generosity and was keenly interested in the promotion of education. At the opening of Khalsa College, Amritsar, he gave one and a half lakh rupees. He was completely on the side of the British. The Maharaja personally participated in the fighting against the Afridis. In recognition of his services, he was given the title of 'The Most Exalted Star of India' by the English.<sup>141</sup> The Baradari palace which now houses the Punjab state archives was built by him. as his residence. Maharaja Rajinder Singh died on November 8, 1900, at the age of 28.

### **Maharaja Bhupinder Singh (1900-1938)**

Bhupinder Singh, who was born on October 12, 1891,<sup>142</sup> succeeded his father in 1900. He was educated at Chiefs College, Lahore. The Council of Regency was constituted to look after the state affairs during the minority of the new ruler. He assumed administrative control in 1909.<sup>143</sup> He participated in the coronation celebrations in Delhi in 1911. He helped the British in the First World War (1914-18). He attended the War Conference in London in 1918.<sup>144</sup> He was a first rate sportsman, an astute politician and an able administrator. He was the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes for a long time. In 1928, he represented the Indian States Committee.<sup>145</sup> He also represented them at the Round Table Conference in London, in 1930. He was a great patron of art, education and literature and had a big collection of historical and artistic interests.

From his honorary military rank of Major-General he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-General, in 1931. In 1935, he attended the Silver Jubilee of George V in London. He died on March 23, 1938, due to haemorrhage. He remained loyal to the British. As a devoted Sikh he proclaimed, 'I am a Sikh and must live and die as a Sikh'.

Almost all branches of state administration received the personal and careful attention of Maharaja Bhupinder Singh. There was, throughout, a lot of activity in the internal and external matters relating to the state. The district boundaries were redrawn and civil administration was thoroughly improved.

He raised Punjabi to the position of court language as early as 1910. He got Gurmukhi type-writer prepared from America.

The Maharaja had a great love for music. Ali Bux, the reputed disciple of Ustad Tanras Khan, was employed as court musician at Patiala. Under Bhupinder Singh's patronage the Patiala *gharana* of music attained national prominence.

Maharaja Bhupinder Singh's manoeuvres against Ripudaman Singh of Nabha went a long way to the latter's forced abdication. This resulted in bitter criticism of the Patiala ruler by the Sikh leadership, the treatment of Sewa Singh Thikriwala at the handset the Patiala government also proved a strong irritant between the Akali leaders and the Maharaja.

Maharaja Bhupinder Singh was liberal in his religious outlook. The educational institutions such as the Banaras Hindu University, the Aligarh Muslim University and the Khalsa College, Amritsar, received grants worth lakhs of rupees from him.

The Maharaja had a commanding and domineering personality. In a gathering of Indian princes, beside him, other Maharajas looked 'rustic.' Such was his regal presence.<sup>146</sup> Lord John making observations about him wrote, "From his accession in 1900, to his death in 1938, Maharaja Bhupinder Singh was Patiala, was perhaps the Sikh nation and even for many in Europe, was India."<sup>147</sup> There is no denying the fact that during his life time Maharaja Bhupinder Singh dominated the Indian princely order like a colossus.

#### **Maharaja Yadvindra Singh (1938-1948)**

He was born on January 7, 1913.<sup>148</sup> He received his education at Aitchison Chiefs College, Lahore. After obtaining his diploma in 1930, he accompanied his father to England on the occasion of the First Round Table Conference. During his wide and extensive tour of European countries he met great men of international fame. He also visited big libraries and noted museums and historical monuments there. On his return to the Punjab he joined Police Training School, at Phillaur, where his deep sense of discipline, unflinching punctuality and hard work and living like a commoner among his fellow trainees won for him the admiration of one and all. On the completion of his training he was appointed Superintendent of Police, Patiala district, in which capacity he often, even at the risk of his life, led his men personally against armed gangs of notorious dacoits. In 1933 he was promoted to the rank of the Inspector-General of Police, of the state.

When a terrible earthquake hit Quetta on May 31, 1935, burying under its debris some forty thousand men, women and children, the heir-apparent of Patiala, Yadvindra Singh, joined hands with the military officers in the rescue work and earned the respect and admiration of all who saw him working with his own hands among the corpseful debris of the ruined city.

After the death of his father he assumed charge of administration of the state on March 23, 1938.<sup>149</sup> In the Second World War, he helped the British. He visited many war-fronts to enthuse and inspire the *jamins*. He became the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes in 1943. When, after the failure of the Cripps Mission in 1942, the British government sent to India the Cabinet Mission under the leadership of Lord Pethick Lawrence, the Maharaja of Patiala was often the central figure in the negotiations. On August 1, 1947, twenty two rulers of states, with Maharaja Yadvindra Singh leading, announced their decision to accede to the Indian Union and the other rulers. Followed in quick succession.

After the partition of the country, the Maharaja of Patiala came to the help of the distressed refugees from Pakistan, welcoming them to settle down in Patiala. They were given all possible facilities in their rehabilitation.

When the Punjab states were leagued together Maharaja Yadvindra Singh was appointed the *Rajparmukh* (governor) on August 20, 1948,<sup>150</sup> in which capacity he worked up to 1956, when the Pepsu (Patiala and East Punjab States Union) was merged with the Punjab. Later, he worked as an ambassador to Italy and Holland. He died on June 17, 1974, at Hague in Netherlands due to heart attack.<sup>151</sup> His body was flown to India and cremated at Patiala on June 21, in the family crematorium, the *shahi samadhan*, with full state honours. He left behind him his wife, Maharani Mohinder Kaur, his two daughters and two sons, Sardar Amarinder Singh and Sardar Malvinder Singh. With the death of Maharaja Yadvindra Singh, who was the ninth in the line which began with Ala Singh, came to a close the history of the ruling house of Patiala.

### **Nabha State**

The Nabha and Jind families descended from the same ancestor, Tiloka, the eldest son of Phul. Tiloka had two sons, Gurditta (Gurdit Singh) and Sukhchain (Singh). From the elder, Gurditta, descended the Nabha family and from the younger, Sukhchain, the Jind family.<sup>152</sup>

On the death of Tiloka in 1729, his elder son, Gurditta, founded the village of Dhanaula and later the town of Sangrur, which remained the headquarters of Nabha state till it was seized by the ruler of Jind.<sup>153</sup>

### **Sardar Hamir Singh (1754-1783)**

Gurditta died in 1754, and was succeeded by his grandson, Hamir Singh. His only son Surat (or Suratya) Singh, having died two years earlier, leaving two sons, Hamir Singh and Kapur Singh.<sup>154</sup> Hamir Singh was a brave and an energetic chief and added very largely to his possessions. According to James Skinner, Hamir Singh was a man of strong determination and valour. He was deeply kind to his subjects and always kept their well-being in mind. He was fond of good weapons. He always, very much, appreciated and honoured the army personnels.<sup>155</sup> He founded the town of Nabha in 1755. In 1759, he obtained the possession of Bhadson and in the beginning of 1764, having joined Ala Singh of Patiala and other Sikh Sardars in the battle of Sirhind, when Zain Khan, its Afghan governor, was killed, he obtained Amioh as his share.<sup>156</sup> In 1776, he conquered Ron from Rahimdad Khan. Hamir Singh was the first ruler of Nabha who established a mint which may be accepted as a sign of his complete independence.<sup>157</sup> He issued coins in the names of the Sikh Gurus and not in the names of the Mughal and Afghan kings.

In 1774, Gajpat Singh of Jind, on a frivolous pretext, took Hamir Singh prisoner and seized the strong town of Sangrur, along with many villages, and it was never restored.<sup>158</sup>

As the story goes, at the time of Mahan Singh's marriage with the daughter of Gajpat Singh, the Sukarchakia chief came with a large marriage party of about ten thousand horsemen. Their horses and camels were let loose to graze in the neighbouring pasture (*bir*) which belonged to the Nabha state. Yaqub Khan, an officer of Hamir Singh of Nabha, attacked the Jind party that looked after the animals. After the departure of the marriage party Gajpat Singh feigned illness and called Hamir Singh and Yaqub Khan to Jind and tortured Yaqub Khan to death and treacherously imprisoned Hamir Singh. He occupied Amioh, Bhadson and Sangrur. On the intercession of Amar



Singh of Patiala Gajpat Singh released Hamir Singh and restored his possessions of Amioh and Bhadson and kept Sangrur with him permanently. Hamir Singh died in 1783.

### **Raja Jaswant Singh (1783-1840)**

At the time of Hamir Singh's death, his son and successor, Jaswant Singh, who was born in 1775, was only eight years of age. Rani Desu, (or Deso), one of late Hamir Singh's widows, was appointed the new ruler's regent to carry on the administration, in preference to the mother of Jaswant Singh. Desu had held her own bravely against Jind during the imprisonment of her husband, recovering most of her territory which had been seized by Gajpat Singh, with the aid of troops lent by her son-in-law, Sahib Singh Bhangi of Gujrat.<sup>159</sup> She died suddenly in 1790.

Jaswant Singh, later, entered into an alliance with the British. He refused to aid the Maratha Prince Jaswant Rao Holkar who was advancing towards Amritsar, in 1805. In 1809, the Nabha chief put himself under the British protection along with other cis-Satluj or Malwa chiefs. By a *sanad* signed by the governor-General, he was exempted from the payment of tribute.

In September 1810, Muhammad Akbar Shah, the Emperor of Delhi, conferred on the Raja the title of *Brar Bans Sarmour Malvindra Babadur*. The Raja assisted the British government in the Gorkha campaign and in the expedition to Bikaner. Jaswant Singh died on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May 1840, in the sixty sixth year of his age.<sup>160</sup>

According to James Skinner, the boundaries of Jaswant Singh's state extended to Dharamkot in the west, to Patiala in the east, to Ludhiana in the north and to Samana in the south. His state comprised 225 villages. The annual revenue accruing from his state amounted to two lakh and forty thousand rupees. His army, consisting of foot and horse, totalled about one thousand men.<sup>161</sup>

### **Raja Devinder Singh (1840-1846)**

Jaswant Singh was succeeded by his son, Devinder Singh, who was born on Bhadon 22, 1879 BK. (September 5, 1822), then in his eighteenth year. The *gaddi* installation ceremony took place on October 15, 1840.<sup>162</sup> He was a weak-minded person and was always surrounded by flatterers who impressed upon his mind false notions of his importance and dignity. He introduced absurd forms of etiquette at his court, requiring his courtiers to prostrate themselves when they paid their compliments or spoke to him.<sup>163</sup> During the war between the British and the Lahore government the Nabha chief showed sympathy with the Lahore Durbar and intentionally failed to provide supplies on the road from Kalka to Rahana. As a punishment the British confiscated the estates of Deharu and Amluh belonging to the Nabha state, and after the conclusion of war the ruler of Nabha was not allowed to attend the viceregal Durbar at Ludhiana, where all chiefs of the protected states came to pay their respects to the Governor-General. After a formal inquiry into his conduct Devinder Singh was ordered to be deposed and his seven year old son installed on the *gaddi* under the guardianship of a council headed by his grandmother. *Mai Chand Kaur*. Devinder Singh was first removed to Mathura and then to Lahore in December 1855, where he died on Maghar *Vadi* 11, 1922 BK., November 14-15, 1865.<sup>164</sup>

### **Raja Bharpur Singh (1846-1863)**

Raja Bharpur Singh, born on Assuj *Sudi* 9, 1897 B.K. (October 5, 1840), succeeded his father, Devinder Singh, and attained his age of discretion a few months after the Mutiny broke out in 1857. He expressed his desire to personally conduct operations against mutineers at Delhi. But in consequence of his young age he was not allowed by the British who only accepted a small

contingent of 300 troops for service in Delhi. His troops rendered help to the British at Ludhiana and Jalandhar also. For his services he was rewarded by the British. A portion of the confiscated Jhajjar territory, with an income of Rs. 1,06,000, a year, was granted to the Raja in perpetuity. The right of adoption was conferred upon him by a *sanad* granted in May 1860, His honorary titles were increased, Lord Elgin, Viceroy of India, gave Raja Bharpur Singh a seat in the Legislative Council in September 1863. He died on the 9th of November of the same year, of severe fever contracted from over-exertion.<sup>165</sup> He died without a son and, therefore, was succeeded by his younger brother, Bhagwan Singh. The ceremony of installation took place on the 17<sup>th</sup> February 1864.<sup>166</sup>

### **Raja Bhagwan Singh (1863-1871)**

Raja Bhagwan Singh was born on November 30, 1842. At the time of his accession to *gaddi* there -were two factions among the courtiers. One group was led by Gurbakhsh Singh Mansahia and the other by Munshi Sahib Singh. The group of Sahib Singh charged the other group with killing Raja Bharpur Singh by poisoning. Raja Bhagwan Singh was also involved in this charge. Gurbakhsh Singh Mansahia was tried at law court and exonerated. Munshi Sahib Singh and seven of his group were imprisoned on the plea of levelling a wrong charge against Gurbakhsh Singh. During this time the administrative affairs of the state were conducted by a council. After three years the British restored the rights of the Raja. Raja Bhagwan Singh died on May 31, 1871, due to tuberculosis after a four-month long illness. Raja Bhagwan Singh had three wives none of whom produced any child. With this ended the line of Sardar Gurdit Singh.

### **Maharaja Hira Singh (1871-1911)**

Hira Singh, son of Sukha Singh of Badrukhan, was born on December 19, 1843.

After the death of Bhagwan Singh it was decided to find a successor from the Phul family. Diwan Hakim Rai, considering Hira Singh of Badrukhan to be a legitimate and competent man, recommended him for the *gaddi* of Nabha, under the signatures of all the courtiers of the state. The British deputed Lepel Griffin and the rulers of Patiala and Jind to inquire from the courtiers of Nabha about the legitimate claimant to the *gaddi* of Nabha. Hira Singh's name figured out and he was selected to succeed Bhagwan Singh. The succession took place on August 10, 1871.<sup>167</sup>

Hira Singh remained loyal to the British. After the Kukas' row with the butchers of Malerkotia, when the former left the town, Hira Singh's contingent sent under the command of his minister, Ali Khan, captured them and took them to Malerkotia where they were blown off with the orders of Mr Cowan, the Deputy Commissioner of Ludhiana. In the British combat with the Afghans of Kabul in 1878, Hira Singh sent his contingent of 700 to fight on the side of the British for which he was richly rewarded by the latter.

Raja Hira Singh did a lotto develop the state in various fields. Many new buildings were erected, including a cantonment, a hospital, a jail and a magnificent palace, known as Hira Mahal. An Intermediate College, along with a hostel, was started at Nabha. Big Nabha houses were built at Lahore and Simla. New courts, in the districts, were built. *Pucca* or metalled roads were constructed joining Nabha with Patiala, Khanna and Malerkotla.<sup>168</sup> He was keenly interested in works of public welfare.

Hira Singh's four wives could produce only one son, Ripudaman Singh, for him. Hira Singh died on December 24, 1911.

### **Maharaja Ripudaman Singh (1911-1923)**

After Hira Singh's death his son, Ripudaman Singh, who was born on March 4, 1883, formally succeeded to the *gaddi* on January 24, 1912. Hira Singh had made a very good arrangement for the education of his son who acquired high proficiency in English, Sanskrit and Punjabi. As a Kanwar, Ripudaman Singh had imbibed the spirit of nationalism. From 1906 to 1908, he was an additional member of the viceroy's law-making council where he delivered many speeches in favour of the national rights of the Indians. Ripudaman Singh was never prepared to give up his patriotic views.

A conflict between Ripudaman Singh and Bhupinder Singh of Patiala was made a plea for the abdication of *gaddi* by the ruler of Nabha, on July 9, 1923. The British were intent upon dethroning Ripudaman Singh. Even after abdication Ripudaman Singh continued having contacts with the top Indian nationalist leaders like Pandit Moti Lal Nehru and Lala Lajpat Rai. The Sikhs started a *morcha* at Jaito for the restoration of Ripudaman Singh to his *gaddi*. The Sikhs suffered immense sacrifices during the *morcha*. Many leaders of the Indian National Congress, including Jawahar Lal Nehru, visited Jaito and were detained in jail by the British. Ripudaman Singh was transferred to a jail at Kodai Koral in Madras where he died on December 14, 1942.

### **Maharaja Partap Singh (1923-1948)**

After his father Ripudaman Singh's abdication, Partap Singh, who was born on September 21, 1919, was acknowledged by the government of India as the ruler of Nabha on February 23, 1928. At the time of his father's abdication in 1923, he was a young boy of four years. During Partap Singh's minority, first an English administrator was appointed to look after the affairs of the state and then a Council of Regency was set up. Partap Singh helped the British in the Second World War (1939-45). Partap Singh's state of Nabha became a part of Patiala and East Punjab States Union with effect from July 15, 1948.

### **Jind State**

As referred to earlier, Tiloka, the eldest son of Phul, had two sons, Gurditta and Sukhchain.

### **Sardar Sukhchain Singh**

Sukhchain Singh, the founder of Jind house, had three sons: Alam Singh, Gajpat Singh and Bulaki Singh. Alam Singh, the eldest was a brave soldier and fought with distinction against the imperial troops many a time and he carved out for himself a sizable tract of territory.<sup>169</sup>

Before his death, Sukhchain Singh divided his lands among his sons. Balanwali fell to the share of Alam Singh, Badrukhan was given to Gajpat Singh and Dialpura to Bulaki Singh.<sup>170</sup>

Sukhchain Singh continued putting up at Phul till his death in 1758. Sukhchain Singh's brother, Gurdit Singh, the founder of the Nabha house, had always hostile intentions against him. Gurdit Singh's only son, Surtya Singh, had succumbed to the injuries received from Sukhchain Singh's men. At the connivance of Gurdit Singh, imperial troops were sent to seize Sukhchain Singh who had fallen into arrears as to the payment of the revenues. Sukhchain Singh managed to escape but his five year old son, Gajpat Singh, along with his mother, Agan, fell into the hands of the imperialists and taken to Delhi and imprisoned there. But they managed to escape from the prison in disguise.<sup>171</sup> Sukhchain Singh died in 1758, at the age of seventy five.

### **Raja Gajpat Singh (1738-1789)**

Gajpat Singh, the second son of Sukhchain Singh, was born on April 15, 1738.<sup>172</sup> He was the most adventurous of his brothers. He lived with his father at Phul till the latter's death, assisting him against his rival and brother, Gurdit Singh.<sup>173</sup>

In his youth, Gajpat Singh was a fine, handsome and intelligent person. He was well skilled in all military crafts and exercises.<sup>174</sup> He possessed a winsome personality and had a quick grasp of things. In 1767, for being remiss in paying his arrears which amounted to one and a half lakhs, he was imprisoned by Najib Khan Rohilla and taken to Delhi. He remained at Delhi for three years and impressed Muhammad Shah, the Mughal Emperor, as a person of address and good demeanour.<sup>175</sup> The Emperor wanted of Gajpat Singh to learn Persian language and wear the dress of a Mughal courtier which wrongly led some orthodox Sikhs attribute to his conversion to Islam.<sup>176</sup>

He had married the daughter of Kishan Singh Mansahia who bore him four children, Mehar Singh, Bhag Singh, Bhup Singh and a daughter. Raj Kaur who was married to Mahan Singh Sukharchakia in 1774, and became the mother of Ranjit Singh.<sup>177</sup> Gajpat Singh also married one of the widows of his elder brother, Alam Singh, and succeeded to his estate of Balanwali. This wife gave birth to a daughter, named Begama. Gajpat Singh's eldest son, Mehar Singh, died in his life time in 1780, leaving one son, Hari Singh, who was put in possession of Safidon. But Hari Singh, who lived a dissipated life, died in 1791, at the age of 18, by falling from the roof of his house.<sup>178</sup>

In 1774, Gajpat Singh took Sangrur from the possession of Nabha. In 1775, he not only overran Hansi, Hisar, Rohtak and Gohana but also laid contribution on Panipat and Karnal. His most important possessions included Jind, Sangrur, Safidon and Kharkhoda.<sup>179</sup>

From 1772 onwards, many attempts were made by the Mughal officers, the hostile Sikh Sardars and the Maratha generals upon Jind and other possessions of the state. Samru attacked Jind in July 1774. All the Sikhs in the neighbourhood of Jind united to give battle to the invader. In the battle the European-trained battalions of Samru were routed with three hundred of them slain. Thus, Gajpat Singh proved equal to them and saved his territories.

Gajpat Singh extended his capital, Jind, to a large extent and constructed a fort in the north of the town. Safidon had also many buildings of bricks and a strong fort was built there by Gajpat Singh. It was built of bricks with walls of uncommon height.<sup>180</sup>

Gajpat Singh was a brave and an intrepid ruler. "He was a remarkable man and a prominent figure in those troublous times."<sup>181</sup> He was given the title of 'Raja' by Emperor Shah Alam in 1772, under a royal *farman* and was confirmed in his territories.<sup>182</sup>

He coined his own money on the model of the coins of Patiala with the only difference of Jind inscribed on them. He had deep affection for Raja Amar Singh of Patiala with whom he joined in almost all his campaigns."<sup>183</sup> There existed great amity and regard for each other and a fellow-feeling between the two. Gajpat Singh helped Amar Singh in the revolt of Prince Himmat Singh in 1765, and again in 1772. He helped the Patiala chief when the latter attacked Bathinda fort in 1771. Amar Singh helped Gajpat Singh when the latter had feud with the Nabha chief in 1774, and again when he (Gajpat Singh) was attacked by Rahim Dad Khan in 1775. Gajpat Singh joined Amar Singh in his attack on Hari Singh of Sialba in 1778. Gajpat Singh played an important role of a mediator in Abdul Ahad's campaign against Patiala in 1779. Even after the death of Amar Singh in 1781, Gajpat Singh continued to help the Patiala minister, Nanu Mal, in restoring order. When the new ruler,

Sahib Singh, was just an adolescent, Gajpat Singh went to Patiala with his contingent to give help to Sahib Singh. Gajpat Singh went to Delhi in 1781, and was given a robe of honour by the Emperor.<sup>183a</sup> Gajpat Singh exercised formidable influence with the Mughal officers who recommended the cancellation of the amount of his arrears. He died on November 11, 1789, aged about fifty one years and a half.<sup>184</sup>

Gajpat Singh, who was brought up as a soldier and experienced as a general, took part in not fewer than 30 battles. He extended his territories considerably and the revenue of his state amounted to between 6 and 7 lakhs.<sup>185</sup> He is also said to have raised the revenue to rupees 16 lakhs.<sup>186</sup> His army consisted of 1500 horse and 500 foot.<sup>187</sup>

### **Raja Bhag Singh (1789-1819)**

The territories of Gajpat Singh were divided between his sons, Bhag Singh and Bhup Singh, the former taking Jind and Safidon with the title of 'Raja' and the latter the estate of Badrukhan.

Bhag Singh, was born on September 23, 1760. He succeeded to the chiefship of Jind state in November 1789. In 1786, the districts of Gohana and Kharkhoda were conferred upon him in *jagir* by Emperor Shah Alam. In 1794, Bhag Singh joined the Patiala army under Rani Sahib Kaur, in the attack on the Maratha generals, Anta Rao and Lachman Rao, at Rajgarh near Ambala. In 1795, Bhag Singh lost Karnal which was occupied by the Marathas and made over to George Thomas.<sup>188</sup>

In 1801, Bhag Singh went to Delhi in company with other chiefs to ask General Perron, commanding the northern division of the Maratha army, to crush George Thomas whose existence at Hansi, on the southern border of the Jind state, was a perpetual menace to all the Sikh chiefs in the neighbourhood. This expedition was successful in driving Thomas from Hansi.<sup>189</sup>

Raja Bhag Singh was the first of all the great cis-Satluj chiefs to seek an alliance with the British government. He joined the British camp towards the end of 1803. Bhag Singh joined General Lake in his pursuit of Jaswant Rao Holkar in 1805, accompanying him as an envoy to his nephew, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, to tell him of the approach of General Lake, and warn him against espousing the hopeless cause of Holkar.<sup>190</sup> Bhag Singh exerted considerable influence with Ranjit Singh in favour of the English. The negotiations between Holkar and Ranjit Singh broke off and the Maratha chief was compelled to leave the Punjab.<sup>191</sup> Bhag Singh returned with Lord Lake to Delhi and received the grant of the *pargana* of Bawanat, immediately to the south-west of Panipat. It was a life-grant in the name of Kanwar Partap Singh.<sup>192</sup>

During the cis-Satluj campaign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1806, Bhag Singh received from, his nephew (the Maharaja), Ludhiana consisting of 24 villages worth Rs. 15,380, a year; 24 villages of Jandiala from the same family, worth Rs. 4370; two villages of Kot and two of Jagraon, worth Rs. 2,000, a year. During the expedition of 1807, Bhag Singh received from the Maharaja three villages of Ghungrana and 27 villages of Morinda in Sirhind, and all together worth Rs. 19,255, a year.<sup>193</sup>

A deputation, which included Raja Bhag Singh, met Mr Seton on March 22, 1808, in Delhi and solicited the English help urgently. He joined General Ochterlony in conducting negotiations with the Sikh chiefs. He put more confidence in the friendship of the English than that of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Raja Bhag Singh was willing to give up Ludhiana to the English who realised its potentialities as a strategic cantonment on their border. Bhag Singh wanted Karnal in exchange for Ludhiana but the government rejected the proposal for Karnal and allowed the Raja a fair amount of compensation for the loss of Ludhiana.<sup>194</sup> Raja Bhag Singh had three sons, Fateh Singh, Partap Singh and Mehtab Singh.<sup>195</sup>

From the year 1814 onwards, Bhag Singh began to fall seriously out of health. He died on June 16, 1819.

### **Raja Fateh Singh (1819-1822)**

After Bhag Singh's death his eldest son, Fateh Singh, succeeded him. He was born on May 6, 1789. The reign of Fateh Singh was very short and uneventful. He died on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 1822, at his residence, at Sangrur at the age of thirty three, leaving one son, Sangat Singh, eleven years of age.<sup>196</sup>

### **Raja Sangat Singh (1822-1834)**

The installation of the young Rajat Sangat Singh, who was born on July 16, 1810, took place on July 30, 1822, at Jind. In 1826, Sangat Singh visited Lahore. He repeated his visit to Lahore next year. He was received by Maharaja Ranjit Singh very courteously. The Maharaja made many grants of lands to Sangat Singh that involved him into disputes with the British government.<sup>197</sup> The British government urged upon the Raja the fundamental principle that the protected chiefs must abstain from all connections with foreign princes and governments without the knowledge and sanction of the British government. In spite of the remonstrances to the contrary Raja Sangat Singh again opened negotiations with the court of Lahore and personally visited it, in 1834.<sup>198</sup> Sangat Singh's annual revenue collection was about two and a half lakh rupees and his army both of horse and foot comprised about five or six hundred men.<sup>199</sup> Sangat Singh was a brave young man and was fond of hunting.<sup>200</sup>

At the time of his sudden death on November 4-5, 1834, Sangat Singh was merely twenty three years old. He had married three wives but he left no son to succeed him.<sup>201</sup> The nearest relations who could advance valid claims to the *gaddi* were three second cousins, Sarup Singh, Sukha Singh and Bhagwan Singh. But these candidates had, for long, been cut off from the straight line of succession to the Jind branch of the family. Many people advanced their claims to the *gaddi*, including the widows of Sangat Singh and of his father, and the Raja of Nabha.

### **Raja Sarup Singh (1834-1864)**

Sarup Singh of Bazidpur, who was born on May 30, 1812, succeeded Raja Sangat Singh. He was formally installed, in the presence of all the Phulkian chiefs and the British Agent, in April 1837.<sup>202</sup> In the Anglo-Sikh War of 1845-46, Raja Sarup Singh was called upon by the British to supply 150 camels for the use of Sirhind Division. The Raja neglected to comply with the demand in spite of repeated promises and assurances. But later he served the British government and was again received into favour. He rendered significant service to the British during the Mutiny of 1857.<sup>203</sup> He was present at the siege of Delhi. He suppressed slavery, infanticide and *sati* in his state. He also abolished transit duties. Sarup Singh died of acute dysentery on January 26, 1864.<sup>204</sup>

### **Raja Raghbir Singh (1864-1887)**

Sarup Singh was succeeded by his son, Raghbir Singh, who was born in 1832. The installation of the new chief took place on March 31, 1864.<sup>205</sup> He was, in every way, worthy of his

father. The new Raja had scarcely taken his seat on the *gaddi* when a rebellion broke out in the newly acquired territory of Dadri to test his energy and determination. The Dadri people made a great mistake when they fancied that the new Raja was less energetic than his father. He did not ask Patiala or Nabha for assistance which they were quite willing to give, and he also declined the presence of a British officer in his camp. He crushed the rebellion and destroyed the villages which were the strongholds of the rebels. But he was merciful after his success. He only punished the ring leaders of the revolt, permitting the *zamindars* to return to Dadri territory and rebuild their ruined villages.<sup>206</sup>

The principal residence of Raja Raghbir Singh was at Sangrur but he did not neglect the administration of even the distant parts of his state. He was a man of excellent judgement and great honesty. He died on March 7, 1887.<sup>207</sup>

### **Raja Ranbir Singh (1887-1948)**

Ranbir Singh succeeded his grandfather, Raghbir Singh (his father, Balbir Singh, having died on November 26, 1883, in his youth). Ranbir Singh who was born on October 11, 1879, was very young at the time of his predecessor's death in 1887. So a Council of Regency was appointed to look after the affairs of the state. The installation ceremony of Ranbir Singh took place on February 27, 1888, when he was nine years of age.<sup>208</sup>

In 3911, he was present at Delhi at the coronation ceremony of George V. In 1926, he was given, by the British, the honorary title of colonel in the army. He visited Europe many times. He died on April 1, 1948. He was succeeded by his son, Rajbir Singh. In July 1948, Jind state lapsed into the Patiala and East Punjab States Union.

### **Footnotes:**

1. Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, Lahore, 1873, p. 2; Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Part-II, (reprint, 1970), p. 541; cf., *Tazkirah-i-Khandan-i-Rajah-i-Phulkian*, Persian MS., Dr Ganda Singh Private Collection, Patiala, p. 1. Henceforth this manuscript would be referred to as *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, Daftar IV, MS., Dr Ganda Singh Private Collection, Patiala, p. 243.
2. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 541-42.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 3; cf., Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 542.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 3-5; cf. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 542.
5. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, p. 1; Gian, *op. cit.*, pp. 542-43.
6. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 543-44.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 544; cf., *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, p. 11; cf., Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 274; Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-6.
8. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, p. 1; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 274.
9. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 6; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 545-46.
10. *Ibid.*, Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 546.
11. S.N. Banerjee, *A History of Patiala*, Vol. I, Part II, (typed MS., Dr Ganda Singh Private Collection, Patiala) pp. 2-3. Khalifa Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, Amritsar, (1878), pp. 33-34.
12. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*. p. 3.
13. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 546; cf., Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*; p. 6.

14. S.N. Banerjee, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4.
15. Khushwaqat Rai, *Tawarikh-i-Sikhan*, MS., GS., pp. 114-15; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 274; Kanaihya Lal *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, Lahore, 1877, p. 108; Khalifa Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan. *op. cit.*, p. 34; Muhammad Latif, *History of the Punjab* (1891), Delhi reprint 1964, p. 325.
16. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, *op. cit.*, p. 2; cf., Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 274; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 7; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 547.
17. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
18. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 547; Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-35.
19. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, pp. 2-3.
20. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 7; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 547; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 325.
21. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, p. 3; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 7; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 547; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, pp. 325-26.
22. Karam Singh, *Maharaja Ala Singh*, Tarn Taran, 1918, p. 59.
23. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 275.
24. Khalifa Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-37; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 326.
25. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
26. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, p. 2; S.N. Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 10; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 546-47.
27. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, p. 2; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 37.
28. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
29. Ganda Singh (ed.), *Hukamname*, Patiala, 1967, p. 147.
30. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Prakash*, (1841), Amritsar, 1939, p. 58; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 549.
31. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, p. 7; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12.
32. S.N. Banerjee, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 17.
33. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 12; S.N. Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
34. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 13; Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-39; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 326, Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 551.
35. S.N. Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
36. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 275; *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, p. 7.
37. S.N. Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 21; Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
38. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 551.
39. S.N. Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
40. Lepel Griffin *op. cit.*, p. 14; S.N. Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 25; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 552.
41. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 14; S.N. Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 26; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 552.
42. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 275; *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, p. 11; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 15.
43. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, p. 11.
44. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 15; cf., *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, p. 11.
45. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, pp. 11-12; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 15.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 12; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 15.
47. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, p. 206.
48. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, p. 12.
49. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 555-56.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
51. S.N. Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 38; cf., Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 20; cf., *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, p. 13; Muhammad Latif. *op. cit.*, p. 327.
52. *Ibid.*, Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-50. Kirpal Singh, *Maharaja Ala Singh and His Times*, Amritsar. 1954, pp. 77-78.
53. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, pp. 13-15.



54. S.N. Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p, 39; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 21; Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan *op. cit.*, pp. 51-52.
55. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*. pp. 15-16; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-22, Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, pp. 326-27.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 16; Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 55; S.N. Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 41. It is more reliably believed that Bhikan Khan died in December 1763, in an engagement with Amar Singh not near Kakra but at Kalanjhar near Kotla. In 1761, Bhikan Khan was defeated and repulsed.
57. Anand Ram Mukhlis, *Tazkirah* (1748), MS., PUP., p. 271; S.N. Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
58. S.N. Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 66; cf., Bakht Mal, *Khalsa Nama*, MS., PUP., p. 40; Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, London, 1812. p. 93; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, pp. 228-29.
59. *Ibid.*, pp. 68-69.
60. Rajwade, *Marathyanchya Itihashin Sadhane*, Vol. VI, p. 407; Ghulam Ali-Azad Bilgrami, *Khazana-i-Amira*, (1762-63), Cawnpore, 1900; Jadunaths Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. II, Calcutta, 1934, p. 308. According to Hari Ram Gupta, the following places contain Maratha families, descending from the refugees of 1761. Birchpur 40 families, Dola 15 families, Julana Mandi 10 families, Kaithal 80 families, Karsola. (Jind state) 50 families, Manduthi near Asoda 20 families, Moi 6 families, Narwana 90 families, Phurlak 2 families, Rathal near Rohtak 15 families, Sargthal 2 families, Sikandarpur Majra 500 Maratha Brahmans, Thana on Rohtak-Kotli Road 150 families (vide Author's *Marathas and Panipat*, p. 288), *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. IV, p. 150, fn. 1.
61. Qazi Nur Muhammad, *Jang Nama* (1765), ed. Ganda Singh, Amritsar, 1939, p. 48; *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, pp. 16-17; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 260; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 24; Karam Singh, *Maharaja Ala Singh*, Tarn Taran, 1918, p. 24.
62. S.N. Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 75.
63. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 733; Ramjas, *Tawarikh-i-Riast Kapurthala*, Lahore, 1897; p. 150; S.N. Banerjee, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-76.
64. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, p. 17; Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-62.
65. Qazi Nur Muhammad; *op. cit.*, pp. 45-46.
66. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, p. 17; Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 62. Khazan Singh, *History and Philosophy of the Sikh Religion*, Part I, Lahore, 1914, p. 291.
67. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, p. 18; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 560; Khazan Singh, *op. cit.*, I, p. 291; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 327.
68. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, pp. 12-13; Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*; p. 62; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 561.
69. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, p. 13; Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-63.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 12; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*; p. 562.
71. Gian Singh *op. cit.*, p. 562.
72. Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*. Vol. IV, Delhi, 1984, p. 154.
73. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 28; cf; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, pp. 275-76; *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, pp. 10-11; S.N. Banerjee, *op. cit.*, pp. 102-03.
74. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 276; *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, p. 11.
75. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*. p. 18; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-30; Sayid Muhammad Hassan Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 64.
76. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, p. 18; cf., Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 261; cf., Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-66.
77. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 30; cf., Bute Shah *op. cit.*, IV, p. 27,7; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 562; Balwant Singh. *Sidhu Braran da Ithas* (Punjabi), 1956, p. 72.
78. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, p. 18.

79. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 562; Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-80.
80. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, p. 19; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 563; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
81. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, p. 19; Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-75.
82. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 31; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 563; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 327; cf., *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, pp. 19-20.
83. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, p. 21; S.N. Banerjee, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-26; Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 81.
84. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, p. 21; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 263-64; Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 81.
85. S.N. Banerjee, *op. cit.*, pp. 128-29.
86. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, p. 22; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 261; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-35.
87. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, pp. 23-24; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 261.
88. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 261; *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, p. 24.
89. *Ibid.*, p. 262; *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, p. 26.
90. *Ibid.*, p. 262; *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, p. 26.
91. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, pp. 29-30; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
92. *Ibid.*, pp. 30-3.
93. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, 43-44; Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, Pp. 107-11.
94. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, pp. 36-39; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 266; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 569; Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 112.
95. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, p. 40; Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-14.
96. *Ibid.*, p. 40; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-48; Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 114.
97. *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, pp. 267-68; Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-15.
98. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 267; *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, pp. 40-41.
99. *Ibid.*, p. 268; *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, p. 41; Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-15.
100. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, p. 41; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 50; Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 118; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 328; Khazan Singh, *op. cit.*, I, p. 292.
101. Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 120; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 571.
102. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, p. 42; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 571.
103. *Ibid.*, pp. 42-44, Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, pp. 269-71; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-53; Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-23.
104. *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 272; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 55; Say id Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-26; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 572-73; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 328.
105. *Ibid.*, 47-49; cf., Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 117; Bute Shah. *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 274-77; Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 126-27.
106. *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 575; Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-32.
107. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 59; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 575; Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 137.
108. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, pp. 53-56; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 576-77.
109. *Ibid.*, pp. 57-59; Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*; pp. 145-146; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 577-78.
110. *Ibid.*, p. 61; *Ibid.*, p. 147; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 578.
111. *Ibid.*, p. 62; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 284-85; Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 149.
112. *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63; Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 149; Giani Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 578.
113. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 67; cf.. *Ibid.*, p. 149.

114. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*. p. 68; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 579.
115. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-72; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 580-81; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 328.
116. *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, pp. 76-77; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 585; Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 170-71.
117. *Ibid*, p. 77; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 79; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 585; Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 172.
118. Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, II, Lahore, 1885, pp. 65-66; Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 195.
119. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 120.
120. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 141; *Tazkirah-i-Phulkian*, pp. 100-01; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 596; Khalifa Sayid Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 255.
121. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.* p. 131.
122. Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 259; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 597.
123. *Ibid.*, p. 264.
124. *Ibid.*, pp. 264-69.
125. *Ibid.*, pp. 273-76; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 155-57.
126. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 158-50.
127. Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 344.
128. James Skinner, *Kitab-i-Haqiq-i-Rajgan* also called *Tazkirat-ul-Umra*, (1830) MS, Ganda Singh, personal collection, now at PUP., p. 184.
129. Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 346; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 602.
130. Muhammad Latif. *op. cit.*, p. 329.
131. Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 461; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 611.
132. *Ibid.*, p. 528; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 614.
133. *Ibid.*, pp. 570-71; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 330.
134. *Ibid.*, p. 574; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 616; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 330.
135. Muhammad Hasan Khan, *op. cit.*, p, 573; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 615.
136. *Ibid.*, p. 734.
137. *Ibid* , pp. 759-62; Muharnmad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 330.
138. *Ibid.*, p. 765.
139. *Ibid.*, p. 777.
140. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 619.
141. *Ibid.*, p. 623.
142. *Ibid.*, p. 619; Somerset Playne (Compiler) ‘The State of Patiala’, *Indian States*, (The Foreign and Colonial Compiling and Publishing Co. 6, West Harding Street, London, E.C., 1921-22), p. 238.
143. Samersset Playne, *op. cit.*, p. 238.
144. *Ibid.*, p. 239.
145. Ganda Singh, ‘Obituary—Maharaja Yadavindra Singh of Patiala’, *The Punjab Past and Present*, Vol. VIII, Patiala, 1974, p. 513.
146. K. M. Panikkar, *An Autobiography*, Madras, 1977, pp. 85-86.
147. Lord John, *The Maharajas*, London, 1972, p. 161.
148. Ganda Singh, ‘Obituary—Maharaja Yadvindra Singh of Patiala’, *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. VIII, p. 514.
149. Ganda Singh, *A Bibliography of the Patiala and East Panjab States Union*, p. 42.
150. *Ibid.*

151. Ganda Singh, 'Obituary—Maharaja Yadvindra Singh of Patiala,' *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. VIII, p. 526.
152. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 282; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 628.
153. *Ibid.*, p. 381; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 628-29.
154. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 381; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 629; Kanaihya Lal, *op. cit.*, p. III; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*; p. 332; cf., Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.* p. 121.
155. James Skinner. *Kitab-i-Haqiq-i-Rajgan* also called *Tazkirat-ul-Umra*, (MS. 1830, Dr Ganda Singh private collection, Patiala.), p. 179.
156. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 382; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 629; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 332.
157. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 382.
158. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 121; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 382; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 631; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 382.
159. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 382; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 652,
160. *Ibid.*, p. 396; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 322; Khazan Singh, *op. cit.*, 1, p. 297.
161. James Skinner, *op. cit.*, p. 180.
162. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 640.
163. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, pp. 332-33; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 641.
164. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 419; Ganda Singh, *A Bibliography of the Patiala and East Punjab States Union*, Patiala, 1954, p. 43.
165. *Ibid.*, p. 433; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 653; cf., Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 334.
166. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 653; cf., Khazan Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 298.
167. *Ibid.*, p. 658.
168. *Ibid.*, pp. 660-61.
169. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 283; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 662-63.
170. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 283-84. Bute Shah wrongly writes that Sukhchain Singh had only two sons, Alam Singh and Gajpat Singh. Bulaki Singh, the third son of Sukhchain Singh was the founder of the Dialpura Branch of the Jind family (Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 279).
171. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 284; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 662-63.
172. *Ibid.*, p. 284.
173. *Ibid.*
174. *Ibid.*
175. Giani Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 664.
176. Khushwaqat Rai wrongly believes that Gajpat Singh was turned a Muhammadan by the Emperor of Delhi and was later brought into the-fold of Sikhism by Jassa Singh Ahluwalia (*Tawarikh-i-Sikhan*, p. 121).
177. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 285; Gian Singh, p. 66&; Kanaihya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 113.
178. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 291; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 666.
179. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 121.
180. Francklin, *Military Memoirs of George Thomas*, pp. 288-90.
181. R. C. Temple, *The Indian Antiquary*, p. 10.
182. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 285; Gian Singh, p. 665; *Delhi Chronicle*, p.143.
183. *Ibid.*, p. 290; *Ibid.*, p. 665.
183. Rajwada, Vol. XII, Letter No. 19, dated 25-5-1781.
184. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 291.
185. *Punjab State Gazetteers*, Vol. XLIII, Jind State, Statistical Tables (1933).
186. *Halat-i-Jind*. p. 7.
187. James Browne, 'History of the Origin and Progress of the Sikhs', published in Ganda Singh's (edited) *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs*, (ed. 1962), p. 43.

188. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 292; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 667.
189. *Ibid.*, pp. 292-93; *Ibid.*, pp. 667-68; cf., James Skinner, *Kitab-i-Haqiaq-i-Rajgan*, also called *Tazkirat-ul Umra*, (Ms. 1830), p. 165.
190. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 58.
191. *Ibid.*
192. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 294; cf., James Skinner, *op. cit.*, p. 165.
193. *Ibid.*, p. 295; cf., James Skinner, *op. cit.*, p. 165.
194. James Skinner, *op. cit.*, p. 166; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 670-71.
195. *Ibid.*, p. 165; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 672-73.
196. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 322; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 678.
197. *Ibid.*, p. 324; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 679.
198. *Ibid.*, pp. 327-28; *Ibid.*, pp. 679-80.
199. James Skinner, *op. cit.*, p. 168.
200. *Ibid.*
201. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 329; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 682; Kanaihya Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 114.
202. *Ibid.*, p. 346.
203. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 355-57; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 687; Kanaihya Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 114; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 114.
204. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 332; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 693.
205. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 375; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 694.
206. *Ibid.*, p. 378; *Ibid.*, p. 695.
207. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 698.
208. *Ibid.*

## Chapter 15

### INTERNAL POLITICS OF THE MISALS

Ahmad Shah Durrani was the bitterest enemy of the Sikhs and paradoxically their greatest benefactor. His invasions helped destroy the administration of the Mughals in the Punjab. In 1761, he inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Marathas at Panipat and put an end to their designs upon the north-western India. The power vacuum, thus created in the Punjab, was adequately filled by the Sikhs. And in sheer helplessness, after 1768, the Durrani had to relinquish his plan of subduing the Punjab. The Sikhs, then, became the rulers of the major parts of the Punjab and established their unchallenged authority.<sup>1</sup> The territory, in the possession of the Sikhs, lay, for the most part, in the country between the Jamuna and the Indus. Within these wide limits the twelve Sardars held their principalities, each independent of the other.

#### Intermingling of Boundaries

The boundaries of these principalities were so inconsistent and shifting that any attempt to define them with even a show of precision is bound to fail. The territories of the Ramgarhias and the Kanaihyas intermingled both in the upper Bari Doab and the upper Jalandhar Doab. Only the approximate limits of a Sardar's jurisdiction and his principal seat of authority could be indicated. Therefore, a dispute, over the collection of revenue and division of certain areas, was natural.

The city of Amritsar was open to all. The Sardars of the Misals had their *bungahs* (residential quarters) and *katras* (bazaars) there. They generally assembled there on festivals and other important occasions and stayed in their *bungahs*. Such assemblages, sometimes, provided irritants because of the joint boundaries of their residences and the *katras*. The Sardars managed their portions of the town. All taxes and octroi charges collected in the city of Amritsar were made over to the management of the Golden Temple. The undefined boundaries of their possessions or portions of the town, very often, soured their mutual relations. According to Ahmad Shah Batalia the system worked well in the beginning, but, later, mutual rivalries and disputes cropped up.<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, Lahore was under the rule of a triumvirate. Two of them were Bhangis and one was a Kanaihya. Each of them administered his area in his own way. Their boundaries were not clearly demarcated. It, sometimes, led to the harassment and oppression of the people and disputes between the rulers.

With the Sardars' increasing anxiety for power and possession, the cohesion of the brotherhood of the Khalsa and their mutual cooperation became weak and, at times, involved them in internal scrambles. The strong men in the Misals were ambitious to create new chiefships. This created a basis for rivalries between the Sardars.

Thus, various reasons of minor consequence led, sometimes, to the ruffling of good neighbourly relations. These mutual misunderstandings, rivalries and minor clashes have been magnified by some of the present day scholars, basing their observations on the accounts of some of the inadequately informed contemporary or semi-contemporary travellers.

Of course, the Sardars were ambitious and naturally eager to extend their borders and make their states of greater consequence, but talking of utter disunity, internal commotion and strife,

deep-rooted spirit of revenge and their ever-readiness to fly on one another's necks,<sup>3</sup> does not appear to be correct judgement of the situation. If the split between them had been very wide and unbridgeable they could never have been able to face the Durranis, the Marathas, the Mughals and the adventurers like Perron and George Thomas who could make no headway into their territories or create a permanent impress on the land of the Sikhs.

### **Disputes over the Division of Gains**

When two or more Sardars united together for a common action against some power there were, at time, differences over the sharing of trophies of their victory. For example, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and Jai Singh Kanaihya, who were close friends as members of the Dal Khalsa and who remained on friendly terms while campaigning against their opponents, had some differences during the conquest of Kasur over the division of their gains. It is said that they got huge amount of booty from Kasur. Mali Singh, brother of Jassa Singh, was alleged to have concealed a valuable part of the booty against Jassa Singh's wishes. When this fact was discovered later the friendship between the Ramgarhia and Kanaihya chiefs came to an end. Similarly, after operation in Chandausi (U.P.), Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and Baghel Singh could not agree on the division of the fruits of their combined action and their parting of company resulted in the fizzling out of their plan of an attack on Rohelkhad.

Here is another example. As Brij Raj Deo of Jammu had refused to pay the stipulated tribute to Hakikat Singh Kanaihya, the latter made a pact with Mahan Singh Sukarchakia to attack on Jammu jointly but Mahan Singh did it alone and brought back heavy booty from Jammu in 1784. Jai Singh Kanaihya demanded from Mahan Singh a huge amount from the booty which he had brought from Jammu otherwise he would not be allowed to go out of Amritsar where they were holding a meeting. There was a skirmish and then both sides withdrew.<sup>4</sup>

### **Defections and Regroupings**

Because of the Sardar's strong spirit of self-aggrandisement and a sense of possession, the flame of brotherhood of the Khalsa and their mutual cooperation had bedimmed and the desire of every chief to increase his territories, to build strong forts and add to the number of his troops involved them in internal scrambles. The more daring men in the Misals were ambitious to become the chiefs of either the existing Misals or create new ones. Therefore, defections of petty chiefs from one Sardar to another were there, though not very often, probably only when the defector was sure of his military strength to challenge his former Sardar or was given protection by another Sardar. This created a basis for future rivalries between the two Sardars. Such defections were generally disliked.

Sometimes, the Sardars of the Misals arrayed themselves on opposite sides for the cause of the others as we see in the dispute at Jammu in 1770. Ranjit Deo, the ruler of Jammu, was not in favour of his heir-apparent, Brij Raj Deo, who was a man of dissolute character. Ranjit Deo wanted his younger son, Dalel Singh, to succeed him. Brij Raj Deo sought the help of Charhat Singh Sukarchakia and Jai Singh Kanaihya. Ranjit Deo invited Jhanda Singh Bhangi to help him.<sup>5</sup> To further their individual interests the Sikh Sardars took opposite sides. Charhat Singh was killed by the bursting of his own gun.<sup>6</sup>

Jai Singh Kanaihya, finding that Charhat Singh's son, Mahan Singh, was too young and the allies were no match for the Bhangis, got Jhanda Singh Bhangi murdered by a hired Rangretta Sikh.<sup>7</sup> Jhanda Singh's successor, Ganda Singh, withdrew from Jammu.

In 1774, we find Ganda Singh, Gujjar Singh and Lehna Singh Bhangis, Ranjit Deo of Jammu and Jassa Singh Ramgarhia advancing against the united forces of the Sukarchakias, Kanaihya's and Ahluwalias, over the Bhangi claim of the possession of Pathankot. The fighting between the contending parties took place at Dinanagar. Ganda Singh Bhangi suddenly died from illness and his successor also died in one of the engagements and the next successor of the Bhangis, being a young boy, was not in a position to continue fighting, so he retired to Amritsar.<sup>8</sup>

In 1775, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Jassa Singh Ramgarhia fought against each other at Zahura on the Beas. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia was wounded and he withdrew from Zahura which was later given to Baghel Singh Karorsinghia.

In 1776, one day Jassa Singh Ahluwalia went out hunting towards Nangal village. Mali Singh, brother of Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, was coming with his contingent from the opposite side. He attacked the Ahluwalia Sardar who got wounded and he fell unconscious. He was taken to Sri Hargobindpur by Mali Singh's men. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia felt very unhappy over this incident and he expressed his regrets to the Ahluwalia chief. After a couple of days, the Ahluwalia Sardar was sent to Fatehabad, under necessary escort.<sup>9</sup> Jai Singh Kanaihya, Gujjar Singh Bhangi and some others incited him to retaliate upon the Ramgarhias. Jassa Singh said, "I will now armour myself to turn out the Ramgarhias from the country."

As referred to earlier, since the possessions of the Kanaihyas and Ramgarhias were not clearly demarcated in the Upper Bari Doab and the Upper Jalandhar Doab, there was a quarrel between them over the division of revenue of certain areas. Jai Singh Kanaihya and the Ahluwalias attacked Sri Hargobindpur. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia was expelled from that place. Batala was besieged and taken possession of by Jai Singh's son, Gurbakhsh Singh. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia's brother, Tara Singh, who was in occupation of Kalanaur, was also turned out of that place. The Ramgarhias went away to Hisar and Hansi and stayed there for the next few years.<sup>10</sup>

Again in 1782, the Kanaihyas and the Bhangis clashed among themselves. After Ranjit Deo's death in 1781, his son, Brij Raj Deo, became the next ruler. He got his brother Dalel Singh and one of his sons, Bhagwant Singh, killed in 1782. Dalel Singh's second son, Jit Singh, was imprisoned. On account of his unworthy deeds, Brij Raj Deo became unpopular among his people. Brij Raj Deo wanted to recover a part of the Jammu state that had been annexed by the Bhangis. He got help from Haqiqat Singh Kanaihya. Bhangis suffered a defeat and Brij Raj Deo promised to give an annual tribute of Rs. 30,000, to Haqiqat Singh Kanaihya.<sup>11</sup> The mutual rivalries and internecine warfare of the Sikhs were weakening them and ultimately leading them towards all-embracing deterioration.

The groupings and regroupings of the Sikh Sardars took place very often. The Kanaihyas and Bhangis joined hands and conquered a part of the Jammu territory. The Jammu ruler, Brij Raj, approached the Sukarchakia chief, Mahan Singh, for help. The Bhangis and the Kanaihyas, under the leadership of Jai Singh and Haqiqat Singh Kanaihyas and Gujjar Singh Bhangi, laid siege to the fortress of Dinapur. They also invited Jassa Singh Ahluwalia to help them against Brij Raj Deo and Mahan Singh, telling him, "We, in haste, have, besieged Dinapur and the Jammu ruler, Brij Raj, has a large army. Sardar Mahan Singh has come to his help. If this place is conquered by your aid, we can maintain our prestige. You have been kind to us before."<sup>12</sup>



The Jammu chief and Mahan Singh also made a request to the Ahluwalia Sardar for help. "You are the chief leader of the Panth, and every one expects help from you. We are fighting with Kanaihyas and Bhangis. Let us decide the matter between ourselves and give no help to them."<sup>13</sup>

The Ahluwalia Sardar decided to help the Kanaihyas and Bhangis. He sent Bhag Singh straight to Dinapur while he himself advanced via Dera Baba Nanak where he was joined by Gurbakhsh Singh, son of Jai Singh Kanaihya. Despite efforts to avoid fighting the clashes took place between the opposing forces. Ultimately, both the parties made peace. The fort was retained by the Raja of Jammu and the neighbouring territory was given to Haqiqat Singh Kanaihya. The battle of Dinapur was fought in 1782.

Within about six months of the occupation of a portion of Jammu territory Haqiqat Singh made a demand of the promised tribute from Brij Raj Deo who wanted to make the payment at the end of the year. He depended on the support of Mahan Singh but the latter went over to the side of Haqiqat Singh. Mahan Singh attacked the city of Jammu and he is said to have acquired rich booty from there. On his return from Jammu Jai Singh Kanaihya asked him to share the booty with Haqiqat Singh who was not able to reach Jammu in time. Mahan Singh wanted to retain the entire booty and at the same time wanted to please Jai Singh. Mahan Singh asked for forgiveness but he was insulted by Jai Singh and attacked by his contingent.<sup>14</sup> Mahan Singh decided to take revenge from Jai Singh.

Mahan Singh won over to his side Sansar Chand Katoch, ruler of Kangra, and also invited Jassa Singh Ramgarhia from his exile on the promise of help for recovering his territories from the Kanaihyas. The allies marched upon Batala, the headquarters of Jai Singh Kanaihya. The opposing armies clashed at Achal near Batala. In the course of fighting Gurbakhsh Singh, son of Jai Singh, was shot dead.<sup>15</sup> This tragedy broke the back of Jai Singh. He exposed himself to the enemy's attack but they withdrew quietly and did not dare to bother further the grief-stricken Kanaihya Sardar.

Jassa Singh Ramgarhia recovered his territories and set up his headquarters at Batala. Jai Singh felt angry over the loss of Batala. He managed to get the support of Mahan Singh, Sansar Chand and Rajas of Chamba and Nurpur and attacked Batala. But Jassa Singh entrenched himself so strongly in Balala that he could not be turned out and the allies had to lift the siege.

Only sometime back, Mahan Singh, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and Sansar Chand Katoch had made an alliance and fought against the Kanaihyas. Now, Mahan Singh, Sansar Chand and Jai Singh Kanaihya jointly fought against Jassa Singh Ramgarhia. These groupings and regroupings were made in view of the petty personal interests of the Sardars, who changed sides as often as they changed their shirts. From the political accounts of the various Misals we find the Ahluwalias fighting against Ramgarhias, Ramgarhias against Kanaihyas, Kanaihyas against Sukarchakias, Sukarchakias against Bhangis, Bhangis against Kanaihyas, Sukarchakias against Ramgarhias, Sukarchakias against Dallewalias, Sukarchakias against Nakkais, Karorsinghias against Phulkians, etc. The alliances and counter-alliances of the Sardars of the Misals considerably weakened the Misals and created bad blood for one another.

### **Matrimonial Alliances**

The marriages of the members of the ruling families amongst themselves were mostly political alliances. These matrimonial ties resulted in new groupings and cementing relations

between them. When need arose the Sardars came to the assistance of each other. A few marriages are listed below to give an idea as to how these matrimonial alliances affected the internal politics of the Misals, though at times, when relations got soured, the regard for kinship was set aside.

1. Charhat Singh Sukarchakia married his sister to Dal Singh of Akalgarh.
2. Mahan Singh Sukarchakia was married to Raj Kaur, daughter of Gajpat Singh, the ruler of Jind.
3. Mahan Singh's sister, Raj Kaur, was married to Sahib Singh, son of Gujjar Singh Bhangi.
4. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was married to Sada Kaur's daughter or Jai Singh Kanaihya's granddaughter, Mehtab Kaur.
5. Ranjit Singh got married to Datar Kaur, daughter of Ram Singh or sister of Gian Singh Nakkai.
6. Ranjit Singh married Ranis, Rattan Kaur and Daya Kaur, widows of Sahib Singh of Gujrat, through the ceremony of *chadar pauna*.
7. Raja Amar Singh of Patiala married his daughter. Sahib Kaur, to Jaimal Singh, son of Haqiqat Singh Kanaihya.
8. Prince Kharak Singh, son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, was married to Chand Kaur, daughter of Jaimal Singh Kanaihya.
9. Fateh Singh, son of Jai Singh Kanaihya, was married to the daughter of Khushal Singh, successor of Nawab Kapur Singh Faizullapuria.
10. Fateh Singh Kanaihya married his daughter to Gulab Singh Bhangi.
11. Raja Sahib Singh of Patiala was married to Rattan Kaur, daughter of Ganda Singh Bhangi.
12. Maasa Singh Bhangi's daughter was married to Tara Singh Kanaihya (brother of Hakikat Singh Kanaihya).
13. Jai Singh Kanaihya married his sister to Sardar Bagh Singh Hallowalia.
14. Lehna Singh Bhangi married Sudh Singh (brother of Budh Singh successor of Khushal Singh) Faizullapuria's daughter.
15. Jai Singh Nishanwalia made an alliance with Nabha by marrying his daughter, Daya Kaur, with Raja Jaswant Singh of Nabha.
16. Karam Singh Nirmala of Shahabad's son, Kharak Singh, was married to Prem Kaur, daughter of Raja Sahib Singh of Patiala.
17. Raja Sahib Singh of Patiala married his daughter, Karam Kaur, to Hari Singh, son of Jodh Singh Karorsinghia.
18. Kanwar Himmat Singh of Patiala house married his daughter, Chand Kaur, with Tara Singh Ghaiba's son and successor, Dasondha Singh.

These marriages strengthened the positions of the concerned families and united them for the purpose of combined action. In many cases their previous rivalries and hostilities also cease with these matrimonial bonds.

Besides matrimonial alignments exchange of turbans was also in practice to express solidarity with each other. For example, Charhat Singh Sukarchakia exchanged turban with Sobha Singh Kanaihya.<sup>16</sup> Mahan Singh exchanged turban with Brij Raj Deo, ruler of Jammu, in 1781, as a token of friendship.<sup>17</sup> Maharaja Ranjit Singh exchanged turbans with Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, at Tarn Taran in 1802,<sup>18</sup> and with Raja Sahib Singh, at Patiala, in November 1808.<sup>19</sup> Bhag Singh Ahluwalia and Raja Sansar Chand Katoch and their sons, Fateh Singh and Anrodh Chand, exchanged turbans in the fort of Kangra.<sup>20</sup>

Even women sometimes exchanged their clothes as an expression of deep friendship. Sada Kaur Kanaihya exchanged her clothes with Samru Begum when they met at Hardwar.<sup>21</sup>

### Family Disputes

After Sardar Ala Singh's death Amar Singh was installed to the *gaddi*, at Patiala. But Amar Singh's elder brother, Himmat Singh, revolted against the new ruler and captured the fort of Bhawanigarh. Raja Amar Singh agreed to part with half of his territory. Himmat Singh declined the offer. Through the intercession of some responsible persons Himmat Singh submitted after receiving the town of Bhawanigarh and some villages in *jagir* in 1767.<sup>22</sup>

In 1807, Rani Aus Kaur, wife of Raja Sahib Singh of Patiala, picked up a dispute with her husband on the issue of the nomination of the Raja's successor. She wanted that her son, Karam Singh, be named as such. She also demanded a big *jagir* for her son. Some of the courtiers supported the cause of the Rani. Sahib Singh invited Maharaja Ranjit Singh to administer warning to his opponents and to expel the Rani and her son from Patiala.<sup>23</sup> The matter was settled later.

Maharaja Karam Singh of Patiala was confronted by his half-brother, Kanwar Ajit Singh, who adopted the title of 'Maharaja.' He wanted the territory to be divided and a great portion of the revenue alienated for his benefit. Ultimately, he was appeased by the grant of a big *jagir*.<sup>24</sup>

Jassa Singh Ahluwalia had two daughters and no male issue. After his death both of his sons-in-law claimed inheritance to his territory and property. Some of the leaders of the Sikhs desired his elder son-in-law to succeed him but Jai Singh Kanaihya managed to get Jassa Singh's nephew, Bhag Singh, installed on the *gaddi*.<sup>25</sup> Bhag Singh had to face a constant challenge from the sons-in-law of his predecessor. Mehar Singh, son-in-law of Jassa Singh, consolidated his power during the period of Bhag Singh and became independent of the Ahluwalia chief. He was deprived of his estate and property by Bhag Singh's successor, Fateh Singh.<sup>26</sup>

After Fateh Singh Ahluwalia's death his elder son, Nihal Singh, succeeded him. Nihal Singh's younger brother, Amar Singh, hatched a conspiracy to kill his elder brother. Nihal Singh escaped murderous attack on him with a few wounds while his attendant who threw himself before his master was cut to pieces. On Ranjit Singh's intercession Amar Singh was given an annual maintenance allowance of Rs. 30,000. Amar Singh always remained insincere to his elder brother and Nihal Singh remained in fear of being dispossessed of his principality.

Gurbakhsh Singh, a Bhangi Misaldar, who had no male issue, died in 1763, and dissensions arose between Lehna Singh, his adopted son, and Gujjar Singh, the son of Gurbakhsh Singh's brother,<sup>27</sup> each claiming the territory and other property.<sup>28</sup> They were not prepared to listen to any one. There was a fight between the followers of the two which resulted in human loss on both sides. At last the estate was divided by Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh amongst themselves.<sup>29</sup>

Gujjar Singh Bhangi divided his territories between his two elder sons, Sukha Singh and Sahib Singh and the youngest son, Fateh Singh, was left out. Sukha Singh and Sahib Singh fought amongst themselves and the younger (Sahib Singh), at the instigation of Mahan Singh Sukarchakia, attacked and killed his elder brother. Gujjar Singh was terribly enraged over his eldest son's murder and decided to dispossess Sahib Singh of all his possessions.<sup>30</sup> But later their relations improved.

After the death of Jodh Singh Ramgarhia, the members of his family began to quarrel for the division of the Misal's possessions. Diwan Singh (son of Tara Singh) cousin brother of Jodh Singh, Vir Singh (younger brother of Jodh Singh) and a widow of Jodh Singh, were all claimants to the estate. Maharaja Ranjit Singh called the claimants to him at Nadaun. They misbehaved towards one another so rudely that Ranjit Singh was obliged to keep them in detention.<sup>31</sup> They were later released. He seized all the possessions of the Ramgarhias and gave them *jagirs* for their subsistence.

Budh Singh Faizullapuria had seven sons and the Misal's territory was divided amongst the seven brothers and thus broken into small shreds.<sup>32</sup>

Jai Singh Kanaihya's two surviving sons, Nidhan Singh and Bhag Singh, were unfit to rule and manage the state affairs. Therefore, before his death, Jai Singh divided his possessions among his wife. Raj Kaur (mother of Nidhan Singh and Bhag Singh) and his eldest son Gurbakhsh Singh's widow, Rani Sada Kaur,<sup>33</sup> who was of a domineering disposition. Finding the Kanaihya Misal reduced to a weak position Ranjit Singh annexed the territories of Nidhan Singh and Bhag Singh and then, that of Sada Kaur in 1821.

As referred to above, Mahan Singh Sukarchakia's brother-in-law, Sahib Singh of Gujrat, refused to pay any tribute to him. Disregarding the close relationship with Sahib Singh, Mahan Singh besieged the fort of Sodhra in which the former was taking asylum. Mahan Singh's sister, Raj Kaur, tried to dissuade her brother from fighting against her husband. Sahib Singh, but to no effect. The maxim that 'kingship knows no kinship' aptly applied to him. Because of exhaustion and an attack of high fever Mahan Singh retired to Gujranwala where he died a few days later.<sup>34</sup>

As noticed from the above discussion the family feuds exercised adverse effects upon the development and stability of the Misals or the possessions of the Sikh chiefs.

### **Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Opportunities**

From the above events and alliances we find that the Sikh Sardars had become considerably selfish. Generally, they did not follow any definite policy towards one another. They took a side because they wanted to oppose the other. Sometimes even in the face of a common enemy they could not sink their differences and forge a united front.

During the last quarter of the eighteenth century we notice that the Punjab was a congeries of small states and there was no individual power in the province which could pose any danger to the adventures of a strong man. As early as 1783, George Forster had predicted that, "we may see some ambitious chief, led on by his genius and success, absorbing the power of his associates, display from the ruins of their commonwealth, the standard of monarchy."<sup>35</sup> This prophecy was fulfilled in the person of Ranjit Singh who was only three years old at that time.

The mutual dissensions of the Misals had weakened them considerably. When earlier, a great aggressor like Ahmad Shah Abdali made efforts, again and again, to crush the power of the Sikhs, he failed to have the desired results. The Sikhs fought against him unitedly and repulsed him from the Punjab as a disappointed man. N. K. Sinha illustrates this point with the help of science. "If we place an iron bar in a coil and electrize the coil, the iron bar becomes magnetic. But when the electricity is gone, the magnetism also goes with it. The impulse given by Guru Gobind Singh and the presence of the foreign danger had given the Sikhs a much-needed electric current and the

political sense of brotherhood had become magnetic. When that was gone, its magnetism disappeared and the Sikhs fell to wranglings among themselves.”<sup>36</sup>

When the Sardars became rulers of their respective Misals and had held their territories for more than three and a half decades we find them to have become weak and incapable of checking the entry into the Punjab of a far weaker invader as Zaman Shah, the grandson of Ahmad Shah, was. This was all due to their incapacity to forge unity against even a common foe. Rather, they took satisfaction in attending on the invader.

Zaman Shah marched to the Punjab in the winter of 1798, and reached Lahore on 27<sup>th</sup> November, 1798. In view of a perilous national situation, on the suggestion of Baba Sahib Singh Bedi, the meeting of the Sarbat Khalsa was called at Amritsar where a large number of Sikhs assembled.<sup>37</sup> Sahib Singh of Patiala ‘declined the invitation to be present at the conference,’<sup>38</sup> probably because of the peculiar geographical and political situation of his state, being surrounded by the Muslim rulers.

According to Ganesh Das, the Shah, through his *vakil*, approached the Sikh Sardars for cooperation and friendship.<sup>39</sup> The first reaction of the Sikhs was a unanimous ‘no’ to the agents of the Shah. Then, Zaman Shah instructed his agent, Wafadar Khan, and others to try to sow discord among the Sikhs. The agents approached the Sardars who went to Lahore where they were received with flattering attention by Zaman Shah.<sup>40</sup> According to Baron Hugel, “many of the Sikh Sardars did outwardly submit to the Shah, either for the promotion of their own interests or in order to be ready for any movement of peril.”<sup>41</sup> Whether it was a pretended submission we cannot deny the fact that the Sikhs had climbed down from the position which they had taken against Ahmad Shah Abdali.

The attending of the Shah’s Durbar by the Sikh Sardars or their representatives and offering of *nazaranas* were tantamount to accepting the authority of the foreign invader. We may, at best, take it as a camouflage to hide their hostile intentions against a powerful enemy. It goes without saying that even at this stage the Sikhs, divided as they were, found it difficult to drive out a foreign invader.

But the Sukarchakia chief, Ranjit Singh, visualising the situation in the Punjab and feeling the urge of necessity, set to work to bring the various independent chiefs under one flag and create a strong and consolidated Sikh kingdom in the Punjab. He felt that, because of their mutual rivalries and continued wranglings, the Sikhs would cease to be a dreaded power. The individual Sardars of the Misals must make way before the united power of the Khalsa, and be satisfied to occupy a subordinate position in the new dispensation of things, in the larger interest of the Panth. Though Ranjit Singh’s was an ambitious plan but not altogether beyond the bounds of possibility. The movement had already undergone substantial changes during the course of its past history. Now this change from chiefship, though independent and sovereign, to monarchy, was just the natural and even irresistible evolution. At each turn from one phase to another, in their past history, it was rather a gigantic effort on the part of one or more gifted leaders that had brought about the change. And now, Ranjit Singh was one such gifted leader who could give lead to the community.

Some historians doubt the wisdom of Ranjit Singh and even question the sincerity of his motives. We may examine here whether this policy of the Maharaja was centred round his personal ambition or based on far-sighted vision and constructive statesmanship.

At the time of Ranjit Singh's accession to power Punjab was divided into a number of principalities and as has been discussed earlier some of the leaders were, unfortunately, not on good terms with one another. The Sikh principalities had already been weakened. The Afghans and the Marathas were threatening to establish their overlordship in the Punjab. The English had also started to take interest in this part of the country as their future sphere of influence. Besides, there were some Muslim and adjoining hill states under the Hindu Rajas, and several small and petty principalities that dotted the map of Punjab.

The principalities of the Punjab presented a picture similar to that of heptarchy in England immediately after Anglo-Saxons had established themselves in the country. At this stage, even among the Sikh Sardars, there was little inclination towards unified action.

The Bhangi Misal was divided into three groups with their separate headquarters at Lahore, Amritsar and Gujrat. As seen earlier, the Kanaihyas were pitted against the Ramgarhias and the latter were unfriendly to the Ahluwalias. There existed differences between the Sukarchakias and the Bhangis and between the latter and the Kanaihyas. Constant grouping and regrouping was going on between the Sardars and almost each one of them participated on this side or that and the balance of power was frequently shifting from one chief or group to another.

The Bhangis held the important cities of Lahore, Amritsar, Gujrat and Sialkot. But the Bhangi leaders were no match for Ranjit Singh. Gulab Singh Bhangi, the most important of them was said to have been too romantic to challenge seriously the rising chief of the Sukarchakia Misal, and the second important leader of that Misal, Sahib Singh, whose career had hitherto been marked by energy and enterprise, had now become weak and indolent. The Ahluwalias were also not a source of any serious threat to Ranjit Singh. The chief leader of this Misal, Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, had died in 1783. After the death of Bhag Singh, his son and successor, Sardar Fateh Singh, was anxious to form an offensive and defensive alliance with Ranjit Singh. The two Sardars exchanged turbans and swore perpetual friendship by the sacred *Granth*. Although the friendship was signed on the basis of equality, but in practice, the diplomatic genius, Ranjit Singh, made Fateh Singh play only a subservient part and used him rather as a stepping stone for the development of his power.

Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, a brave and courageous man, could be an effective hindrance in the way of Ranjit Singh but fortunately for the latter, the Ramgarhia chief had grown old and too weak to challenge the rising power of the young Sukarchakia chief. With the marriage of Jai Singh Kanaihy's grand-daughter, Mehtab Kaur, to Ranjit Singh, the relations between the Kanaihyas and the Sukarchakias had already been established.

Singhpurias were in possession of Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Nurpur and north-western parts of Ambala. Nishanwalias were holding Ambala, Shahabad and Amioh. These Misals were not important. Similarly, the Karorsinghias, the Shahids, the Nakkais and the Dallewalias were powers of small consequence and could be easily dealt with by any strong and ambitious power. In the cis-Satluj regions the Phulkian Misal was the strongest power, though the chiefs of the Misal had been considerably weakened by the mutual jealousies and quarrels.

### **Unification of the Punjab**

Thus, the political situation, with the beginning of the nineteenth century, eminently suited for the rise of a resolute and an outstanding personality who might weld these discordant and weak

elements steadily into an organised kingdom, and Ranjit Singh availed himself of this opportunity. Ranjit Singh, realising the limitations of the republican institutions of the Sikh commonwealth for the role of organising and administering such a powerful state, decided to resort to the long-established and well-rooted polity of the country, that is, monarchy assisted by a class of noble chiefs. It is a historical evidence that anarchy and political upheaval always hold out an opportunity to men of genius. The medieval period of Indian history produced many such men. Some such men had arisen among the Marathas; in Mysore, Hyder Ali had set up his power and amongst the Sikhs, the wanted man appeared in the person of Ranjit Singh.

In the words of Lepel Griffin, “there is perhaps no more notable and picturesque figure among the chiefs who rose to power on the ruins of the Mughal Empire than Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the founder of the short-lived Sikh kingdom of Lahore. In the stormy days at the beginning of the century, amid a fierce conflict of races and creeds, he found his opportunity and seizing it with energy, promptitude and genius, he welded the turbulent and warlike sectaries who followed the teachings of Guru Gobind Singh into a homogeneous nation.”<sup>42</sup>

The triumvirate—Chet Singh, Sahib Singh and Mohar Singh, returned to Lahore in January 1799, twenty six days after Zaman Shah’s exit. Five months after the return of the trio, Ranjit Singh was invited to Lahore by its leading citizens. He occupied Lahore without any resistance on July 7, 1799. The ouster of the Lahore chiefs was mainly due to their inability to deliver goods to the people. Secondly, their territories were not contiguous but interspersed by the possessions of Ranjit Singh and thus they could not mobilise their resources collectively. Thirdly, the Lahore chiefs had tyrannized the people to the extent of compelling them to invite Ranjit Singh to take possession of the city. Fourthly, the coalition of the Kanaihyas, Nakkais and Sukarchakias made the allies more than a match for Lahore Sardars.

In Ranjit Singh’s imperial career the capture of Lahore was of the greatest significance and this possession made him the most powerful chieftain in northern India. Lahore had always been a provincial capital and it gave Ranjit Singh an edge over the other chiefs in the Punjab and enhanced his political prestige considerably.

Amritsar was the Mecca of the Sikhs and their most important city in the world. Any one who aspired to be their leader and the Maharaja of the Punjab must take Amritsar to justify his title. Ranjit Singh took charge of the city of Amritsar in 1805. The occupation of Amritsar, religious capital of the Sikhs, brought an additional lustre to Ranjit Singh’s name. Ranjit Singh got the *zamzama* gun (known as *top-i-Bhangian*) from the Bhangis of Amritsar.<sup>43</sup>

Dal Singh of Akalgarh, for having joined hands with Sahib Singh of Gujrat against Ranjit Singh, was called by the Maharaja to Lahore, imprisoned and relieved of his possessions.<sup>44</sup>

Ranjit Singh united the resources of the Kanaihyas and the Ahluwalias with those of his. Their interests at this stage, in some measure, were identical. Fateh Singh Ahluwalia and Sada Kaur Kanaihya were not friendly disposed towards the Ramgarhias and the Ahluwalia chief also needed the help of Ranjit Singh to keep some of his ambitious vassal chiefs in restraint. After sometime the Ahluwalia and Kanaihya chiefs—Fateh Singh and Sada Kaur, who had been helped and respected by Ranjit Singh, found themselves helpless before the advancing power of the Sukarchakia Sardar. “This coalition based on kinship and political friendship served as the ladder by which Ranjit Singh climbed to political supremacy. The initiative always rested with the Lahore chief.”<sup>45</sup>

Ranjit Singh took over the towns of Rahon, Nakodar and Naushera, belonging to Tara Singh Ghaiba of the Dallewalia Misal, shortly after his death in 1807, as in the absence of any competent successor his territory could succumb to any outside usurper. He provided for the widow and the family of the Dallewalia chief and incorporated his forces in the Lahore army. The taking over of these places by Ranjit Singh seemed to upset the chiefs of the Malwa and it gave them an impression that the Maharaja meant to reduce the other chiefs to the position of the mere pensioners of Lahore government.

The Faizullapuria possessions were seized by Diwan Mohkam Chand and Jodh Singh Ramgarhia in 1810-11, and placed under Lahore Durbar. In 1811, the territory of the Nakkais, which included Pakpattan, was also annexed by the Maharaja. In 1812, on the death of Jaimal Singh Kanaihya, his territory, which included Taragarh, Mirthal and Fatehpur, was occupied.<sup>46</sup> Shortly after the death of the Ramgarhia chief, Jodh Singh, in 1815, his territory was taken over.<sup>47</sup> Four villages were given, for subsistence, to Jodh Singh's widows; Diwan Singh and Vir Singh Ramgarhia were also given some villages as a sort of subsistence allowance.<sup>48</sup>

Sada Kaur, Ranjit Singh's mother-in-law, who had been greatly helpful in Ranjit Singh's coming to power was estranged, in 1821, from him, due to some domestic circumstances. Her territories were annexed. Ranjit Singh and his mother-in-law were both masterful personalities and they could not remain together for long. An independent chief had no room in Ranjit Singh's scheme as he wanted a strong and consolidated Punjab. They must make way before his power.

Ranjit Singh's policy of absorption and, ultimately, creating a strong kingdom of the Punjab estranged some of the Sardars into his opponents but he was tactful enough to win some of them to his side until he was in a very strong position. There is no denying the fact that Ranjit Singh was the creator of a dominion but the process through which he achieved his ultimate goal was not a haphazard joining of the territories of others with the kingdom of Lahore, rather a systematic and well-designed plan. He had his eyes fixed on the union and consolidation of the Sikh Misals and the Afghan principalities into a strong and compact kingdom with natural and dependable frontiers on all sides. And by the single-minded devotion to his plans, formed early in his life and carried out with thoughtful patience and persistent energy, he could found as large a kingdom as France. .

Divergent views have been expressed regarding Ranjit Singh's policy of unification. However, there could be much justification in his favour when we find that he united all the wavering elements together and converted the warring Sikh principalities into a strong state with a strong political entity. Moreover, by digging out a kingdom from the debris of confusion in the Punjab, Ranjit Singh canalised the big annual revenue of the Punjab, that amounted to over three crores of rupees, by using the same for social and economic progress of his kingdom.

We do not have much reason to question the sincerity of his motives. Under his political and military leadership the Sikhs were not only able to stem the rising tide of the dangers facing the Sikhs at that time but were able to dam the flood of invasion rather actually roll it back across the Indus, that had been constantly flowing from Central Asia into India, since the days of Sultan Mahmud. And the Pathans were compelled to exclaim: *Khuda ham Khalsa shud* (God has also become Khalsa).



The position of Ranjit Singh among the Sikhs may be paralleled by that of Frederick, the Great, of Germany, who rose to power not so much as the king of Prussia as the one man to whom all Germans could look as likely to raise that medley of principalities and electorates into a nation.<sup>49</sup>

Once the Maharaja summed up his own achievements in the following words:

“My kingdom is a great kingdom; it was small, it is now large; it was scattered, broken and divided, it is now consolidated; it must increase in prosperity and descend undivided to my posterity. The maxims of Timur have guided me, what he professed and ordered, I have done. By counsel and providence combined with valour, I have conquered, and by generosity, discipline and policy I have regulated and consolidated my government.”<sup>50</sup>

These lines of the Maharaja himself speak so frankly of the policy that had been passing in his mind about the principalities that dotted the map of the Punjab. He wanted to place under one government and weld together the ‘scattered’ and ‘broken’ kingdom of the Punjab and aspired to ‘consolidate’ the ‘divided.’

The unification of the Sikh principalities was bound to come but it could form a strong republic also that would have been the pride of the East. Though very strong germs of democratic and republican federal government were present in the Sikh traditions and their past history but the consolidation and unification of the Punjab was its dire need and for that a single controlling hand was a necessity. Therefore, the coming of the Sikh monarchy was the suitable solution to the problems of the Punjab created by the warring Misals. Elphinstone, returning from Kabul in 1809, wrote, “Almost the whole of the Punjab belongs to Ranjit Singh who in 1805, was but one of the many chiefs but who when we passed had acquired the sovereignty of all the Sikhs in the Punjab.”<sup>51</sup>

Ranjit Singh was the political architect of the new Punjab and he never allowed his campaign a religious colour in spite of the Wahabis leading a crusade against him. Ranjit Singh was a statesman par excellence; Undoubtedly, he was the last great constructive genius among the Sikhs. Baron Hugel wrote that “the object of my travels—has been to acquaint myself of the kingdom founded by Ranjit Singh, who like a skilful architect, has formed of so many insignificant unpromising fragments, one majestic fabric, seemed to me the most wonderful object in the whole world.”<sup>52</sup>

## Footnotes:

1. George Forster, *A Journey From Bengal to England*, I, London, 1798, p. 324.
2. Ahmad Shah Batalia, Appendix to Sohan Lal Suri's *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar I, Lahore, 1885, p. 14.
3. William Franeklin, *Military Memoirs of George Thomas*, Calcutta, 1803, p. 102.
4. Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, IV (1848), MS., Ganda Singh's Personal Collection, Patiala, p. 496; Ali-ud-Din Muftia, *Ibratnama*, I (1854), Lahore, 1961, p. 278; Muhammad Latif, *History of Punjab*, Calcutta, 1891, p. 310.
5. Ali-ud-Dih Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 246; Lepel Griffin, *Punjab Chiefs*, 1865, p. 387.
6. Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, II, Lahore, 1885, p. 13; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 6; Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
7. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 247; Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

8. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 16; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, pp. 14, 40; Ali-ud-Din, Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 250.
9. Khushwaqat Rai, *Tawarikh-i-Sikhan* (1811), MS., Ganda Singh's Personal Collection, Patiala, p. 73; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 56.
10. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*; p. 67.
11. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 43-44; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 274.
12. Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. III, Lahore 1944, p. 40.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 49-50; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 278; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 310.
15. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 50; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 278-79; Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 92.
16. Kanaihya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab* (1877), Punjabi, Version, Patiala, 1968. p. 135.
17. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 43-44.
18. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 68; James Skinner, *Kitab-i-Haqiqat-i-Rajgan*, also called *Tazkirah-ul-Umra*, Persian MS., (1830), GS., Personal Collection, Patiala, p. 182; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 265; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 312-13.
19. Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Patiala reprint, 1970, p. 592.
20. Ramjas, *Tawarikh-i-Riast Kapurthala*, Vol. I, Lahore, 1897, pp. 313, 318-19.
21. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 50; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 283.
22. *Tazkirah-i-Khandan-i-Rajah-i-Phulkian*, MS., GS., personal collection, Patiala, p. 18.
23. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-66.
24. Muhammad Hasan Khan, *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, Amritsar, 1878, pp. 273-76; Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, Lahore, 1873, pp. 155-57.
25. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, p. 313; cf., James Skinner, *op. cit.*, p. 183.
26. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 68; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 269; Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-28.
27. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 15; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
28. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 391; Lepel Griffin and his blind copyists wrongly write Gujjar Singh to be the son of Gurbakhsh Singh's daughter.
29. *Ibid.*
30. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 17; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 395.
31. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 21; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 63; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, p. 404; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 174.
32. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 270.
33. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 92; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 52; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 280.
34. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 27-28; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17.
35. George Forster, *op. cit.*; I, p. 295.
36. N. K. Sinha, *Rise of the Sikh Power*, Calcutta reprint, 1973, p. 117.
37. Ganesh Das Badehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab* (1855), Amritsar, 1965, p. 140.
38. *Imperial Records, Political Proceedings*, 16<sup>th</sup> October, 1797, No. 10. It was not due to an indifference to the Sarbat Khalsa but as a measure of diplomacy and statesmanship. Had he crossed river Satluj his territory, surrounded by hostile Muhammadan chieftains would have gone out of his hands.
39. Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 140.
40. *Imperial Records, Political Proceedings*, 25<sup>th</sup> January, 1799, No. 27.
41. Baron Hugel, *Travels in Kashmir and the Punjab*, London, 1845, p. 275.
42. Lepel Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, Oxford, 1905, p. 9.
43. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 56-57.

44. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 139; Amar Nath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh* (1837), ed. Sita Ram Kohli, Lahore, 1928, p. 13.
45. N. K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, Calcutta., ed. 1960, p. 15.
46. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19.
47. Gian Singh, *Raj Khalsa*, (Urdu), Amritsar, p. 129.
48. Ali-ud-Din, Mufti, *op. cit.*, I. p. 310.
49. Hugh Kennedy Trevaskis, *The Land of the Five Rivers*. Oxford, 1928. p. 176.
50. Lawrence, H. W., *Adventures of an Officer in the Punjab*. Vol. I, London, 1846, pp. 64-65.
51. Elphinstone, *Cabul*, Vol. I, p. 111.
52. Baron Hugel, *op. cit.*, pp. 293-94.

## Chapter 16

### THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE MISAL ORGANISATION

#### (a) Definition and Origin of the Misal

The term *Misal* has been defined differently by different historians. According to Cunningham<sup>1</sup> and Prinsep,<sup>2</sup> *Misal*, an Arabic word, has been used to denote 'alike or equal.' To David Ochterlony, the *Misal* meant a tribe or race.<sup>3</sup> Wilson understood it to be a voluntary association of the Sikhs.<sup>4</sup> According to Ghulam Muhayy-ud-Din *alias* Bute Shah, *Misal* is a territory conquered by a brave Sardar with the help of his comrades and placed under his protection.<sup>5</sup> Cunningham links *Misal* to the Arabic term, '*muslubul*' (*musallah*) which means armed men and warlike people.<sup>6</sup>

Muhammad Latif writes, "The various clans under their respective chiefs were leagued together and formed a confederacy, which they denominated Misal or 'similitude', thereby implying that the chief and followers of one clan were equal to those of another."<sup>7</sup> According to N.K. Sinha, the Misals were confederacies which the Sikhs formed when Timur Shah, the successor of Ahmad Shah Abdali, abandoned the policy of subordinating the Sikhs.<sup>8</sup> W.H. McLeod considers the Misals as 'semi-independent bands.'<sup>9</sup>

The term Misal came to be used during Guru Gobind Singh's days by his contemporary poet, Senapat, who uses this term in the sense of a group, at a couple of places in his book.<sup>10</sup> He uses it, for the first time, in reference to the battle of Bhangani when different *morchas* were allotted to different Misals (groups). The second reference relates to the people visiting the Guru at Nander in Misals (groups).

Rattan Singh Bhangu also makes use of this term in the sense of a group."<sup>11</sup>

All the above definitions seem to be incorrect. The meaning of the word Misal during the period under discussion was the same as it is today. Misal is and has been used to mean loose papers tagged or stitched together, forming a sort of file. When the Sikh Sardars assembled at Akal Takht they made a detailed report of the territories occupied by them to their chief leader—the president of the assembly, who prepared the separate Misals (files) of the individual Sardars. These records or Misals helped resolve territorial disputes whenever they arose between the two Sardars.<sup>12</sup> In a general way, this interpretation of the term is borne out by Cunningham<sup>13</sup> also. It was Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, who seems to have started for the first time, the maintenance of the Misals or files for the individual Sardars. Probably, he was, then, the only person with knowledge of Persian and Urdu, among the Sikh Sardars to do this job. Later, the term Misal acquired the meaning of the army of a Sardar or the territory under him.

The origin of the Misals may be traced to the practical needs of the Sikhs during the early days of their political rise. During Banda Singh's time the Sikhs had a taste of freedom and, afterwards, they struggled incessantly for it against the Mughal authority in the Punjab. Under the able and selfless leadership of Kapur Singh, and, later of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, the Khalsa was organised into different groups commanded by the old veterans. It is not unreasonable to presume that these leaders had willing followers. The devotion of the Sikhs to the last Guru and their conviction in the future greatness of the Khalsa brought volunteers to the banners of the leaders of

the various groups of the Khalsa. During the early phase the element of rough equality between the commander and the commanded is discernable and each member of the group could claim and express his equality with others in common deliberations.<sup>14</sup> Thus, a spirit of mutual cooperation was developed in the Khalsa.<sup>15</sup> These groups had a common treasury and & common kitchen. Though the association of the commander with Guru Gobind Singh or Banda Singh was an initial advantage, but the leader of the group was acceptable to its members because of his intrinsic qualities. No commander could afford to neglect the views and wishes of his comrades.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, this relationship between the commander and his followers, in all its comprehensive sense, gave strength to the organisation of the Sikhs and proved to be a great unifying and integrating force within the community. And soon this inner organisational strength manifested itself into a mighty force for the outsiders to reckon with, so much so that the combined strength of the *jathas* was enough to persuade Zakariya Khan to try to conciliate the Sikhs. His envoy came to the meeting of the Sarbat Khalsa, on the Baisakhi day in 1733, and made an offer to the Khalsa of the *jagir* of the *parganas* of Dipalpur, Kanganwal and Jhabal, which were worth a lakh of rupees in revenue. The Khalsa selected Kapur Singh for the honour. This offered a favourable opportunity to the Sikhs to consolidate their organisation.

The successes of the Khalsa against the government authorities in the Punjab turned the Sikhs into territorial *powers*. The Sikh commanders carved out small possessions to start with and the records of the Misals (files) of their territories were maintained at Akal Takht. These commanders were called 'Sardars' and their acquisitions as 'Misals'. The Sardars had not acquired these territories exclusively by their personal prowess but with the active support of their associate leaders. The associate leaders, however small the strength of their contingents which had fought under the standard of the leading Sardar, had their shares according to the contribution they had made to the acquisition, and such land tenures were known: *Misaldari*, *pattadari*, *jagirdari* and *tabedari* which have been explained by Prinsep as given below:

The Sardar granted them a share from the land acquired. Having separated his share the Sardar divided the rest among the smaller associate Sardars. The associate Sardars gave from their shares to the junior leaders the portions of the land according to their contributions. These shares were further divided amongst the troopers.

The most important tenure was that of the *Misaldari*, according to which a grant of territory was made to a petty chief who had joined the Misal without any condition of dependence. If the Misaldar was dissatisfied with the Sardar he could transfer himself along with his lands to some other chief. And each of the shares given by the Sardars to the subordinate chiefs up to the individual horseman was called *patti* and the system named *pattidari*. The co-sharer could not dispose of his tenure to a stranger but in an emergency he was allowed to mortgage it. At the time of his death he could give away his *patti* to any of his male relations. Thus, the *pattis* became hereditary. The only condition of his tenure in relation to the Sardar of the Misal was the military aid when required.

The *jagirdari* tenure was given to the relations and the deserving companions of the chief and, in return for this grant, the grantees were required to render personal service whenever needed by the chief and they had to supply a certain number of equipped horses. The *jagirs* could be resumed by the donor for the *jagirdars'* failure to render the necessary service.

The tenure of *tabedari* was granted in lieu of service to a follower who was completely subservient to the chief. The land could be taken back for an act of rebellion or disobedience on the part of the allottee.<sup>17</sup>

There were religious and charitable grants also given by way of endowments for the Gurdwaras, temples and other religious places.<sup>18</sup> According to Ahmad Shah Batalia, nearly all the Sardars bestowed cash and revenue-free villages upon Akalis.<sup>19</sup>

Though twelve is the generally accepted number of the major confederacies but there were smaller ones also who allied themselves to one of them in need of war. In the words of Cunningham, "The confederacies did not all exist in their full strength at the same time, but one Misal gave birth to another, for the federative principle necessarily pervaded the union and an aspiring sub-chief could separate himself from his immediate party, to form, perhaps, a greater one of his own."<sup>20</sup>

The founders of the Misals were originally free-lancers and veteran espousers of the cause of their oppressed countrymen. As their possessions and followers increased, they acquired the character of chieftainship. In this way they passed from deliverers to rulers of their territories. "The Misals were again distinguished by titles derived from the name, the village, the district or the progenitor of the first or most eminent chief or from some peculiarity of custom, or of leadership."<sup>21</sup> The origin of the names of the twelve Misals can be traced as under:

1. The Bhangi Misal took its name from its leader's nickname Bhangi or an addict to *bhang*—an intoxicating preparation of hemp.<sup>22</sup>
2. The Nishanwalias were the standard bearers, *nishan* means a standard of the Dal Khalsa.
3. The Shahids were headed by the descendants of honoured martyrs and Nihangs.<sup>23</sup>
4. The Ramgarhias took their name from the fortress of Ramgarh at Amritsar, earlier known as Ramrauni, held and enlarged by Jassa Singh, the carpenter.
5. The Ahluwalias derived their title from the village Ahlu to which Jassa Singh originally belonged.
6. The Nakkais were named after the territory of Nakka they had risen from and (7) The Kanaihyas<sup>24</sup> (8) Faizullapurias or Singhpurias (9) Sukarchakias (10) Dallewalias took their names from the villages of their chiefs.
11. The Karorsinghias took the name from Karora Singh, the third and the most important leader of the Misal. They were sometimes called Punjgarhias from the village of their first chief.
12. The Phulkians went back to Phul, the common ancestor, of Ala Singh of Patiala house, of Gajpat Singh of Jind and of Hamir Singh of Nabha. Ala Singh was the son of Rama, the second son of Phul; Gajpat Singh was the grandson of Tiloka, son of Phul; Hamir Singh was the great grandson of Tiloka, son of Phul.

Sometimes the chiefs were known by some cognomen which specially distinguished them. Some personal peculiarity was added to the Sardar's name as in the following cases: Nidhan Singh Panjhatha, (the five-handed, from his great prowess in battle), Lehna Singh Chimini (from his short stature), Mohar Singh Lamba (the tall) and Sher Singh Kamla "(the deranged).<sup>25</sup>

With the exception of a few, the Misals, principally, belonged to the sturdy race of the Jats.<sup>26</sup>

## **(b) Evolution of the Office of the Sikh Chief—His Powers and Duties**

In the words of Lepel Griffin, “All the Sikhs were theoretically equal and he who like Amar Singh Majithia could pierce a tree through with an arrow or like Hari Singh Nalwa could kill a tiger with a blow of his sword, might soon ride with the followers behind him and call himself a Sardar.”<sup>27</sup> When the various groups were leagued into twelve *dais*—though there was no formal grouping—smaller ones joined the big ones. The distinguished and selfless Sikhs, who were wedded to the resolute determination of the emancipation of this land of theirs from the Mughal or Afghans, became their leaders. With the increase of their *powers*, the Sardars began to possess territories. They also placed some areas in the Punjab under them on the *rakhi* terms. According to James Browne, “These chiefs enjoyed distinct authority in their respective districts, uncontrolled by any superior *power*, and only assemble together on particular occasions. . . . They choose by majority of votes, a leader to command their joint forces during the expeditions; generally from among those chiefs, whose *zamindaris* are most considerable; his authority is, however, but ill-obeyed by so many other chiefs who though possessed of small territories yet as leaders of the fraternity of the Sikhs think themselves perfectly his equals, and barely allow him, during his temporary elevation, to the dignity of *primus inter pares*.”<sup>28</sup>

As referred to earlier, according to Bute Shah when, a person, accompanied by some comrades, takes possession of a particular territory he gives away some portions of that territory to his companions for their support. He himself becomes the Sardar (chief) of that Misal and the others become his Misaldars. The chiefs of the Misals, who had territories under them, distributed some villages amongst their companions according to the number of their horses. The grantees were called the chiefs of the *pattis* and others became *pattidars*.<sup>29</sup>

According to Gian Singh, the minor Sardars joined some bigger Sardar and launched upon territorial acquisitions. They conquered territories according to their force. Those minor Sardars known as Misaldars were always the supporters and well-wishers of their subordinates who remained obedient to them.<sup>30</sup>

In the beginning, the chiefship of a Misal was not considered as the hereditary property of a particular Sardar. This belief led to giving preferences to suitability over hereditary claims and caste distinctions. In the early stages, this practice was not resented by the progeny of any Sardar. According to Ahmad Shah Batalia, the founder of the Ramgarhia Misal was Khushal Singh, a Jat, and his successor Anand Singh was also a Jat, but later the leadership of the Misal went into the hands of Jassa Singh Ramgarhia (carpenter by profession) and his brothers. As they were known for their bravery and intrepidity, nobody objected to this change of leadership in the Misal from Jats to the Ramgarhias. Similarly, the chiefship of the Bhangi Misal did not remain in the family of its founder Chhajja Singh, but went over to his companion, Bhoma Singh and, after Bhoma Singh one of his brave and wise companions, Hari Singh, was appointed as the chief. After the death of Gurbakhsh Singh— one of the Misaldars of Bhoma Singh, the former’s nephew, Gujjar Singh, was ignored in favour of Lehna Singh Kahlon who was an officer in the contingent of that Misaldar.<sup>31</sup> And also the succession to the leadership of the Karorsinghia Misal was another instance of this practice in the early stage of the process of development of Misal system. The founder, Sham Singh, was succeeded by his nephew, Karam Singh, who left his authority to Karora Singh, a petty personal follower, who again bequeathed the command to Baghel Singh, his own menial servant<sup>32</sup> All the Sikhs in the Misal considered it their privilege to elect a leader of the Misal. Thus, we find that in the Panthic interest, the Sikhs in the early stages did not attach any importance to the principle of hereditary succession. Only the personal qualities were the main criteria for the selection or election of a successor. That these elections were not always nominal is shown by the fact that many times

the heir-apparent was set aside and some really very capable person was elected from among the descendants or relations of the deceased chief, and sometimes even from among the troops themselves. With the passage of time the chiefship became hereditary. In case, the Sardar had no son, the Sardari was conferred upon the nephew or sometimes the widow of the Sardar adopted a son and ruled as regent. As Jassa Singh Ahluwalia had no son, his nephew Bhag Singh became his successor. After Khushal Singh Mitu's death his widow ruled her territory with the help of her *keardars*. After Sardar Baghel Singh's death, in the absence of a legitimate heir, his widows, Ram Kaur and Rattan Kaur, ruled two different sectors of his state. Nawab Kapur Singh, who died issueless, was succeeded by his nephew, Khushal Singh. Thus, a democratic practice of electing a leader of the Misal came to be converted into a hereditary succession though the suitability was never ignored.

It is interesting to note that the overall charge of the Misal was in the hands of the Sardar (chief) and not the Misaldar. The Sardar, as we have seen above, had many Misaldars under him in his Misal. According to Browne<sup>33</sup> and Ahmad Shah Batalia,<sup>34</sup> the number of such Misaldars had grown to something like 400 to 500. But in the event of an impending danger they had to align themselves with some bigger chiefs. Within the Misal itself the chief was likely to possess larger territories than any of the other members of the Misal and, thus, the prominence which the chief enjoyed as a commander was consolidated through acquisition of larger resources. He would naturally expect his Misaldars to continue acknowledging his superior status. Thus, a defection from one Misal to another against the wishes of the chief would be discouraged by him. For instance, Nand Singh, an associate of Jhanda Singh Bhangi, had occupied Pathankot and when he transferred it to his son-in-law, Tara Singh Kanaihya, Ganda Singh Bhangi tried to wrest it from the Kanaihya Sardar.<sup>35</sup> It is, however, not clear whether or not the rights claimed by the chief over his Misaldars were justified by some sort of conditions settled between them.

At any rate, it cannot be suggested that the chief of the Misal exercised strict control over his Misaldars. According to Ahmad Shah Batalia, their obligation was limited to their active cooperation with the chief only in such situations as called for armed offence or defence.<sup>36</sup>

Thus, we find that these Misaldars enjoyed the right of keeping independent forces and conquering territories. There is little doubt, however, that they aligned themselves with some Sardar in situations fraught with dangers to the Khalsa commonwealth. As the time passed these Misaldars also became strong enough to act independently of the Sardars. There was no objection of the Panth to a Misaldar or a minor chief's becoming an independent ruler as it was not in supersession to his former Sardar's position. The minor chief could enlarge his territories and establish an independent rule without, at all, disturbing the Misal to which he was formerly attached.

According to *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, the political ambition (*bu-i-riyast*) is attributed to Sardar Charhat Singh at the very outset of his active career, when he was in the contingent of the Bhangis.<sup>37</sup> This is true almost of every Sardar and even some of them designated as the Misaldars were equally ambitious for territorial acquisitions. For instance, Nahar Singh Chamariwala, Bagh Singh Hallowalia, Dit Singh Gill and Jodh Singh Wazirabadia who have been mentioned as the Misaldars of the Bhangis,<sup>38</sup> claimed independent sway (*Har yaq baja-i-kebud dam-i-hakumat me zād*),<sup>39</sup> and as explained above they were free to do so.

Thus, we find that most of the Misaldars had the opportunity of becoming independent of the control of the Sardar of the Misal. They exercised full authority over the territories under them.



Indeed, in a very real sense, the Misaldar was as autonomous as the Sardar. The principle of hereditary succession that came to be established in the Misals was adopted as much by the Misaldars as by the Sardars themselves.

For all practical purposes the qualitative difference between the Sardar and the Misaldar was first minimised and then obliterated and all of them became equally autonomous Sardars and the relationships earlier established by the Misal gradually vanished. By the last quarter of the eighteenth century there were strictly speaking no chiefs and no Misaldars but only so many Sardars of major or minor consequence.

Roughly speaking, it was about 1758, when the terms Misal and Misaldar began to be used by the Sikhs in their political context.

Whatever the extent of their territories the Sikh chiefs exercised complete sovereign authority over their states like the kings in ancient India who ruled over very small states and their status as sovereign *powers* had never been questioned. About the size of an ancient state, Altekar writes, "Most of the states in Vedic period were small; it is doubtful whether there was a state big enough to extend over a quarter of the Punjab. The dominion of a *samrat* was perhaps not much bigger than that of an ordinary king."<sup>40</sup>

On the basis of contemporary evidence we may say that, "within his own domain each chief is lord paramount. He exerts an exclusive authority over his vassals even to the *power* of life and death and to increase the population of his districts he proffers ready and hospitable asylum to fugitives or refugees from all parts of India."<sup>41</sup> Ganesh Das observed that the Sardar acted as an autonomous ruler and he worked strictly in accordance with the dictates of his own practical good sense. Each leader established his government wherever he could do that in the Punjab.<sup>42</sup>

McCrinkle writes that states, where the principal executive authority was vested in two rulers as in ancient Sparta, were not unknown in ancient India. One such state existed at Patala in Sindh in Alexander's days, where the sovereignty was vested in two different kings hailing from different houses.<sup>43</sup> Under the Sikhs also, according to Ahmad Shah Batalia, sometimes many chiefs held common charge of the same *pargana* or territories. The chiefs divided the revenue of such territories according to the number of their horses kept in those possessions. The Kanaihyas and Ramgarhias continued ruling common territories for a long time.<sup>44</sup> When disputes on common possessions could not be resolved the partners resorted to the division of the common territories.<sup>45</sup>

There were some other categories of possessions also. For example, two of them Bhangis and one Kanaihya, collectively captured Lahore, the capital of the Punjab, in 1765; partitioned the city amongst themselves<sup>46</sup> and ruled their portions for nearly thirty four years till it was occupied by Ranjit Singh in 1799.

After collectively conquering Kasur, it was divided among themselves; by the three principal allies—the Bhangis, Ramgarhias and Kanaihyas. Out of four parts into which the town was split up, two parts were received by the Bhangis and one each by the Ramgarhias and Kanaihyas<sup>47</sup> Similarly, Mehraj was jointly administered by all the Phulkian chiefs. Amritsar belonged to almost all the Sikh Sardars. In Amritsar, they had their own fortresses and *katras* or bazars, as *katra* Bhangian and *katra* Kanaihyas. The Sardars had also constructed *bungahs* (residential quarters) around the tank there.<sup>48</sup> They managed their portions of the town efficiently. All the taxes and octroi charges collected in

the town of Amritsar were made over to the management of the Golden Temple. According to Ahmad Shah Batalia, this system worked well in the beginning- It was only later on that there were some mutual rivalries, and disputes.<sup>49</sup>

### **Relations between the Ruler and His Subjects**

The relations between the ruler and the ruled were cordial and intimate.<sup>50</sup> Many of the chiefs had only a few square miles of land and a very small amount of revenue and a handful of soldiers to form their army. Riches and forces of the chief had almost nothing to do with the ready and willing obedience of the subjects. The strength of the chief did not lie in his material prosperity but it had roots in the love and regard of the people for him. "Although he (the chief) is absolute, rules with such moderation and justice that he is beloved and revered by his people whose happiness he studies to promote."<sup>51</sup> The chiefs regarded their subjects as members of their family. In order to identify themselves completely with their subjects, according to John Malcolm, the chiefs generally despised luxury of diet and lived on simple food. They were plainly dressed, divested of ornaments, and their general mode of living was simple.<sup>52</sup> "Was it not a marvel to see the Sikh chiefs squatting on the ground in the midst of their subjects, plainly dressed, unattended by any escort, without any paraphernalia of government, talking, laughing and joking as if with comrades, using no diplomacy with them but having straight forward dealings, simple manners, upright mind and sincere language?"<sup>53</sup>

According to an English traveller who came to Lahore in 1808, the chief was keenly interested in giving justice to the people. All criminal cases, after preliminary inquiries by the *kotwal* are submitted to him for punishment. . . . The chief of every town looks to the needs of the needy traveller from his own funds, a part of which is set apart for this purpose.<sup>54</sup>

In order to advance their interests the chiefs, at times, resorted to convenient matrimonial alliances.<sup>55</sup> For example, Sardar Charhat Singh married his daughter to Sahib Singh, son of Sardar Gujjar Singh Bhangi.<sup>56</sup> The matrimonial bond cemented their relations and made them *powerful*. An alliance between the Kanaihyas and Sukarchakias which provided the ladder for the rise of Ranjit Singh, is another example. An alliance could also be effected by the ceremonial exchange of turbans at Akal Takht (or at any Gurdwara or a public meeting) to be followed by a public vow of mutual assistance.<sup>57</sup> Such alliances between the Sardars were not necessarily directed against their enemies but they were mostly formed for mutual good-will and cooperation.

### **(c) The Khalsa Ideals and their Observance by the Sikh Chiefs**

The main springs of the ideals of the Sikh chiefs were the teachings of the Gurus. The Sikhs being dissociated from the ancient past by many centuries and being not conversant with the Vedic and other literature, they could not look back to the Hindu polity for guidance. The Mughal practices, they had found to be very irksome. For several generations they had not seen any settled life out of which new political thought and institutions could originate and grow. Therefore, they forged some new, though crude, methods which suited the Situations in which they had been placed in the eighteenth century; They brought into full play the great qualities of service to humanity, clemency, forgiveness, humility, justice, equality, liberalism, respect and regard for women, etc., that they had learnt from the teachings of the Gurus.

Before the eighteenth century the basic framework of the political ethics for the Sikhs had been evolved, and it served as the chief source of inspiration and guidance for the Sikh community in the subsequent period. It is, therefore, imperative that in order to form a correct estimate of the

political philosophy of the Sikh rulers, we should look to their heritage coming down from the preceding period of the Gurus.

The Khalsa ideals served as beacon light for the Sikh chiefs. Whenever the people felt their leaders likely to stray away, out of ignorance, from their ideals, they showed them the right path. The Sikh chiefs dared not, therefore, defy the Sikh ideals.

The Panth or the Khalsa commonwealth was considered by all the Sikhs as a very sacred creation of the Gurus, reared into its final shape by Guru Gobind Singh. The last Guru was believed to have merged himself in the Panth. So great was the respect for this creation of the Guru that none could ever think of doing any thing in violation to the tenets laid down for the members of the Panth.

In respect of their duties towards the Khalsa commonwealth, no Sikh, including the Sikh chiefs, enjoyed any exemption. None could pose to be above the Panth. No single-individual or a group of individuals could be considered as superior or equal to the entire body of the community. No Sardar could ever think like the Mughal ruler that he belonged to a different category and was one specially blessed and destined by God to rule over others and exercise and enjoy some special and superior rights and privileges vis-i-vis the whole of the Panth. He always kept before his mind that his position was not due to any of his personal qualities but was due to the grace of the Guru and the Khalsa. The Sikh chiefs, time and again, declared that they were the humble servants of the Panth, subservient to its will, working for the good and pleasure of the Khalsa commonwealth.

### **Rulers to abide by the Khalsa Rahit**

To take *amrit* (baptism of the double-edged sword) and become a member of the Khalsa was required of every Sikh. He who was not duly baptized could not be elected as their leader. They all had to adopt the *rahit* (code of conduct) or discipline of the Khalsa and abide by it. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia received *amrit* from Sardar Kapur Singh<sup>58</sup> and Raja Amar Singh prided in having received it at the hands of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia.<sup>59</sup> The founder of the Kanaihya Misals, Amar Singh Sanghania (Kingra), considered it absolutely necessary to baptize a person into a 'Singh' before accepting him into his *derah* or camp. Similarly, Charhat Singh's essential condition for recruitment to his contingent was that the incumbent must be duly a baptized 'Singh'. Those who were not already initiated into Sikhism with the baptism of the double-edged sword were baptized by him before joining his ranks.<sup>60</sup> The Sardars of the Misals were generally known by the appellation of *Singh Sahib*.

The Gurus had enjoined upon the Sikhs to take their decisions through *panchayats* or councils, and all important decisions relating to common interests of the community must have the approval of those for whom they were meant. The Sikh chiefs were alive to the democratic ideals inculcated by the Gurus and they followed them to the best of their *power*. The *gurmata* was a strong expression of this ideal of democratising the Panthic decisions. The practice of electing a leader of the Misal in the earlier stages and electing the leader of the Dal Khalsa were in pursuance and fulfilment of the same ideal of republican and democratic spirit of the Khalsa.

The Sikh chiefs ruled in the name of the Guru and the Khalsa as is apparent from their coins. An important aspect of their victory over their enemies was that it was the triumph not of any individual leader or leaders but of the Khalsa or the Sikh commonwealth. No wonder, therefore, the Sardars founded their states and attributed their successes to the Gurus whom they believed to be the real founders and masters of their commonwealth.

Guru Nanak had expressly told his followers that, “it is the duty of the king to administer justice. Only he should (be able to) occupy the throne who is capable of holding that (exalted) office (and is fit to discharge his obligations to the people). Only they are the true Rajas who have recognised the truth.”<sup>61</sup>

The Sikh rulers had fully realised that ‘dominion can subsist in spite of mischief but cannot endure with the existence of injustice.’ However crude the methods of investigation and trial they might have adopted, the Sikh chiefs were known for their love of justice. Every Sikh ruler at the time of his investiture solemnly promised in the presence of the *Guru Granth Sabib* to always keep before him, in the performance of his duties, the Sikh code of conduct, the law of the land and the customs of the society.

A high standard of war morality was placed before the Sikhs by the Gurus and the former punctiliously observed it. “They never harassed the old, infirm and women” says Qazi Nur Muhammad in his *Jangnama*.<sup>62</sup> Polier wrote that “it is true they seldom kill in cold blood or make slaves.”<sup>63</sup> And “during any intestine disputes their soldiery never molest the husbandman.”<sup>64</sup>

Under the influence of the teachings of the Sikh Gurus, the Sikhs had disregarded the caste distinctions, differences of high and low, untouchability, etc. In the matter of origin, growth and development of the Misals the castes had no place. No Misal was named after any caste or sub-caste of any chief or Misaldar. Whether the leaders of the Misals originally belonged to the peasant, carpenter or any other profession, it was immaterial with the Sikhs. The leader should be a member of the Khalsa. The *amrit* or the Sikh baptism had elevated them all to the same level and made them members of the same casteless Khalsa fraternity.

The Gurus had enjoined upon their followers to serve humanity. Guru Nanak had said, “Service in the world alone shall find for one a seat in the court of the Lord.”<sup>65</sup> Guru Angad Dev exhorted his followers that “if one serves with selflessness, then alone he gets honours.”<sup>66</sup> The Guru personally set high example of *sewa* (service). Guru Angad served his Master (Guru Nanak) and the Sikhs with utmost devotion. Guru Amar Das, even in his old age, carried water from the river daily for the bath of his Master (Guru Angad). He served in the *langar* even after he had assumed Guruship. Guru Ram Das worked like a regular labourer at the time of digging the *baoli* at Goindwal. Guru Arjan personally attended to the lepers at Tarn Taran and his wife, Ganga ji, served in the *langar* for the major part of the day.

The examples of the Gurus were the guide-lines for their followers. Kapur Singh was tipped by the *sangat* for the title of ‘Nawab’, offered by the governor of Lahore, when he was Fanning the Sikh congregation. Similarly, the Sikh Sardars and Misaldars always kept before them, the motto: “The service of humanity is the service of God.’ They were well known for *sewa* in the Gurdwaras and the other holy places.

The Sikh chiefs always maintained their free kitchens to supply food to the way-farers as well as to the poor and the needy and they paid special attention to this part of the service in the event of a famine.<sup>67</sup> “The famine of 1783, occurred in Budh Singh’s time. He is said to have sold all his property and to have fed the people with grains from the proceeds.”<sup>68</sup>

It is interesting to know that the Sikh Sardars who were so well known in the art of war were no less adept in the art of peace. Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Ala Singh, Lehna Singh Bhangi and

Charhat Singh, were, no doubt, great soldiers, but, as history bears witness, they knew well how to bring about conditions of settled life and peace. In the words of the authors of the *Gujrat Gazetteer*, “the names of Sardar Gujjar Singh and Sahib Singh are often in the mouths of the people, who look back to their rule without the smallest bitterness. They seem, indeed, to have followed an enlightened liberal policy, sparing no effort to induce the people, harried by twenty years of constant spoliation to settle down once more to peaceful occupation.”<sup>69</sup>

We generally find the Sikh rulers equating and identifying themselves with their soldiers and declaring themselves as the humblest servants of their subjects. From the letters exchanged between the Sardars and collected by Dalpat Rai in 1794-95, we notice that almost invariably all the Sardars or the rulers, of the Sikh Misals, were addressed as ‘Singh Sahib’ ‘Bhai Sahib’ or ‘Khalsa jio’. For example, Bhai Fateh Singh, Bhai Amar Singh Bhai Gulab Singh jio (ff. 44-45), Khalsa Jai Singh (f. 17), Bhai Ranjit Singh jio (f. 104), and Singh Sahib Bhai Sahib Dal Singh jio (f. 13). These titles were applicable to every member of the Sikh gentry. The Sikh rulers liked to be addressed by these plain and simple titles, which as referred to above, maintained their identities with the Sikhs.<sup>70</sup> Nawab Kapur Singh, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, the ‘*Sultan-ul-quam*’, and Baba Ala Singh, are not the solitary examples to be found amongst good Sikh rulers.

### **Sikh Women’s Participation in State Affairs**

In Indian history, we find only a few women actively participating in government affairs. In the early medieval Muslim period Razia was a solitary woman who conducted the affairs of government for a short time but she suffered early death mainly because of the weakness of her sex. During the Mughal period the inmates of the Emperor’s *harem* lived in seclusion excepting Nur Jahan. And in later times, Rani of Jhansi flashed into prominence for a while, during the uprising of 1857. But, strange enough, the short span of Sikh history is replete with the remarkable role of Sikh women of princely families. Guru Nanak had preached equality and respect for womenfolk and the Guru’s observations in favour of women went a long way in getting them an honourable status and share in the various fields of life.

The Sikh *ranis* (queens) as and when an occasion arose, actively participated in state affairs. They occasionally took charge of state administration and their contribution, to the Sikh polity as rulers, regents, administrators and advisers has been creditable indeed. “The Sikh ladies ruled with vigour and diplomacy,” says General Gordon.<sup>71</sup>

In the words of William Francklin, “Instances indeed, have not unfrequently occurred, in which they (women) have actually taken up arms to defend their habitations, from the desultory attacks of the enemy, and throughout the contest, behaved themselves with an intrepidity of spirit, highly praiseworthy.”<sup>72</sup>

To quote Griffin, the Sikh women “have on occasions shown themselves the equals of men in wisdom and administrative ability.”<sup>73</sup> Usually the dowager *ranis* were up to commendable work. A passing reference of the role of some of them towards the end of the eighteenth century and in the first half of the nineteenth century may not be out of place here. Rani Sada Kaur, widow of Sardar Gurbakhsh Singh Kanaihya and mother-in-law of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, was well versed in the affairs of the state and commanded her soldiers in the battle-field. She was a very shrewd lady with a thorough grasp or statecraft.<sup>74</sup> Mai Desan, the widow of Charhat Singh Sukarchakia, was a great administrator, an experienced and a wise diplomat who conducted the civil and military affairs dexterously.<sup>75</sup> Rattan Kaur, the widow of Tara Singh Ghaiba, was a brave and an able lady who kept

the Lahore Durbar forces at bay for a sufficient time till the gate-keepers were bribed by the Lahore army.<sup>76</sup> Mai Sukhan, the widow of Gulab Singh Bhangi, strongly defended the town of Amritsar against Ranjit Singh for some time.<sup>77</sup> Dharam Kaur, wife of Dal Singh of Akalgarh, after her husband's imprisonment by Ranjit Singh, mounted guns on the walls of her fort and fought against the Durbar forces. She was a brave and a wise lady who was able, for some time, to foil the designs of the Lahore ruler on her territory.<sup>78</sup>

After Sardar Baghel Singh's death in 1802, his two widows, Ram Kaur and Rattan Kaur, looked after their territories very well. Ram Kaur, the elder Sardarni, maintained her control over the district of Hoshiarpur which provided her a revenue of two lakh rupees and Sardarni Rattan Kaur kept Chhalondi in her possession, fetching her an annual revenue of three lakh rupees. She administered her territory efficiently. Similarly, Rani Chand Kaur, widow of Maharaja Kharak Singh, and Rani Jindan, widow of Ranjit Singh, played important roles in the Lahore Durbar polity.

From the Patiala house also many names like that of Rani Fato, wife of Baba Ala Singh, Rani Ranjinder Kaur, Rani Aus Kaur and Rani Sahib Kaur may be mentioned. In the words of Lepel Griffin, "Rani Rajinder (Kaur) was one of the most remarkable women of her age. She possessed all the virtues which men pretend are their own—courage perseverance and sagacity—without mixture of weakness which men attribute to women."<sup>79</sup> Sahib Kaur was proclaimed as Prime Minister of Patiala at the age of 18. She managed the affairs, both in office and in the battle-field, wonderfully well. Later, when her husband, Jaimal Singh Kanaiyha, was imprisoned by his cousin, Fateh Singh, she hastened to Fatehgarh at the head of a strong force and got her husband released. In 1794, when the commander of the Maratha forces coming northwards sent a message to Sahib Kaur of Patiala house for submission, she preferred to settle the issue in the field of battle. Hurriedly she formed a league of the neighbouring chiefs, Bhag Singh of Jind, Bhanga Singh and Mehtab Singh of Thanesar, and rushed forth to check the advance of the Marathas. The two armies came to grips near Ambala. She infused new spirit in her disheartened soldiers, led a surprise night attack on the Marathas. In the words of John J. Pool, "With mingled feelings of fear and respect they (Marathas) turned their forces homeward and gave up the expedition. Thus, Patiala was saved by the skill and daring of Rani Sahib Kaur."<sup>80</sup> Rani Desa of Nabha and Daya Kaur of Ambala's role, in shaping the destinies of their territories was no less noteworthy. Daya Kaur, wife of Gurbakhsh Singh, ruler of Ambala, succeeded to her husband after his death. In the words of Lepel Griffin, "She was an excellent ruler and her estate was one of the best managed in the protected territory."<sup>81</sup> These ladies were well known for their administrative acumen, grasp of political situations, and dexterity in handling arms and organising defence.

### **Non-communal Policy of the Sikh Chiefs**

The Sikhs had, in the first half of the eighteenth century suffered a lot at the hands of the fanatical Mughal rulers of the Punjab but when they took over control of the Punjab they were not revengeful or intolerant to the Muslims as such. What they had disliked in the Mughal government, they would not do themselves. It was really noble of them to have so soon forgotten about the wounds inflicted on them in the recent past. It was in keeping with the traditions of their Gurus. In the words of Campbell, "They were not exclusive and unduly prejudiced in favour of their own people but employed capable Mohammadans and others almost as freely as Sikhs."<sup>82</sup> Ali-ud-Din Mufti writes that Lehna Singh Bhangi gave turbans and bestowed honours on *qazis* and *muftis* on the occasion of *Id*.<sup>83</sup>

As Lehna Singh had shown no discrimination to the non-Sikhs and all his subjects were given equal treatment, he had become very popular with his Muslim subjects. When Ahmad Shah appointed Dadan Khan as governor of Lahore and retired to his country, Lehna Singh came out of his retreat and came close to Lahore. The courtiers of Dadan Khan advised him to step down from his office and surrender it to Sardar Lehna Singh who was so well liked by the Muslims. This speaks volumes for the popularity of the Sardar and his' government. They also advised the governor to see Lehna Singh and ask him for subsistence allowance which was graciously granted by him.<sup>84</sup> According to Ahmad Shah Batalia, Jaimal Singh of Kanaihya Misal, who was a kind-hearted man, took special care to look after the Muslims.<sup>85</sup> And again, according to the same author, when Sayid Ghulam Ghaus fled from Batala and sought asylum with Sardar Mahan Singh, the Sukarchakia Sardar helped in the restoration of the Batala theological seminary to him.<sup>86</sup> The Sikh chiefs, ungrudgingly, appointed Muslims and other non-Sikhs to responsible positions. Lakhna Doggar, a Muslim, was the commander-in-chief of the army of Ala Singh. Qazi Nur Muhammad, a contemporary, writing about Ala Singh says, "The Muslims are also in his service and all Hindus are obedient to him."<sup>87</sup> Mohammad Salah Khokhar, of the *pargana* of Sanaur, was an ardent admirer of Ala Singh. Such instances can be multiplied. Similarly, they were equally liberal to all foreigners who came in contact with them.

William Francklin bears witness to the fact that "the Seiks allow foreigners of every description to join their standard and to sit in their company."<sup>88</sup>

With the Sikh gospel to light their path the Sikhs were instinctively opposed to religious bigotry and communal hostility. It was never a part of the functions of the Sikh state to campaign for religious conversions or to give inducements or put economic pressure to obtain conversion to Sikhism.

According to Ahmad Shah Batalia, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was never prejudiced or fanatically disposed towards the Muslims, rather his treatment of them was praiseworthy.<sup>89</sup> It was due to his liberal policy that the Afghans of Urmar, Yahyapur and Tanda (now in Hoshiarpur district) joined his forces. Gian Singh, the author of the *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, writes, "Hundreds of people took their meals from Jassa Singh's *langar*, irrespective of their community. He was totally free from sectarianism and he had in his employ a large number of Muslims who had full liberty to perform their religious rituals as they pleased."<sup>90</sup> And Ahmad Shah Batalia further tells us that Fateh Singh Ahluwalia appointed Qadar Bakhsh as his special officer and sent him to Maharaja Ranjit Singh as his ambassador. After Qadar Bakhsh, another person named Qazi Nur Muhammad was appointed his *divan* and *mukhtar*<sup>91</sup> and later Sher Ali Kakezai of Danawali was held in high esteem by Fateh Singh and was appointed as his *divan*.<sup>92</sup>

Summing up, we may say that invariably all the Sikh rulers kept the welfare of their subjects and the dispensation of justice and service to the people uppermost in their minds; created a close identification with the people; rejected the theory of divine right of kings, adopted completely a non-communal policy in the conduct of state affairs; started *langars* (free kitchens), encouraged women in the participation of state business, ruled in the name of the Guru and took major decisions through the *panchayats* and *gurmata*s. They never disregarded the supreme authority that rested in the Khalsa commonwealth. The Khalsa ideals had basically changed the outlook of the Sikhs and had given to the Sikh chiefs a political ideology that remarkably differed from that of the Mughals. All this was an outcome of the high political idealism that the Sikhs had cherished right from the inception of their movement.

## **The Institution of Gurmata**

### **Its Definition**

The word *mata* in Punjabi language literally means opinion or resolution. When a resolution concerning the Sikh Panth is placed before a congregation in the presence of the *Guru Granth Sahib* and some decision is arrived at with common consent after dispassionate and unbiased deliberations and is confirmed by a formal prayer followed by the recital of a hymn from the *Guru Granth Sahib*, the *mata* is deemed to have been endorsed by the Guru himself and is, therefore, called *gurmata*. But the term *gurmata* has been erroneously interpreted by European and English writers, such as Browne, Polier, Forster and Malcolm. They have taken it to mean as the grand meetings or councils of the Khalsa.

Polier thought of the *gurmata* as, “the greatest council or *gurmata* of the nation, held annually either at Ambar, Lahore or some other place. Every thing is decided by the plurality of votes taken indifferently from all who choose to be present at it. In this council or Diet all the public affairs are debated.”<sup>93</sup>

James Browne<sup>94</sup> and George Forster<sup>96</sup> used ‘Diet’ or grand Diet and ‘grand convention’ for the *gurmata*. J.D. Cunningham considers the *gurmata* as ‘the assembly of chiefs.’<sup>96</sup> C.H. Payne calls it ‘national council.’<sup>97</sup> But actually, as explained above, it was a resolution passed or a decision taken by an assembly of the Sikhs.

### **Its origin and Evolution**

Its origin can be traced in the *sangat* (congregation) that played an important part in the life of a Sikh in keeping him on the right path. The *sangat* was fully competent to punish or forgive his faults and lapses.<sup>98</sup> Even ordinary breaches of the rules of conduct could be taken up for action in the local *sangats*, and no person, however highly placed he might be, was ever considered above the jurisdiction of these conclaves. When a guilty person offered himself before an assembly for punishment, he stood with folded hands. The necessary action was proposed and he accepted the punishment without grumbling. These traditions gave the Sikhs a strong grounding and experience in democratic principles. According to the *Dabistan*, whenever a Sikh had a wish to be fulfilled he made a request to the assembly and then it was referred to the Guru or invoked to God. And whenever the Guru had a wish to be fulfilled he also placed it before the *sangat*, considering, it spiritually competent to get it granted through an efficacious prayer to that effect.”

It may be remarked that spiritually the *sangat* helped the Sikhs in maturing their beliefs according to the instructions of the Guru. Socially, they provided opportunity to the people of all castes and creeds, high and low, rich and poor, to meet and sit together as equals. And, politically, they developed among the Sikhs strong democratic traditions later practised by the Sikhs earnestly during the eighteenth century.

The *gurmata* is said to have been started during the days of Guru Gobind Singh.<sup>100</sup> Of his close identification with the congregation or *sangat*. Guru Gobind Singh provided a unique example at the initiation ceremony in which he, the supreme head of a religious organisation, surrendered his authority to his disciples and adopted the unusual procedure of being baptised by the same disciples, who, a short while ago, had been baptised by him and he undertook to abide by the same discipline that had been enjoined upon the Sikhs to follow. Guru Gobind Singh, thus,



brought Guruship on a level with his followers. It was a revolutionary and a democratic step that the Guru took.<sup>101</sup>

He told the Sikhs that the Guru was the Khalsa and the Khalsa was the Guru.<sup>102</sup> This brings out in clear terms how earnestly the Guru wished his followers to lead a corporate life. The importance attached to Guruship did not, however, create a community, depending on autocratic leadership. The *gurmata* played a vital role in the Sikh struggle for independence.

The contemporary Punjabi writers, Sohan Kavi and Senapat, refer to the *matas* passed by the Sikhs in the sense of resolutions. Sohan Kavi writes that the Sikhs of Lahore informed Guru Hargobind through a letter and also conveyed verbally that the Mughals had started against him with forces. The Sikhs got ready with weapons and took a decision (*mata kina*) to fight.<sup>103</sup> Senapat writes that the Sikhs of a place decided (*mata dhara*) to take the baptism of Guru Gobind Singh.<sup>104</sup> But it became an instrument of *power* when the Sikhs started meeting at Amritsar or at other places to plan their future course of action. Ordinarily they tried to meet twice a year during the Baisakhi and Diwali<sup>105</sup> festivals (i.e. in April and October) at Akal Takht—a place within the holy precincts of Darbar Sahib, and discussed their problems. But on other occasions also they would meet as and when some urgent matter of political importance had to be discussed or some imminent danger threatened the country or any larger expedition was to be undertaken. When Tara Singh of Van was killed in 1726, along with his companions, the Sikhs passed a *gurmata*<sup>106</sup> to assert themselves to make the government machinery inactive and inoperative. As an effective step to weaken the government the Sikhs pounced upon some government treasures and arsenals and chastised the officials who spied upon them.

Rattan Singh Bhangu and Gian Singh have referred to various *gurmata*s. They seem to be making no distinction between *mata* and *gurmata*. For example, Rattan Singh writes that the Khalsa used to visit Amritsar from their hideouts to participate in the festival of Diwali. After taking a bath in the holy tank they all used to sit in the Akal Bungah to discuss their matters and to take decisions (*mato sabh matayan*).<sup>107</sup>

Generally, the assemblage at Akal Takht was in proportion to the magnitude of the danger facing the Sikhs. If they had local problems they decided them through local *gurmata*s, as a *gurmata* could be passed at any place in the presence of the *Guru Granth Sahib*.

After Zakariya Khan's death which took place on July 1, 1745, his two sons quarrelled for the viceroyalty of the Punjab. The Khalsa took advantage of the confusion and lawlessness prevailing at Lahore and met at Amritsar at the very next Diwali which fell on October 14, 1745, and passed a *gurmata* and divided itself into 25 groups, each consisting of about 100 persons. Though *gurmata*s had been passed earlier too but according to Hari Ram Gupta, "this was probably the first *gurmata* regularly passed by the Sikhs after a long period of persecution. This great institution gave each individual a personal share in the important national deliberations and placed within the reach of every Sikh the attainment of rank and influence." Thus, at this time, the Khalsa created the *dals* and brought into prominence the institution of *gurmata*. These two institutions, the Dal Khalsa and the *gurmata*, were of vital importance to the Khalsa's future success as they set the pattern of the later development of the Panth by combining the benefits of centralised counsel with those of dividing itself for the purpose of better organisation. These groups were united not only by religious ties but also by mutual interests and, therefore, a system of general confederation, for self-protection as well as for operations, came into being. When all the contingents of the *dals* undertook an enterprise

unitedly they assumed the name of 'Dal Khalsa' and on common consent one of the chiefs of the *dals* was appointed the supreme head of the Dal Khalsa or the national army and the other chiefs constituted a war cabinet. The entire body of the Sikhs known as the Sarbat Khalsa met twice a year at Amritsar during Baisakhi and Diwali festivals (April and October respectively) and passed *gurmata*s regarding matters of Panthic interest. The Sarbat Khalsa was dominated by the chiefs of the *dals* as they were the persons in a position to enforce or translate into action the *gurmata*s passed. The leader of the Dal Khalsa was looked upon as the head of the church and the state.

With the development of the Sikh liberation movement and its assuming larger proportions, it was felt that a closer union between different groups had become necessary. They assembled in large numbers at Amritsar on the day of Baisakhi on March 29, 1748, and discussed the situation facing the Panth. At the suggestion of Nawab Kapur Singh, a *gurmata* was passed choosing Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia for the supreme command of the Dal Khalsa<sup>108</sup> which was reorganised. Rattan Singh Bhangu and Giani Gian Singh have referred to many *gurmata*s passed on various occasions. Some of these *gurmata*s are said to have been passed by the Dal Khalsa near Kasur, Sialkot, Sirhind, etc. A *gurmata* was passed at Akal Takht on November 7, 1760, on the occasion of Diwali to occupy Lahore.<sup>109</sup> A *gurmata* was passed at Akal Takht on October 27, 1761, that the supporters of Ahmad Shah Abdali, including Aqil Das of Jandiala be chastised.<sup>110</sup> According to Baron Hugel, the first open assembly of the Sikhs took place after the expulsion of Ahmad Shah Abdali's viceroy, Khwaja Ubaid, in 1762. This assembly of the Sarbat Khalsa was held with great rejoicings. After every Sikh had bathed in the purifying holy water of the sacred tank, they met to pass a *gurmata* for the organisation of the Sikh confederacy.<sup>111</sup>

By a *gurmata* the Sikhs decided to get rid of Zain Khan of Sirhind as a result of which he was killed on January 14, 1764.<sup>112</sup> Through another *gurmata* the Sikhs decided to sack Sirhind.<sup>113</sup> In March 1765, on the Festival of Baisakhi the Khalsa assembled at Akal Takht and passed a *gurmata* to occupy Lahore.<sup>114</sup> We also hear of many other meetings of the Sarbat Khalsa as in 1766, 1798, 1805, etc. The *gurmata*s relating to securing the release of Taru Singh, fighting pitched battles against Nadir Shah, Ahmad Shah and Timur Shah, avenging the murder of Bhai Taru Singh, constructing a fort at Amritsar, sending expeditions against their enemies, approving *rakhi* system, recognising territorial possessions of the Sardars under *rakhi*, emphasising the supremacy of the Sarbat Khalsa, etc., are available in contemporary and semi-contemporary records.

After 1765, when the Sikhs assumed sovereignty of different parts of the province, the meetings of these councils became less frequent but they continued to be held occasionally till 1805, when Ranjit Singh had been securely settled at Lahore and there were no problems left confronting the Sikh community.

### **Its Working and Nature**

Whenever there was need for the passing of a *gurmata*, generally the assembly session of the Sarbat Khalsa was convened by the leaders of the community at Akal Takht. According to John Malcolm:

“When the chiefs meet upon this solemn occasion it is concluded that all private animosities cease and that every man sacrifices his personal feelings at the shrine of general good and actuated by the principles of pure patriotism, thinks of nothing but the interests of the religion and commonwealth to which he belongs.

“When the chiefs and principal leaders are seated the *Adi Granth* and *Dasama Padshah ka Granth* are placed before them. They all bend their heads before their scriptures and exclaim ‘*Wah Guru Ji ka Khalsa Wah Guru ji ki Fateh*. ‘A great quantity of cakes made of wheat, butter and sugar are placed before the volumes of their sacred writings and covered with cloth. These holy cakes, which are in commemoration of the injunctions of Nanak, to eat and give to others to eat, next receive the salutation of the assembly, who then rise, and the Akalis pray aloud, while the musicians play. The Akalis, when the prayers are finished, desire the council to be seated. They sit down and the cakes being uncovered are eaten by all classes of Sikhs. Then, distinctions of original tribes, which are on other occasions kept up are on, this occasion laid aside in token of their general and complete union in one cause. The Akalis then exclaim, ‘Sardars (chiefs), this is a *gurmata*, on which prayers are again said aloud. The chiefs after this sit closer and say to each other, the sacred *Granth* is betwixt us, let us swear by our scripture to forget all internal disputes and to be united. This moment of religious fervour and ardent patriotism is taken to reconcile all animosities. They, then, proceed to consider the danger with which they are threaten-end, to settle the best plans for averting it and to choose the generals who are to lead their armies against the common enemy.”<sup>110</sup>

As the Sikh Sardars held Akal Takht in high esteem, the decisions taken there had a moral and religious binding on them. The Sardars could not, therefore, afford to go against the decisions taken at the Akal Takht and run the risk of losing their popularity with the community. “Though the Sardars, at times, quarrelled among themselves, all was peace and friendship when they met at the holy tank of Amritsar. There, each independent Sardar had his fort or dwelling house with a bazar attached for supply of his followers and retainers with food and other necessaries of life.”<sup>116</sup> The chiefs of the Misals had got their hospices or *bungabs* erected round the Harmandir,<sup>117</sup> where they stayed during their visit to Amritsar to attend the meetings of the Sarbat Khalsa.

At the time of their meeting, they assembled in the open space in front of the Akal Takht. Originally, a *gurmata* or resolution was passed by an assembly of all Sikhs giving to each member of the community a sense of participation. As the organisation of the Misal developed the leaders or chiefs of the Misals began to take decisions. Each Sardar had his companions sitting behind him and he participated in the deliberations on behalf of his men. If the followers had any point to make they did it through their Sardar or they could do it direct. In theory, the Sarbat Khalsa always remained a primary assembly, in actual practice, at times, it became representative but it still retained its democratic character. The chief faithfully represented the wishes of his followers as he was himself a chosen leader. Moreover, membership of the Misal being entirely voluntary the members were free to leave the Misal if the chief acted against their wishes. At the same time it was not Sardar’s assembly nor were the deliberations of the national problems the monopoly of the chiefs. But it was a gathering of the community. According to Fauja Singh, the basic ideas kept before them by the members of the assembly were those of equality, unanimity and responsibility. The idea of equality entitled every member of the community, including women, to attend and participate in the deliberations of the assemblies. This right of participation in the discussions had to be exercised personally and directly and not through elected or nominated representatives. The principle of unanimity was based on the belief that the Khalsa was an embodiment of the holy Guru and that all their assemblies were made sanctimonious by the Guru’s presence in them. Therefore, all collective deliberations were conducted in an objective manner. Different view points could be expressed but as they were bound by a solemn pledge of being united in the presence of the Guru, the resolutions were carried unanimously. The choosing of a committee which was created to carry the *gurmata*s of the Sarbat Khalsa into effect and even otherwise to look after the affairs of the community was also conducted on the principle of unanimity. This popularly elected committee was answerable for its

work to the parent body which had the *power* to change it whenever it was deemed necessary. The principle of responsibility involved in this practice was useful and necessary so far as it kept the leadership on guard.<sup>118</sup> When the Sardars met under urgent circumstances in view of a grave situation, taking of decisions might have been confined to a few that happened to attend. In fact, anybody could attend the meeting of the Sarbat Khalsa and express his opinion in respect of every point.

As referred to above, the resolutions were not voted upon individually or passed by majority but were carried *nem. con.*<sup>119</sup> The individual Sardars did not hinder the proceedings of the deliberations. A safeguard, inherent in the constitution of the Khalsa was helpful in avoiding deadlocks. No resolution could be put before a meeting of the Sarbat Khalsa unless, as a preliminary condition, a solemn assurance was given by the leaders present that they were positively one in the Guru. If they had any old scores still to settle they—as many as had differences—would retire for a time to make them up and when they had done so they would come forward and announce that they had made their peace and were fit to participate dispassionately in the *gurmata*. The presiding officer of the Sarbat Khalsa would then announce that the Khalsa was in the Guru and then put the *gurmata* before the assembly and announced the wordings of the resolutions after which the discussions started. Sometimes very lively discussions were held and the participants advanced opposing views but when more people were for a particular decision the persons with dissenting votes yielded and the decision was taken unanimously.

In theory and practice the Sarbat Khalsa was democratic as within the council the Sardars—whatever their territories, forces and positions as chiefs—were always considered equal members of the council. The common leadership of the federation was elective. The elected leader never acted despotically, rather he held full discussions over national problems with the other Sardars and mostly worked according to the will and direction of the other chiefs. From close scrutiny we discover that the main object of the Sarbat Khalsa and the *gurmata* was the preservation of the corporate existence of the Sikh people. The Sikhs at that time took it as a national institution. The only body to which the Misals owed allegiance was the Sarbat Khalsa or the Panth Khalsa ji as a whole which had been consecrated by Guru Gobind Singh as the sovereign authority of the community. The only link that held them together was the defence of the Panth.<sup>120</sup>

The councils of the Sarbat Khalsa had a variety of problems for their deliberations. Thorough discussions were held before the *gurmatas* were passed. Through the *gurmatas* the Sarbat Khalsa elected the *jathedar* or the chief leader of the Dal Khalsa and chose agents who were entrusted with *powers* to negotiate with others on behalf of the Sikhs. Secondly, by the *gurmata* the Sikhs decided the foreign policy to be pursued by them. Thirdly, they drew up plans of military operations against the common enemies of the community. Fourthly, they took up the private feuds of the Sikh chiefs; sometimes cases of disputed succession were also brought before the Diet for its verdict as a judicial body. And fifthly, they took measures for the spread of the Sikh faith and the management of the Gurdwaras.

When the Dal Khalsa undertook an important expedition under the decisions of the Sarbat Khalsa in the form of the *gurmata*, the amount of the booty was reported to the assembly and decision was taken regarding its division among the Sardars in proportion to the number of their troops.<sup>121</sup>

This assembly of the chiefs, meeting unfrequently, could not be called the central government of the Sikh Misals. This assembly had no political jurisdiction or military sanction over the individual chiefs, nor was it necessary. Their attendance was not compulsory but the chiefs considered it obligatory to attend it, specially with a view to promoting the general interests of the community. Although there existed no means to enforce an obedience to the *gurmata* passed at Akal Takht yet there was never an occasion known to history when such a decision was flouted. The decisions taken in the presence of the *Guru Granth* had behind them the religious sanction, the force of which was greater than that of a military dictator. The Sikhs obeyed these decisions even at the cost of their lives. They believed that the *gurmata* or the decision of the council had the spiritual sanction of the Guru.<sup>122</sup> This simple constitution of the Sikh commonwealth was sufficient to preserve the Khalsa through troublous times. The *gurmata* was a system of the inherent strength of the unity of the Khalsa.

Sometimes when the Sikh chiefs were confronted with such problems as related to their individual states and there was no immediate possibility of taking the case to the Sarbat Khalsa meeting at Akal Takht the chief transacted business locally by inviting the concerned Sikhs or important persons of the Misal. Sometimes questions of foreign policy were also taken up and decided in such local meetings. Local *gurmata* also had the same meaning and force. According to the *Haqiqat-i-bina-i-Sikhan*, "If a messenger from any other *power* went to them for negotiations, the Sardars did not have an independent *power* to have dialogue with him. At first a mattress was spread at a particular place. The Sardar sat there with his associates. One was asked to offer a prayer. He stood up, made an announcement about the coming of an envoy of a particular Amir to make peace with the Khalsa ji. It was for the Khalsa to announce their resolution. Those who had assembled would give their opinion. "The above author writes further that all persons assembled there had full freedom to express their opinions regarding the matter under discussion. And "every one is independent in his own position. Even if he had two horses and one village he would not bow down to anybody."<sup>123</sup> We see in the contemporary record the coming of Jowahir Singh, the son of Suraj Mal, the ruler of Bharatpur, to an assembly of the Sikhs. He made a request for avenging his father's blood. The Sikh Sardars who attended the meeting said whatever they felt like saying.<sup>124</sup>

We find that in the meetings of the Sarbat Khalsa held for national concern and in the local gatherings of the Khalsa for local affairs, it was the whole assembly that decided the matters. No Sikh however insignificant he might have been, ever carried an impression of being ignored. He could participate in debates and push forward his point. In the words of Polier:

"All the chiefs, great or small, and even the poorest and most abject Siques, look on themselves as perfectly equal in all the public concerns and in the greatest council or Goormotta of the nation held annually either at Ambarsar, Lahore or some other place. In this council or Diet all the public affairs are debated, such as alliances, wars and the excursions intended to be made in the ensuing year."<sup>125</sup>

There was no ban on freedom of speech. "A real democratic element was there in the constitution."<sup>126</sup> In external appearance it was an aristocracy but in spirit it was, undoubtedly, a democracy.

When the situation on all front eased, the Sikh chiefs became a little indifferent to attending the meetings of the Sarbat Khalsa at Amritsar. Now, their meetings were attended by a few chiefs. But the absentees never meant any opposition to such meetings or any resistance to decisions taken

there. Being busy in their internal affairs, the Sardars sometimes, just could not attend. There was absolutely no such thing as intentionally breaking away of the Sardars from the Sarbat Khalsa with a calculated design to weaken this institution as John Malcolm and Prinsep believe.<sup>127</sup> The real fact was that with the rise of Ranjit Singh as a sovereign ruler, the Punjab had come to be consolidated and the foreign invaders had ceased to endanger the country and the community. Therefore, the occasion for calling the grand Diet of the whole community had disappeared.

Some people wrongly believe that Ranjit Singh abolished the *gurmata* after 1805, when only a few Sardars responded to his call to attend the meeting to take a decision in respect of the situation created by Jaswant Rao Holkar's entry into the Punjab followed by the English forces.

Explaining Ranjit Singh's not calling the meeting of the Sardars at Akal Takht, Teja Singh writes that it was a long awaited fulfilment of the Sikh ideal; the secularization of service. . he wanted to make Hindus and Muslims feel that they were as much the people of the land as his own co-religionists. He, therefore, abolished the rule of the Akal Takht so far as political affairs were concerned. . . the *gurmata* of Akal Takht had no place in such a secular scheme. It would have put a great strain on the loyalty of the Hindu and Muslim subjects if he had still tried to rule over them by the religious edicts issued from the Mecca of the Sikhs.<sup>128</sup>

Teja Singh's contention that in a bid to secularize his rule Ranjit Singh dissolved the *gurmata* is not correct. The Maharaja's regard for all people irrespective of their religious affiliations was not rooted in any conception of a secular state. Ranjit Singh had no idea of a secular state as we understand it today. His policy towards the non-Sikhs was inspired by his sense of paternalism and benevolence. He was the product of the revolution that had taken place in the Punjab in the eighteenth century. He followed the Sikh traditions of liberalism. He always remembered that he was a member of the Khalsa fraternity. He worked for the glorification of the Sikh Panth and was sincere in his professions of his government being the Sarkar-i-Khalsa.

Teja Singh wrongly puts *gurmata* tradition vis-i-vis secular tradition. With the attainment of political *power* neither the need for the Sikh unity and Panthic organisation becomes less important nor the need of the *gurmata* or collective deliberations fades out. Rather, in the changed circumstances it was necessary to give a new shape to the relationship between the Panthic organisation and *gurmata* on one side and the government authority on the other. On the one side, the government should have the autonomy to function as a liberal and paternal authority and on the other the Panthic organisation should determine the directive principles of state policy through the procedure of *gurmata*. As we see today, the political party takes decisions as to how its government should function and the government implements the party's policies. So through the *gurmata* polity Ranjit Singh could conduct the affairs of his-state according to the discussions of the Panthic organisation through the *gurmata*. But he failed to avail himself of the decisions of the Panth taken collectively. The government could implement these decisions in a liberal manner.

The eighteenth century Sardars had also observed non-sectarian and liberal traditions and showed full religious toleration.<sup>129</sup> The Muslims and Hindus, however, had to establish their bonafides before getting into the government of the Sikh chiefs. The meeting of the Sikhs at a common, religious and respected place, never meant that they would exclude non-Sikhs from their services. Lehna Singh Bhangi was given preference over a Muslim as the ruler of Lahore by the Muslim population of the city.<sup>130</sup> At no meeting of the Sarbat Khalsa we hear of a proposal being made or a resolution being passed to the detriment of the interests of the non-Sikhs under the Sikh

chiefs. Rather, their non-communal attitude to the temporal problems was one of the main ideals of Sikhism.

As the situation created in 1805, by the presence of the Maratha army under Jaswant Rao Holkar pursued by the English under Lord Lake, was not very serious, the meeting of the Sarbat Khalsa was not very seriously taken by the Sikh Sardars. Nor was it very serious indeed for the whole Sikh nation. None of the two had come to the Punjab as an aggressive invader. Jaswant Rao Holkar was a helpless fugitive who had come here to seek shelter and help from the ruler of Lahore, Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Lake on the other hand, was only pursuing him into his place of refuge, to chase him out for surrender and wanted the Punjab's neutrality in the matter. He had no intention, whatever, overt or covert, to invade the Punjab or any part of any Sikh territory. Thus, the situation did not warrant the urgent attendance of all the Sikh Sardars at Akal Takht. The meeting of the Khalsa convened by Maharaja Ranjit Singh to chalk out their future course of action, in respect of the Marathas and the English, therefore, attracted only a few directly affected Sardars and their *gurmata* was able to successfully solve the problem that faced them.<sup>131</sup>

Thereafter, there never arose during the reign of the Maharaja and some five years after his death, up to the end of November, 1845, the eve of the First Anglo-Sikh War, an occasion for a national convention to resolve upon a problem of national magnitude. Therefore, although the Baisakhi and Diwali festivals were, as usual, celebrated with the same old enthusiasm and meetings of the Sarbat Khalsa were also held at Akal Takht, there have been only one or two occasions during the Akali movement in the third decade of the twentieth century when questions affecting the whole of the nation called for a national *gurmata*. It is, therefore historically incorrect to say that Maharaja Ranjit Singh abolished the *gurmata* or that it came to be abandoned with the mutual wranglings of the Sikh Misaldars and Sardars or that it died of itself with the passage of time. The *gurmata* is a living thing and can be made use of whenever an occasion for it arises. In a limited sense, every resolution passed by any *sangat* anywhere at any time in the presence of the Sikh Holy Book, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, is a *gurmata* and is usually passed in the matters of local general interest and is binding on members of the *sangat* like a national *gurmata*. In fact, the *gurmata* is, purely, a Sikh religious resolution even if it were to solve political or social problems of the community. No individual Sikh, however highly placed, could abolish it.

### **The Nature of the Misal Organisation**

It will be too much to expect any concrete form of government from the Sardars immediately after their assuming administrative control. They had passed through a life of great stress and strain for half a century. The form of government introduced by them has received different interpretations at different hands. In Cunningham's view the Misal organisation was "a theocratic confederate feudalism."<sup>132</sup> According to the *Chamber's Dictionary*, 'theocracy is that constitution of a state in which God or god is regarded as the sole sovereign and the laws of the realm as divine commands rather than human ordinances,-the priesthood necessarily becoming the officers of invisible ruler.' The state thus governed is a theocratic state. In the words of Cunningham, the organisation of the Misal was theocratic as "God was their helper and only judge, community of faith or object was their moving principle, and warlike array, the devotion the steel of Gobind, was their material instrument."<sup>133</sup> The same author continues that it was confederate because "year by year the Sarbat Khalsa or the whole Sikh people meet once at Amritsar. . . . It was perhaps hoped that the performance of religious duties and the awe inspired by so holy a place might cause selfishness to yield to a regard for the general welfare. . . . They sought wisdom and unanimity of counsel from their teacher and the book of his word"<sup>134</sup> And he further says that it was

feudalism because “the federate chiefs partitioned their joint conquests equally among themselves and divided their respective shares in the same manner among their own leaders of bands while these again sub-divided their portions among their own dependents agreeably to the general custom of subinfeudation.”<sup>135</sup>

At the same time, Cunningham says that this system existed “with all the confusion and uncertainty attendant upon a triple alliance of the kind in society half-barbarous” and further “this positive or understood rule was not always applicable to the actual conditions. . . In theory such men (the Sikhs) were neither the subjects nor the retainers of any feudal chiefs and they could transfer their services to whom they pleased or they could themselves become leaders and acquire new lands for their own use in the name of the Khalsa or the commonwealth.”<sup>136</sup>

Malcolm, an earlier writer, has opined that the government of the Sikhs was theocratic and “the chief preserves his *power* and authority by professing himself the servant of the Khalsa or government. . . and the national council. . . is supposed to deliberate and resolve under the immediate inspiration and impulse of an invisible being who, they believe, always watches over the interests of the commonwealth.”<sup>137</sup>

A still earlier writer, Forster, gives us to understand that the Sikhs believe in theocracy at least in theory. When Forster asked of a Sikh the name of his Sardar the Sikh seemed convulsed and revolted at the idea of servitude. “He disdained an earthly superior and acknowledged no other master than his prophet.”<sup>138</sup>

In actual practice we find that the Sikh states or Misals were not governed according to any definite system of government. The chiefs formulated their codes for the conduct of the state business as it suited them. The infrequent meetings of the Sikh chiefs at Akal Takht probably never took up for consideration a proposal for a common and uniform code of government. The nature of their deliberations has been discussed earlier. The meetings were held to face an emergency and discuss general affairs of mutual interests. Forster has clearly pointed out that “the administration of ecclesiastical affairs was entrusted to a certain society of religious.. but they did not possess any influence in the temporal regulations of the state. These were the principal ordinances enacted by the first chiefs when the people were united and a common object governed their public conduct.”<sup>139</sup>

A.C. Banerjee, challenging the view expressed by Cunningham asserts that the organisation of the Misal was ‘democratic in composition and religious in its cohesive principles’. Banerjee holds that the organisation could not be theocratic because the Sikh priests did not hold sway over the policies of the Misals. Again he asserts that it could not be feudal because feudalism cannot exist apart from monarchy. And the subordinate Sikh chiefs too did not owe military or fiscal obligation to their chiefs. They could easily transfer their services from one chief to another.<sup>140</sup>

The respect or observance of certain Khalsa ideals by the Sikh chiefs has misled some historians into thinking that a Sikh state was a theocracy. But it may be noted that these ideals, as already discussed, are of cosmopolitan nature enjoining upon the Sikhs, religious toleration, liberalism, justice, upright moral conduct, service of humanity and democratic ideas. All these things were based on human experience and not on divine revelation.



N.K. Sinha has drawn up a sharp contrast between the Sikh feudalism and the feudalism of the medieval Europe and that of Rajputana. He observes that the feudalism of the Sikhs differed almost totally not only from the feudalism in Europe, in medieval times, but also from the feudalism that obtained in Rajputana, close to the homeland of the Sikhs. The Misals were the confederacies of equals and they kept in view the reciprocal benefits or the well-being of their Misals. At no stage of Sikh history do we find a haughty nobility as in Rajputana or in medieval Europe. In Rajputana, the chiefs were divided into very clear grades, and similarly there was graded society in medieval feudal Europe. In Rajputana, there was a patriarchal element, prominently visible, a large number of vassal chiefs claimed blood affinity to the ruler. But in the Sikh *jagirdari* system (feudalism) we find no such patriarchal element and also there were no feudal obligation of military service. The feudal system of Europe has been described by Gibbon as the offspring of chance and barbarism. The Punjab system was certainly not feudal in the European sense. The all-pervading sense of brotherhood and a religious outlook would not, at least in theory, allow distinctions of rank.<sup>141</sup>

The majority of the foreign travellers and historians have made a particular mention of a dominant element of democracy in the Sikh system of government during the Misal period.

According to Polier, it was an 'aristocratic republic'<sup>142</sup> and he further writes that "they (the Sikhs) formed themselves into a kind of republic and in the course of a few years possessed themselves of the full government of the provinces of Lahore and Multan."<sup>143</sup> And in the words of Gordon, "these Sardars did not exercise absolute supremacy over their Misals, the constitution of which was very democratic and the authority of the chiefs limited."<sup>144</sup> He further writes that "the chiefs and men, all sat down together to eat and drink on a footing of equality."<sup>148</sup> He calls the Misal organisation, "an oligarchy based on republican principles."<sup>116</sup> Forster, who saw a bit of the Sikhs and wrote in the early eighties of the eighteenth century, says, "I find an embarrassment in applying a distinct term to the form of the Sikh government which, on the first view, bears an appearance of aristocracy but a closer examination discovers a large vein of popular *power* branching through many of its parts. No honorary or titular distinction is conferred on any member of the state. An equality of rank is maintained in their civil society which no class of men, however wealthy or *powerful*, is sufficient to break down. At the period when general councils of the nation were convened which consisted of the army at large, every member had the privilege of delivering his opinion and the majority, it is said, decided on the subject in debate."<sup>147</sup>

The Sardar, no doubt, commanded a superior position as compared to his dependents but those followers, if dissatisfied with their leader, reserved to themselves the opinion of curtailing their services and transferring themselves to some other leader.<sup>148</sup> This was a most democratic privilege that could be enjoyed by every follower of every Sikh chief.

Sir George Campbell<sup>149</sup> has supplied very valuable information about the character of the Misal organisation and its government. He writes, "The Sikh system is very like that out of which the German system sprung. They formed Misals or military confederacies. Each Misal elected its own supreme chief and sub-chiefs. The combined Misals formed the Khalsa, or Sikh commonwealth. Just as in Germany the tendency was to an elective supreme chief who had very little *power* and whose place was not hereditary. But the chiefs of the Misals and minor chiefs gradually acquired hereditary footing like the dukes and barons of Europe."<sup>150</sup>

Campbell has given the account of the republic of Mehraj for which he is all praise. He writes that near the centre of the Malwa country, there is "a place called Mehraj consisting of a

mother town with good many daughter villages and inhabited by people of the dominant race of all that country, the Jats.” With the breaking up of the Mughal *power* the Phulkian family struck of independence. The same author says further, “If they had struck together and maintained their allegiance to the mother town, Mehraj might have become another Rome.” But what they had conquered in common was divided and they separated. The Phulkian Sardars continued expanding territorially in all directions but Mehraj was not touched by any of them. Campbell continues, “I do not think it was on account of respect for the place of their origin that these Jat Caesars did not enslave their mother state but rather because they were so jealous of one another that if anyone of them attempts to do so, the others all combined to prevent him. At any rate, Mehraj remained an independent republic till with the rest of the country it came under British protection. We recognise the Sikh states as they existed and Mehraj continued completely independent self-governing republic down to my time—the only real well-established republic that I know in India. It really was a very complete, fully equipped republic. I had political charge of it when I went up to the Satluj. . . . It was much more than a mere village or municipal government, it was diplomatically recognised as a state and had its own administration and state justice. I saw regular prisoners with great logs of wood upon their legs just as I did at Lahore. There was no chief or hereditary ruler. The state was governed by its *punches* or representative elders. There was nothing of any feudal system or any division into conquerors or conquered. Apart from a helot class which exists everywhere in India all the citizens were free and equal. It was purely indigenous state.”<sup>151</sup>

It is true that all states were not republics like Mehraj and not ruled by *punches* but by the Sardars or chiefs. But there is hardly any doubt that the democratic and republican principles were ingrained in the social and political ethics of the Sikhs. The Sardars took no decisions on their own and the persons invited for discussions and advice, expressed themselves frankly and sincerely and majority decisions were honoured. Despite all these observations it may be remarked that not much of democracy, as a system of government, could be traced in the internal organisation of the Misals. When entrenched in strong positions after a prolonged struggle for existence, they failed to carry forward their ideas of democracy. It is probable that they felt that direct democracy was unsuited to the circumstances in which they were required to act as rulers and in order, to establish themselves as such they took to the idea of personal government that was in general prevalence in the country. The comparative freedom from danger from Ahmad Shah Abdali’s side after 1765, might also have had the effect of taking the edge off their enthusiasm for democratic ideas.

The government of the Misal was, no doubt, a confederacy composed of the chiefs and his close associates working liberally and benevolently towards the people. And, the further confederal system that the Misals evolved to meet the dangerous situations was not out of a keenly felt necessity of such a system or in a sincere bid to stick to their old ideal of democracy. We do not find much of earnestness about democracy or confederation in the minds of the chiefs. But the idea of commonwealth was too strongly prevalent among the Sikhs to be disregarded and actually it was this that saved the Misals from completely falling apart.

Apparently the Misal organisation was, in a way, a double confederation; a confederation of Misal’s constituent parts and a confederation of various Misals. But within the Misal the Sardar functioned, in a large measure, as an independent ruler. As the ties with the Khalsa commonwealth were very strong, a suitable adjustment was necessary between the rival ideas of allegiance to the commonwealth and the Sardar’s independence in the internal affairs of the state. According to Fauja Singh, the problem was solved by a constitutional arrangement based on confederation in which, in a broad way, while the local units were allowed to carry on their normal functions of

administration, the vital questions of national importance were reserved to be discussed at the meetings of the Sarbat Khalsa. Under this arrangement, however, the balance of *power* heavily weighed in favour of local independence, for the central authority, as it stood, could not function effectively as its sessions were held very infrequently. In between the sessions of the national Diet there were sometimes long intervals during which the centrifugal tendencies got the opportunity of strengthening themselves, thus weakening the earlier ideal of democracy inherent in the constituents of the commonwealth.<sup>152</sup>

Others have interpreted the organisation of the Misals still differently, some calling it aristocracy and some others military republic. The real thing is that it would not be very correct to assign any definite constitution to the organisation. The political terminology known to us may perhaps fail in explaining the peculiar system of the Sikhs as it existed. At best, we may agree partially with Ibbetson that the Misal organisation was “a curious mixture of theocracy, democracy and absolutism.”<sup>153</sup> It was theocratic (in a very limited sense) as the Sikh soldiers and Sardars fought for the Guru and when they assembled at Amritsar before the *Guru Granth Sahib* they did what the religious assemblies decided, It was democratic because every soldier and member of the Misal enjoyed social and political equality. But ‘absolutism’ did not mean as we understand it from its modern concept. They could not afford to exercise unrestricted and completely independent authority or rule arbitrarily.

### **Government of the Misal**

Some people have deprecated the government of the Misal as harsh and oppressive but on the basis of the writings of contemporary writers and travellers there is no denying the fact that the system of their government had certainly the elements of goodness, justice, and humanitarianism in it. Not insensible to the advantages of a good government, the Sikh chiefs always kept before them the well-being of their subjects. “All their rights and constitutional liabilities were regulated as nicely as in any European confederacy.”<sup>154</sup>

Writing on February 17, 1794, John Griffiths says about the Sikhs that “they have the character of being rather mild and benignant than otherwise in their interior government.”<sup>155</sup> The government of the Sikh chiefs has been spoken of well by all persons who came into touch with them and had a closer peep into their conduct of public affairs. The Sikh rule did not escape the observation of Polier who wrote, “In their intestine divisions from what is seen everywhere else, that the husbandman and labourer, in their own districts, are properly safe and unmolested, let what will happen round about them.”<sup>156</sup> In 1788, James Renell recorded that, “we know but little concerning the state of their government and politics but the former is represented as being mild,” and he further records that “they have extended their territories on the south-east, that is, into the provinces of Delhi; very rapidly of late years; and perhaps the *zamindars* of that country may have found it convenient to place themselves under the protection of the Sikhs, in order to avoid the more oppressive government of their former masters.”<sup>157</sup>

William Francklin, who had a first hand knowledge of the Sikhs, wrote, “The Sikhs, in the interior part of their country, preserve good order and a regular government and the cultivation of their lands is attended with much assiduity.”<sup>158</sup>

About the closing years of the eighteenth century, George Thomas, who came into frequent direct contact with the Sikhs, wrote, “In the Seikh territories, though the government be arbitrary there exists much less cause for oppression than in many of the neighbouring states; and hence

likewise the cultivator of the soil being liable to frequent change of master, by the numerous revolutions that are perpetually occurring, may be considered as one of the causes of fluctuation of the national force.”<sup>159</sup> And Malcolm who travelled in the Sikh country in 1803, writes, “In no country, perhaps, is the *rayat* or cultivator treated with more indulgence.”<sup>160</sup> Many more such contemporary or near contemporary sources may be quoted to testify the fact that the government of the Sikh chiefs was mild and un-oppressive and that they kept before them the well-being of the people. They never forgot that they were from amongst the people and their states were because of the people and that they could not ignore their interests.

### **Village Government**

According to Campbell, in most of the states of the Punjab the position of the village communities was recognised; they retained their village self-government and only paid the customary revenue to the state. Some villages, at times, paid the revenue not without a murmur. Campbell further says, “The villages were, almost all, walled and fortified. I remember one strong village in Kaithal which for generations had made it a point of honour never to admit a government officer within their walls; they paid the revenue over the wall and that was enough. In the same village the different *pattis* (sub-divisions of a village) were barricaded against one another. They all combined against an outside foe but could not trust one another. The *pattis* or wards were, not unfrequently, as in this case, of different castes and even different religions; but they had a tolerable *modus vivendi* and remained one of the different tribes and gentes which combined on the seven hills of Rome.”<sup>161</sup>

As seen and recorded by Campbell, the constitution of the democratic villages of northern India and their government was run by representative *punches*.<sup>162</sup> And he further write that ‘*punch men pramesher*’ or in the *punches* there is God, which is the equivalent or ‘*Vox populi vox dei*’ or perhaps should be put a little differently, ‘the voice of the representative assembly is the voice of God’. . . . “The best system for that country was a paternal despotism above with local self-government below.”<sup>163</sup> T. Fortescue writes, “No instances occur of a proprietor being driven from the village by oppression or violence of one or any number of other sharers; on the contrary it is observable that they tender each other the most friendly and essential aides when in distress. They will supply cattle, till the lands themselves, contribute money when a sharer has been really unfortunate and they assist him in the disposal of his produce, in providing seed, bullocks and implements, should they be satisfied with him. This feeling. . . is extended to the widow and necessitous family of a deceased sharer and its effects scarcely surpassed.”<sup>164</sup>

According to Campbell, “Each village had a complete self-government. There were also people generally known as representatives of *pergunahs* or large tracts who used to treat with the government on certain matters. On the whole their system of local government was really, I believe, exceedingly good. . . . There was often an opposition party who accused the village *punch* of various malversations, overcharges for public entertainments and bribes, and such like matters just as if they had been situated in London of today, but at any rate I do not think these were worse than in civilised countries, rather I believe that they were not merely so bad.”<sup>165</sup> Campbell was a great admirer of ‘indigenous municipalities’ as he calls them. He disapproved the British plans to replace them by big institutions on a large scale. He says, “Certainly my experience of the village institutions on the Satluj, where perhaps they are at their best, made me appreciate them very much indeed and I think that they were not only good for India but for some other countries as well. In fact, I can deliberately say that far from imposing any ideas on these people it was from them that I learnt ideas

of local self-government which I retain to this day and which I have brought with me to my native country.”<sup>166</sup>

And thus, according to Campbell, “those village constitutions that then existed, certainly worked admirably well.”<sup>167</sup>

### The Sikh Coins

According to Hari Ram Gupta, the Sikhs after the conquest of Lahore in November 1761, seizing the royal mint, struck the first rupee which bore this inscription:

*Sika zad dar jahan ba fazle Akal  
Mulke-i-Ahmad grift Jassa Kalal.*

(Jassa Kalal, having seized the country of Ahmad, struck coin in the world by the grace of God).

But it does not seem to be correct.<sup>168</sup> In the trans-Satluj territory two types of coins were used by the Sikh chiefs. The coin struck in 1765, after the Sikh conquest of Lahore, bore the old inscription of Banda Singh’s days, expressing devotion to the Sikh Gurus. According to Irvine, Banda Singh assumed royal authority, issued coins, introduced an official seal and a new calendar dating from the capture of Sirhind.<sup>169</sup> His coins bore the names of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh:

*Sikka zad bar har du alam tegh-i-Nanak wabib ast  
Fateh Gobind Singh Shab-i-Shaban fazal-i-sacha Sabib ast.*

(Struck coins in the two worlds, by the grace of the true Lord; the sword of Nanak is the granter of all boons and the victory is of Guru Gobind Singh, the king of kings).

On the reverse of the coin is:

*Zarb ba aman ud-dabar maswrat shahr  
Zint-ul-takht-i-mubarak bakht.*

(Coined at the city of peace, illustrating the beauty of civic life and the ornament of the blessed throne).<sup>170</sup>

Banda Singh also introduced an official seal for state documents and letters patent. The inscription on the seal was:

*Deg-o-tegh-o-fateh-o-nusrat bedirang  
Yaft az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh.*<sup>171</sup>

(The kettle and the sword (symbols of service and *power*), victory and ready patronage have been obtained from the Gurus, Nanak and Gobind Singh).

According to the *Akbbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla*, Banda Singh had got inscribed on the *mohur*:

*Azamat-i-Nanak Guru ham zabar-o-batan ast  
Padshah-i-din-o-duniya aap sacha sahib ast.*

(Inwardly and outwardly the greatness of Guru Nanak was established. The true Guru was the king of this world and world hereafter).<sup>172</sup>

The two different inscriptions on the coins and seals as introduced by Banda Singh continued to be followed by all the Sikh rulers. From the examination of the Sikh coins we find slight change in the text of the inscriptions of some coins. This unintentional change crept in the inscriptions at the time of setting the words on the dies by their manufacturers. The Sikh Sardars

minted the coins almost every year and the interruption was caused only during foreign invasions or internal strife.

The minting of coins was not confined to any particular place. Every Sardar set up his own mint in the territory under his control.<sup>173</sup> The Sikh chiefs believed that the *raj* had been given to them by the Gurus. Therefore, they struck their coins in the names of the givers of the *raj*. Themselves, they were just the humble servants of the Gurus.

Even the great Maharaja Ranjit Singh would not issue a coin in his own name. He maintained the same old inscription of the Khalsa and named his coins after Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh (i.e. belonging to Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh). Thus, the Sikh chiefs in the trans-Satluj territory continued to cherish the belief and practised accordingly that the victory over their enemies was a triumph not of any individual leader but of the Lord Eternal or of the Sikh commonwealth, and the coins were struck in the names of the Gurus, the founders of the Khalsa commonwealth.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh started minting coins in 1801. The new rupee (of silver) was of 11 *mashas* and 2 *raffs* and was called Nanakshahi rupee. The obverse of the coin shows the legend attributed to the grace of the Gurus and on the reverse is embossed the year and place of its minting. It also bears a *peepal* leaf and arrow—*peepal* tree signifying the eternal tree of life and arrow symbolising *power* and strength. Full or a portion of earlier inscriptions are found on these coins as:

*Shah Nanak wahab ast*  
*Fateh-i-Gobind Singh Shah-i-Shaban*  
*Fazal-i-Sacha Sahib ast*  
*Sikka zad bar seem-o-zar.*

(Lord Nanak is the granter of all boons, victory is of Gobind Singh, the king of kings. By the grace of the true Lord the coin is struck in silver and gold).

On the reverse is:

*Zarb dar-ul-Sulnat Lahore*  
*Samat 1857* (leaf symbol)

(Struck at the seat of government, Lahore, in the auspicious *samat* 1857).

The Amritsar and Lahore rupees issued afterwards kept their usual inscription. The coins were struck at Multan, Srinagar and Peshawar as well, with the same inscription. The reverse had generally the popular symbol of *peepal* leaf, the name of the mint and the date of minting. One of the coins available has on its reverse images of Guru Nanak and his Muslim companion, Mardana. We have the *moburs* (gold coins) of *samat* 1861 (A.D. 1804) with no indication of the mint town. A *mobur* weighed 169 grains.

The copper coins of Ranjit Singh are remarkable for their heavy weight and bold execution. There was no uniformity in weight of copper coins which were generally of different weights. These coins bear dates, symbols and legends similar to those on the silver and gold coins. On the reverse of the copper coins is the leaf symbol and the inscriptions as *zarb Sri Amritsar ji* and the *samat, Khalsa ji* *zarb Sri Amritsarji*, *zarb-i-Lahore*, *zarb-i-Dera* (Derajat) and *zarb-i-Kashmir*.

Dr Madanjit Kaur, who worked extensively on the coins of Maharaja Ranjit Singh has summed up her observations as under: the most striking feature of the coins of Ranjit Singh is that

they show a close association with religion and famous local legends. These coins have on them 'peepal leaf and 'crossed swords'. Most of the coins bear the date and place of minting. It seems that the mints at Lahore, Amritsar and other places in the Maharaja's kingdom did not always have trained workers, and, therefore, some of the coins have irregular shapes and only half of the words can be read; the blocks made, appear to be bigger than the coins. The coins, in use, were made from three metals: gold, silver and copper. Generally there was lack of uniformity in the weight of coins. Lack of standardisation of currency must have created problems.<sup>174</sup>

The coins used and manufactured by the Phulkian houses in the cis-Satluj areas were of different types as compared to those of the trans-Satluj Sardars.

In March 1767, Ahmad Shah Abdali was pleased to grant on the recommendation of Shah Vali Khan, the government of Sirhind to *Raja-i-Rajgan* Amar Singh of Patiala who struck coins in the name of Ahmad Shah with the following inscription:

*Hukam shud az qadar be chonba-Ahmad Padshah  
Sikka zan bar seem-o-zar az mahi ta ba mah.*

God, the inscrutable, commanded Ahmad, the king, to stamp silver and gold currency from the pisces to the moon.

This was the first coin struck in the name of Ahmad Shah at Qandhar immediately after his coronation.

At the same time Amar Singh added 'Bamezai' the name of his patron Shah Vali Khan's tribe to his own name in the coin.<sup>175</sup> Ahmad Shah Abdali conferred the title on Amar Singh when the former was almost being pushed out of the Punjab by the Sikhs. Under such circumstances the conferring of a title was just a mockery. And the Phulkian house, amusingly enough, prolonged this derision till recent times. According to Ganda Singh, these coins were, in fact, never meant for general circulation and were only struck on the *Dussehra* day or on the accession of a new ruler right up to the reign of the last Maharaja of Patiala, Shri Yadvindra Singh.<sup>176</sup> Since the days of Ala Singh they exercised full sovereign *power* within their state.

In the cis-Satluj country, there were four important mints, that is, at Patiala, Nabha, Jind and Kaithal and all these mints struck similar coins with the exception of a distinctive mark or sign of the chief issuing them. According to Griffin, "Maharaja Amar Singh's rupee is distinguished by representation of a *kalghi* (small aigrette plume); Maharaja Sahib Singh by that of a *saij* (or double-edged sword)."<sup>177</sup> But R. C. Temple did not agree with Griffin's statement. He says, "At Patiala I found that the officials knew very little but that the bankers know a great deal and traditionally knew to whom to assign the various rupees at once. Their statements were that Alha Singh, Amar Singh, and Sahib Singh all used the *kalghi*, Karam Singh, the *saij*."<sup>178</sup>

Raja Gajpat Singh of Jind borrowed the 'Durrani die' from Patiala and used it without making any change in the same, except that Jind was inscribed in place of the word, Patiala. Though in actual practice he owed allegiance to Shah Alam II of Delhi but he used the coins of Ahmad Shah Durrani. The coins used by the *Bhais* of Kaithal were also of similar type. Different chiefs of Kaithal put different minor marks on their coins. The rulers of Nabha made an attempt "to vary stereotyped form of the coinage of these Punjab chiefs but it will be observed that originality has not gone beyond imitating the legend of the overshadowing state of Lahore."<sup>179</sup>

The Sikh rulers or chiefs of the trans-Satluj territories, however, never excused the Phulkian chiefs for accepting the overlordship of Ahmad Shah Abdali and issuing coins in his name who had done so much harm to the Sikhs and their holy places.

### **The Process of Criminal and Civil Justice**

In the words of Malcolm, “The administration of justice in the countries under the Sikhs, is in a very rude and imperfect state, for though their scriptures inculcate general maxims of justice. . . and having no fixed code, they appear to have adopted that irregular practice, which is most congenial to the temper of the people, and best suited to the unsteady and changing character of their rules of government.”<sup>180</sup> Malcolm further writes that a Sikh priest who had been several years in Calcutta, spoke of the great superiority of the system of Sikh justice over the bothersome system of the English government which was, he said, “tedious, vexatious and expensive and advantageous only to the clever rogues.”<sup>181</sup> Ordinary cases of the village were settled by the *panchayat* which was “always chosen from men of the best reputation”, and thus village court enjoyed a higher character for justice. The decisions of the *panchayats* were taken voluntarily. The social pressure was sufficient enough to make even the most refractory member of a community bear the severest punishment most calmly. In case of disobedience to the *panchayat's* decision, the culprit was declared an outcast and all the members of the village community refused to associate with him for fear of the same punishment. The village functionaries rendered him no assistance so much so that the menials too refused all service.<sup>182</sup>

The *panchayats* worked very efficiently, and misconduct, dishonesty and corruption on their part must have been very rare. Charles Elliot, Agent to the Governor-General, wrote in 1824, “I cannot call to recollection a single instance, during ten years’ experience in these states of a *panchayat* being convicted of bribery.”<sup>183</sup>

According to Campbell, “Apart from the representative *punches* there were generally found in a large tract of the country two or three venerable and respected men who had come to be the fashion as it were, as referees in cases of dispute, valuations, etc., and who received fees or presents for their trouble. . . . I am bound to admit that their complete honesty was sometimes in some degree impeached.”<sup>184</sup> The cases were disposed of speedily. The crimes and trespasses were expiated by money and the fine realised was not so much according to the gravity of the offence as the means of the offender.<sup>185</sup>

Justice was an important source of income, and efforts were made to realise money both from the plaintiff and the defendant. In a case of theft, for instance, a plaintiff was required to pay a sum of money equal to one fourth value of the stolen goods, if recovered, as *shukrana* or present of thanks-giving. The person, found guilty, was required to pay a heavy *jurmana* or fine. If he was unable to pay the fine, he was thrown into the *taikhana* (dungeon).

The Sikh chiefs or the officers dealing with serious cases, mixed with people and tried to get the true facts about the case. “Though vested with uncontrolled *power* his (chief’s) administration of justice is mild and equitable. . . . All offences whether murder or the slightest misdemeanour are under the cognizance of the *kotwal* who submits a detail of all cases, that come before him to the chief by whom alone punishments are awarded agreeable to his will. This system of judicial administration seems to have a happy effect.”<sup>186</sup>



After the necessary investigation the cases were summarily decided and the decisions were not disputed and the offenders submitted to the punishment awarded. In case an offender persisted in his criminal ways he was punished with the loss of his hand, ear, eye, nose, etc., though this was rarely resorted to.

There was no capital punishment even for the murder.<sup>187</sup> In such a case the murderer's family was made to conclude a matrimonial relationship with the family of the murdered one by giving away in marriage a female to the aggrieved family or a heavy amount of money was paid or, if available, 125 *bighas* of land had to be surrendered.<sup>188</sup> This was called *kbunbaba* or the price of blood. Generally the murderer was handed over to the family members of the murdered person to retaliate upon him in any way they liked to be decapitated, etc. This was called *gaba* or self-redress or retributive justice.

In towns, courts were held by *adalatis* who were often Muslim *qazis* and Hindu Kayasths rather than the Sikhs. Under a big Sikh chief eminent *jagirdars* were also entrusted with the civil, criminal and fiscal *powers*.<sup>189</sup>

At Patiala, "Maharaja Karam Singh began the work of reform by appointing an *adalati* (judicial officer) but no line of demarcation was drawn between his *powers* and those of *thanedars*. Orders in criminal cases were still given verbally but in civil cases files were maintained and judgements written."<sup>190</sup>

It is said that in certain states bribes were occasionally resorted to by the *adalatis* (judges). In Kaithal and Patiala it was the fashion for the *adalatis* to pass as many years in imprisonment as on the bench, probably, as a means of eliciting for the *sircar* (government) a portion of the bribes supposed to have been received by them.

The cases of succession were decided according to the traditional rules. The Muslims, both in the Majha as well as Malwa were allowed to follow their own laws of succession.<sup>191</sup>

According to Campbell, "when people thought that their particular grievances had not been sufficiently redressed they sometimes appeared in the middle of the day with flaming torches to indicate that there was darkness and loudly called for redress. Another fashion of the aggrieved parties was to appear in court with straws in their mouths, to indicate that they were reduced to the condition of mere cattle."<sup>192</sup>

## **Fiscal System**

Besides being a war against the Mughal government the Sikh movement under Banda Singh also signified a *powerful* protest against the beneficiaries of the structure of authority. Banda Singh was largely responsible for the liquidation of *zamindari* system in the Punjab. On his suggestion the tillers of the soil ejected the land-lords and the peasants themselves became the masters of land. Large estates were broken into smaller holdings in the hands of the Sikh or Hindu or Muslim peasants. These agrarian changes, to a great extent, ameliorated the lot of the poor peasantry. The Sikh uprising had largely assumed the character of a peasant movement that exposed and further accentuated the basic conflict between the peasantry and the Mughal ruling class. He ousted the Mughal officers from the various *parganas* of Sirhind division and put his own men in their places.<sup>193</sup> Hindu *qanungos* and *amils* that had been replaced by Muslims under Aurangzeb were dismissed and the jobs of the displaced Hindus were restored to them.<sup>194</sup>

The agrarian revolution effected by Banda Singh continued in practice in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In the early stages the revenues of the Sikh Sardars were of two kinds, that is, from the country occupied by them and the *rakhi* or protection money received from the territory taken under protection and not occupied by the Sikh chiefs. According to Cunningham the *rakhi* money ranged between one fifth and one half of the rental or government share of the produce,<sup>195</sup> As regards the other kind of revenue, "it is stated to be general rule," says Malcolm, "that the chief to whom the territories belong, should receive one half of the produce and the farmer the other, but the chief never levies the whole of his share."<sup>198</sup>

At first the taxes on trade were heavy but the Sikh chiefs soon lightened the weight of taxes. Every major and minor chief exercised, by prescription, the privilege of taking to trade, yet the duties though levied at every ten to twenty miles were light.

According to James Browne, "They (the Sikh chiefs) collected a very moderate rent and that mostly in kind and during any intestine disputes, their soldiery never molest husbandmen."<sup>197</sup>

The mode of collection differed greatly with the various chiefs. The *kardars* calculated the yield of grains with the help of the appraisers. The produce per *bigha* was assessed and the number of *bighas* and the quantity of grains were entered against each man. A deduction of one tenth was made for the village servants and the remainder was divided between the farmer and the government in the fixed proportion. The grains were commuted into cash at the market price. The village moneylender was called upon to advance the whole or a large portion of the amount to the *kardar*. Afterwards the *kardar* helped him in collecting the grain.<sup>198</sup>

The general rate, on the whole, at which a Sikh chief received his share of the produce was one third of grains and one fourth of straw.<sup>199</sup> Sometimes revenues from refractory cultivators were collected through the influential men of the locality called *inamdars*. In fact, this was not their function. The *inamdars* were granted a part of the state revenue of certain villages or parts of a village in recognition of their services. This privilege had been extended only to a few people. The grant was generally given for the life-time of the *inamdar*. The revenue system adopted by the Sikhs had been "wonderfully successful in promoting the extension of cultivation in a tract which prior to the period of Sikh rule was, particularly an uncultivated waste, inhabited only by pastoral and nomad tribes,"<sup>200</sup>

Polier writes that, "The Sikhs' own immediate possessions are exceedingly well cultivated, populous and rich; the revenues, in general, taken in kind throughout and not in money, which is very favourable to the tiller. In short, few countries can vie with theirs, particularly in this part of India."<sup>201</sup>

According to the military *Memoirs of George Thomas*, "Notwithstanding the state of warfare in which the chiefs of Punjab are constantly involved, the country is in a state of high cultivation; and though the population be great, grain is cheaper than in any other part of India. This advantage, in a great measure, is derived from the numerous rivers, by which it is watered."<sup>202</sup>

## Footnotes:

1. Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs (1849)*, Delhi, 1955, p. 96.
2. Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh power in the Punjab and political Life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*. Calcutta, 1834, p. 29.
3. Sir David Ochterlony to the Government of India, December 30, 1809, quoted by J.D. Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, (ed. 1955), fn, 1, p. 97.
4. Wilson, 'Civil and Religious Institutions of the Sikhs' reproduced in the *Sikh Religion* (A Symposium), Calcutta, 1958, p. 61.
5. Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, Daftar IV (1848), MS., GS., pp. 95-96.
6. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, fn. 1. p. 96.
7. Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, Calcutta, 1891, p. 291.
8. N. K. Sinha, *Rise of the Sikh power*, Calcutta, (ed. 1936), pp. 96-97.
9. W. H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, Delhi, 1975, p. 17.
10. Senapat, *Gursobha* (edited by Ganda Singh, Patiala 1967), pp. 9, 124.
11. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash* (1841), Amritsar, 1962, p. 364.
12. Kohli, S.R., *Maharaja Ranjit Singh* (Punjabi), Delhi, 1953, p. 22.
13. "Misal, moreover, means, in India, a file of papers or indeed anything serried or placed in ranks," (Cunningham *op. cit.*, footnote 1, p. 96).
14. Khushwant Singh, *The Sikhs*, London, 1953. pp. 52-55.
15. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, pp. 325-26.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
17. Prinsep, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-36; cf., *Jalandhar District Settlement Report* (1892), pp. 29-30.
18. cf., Prinsep, *op. cit.*, p. 36; H. M. Lawrence's *Settlement Report of Thanesar District* (1843), p. 12.
19. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *Appendix to Sohan Lal's Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar I, Lahore, 1885, p. 14.
20. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 96.
21. *Ibid.*
22. Lepel Griffin and C. F. Massy, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Lahore, 1909, p. 478.
23. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 96.
24. The name of the Misal was not always associated with its founder. The name of the Kanaihya Misal, for instance, embodies a tribute to the eminence of Jai Singh among the associates of Amar Singh Sanghania, the original founder of the *derah*. At no stage did all the members of this association belong to Jai Singh's village Kanha Kachha. (Ahmad Shah Batalia, Appendix to Sohan Lal Suri's *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, 1, p. 21.)
25. Lepel Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, Oxford, 1905, p. 87.
26. Campbell, *Memoirs of My Indian Career*, Vol. I, London, 1893, p. 45.
27. Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab* (1870), reprint, Patiala, 1970, p. 16; *Ranjit Singh* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition), pp. 83-84.
28. Browne, 'History of the Origin and progress of the Sicks' reprinted in *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs* (ed. Ganda Singh, Calcutta, 1962), p. 15.
29. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, Daftar IV, MS., GS., pp. 95-96.
30. Gian Singh, *Shamsber Khalsa*, part II (Urdu), 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 1913, p. 122.
31. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, pp. 15, 18.
32. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 97; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, pp. 216-18.
33. Browne, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
34. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
35. *Ibid.*, cf., Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 14, 40; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, I (1854), Lahore, 1961, p. 250; Lepel Griffin, *Punjab Chiefs*, pp. 388-89.

36. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
37. Ganesh Das Badehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab* (1855), Amritsar, 1965, p. 135.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 144.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 129.
40. Altekar, *State and Government in Ancient India*, Delhi, 1958, pp. 47-48.
41. William Francklin, *Memoirs of George Thomas*, Calcutta, 1803, p. 76. M'Gregor, *The History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, London, 1846, pp. 118-19.
42. Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 133.
43. McCrindle, *Alexander's Invasion*, p. 296.
44. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
45. Campbell, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 49.
46. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
49. *Ibid.*
50. Campbell, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 47.
51. 'An Officer of the Bengal Army, A Tour to Lahore in 1808', published in *The Asiatic Annual Register*, Vol. XI (1809), reprinted in the *Panjab Past and present*, Punjabi University, Patiala, Vol. I, part, I, p. 111.
52. Malcolm, *op. cit.*, pp. 141-42; cf., Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, reprint, Patiala, 1970, p. 562.
53. Gupta, H. R., *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. III, Lahore, 1944, p. 131.
54. A Tour to Lahore in 1808, by an Officer of the Bengal Army, reprinted in the *Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. I, part I, pp. 111-15.
55. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, Daftar V, MS., GS., pp. 15-16.
56. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 7; Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, 11, p. 9; Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 131; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 378.
57. Ram Sukh Rau, *Jassa Singh Binod*, MS., AP., p. 772; Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 51; Amar Nath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh* (1837), (ed. S. R. Kohli), 1928, p. 20.
58. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, p. 204; Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 27; Ramjas, *Tawarikh-i-Riast Kapurthala*, Vol. I. 1897, p. 104.
59. Ramjas, *op. cit.*, p. 150; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 733.
60. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 5; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 2-3.
61. Shalok Mahalla I, *Var Maru*, pauri, 9.
62. Qazi Nur Muhammad, *Jangnama* (1765), MS., GS., p. 158.
63. Polier, 'An Account of the Sikhs' reproduced in the *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs* (ed. Ganda Singh), 1962, p. 61.
64. Browne, Introduction, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
65. Sri Rag Mahalla I, *Adi Granth*, p. 26.
66. Asa di Var; pauri 22, Slok Mahalia II, *Sri Adi Granth*. p. 474.
67. *Ludhiana District Gazetteer* (1888-1890), p. 72.
68. *Montgomery District Gazetteer*, (1883-84) p. 34.
69. *Gujrat District Gazetteer* (1892-93), pp. 21-22.
70. Dalpat Rai (ed.), *Amir-ul-Imla or Muntakhab-ul-Haqaiq*, MS., Dr Ganda Singh personal Collection, Patiala.
71. Gordon, *The Sikhs*, London, 1904, p. 84.
72. Francklin, 'The Sikhs and their Country', reprinted in the *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs* (ed. Ganda Singh), p. 105.

73. Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, pp. 62-63.
74. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *Appendix, op. cit.*, p. 25.
75. Sita Ram Kohli, *Ranjit Singh*, pp. 33-34.
76. Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Patiala reprint, 1970, p. 253.
77. *Ibid.*, p. 231.
78. *Ibid.*, p. 294.
79. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
80. J. Pool, *Women's Influence in the East*. London, 1892, pp. 234-37.
81. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 93.
82. Campbell, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 180.
83. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 240.
84. *Ibid.*, p. 241.
85. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *Appendix, op. cit.*, I, p. 23.
86. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.
87. Qazi Nur Muhammad, *Jangnama*, (ed. Ganda Singh), Amritsar, 1939, p. 46.
88. Francklin, *Memoirs of George Thomas*, Calcutta, 1803, p. 75.
89. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *Appendix, op. cit.*, p. 27.
90. Gian Singh, *Raj Khalsa* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Urdu), p. 202.
91. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *Appendix, op. cit.*, p. 28.
92. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
93. Polier, Ganda Singh (ed.) 'The Siques' published in the *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs*, Calcutta, 1962, p. 61.
94. James Browne, 'History of the Origin and progress of the Sikhs' in the *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs*, p. 16.
95. Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England*, London. 1798, p. 330.
96. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 112.
97. C. H. Payne, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, London, n.d., p. 63.
98. Senapat, *Gursobha* (ed. Ganda Singh), Patiala, 1967, p. 39.
99. Maubid Ardistani (Mohsin Fani) *Dabistan-i-Mazhabib*, (1644), Cawnpur, 1904, p. 239; Senapat, *op. cit.*, Chapter V, Chhand 61.
100. Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, London, 1812, p. 123; Gordon, *op., cit.*, p. 53.
101. Bhagat Singh, *Sikh polity in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, New Delhi, 1978, pp. 39-40.
102. Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 115; Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, p. 405; Ghulam Mahyy-ud-Din, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, MS., GS., p. 408; Ali-ud-Din Mufti *op., cit.*, Vol. I, p. 173.
103. Inder Singh (ed.), *Gurbilas Padshahi Chbevin* (ed. 1968), p. 273.
104. Ganda Singh (ed.), *Sri Gursobha*, Patiala, 1967, p. 46.
105. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, Dafter III, personal collection of Dr Ganda Singh, Patiala p. 97; Thornton, *History of the Punjab*, London, 1846, Vol. I, p. 131; Baron Hugel, *Travels in Kashmir and the Punjab*. London, 1845, p. 237; Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh power in the Punjab and political Life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*. Calcutta, 1834, p. 26. The meetings of the Sikhs at Chak Guru (Amritsar) on the occasion of Baisakhi has been referred to by Sujan Rai Bhandari in his book titled *Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh* (1696), Delhi, 1918, p. 66. So Baisakhi day seems to have been a famous festival of the Sikhs for a long time.
106. Gian Singh, *Panth Prakash*, Amritsar, 1880, p. 529.
107. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, pp. 221-22.
108. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Bombay, 1950, p. 136.
109. *Ibid.*, p. 165.
110. *Ibid.*, p. 167.

111. Baron Hugel, *op. cit.*, p. 392.
112. Rattan Singh, *op. cit.*; p. 391.
113. *Ibid.* p. 393.
114. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*; p. 183.
115. Malcolm, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-123; Thornton, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 131-32, also pp. 228-29.
116. M'Gregor, *The History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, London, 1846, p. 118; see also Ganesh Das Bادهhra, *op. cit.*, p. 128; Ahmad Shah Batalia *Ziker-i-Guruan wa Ibtida-i-Singhan wa Mazhab-i-Eshan*, printed as an appendix to Sohan Lal Sun's *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Lahore, 1885, p. 14.
117. Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 128; Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
118. Fauja Singh, 'Political Ideas of the Sikhs during the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries', *Ideas in History* (ed. Bisheshwar Prasad), Delhi, 1968, pp. 198-99.
119. Teja Singh, *Sikhism, Its Ideals and Institutions*, Bombay, 1937, p. 43.
120. Faqir Waheed-ud-Din, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, Karachi, 1965, p. 54.
121. Polier, 'An Account of the Sikhs', reprinted in the *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs* (ed. Ganda Singh), Calcutta, 1962, p. 61; Sinha N. K., *Rise of the Sikh power*, Calcutta. 1960, (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) p. 108.
122. Malcolm, *op. cit.*; p. 115.
123. *Haqiqat-i-bina-o-uruj-i-firqa-i-Sikhan*, MS, PUP., p. 2.
124. Sayyid Nur-ud-Din Hussani, *Tarikh-i-Najib-ud-Daulah*, p. 83, quoted by Sinha, *Rise of the Sikh Power*, p. 109.
125. Polier, 'An Account of the Sikhs', reprinted in the *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs*, (ed. Ganda Singh), p. 61.
126. Sinha, *op. cit.*, (3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 1960), p. 110.
127. Malcolm, *op. cit.*, p. 107; Prinsep, *op. cit.*, p. 182.
128. Teja Singh, *Sikhism, Its Ideals and Institutions*, Bombay, 1937, pp. 44-45.
129. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, p. 240.
130. *Ibid.*, pp. 240-41.
131. Bhagat Singh, *Sikh polity in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*. New Delhi, 1978, pp. 118-19.
132. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 94.
133. *Ibid.*
134. *Ibid.*
135. *Ibid.*, p. 95.
136. *Ibid.*
137. Malcolm. *op. cit.*, pp. 114-15.
138. Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England*, Vol. I, London, 1798, p. 330.
139. *Ibid.*, p. 331.
140. A.C. Banerjee, *Anglo-Sikh Relations*, p. xvii.
141. N. K. Sinha, *op. cit.* pp. 110-11.
142. It is from a letter written by Major Polier from Delhi to colonel Ironside at Belgram, May 22, 1776, reprinted in *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs* (ed. Ganda Singh) p. 65.
143. Polier, 'An account of the Sikhs', reprinted in *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs* (ed. Ganda Singh) p. 58.
144. Gordon, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
145. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
146. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
147. Forster, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 328-29.
148. Forster, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 331; M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 118-19; Prinsep, *Punjab Series*, Vol. II, pp. 28-29.

149. George Campbell was a civilian officer who had been looking after the administration of the Sikh states after they came into the hands of the British or under their protection during the first half of the nineteenth century. He saw the prevalent system of the Sikh governments and had written about them in his *Memoirs*.
150. Campbell, *Memoirs of My Indian Career*, Vol. I, London, 1893, p. 47.
151. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 42-43.
152. Fauja Singh, political Ideas of the Sikhs in the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries' published in the *Ideas in History*, edited by Bisheshwar Parsad, Delhi, 1968, pp. 200-01.
153. Ibbetson and Maclagan, *Glossary of Tribes and Castes of the Punjab*, Vol. I, Lahore, 1919. p. 704.
154. Campbell, *op. cit.*; Vol. I, pp. 47-48.
155. John Griffiths, *A Memorandum on the Punjab and Qandbar*. It was written in the form of a letter to Mr. Alexander Adams from Surat on 17<sup>th</sup> of February, 1794.
156. Polier, An Account of the Sikhs, reprinted in the *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs* (ed. Ganda Singh), p. 65.
157. James Renell, *Memoirs of a Map of Hindustan or the Mughal Empire*, London, 1793, pp. cxxi-ii.
158. Francklin, *The History of the Reign of Shah Aulum*, London 1778, p. 77.
159. Francklin, *Military Memoirs of George Thomas*, Calcutta, 1803, p. 114.
160. Malcolm, *op. cit.*; p. 57.
161. Campbell, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 52-53.
162. *Ibid.*, p. 58.
163. *Ibid.*
164. J. Fortescue, *Punjab Government Records, Delhi Residency and Agency, 1809-57*, Vol. I, p. 122.
165. Campbell, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 81.
166. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
167. *Ibid.*, p. 189.
168. In reality the local Muslims and Mullahs felt very perturbed on Jassa Singh's occupation of Lahore and the establishment of his *Badshabat* there. With a view to instigating the Durrani invader they struck a few coins and sent the same to Ahmad Shah (Ganesh Das Badehra's *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, pp. 130-131). Lepel Griffin holds Ganesh Das Badehra's version as correct (*Rajas of the Punjab*, p. 505). C.L. Rodgers also agrees with Ganesh Das (*Asiatic Society Journal*) (1881-L(1), 71-93). Teja Singh and Ganda Singh also accept the observation of Ganesh Das to be correct (*A Short History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 167 fn. 1).
169. Irvine W., *Later Mughals*, Vol. I, London, 1922, p. 110.
170. Ijad, *Farrukh Siyar Nama: Hadiqat-ul-Aqalim*, p. 148, quoted by Ganda Singh in, *Banda Singh Bahadur*, Sirhind, 1976, p. 9.
171. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 87.
172. *Akbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla*, Newsletter, January 9, 1711. The Persian manuscript is preserved in the private collection of Ganda Singh, Patiala (now at Punjabi University, Patiala). Its English rendering by Dr Bhagat Singh is published in *The Panjab past and present*, Vol. XVIII, II, October 1984, pp. 1-206, PUP, p. 52; cf., *op. cit.*, p. 30.
173. Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 132.
174. Madanjit Kaur, 'A study of the Sikh Numismatics with special reference to the coins of Maharaja Ranjit Singh', Fauja Singh and A.C. Arora (edited) *Maharaja Ranjit Singh: Politics, Society and Economy*, Patiala, 1984, pp. 336-37.
175. Ganda Singh, *Ahmad Shah Durrani*, Bombay, 1959, p. 367.
176. *Ibid.*, p. 372.
177. Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, Lahore, 1873, p. 286, fn. 2.
178. R. C. Temple, *The Indian Antiquary*, XVIII (1889), p. 325.

179. *Ibid*, p. 331.
180. Malcolm, *op. cit.*, p. 127.
181. *Ibid*.
182. Gupta, H. R., *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 318.
183. Charles Elliot, *Report on Lapsed and Reserved Sikh and Hill States*.
184. Campbell, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 83.
185. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 294; Prinsep, *op. cit.*; p. 154.
186. 'A Tour to Lahore in 1808', reprinted in the *Punjab Past and Present*, Vol. I, Patiala, p. 111.
187. Malcolm, *op. cit.*, p. 128; Ganesh Das Bادهhra, *op. cit.*, p. 116; Latif. *op. cit.*, Delhi reprint. 1964. p. 293.
188. Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 294.
189. Gupta, H. R., *op. cit.*, Vol. HI, p. 146.
190. *Punjab States Gazetteers*, Vol. XVII A, *Phulkian States, Patiala, Jind and Nabha* (1904), p. 141.
191. Narang G. C., *Transformation of Sikhism*, (4th edition), p. 173.
192. Carnpbell, *op. cit* , Vol. I, p. 84.
193. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*, Vol. II (1722), Calcutta. 1874, pp. 652, 654; Ganda Singh, *Banda Singh Bahadur*, Amritsar, 1935, pp. 72, 85-87.
194. Karam Singh, *Banda Bahadur*, Amritsar, 1907, pp. 77-78; Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 107.
195. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, footnote I, p. 95.
196. Malcolm, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-26.
197. James Browne, *India Tracts*, I, ix.
198. *Jhelum District Gazetteer* (1904), p. 136.
199. *Ludhiana District Gazetteer* (1888-89), p. 178.
200. *Gujranwala District Gazetteer* (1893-94), p. 71.
201. Polier, *op. cit.*, p. 62.
202. Francklin (extract from *Memoirs of George Thomas*), reprinted in the *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs*, (ed. Ganda Singh), Calcutta, 1962, p. 101.



## Chapter 17

### MILITARY SYSTEM OF THE MISALS

#### Military Organisation under Banda Singh Bahadur

As a background to the military system of the Misals it would be worthwhile to study briefly the army organisation and the fighting techniques that Banda Singh Bahadur adopted during his fight against the Mughals for seven long years.

When Banda Singh came to the Punjab from the Deccan he was accompanied by a few companions. From a military point of view he started from a scratch. Arriving in northern India he despatched the *bukam-namas* of Guru Gobind Singh to prominent Sikhs in the Punjab.<sup>1</sup> His main target, to begin with, was Wazir Khan, the *faujdar* or governor of Sirhind, the killer of Guru Gobind Singh's young sons.<sup>2</sup> The leading Sikhs of the Punjab, Bhai Fateh Singh, Karam Singh, Dharam Singh, Nagahia Singh, Ali Singh and Mali Singh flocked round him along with their followers. According to Khafi Khan, in two or three months' time, four or five thousand horsemen and seven or eight thousand foot soldiers joined him and their number soon rose to 40,000.<sup>3</sup>

After coming to the Punjab and gathering men around him Banda Singh set before him to build a Sikh political power in the Punjab. The Guru had organised the Sikhs to defend their rights and secure freedom of worship, freedom of expression and freedom of missionary activities. But Banda Singh was the first to organise the Sikhs to fight battles not only to weaken the Mughal power but also to replace it by a better one. He had, therefore, no alternative but to oust the Mughal government officials, appoint his own men, introduce changes in the government set up and adopt a polity that aimed at fulfilling the aspirations of the Sikhs.

Nearly the period of seven years, marked by ceaseless fighting against the Mughal imperialists and the meteoric rise and fall of Banda Singh, witnessed the first armed Sikh attempt though unsuccessful, to carve out an independent state.

His general policy at the very outset of his campaigns to distribute the conquered lauds among those who would fight for him and his land reforms after the conquest of Sirhind, conferring proprietorship upon petty cultivators in place of the *zamindars* and *chaudbaris* made his cause popular, making him the rallying point of the poor agricultural classes, thereby broadening the base of his struggle. Thus, the bulk of his followers were the Jat Sikhs belonging to the villages of the Sikh rural community.

According to Indubhusan Banerjee, Guru Arjan is said to have converted almost the entire Jat peasantry of the Majha tract and there could be little doubt that by the time of Guru Hargobind the Jats formed, by far, the preponderant element in the Sikh community. The character of the Jats imperceptibly modified the Sikh system as it was bound to do.<sup>4</sup> Almost all writers are, more or less, agreed that one of the fundamental traits in the Jat character has been the instinct of tribal freedom and of tribal kinship.<sup>5</sup> The role of the Jats was of considerable importance in the Khalsa Panth, particularly for the developments which took place during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with the change or shift from Khatri to Jat leadership in the community. The author of the *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* noted that though the Gurus had been the Khatri, they had made the Khatri subservient to the Jats who were considered the lowest caste among the Vaishyas. Thus, most of

the big *masands* of the Guru were the Jats.<sup>6</sup> The new features of Sikhism came to represent the dominance of the Jat culture<sup>7</sup> which Guru Gobind Singh proclaimed in 1699, as the essentials of Sikhism. Love of freedom and warlike spirit of the Jats could no longer be denied a place within the system.<sup>8</sup>

Irfan Habib believes that the Jats were the peasants in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries who had to bear a heavy burden of land revenue and a great degree of oppression of the ruling classes of the Mughal empire. This situation was bound to provoke peasant revolts. Thus, the militant development of the Sikh community during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries can have one major explanation in this resort to armed violence by the Jat peasantry, when the economic pressure became increasingly intolerable.<sup>9</sup> The economic pressure on the Jats could be one of the reasons for arraying themselves on the side of Banda Singh but more powerful reason was the religious persecutions suffered by the Sikhs at the hands of the Mughal government. It led them to take up arms under the leadership of Banda Singh to replace the tyrannical government. Banda Singh was lucky to have such spirited and fearless people, known for their intrepidity and sacrifice, as his followers.

Banda Singh did not employ the Gurus' defensive strategy. Like a shrewd general, he started with a strong offensive as a result of which he became the master of a large area in a short space of time. After his expulsion from his capital, Lohgarh, as a military strategy, he chose Kohistan, as the hilly areas were called, to be made into a military base from where he carried on irregular but well-planned inroads into the plains. He conceived the hill areas as a military base for operations in view of the security of his line of retreat. "Offensive and planning were not the only characteristics of Banda Singh's military strategy. Its other important features were surprise, mobility, concentration, economy of force and security. His movements were like a storm and their very swiftness constituted the major element of surprise."<sup>10</sup>

Banda Singh always displayed great vigilance in the matter of military intelligence. He not only spared no pains and measures to keep himself informed of the enemy's designs and movements through his spies, but was always on guard against the enemy's spies. Like his strategy, his tactical manoeuvres were also based on speed and mobility. He made up his lack of sinews of war by swift movements. His adversaries were often Struck down by his dashing charges even before they were aware of the danger facing them.

Despite his being a competent strategist and a shrewd tactician Banda Singh was unsuccessful in his bid against the imperial government. The fact is, that his failure was not due to any flaw in his generalship, but to other factors such as shortage of resources, superiority of the Mughals in man-power and war material, defective army organisation and the gradual alienation of the upper classes from his cause.<sup>11</sup> The greatest handicap of the Sikhs under Banda Singh was the shortage of arms, horses and man-power. He had a few guns only. Hundreds of his men had to go without horses and they were pitted against an enemy who was far stronger in numbers, artillery, horses, weapons and equipment of war. Kamwar Khan the author of *Tazkirah-i-Chnghtai* writes, "The list of arms taken and money seized from Gurdas Nangal does not give a very exalted notion of either the military strength or of the wealth of the Sikh leader in the fortress of Gurdas Nangal, and it is really astonishing that with so scanty resources the Sikhs so determinedly resisted the greatest empire of the day for such a long *time*."<sup>11a</sup>

Banda Singh's task was far beyond his resources, limited as they were. And unfortunately for him, a strong man like Abdus Samad Khan was, then, the governor of Lahore. Banda Singh had no funds to enlist a substantial strength of paid soldiers, and consequently had to depend upon many such men whose bonafides were never above suspicion.

There were three types of men that had rallied round Banda Singh. Firstly, there were those Sikhs who had previously been with Guru Gobind Singh and were always ready to fight with a spirit of devotion and self-sacrifice. The second category comprised those who had been supplied by persons like Ram Singh and Tilok Singh of the Phul family and the third category constituted those who had flocked to them for the sake of plunder and booty.<sup>12</sup> Those of the last category, the mercenaries, were mainly responsible for indiscriminate murders and plunder. Being without any leader they had no discipline in their ranks. They were not always reliable, and they constituted a fair number of Banda Singh's followers. After the plunder of a place they would go home to unburden themselves of the booty and join again whenever they felt like doing so.<sup>13</sup> Whenever they found a situation fraught with danger they would slowly melt away. So, before launching upon some big enterprise, Banda Singh had always to be sure of his force.

The hardcore of Banda Singh's army was composed of devoted Sikhs of the above said first two categories who had joined him as volunteers from different parts of the Punjab. They were at one with him in the political objectives of the rebellion against the government and were ever ready to make a sacrifice for the cause.

In the flush of Sikh victory a large number of Hindus also seem to have joined the forces of Banda Singh to reap various benefits and enjoy the fruits of success over their Mughal masters.<sup>14</sup> Many of the spirited and daring Hindus adopted Sikhism.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, thousands of Muslims also joined Banda Singh. This has been borne out by many contemporary or semi-contemporary references. According to a report made to Emperor Bahadur Shah by an official news-writer, "the follower of Nanak (Banda Singh) was in Kalanaur up to 26<sup>th</sup> April, 1711. He had assured the Muhammadans that he would not in, any way, interfere with them and those who would join his ranks would be duly paid. They would enjoy full religious liberty including that of saying *namaṣ* and *azan*. As a result of this, 5,000 Muhammadans enlisted themselves in his army."<sup>16</sup> A similar reference was made by Amin-ud-Daula in June 1710 that, "the authority of that deluded sect (of the Sikhs) had reached such extremes that many Hindus and Muhammadans adopted their faith and rituals. Their chief (Banda Singh) captivated the hearts of all towards his inclinations and, whether a Hindu or a Muhammadan, whosoever came into contact with him was addressed as a Singh. A large number of Muhammadans abandoned Islam and followed the misguided path (of Sikhism) and took solemn oaths and firm pledges to stand by Banda (Singh)."<sup>17</sup>

According to Karam Singh, (a biographer of Banda Singh), the aggregate strength of Banda Singh's army was not even as much as a Mughal *faujdar* could mobilise. But Khafi Khan's exaggerated estimate put it at forty thousand. As referred to in one of the news of the *Akbbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla*, it was brought to the notice of the Emperor that Nanak-worshippers to the tune of twenty-five thousand had assembled in the vicinity of Lahore. Hearing the news, Shams Khan, the *faujdar* of Doaba and Ali Khan the *faujdar* of Jammu, came with their armies to fight against the Sikhs. The said Khans died fighting along with many killed and wounded on both sides.<sup>18</sup>

The number of Banda Singh's army could not be the same at all times. It varied considerably on different occasions. But any way, the strength must have been sufficient enough to

keep the war going for seven long years, and Banda Singh's remaining on the nerves of the Emperor of Delhi without any respite to him or his forces.

In spite of all this, there is no denying the fact that it was a war between the unequals. The Mughal government had a big army at its command. The Mughal army was well-equipped, well-officered and well-trained but the Sikh comrades of Banda Singh were handicapped in many ways. They were an untrained, indisciplined and improperly equipped rabble but their shortcomings were made up by their faith in the genuineness of their cause and their long tradition of undergoing sacrifice and suffering for a good and righteous cause. With all the limitations of resources Banda Singh's bid for carving out an independent state was rather premature and was bound to be ultimately unsuccessful as it was. But the example set by Banda Singh Bahadur and his companions to live and die for a national cause and the idea of a national state given by them became a living aspiration for the Sikhs, which "although suppressed for the time being by relentless persecution, went on working underground like a smouldering fire and came out forty years later with a fuller effulgence, never to be suppressed again."<sup>19</sup>

### **Organisation of the Dal Khalsa and its Constitution**

Though the Sikhs had been outlawed by the Punjab government, they secretly moved about in small groups. In 1734, Kapur Singh divided the disintegrated fabric of these Sikhs into two *dais* (groups). The word *dal* is a Punjabi expression meaning a horde and suggests the notion of a group with a definite mission or objective before it. As written earlier one group was named *Budha Dal*, the League of the Elders, which comprised men above the age of forty and the other was named *Taruna Dal*, League of the Young, which consisted of the young Sikhs below that age. The *Budha Dal* was assigned the duty of looking after the Sikh holy places and the propagation of the Sikh faith. The *Taruna Dal* was to undertake the more difficult task of the defence of the community. Though Sardar Kapur Singh was in charge of the first section, but because of his respectful position amongst the Sikhs, he acted as a common link between the two *dais*, that were organised under the leadership of the seasoned Sikh soldiers of the days of Banda Singh.<sup>20</sup> Some of them had seen the days of Guru Gobind Singh. Later, Sardar Kapur Singh reorganised the *Taruna Dal* into five sections, each led by a separate *jathedar* (group leader). Gradually the number of the *jathas* (highly mobile bands or groups) rose. As ambitious and spirited young men formed their separate *jathas* they were welcomed by the leading Sardars who encouraged them to carry on a guerrilla warfare against the government. The *dais* served a very useful purpose of providing a number of leaders.

The Dal Khalsa took advantage of the confusion and lawlessness prevailing at Lahore after Zakariya Khan's death and met at Amritsar at the very next Diwali which fell on October 14, 1745, and passed a *gurmata* to divide itself into twenty-five groups, each consisting of about 100 persons.<sup>21</sup> This was probably the first important *gurmata* regularly passed by the Sikhs. This wonderful institution of *gurmata* gave each individual a personal participation in the affairs of the commonwealth and, thus, the attainment of status and influence came within the reach of every Sikh.<sup>22</sup> The two institutions of the *dal* and the *gurmata* that were brought into the lime-light proved of vital importance to the Khalsa's future success as they combined the benefits of centralised counsel with those of dividing their *dal* for the purpose of better organisation. These groups were united not only by religious ties but also by mutual interests and, therefore, a system of general confederation, for self-protection as well as for operations, came into being. When these groups combined their contingents during some big expeditions the booty was divided by the chiefs according to the strength of their followers.

These leaders were not created by some high authority, but came to occupy this position, as a matter of course, on account of their natural ability. If a Sikh, of however humble origin, possessed a daring spirit, ability to lead, quick perception, rapid decision and undaunted courage, he was sure to gather round himself a number of followers.<sup>23</sup>

Military talent amongst the Sikhs was most welcome to this career and despite the dangers ahead there was no dearth of young men who were always ready to jump into the jaws of death at the signal of their leaders. These loosely knit groups of enthusiasts formed a strong basis of the first regularly organised national army of the Sikh community known as the Dal Khalsa.<sup>24</sup>

The Dal Khalsa has been defined differently by different writers. In the later part of the eighteenth century James Browne defined it as under:

“Since the Sicks (Sikhs) became powerful and confederated for the purpose of conquest, they have called their confederacy Khalsa Gee or the state, and their grand army Dull Khalsa Gee, or the army of the state.”<sup>25</sup>

According to James Browne the Dal Khalsa was formed by Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Charhat Singh Sukarchakia and Karora Singh.<sup>26</sup> Browne refers to only three leaders of the Sikhs and not the Khalsa—the entire body of the Sikhs. John Malcolm gives us to understand that the term Dal Khalsa was used for the combined forces of the Sikh leaders at a particular time and place.<sup>27</sup>

To the mid-nineteenth century British historian, J. D. Cunningham, the Dal Khalsa, was the ‘army of the theocracy or Singhs.’<sup>28</sup> The Muslim Persian writers of the period did not understand the institutions of the Sikhs. Ghulam Muhayy-ud-Din alias Bute Shah and Ali-ud-Din Mufti merely use the term ‘*grob-i-Singhan*’ for the Dal Khalsa.<sup>29</sup> Rattan Singh Bhangu who wrote in the first quarter of the nineteenth century used the term *dal* for the Sikh national army of the eighteenth century.<sup>30</sup> Sohan Lal Suri, the court diarist of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, writing about the formation of the Dal Khalsa says, ‘Sardar Bhag Singh Ahluwalia, along with his deputy Jassa Singh and Sardar Jassa Singh Ramgarhia in the Doaba-i-Bist Jalandhar; Sardar Najja Singh and Hari Singh together in the Doab-i-Bari; and Sardar Sahib Charhat Singh in the Doaba-i-Rachina, strengthened their possession of the entire territory. They named their conquering armies as the Dal Khalsa Jio.’<sup>31</sup>

As we clearly understand the *dal* means an army and the Khalsa Ji means the entire body of the Sikhs and thus the *dal* Khalsa Ji may be defined as the entire fighting body of the Sikhs. N.K. Sinha has defined it as the grand army of the Khalsa confederacy.<sup>32</sup>

These groups of Sikhs started vigorous attacks against such of the *chaudhris* and *muqadams* as had helped the government against them. They took strong steps in the towns of Batala, Jalandhar, Bajwara and Phagwara.<sup>33</sup> They sometimes killed the *qazis* and *muftis*, if they could get hold of them, as they pronounced death sentences on the Sikh captives.<sup>34</sup> Both the government and the Sikhs remained unreconciled. But the government was in a more advantageous position to deal with the Sikhs in respect of fighting material and man-power but the Sikhs matched them favourably with their unsubdued spirits and unshakable determination to fight the government to the bitter end for their independence.

With the progress of the *dals*, a new development took place in their organisational structure. It meant to unite the whole body of the fighting Sikhs in the form of a standing army of the

community. With the measures of government becoming more and more stringent and harsh the Sikhs felt the need of unity. Since the first division of the fighting Sikhs into twenty-five groups under as many Sardars, the number of the groups had risen to sixty-five,<sup>35</sup> and it went on increasing.

After Ahmad Shah Durrani's exit from the province, following his first invasion of India, the Sikhs met at Amritsar on the sacred day of Baisakhi, March 29, 1748, and on the proposal of Nawab Kapur Singh that the Panth needed solidarity and union, the entire fighting body of the Sikhs was named the Dal Khalsa Jio and placed under the supreme command of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. The various groups were leagued together under twelve prominent chiefs. Each group had a banner of its own; they later on established their principalities.

### **Constitution of the Dal Khalsa**

Most of the leaders and followers of the Dal Khalsa had been hard-pressed, poverty-stricken tillers of the soil.<sup>36</sup> They had undertaken a particular course in view of a particular situation. We cannot expect of them to have planned anything like an elaborate constitution. They only seem to have evolved a crude system, to meet the requirements of the organisation.

Before recruitment to the Dal Khalsa it was essential for every man to take *amrit* prepared with the double-edged sword and grow long hair and beard.

The system was not devised or purposely adopted, therefore, it was rather incomplete and temporary. Every Sikh, who had faith in the injunctions of Guru Gobind Singh, was considered a member of the Dal Khalsa. For every able-bodied Sikh it was thought compulsory to enroll himself in the Khalsa army to fight the enemies of his faith. He was expected to be a good horseman and skilled in the use of arms. Every individual was free to choose the leader he was to follow.

When several sub-divisions of the Sikh chiefs took the field jointly as parts of the Dal Khalsa or the national army, by common consent, one of the chiefs of the *dals* was elected as the supreme commander of the Dal Khalsa, the other chiefs constituting a sort of war cabinet that obeyed him.

The entire body of the Sikhs known as the Sarbat Khalsa met twice a year at Amritsar during Baisakhi and Diwali festivals (April and October, respectively) and passed *gurmata*s regarding matters of common interest.

A kind of federal union was set up and the leader of the Dal Khalsa was looked upon as the head of the Sikh Church as well. In times of peace each division acted in an independent manner. A follower of a Sardar was free to join another Sardar. "It is from this cause" says Malcolm, "that the lowest Sikh horseman usually assumes a very independent style and the highest chief treats his military followers with attention and conciliation."<sup>37</sup> The Sardar did not exercise absolute authority over his comrades. The soldiers paid the Sardar due regards and respects but they were not under any obligation to obey him beyond what was in the interests of the community or their group.

In the absence of any fixed salary, a reasonable share from booty, to a horseman, was always guaranteed. This booty was divided among the chiefs in proportion to the number of their followers and they sub-divided it among their men.

There existed no wide distinction between the high and low. All could claim to belong to the same Khalsa brotherhood and the same profession of arms. They had the same common

grievance against the oppressors of their religion and the same bond of union, their faith. Thus, the Sardar and the soldier were united over common objectives and they moved from one victory to another.

The establishment of the Khalsa was a turning point in the history of the Sikhs and it united them into one compact body as had been done under Banda Singh Bahadur, about three decades before. They adopted the ideal of unity and disciplined brotherhood. They believed that every sacrifice made for the community was the service to the Guru who had merged his personality into the Panth. This devotion to the Panth made them a formidable community to contend with and ultimately the government of the country could not but accept the Sikhs as the masters of the province of the Punjab.

The classification of the Sikh army may be discussed as under:

### **Cavalry**

The cavalry was an important part of the army of the Sikh Sardars. The soldiers, in fact, considered it below their dignity, to move about without a horse which they generally got for themselves. Writing about the army of the Sikh chiefs, Lepel Griffin says, "It consisted, for the most part, of cavalry called *Kattianwand* who found their own horses and received a double share of prize money. Each chief, in proportion of his means, furnished horses and arms of his retainers who were called *bargirs*; and as the first tribute exacted from a conquered district was horses, the infantry soldier was, after a successful campaign, generally transformed into a trooper."<sup>38</sup> The province of the Punjab provided a good breed of horses and the Sikh soldiers were very well-mounted. Hence it must be remembered that the Sikh army under the Misals consisted largely, if not entirely, of cavalry.<sup>39</sup> Forster writes, "Though they (the Sikhs) make merry<sup>40</sup> on the demise of any of their brethren they mourn for the death of a horse thus showing their love of an animal so necessary to them in their professional capacity."<sup>41</sup> Most of the soldiers had two or three horses each by means of which they made their movements with great rapidity, their armies marching from fifty to one hundred and twenty miles a day.<sup>42</sup>

### **Infantry**

The infantry, among the Sikhs in the eighteenth century, was an unimportant and inferior branch of service.<sup>43</sup> They disliked to serve as infantrymen. It was used for realising tributes and taxes, garrison and sentry duty,<sup>44</sup> and the battles of the Sikhs were invariably cavalry actions.<sup>45</sup> The only infantry that enjoyed any respect were the Akalis. These were an enthusiastic and orthodox body of devotees, dressed in dark-blue and wearing round their turbans steel quoits, to be used as a weapon.<sup>46</sup>

### **Artillery**

The Sikh chiefs did not possess heavy artillery and the few references<sup>47</sup> to the use of guns by the later Sikhs prove even more clearly that it was never popular among them. They had only forty field guns in 1800 and one of the great difficulties that the Sardars faced against the Afghan invaders was their inability to meet the heavy artillery of their opponents. In fact, before the rise of Ranjit Singh the Sikhs had not taken to the use of artillery and in their struggle against the invaders, they do not seem to have used any cannon at all. The main reason was that heavy cannon could not be carried by them as fast as they wanted to gallop on their horses.

### **Recruitment and Discipline**

Recruitment in the Sikh forces was entirely voluntary and recruits could join the contingent of any chief. No records of the soldiers' names, service, payment, etc., were kept. This was perhaps not possible for want of literate Sikhs. To learn reading and writing under the circumstances in which they had been living during the first half of the eighteenth century was almost impossible. There were no gradations in the army and no provision for regular training to the soldiers. The regular drilling system was introduced later by Ranjit Singh. The deficiency of military science was supplied by their religious zeal, single-minded devotion to the Khalsa and intense feeling of self-respect. There was no organisation of the Sikh army into regular regiments of uniform size. The contingents of the various chiefs, whether their number was big or small joined the units of the Dal Khalsa in the event of a national danger. Disobedience to the officers was punished by war councils of five, though such cases were few. According to Forster, "Though orders were issued in a Sicque (Sikh) army and a species of obedience observed, punishments are rarely inflicted."<sup>48</sup>

### **Camp, Arms and Equipment**

The Sikh camp was a very humble affair as compared to that of the Mughals or the Marathas. The Sikhs at this stage had none of the comforts and luxuries of their Indian contemporaries. Life at their camps was noted for frugality, simplicity and austerity.<sup>49</sup> They have no tents; their cakes of flour serve as dishes and plates. Each horseman has two blankets; one for himself and one for his horse, kept beneath the saddle. The rapidity of their marching is incredible.<sup>50</sup> Shahamat Ali wrote that, "in enduring fatigue, absence from the prejudices of caste, and patience of discipline, the Sikh is not easily surpassed."<sup>50a</sup> Their flag was of saffron colour but the emblem on it is not known. Their war cry was "*Sat Sri Akal or Wab-e-Guru Ji Ka Khalsa, Wab-e-Guru Ji Ki Fateh*"

The Sikh weapons<sup>51</sup> of war consisted of swords, spears, battle-axes, sabres, two-edged daggers, lances, muskets, cutlasses, pikes, bows and arrows. The use of the match-lock was much restricted owing to the scarcity of powder. In the handling of these arms, especially the lances and the sabres, they were uncommonly expert. Shields of hides and the coats of mail were used for defence. It was estimated that a Sikh soldier carried on his person an iron load weighing about twenty kilograms. There was no grading among officers and soldiers. The chiefs were only distinguishable by the finer horses and small tents used by them.

### **Mode of Fighting**

The greatest military development of the period under study was the evolution of the guerrilla mode of fighting under the Sikhs. From their experience of nearly half a century of a life and death struggle against the superior power of the Mughals and the Afghans the Sikhs fully realised the necessity of an underground or irregular mode of fighting. The guerrilla fighting by the Sikhs grew up spontaneously under the pressure of circumstances as no other alternative was left to them. We may enumerate several factors which explain the popularity and growth of this form of fighting. The first was the failure of Banda Singh and his having been made captive and ultimately his brutal execution at Delhi. The Sikhs could not ignore the lesson which they learnt after paying very heavy price. Banda Singh had succeeded in giving a jolt, though serious at times, to the Mughal empire. But it was felt that in open and pitched warfare the Sikhs were no match for the imperialists, Another factor was the Sikhs' deficiency in artillery that affected their capability for regular warfare. The Mughals against whom the Sikhs were pitted had an effective artillery or an impressive park of cannon. Thirdly, Zakariya Khan's policy of alternating persecution and relaxation drove them out of their habitations into the jungles and hills. The official machinery, particularly the moving columns made the life of the Sikhs utterly miserable and made them resort to guerrilla methods of fighting and in view of their handicap of resources and numerical strength



they had no other alternative. The guerrilla warfare by the Sikhs had proved effective on more than one occasion. Fourthly, the death of Banda Singh left the Sikhs leaderless and without any central body which could organise and guide them in the face of the serious situation confronting them. This resulted in leaving the Sikhs to their own resources, who inevitably resorted to irregular methods of fighting.

From 1716 to 1726, there was not much of Sikh activity against the government. The Sikhs were reeling under the terrible blows suffered by them by the massacre of their men at Delhi. They took some time to recover from the shock and to make up their loss. About the late twenties of the eighteenth century the Sikhs again began to reorganise themselves and meet the threat of their liquidation by the government. They employed the guerrilla strategy to impede every foreign invasion by cutting off their supplies, harassing their army both in camp and on march, plundering their baggage, hovering round the troops, pursuing them at the time of their retreat, raiding their flanks, rear and vanguards, making attacks on their foraging parties, falling upon their detachments, also blocking their passage of roads and rivers. They sometimes made surprise attacks on their enemy, and before the enemy could retaliate they moved beyond their reach. Mir Mannu's seeking aid from the Sikhs under the advice of Diwan Kaura Mal, 'a Khulasa Sikh,' gave the Sikhs a much valued opportunity to study the working of the Mughal government and their fighting techniques from close quarters which enabled them successfully to weather the storm of official persecution.

Because of their limitations the Sikhs always tried to avoid pitched actions with the foreigners. But this did not prevent them from making a surprise attack upon a major portion of the enemy's force. The prominent examples of the manoeuvring capability of the Sikhs are provided by the last three invasions of Ahmad Shah Durrani. In 1764, the Afghan invader was forced to return from Lahore, in 1765, he had to return from Sirhind and in 1766, he could not proceed beyond Ambala, though every time he had come determined to enter Delhi. The guerrilla technique of the Sikhs was at its height during the period from 1754 to 1766.

George Thomas who had to fight with the Sikhs more than once observed their mode of fighting as under: "With the enemy they engaged in continuous skirmish. They advance and retreat until men and horses become tired. They then retreat to some distance where they leave their horses to graze, take a very frugal meal and begin skirmishing again."<sup>52</sup>

George Forster, also gives an almost identical description, and about their horses he writes, "The horses have been so expertly trained. . . that on receiving a stroke of the hand they stop from a full career."<sup>53</sup> The Sikhs adopted guerrilla tactics of warfare. A party of Sikh horsemen, numbering about forty or fifty, advanced towards the ranks of the enemy, galloping at a quick pace, and suddenly drew up their horses and discharged their loaded guns from a distance with such marksmanship that not a single shot failed in its aim. After they suddenly retired to about a hundred paces, reloaded their guns and repeated the process. All this was done with an alacrity and activity unparalleled by other people of India.<sup>54</sup>

Qazi Nur Muhammad who was an eye-witness to the Sikh mode of fighting writes:

"If their (Sikh) armies take to flight, do not take it as an actual flight. It is a war tactic of theirs. Beware, beware of them for a second time. The object of this trick is that when the furious enemy runs after them, he is separated from his main army and from his reinforcements. Then, they turn back to face their pursuers and set fire even to water. Did you not see how during the flight

they took to a deceptive flight from before the Khan, and how, then, they turned back on him and surrounded him on all sides.”<sup>55</sup> It is apparent that the Sikh tactics were to wear out the enemies and to draw them into the snare by trick-flights and then to overwhelm them. Guerrilla fighting placed them at an advantage strategically because their swift cavalry could command the communications. The extensive forests and hill tracts provided safe line of retreat. Though the Sikhs were not thus able to gain any spectacular victory, they could certainly wear the enemy out.<sup>56</sup> In their aids the Sikhs were at their best.

In 1754, Tahmas Khan Miskin saw with his own eyes three Sikh horsemen driving away before them a full regiment of Turki soldiers under Qasim Khan between Patti and Lahore.<sup>57</sup>

Major Polier, a swiss officer in the Mughal service at Delhi, wrote in May 1776, “Five hundred of Najaf Khan’s horsemen dare not encounter fifty Sikh horsemen.”<sup>58</sup>

The Sikhs had another tactic of guerrilla warfare in which their operation comprised hit and run called *dhai phat*. Rattan Singh Bhangu describes this mode of warfare as under:

“The wise and the experienced were of the opinion that in battle there are two and a half movements. Rushing on the enemy and retreating make two and to strike is the half. The Guru has taught us to run away and to come back again to fight. This is a great tactic. The Guru himself adopted these and in it there is no dishonour.”<sup>59</sup>

In the event of their attacks upon fortified places the Sikhs made their entries in the form of disguised parties. They would cut down the enemy guard and replace it with their own men at the gate. Sometimes some influential residents of the place were bribed into opening the gates for them. If and when that was not possible walls were scaled by means of ladders, gates opened and their men admitted into the place. Sometimes the besieging Sikh forces used the stratagem of pretending to retire. This tactic was used by Charhat Singh in 1761, in the course of his siege of the fort of Rohtas. The Afghan garrison rushed out to pursue the retreating army. Charhat Singh’s contingent made a detour and took possession of the fort and turned out rest of the garrison there. Sometimes, through rigorous siege the Sikhs starved the garrison into submission.

There were some well-known defensive manoeuvres peculiar to the Sikhs. Whenever they apprehended any attack they would gallop off beyond the enemy’s range. If they were taken unawares and encircled they would try to escape through the ranks of the enemy force. But in 1762, they were faced with a very difficult situation when surrounded by the Afghan forces near Malerkotla. The Sikhs were accompanied by their families. They made a solid cordon of defence around their families and moved on fighting from village to village. But because of the overwhelming strength of the Afghans the cordon was at last broken by the invaders and a wholesale massacre ensued resulting in the murder of about ten thousand Sikhs at the lowest or modest estimate. It is called the *wada ghallughara* or big holocaust. This is an example of the Sikhs fighting a battle in defence.

The use of guerrilla methods of warfare by the Sikhs was largely responsible for their marvellous success against the Mughal and Afghan adversaries. According to *Encyclopedia Britannica*, conditions essential to successful guerrilla methods of warfare are: an unassailable base, a friendly population, not actively friendly but sympathetic to the point of not betraying rebel movements to the enemy, presence amongst the rebels of the qualities of speed and endurance, ubiquity and

independence of arteries of supply. The conditions essential to their success were available to the Sikhs. Firstly, they had an unassailable base in the Shivalik hills, Lakhi forests and the swamps of Kanuwan that were almost inaccessible. Secondly, the Sikhs had a friendly population in the country as they made conscious efforts to win the sympathy and support of most of the non-Muslims. The Sikhs were secretly provided shelter by the people and their movements were not divulged to the enemy. No doubt a section of the Muslim population was not at all sympathetic to the Sikhs but out of fear for victimisation at their hands later they did nothing against the Sikhs. Thirdly, the Sikhs possessed in abundance the qualities of speed, endurance and quickness of movement and ubiquity. The Sikhs at a pinch could march twenty to thirty miles on just a little parched grams. They had learnt endurance behind the plough. George Forster wrote in 1783, "Their success and conquests have largely originated from an activity unparalleled by other Indian nations, from their endurance of excessive fatigue, and a keen resentment of injuries. The personal endowments of the Sikhs are derived from a temperance of diet, and a forbearance from many of those sensual pleasures which have enervated the Indian Mahomedans."<sup>60</sup>

At this time the Sikhs were very powerful people in the whole of India. A Muslim writer of this period writes, "This sect abounds in giant-sized and lion-limbed youths whose stroke of the leg would certainly cause instantaneous death to a *vilayati* horse. Their matchlock strikes a man at a distance of nine hundred footsteps and each of them covers two hundred *kos* (600 kms) on horseback."<sup>61</sup> They wore the minimum of clothing and maximum of armour. They had the capability of recovering from the blows suffered by them with amazing rapidity. The holocausts of 1746, and 1762, were the severest blows borne by them and they were upon their feet again in no time. Fourthly, the Sikhs had no arteries of supply which could be snapped. They collected their supplies from the areas in which they operated. Thus, there was no line of supply running between the base and the field of their operations. Fifthly, the Sikhs being the sons of the soil had an intimate knowledge of the topography, which proved very useful for their successful pursuits of guerrilla warfare. As against the foreign enemy the Sikhs had great hold on the minds of the people. Sixthly, the Mughals or Afghans could not "fulfil the doctrine of acreage" or adjust numbers to space, in order to control the whole area effectively. The Sikhs took advantage of this weakness of the Mughals and Afghans. Instead of fighting pitched battles against their enemy the Sikhs often chose to strike at points where they had little or no strength and thus created chaotic conditions advantageous to their activities.

It was not always that the Sikhs used guerrilla methods of fighting. Sometimes they adopted a regular formation for a pitched battle. According to Qazi Nur Muhammad who accompanied Ahmad Shah Durrani to India during his seventh invasion and saw the Sikhs fighting for himself writes that the Khalsa met the army of Ahmad Shah in early 1765, in the battle of Satluj with a well-arranged army of their own. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Jassa Singh Ramgarhia commanded the centre; the right was led by Charhat Singh Sukarchakia, Jhanda Singh Bhangi and Jai Singh Kanaihya and the left was under the command of Hari Singh, Gulab Singh and Gujjar Singh Bhangis.<sup>62</sup>

Ahmad Shah Durrani had fully known the fighting method of the Sikhs and he took care to save his men from their terrible and crushing attacks. The Shah warned Naseer Khan, ruler of Kalat, who had accompanied the Afghans to India in 1765, on their seventh invasion:

"Look here! you young man, you are a lion amongst men in field, but do not be hasty in battle with the Sikhs. Stand like a mountain where you are in the field of battle and let the enemy come to you and expose their chests to your arrows. The Sikhs are headstrong and flare up like fire

in the battle-field. Even their forefathers behaved in the same manner and, single-handed, pounced upon the armies of their enemies. I, therefore, advise you not to move from where you are.”<sup>63</sup>

According to the memoirs of George Thomas, who frequently came into contact with the Sikhs, “when mounted on horseback, their black flowing locks and half-naked bodies, which are formed in the stoutest and most athletic mould, the glittering of their arms, and the size and speed of their horses, render their appearance imposing and formidable, and superior to meet most of the cavalry in Hindostan.”<sup>64</sup>

Studying the entire gamut of the Sikh activities in the Punjab and the adjoining areas Jadunath Sarkar observed: “This astonishing superiority, man for man, over all other fighting forces of India, was due to the Sikh character, training and organisation.”<sup>65</sup>

The Malwa Sikhs under Ala Singh followed a different line of policy so far as military strategy and tactics were concerned. They did not offend the government and so were not forced to leave their homes and hearths. There was no need for them to resort to guerrilla method of fighting. They raised a regular army and followed a conventional system of warfare, popular with the Mughals and Afghans. They fought in a regular and organised manner but when the Malwa rulers found themselves unequal to the enemy they invited help from the Dal Khalsa and made additions to their contingents. Being gifted with diplomacy of a higher order Ala Singh adopted an attitude of cooperation with the Mughal government but when the Delhi government declined he held out his hand to the newly-risen powers of the Marathas and the Durranis.

### **Mode of payment**

With the Sikh Sardars gaining political authority in their respective areas, they introduced gradually the replacement of the voluntary basis of military service by the remunerative one. Earlier the retention of a portion of booty acquired by the Sardar’s men in the course of fighting was permitted. According to Lepel Griffin, “The prize-money taken in campaign was equally shared among the combatants; if a soldier was wounded he invariably received compensation, and if he was killed his son or nearest male relative was entertained in his place.”<sup>66</sup> Later on, various forms of remuneration, such as grant of land, payment in kind at the time of harvest and lumpsum money payments came into use.<sup>67</sup> By 1765, the Khalsa army had ceased to be a body of volunteers. They were regularly paid in one form or the other. In the Malwa this change had come much earlier with the setting up of a territorial power by Ala Singh. He maintained an army of 7,000, horse appointed on the basis of payment.

### **Military Strength of the Misals**

The military strength of the Misals has been variously estimated. George Forster writes in 1783, that “they can produce when in unity 2,00,000, horse, their force in cavalry must be greater than that of any power now existing in Hindustan.”<sup>68</sup> James Browne in 1785, estimated the strength of the cis-Satluj Sikh chiefs at 18,225 horse and 6,075 foot, totalling 24,300 and their full strength including the trans-Satluj Sikhs at 73,150 horse and 25,050 foot, totalling 98,200.<sup>69</sup> William Francklin in 1793-94, put the entire strength of the Sikh army at 2,48,000.<sup>70</sup> Colonel A.L.H. Polier assessed the total strength of the Sikh army at ‘2,00,000 horse, a power which would be truly formidable’.<sup>71</sup> Alexander Dow in 1768, put the total strength of the Sikh Misals at ‘60,000 good horses’.<sup>72</sup> Ghulam Hussain in 1782, wrote that, “the Sikhs have sent more than once sixty thousand horse in the field.”<sup>73</sup> George Thomas reckoned in 1799, the army of the cis-Satluj chiefs at 27,000

and their total strength at 60,000 horse and 5,000 foot. H.M. Lawrence considered the total fighting strength of the Sikh Misals more than 70,000.

Certain writers have referred to the total number of Sikh troops present at a particular battle. At the battle of Sirhind in 1764, as given by Gian Singh,<sup>74</sup> the number was about 50,000. Forster<sup>75</sup> estimates at 60,000, the number of Sikhs who fought against the Durrani invader at Amritsar in October 1762. The invasion of the Gangetic Doab in February 1764, was made by only half of the army numbering 40,000. Generally the whole Khalsa army did not act together. For operations the various units of the Dal Khalsa acted either independently or in smaller combinations of two or three units,<sup>76</sup> according to the needs of the situations. From the proposal of a treaty with the ruler of Jodhpur we learn that the Sikhs could throw into the battle-field as many as 50,000 well-equipped horsemen.<sup>77</sup>

Henry T. Prinsep<sup>78</sup> wrote about the military power (cavalry) of each Misal in the eighteenth century as under:

1.	The Bhangi Misal	10,000 horse
2.	The Ramgarhia Misal	3,000
3.	The Kanaihya Misal	8,000
4.	The Nakkai Misal	2,000
5.	The Ahluwalia Misal	3,000
6.	The Dallewalia Misal	7,500
7.	The Nishanwalia Misal	12,000
8.	The Faizullapuria Misal	2,500
9.	The Karorsinghia Misal	12,000
10.	The Shahid or Nihang Misal	2,000
11.	The Phulkian Misal	5,000
12.	The Sukarchakia Misal	2,500

Total 69,500

Baron Hugel who stayed with Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1835, agrees with H.T. Prinsep. Osborne and Debi Prasad generally agree with Prinsep with slight variation here and there. According to Prinsep, Ranjit Singh's total army, horse and foot, was 82,014 in 1834.<sup>79</sup>

Many more authors have given varying figures regarding the military strength of the Misals. All accounts taken into consideration we may safely guess the total strength of the Misals to the tune of one lakh horsemen.

In the eighteenth century the Sikh principalities were a combined civil and military polity. The administrators of bigger or smaller units of administration were both civil and military personnel combined and performed their duties in both the capacities with remarkable efficiency. Their military achievements gave them a splendid halo. Kapur Singh Singhpuria, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Ala Singh Phulkian, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, Charhat Singh Sukarchakia, Gujjar Singh Bhangi, Jai Singh Kanaihya, Tara Singh Ghaiba, Baghel Singh Karorsinghia and other Sikh chiefs of the eighteenth century were the generalissimos of the Dal Khalsa and also the rulers of their Misals.

Even when in the civil administration of the Misal there was not much of democracy left, the organisation of the Dal Khalsa still functioned in a democratic way. The leader of the national army was elected and, in times of emergency, the Misal chiefs pooled their resources in the common interest of the entire Sikh community. In the words of Forster, "when incited by any grand national concern their chiefs became confederated and their armies are combined."<sup>80</sup> The division of booty among participating Sikh chiefs according to the strength of their contingents and then further dividing it among the troopers was a democratic method. More than anywhere else the real confederacy and the real democracy existed in the Dal Khalsa and it continued up to the coming of Ranjit Singh to power.

#### Footnotes:

1. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, (1841), Amritsar, 1939, p. 67.
2. *Akbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla* MS., Ganda Singh personal collection, Patiala, p. 122.
3. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*, Vol. II, (1722), Calcutta, p. 652. The number seems inflated.
4. Indubhusan Banerjee, *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol. I, Calcutta, (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1963), p. 21.
5. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, (edition 1947), p. 32.
6. Zulfiqar Ardistani Maubid, *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* (1645), Cawnpur, 1904, p. 233.
7. W. H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*. Delhi, 1975, p. 10.
8. Indubhusan Bauerjee, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 124.
9. Irfan Habib, 'Presidential Address to the Medieval Section', *Proceedings of the Punjab History Conference*, 1971 (published Patiala, 1972) p. 54.
10. Fauja Singh, 'Some Critical Periods of Sikh History', *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XI-II (October 1977), p. 386.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 387.
- 11a. (According to Kamwar Khan the things recovered from Gurdas Nangal and deposited in the Qila Mubarak at Delhi were: Swords 1000, quivers 170, bows 200, rifles 3, *Jamdbar* 180, daggers 140, gold ornaments 250, *mohars* 3 and about 600 rupees were entrusted to the *tehweldar* of the treasury, Kamwar Knan '*Tazkirah-i-Salatin-i-Chughtai*, MS., PUP., p. 461.

12. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, p. 81; Karam Singh, *Banda Bahadur*, Amritsar, 1907, p. 41; G.C. Isarang, *Transformation of Sikhism*, pp. 100-01; Ganda Singh, *Banda Singh Bahadur*, Amritsar, 1935, p. 83.
13. Karam Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 123.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
16. *Akbbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla*, news-letter, April 28, 1711. Persian manuscript in Dr Ganda Singh's Private Collection, Patiala.  
English version by Dr Bhagat Singh, published in the *Punjab Past and Present*. Vol. XVIII-II, October 1984, (pp. 1-206), p. 63.
17. *Ruqaat-i-Amin-ud-Daula*, letter III., Yar Muhammad Qalandar, *Dastur-ul-Insba*, letter III, MS., Khalsa College, Amritsar.
18. *Akbbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla*, March II, 1711.
19. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Bombay, 1950, pp. 107-08.
20. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *Appendix to Daftar, I of Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, p. 15.
21. Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1939, p. 21.
22. *Ibid.*, footnote I. p. 21.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
24. cf., M'Gregor, *The History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, London, 1846, p. 185; Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, Lahore 1870, p. 16; Gordon, *The Sikhs*, London, 1904, pp. 59-60.
25. James Browne, 'History of the Origin and Progress of the Sicks, *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs*' (ed. Ganda Singh), *Indian Studies, Past and Present*, Calcutta, 1962, pp. 16-17.
26. *Ibid.*
27. John Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, London, 1812, pp. 122-23.
28. J. D. Cunningham. *A History of the Sikhs*, London, 1849 p. 101.
29. Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, MS., Dr Ganda Singh Collection, Patiala, p. 246; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama* (1854), Vol. I, Lahore, 1961, pp. 242, 244, 246.
30. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, (ed. 1962), pp. 305, 363-64, 376-77, 389-90, 412, 414.
31. Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar I, Lahore, 1885, pp. 127-28.
32. N.K. Sinha, *Rise of the Sikh Power*, Calcutta. 1936, p. 195.
33. Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, 1880, p. 664; Gian Singh, *Shamsber Khalsa*, p. 78.
34. Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 661-62.
35. The names of the Sikh chiefs have been given by Hari Ram Gupta, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 49-50.
36. Karam Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
37. Malcolm, *op. cit.*, p. 125.
38. Lepel Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, Oxford, 1905, pp. 85-86.
39. Irvine, *Army of the Mughals*, London, 1922, p. 128.
40. There was no question of merry-making on the death of any of their brethren. They recited the songs of mourning from their scriptures (*bani*) to the accompaniment of musical instruments and the sweet pudding was distributed as a part of the death ceremony. The foreign traveller mistook the performance of the last rites as rejoicings or merry-makings.
41. Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England*, Vol. I, London, 1798, p. 290.
42. Browne, Introduction, *India Tracts*, London, 1788, p. ix.
43. Forster, *op. cit.*, Vol. I. p. 228.
44. Polier, 'Account of the Sikhs' *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs* (ed. Ganda Singh), Calcutta, 1962, p. 64.
45. Francklin, *The Military Memoirs of George Thomas*, Calcutta, 1803, p. 274; Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-86.
46. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 86; cf., Gordon, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-76.

47. Francklin, *op. cit.*, p. 274.
48. Forster, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 329.
49. Malcolm, *op. cit.*: pp. 141-42; Francklin, *op. cit.*, p. 107.
50. Francklin, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-72.
- 50a. Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and Afghans*. London, 1847, p. 25.
51. Francklin, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-72.
52. *Ibid.*
53. Forster, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 288-89.
54. *Ibid.*, pp. 287-88; Francklin, *The History of the Reign of Shah Allum*, London, 1798, p.76.
55. cf. Qazi Nur Mohammad, *Jangnama* (1765), ed. Ganda Singh, Amritsar, 1939, p. 57., Francklin, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-73.
56. Sinha. N.K., *op. cit.*, p. 116.
57. Tahmas Khan, *Tabmas Nama* (1779), translated into English by P. Setu Dadhava Rao, Bombay, 1967, p. 23.
58. Polier, *op. cit.*, p. 66.
59. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, (ed. 1962), p. 130.
60. Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 333.
61. Ghulam All Khan, *Imacl-ut-Sa'adat*, Cawnpore, 1864, p. 71.
62. Qazi Nur Muhammad, *Jang Nama* (1765), edited Ganda Singh, Amritsar, 1939, pp. 50-51.
63. *Ibid*, p. 52.
64. Francklin, *op. cit.*, p. 73; Francklin, *Shah Aulum*, London, 1798, p. 77.
65. Jadunath Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*. Vol. III (1772-1788), Calcutta. 1938, p. 148.
66. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 87.
67. Francklin, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-76.
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## SELECT GLOSSARY

Adalti	:A Judicial officer.
Adi Granth	:The Sikh scripture.
Ahad-nama	:An Agreement.
Akali	:A member of the Akali or Nihang order of the Sikhs, literally meaning 'an immortal'.
Akhbar	:News, News-paper.
Akhbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla	:The Royal Mughal court news.
Amir	:A noble, a ruler.
Amir-ul-Umra	:A noble of nobles, a noble of high order.
Amrit	:The Sikh baptism of the double-edged sword.
Ardas	:A prayer.
Ashrafi	:A gold coin.
Avtar	:A prophet.
Azan	:A Muslim call for prayer.
Babaji	:An elderly and respected person.
Bahadur	:Brave, also a title of distinction.
Baisakhi	:The first day of the month of Baisakh, an important festival of rural Punjab, celebrating the advent of harvesting season, generally falling in the second week of April.
Balabash	:A high-head, a haughty and self-conceited person.
Banjara	:A businessman, an itinerant trader.
Baoli	:A well with stairs going down to the water.
Bet	:An area situated on the bank of a river.
Bhagtia	:A dancing boy.
Bhai	:Literally a brother and a title of sanctity and respectability among the Sikhs.
Bhangi	:Addicted to taking <i>bhang</i> or hemp—an intoxicant, also the name of a Sikh Misal.
Bigha	:A measure of land equal to 4 <i>kanals</i> (equal to two thousand square yards) and in certain areas equal to 2 <i>kanals</i> . Its size varies from region to region.
Bir	:Pasture.
Budha Dal	:An army of the Sikh veterans or the army of the Sikh elders.
Bungah	:A dwelling place or a store-house attached to a Sikh temple.
Chadar	:A sheet of cloth used to cover the body or the bed.
Chadar Pauna	:A ceremony to bring a widow into wedlock.
Chak	:A village.
Chauth/Chouth	:It was a payment which saved a place from the unwelcome presence of the Maratha soldiers and civil underlings under Shivaji.
Charpai	:A cot.
Chaudhari/Chaudhary	:The chief person of the village, usually rich and distinguished.
Chhota Ghallughara	:A small holocaust.
Chugan	:A sort of polo game.
Daftar	:A register or a book, also an office.
Dal	:A group of persons, a Sikh contingent.

Dal Khalsa	:The national army of the Sikhs.
Dargah	:A mausoleum.
Dastar	:A turban.
Deohri	:An entrance to a house or building.
Derah/Dera	:An abode, a camp.
Dharamsala	:A place of congregation.
Dharam-yudh	:A holy war.
Dhusa	:A rough blanket.
Diwali	:The Indian festival of lights celebrated in commemoration of the return of Lord Rama from his exile and the release of Guru Hargobind from the fort of Gwalior, usually falling towards the end of October or the beginning of November.
Diwan	:The head of the finance department, a finance officer.
Diwan-Khana	:An audience hall.
Doab/Doaba	:A territory lying between two rivers, and in the Punjab, particularly the one between the rivers, Satluj and Beas.
Doshala	:A double shawl.
Durbar	:A court, an audience hall, government.
Faqir	:A mendicant, a religious-minded person devoted to meditation.
Farman	:A royal order.
Farzand-i-dilband	:An enchanting or charming son, a title conferred by the British government on Raja Randhir Singh of Kapunhala state.
Faujdar	:Literally an official who maintained troops for law and order, the administrator of a <i>sarkar</i> under the Mughals, a commander.
Gaddi	:An elevated place for the Guru or a ruler to sit on, throne.
Garhi	:A fortress.
Gharana	:A house, a family.
Ghee	:Purified butter.
Giani/Gyani	:A learned man.
Granth Sahib	:Literally a book but here used for the Holy Book of the Sikhs.
Granthi	:The reader or the reciter of the <i>Guru Granth Sahib</i> of the Sikhs.
Groh-i-Singhan	:A group or contingent of the Sikhs, here used for the Dal Khalsa.
Gur	:Molasses.
Gurdwara	:A Sikh temple.
Gurmata	:A resolution passed in an assembly of the Sikhs in the presence of the holy <i>Guru Granth Sahib</i> .
Guru	:A guide, preceptor, title of the founders of Sikh religion, the Sikhs having a hierarchy of ten Gurus.
Guru-gaddi	:A seat of Guru's spiritual authority.
Guru-ghar	:A Sikh temple.
Haq-i-hakmana	:Succession money.
Harem	:Mohammadan women's dwelling house, female quarters, specially in the royal palaces.
Hari (Rabi)	:Summer harvest.
Harmandir	:The temple of God, the Golden Temple of Amritsar.
Haveli	:A mansion.
Hazari	:Holder of a rank of one thousand.
Hola	:Annual spring festival of the Sikhs.

Holi	:A Hindu festival of colours.
Howdah	:A seat on an elephant's back.
Hukam-nama	:A written order, a writ, a warrant, an injunction.
Id	:A Muslim festival.
Id-ul-zuha	:A Muslim festival which falls on the 16 <sup>th</sup> day of last month of Islamic calendar. It is a thanks-giving celebration and animals are sacrificed on the occasion.
Ilaqa	:A territory, an estate, jurisdiction.
Imam	:A Muslim preacher who leads prayer in a mosque.
Inamdar	:An influential man of the locality who enjoyed grant from the state.
Jagir	:An assignment of land or land revenue or a fixed sum of money for services rendered or to be rendered, an estate.
Jagirdar	:The holder of a <i>jagir</i> .
Jama	:A gown.
Jarmana/Jurmana	:Fine, penalty.
Jat	:A virile community of the Punjab.
Jatha	:A group.
Jathedar	:A group leader.
Jawan	:A youngman, a soldier.
Jhiwar	:A person belonging to a class of water-carriers, a water-man.
Kachha	:Half trousers.
Kaki	:Reddish.
Kakar	:A man with reddish beard or hair.
Kalghi	:A small aigrette plume.
Kambli	:Blanket, blanket money or contribution received per house or per head by the Sikh soldiers for their maintenance at a place.
Kankut	:A method of assessment based on the appraisal of the standing crops.
Karah Parchad	:Sacred pudding.
Kardar	:An officer in charge of the revenue and local administration of a <i>pargana</i> or <i>taaluqa</i> .
Katra	:A section of a bazar.
Khalsa	:The land held or administered directly by government or the sovereign, the brotherhood of the Sikhs, particularly of those conforming to the instructions of Guru Gobind Singh.
Khillat	:A robe of honour.
Kos	:A distance of about three kilometres.
Kot	:A fort.
Kotwal	:A police officer in charge of a <i>kotwali</i> , a <i>thana</i> or a police station.
Langar	:Common and free kitchen.
Lohri	:A winter festival when bonfires are lit at night to the accompaniment of dance and music.
Mahabat	:An elephant driver.
Mahant	:A priest.
Maharaja	:The great king, the king of kings, a ruler and a sovereign prince.
Mai	:An elderly lady.
Majha	:Literally the middle country, usually referring to the territory of Lahore and Amritsar districts of Punjab.

Malwa	:Land of the Malwaeis or Malois, usually referring to the territory between the Satluj and Ghaggar rivers.
Manji	:Literally a cot. A Sikh preaching-centre established by Guru Amar Das.
Masand	:Guru's agent.
Mata	:A resolution.
Maund	:A unit of weight of 40 <i>seers</i> .
Mir	:An army leader or a general.
Misal	:A Sikh confederacy, also used for the territory or troops of a Sikh Sardar, a file.
Misaldar	:Belonging to a Sikh Misal, holder of a portion of the Misal.
Mohri	:A trunk of wood.
Morcha	:An agitation against the government.
Mufti	:Pronouncer of <i>fatwa</i> or verdict according to Muslim law.
Mukhtar	:An agent, an accredited representative.
Mulla	:A Muslim teacher who imparts Islamic teachings.
Munshi	:A scribe, a writer.
Muqadam	:A village headman.
Mutsaddi	:An accountant, a clerk.
Nakhas	:A horse-market.
Nawab	:A title of high authority.
Nazar	:An offering to a superior or a holy person.
Nazarana	:A tribute from a tributary or a dependant on a regular basis or on special occasions.
Nazim	:The governor of a province.
Neonda	:A marriage cess.
Nishan Sahib	:A pole carrying Sikh emblem.
Nit-name	:A daily prayer of the Sikhs.
Pagri	:A turban.
Pahul	:Sikh <i>amrit</i> or initiation.
Palki	:A palanquin.
Panch	:A representative of the people, a member of the village community.
Panchayat	:A village court of arbitration consisting of five or more members. It was the lowest rung in the hierarchy of judicial administration.
Pangat	:A row, particularly for inter-dining.
Panj Piaras	:Five beloved ones.
Panth	:A community, the title designates the Sikh community.
Pargana	:A tract of country consisting of generally fifty to hundred villages.
Patan	:A crossing in the river.
Patka	:A girdle, also a small turban.
Pir	:A spiritual guide among the Muslims.
Pirchi	:Literally a sort of comfortable stool for the preacher to sit on, smaller section of a bishopric.
Pothi	:A book, particularly containing scriptures.
Pranayam	:A practice of stopping breath.
Pucca garhi	:A fortress built with stones and bricks.
Pujari	:A priest, a worshipper.
Qanungo	:A keeper of the revenue records at the <i>pargana</i> or <i>taaluqa</i> level.

Qaum	:A community.
Qazi	:A judge, an official appointed by the government to administer civil and criminal justice according to Islamic law.
Qila	:A fort.
Qiladar	:In charge of the fort.
Rahit	:A code of conduct;
Raj	:A kingdom, a government.
Raja	:A ruler, a prince, a title of high rank.
Raja-i-Rajgan	:A ruler of rulers, a title.
Rakhi	:Protection, an amount realised in return for protection.
Rani	:Queen, a ruler's wife.
Sacha Padshah	:A true or spiritual king, usually used by the Sikhs for their Gurus.
Sadhu	:An ascetic.
Saif	:A sword.
Samadh	:A mausoleum.
Sanad	:An official document or an agreement.
Sangat	:Congregation, a holy assembly.
Sarbat Khalsa	:Whole Sikh community.
Sardar	:A leader, a chief, a commander, a form of address for the Sikhs.
Sarkar	:An administrative unit bigger than a <i>pargana</i> , roughly like a present-day district.
Sarkar-i-wala	:A ruler, a title of distinction.
Sarovar	:A tank.
Sati	:A wife who burns herself on the funeral pyre of her dead husband, self-immolation.
Sawar	:A horseman, a military rank, a cavalier, a trooper.
Serai	:An inn.
Sewa:	Service free of any remuneration or <i>wages</i> .
Shahid	:A martyr.
Shahi Samadhan	:Royal mausoleums.
Shahidi Jatha	:A group prepared to undergo any sacrifices.
Shahukar	:A banker, a money-lender.
Shukrana	:A present of thanks-giving.
Sikh	:A Sikh (Sanskrit <i>shishya</i> ) means a disciple, a learner, a follower of the Sikh religious order founded by Guru Nanak.
Suba	:A province, a division of a kingdom.
Subedar	:The governor of a province.
Subedari	:Governorship of a province.
Sukhmani	:Psalm of peace.
Sultan-ul-qaum	:Badshah, a king.
Taaluqa	:A revenue administrative unit.
Tabedar	:A follower completely subservient to his chief.
Tarikh/Tawarikh	:A history.
Taruna Dal	:A contingent or an army of the young Sikhs.
Tehsildar	:An officer in charge of a <i>tehsil</i> (a unit of administration).
Thana	:A police station.
Thanedar	:An officer in charge of a <i>thana</i> , commandant of a fort.
Theh	:A deserted place.

Tila	:A hillock.
Top	:A gun.
Toshakhana	:A store room, a ward robe, a chamber in which objects of value or rare articles are kept.
Uprajparamukh	:Deputy governor.
Vakil	:An ambassador, an agent or a representative.
Wada Ghallughara	:A big holocaust.
Wahe-Guru	:Almighty God.
Wazir	:Lieutenant of a king, a counsellor of a state, a minister.
Yama	:An angel of death.
Yogi	:An ascetic.
Zamburk	:A camel battery.
Zamindar	:A land-lord, proprietor or an occupant of land.
Zamzama	:Name of a gun.
Zanana	:A harem, female quarters specially in the royal palaces.

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