

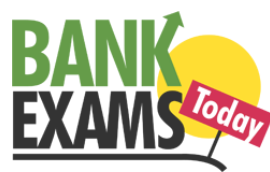
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Punjab History for Patwari Exam

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Introduction to Punjab

Punjab, the land of five rivers, has land with prosperity. The plains of Punjab, with their fertile soil and abundant water supply, are naturally suited to be the breadbasket for India. The land of Punjab is a land of exciting culture. The state has achieved tremendous growth over the years due to the success of the Green Revolution in the early 70s. For a major period in the second half of the 20th century, Punjab led the other states in India to achieve self-sufficiency in crop production. The current state of Punjab was formed in 1966, the state was organized into three smaller states - Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh.

The name Punjab is a xenonym/exonym and the first known mention of the word Punjab is in the writings of IbnBat t , who visited the region in the 14th century. The term came into wider use in the second half of the 16th century, and was used in the book Tarikh-e-Sher Shah Suri (1580), which mentions the construction of a fort by "Sher Khan of Punjab". The first mentioning of the Sanskrit equivalent of 'Punjab', however, occurs in the great epic, the Mahabharata (pancha-nada 'country of five rivers'). The name is mentioned again in Ain-e-Akbari , written by AbulFazal, who also mentions that the territory of Punjab was divided into two provinces, Lahore and Multan. Similarly in the second volume of Ain-e-Akbari, the title of a chapter includes the word Panjnad in it. The Mughal King Jahangir also mentions the word Panjab in Tuzk-i-Janhageeri.

Punjab in Persian literally means "five" (panj) "waters" (ab), i.e., the Land of Five Rivers, referring to the five rivers which go through it. It was because of this that it was made the granary of British India. Today, three of the rivers run exclusively in Punjab, Pakistan, and Punjab, India has the headwaters of the remaining two rivers, which eventually run into Pakistan.

About Punjab

Brief History of Punjab

Punjab is said to have derived its name from the five rivers that flow through this region - Indus, Sutlej, Beas, Ravi and Ghaggar. It was a region that formed parts of the Indus Valley civilization. The Aryans settled in this region in about 1500 B.C. It was in about 900 B.C. that the battle of Kurukshetra mentioned in the Epic Mahabharata was believed to have taken place in Kurukshetra. During this period the region formed small principalities ruled by chieftains. In 326 B.C. Alexander the Great of Macedonia invaded Punjab. After this was the rule of Chandragupta Maurya that lasted till about 1st century A.D. By 318 A.D. the Gupta dynasty exercised their influence. The Huns followed them in about 500 A.D.

By 1000 A.D., the Muslims invaded Punjab led by Mahmud of Ghazni. In 1030 A.D., the Rajputs gained control of this territory. During the Sultanate period and Mughal rule, Punjab was engaged in intermittent warfare. In about 1192 A.D. the Ghoris defeated the Chauhans and ruled until the establishment of the Mughal rule. Guru Gobind Singh (1661-1708 AD) created the Khalsa, an army of saint-warriors who rose up against the ferocity perpetrated by the Mughals. The Sikhs carried on their struggle and after the fall of Banda Bahadur, they established themselves as sovereign rulers of the greater part of the Punjab.

From the misals evolved the government of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1778-1839). He was the first independent native Indian ruler after the centuries of slavery. His reign, though not long, is significant because of its concept of dharma entwined with the practice of secularism. In the early, 19th century the British established their influence. After independence this region witnessed mass migration and distribution of property. In 1947 when India was partitioned, the larger half of Punjab went to Pakistan.

Currently Punjab has 22 districts with 157 towns and 12,673 villages. (Fazilka and Pathankot are new districts for Punjab).

Economy of Punjab

The state has number of small, medium and large-scale industrial units. Major Industries in the state include metals, manufacturing textiles, hosiery, yarn, sports goods, hand tools, bicycles, and light engineering goods. The areas of industrial thrust include agro-industry, electronics, dairy industry, pharmaceutical industry and white goods industry. Agriculture is the mainstay of Punjab's economy. The state contributes 80 percent of wheat and 43 percent of rice to the national exchequer. The other major reason for the prosperity of the state are the great number of people who left their home for the countries in Europe and North America and, after long struggles, achieved successes there.

Punjab Travel Information

The most important tourist center in the state is Amritsar with its Golden Temple. This temple is considered to be the holiest of all the pilgrimages of Sikhism and houses Akal Takht, the supreme governing body of Sikhism.

The JallianwallahBagh is a small park in the city where the British police massacred many pilgrims in the year 1919. Wagah is the only open land point between India and Pakistan. The Changing of Guards and the ceremonial lowering of the flags ceremony at sundown are great tourist attractions and have their own symbolic importance.

Ludhiana is famous for its hosiery and woolen goods and products from Ludhiana are exported all over the world. For its production of hosiery, Ludhiana is also known as the Manchester of India. It also boasts of the world famous Punjab Agricultural University, which organizes the KisanMela every Year. Nearby is Killa Raipur, which is famous for its Rural Olympics.

Patiala is famous for its healthy food, loving people, wonderful parandaas, exciting Patiala peg and jootis. Easily accessible and well maintained, Patiala is a place that would give one the much-needed tranquility far from urban chaos. The Sports School and the MotiBagh Palace are some of the places that one must visit to get a clear picture of the past of the state. Chandigarh is the capital of both Punjab and Haryana.

The city is considered to be a Mecca of modern architecture and planning all over the world. What makes Chandigarh extraordinary is the fact that within four decades, a barren landscape has been transformed into a modern and model human habitation. Jalandhar is an ancient city but not much of its evidence is left now. Today, it is a major rail and road junction and an army cantonment.

Rivers of Punjab

The word "Punjab" is a combination of the Persian words 'Punj' Five, and 'Aab' Water, giving the literal meaning of the Land of the Five Rivers. The five rivers after which Punjab is named after are the Jhelum; the Chenab; the Ravi; the Beas and the Sutlej - all of them are the tributaries of the Indus river.

Education in Punjab

Punjab is served by leading institutes of excellence in higher education. All the major arts, humanities, science, engineering, law, medicine, veterinary science, and business courses are offered, leading to first degrees as well as postgraduate awards. Advanced research is conducted in all major areas of excellence. Punjab Agriculture University is one of world's leading authorities in agriculture.

Major universities of Punjab are Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar; Punjabi University, Patiala; Panjab University, Chandigarh; Punjab Agriculture University, Ludhiana; Punjab Technical University, Jalandhar; Punjab Medical University, Faridkot and Punjab Veterinary Sciences

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University, Talwandi Sabo. Punjab also has many institutes of repute such as National Institute of Technology, Jalandhar and Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala

Food of Punjab

The Punjabis are known for their rich foods. Predominantly wheat eating people, the Punjabis cook rice only on special occasions. Nans and parathas, rotis made of corn flour (makke di roti) are their typical breads. Milk and its products in the form of malai (cream), paneer (cottage cheese), butter and curds are always used with almost every Punjabi meal.

The main masala in Punjabi dish consists of onion, garlic, ginger and a lot of tomatoes fried in pure ghee. Spices like coriander, cumin, cloves, cinnamon, cardamom, black pepper, red chili powder, turmeric and mustard are regularly used. Chicken especially 'Tandoori Chicken' is a favourite with non-vegetarians as paneer is in the vegetarian Punjabi menu. Mahki Dal, SarsonKaSaag, meat curry like Roghan Josh and stuffed parathas can be found in no other state except Punjab.

Arts & Culture of Punjab

A majority of the people in this state is of Aryan origin. A large part of the population follows Sikhism, which has visible effects of Hinduism and some effect of Islam. Punjabi is the state language, quite similar to Hindi. Most famous of the craft traditions of Punjab is phullkari. The word phullkari means flowering and it does exactly that - creates a flowery surface with the simplest of tools, a needle and a silken thread, and a high degree of skill. The phullkari pattern revolves around a single stitch, the darn stitch.

At Kartarpur, Jalandhar and Hoshiarpur, craftsmen and women create pidhis (low, four legged woven stools), which are both artistic and of immense utility in the day-to-day life. Color, beauty and utility combine yet again to form the central theme of the well-known leather jootis (shoes and slippers) of Punjab. The enterprising women of Punjab weave durries (a pileless cotton spread, which can be used to spread on a bed or the floor).

Girls are taught the art of weaving durries at a young age. The durries are woven in different sizes, and patterns - geometrical, animals, birds, leaves and flowers-and colors. Nikodar, Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur, Tarn Taran and Anandpur Sahib offer a vast variety of durries to buyers. Another important craft of Punjab is the art of doll making, especially the Punjabi bride and the bhangra dolls. Colorful and beautifully crafted and dressed, dolls are made all over Punjab, though the most important center is Chandigarh.

Dance & Music of Punjab

The folk songs of Punjab are the songs of the body and soul. The joyous flight of birds, starry nights, sunny days and thundering clouds, signifying happiness and joy, are all reflected in folk songs. So ageless are these songs that no one can claim their creation.

Punjab is the only place where the dances for men and women are not the same and are of varying forms. While the dances for men are the bhangra, jhoomer, luddi, julli and dankara, the ones for women are the giddha and kikli.

Festivals of Punjab

The festivals in Punjab have always been celebrated with much exuberance and fanfare. For the masses these festivals are popular occasions for social interaction and enjoyment. Punjab being a predominantly agricultural state that prides itself on its food grain production, it is little wonder that its most significant festival is Baisakhi, which marks the arrival of the harvesting season. For the Sikhs, Baisakhi has a special significance because on this day in 1699, their tenth guru, Guru Govind Singh organized the Order of the Khalsa.

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The Gurburab festival is celebrated by the Sikhs to express their reverence for their gurus. Two major Gurburabs are celebrated during the year. The first in the month of Kartik (Oct-Nov) to celebrate the teachings of the founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak, and the second in the month of Pausa (December-January) to celebrate the birth anniversary of Guru Govind Singh. On all Gurburabs, non-stop recital of the Granth Sahib and religious discourses are held. Langars (free meals) are served to all without distinction of caste or creed.

A day after Holi, the Sikh community in Punjab observes HollaMohalla with thousands of devout Sikhs gathering at Anandpur Sahib-where Guru Gobind Singh was baptized-to participate in the grand fair of HollaMohalla. The whole place wears a festive look, processions are taken out, and the people participate in the festivities with gaiety and fervor.

Tika is celebrated in the month of Kartik (Oct-Nov.) one day after Diwali. Women put a tika of saffron and rice grains on the foreheads of their brothers, to protect them from evil. Like most other festivals of Punjab, Lohri too is a festival related to the seasons. Celebrated in the month of January, it marks the end of the winter season. A huge bonfire is made in every house and the fire god is worshipped.

Costumes of Punjab

The most common attire of Sikh men folk is a long kurta (shirt) with baggy trousers drawn in at the ankle. Most unique identification of a Sikh man is his turban and his beard. Women of the state also wear almost the same dress known as the salwarkurta along with a dupatta (long stole).

Historical Overview

Pre – Aryan Civilization

Archeological discoveries at Mehrgarh in present-day Baluchistan show that humans inhabited the region as early as 7000 BCE. From about 3000 BCE the Indus River basin was home to the Indus valley civilization, one of the earliest in human history. At its height, it boasted large cities like Harrapa (near Sahiwal in West Punjab) and MohenjoDaro (near Sindh). The civilization declined rapidly after the 17th century BCE, for reasons that are still unexplained.

Indo – Aryans

Factors in the Indus valley civilization's decline possibly included a change in weather patterns and unsustainable urbanization (that is, without any rural agricultural production base). This coincided with the drying up of the Sarasvati River. The Out of India theory suggests that this drying up caused the movement of the remaining Indo-Aryans towards the Gangetic basin and possibly southwards towards the home of the Dravidian people.[3] The next one thousand years of the history of the Punjab and North India in general (c.1500-500 BCE) is dominated by the Indo-Aryans and the mixed population and culture that emerged from their interactions with the natives of the rest of the Indian subcontinent.

Vedic Punjab

The Rig-Veda, the oldest book in human history, is thought to have been written in the Punjab. It embodies a literary record of the socio-cultural development of ancient Punjab (known as SaptaSindhu) and affords us a glimpse of the life of its people. Vedic society was tribal rather than territorial in character. A number of families constituted a grama, a number of gramas a vis (clan) and a number of clans a Jana (tribe). The Janas, led by Rajans, were in constant inter-tribal warfare. From this warfare arose larger groupings of peoples ruled by able chiefs and kings. As a result, a new political philosophy of conquest and empire grew, which traced the origin of the state to the exigencies of war.

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An important event of the Rigvedic era was the "Battle of Ten Kings (BTK)" which was fought on the banks of the river Purusni (identified with the present-day river Ravi) between king Sudas of the Trtsu lineage of the Bharata clan on the one hand and a confederation of ten tribes on the other. The ten tribes pitted against Sudas comprised five major Indo-Aryan clans---the Purus, the Druhyus, the Anus, the Turvasas and the Yadus---and five non-Indo-Aryan (that is, Iranian) clans from the north-west frontiers of present-day Punjab---the Pakthas, the Alinas, the Bhalanas, the Visanins and the Sivas. King Sudas was supported by the Vedic Rishi Vasishtha, while sage Viswamitra sided with the confederation of ten tribes.

Out of such conflicts, struggles, conquests and movements of the Vedic and Later Vedic age emerged the heroic society of Punjab, a society that laid special stress on the value of action. The ideals and standards of that society are embedded in the Hindu Epics, notably the Mahabharata.

Epic Punjab

The philosophy of heroism of the Epic Age is excellently expounded in the Bhagavatagita section of the Mahabharata. That great work is a synthesis of many doctrines and creeds, but its core is arguably the enunciation of a martial and heroic cult. The *Bhagavatagita* comprehensively expounds a philosophy of heroism probably current in the then Punjab. It seeks to provide a philosophical foundation to the profession of arms and invests the Kshatriya or warrior with respectable position and noble status. It canonizes his professional integrity and injects an intensity of purpose into it.

This philosophy was professed by the warrior communities of ancient Punjab and countless generation of Punjabi soldiers have derived their strength and inspiration from it. The Punjabis, represented by ethnic groups such as the Gandharas, the Kambojas, the Trigartas, the Madras, the Malavas, the Pauravas, the Bahlikas and the Yaudheyas are stated to have sided with the Kauravas and displayed exemplary courage, power and prowess in the 18 day battle. The glorious exploits of these warlike communities can be seen in the accounts of the charges of the Kauravas against the Pandavas. The great epic makes copious attestation of the fact that the contingents of Gandharas, Kambojas, Sauviras, Madras and Trigartas occupied key positions in the Kaurava arrays throughout the epic war.

Another important epic event which involved the Punjabis was the conflict between the Indo-Aryan king Vishwamitra from Uttar Pradesh and Sage Vasishtha from the north-western parts of greater Punjab. The story is portrayed in the Bala-Kanda section of Valmiki's *Ramayana*. The conflict is said to have been sparked over the re-possession of Kamadhenu, also known as Savala, a divine cow (possibly an allegorical reference to a fief) by king Vishwamitra from a Brahmana sage of the Vasishtha lineage. RsiVasishtha skillfully solicited the military support of the frontier Punjabi warriors consisting of eastern Iranians---the Shakas, Kambojas, Pahlavas etc., aided by Kirata, Harita and the Mlechcha soldiers from the Himalayas. This composite army of fierce warriors from frontier Punjab utterly ruined one Akshauni army of the illustrious Vishwamitra, along with all of his 100 his sons except one. The Kamdhenu war seems to allegorically symbolise a struggle for supremacy between the Kshatriya forces and the priestly class of the epic era. It is however ironic that the warrior Punjabi communities of the frontier supported the priestly class against their own Kshatriya brotherhood.

Paninain and Kautilian Punjab

Paninia was a famous ancient Sanskrit grammarian born in Shal tura, identified with modern Lahur in northwest frontier province of Pakistan, thus a Punjabi himself. One may infer from his work, the Ashtadhyayi, that the people of greater Punjab lived prominently by the profession of arms. That text terms numerous clans as being "Ayudhajivin republics" or "Republics that live by force of arms". Those living in the plains were called Vahikas, while those in the mountainous regions (including the north-east of present-day Afghanistan) were termed as Parvatiyas (mountain people). The VahikasSanghas included prominently the Yaudheyas (modern Joiya or JohiyaRajputs and some

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Kamboj), Kekayas, Vrikas (possibly modern Virk Jatts), Usinaras, Sibis (possibly modern Sibia Jatts?), Kshudrakas, Malavas and the Madras clans, while the second class, styled as Parvatiya Ayudhajivins, comprised among others the Trigartas, the Gandharan clan of Hastayanas, and the Kambojan clans of Ashvayanas & Ashvakayanas, as well as the Daradas of the Chitral and Gilgit. In addition, Panini also refers to the Kshatriya monarchies of the Kuru, Gandhara and Kamboja. In fact, the entire region of greater Punjab is known to have reeked with martial people. These Kshatriyas or warrior communities followed different forms of republican constitutions, as is amply attested to by Panini's Ashtadhyayi. Again, the 4th century BC Arthashastra of Kautiliya also talks of several martial republics and specifically refers to the Kshatriya Shrenis (warrior-bands) of the Kambojas and some other frontier tribes as belonging to varta-Shastr-opajivin class (that is, living by the profession of arms and varta), while the Madras, Malla and the Kurus clans are styled as Raja-shabd-opajivins class (that is, living by the title of Raja). Thus, it is seen that the heroic traditions cultivated in Vedic and Epic Age continued to the times of Panini and Kautiliya. History strongly witnesses that these Ayudhajivin clans had offered stiff resistance to the Achaemenid rulers in the 6th century, and later to the Macedonian invaders in the 4th century BC.

There is no doubt that the Kambojas, Daradas, Kaikayas, Madras, Pauravas, Malavas, Saindhavas and Kurus jointly contributed to the composite culture and evolution of heroic tradition of ancient Punjab.

Persian domination

The western parts of ancient Gandhara and Kamboja (kingdoms of Greater Punjab) lay at the eastern edge of the Persian Empire. Both these ancient kingdoms fell prey to Persia either during the reign of the semi-legendary Achaemenid, or of Cyrus the Great (558-530 BCE), or in the first year of the reign of Darius I (521 BC - 486 BCE). The upper Indus region comprised of Gandhara and Kamboja formed the 7th satrapy of the Achaemenid Empire, while the lower and middle Indus comprised of Sindhu and Sauvira constituted the 20th satrapy. They are reported to have contributed 170 and 360 talents of gold dust in annual tribute.

The ancient Greeks also had some knowledge of the area. Darius I appointed the Greek Scylax of Caryanda to explore the Indian Ocean from the mouth of the Indus to Suez. Scylax provides an account of this voyage in his book Peripulus. Hecataeus (500 BCE) and Herodotus (483-431 BCE) also wrote about the Indian Satrapy of the Persians. In ancient Greek maps, we find mention of the "mightiest river of all the world", called the Indos (Indus), and its tributaries, the Hydaspes (Jhelum), Akeshines (Chenab), Hydraotis (Ravi), Hesidros (Sutlej) and Hyphasis (Beas).

Alexander's invasion

Alexander overran the Achaemenid Empire in 331 BCE and marched into present-day Afghanistan with an army of 50,000. His scribes do not record the names of the rulers of the Gandhara or Kamboja; rather, they locate a dozen small political units in those territories. This rules out the possibility of Gandhara and/or Kamboja having been great kingdoms in the late 4th century BCE. In 326 BCE, most of the dozen-odd political units of the former Gandhara/Kamboja fell to Alexander's forces.

Alexander invited all the chieftains of the former satrapy of Gandhara to submit to his authority. Ambhi, ruler of Taxila, whose kingdom extended from the Indus to the Hydaspes (Jhelum), complied. After confirming him in his satrapy, Alexander marched against the Kamboja highlanders of the Kunar and Swat valleys (known in Greek texts as Aspasios and Assakenois and in Indian texts as Ashvayana and Ashvakayana) who had refused to submit to him.

The Ashvayan, Ashvakayan, Kamboja and allied Saka [18] clans offered tough resistance to the invader and even the Ashvakayan women took up arms, preferring "a glorious death to a life of dishonor".

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In a letter to his mother, Alexander described his encounters with these trans-Indus tribes: "I am involved in the land of a leonine and brave people, where every foot of the ground is like a well of steel, confronting my soldier. You have brought only one son into the world, but everyone in this land can be called an Alexander".

Alexander then marched east to the Hydaspes, where Porus, ruler of the kingdom between the Hydaspes (Jhelum) and the Akesines (Chenab) refused to submit to him. The two armies fought the Battle of the Hydaspes River outside the town of Nikaia (near the modern city of Jhelum). Porus's army was defeated and when Alexander inquired of Porus, "How should I treat you?", the brave Porus reputedly shot back, "The way a king treats another king." Alexander was struck by his spirit. He not only returned the conquered kingdom to Porus, but added the land lying between the Akesines (Chenab) and the Hydraotis (Ravi).

Alexander's army crossed the Hydraotis and marched east to the Hesidros (Beas), but there his troops refused to march further east, and Alexander turned back, following the Jhelum and the Indus to the Arabian Sea, and sailing to Babylon.

Indo-Greek kingdom

Alexander established two cities in the Punjab, where he settled people from his multi-national armies, which included a majority of Greeks and Macedonians. These Indo-Greek cities and their associated kingdoms thrived long after Alexander's departure. After Alexander's death, the eastern portion of his empire (from present-day Syria to Punjab) was inherited by Seleucus I Nicator, the founder of the Seleucid dynasty. However, this empire was disrupted by the ascendancy of the Bactrians. The Bactrian king Demetrius I added the Punjab to his Kingdom in the 2nd century BCE. Many of the Indo-Greeks were Buddhists. The best known of the Indo-Greek kings was Menander I, known in India as Milinda, who established an independent kingdom centered at Taxila around 160 BCE. He later moved his capital to Sagala (modern Sialkot).

Sakas, Kushanas, and Hephthalites

In the middle of the 2nd century BC, the Yuezhi tribe of modern China moved westward into Central Asia, which, in turn, caused the Sakas (Scythians) to move west and south. The Northern Sakas, also known as the Indo-Scythians, moved first into Bactria, and later crossed the Hindu Kush into India, successfully wresting power from the Indo-Greeks.

They were followed by the Yuezhi, who were known in India as the Kushans or Kushanas. The Kushanas founded a kingdom in the 1st century that lasted for several centuries. Both the Indo-Scythians and the Kushans embraced Buddhism, and absorbed elements of Indo-Greek art and culture into their own. Another Central Asiatic people to make Punjab their home were the Hephthalites (White Huns), who engaged in continuous campaigns from across the Hindu Kush, finally establishing their rule in India in the fifth century.

Muslim invasions and the Shahi Kingdom

Following the birth of Islam in Arabia in the 6th century, the Muslims rose to power, replacing formerly Zoroastrian Persia as the major power to the west of India. In 711-713 AD, Arab armies from the caliphate of Damascus conquered Sind and advanced into southern Punjab, occupying present-day Multan, which was later to become a center of the Ismaili sect of Islam. Northern Punjab was divided into small Hindu kingdoms.

The Hindu Shahi dynasty ruled much of the Punjab, as well as western Afghanistan, from the mid-9th to the early 11th centuries. The Shahi Kingdom was originally based at Kabul, and later spread across the Punjab. Kabul was overrun by Turkic Muslims in the 10th century, and the Shahi capital was shifted to Ohind, near present-day Attock.

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In 977 AD, the Turkic ruler Sabuktigin acceded to the throne of the small kingdom of Ghazni in central Afghanistan. In the 980s, Subuktigin conquered the Shahis, extending his rule from the Khyber Pass, to the Indus. After his death in 997, his son Mahmud assumed power in Ghazni.

He expanded his father's kingdom far to the west and east through military conquest. He invaded the Punjab and northern India seventeen times during his reign, conquering the Shahi kingdom and extending his rule across the Punjab as far as the upper Yamuna. Mahmud demolished Hindu temples wherever his campaigns took him, and he also attacked the Ismailis, whom he viewed as heretics.

Mahmud's successors, known as the Ghaznavids, ruled for 157 years. Their kingdom gradually shrank in size, and was racked by bitter succession struggles. The Ghaznavids lost the western part of their kingdom (in present-day Iran) to the expanding Seljuk Turks. The Rajput kingdoms of western India reconquered the eastern Punjab, and by the 1160s, the line of demarcation between the Ghaznavid state and the Hindu kingdoms approximated to the present-day boundary between India and Pakistan. The Ghorids of central Afghanistan occupied Ghazni around 1150, and the Ghaznevid capital was shifted to Lahore. Muhammad Ghorid conquered the Ghaznavid kingdom, occupying Lahore in 1186-1187, and later extending his kingdom past Delhi into the Ganges-Yamuna Doab.

The Rise of Sikh Power

The Punjab presented a picture of chaos and confusion when Ranjit Singh took the control of Sukerchakiasmisal. The edifice of Ahmed Shah Abdali's empire in India had crumbled. Afghanistan was dismembered. Peshawar and Kashmir though under the suzerainty of Afghanistan had attained de facto independence. The Barakzais were now masters of these lands. Attock was ruled by Wazirikhels and Jhang lay at the feet of Sials. The Pathans ruled Kasur. Multan had thrown off the yoke and Nawab Muzaffar Khan was now ruler.

Both Punjab and Sind had been under Afghan rule since 1757 when Ahmed Shah Abdali was granted suzerainty over these provinces. However, the Sikhs were now a rising power in Punjab. Taimur Khan, a local Governor, was able to expel the Sikhs from Amritsar and raze the fort of Ram Rauni. His control was short-lived, however, and the Sikh misal joined to defeat Taimur Shah and his Chief minister Jalal Khan. The Afghans were forced to retreat and Lahore was occupied by the Sikhs in 1758. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia proclaimed the Sikh's sovereignty and assumed leadership, striking coins to commemorate his victory.

While Ahmed Shah Abdali was engaged in a campaign against the Marathas at Panipat in 1761, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia plundered Sirhind and Dialpur, seized towns in the Ferozepur district, and took possession of Jagraon and Kot Isa Khan on the opposite bank of the Sutlej. He captured Hoshiarpur and Naraingarh in Ambala and levied tribute from the chief of Kapurthala. He then marched towards Jhang. The Sial chief offered stout resistance.

However, when Ahmad Shah left in February 1761, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia again attacked Sirhind and extended his territory as far as Tarn Taran. When he crossed the Bias and captured Sultanpur in 1762, Ahmad Shah again appeared and a fierce battle took place. The ensuing holocaust was called Ghalughara. Following the rout of Sikh forces, Jassa Singh fled to the Kangra hills.

After the departure of Ahmad Shah Abdali, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia again attacked Sirhind, razing it and killing the Afghan Governor Zen Khan. This was a great victory for the Sikhs who now ruled all of the territory around the Sirhind. Jassa Singh immediately paid a visit to Hari Mandir Saheb at Amritsar, making amends and restoring the temple which had been defiled by Ahmad Shah through the slaughter of cows in its precincts.

Ahmad Shah died in June 1773. After his death the power of the Afghans declined in the Punjab. Taimur Shah ascended the throne at Kabul. By then the Misls were well established in the Punjab. They controlled territory as far as Saharnpur in the east, Attock in the west, Kangra Jammu in the

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north and Multan in the south. Efforts were made by Afghan rulers to dislodge the Sikhs from their citadels. Taimur Shah attacked Multan and defeated the Bhangis. The Bhangi Sardars, Lehna Singh, and Sobha Singh were driven out of Lahore in 1767 by the Abdali, but soon reoccupied it. They remained in power in Lahore until 1793 - the year when Shah Zaman acceded to the throne of Kabul. The first attempt at conquest by Shah Zaman was in 1793. He came to Hasan Abdal from which he sent an army of 7000 cavalry under Ahmad Shah Shahnachi but the Sikhs routed them. It was a great setback to Shah Zaman, but in 1795 he reorganized forces and again attacked Hasan Abdal. This time he snatched Rohtas from the Sukerchikias, whose leader was Ranjit Singh. Singh suffered at Shah Zaman's hands but did not lose courage. However, Shah Zaman had to return to Kabul as an invasion of his country from the west was apprehended. When he returned, Ranjit Singh dislodged the Afghans from Rohtas.

Shah Zaman did not sit idle. In 1796 he crossed the Indus for the third time and planned to capture Delhi. His ambition knew no bounds. By now he had raised an Afghan army of 3000 men. He was confident a large number of Indians would join him. Nawab of Kasur had already assured him help. Sahib Singh of Patiala betrayed his countrymen and declared his intentions of helping Shah Zaman. Shah Zaman was also assured of help by the Rohillas, Wazir of Oudh, and Tipu Sultan of Mysore. The news of Shah Zaman's invasion spread quickly and people began fleeing to the hills for safety. Heads of Misals, though bound to give protection to the people as they were collecting Rakhi tax from them, were the first to leave the people in lurch. By December Shah Zaman occupied territory up to Jhelum. When he reached Gujarat, Sahib Singh Bhangi panicked and left the place.

Next Shah Zaman marched on the territory of Ranjit Singh. Singh was alert and raised an army of 5000 horsemen. However, they were inadequately armed with only spears and muskets. The Afghans were equipped with heavy artillery. Ranjit Singh foresaw a strong, united fight against the invaders as he came to Amritsar. A congregation of Sarbat Khalsa was called and many Sikh sardars answered the call. There was general agreement that Shah Zaman's army should be allowed to enter the Punjab and that the Sikhs should retire to the hills.

Forces were reorganized under the command of Ranjit Singh and they marched towards Lahore. They gave the Afghans a crushing defeat in several villages and surrounded the city of Lahore. Sorties were made into the city at night in which they would kill a few Afghan soldiers and then leave under cover of darkness. Following this tactic they were able to dislodge Afghans from several places.

In 1797 Shah Zaman suddenly left for Afghansistan as his brother Mahmud had revolted. Shahanchi khan remained at Lahore with a sizeable army. The Sikhs followed Shah Zaman to Jhelum and snatched many goods from him. In returning, the Sikhs were attacked by the army of Shahnachi khan near Ram Nagar. The Sikhs routed his army. It was the first major achievement of Ranjit Singh. He became the hero of the land of Five Rivers and his reputation spread far and wide.

Again in 1798 Shah Zaman attacked Punjab to avenge the defeat of 1797. The Sikh people took refuge in the hills. A Sarbat Khalsa was again called and Sada Kaur persuaded the Sikhs to fight once again to the last man. This time even Muslims were not spared by Shah Zaman's forces and he won Gujarat easily.

Sada Kaur roused the Sikhs sense of national honour. If they were to again leave Amritsar, she would command the forces against the Afghans. She said that an Afghani soldier was no match for a Sikh soldier. In battle they would acquit themselves, and, by the grace of Sat Guru, would be successful.

The Afghans plundered the towns and villages as they had vowed and declared that they would exterminate the Sikhs. However, it was the Muslims who suffered most as the Hindus and Sikhs had already left for the hills. The Muslims had thought that they would not be touched but their hopes were dashed and their provisions forcibly taken from them by the Afghans.

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Shah Zaman requested that Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra refuse to give food or shelter to the Sikhs. This was agreed. Shah Zaman attacked Lahore and the Sikhs, surrounded as they were on all sides, had to fight a grim battle. The Afghans occupied Lahore in November 1798 and planned to attack Amritsar.

Ranjit Singh collected his men and faced Shah's forces about eight kilometres from Amritsar. They were well-matched and the Afghans were, at last, forced to retire. Humiliated, they fled towards Lahore. Ranjit Singh pursued them and surrounded Lahore. Afghan supply lines were cut, crops were burnt and other provisions plundered so that they did not fall into Afghan's hands.

It was a humiliating defeat for the Afghans. Nizam-ud-din of Kasur attacked the Sikhs near Shahdara on the banks of the Ravi, but his forces were no match for the Sikhs. Here too, it was the Muslims who suffered the most. The retreating Afghans and Nizam-ud-din forces plundered the town, antagonizing the local people.

The Afghans struggled hard to dislodge the Sikhs but in vain. The Sikh cordon was so strong that it was impossible for the Afghans to break it and proceed towards Delhi. Ranjit Singh terrorized the Afghans. The moment Zaman Shah left, Ranjit Singh pursued his forces and caught them unawares near Gujranwala. They were chased further up to Jhelum. Many Afghans were put to death and their weapons and supplies taken. The rest fled for their lives. Shah Zaman was overthrown by his brother and was blinded. He became a helpless creature, who, twelve years later, came to the Punjab to seek refuge in Ranjit Singh's darbar. Singh was now ruler of the land.

Ranjit Singh combined with Sahib Singh of Gujrat (Punjab) and Milkha Singh Pindiwala and a large Sikh force. They fell upon the Afghan garrison while Shah Zaman was still in vicinity of Khyber Pass. The Afghan forces fled north after having been routed by the Sikhs, leaving behind their dead, including the Afghan deputy, at Gujarat."

By this time the people of the country had become aware of the rising strength of Ranjit Singh. He was the most popular leader of the Punjab and was planning to enter Lahore. Victims of oppression, the people of Lahore were favorably disposed towards Singh who they saw as a potential liberator. Muslims joined Hindu and Sikh residents of Lahore in making an appeal to Singh to free them from the tyrannical rule.

A petition was written and was signed by MianAshak Muhammad, MianMukkam Din, Mohammad Tahir, Mohammad Bakar, Hakim Rai, and BhaiGurbaksh Singh. It was addressed to Ranjitsingh, requesting him to free them from the Bhangisardars. They begged Singh to liberate Lahore as soon as possible. He mobilised an Army of 25,000 and marched towards Lahore on July 6, 1799.

It was a last day of Muharram when a big procession was to be held in the town in the memory of the two grandsons of the Prophet Muhammad who had been martyred on the battlefield. It was expected that the Bhangisardars would also participate in the procession and mourn with their Shia brethren. By the time procession was over Ranjit Singh had reached the outskirts of city.

In the early morning of July 7, 1799, Ranjit Singh's men took up their positions. Guns glistened and bugles were sounded. Rani SadaKaur stood outside Delhi Gate and Ranjit Singh proceeded towards Anarkali.

Ranjit Singh rode along the walls of the city setting mines. The wall was breached. This created panic and confusion. Mukkam Din, who was one of the signatories to the petition made a proclamation, accompanied by drumbeats, stating that he had taken over the town and was now in charge. He ordered the city gates to be opened. Ranjit Singh entered the city with his troops through the Lahori Gate. SadaKaur and a detachment of cavalry entered through Delhi gate.

Before the Bhangisardars realized it, a part of the citadel had been occupied without resistance. Sahib Singh and Mohar Singh left the city and sought protection. Chet Singh was left to either to fight to

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defend the town or flee. He shut himself in HazuriBagh with 500 men. Ranjit Singh's cavalry surrounded HazuriBagh. Chet Singh surrendered and was given permission to leave the city along with his family.

Ranjit Singh was now well-entrenched. Immediately after taking possession of the city, he paid a visit to Badshahi Mosque. This gesture increased his prestige in the eyes of people. He won the hearts of his subjects, Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh alike. It was July 7, 1799 when the victorious Ranjit Singh entered Lahore.

Ranjit Singh ultimately acquired a kingdom in the Punjab which stretched from the Sutlej River in the east to Peshawar in the west, and from the junction of the Sutlej and the Indus in the south to Ladakh in the north. Ranjit died in 1839, and a succession struggle ensued. Two of his successor maharajas were assassinated by 1843.

The Ten Gurus of Sikhism

- Sikhism was established by ten Gurus, human spiritual teachers or masters, over the period from 1469 to 1708 - that is over a period of 239 years. These teachers were enlightened souls whose main purpose in life was the spiritual and moral well-being of the masses. By setting an exceptional example of how to live a holy and worthy life through practising righteous principles of living their human lives, they sort to awaken the higher consciousness in the human race. The Gurus taught the people of India and beyond, to live spiritually fulfilling lives with dignity, freedom and honour.
- Each of the ten masters added to and reinforced the message taught by the previous, resulting eventually to the creation of the religion that is now called Sikhism. Guru Nanak Dev was the first Guru and Guru Gobind Singh the final Guru in human form. When Guru Gobind Singh left this world, he made the Sri Guru Granth Sahib the ultimate and final Sikh Guru. The Spirit of this final Guru is more than a holy book for the Sikhs, who give this eternal Guru the same respect and reverence as a living "human" Guru.
- During the span of 239 years, the Sikh Gurus laid down within the sacred scriptures, the rules and regulations that outline the way of living that was to be followed by all practising disciple of this religion. The history and the literature present the followers of the faith and others with the raw material required to learn about the beliefs and practises propagated by the Gurus. The Gurus were clear also to outline rituals, practises and beliefs that were not appropriate and were not to be followed by the faithful disciples. They promoted the habit of reciting of holy hymns called Shabads; living in constant remembrance of the Supreme Creator and living a simple life of truth, decency and virtuous principles.

Guru Nanak - Guru from 1469 to 1539

Guru Nanak

The first of the Gurus and the founder of the Sikh religion was Guru Nanak. He was born at Talwandi (now known as Nankana Sahib in Pakistan) on October 20, 1469.

Guru ji mastered Punjabi, Sanskrit and Persian at an early age and in childhood revolted against ritualism, caste, prejudices, hypocrisy and idolatry.

He regarded Hindus and Muslims as equals and referred to himself as neither Hindu nor Muslim but as a brother to all those who believed in God and truth.

He made four great journeys, travelling to all parts of India, and into Arabia and Persia; visiting Mecca and Baghdad. He spoke before Hindus, Jains, Buddhists, Parsees, and Muslims. He spoke in the temples and mosques, and at various pilgrimage sites. Wherever he went, Guru Nanak spoke out against empty religious rituals, pilgrimages, the caste system, the sacrifice of widows, of depending on books to learn the true religion, and of all the other tenets that were to define his teachings. Never did he ask his listeners to follow him. He asked the Muslims to be true Muslims and the Hindus to be true Hindus.

2. Guru Angad - Guru from 1539 to 1552

Guru Angad

He was born in 1504. Guru Angad invented and introduced the Gurmukhi (written form of Punjabi) script and made it known to all Sikhs.

The scripture of the Guru Granth Sahib Ji is written in Gurmukhi. This scripture is also the basis of the Punjabi language. It became the script of the masses very soon. Guru Angad was a model of selfless service to his Sikhs and showed them the way to devotional prayers. He took great interest in the education of the children by opening many schools for their instruction and thus greatly increased literacy.

For the youth he started the tradition of Mall Akhara, where physical as well as spiritual exercises were held. He collected the facts about Guru Nanak Sahib's life from Bhai Balaji and wrote the first biography of Guru Nanak Sahib. (The Bhai Bale Wali Janamsakhi currently available is not the same as that which Guru Angad Sahib compiled.) He also wrote 63 Saloks (stanzas), these were included in Guru Granth Sahib. He popularized and expanded the institution of 'Guru ka Langar' started by Guru Nanak Sahib earlier.

3. Guru Amar Das - Guru from 1552 to 1574

Guru Amar Das

He was born in 1479. Guru Amardas took up cudgels of spirituality to fight against caste restrictions, caste prejudices and the curse of untouchability.

He strengthened the tradition of the free kitchen, Guru Ka Langar (started by Guru Nanak), and made his disciples, whether rich or poor, whether high born or low born (according to the Hindu caste system), have their meals together sitting in one place.

He thus established social equality amongst the people. Guru Amardas introduced the Anand Karaj marriage ceremony for the Sikhs, replacing the Hindu form.

He also completely abolished amongst the Sikhs, the custom of Sati, in which a married woman was forced to burn herself to death in the funeral pyre of her husband. The custom of Paradah (Purda), in which a woman was required to cover her face with a veil, was also done away with.

4. Guru Ram Das - Guru from 1574 to 1581

Guru Ram Das

He was born in 1534. Guru ji founded the city of Amritsar and started the construction of the famous Golden Temple at Amritsar, the holy city of the Sikhs. He requested the, Muslim Sufi, Mian Mir to lay the cornerstone of the Harmandir Sahib.

The temple remains open on all sides and at all times to everyone. This indicates that the Sikhs believe in One God who has no partiality for any particular place, direction or time.

The standard Sikh marriage ceremony known as the Anand Karaj is centered around the Lawan, a four stanza hymn composed by Guru Ram Das ji. The marriage couple circumscribe the Guru Granth Sahib ji as each stanza is read. The first round is the Divine consent for commencing the householders life through marriage. The second round states that the union of the couple has been brought about by God. In the third round the couple is described as the most fortunate as they have sung the praises of the Lord in the company of saints. In the fourth round the feeling of the couple that they have obtained their hearts desire and are being congratulated is described.

5. Guru ArjanDev - Guru from 1581 to 1606

Guru ArjanDev

He was born in 1563. He was the third son of Guru Ram Das ji. Guru Arjan was a saint and scholar of the highest quality and repute.

He compiled the AdiGranth, the scriptures of the Sikhs, and wrote the Sukhmani Sahib. To make it a universal teaching, Guru ji included in it hymns of Muslim saints as well those of low-caste pariah saints who were never permitted to enter various temples.

Guru ArjanDev completed construction of Sri Darbar Sahib also known as Golden Temple in Amritsar.

Sri Darbar Sahib welcomes all without discrimination, which is symbolised by the four doors that are open in four directions. Guru ji became the first great martyr in Sikh history when Emperor Jahangir ordered his execution.

6. Guru HarGobind - Guru from 1606 to 1644

Guru Hargobind

He was born in 1595. He was the son of Guru ArjanDev and was known as a "soldier saint," Guru Hargobindjiorganised a small army, explaining that extreme non-violence and pacifism would only encourage evil and so the principles of Miri-Piri were established.

Guru ji taught that it was necessary to take up the sword in order to protect the weak and the oppressed. Guru ji was first of the Gurus to take up arms to defend the faith. At that time it was only emperors who were allowed to sit on a raised platform, called a takhat or throne.

At the age of 13, Guru Hargobind erected Sri Akal Takhat Sahib, ten feet above the ground and adorned two swords, Miri and Piri, representing temporal and spiritual power.

7. Guru HarRai - Guru from 1644 to 1661

Guru HarRai

He was born in 1630, spent most of his life in devotional meditation and preaching the teachings of Guru Nanak.

Although, Guru HarRaiji was a man of peace, he never disbanded the armed Sikh Warriors (Saint Soldiers), who earlier were maintained by his grandfather, Guru Hargobind. He always boosted the military spirit of the Sikhs, but he never himself indulged in any direct political and armed controversy with the Mughal Empire. Guru ji cautiously avoided conflict with Emperor Aurangzeb and devoted his efforts to missionary work.

He also continued the grand task of nation building initiated by Guru Hargobind.

8. Guru HarKrishan - Guru from 1661 to 1664

Guru HarKrishan

He was born in 1656. Guru HarKrishan was the youngest of the Gurus. Installed as Guru at the age of five, Guru ji astonished the Brahmin Pundits with his knowledge and spiritual powers.

To the Sikhs he proved to be the very symbol of service, purity and truth. The Guru gave his life while serving and healing the epidemic-stricken people in Delhi. The young Guru began to attend the

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sufferers irrespective of cast and creed. Particularly, the local Muslim population was much impressed with the purely humanitarian deeds of the Guru Sahib and nicknamed him BalaPir (child prophet).

Even Aurangzeb did not try to disturb Guru Harkrishan Sahib sensing the sensitivity of the situation, but on the other hand never dismissed the claim of Ram Rai also.

Anyone who invokes Guru HarKishan with a pure heart has no difficulties whatsoever in their life.

9. Guru TeghBahadur - Guru from 1665 to 1675

Guru TeghBahadur

He was born in 1621 in Amritsar.

He established the town of Anandpur. The Guru laid down his life for the protection of the Hindu religion, their Tilak (devotional forehead markings) and their sacred (janeau) thread. He was a firm believer in the right of people to the freedom of worship.

It was for this cause that he faced martyrdom for the defence of the down-trodden Hindus. So pathetic was the torture of Guru TeghBahadur that his body had to be cremated clandestinely (a follower burned down his own home to cremate the Guru's body) at Delhi while his severed head was secretly taken four hundred kilometers away to Anandpur Sahib for cremation. Because of his refusal to convert to Islam a threatened forced conversion of the Hindus of Kashmir was thwarted.

10. Guru Gobind Singh - Guru from 1675 to 1708

Guru Gobind Singh

He was born in 1666 and became Guru after the martyrdom of his father Guru TeghBahadur.

He created the Khalsa (The Pure Ones) in 1699, changing the Sikhs into a saint-soldier order with special symbols and sacraments for protecting themselves. After the Guru had administered Amrit to his Five Beloved Ones, he stood up in supplication and with folded hands, begged them to baptize him in the same way as he had baptized them.

He himself became their disciple (Wonderful is Guru Gobind Singh, himself the Master and himself the disciple). The Five Beloved Ones were astonished at such a proposal, and represented their own unworthiness, and the greatness of the Guru, whom they deemed God's representative upon earth. He gave the Sikhs the name Singh (lion) or Kaur (princess).

He fought many battles against the armies of Aurangzeb and his allies. After he had lost his father, his mother and four sons to Mughal tyranny, he wrote his famous letter (the zafarnama) to Aurangzeb, in which he indicted the Grand mughal with his treachery and godliness, after which the attacks against the Guru and his Sikhs were called off. Aurangzeb died soon after reading the letter.

Soon, the rightful heir to the Mughal throne sought the Guru's assistance in winning his kingdom. It was the envie and fear of the growing friendship between the new Emperor and the Guru which lead to the sneak attack of the Pathanassasins of Wasir Khan who inflicted the wound which later caused the Guru's death.

Thus the tree whose seed was planted by Guru Nanak, came to fruition when Guru Gobind Singh created the Khalsa, and on 3 October 1708, appointed Guru Granth Sahib as the Guru. He commanded: "Let all bow before my successor, Guru Granth. The Word is the Guru now."

11. Guru Granth Sahib - Guru from 1708 to eternity

Sri Guru Granth Sahib

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Guru Granth Sahib (also known as the Adi Granth) is the scripture of the Sikhs. No Sikh ceremony is regarded as complete unless it is performed in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib.

The Granth was written in Gurmukhi script and it contains the actual words and verses as uttered by the Sikh Gurus.

It is considered the Supreme Spiritual Authority and Head of the Sikh religion, rather than any living person. It is also the only scripture of its kind which not only contains the works of its own religious founders but also the writings of people of other faiths.

The living Guru of the Sikhs, the book is held in great reverence by Sikhs and treated with the utmost respect.

Guru Granth Sahib is a book of Revelation. It conveys the Word of the Master through His messengers on earth. It is universal in its scope.

The greatness of the Guru Granth Sahib lies not only in its being the Holy Scripture of the Sikhs but also in it being a general scripture available to mankind, intended for everybody, everywhere.

Creation of the Khalsa

In 1699 he created the Khalsa panth, by giving amrit to sikhs. In 1704 he fought the great battle with collective forces of Aurangzeb, Wazir Khan (Chief of Sarhind), and other kings. He left Anandpur and went to Chamkaur with only 40 sikhs. There he fought the Battle of Chamkaur with 40 sikhs, vastly outnumbered by the Mughal soldiers. His two elder sons (at ages 17, 15) were martyred there. Wazir Khan killed other two (ages 9, 6). Guru Ji sent Aurangzeb the Zafarnamah (Notification of Victory). Then he went to Nanded (Maharashtra, India). From there he made Baba Gurbakhash Singh, also alias as Baba Banda Singh Bahadur, as his general and sent him to Punjab.

On the evening of the day when Baba Gurbakhash Singh left for Punjab, Guru Gobind Singh was visited by two Muslim soldiers. One of them was commissioned by Wazir Khan, Subedar of Sirhind, to assassinate Guru Gobind Singh. One of the assailants, Basha Beg, kept a vigil outside the Guru's tent while Jamshed Khan, a hired assassin, stabbed the Guru twice. Khan was killed in one stroke by the Guru, while those outside, alerted by the tumult, killed Beg. Although the wound was sewn up the following day, the Guru died in Nanded, Maharashtra, India in 1708.

Shortly before passing away Guru Gobind Singh ordered that the Guru Granth Sahib (the Sikh Holy Scripture), would be the ultimate spiritual authority for the Sikhs and temporal authority would be vested in the Khalsa Panth – the Sikh Nation. The first Sikh Holy Scripture was compiled and edited by the Fifth Guru, Guru Arjan in AD 1604, although some of the earlier gurus are also known to have documented their revelations. This is one of the few scriptures in the world that has been compiled by the founders of a faith during their own lifetime. The Guru Granth Sahib is particularly unique among sacred texts in that it is written in Gurmukhi script but contains many languages including Punjabi, Hindustani, Sanskrit, Bhojpuri, Assamese and Persian. Sikhs consider the Guru Granth Sahib the last, perpetual living guru.

Banda Singh Bahadur

Banda Singh Bahadur (born Lachman Dev, also known as Banda Bairagi, Banda Bahadur, Lachman Das and Madho Das (27 October 1670 – 9 June 1716, Delhi) was a Sikh military commander.

At age 15 he left home to become an ascetic, and was given the name "Madho Das". He established a monastery at Nanded, on the bank of the river Godavari, where in September 1708 he was visited by, and became a disciple of, Guru Gobind Singh, who gave him the new name of Banda Singh Bahadur. Armed with the blessing and authority of Gobind Singh, he assembled a fighting force and led the struggle against the Mughal Empire. His first major action was the sack of the Mughal

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provincial capital, Samana, in November 1709. After establishing his authority in Punjab, Banda Singh Bahadur abolished the zamindari system, and granted property rights to the tillers of the land. He was captured by the Mughals and tortured to death in 1716.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh

Ranjit Singh, also spelled Runjit Singh, byname Lion of the Punjab (born November 13, 1780, Budrukhan, or Gujranwala [now in Pakistan]—died June 27, 1839, Lahore [now in Pakistan]), founder and maharaja (1801–39) of the Sikh kingdom of the Punjab.

Ranjit Singh was the first Indian in a millennium to turn the tide of invasion back into the homelands of the traditional conquerors of India, the Pashtuns (Afghans), and he thus became known as the Lion of the Punjab. At their height, his domains extended from the Khyber Pass in the northwest to the Sutlej River in the east and from the Kashmir region at the northern limit of the Indian subcontinent southward to the Thar (Great Indian) Desert. Although he was uneducated, he was a shrewd judge of people and events, free from religious bigotry, and was mild in the treatment of his adversaries.

Early life and conquests

Ranjit Singh was reported to be short and unattractive. He was blind in one eye and had a face pitted with pockmarks. A lover of life, he liked to surround himself with handsome men and women, and he had a passion for hunting, horses, and strong liquor.

He was the only child of Maha Singh, on whose death in 1792 he became chief of the Shukerchakias, a Sikh group. His inheritance included Gujranwala town and the surrounding villages, now in Pakistan. At 15 he married the daughter of a chieftain of the Kanhayas, and for many years his affairs were directed by his ambitious mother-in-law, the widow Sada Kaur. A second marriage, to a girl of the Nakkais, made Ranjit Singh preeminent among the clans of the Sikh confederacy.

In July 1799 he seized Lahore, the capital of the Punjab (now the capital of Punjab province, Pakistan). The Afghan king, Zaman Shah, confirmed Ranjit Singh as governor of the city, but in 1801 Ranjit Singh proclaimed himself maharaja of the Punjab. He had coins struck in the name of the Sikh Gurus, the revered line of Sikh leaders, and proceeded to administer the state in the name of the Sikh commonwealth. A year later he captured Amritsar (now in Punjab state, India), the most-important commercial entrepôt in northern India and sacred city of the Sikhs. Thereafter, he proceeded to subdue the smaller Sikh and Pashtun principalities that were scattered throughout the Punjab.

His later forays eastward, however, were checked by the English. By a treaty with them, signed in 1806, he agreed to expel a Maratha force that had sought refuge in the Punjab. The English then thwarted his ambition to bring together all of the Sikh territories extending up to the vicinity of Delhi. In 1809 they compelled him to sign the Treaty of Amritsar, which fixed the Sutlej River as the eastern boundary of his territories.

Consolidation of territory and later career

Ranjit Singh then turned his ambitions in other directions. In December 1809 he went to the aid of Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra in the Lesser Himalayas (in what is now western Himachal Pradesh state) and, after defeating an advancing Ghurka force, acquired Kangra for himself. In 1813 he joined a British-Afghan expedition into Kashmir. Although the British betrayed him by keeping Kashmir for themselves, he more than settled scores with them by rescuing Shah Shojah—brother of Zaman Shah, who had been deposed as Afghan king in 1803 and had fled from the British—and by occupying the fort at Attock on the Indus River, southeast of Peshawar, the Pashtun citadel. Shah Shojah was taken to Lahore and pressured into parting with the famous Koh-i-noor diamond. In the summer of 1818 Ranjit Singh's troops captured the city of Multan, and six

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months later they entered Peshawar. In July 1819 he finally expelled the Pashtuns from the Vale of Kashmir, and by 1820 he had consolidated his rule over the whole Punjab between the Sutlej and Indus rivers.

All Ranjit Singh's conquests were achieved by Punjabi armies composed of Sikhs, Muslims, and Hindus. His commanders were also drawn from different religious communities, as were his cabinet ministers. In 1820 Ranjit Singh began to modernize his army, using European officers—many of whom had served in the army of Napoleon I—to train the infantry and the artillery. The modernized Punjabi army fought well in campaigns in the North-West Frontier (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan, on the Afghanistan border), including quelling an uprising by tribesmen there in 1831 and repulsing an Afghan counterattack on Peshawar in 1837.

In October 1831 Ranjit Singh met with British officials regarding the disposition of Sindh province (now in southeastern Pakistan). The British, who had already begun to navigate the Indus River and were eager to keep Sindh for themselves, prevailed on Ranjit Singh to accept their plan. Ranjit Singh, however, was chagrined by the British design to put a cordon around him. He opened negotiations with the Afghans and sanctioned an expedition led by the Dogra commander Zorawar Singh that extended Ranjit Singh's northern territories into Ladakh (a region of eastern Kashmir now in Jammu and Kashmir state, India) in 1834.

In 1838 he agreed to a treaty with the British viceroy Lord Auckland to restore Shah Shojah to the Afghan throne at Kabul. In pursuance of that agreement, the British Army of the Indus entered Afghanistan from the south, while Ranjit Singh's troops went through the Khyber Pass and took part in the victory parade in Kabul. Shortly afterward, Ranjit Singh was taken ill, and he died at Lahore in June 1839—almost exactly 40 years after he entered the city as a conqueror. In little more than six years after his death, the Sikh state he had created collapsed because of the internecine strife of rival chiefs.

The Britishers in Punjab

By 1845 the British had moved 32,000 troops to the Sutlej frontier, to secure their northernmost possessions against the succession struggles in the Punjab. In late 1845, British and Sikh troops engaged near Ferozepur, beginning the First Anglo-Sikh War. The war ended the following year, and the territory between the Sutlej and the Beas was ceded to Great Britain, along with Kashmir, which was sold to Gulab Singh, who ruled Kashmir as a British vassal.

As a condition of the peace treaty, some British troops, along with a resident political agent and other officials, were left in the Punjab to oversee the regency of Maharaja Dhalip Singh, a minor. The Sikh army was reduced greatly in size. In 1848, out-of-work Sikh troops in Multan revolted, and a British official was killed. Within a few months, the unrest had spread throughout the Punjab, and British troops once again invaded. The British prevailed in the Second Anglo-Sikh War, and under the Treaty of Lahore in 1849, the Punjab was annexed by the British East India Company, and Dhalip Singh was pensioned off. The Punjab became a province of British India, although a number of small states, most notably Patiala, retained local rulers who recognized British sovereignty.

In every way, the Punjab was Great Britain's most important asset in colonial India. Its political and geographic predominance gave Britain a base from which to project its power over more than 500 princely states that made up India. Lahore was a center of learning and culture under British rule, and Rawalpindi became an important Army installation.

The JallianwalaBagh Massacre of 1919 occurred in Amritsar. In 1930, the Indian National Congress proclaimed independence from Lahore. The 1940 Lahore Resolution of the Muslim League to work for Pakistan, made Punjab the centerstage of a different, bloodier and dirtier struggle.

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In 1946, massive communal tensions and violence erupted between the majority Muslims of Punjab, and the Hindu and Sikh minorities. The Muslim League attacked the government of Unionist Punjabi Muslims, Sikh Akalis and the Congress, and led to its downfall. Unwilling to be cowed down, Sikhs and Hindus counter-attacked and the resulting bloodshed left the province in great disorder. Both Congress and League leaders agreed to partition Punjab upon religious lines, a precursor to the wider partition of the country.

The British Punjab province, which includes present-day Punjab province of Pakistan, and the Indian states of Punjab, Haryana, and Himachal Pradesh, was partitioned in 1947 between the newly-independent states of India and Pakistan.

Punjab of India and Pakistan

In 1947, 70% of Punjab (now West Punjab) fell to Pakistan. Further controversial decisions made by the Radcliffe Boundary Commission exacerbated the crisis. The Gurdaspur region in the northern point of the province adjoining Kashmir was given to India, despite a distinct Muslim majority. Over 1 million people were killed indiscriminately and with medieval brutality. Women were raped and murdered, children massacred and the elderly brutalized. Whole villages and neighborhoods, temples and mosques were razed to the ground. No Sikh or Hindu could walk in safety in Lahore, once the capital of Ranjit Singh's independent Punjab, and no Muslim could walk freely in Amritsar or Delhi, the former seat of the Mughal Empire.

The frightening exodus tore away from the proud Sikhs the cities of Lahore, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala and Faisalabad, core to their history and culture. Ranjit Singh, the famed Sikh king, lies at rest in a grave in Lahore, the heart of Pakistan West Punjab. Sikhs were the chief land-holders of the more fertile West Punjab, forced to desert their family holdings for measly sums or none at all in a matter of days. Worst-hit by the partition of Punjab and India, the Sikhs re-grouped in India's Punjab. Having had no astute political leadership engaging the British, Sikhs were out-flanked by both Hindu & Muslim parties. Sikhs were made assurances of a recognised Punjabi speaking East Punjab with autonomous control. This never transpired. Led by Master Tara Singh, Sikhs wanted to obtain a political voice in their state. Although it began on stormy notes in 1947, the movement was largely peaceful. It was however opposed by the Indian Government.

Punjab of Pakistan like India became the most dominant province of the new state. It was, and still is the bread basket, the cultural heartland of both provinces. Most of Pakistan's military, police and political offices are filled by Punjabis. The great city of Lahore is the cultural, educational and sports capital of Pakistan; its second-largest city, though hailed in importance greater than the capital Islamabad or the commercial and population center, Karachi, owing to its spiritual importance to Punjabi Pakistanis. It is almost uniformly Punjabi and Muslim. Most of Pakistan's sportsmen in cricket, field hockey and squash (a sport it singularly dominates) come from Lahore! However, is only a few miles from the international boundary with India. Major cities like Rawalpindi and Sialkot are also located at extreme proximity to the Indian boundary. Through the 1960s and 1970s, major industries, educational institutions and urbanization swept the cities and towns of Punjab. Punjabis make 50-55% of Pakistan's people. Their political power remains undisputed; other ethnic groups in Pakistan accuse the Punjabis of strong bias and neglect of non-Punjabi areas and non-Punjabi national assets.

In 1965, a fierce war broke out between India and Pakistan over the disputed region of Kashmir, but owing to the treacherous geography of the state, and the open nature of hostilities, the fiercest fighting took place in Punjab. At a region called the Assal Uttar (Real North), thousands of Pakistani and Indian tanks fought terrifying battles. Thousands of men lost their lives, and while the Pakistani army made a few gains, the Indian forces by the end directly threatened the great city of Lahore with mortar and artillery fire. Owing to the extreme proximity of Pakistan's most important city to the border, the Pakistani army concentrates its forces and strengths to the maximum in this thin stretch of land. In 1971 again, fierce tank battles, air battles and artillery assaults tore away this thin stretch of land.

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In 1966, owing to the tremendous bravery shown by thousands of Sikh officers and soldiers in the Indian Army, the Government divided the Punjab into a Sikh-majority state of the same name, and Hindu-majority Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. Sikhs, however, still form only about 60% of the population.

In the 1970s, the Green Revolution swept India. Punjab's agricultural production trebled, and so did the prosperity of its people. For such a small state to be called the bread-basket for a country of more than a billion people, is like a goldfish being classified a leviathan. Industrialization swept the state and the state remains the ones of the economic leaders of the entire country. Punjabi culture also predominates the national art, media, music and film industries. Punjabis, especially Sikhs, form a major part of the Armed Services. Punjab, being a frontline and focal-point state upon the border with Pakistan, is also a major area of extreme strategic security importance.

In the early 1980s, a small group of Sikh fundamentalists sought the Punjabi state to be made independent of India. Led by Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, a young priest, small bands of militants began attacking policemen, military sites and government and army officials. In the Holy Harimandir Sahib in Amritsar, Bhindranwale broadcast and published his calls for independence. Bhindranwale was supported by Sikhs from all over the Punjab and Delhi, as well as Sikhs outside India. A vast majority of Sikhs in the Punjab and outside it supported the call for independence.

The Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, who had tried to use and manipulate Bhindranwale, authorized an Army take-over of the Harimandir Sahib area. In Operation Bluestar, executed in 1984, thousands of Indian soldiers raided the Temple to flush out thousands of militants holed up in it. During the action, major damage was inflicted to the temple complex. The militants were killed or arrested, but the Operation cost the lives of 300 soldiers and thousands of innocent civilians, many of whom were known to be innocent worshippers by the Indian army.

The incredibly bloody operation invited major criticism of the Gandhi government. The Gandhi government was the only country in modern times that had attacked a faith's most holiest of shrines. Outrage now broke loose in the mainstream of Sikh society. Outraged young Sikhs spread disorder around the Punjab and in Delhi. In October 1984, just two months after Bluestar, Indira Gandhi's own two Sikh bodyguards assassinated her in revenge for the attack on the Holy Harimandir Sahib in Amritsar. The Indian Army commander was similarly assassinated.

Bloodthirsty mobs took to the streets of Delhi following Gandhi's murder. For the first time in history, Hindus and Sikhs fueded against each other. More than 5,000 Sikhs were brutally murdered by Hindu mobs.

The Government acted quickly, imposing martial law in the disturbed areas. Over the next three years, tough police action destroyed the insurgency, and fresh political overtures in the early 1990s did much to calm the state. Although some political suspicion still remains, Sikhs and Hindus have healed their common wounds and bridged the divides. The Sikh fundamentalists have either been driven out of the country or reduced to the margins of politics. However, little was done by the Indian government to redress the thousand of Sikhs killed and many more who lost their homes in the 1984 mob violence. Many of the police and army officers as well as Indian MPs are known to the government for help anti-Sikh mobs kill innocent people, yet they have never been prosecuted or questioned.

The 1990s brought much prosperity to India's Punjab. In 2004, Dr. Manmohan Singh became the country's first Sikh Prime Minister. Operation Bluestar, however, remains a topic of great controversy and bitterness in many parts of society.

The Wagah border post, is the chief crossing point between India and Pakistan. The Samjhauta (Understanding) Express runs between Atari, in Indian Punjab, to Lahore in Pakistan, as does the Delhi-Lahore bus. The Government of Pakistan allows small numbers of Sikhs to visit religious sites

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in Pakistani Punjab, and allowed 3,000 Pakistani Sikhs to cross over recently, at the 300th anniversary of the founding of the Khalsa.

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Punjab After 1947

PARTITION OF THE PUNJAB (1947) was the result of the overwhelming support the Muslim demand for the creation of Pakistan, an independent and sovereign Muslim State, had gathered in India. When the word Pakistan was first mentioned, the idea had been laughed out of court, even by the Muslims themselves. But within the next half a decade, it had annexed almost the total support of the Muslim population. During the discussions in England that preceded the passing of the Government of India Act 1935, Pakistan had been mentioned, but no one had taken it as a serious proposition.

By the end of 1938, however, Pakistan was being seriously canvassed in Muslim League circles, and in March 1940, under MA. Jinnah's leadership, the League passed at Lahore the famous Pakistan Resolution, demanding the partition of India and the formation of the Muslim majority zones of the northwest and northeast into independent sovereign States. This uncompromising demand for Pakistan and the partition of India aroused intense opposition throughout the whole country, not least among the Sikhs. Just as the Muslims were unwilling to submit to a permanent Hindu majority in a united India, so the Sikhs viewed with alarm the prospect of becoming a permanent minority in a Muslim State, which would be their fate if the whole of the Punjab was included in Pakistan.

But the Sikh leaders were in a dilemma; for any division of the Punjab so as to exclude from Pakistan the predominantly non Muslim areas would also divide the Sikhs. In an endeavour to break the deadlock that arose between Congress and the League over the Pakistan issue Mr Rajagopalachari in 1944 persuaded Mahatma Gandhi to offer to Mr. Jinnah a Pakistan consisting of those contiguous areas in the northwest and northeast of India in which Muslims were in a majority. This offer meant the exclusion from Pakistan of practically the whole of Assam and nearly half of Bengal and of the Punjab, both of which would have to be partitioned.

Mr Jinnah rejected it as "a shadow and a husk, a maimed, mutilated and motheaten Pakistan," and adhered inflexibly to his demand for a sovereign Pakistan of six provinces. By this time he and the League had gained greatly in strength. Ever since the passing of the Pakistan Resolution, he had been methodically working to marshal all Muslims under his leadership, and to crush other leaders who were unwilling to bow to his dictation and were lukewarm in their support of the demand for Pakistan. In Bengal, FaziulHuq was displaced as premier in 1943 by a more staunch Muslim Leaguer; and in the Punjab Sir Khizar Hayat Khan Tiwana, who on Sir Sikandar's death had succeeded him as Premier, was expelled from the League in 1944. His Muslim followers had now to choose between loyalty to him and the Unionist Party he led and loyalty to Mr. Jinnah and the League. Though Sir Khizar retained the support of most Muslim members of the provincial assembly and continued as Premier, he was weakened, for a rift opened in the ranks of his Muslim followers.

Fresh elections held at the end of World War II in the cold weather of 1945-46 confirmed that Mr. Jinnah had secured the backing of almost all Muslims in India. The League won every Muslim seat in the Central Legislative Assembly and the majority of those in provincial assemblies. Its most striking success was in the Punjab where Sir Khizar's Muslim Unionists were reduced to a handful of seven and all the remaining seventy-nine Muslim seats had gone to the League.

With the support of Congress Hindus and Akali Sikhs, Sir Khizar was able to form a government and continue as Premier, but it was virtually the end of the once powerful Unionist Party that under his leadership might have stood as a bulwark against the demand for Pakistan and the resulting partition of the Punjab. To the Muslim masses Pakistan had been little more than a vague Utopia, but after the League's electoral successes the demand for it had to be squarely faced. Lord Wavell, the Viceroy, proposed to the Labour Government in England that if Mr Jinnah persisted in the demand for a completely sovereign Pakistan, he should be told that all he could get would be a truncated Pakistan, shorn of Assam, West Bengal, including Calcutta, and about half of the Punjab.

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The Viceroy believed that when plainly confronted with this prospect, Mr Jinnah might be prepared to settle for the best terms he could get for the Muslims within a united India. This was in effect the course adopted when in March 1946 a Cabinet Mission came out to India to try to solve the constitutional problem. It was made clear to Mr Jinnah that he would have to forgo either part of the territory or some measure of the sovereignty that he demanded for Pakistan. If he insisted on full sovereignty, he could only have a reduced Pakistan of contiguous Muslim Majority areas.

The alternative was for him to accept an all India Union limited to defence, foreign affairs and communications within which the full Pakistan provinces that he claimed could be formed into sub federations with wide powers. Mr Jinnah rejected, as he had done previously, a truncated Pakistan, and the Mission themselves remarked that, involving as it would a radical partition of the Punjab and Bengal, it "would be contrary to the wishes of a very large proportion of the inhabitants of these provinces" and "would of necessity divide the Sikhs," leaving substantial bodies of them on both sides of the border.

The other alternative Mr Jinnah grudgingly consented to consider, and the Mission, having vainly tried to bring him and the Congress leaders to agreement on its principles, themselves elaborated it, putting forward a scheme for a three tier constitution: Provinces, groups of Provinces and a minimal Union, and suggesting procedure for framing a constitution on this basis. A Constituent Assembly, elected by the Provincial legislatures, would divide up into three sections, one representing the six Hindi majority provinces and the two others the provinces in the northwest and northeast of India claimed for Pakistan. These sections, meeting separately, would draw up constitutions for the provinces included in them and decide whether a Group should be formed and with what subjects.

All the sections would then meet as a whole to frame the Union constitution. The Sikhs were represented before the Cabinet Mission by Master Tara Singh, Giani Kartar Singh, Harnam Singh, a lawyer from Lahore, and later by Baldev Singh, then development minister in the Punjab Government. The Sikh delegation was united in its opposition to Pakistan. The delegates marshalled all the arguments they could to impress upon the Cabinet Mission of the utter impossibility of the Sikhs either living in a Muslim State or having territory inhabited by them handed over to the Muslims.

The Sikh spokesman, Master Tara Singh, said that he was for a united India; but if Pakistan was conceded, he was for a separate Sikh State with the right to federate either with India or Pakistan. Giani Kartar Singh elaborated the latter alternative as a "province of their {Sikhs} own where they would be in a dominant, or almost dominant position;" this province would comprise the whole of Jalandhar and Lahore divisions, together with Ambala, Hissar, Karnal and Shimla districts of the Ambala division, and the districts of Montgomery and Lyallpur.

Baldev Singh defined the Sikh State in somewhat the same terms as consisting of "the Punjab excluding Multan and Rawalpindi divisions, with an approximate boundary along the Chenab, an area comprising the Ambala division, the Jalandhar division and the Lahore division." The Central Akali Dal representing nationalist opinion and led by Baba Kharak Singh presented through its working president, Amar Singh, a separate memorandum to the Cabinet Mission on behalf of their party.

It drew attention to the faulty compilation of census figures which made the Muslims a majority community in the Punjab. It opposed the partition of the Punjab and reiterated the demands that had been made by the Chief Khalsa Diwan many times since the introduction of democratic institutions, viz. 33% representation in the Punjab, 5% in the Centre and one Sikh member in the Central Cabinet. In addition, it demanded an 8% representation in the Constituent Assembly (as recommended by the Sapru Committee); a permanent 14% Sikh quota in the defence services; Sikh representation in U.P., Sindh, Bihar, Bengal and Bombay and an increase in Sikh representation in the North-West Frontier Province.

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The Central Akali Dal supported joint electorates with reservation of seats for minorities and the setting up of special tribunals for the protection of minorities. Mr Jinnah and the Council of the Muslim League and the Congress Working Committee both reluctantly accepted the Mission's scheme. The Sikhs, though saved by this scheme from division, rejected it. They resented their inclusion, without any safeguards, in an overwhelmingly Muslim group of provinces, and declined at first to elect representatives to the Constituent Assembly.

The Congress Committee's acceptance of the scheme was, however, ambiguous, for they said that they adhered to their interpretation of its provisions regarding the sections and the grouping of provinces, although this interpretation had been declared by the Mission to be erroneous. Furthermore, there was failure to reach agreement on the formation of an Interim Government, and the proposals ultimately put forward by the Viceroy and the Mission were rejected by the Congress because, in deference to Mr Jinnah, no Congress Muslim had been included.

However, the Mission, anxious to show that something had been achieved, announced that constitution making could now proceed with the consent of the two major parties. It seemed that the division of India had been averted and that there was no longer any need to consider the partition of the Punjab and Bengal. But the Congress and the Muslim League interpreted the proposals differently, especially on the question of the grouping of provinces.

The All India Congress Committee on 6 July 1946 called to ratify acceptance of the Mission's Scheme and again at a Press conference four days later, Jawaharlal Nehru expressed reservations as regards the grouping of provinces, which was for the League the real attraction of the Mission's plan. On 29 July at a meeting in Bombay, the Council of the League withdrew their previous acceptance of the Mission's proposals and authorized its Working Committee to prepare a programme of 'direct action' for the achievement of Pakistan.

This resolution proved decisive; all attempts over the next few months to persuade the League to rescind it and to work the Cabinet Mission plan were unavailing. Nothing less than a sovereign Pakistan would now satisfy them. The immediate sequel to the Resolution was the outbreak on 16 August of communal rioting in Calcutta on an unprecedented scale, known as the Great Calcutta Killing. The casualties were estimated at 5,000 dead and 15,000 injured. This was followed in October by Muslim assaults on Hindus in East Bengal and these in turn provoked Hindu assaults on Muslims in Bihar.

Shortly before the Calcutta killing Lord Wavell had invited Nehru to form an Interim Government, and this took office at the beginning of September, but without the inclusion of any League members, as Mr Jinnah declined Nehru's invitation to collaborate. Lord Wavell, however, in the hope of easing the communal tensions himself opened negotiations with Mr Jinnah and at the end of October, five League nominees joined the Interim Government on the understanding that the League would rescind their Bombay Resolution withdrawing acceptance of the Cabinet Mission scheme and take part in the work of the Constituent Assembly that was about to be summoned.

With the League's entry into the Government communal outbreaks were for the time being halted; but no progress was made in the solution of the constitutional problem as Mr Jinnah declined to call a meeting of the League Council to reconsider the Bombay Resolution on the ground that the Congress had not accepted unequivocally the Mission's scheme and were bent on misinterpreting its provisions in regard to grouping. At the beginning of December, in the hope of resolving the differences, the leaders of both parties, along with a Sikh representative, Sardar Baldev Singh, were invited to London for discussions.

The main point now at issue was whether under the Mission's scheme the voting in the sections regarding provincial constitutions and the formation of Groups should be by provinces, as the Congress contended (which would almost certainly preclude the formation of Groups), or by simple

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majority vote, as the League claimed and as the Mission had intended. At the end of inconclusive discussions, the British government issued a statement upholding the latter interpretation.

The All India Congress Committee agreed to accept this interpretation, adding only the qualification that there must be no compulsion for a province and that the rights of the Sikhs should not be jeopardized. But Mr Jinnah was in no mood to accept any qualifications. On 31 January 1947 the Working Committee of the League declined to recommend to the League Council reconsideration of its Bombay Resolution and called on the British government to dissolve the Constituent Assembly, which had met in December without the League representatives, and to declare that the Cabinet Mission plan had failed.

The British government now took a bold step that Lord Wavell had long been urging on them, and on 20 February fixed a date for the transfer of power to Indian hands. It was to be not later than June 1948. At the same time they announced that Lord Mountbatten was to replace Lord Wavell as Viceroy. No reason for the change was given, but the fact was that they had lost confidence in Lord Wavell's ability to handle Indian politicians. The instruction they gave the new Viceroy was to do all in his power to persuade the Indian parties to work for a unitary government on the basis of the Cabinet Mission plan, but, if by 1 October he found that this was impossible, to report what steps he thought should be taken for handing over power by June 1948.

The Cabinet Mission plan was, however, now totally unacceptable to Mr Jinnah and the League who had decided that they must have nothing less than a sovereign independent Pakistan however small it might be. So, as Lord Mountbatten soon realized, the best hope of reaching agreement now lay in the adoption of a plan for a truncated Pakistan involving the partition of Bengal and the Punjab and the division of the Sikhs, that Mr Jinnah had previously rejected and that the Cabinet Mission had condemned. Although all parties disliked this unsatisfactory solution, it was one to which they could all be reconciled.

The Congress had always said that they would not contemplate compelling the people of any part of the country to remain in a united India against their will, and the Congress leaders were now ready to allow Mr Jinnah to take those Muslim majority areas which, on a population basis, he could indisputably claim. Mr Jinnah and the League had reluctantly come to understand that if they insisted on a sovereign Pakistan, then they would have to be content with a truncated Pakistan, for this was all they could get by agreement and they were not in a position to take more by force.

Even the Sikhs, who would suffer most from a partition of the Punjab, as this would divide them and leave about two million of them on the Pakistan side of the line, were prepared to accept it rather than that the whole community should be engulfed in Pakistan, agreed to the partition. They were influenced by recent experience. Early in March in outbreak of communal rioting in the Punjab, Sikhs in villages and small towns in the predominantly Muslim districts of Rawalpindi and Attock had been savagely attacked by Muslim mobs and felt compelled to fly for their lives.

This foretaste of Pakistan convinced many of them that so far as possible they should not come under Muslim rule. Lord Mountbatten speedily coaxed the principal parties into acquiescence in the partition of the land and drew up a plan for giving effect to it. He announced this plan on 3 June; Mr Nehru, Mr Jinnah and, for the Sikhs, Sardar Baldev Singh intimated their consent to it; and the next day Lord Mountbatten told a Press conference that it would be carried out and power transferred to two Dominion Governments by 15 August. This gave little time for the completion of all the work entailed by the division of the country and the partition of Bengal and the Punjab But Lord Mountbatten was impressed by the need to act quickly.

It was a feature of the Plan that the partition of Bengal and the Punjab should be shown to be in accordance with the popular will as expressed by the provincial legislatures. In the Punjab the Legislative Assembly had first to meet as a whole and vote on whether the undivided province should join India or Pakistan. Thereafter it had to meet again in two parts one representing the Muslim

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majority districts and the other more or less eastern half of the province, and vote separately on whether the province should be partitioned. If either part voted for partition, then partition would follow. The two parts would also vote on whether the areas that they represented should join India or Pakistan.

A Muslim majority in the Assembly as a whole secured a vote in favour of joining Pakistan, but a non-Muslim majority in the eastern part dominated mainly by the Sikhs voted for partition and for that part joining India by 50 votes to 22. Partition necessitated a division of the assets and liabilities of the Provincial government. At the centre, for the division of the much larger assets and liabilities of the Government of India, a Partition Council was set up consisting of two Congress and two League members of the Interim Government, aided by a Steering Committee of two officials and several expert committees of officials, and with an Arbitral Tribunal in the background.

In the Punjab there was no ministry from which members of a Partition Council could be drawn, as after Sir Khizar's resignation, the Governor had assumed charge of the administration under section 93 of the Government of India Act 1935. But on the analogy of what was being done at the centre a Partition Committee of two Muslims, a Hindu and a Sikh was formed and with the aid of officials this worked fairly smoothly. A few disputed matters were referred for decision to the Partition Council at the Centre. The Plan provided for Boundary Commissions to be set up to demarcate the actual lines of division in the provinces of Bengal and the Punjab.

Both Commissions were composed of four High Court judges, two nominated by the Congress and two by the League under the chairmanship of an English barrister, Sir Cyril Radcliffe. Their terms of reference were to demarcate the boundaries on the basis of ascertaining the contiguous majority areas of Muslims and non-Muslims, and in doing so to take into account also other factors. The reference to other factors was inserted to satisfy the Sikhs who had been given to understand that, in drawing the line of division, population would not be taken up to be the sole criterion.

The Commissions began work in July and submitted their reports on 13 August. The division of opinion among the judges on the Commissions particularly in regard to the weight to be given to 'other factors' was so wide that the ultimate awards were those of Sir Cyril alone. The members of the Central Partition Council had publicly pledged themselves on 22 July to accept and enforce the Commission's awards, but an attempt to get a similar pledge signed by the members of the Punjab Partition Committee came to nothing owing to serious difference of opinion among its members.

Throughout May, June and July communal strife persisted in the Punjab. In Lahore and Amritsar there were numerous cases of arson, stabbing and bomb throwing; in the Gurgaori district villages were raided and burnt by the rival communities; and as 15 August approached, the situation further deteriorated. A secret intelligence report indicated that the Sikh leader, Master Tara Singh, was engaged in plots for the sabotage of certain canal headworks and for bomb outrages, including the assassination of Mr Jinnah. His arrest and that of other Sikh leaders was mooted, but was turned down on the unanimous advice of the Punjab Governor and the Governor-designate of East and West Punjab that such arrests would only make matters worse.

The imposition of martial law was also considered, but was opposed by the Governor and the senior military commanders who said that they had not enough military officers to enforce it and were convinced that its inevitable failure would only aggravate the disorder. In anticipation of trouble on a wider scale, as soon as the boundary line was announced, a special force, known as the Punjab Boundary Force and consisting of over 50,000 Indian troops of mixed units not yet divided up community wise, was formed early in August to maintain control in twelve districts of central Punjab where the greatest disturbances were apprehended. It was to be responsible to the Joint Defence Council, an overall Indo-Pakistan authority set up for the period of transition.

As 15 August approached, inter-communal rioting started in the districts of Lahore and Amritsar. After 15 August the attacks by both sides on the minority community developed into an orgy of mass

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killing which soon spread from the central Punjab to the outlying districts and beyond. The disorder and the slaughter far exceeded anything that had been expected and was quite beyond the control of the Boundary Force. The twelve districts assigned to it had populations 14.5 million distributed in nearly 18,000 towns and villages over an area of 37,500 square miles. This enormous area of disturbance was more than the Boundary Force, at first much below full strength, could effectively cover, especially as heavy monsoon rains impeded its movement.

It was without any proper intelligence system; it could look for little help from the civil administration which virtually had broken down, while the mainly Muslim Punjab police were, in West Punjab, almost entirely partisan and in East Punjab deserted or were afraid to act. The Boundary Force could, therefore, do little more than slightly check the general slaughter and prevent a complete holocaust in Lahore and Amritsar. It was much criticized, some of the troops composing it succumbed to communal loyalties, and on 31 August it was broken up, two new Dominion Governments taking over the forces located on each side of the boundary line and assuming complete responsibility.

This change and appeals for peace by leaders did not effect much improvement. The mass killings were brought to an end by mass migrations in opposite directions. Migrations from East to West Punjab and vice versa had begun before 15 August, but were frowned upon by the authorities, and as late as 6 August the Partition Council at Delhi was still aiming at stopping the exodus and encouraging the return of those who had already left. After 15 August the rioting in both halves of the Punjab set going a vast movement of mass migration which nobody had foreseen and nobody could arrest and which in three months emptied East Punjab of all Muslims and West Punjab of all Hindus and Sikhs.

Joint appeals by political leaders for an end to violence had little effect, and the refugees, moving by road and rail, were constantly exposed to attack by members of the opposite community. The two new Dominion and Provincial Governments, unable to restore peace or check the migrations, soon found that their main tasks were to afford protection to the outgoing refugees, herding them into camps where they could be safeguarded and then providing escorts for their onward journey, and to make arrangements for the reception and resettlement of refugees coming in from the opposite direction. The great majority of the refugees moved by road and for several weeks huge columns of them.

Sometimes as much as 50 miles in length, with their goods and chattels piled on bullock carts or carried on head, could be seen slowly making their way across the Punjab in opposite directions. The magnitude of these massacres and migrations is without known historical parallel in any part of the globe. Estimates of the casualties range from 200,000 to 1,000,000; the former is probably nearest the truth. Estimates of numbers of persons who migrated are more reliable. Roughly three and a half million Hindus and Sikhs migrated from West Punjab to India and five million Muslims from East Punjab to Pakistan. The Muslims lost rather more lives than the Hindus and Sikhs, but considerably less property.

This is illustrated by the fact that the Hindus and Sikhs had to abandon 6.2 million acres of land in West Punjab, the Muslims only 3.96 million acres in East Punjab. The resettlement of refugees in India was carried out efficiently and fairly quickly but cuts had to be made in their claims to immovable property owing to the paucity of assets left by the Muslims. Resettlement in Pakistan dragged on for many years and was not concluded till after the military regime took over in October 1958.

After recovering from the shock and dislocation of Partition, both halves of the Punjab made considerable economic progress, both agriculturally and industrially, though probably not greater than would have been achieved, if the province had remained undivided. The quickest and most remarkable recovery was that of the Sikhs in East Punjab. As a community the Sikhs had suffered most from the Partition, since such a large proportion of their total population was affected. But many of the Sikhs who migrated from the colony districts of West Punjab were exceedingly good cultivators

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and to some extent they recouped their losses by developing with exceptional energy and enterprise the diminished holdings allotted to them in East Punjab.

Geographical Overview of Punjab

Geography of Punjab

Punjab extends from the latitudes 29.30° North to 32.32° North and longitudes 73.55° East to 76.50° East. It is bounded on the west by Pakistan, on the north by Jammu and Kashmir, on the northeast by Himachal Pradesh and on the south by Haryana and Rajasthan. Due to the presence of a large number of rivers, most of the Punjab is a fertile plain. The southeast region of the state is semi-arid and gradually presents a desert landscape. A belt of undulating hills extends along the northeastern part of the state at the foot of the Himalayas.

The word Punjab consists of the two words "Panj" and "Aab" where Panj means five and Aab means water. This name was given to this region to symbolize its five rivers.

The Northwest location of the state and its fertile land created a strong attraction for foreign influence. Persians, Arabs, the British, and Turko-Mongolians were a few of the groups which contributed to its development. Punjab also was a nurturing ground to several religious movements such as Buddhism, Sikhism, and several schools of Islam.

The historical area of Punjab was defined to the east from the basin of the river Bias to the boundary of the river Indus to the west. On the north the state was bounded by the Kashmiri Himalayas and on the south it reached the plains of Rajasthan and Cholistan. However, over history Punjab has had its boundaries expand as well as shrink. The high time for Punjab occurred under the reign of Mugal emperor Babur and the empire of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. With the partition in 1947 the borders of the region shrank to its current size, with its division into the Pakistani province of Punjab and the Indian state of Punjab.

Location:

Situated in the north-west of India, Punjab is bordered by Pakistan on the west, the Indian states of Jammu & Kashmir on the north, Himachal Pradesh on its north-east and Haryana and Rajasthan on its south.

Area:

50362 square kilometers (Punjab occupies 1.54 % of the country's total geographical area).

Capital:

Chandigarh (population: 642,0000)

Occupation:

More than 80 percent of Punjab is cultivated, and farming is the leading occupation. The major crops are wheat, maize (corn), rice, pulses (legumes), sugarcane, and cotton. Among the livestock raised are buffalo and other cattle, sheep, goats, and poultry. The principal industries include the manufacture of textiles, sewing machines, sporting goods, starch, fertilizers, bicycles, scientific instruments, electrical goods, and machine tools, and the processing of sugar and pine oil.

Languages:

The official language is Punjabi, which is spoken by about two-thirds of the population. Many people are fluent in Hindi, English and Urdu also.

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Currency:

Rupee (100 paise equals one rupee)

State Animal:

Black Buck - Locally called kalahiran, the Black Buck is a graceful antelope blessed with a striking colour and spiraled horns. The fawn's coat is yellowish but it becomes turns black at maturity. It is found in the plains and avoid forests and hilly tracks. Mostly found in herds of 20-30, large herds may number several hundreds. With a keen eyesight and speed, it responds to alarm call by leaps and bounds.

State Bird:

Baz (Eastern Goshawk)

State Tree:

Shisham

Geography:

Find Punjab on the globe at 29'30'' N to 32'32'' N latitude and 73'55 E to 76'50 E longitude. Punjab lies between the Indus and the Ganges rivers. Most of the state is an alluvial plain irrigated by canals. Punjab's arid southern border edges on the Thar or Great Indian Desert. The Siwalik Range rises sharply in the north of the state. The average temperature in January is 13° C (55° F), although at night the temperature sometimes lowers to freezing point. In June, the average temperature is 34° C (93° F), occasionally rising as high as 45° C (113° F). Annual average rainfall in Punjab ranges from 1250 mm (49 in) in the north to 350 mm (14 in) in the southwest. More than 70 percent of the annual rainfall occurs during the monsoon season i.e., from July to September.

Climate:

Climatically the state has three major seasons - summer, winter and rainy season.

Major Land Features:

Most of Punjab is a fertile plain; toward the southeast one finds semi-arid and desert landscape; a belt of undulating hills extends along the northeast at the foot of the Himalayas. Four rivers, the Ravi, Beas, Satluj and Ghaggar flow across the state in a southwesterly direction. They have numerous small and seasonal tributaries. In addition, Punjab is watered by an extensive canal system.

Battles of Guru Gobind Singh Ji

Guru Ji had just created the Khalsa, a society based on equality and dutiful devotion to God. The concept of the Sikh Gurus that all men (and women) were equal, was too much of a threat for the Rajput hill chiefs to swallow. They laid siege to Guru Ji and his newly created Khalsa with 10,000 men. During the siege, the mughals asked Guru Ji to surrender and come out of the fort with their belongings; the safe passage to the Punjab was guaranteed to the Guru - no one would be harmed. The Mughal swore their pledge on the Holy Qu'ran.

The Sikhs pleaded with Guru Ji to trust their attackers, to take their offer and leave the safety of Anandpur Sahib, but Guru Ji wanted to show his Sikhs that the mughals were not to be trusted. Guru Ji sent out a wagon piled high with bulging sacks, wrapped in beautiful cloth. To the Mughal soldiers it must have seemed like a wagon load of gold, silver, jewelry and other valuable treasures. With their imaginations running wild, only a short distance from the safety of Anandpur, the oath of the the mughal Generals were rendered worthless, as the wagons were swarmed by men hungry for booty.

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One can imagine their surprise and anger as the men eagerly opened the bags, finding them filled with trash, dirt, hay and other worthless materials.

Seeing this, those who had doubted the Guru, no longer were eager to trust the promises of their attackers. As the months wore on, the Sikhs were able, through the use of 'guerilla' tactics and night time attacks to effectively turn the tide in their favor. Eventually they chased the Mughals away, after killing their two leaders. The Sikhs gained a large booty in horses, arms and war equipment which the Mughals had left behind in their rush to escape with their lives.

The Battle:

The hill Rajas thought it highly dangerous to allow the Sikhs to continue their increase in power and number. They therefore, decided collectively to complain to the Delhi government against the Sikhs. With Aurangzeb still busy in the South, the viceroy of Delhi sent General Din Beg and General Painde Khan each with five thousand men to resist the Guru's 'encroachments' on the rights of the hill Rajas. When the imperial forces reached Rupar, they were joined by the hill Rajas.

The Guru appointed the Five Beloved Ones as generals of his army. The Sikh chronicler states that, when the engagement began at Anandpur, the Turks were roasted by the continuous and deadly fire of the Sikhs. General Painde Khan seeing determined resistance of the Sikhs, shouted to his men to fight to the death against the infidels. He came forward to engage in a single combat with the Guru and invited him to strike the first blow. The Guru refused the role of an aggressor and claimed that he had vowed never to strike except in self-defence. Upon this Painde Khan discharged an arrow which whizzed past Guru's ear. He charged another arrow which also missed the mark. The whole of Painde Khan's body except his ears was encased in armour. Knowing this the Guru then discharged an arrow at his ear with such an unerring aim that he fell off his horse on the ground and never rose again.

This, however, did not end the battle. Din Beg assumed sole command of the troops. Maddened by Painde Khan's death they fought with great desperation but could not make any impression on the firm hold of the Sikhs. On the other hand, however, the Sikhs caused a great havoc upon the enemy. The hill chiefs left the field. In the meantime Din Beg was wounded and he beat a retreat but was pursued by the Sikhs as far as Rupar (upto the village of Khidrabad near Chandigarh where there is a Gurdwara in that memory).

The 2nd Battle

Summary In July-August 1699, the second battle of Anandpur began. The hill chiefs formed a coalition under Raja Bhim Chand and decided to attack Guru Ji together. The asked Guru Ji to leave the fort, Guru Ji replied that they had paid for this land. There were two forts within Anandpur Sahib, Fatehgarh and Lohgarh. Sher Singh and Nahr Singh each commanding 500 men were given orders to defend Lohgarh. The defense of Fatehgarh was given to Bhai Uday Singh, who has 500 men. The siege began, the allied forces fell upon the Sikh strongholds. After several months, the Sikhs were on top, many hill chieftains were dead and so were their men but Sikh resources were low because the Hill chiefs had cut off their supplies. However, seeing the fortitude of the Sikh soldiers the Mughals planned to withdraw but not before trying one last thing - to intoxicate an elephant and send it towards the Sikh Forts. The job of dealing with this elephant was entrusted to Duni Chand, but he fled out of fear. Bhai Bachittar Singh was given the job, he rode out with his Nagani (spear) and struck the elephant. The elephant ran back and trampled hundreds of its own men.

The Battle

The Rajas of Jammu, Nurpur, Mandi, Bhutan, Kullu, Kionthal, Guler, Chamba, Srinagar, Dadhwal, Handur and others, assembled at Bilaspur to discuss the newly created situation. Raja Ajmer Chand of Kahlur (son of late Raja Bhim Chand) addressed them that if they overlooked the growing power of

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the Guru, he would one day drive them out from their territories. On the other hand if they were to seek assistance from Delhi again and again, they might be taken over by the Mughal empire for ever. It was, therefore, decided that they must defend themselves. If all the hill Rajas contributed reasonable contingents, they could muster a large army which would be sufficient to annihilate the Guru and his Sikhs. Thus a simple and feasible measure was thought out to invest the Guru's capital, Anandpur, and starve its occupants into submission.

Accordingly all the Rajas brought their contingents and marched towards Anandpur. On arriving near the city they dispatched a letter to the Guru in which they wrote, "The land of Anandpur is ours, we allowed your father to dwell on it and he never paid any rent. Now you have originated a new religion which is opposed to our religious system. We have endured all this up to the present, we can no longer overlook it. You should pay the arrears of rent for the occupation of our land and promise to pay it regularly for the future. If you fail to accept these terms, then prepare your departure from Anandpur or be ready for the consequences." The Guru replied, "My father had purchased this land and he paid for it. If you deprive me of Anandpur, you shall have it with bullets added thereto. Seek my protection, and you will be happy in both worlds. Also seek the protection of the Khalsa and abandon pride. Now is the time for a settlement. I shall act as a mediator between the Khalsa and you. You may then rule your states without apprehension."

It was now clear to the Rajas that the Guru would not surrender. Next morning they beat the drum of war. As anticipated a large number of Ranghars and Gujars under the command of Jagatullah flocked to the side of the hill Rajas.

Five hundred men from the Majha area arrived under the command of Duni Chand to join the Guru's forces, and their reinforcements from other quarters also arrived at that juncture. There were two main forts, Lohgarh and Fatehgarh. The Guru ordered his forces not to advance beyond the city but remain as far as possible on the defensive. Sher Singh and Nahar Singh were appointed as chiefs to guard Lohgarh, and Fatehgarh was entrusted to Ude Singh. Sahibzada Ajit Singh, Guru's eldest son, asked his father's permission to join hands with Ude Singh.

The hill Rajas opened fire with large guns on the Guru's fortress. Several brave Sikhs made a determined stand against the enemy and forced them to retreat. The allied chiefs then held a brief council of war in which it was decided to despatch Raja Kesari Chand, the haughty chief of Jaswal, to attack the right flank and Jagatullah the left flank of the Guru's position while Ajmer Chand himself and his troops made a front attack on Anandpur. Jagatullah was shot dead by Sahib Singh and the Sikhs did not retreat to allow the enemy to remove his body. Raja Ghumand Chand of Kangra rallied his troops but failed to cause the Sikhs to retreat. The hill chiefs were in great dismay at the result of the battle and held a council of war during the night. Raja Ajmer Chand advised the council for peace with the Guru saying that the Guru occupied Guru Nanak's spiritual throne and there would be no indignity in appealing to him as supplicants. Many Rajas agreed to the proposal but Kesari Chand of Jaswal opposed the reconciliation and promised to fight with more determination the next day in order to oust the Guru from Anandpur.

Next morning the allied forces contented themselves with concentrating their attack on one particular part of the city but the Sikhs again offered valiant resistance. The allied forces rallied many times but could not overcome the brave Sikhs and so they decided to siege the city which lasted for a few weeks. As the blockade prolonged successfully, Raja Kesari Chand prepared to intoxicate an elephant and direct him against the city.

Whole body of the elephant was encased in steel. A strong spear projected from his forehead for the purpose of assault. The intoxicated elephant was directed towards the gate of Lohgarh fort and the allied army followed him. The Guru blessed his Sikh, Bachittar Singh to combat the elephant. Bachittar Singh took a lance to meet the furious animal. He raised his lance and drove it through the elephant's head armor. On this the animal turned around on the hill soldiers, and killed several of them. Meanwhile Ude Singh continued to advance against Kesari Chand, challenged him, and then

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with one blow cut off his head. Mohkam Singh, one of the Five Beloved Ones, cut off the mad elephant's trunk with one blow of his sword. What remained of the hill army now fled. In the retreat the Raja of Handur was severely wounded by Sahib Singh.

On the following day Ghumand Chand of Kangra directed the efforts of his troops against the city. Ghumand Chand's horse was killed by a bullet from the musket of Alim Singh. The battle lasted with varying success until evening, when Ghumand Chand, as he was proceeding to his tent in the evening, was mortally wounded by a chance bullet. All the hill chiefs now became disheartened and demoralized. Raja Ajmer Chand was the last to leave Anandpur and marched home in the dead of night. This battle was fought in 1701.

The 3rd Battle

Hindu Rajas led by Ajmer Chand of Kahlir and his father Bhim Chand personally went to Aurangzeb and stirred up the wrath of the Emperor by telling him that Guru Gobiñd Singh claimed to be Sachā Patshāh: True King, sat on a raised platform; a prerogative of the Emperor only, and was corrupting both Hinduism and Islam. Aurangzeb ordered a large army under Amir Khan of Sarhand and Zabardast Khan of Lahore to proceed against the Guru. All the Chiefs except the Raja of Nahan joined the Imperial forces. Guru Gobind Singh divided the army into five commands, each of which was posted in a fort. His eighteen years old son Ajit Singh, was stationed in the Kesgarh fort with five hundred soldiers under him. Sher Singh and Nāhar Singh commanded the Lohgarh fort. Udai Singh and Alam Singh commanded the division of Agampura, while Mohkam Singh was posted with 400 men in Holgarh.

Daya Singh commanded the northern ramparts, while the Guru remained in the Anandpur fort. Seeing the Imperial armies approaching in countless numbers, Guru Gobind Singh ordered his artillery men to light their fuses : and discharge their cannons. The battle raged with fearful violence. Daya Singh and Udai Singh came out of their forts and gave a terrific fight to the Imperial army who lost about nine hundred soldiers. Unable to fight the Sikh armies in the open, the Imperialists laid a siege to the city and stopped all ingress and egress. The Sikhs planned night attacks.

They sallied forth from their defensive positions and attacked the enemy unawares. The Mughal Generals tried to storm the citadel in utter distress and desperation, but the Sikhs brought forth their bigger guns, named Baghan: Tigress and Bjai Gosh: Roaring Victory, and fired at the enemy, killing many in the enemy ranks. As the supplies were constantly failing, the Sikhs resorted to desultory sallies to seize the supplies from the enemy. The siege lasted for about seven months Jeth 1762 Bk/May 1705 to Rh Sudi 1, 1762 Bk/December 5-6, 1705 when the Guru's army lived on starvation level. But Guru Gobiñd Singh refused to surrender.

Battle of Nirmoh (4th Battle)

Ajmer Chand in spite of the defeat of the allied forces, determined to oust the Guru. He sent an envoy to the Emperor's viceroy in Sirhind and another envoy to the viceroy of Delhi to complain against the Sikhs and sought their help to assist the hill chiefs in destroying the Guru's power and expelling him from Anandpur. Accordingly the imperial forces were directed to assist the hill chiefs.

At the same time to save their faces, the hill chiefs pro posed to the Guru through Pamma Brahman, that they would be friends with him for ever only if he left Anandpur for a while and come back later. The Guru agreed to the proposal and left for Nirmoh, a village situated about a mile from Kiratpur. After he reached Nirmoh, Raja Ajmer Chand and Raja of Kangra both thought that since he was now in the open and he had no fort around him for protection, it would be better to launch an attack. They attacked the Guru's army without even waiting for the arrival of the imperial army.

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A fierce battle ensued in which the Sikhs were ultimately victorious. One afternoon as the Guru was sitting in his open court, the hill chiefs engaged a Mohammadan gunner to kill him for an adequate remuneration. The gunner fired a cannon ball which missed the Guru but took away the life of Sikh who was fanning him. The Guru picked up his bow and shot an arrow which killed the gunner and with another arrow killed his brother who was assisting him. On seeing this the hill men quit fighting. The two Mohammadans were buried on the spot called Siyah Tibbi or the black hill and a Gurdwara was erected by the Sikhs to commemorate Guru's escape from the bullet.

The army of Wazir Khan, the viceroy of Sirhind, arrived in due time. The Guru found himself in a very dangerous position between the hill Rajas on one hand, and the imperial army on the other. But he resolved to defend himself in whatever way it was and his Sikhs stood faithfully and valiantly by him. Wazir Khan gave an order to his troops to make a sudden rush and seize the Guru. The Guru was successfully protected by his son Ajit Singh and his other brave warriors. They stopped the advance of the imperial forces and cut them down in rows. The carnage continued until night. Next day the imperial army and the hill chiefs made a furious assault when the Guru decided on retiring to Basoli whose Raja had frequently invited him to his capital.

Until the Guru's army reached the river Satluj, fierce fighting continued in which brave Sahib Singh was slain. Biting his thumb Wazir Khan admitted that he had never before witnessed such desperate fighting. The Guru with his troops crossed over the river and reached Basoli. The hill chiefs were overjoyed and presented elephants to Wazir Khan and departed to their homes. Wazir Khan returned to Sirhind. This battle was fought at the end of 1701.

Daya Singh and Ude Singh requested the Guru to return to Anandpur. After staying a few days at Basoli, he marched back to Anandpur and the inhabitants of the city were delighted to see him again among them. Finding the Guru again firmly established at Anandpur, Raja Ajmer Chand thought it most wise to pursue for peace. The Guru told Ajmer Chand that he was willing to come to terms with him, but he would punish him if he were again found guilty of treachery. Ajmer Chand was glad to find peace with the Guru and he sent his family priest with presents to him. The other hill Rajas also followed Ajmer Chand's example and made good relations with the Guru.

After this the Guru went to Malwa for the propagation of his mission. In January 1703 he went to a fair held at Kurukshetra on the occasion of a solar eclipse in order to purchase horses to replace those which were killed or stolen in previous warfare. The custom of sale and barter of horses and other animals at religious fairs was prevalent even during the time of the Guru.

Two Mohammadan generals, Saiyad Beg and Alif Khan, were on their way from Lahore to Delhi. Raja Ajmer Chand who also went to Kurukshetra along with other hill chiefs, thought to secure their assistance. He promised the generals large remuneration if they attacked the Guru. Instead on hearing favorable accounts of the Guru, Saiyad Beg withdrew his army, and when the battle ensued at Chamkaur between the Guru's and Alif Khan's troops, he joined the Guru's forces. Upon this Alif Khan retired from the contest thinking that he had no chance for victory. The Guru returned to Anandpur. Saiyad Beg threw his lot with him and accompanied him to Anandpur, and remained with him as a trustworthy and powerful ally.

After two years of peace, the old hostilities reappeared. The reasons being, the increasing prestige of the Guru and the clashes as a result between the hill Rajas and the Sikhs

The 5th Battle

Owing to the repeated representations of the hill chiefs, the Emperor sent a large army under the command of General Saiyad Khan to subdue the Guru. Saiyad Khan was a brother-in-law of Pir Budhu Shah of Sadhaura who ought on the side of the Guru at the battle of Bhangani. On his way to Anandpur Saiyad

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Khan met Pir Budhu Shah and heard all favorable accounts of the Guru and, thus, had a wish to behold him. It was the end of March, 1704 and was a crop-cutting time of the year, so the majority of the Guru's Sikhs had dispersed to their homes. There were only five hundred strong troops left at Anandpur at that time. The Guru had to make best defence with the present force. Maimun Khan, a faithful Mohammadan who had attached himself to the Guru, asked his permission to show his bravery. The brave and faithful Saiyad Beg also came forward to render his services. Both Musalmans fought like tigers in the battle, and were followed by the Sikhs.

The Sikhs advanced boldly against the enemy. Saiyad Beg entered into a single combat with Raja Hari Chand. After they had repeatedly missed each other, Saiyad Beg at last struck off the hill chief's head. On seeing this Din eg of the imperial army rushed at Saiyad Beg and mortally wounded him. Maimun Khan from horseback charged in every direction and committed great havoc among the imperial troops. The Guru knew what was passing in General Saiyad Khan's mind, and advanced ostensibly to challenge him. Saiyad Khan on obtaining the wish of his heart to behold the Guru, dismounted and fell at his feet. The Guru conferred on him the true Name.

After Saiyad Khan's defection, Ramzan Khan took command and fought with great bravery against the Sikhs. The Guru shot an arrow which killed Ramzan Khan's horse. The Sikhs rallied and presented a bold front to the enemy but being too few in number were overpowered by them. When the Guru saw that there was no chance of retrieving his position, he decided to evacuate Anandpur. The Mohammadan army plundered the city. After obtaining this booty they proceeded back to Sirhind. When the imperial army was resting at night, the Sikhs made a sudden attack, which created great confusion in the enemy camp. The Turks who turned to oppose the Sikhs, were killed and only those who fled, escaped the vengeance of the Guru's pursuing army. The Sikhs also deprived them of all the booty they had captured at Anandpur. After this the Guru returned and took possession of Anandpur.

The 6th Battle

The Emperor called on his troops to account for their cowardice. They pleaded that the Sikhs had taken an unfair advantage of their position in the battle field. At one point the Emperor asked what sort of person the Guru was and what force he possessed. A Mohammadan soldier gave highly colored accounts of the Guru's beauty, sanctity and prowess. He described him as a young handsome man, a living saint, the father of his people and in war equal to one hundred twenty-five thousand men. The Emperor was much displeased on hearing this elaborate praise of the Guru and ordered that he should be brought to his presence. In the meantime Raja Ajmer Chand made a strong representation to the Emperor for assistance to bring the Guru to submission. Accordingly the viceroys of Sirhind, Lahore and Kashmir were ordered to proceed against the Guru.

Some faithful Sikhs informed the Guru of war preparations as a result of Raja Ajmer Chand's representation to the Emperor. The Guru made arrangements accordingly and sent for his followers. The Sikhs of Majha, Malwa and Doaba and other places thronged to Anandpur. They were delighted at the prospect of battle, and congratulated themselves on their good fortune in being allowed to die for their Guru and their faith. The Guru affirmed that the death in the battle-field in the name of religion was equal to the fruits of many years' devotion, and ensured honor and glory in the next world.

The noteworthy point in this whole episode is that the Guru having won battle after battle, never captured an inch of territory, never nurtured enmity, and never attacked anybody as an aggressor. By the creation of the Khalsa he established equality and brotherhood of mankind. The down-trodden segments of the society which were ever ridiculed by the so called high caste Brahmans and Khatris, had now become undaunted saint-soldiers after being baptized by the Guru and joining the brotherhood of the Khalsa. The Brahmans and the hill chiefs considered all this a threat to their very existence. They were, therefore, waging a constant war against the Guru and his Sikhs.

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The hill chiefs who arrayed themselves against the Guru were Raja Ajmer Chand of Kahlur, Rajas of Kangra, Kullu, Kionthal, Mandi, Jammu, Nurpur, Chamba, Guler, Garhwal, Bijharwal, Darauli and Dadhwal. They were joined by the Gujars and the Ranghars of the area, and all of them formed a formidable force. The imperial army of the viceroys' of Sirhind, Lahore and Kashmir came in large number. The chronicler judiciously remarks that the Khalsa must be congratulated because, though few in number, having the blessings of their Guru they had confidence in themselves to fight for their religion, and delighted in anticipation of the approaching conflict. It is recorded that there were ten thousand Sikhs at Anandpur while the opposing army came as strong as fifteen to twenty times in number than the Sikhs

The allied forces fell on Anandpur like locust. On seeing this the Guru ordered his artillery men to discharge their cannon into the hostile army at the thickest spot. The enemy made a charge to seize the artillery, but were quickly restrained by the fatal accuracy with which the Sikhs served their guns. They were supported by the infantry. The city of Anandpur was on a little higher elevation and the allied forces were in the open and had no protection, and consequently fell in heaps. A fierce battle was fought for a few days.

The Mohammadan gunners were promised large reward if they killed the Guru but they were unsuccessful in their mission because their gun fire was either high or too low and could not hit the target. The allied army finding their guns useless tried hand to hand fight. On seeing this the Guru began to discharge his arrows with marvelous effect. The fearful carnage continued, horses fell on horses, men on men.

The allied forces rallied a strong effort to conquer, but was so vigorously and successfully repulsed that they were obliged to suspend hostilities at the end of each day of warfare. The Mohammadans and the hill chiefs had different opinions as to the cause of the success of the Sikhs. Some thought that the Guru had supreme miraculous power and the supernatural forces fought on his side. Others maintained that the Guru's success was owing to the fact that his men were protected behind their ramparts.

While this discussion was going on, the Mohammadan viceroys decided to storm the fortress where the Guru was stationed. On seeing this the Sikhs put their two guns called Baghan (tigress) and Bijai-ghosh (sound of victory) in position. The aims were taken at the enemy. The tents were blown away and great havoc was caused. On seeing this the Mohammadan viceroys retreated and the hill armies fled. That evening the Guru offered thanksgiving, and beat the drum of victory.

Having failed through direct assault, the allied army planned a siege of the city of Anandpur in such a way that all entrances and exits for both goods and persons were completely closed. They completely besieged the city, and the Guru's supplies were failing. Food position became extremely serious and the Sikhs were driven to undertake some dangerous expeditions. They went out at night to snatch provisions from the besiegers. After some time the allies collected their stores at one place and guarded them day and night. When the enemy learnt about the distressful situation of the Sikhs, they planned a different strategy to induce the Guru to leave Anandpur.

Raja Ajmer Chand sent his envoy to him saying that if he left Anandpur, their armies would withdraw and he could afterwards return whenever he pleased. The Guru did not pay any heed to this proposal. The offer was repeated several times, but the Guru did not accept it. Having suffered extreme hardships, the Sikhs besought the Guru to evacuate the fort, but the Guru counselled them patience for some time more. The Sikhs who heard enemy's proposal, went to the Guru's mother to use her influence on him. She pleaded with him but in vain. The Guru told her that the enemy's proposal was hypocritical since they planned to draw out the Sikhs from within the shelter of the city and attack them. Some of the Masands and the Sikhs who were influenced by the hill chiefs, insisted that the proposal of the enemy be accepted and the city be abandoned. Some Sikhs became impatient and

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Dish eartened. The Guru asked them to declare their allegiance. Forty of them signed a disclaimer saying that the was not their Guru and they were not his Sikhs. After they signed the disclaimer, they were allowed by the Guru to go away. He then brought out a scheme to expose the hypocrisy of the enemy.

The Guru sent for Raja Ajmer Chand's envoy and told him that he would evacuate Anandpur if the allied armies would first allow the removal of his treasure and property. The Hindus swore on the Salgram (their idol) and the Mohammadans on the holy Quran, that they would not deceive or molest his servants departing with his property.

The Guru then immediately ordered a number of cartloads of useless articles. To the bullocks' horns were attached torches and at the dead of night, the caravan of bullocks with their loads, started along with some Sikhs accompanying them. When the caravan reached the enemy lines they forgot all their pledges and fell upon the small company of the Sikhs to loot the treasure.

Their disappointment was great when they found out that the treasure was made up of rubbish articles. In this way the Guru exposed the treachery of the enemy and told his Sikhs that everything they had endured had been by the Will of God, and he quoted Guru Nanak- "Happiness is a disease, the remedy for which is unhappiness".

At last came an autographed letter from the Emperor to the Guru- "I have sworn on the Quran not to harm. You. If I do, may I not find a place in God's court hereafter! Cease warfare and come to me. If you do not desire to come hither, then go whithersoever you please." The Emperor's envoy added that the Emperor promised that he would not harm the Guru. The hill Rajas also swore by the cow and called their idols to witness, that they would allow safe passage to the Guru. The Guru told the enemy, " You are all liars, and therefore all your empire and your glory shall depart. You all took oaths before and then perjured yourselves."

The Sikhs went again to the Guru's mother to complain of his refusal to listen to reason. He, however, felt that their pleading was not reasonable but it was not appropriate to accept the terms of the enemy and leave the fort. The Sikhs stricken with hunger, supported the envoy's representation. The Guru comforted them, " My brethren, waver not, I only desire your welfare.

You know not that these people are deceivers and design to do us evil. If you hold a little longer, you shall have food to your heart's content." When the Sikhs refused to wait any longer, he asked them to wait only a few days more when the great God would send them relief. The Sikhs, however, refused to wait even for a day. The Guru repeated his request saying that the enemy would then retire and they would all be happy. He also warned the Sikhs, " O dear Khalsa, you are rushing to your destruction, while I am endeavoring to save you."

The Sikhs were so much hunger stricken that they refused to stay even for a day. The Guru's mother was also in favor of evacuating the fort. The allied armies sent a Saiyid (a Mohammadan priest) and a Brahman, both of whom were to swear, on behalf of the allied armies, solemn oaths of safe conduct for the Guru should he evacuate Anandpur.

On seeing this the Sikhs began to waver in their allegiance to the Guru, and in the end only forty Sikhs decided to remain with him and share his fortunes. He told them that they too might desert him. They refused and said that they would either remain within the fort or force their way out as the Guru directed. He knew that the seed of his religion would flourish. He then finally decided to leave Anandpur and gave orders to his men that they all were to march at night. Anandpur was finally evacuated on 6-7 Poh, Sambat 1762 (20-21 December, 1705).

Bhai Daya Singh and Ude Singh walked in front of the Guru, Mohkam Singh and Sahib Singh on his right, the second batch of baptized Sikhs on his left. His sons Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh followed

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with bows and arrows. Then came Bhai Himmat Singh carrying ammunition and matchlocks. Gulab Rai, Sham Singh and other Sikhs and relations accompanied him. The rest of the followers brought up the rear, about five hundred in all. The moment the enemy got the news of Guru's departure, they again forgot all about their pledges and set out in hot pursuit immediately. Skirmishes started from Kiratpur onwards. Realizing the impending danger the Guru charged Ude Singh with the responsibility to check the advance of the enemy. Bhai Ude Singh fought a bloody battle at Shahi Tibbi.

The enemy surrounded and killed the dauntless and the bravest of the Guru's brave warriors, Ude Singh. When the battle of Shahi Tibbi was in progress, the Guru had reached the bank of Sarsa river. At that time a news came that a contingent of enemy troops was fast approaching. Bhai Jiwan Singh, a Rangretta Sikh, was given a band of one hundred warriors to encounter the pursuers. With the rest of his people the Guru plunged into the flooded waters of the Sarsa river. The flood was so strong that many were drowned and many were scattered in different directions including the Guru's mother with two younger sons, Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh. Besides, there was a heavy loss of valuable literature and property.

The Guru accompanying his two eldest sons and some veteran Sikhs reached the village Ghanaula on the other side of Sarsa river. Apprehending that the route ahead might be beset with danger, the Guru gave Bhai Bachitar Singh a band of one hundred Sikhs and instructed him to march by the direct route to Rupar, whereas he with some veteran Sikhs preferred to take a longer route and reached Kotla Nihang near Rupar to stay with Pathan Nihang Khan who was an old and sincere devotee of the Sikh Gurus. Bhai Bachitar Singh and his men had to fight their way through a cordon of the Ranghars of Malikpur, a village near Rupar, and the Pathans of Rupar. During the fierce fighting that took place on this occasion, majority of the Sikhs fell dead and Bachitar Singh was mortally wounded.

The Guru did not stay long at Kotla Nihang. It seems that he was to proceed to Machhiwara and Rai Kot. Accompanied by his two eldest sons and forty Sikhs, the Guru halted at Bur Majra after Kotla Nihang. A news was received that a large body of Sirhind troops was chasing them. Immediately the Guru decided to face the enemy from within the Garhi of Chamkaur and he hurried towards it. He was well aware of the importance of this Garhi (mud fortress) as he had, on a previous occasion, fought a battle at this place.

Famous Figures

Bhai Bachittar Singh

At Anandpur, Guru Gobind Singh was along with a few hundred of his Sikhs. A Mughal army under the Subedars of Sirhind and Lahore marched against the Guru. They laid siege to the Anandpur Fort. For many months, the Sikhs fought with determination and kept the enemy at bay. It was there that Sikh warriors displayed a miraculous new spirit.

The Mughal Commanders sent a fierce war-elephant to smash the gate of the fort. As the elephant charged furiously towards the gate, the Guru asked one of his Sikhs to go out and fight the wild beast, but no one dared face the ferocious drunken elephant.

It was Bhai Bachittar Singh who took up the challenge and armed with a Nagni (a special spear), which Guru Gobind Singh gave to him, went out to face the armoured elephant, which came charging. The Mughal army on the one side and the Guru and his Sikhs on the other watched the battle.

To the relief and amazement of all, the brave Bhai Bachittar Singh threw the Nagni Spear at the forehead of the elephant, which pierced the iron plate and injured the elephant and sent it back towards the Imperial troops. The weapon with which he fought and injured the elephant can still be seen at the Anandpur museum.

Bhai Uday/Udei/Udai Singh

Bhai Uday Singh was one of the four sons of renowned Sikh martyr Bhai Mani Singh Ji, a resident of village Alipur, District Multan (now in Pakistan) who offered his services along with those of his four sons, to Guru Gobind Singh Ji. Bhai Bachiter Singh and Bhai Uday Singh, were two of the four sons who joined the band of dedicated Sikhs in the Army of the Guru.

Bhai Uday Singh was a very good marksman. Once, while he and a few other Sikhs accompanied Guru Gobind Singh Ji on a hunting expedition, they were suddenly attacked by two Hill chiefs named Balia Chand and Alamchand. Bhai Alam Singh from Guruji's party engaged hill chief Alam Chand and cut off his right arm with a single stroke of his sword. Bhai Uday Singh surged forward and caused serious injury to the Hill Chief Balia Chand with a gun shot. With both the Hill chiefs seriously injured the soldier accompanying the two Hill Chiefs beat hasty retreat into the thick jungle. Guru praised Bhai Uday Singh's brave act in the battle in presence of Sikh sangat.

Bhai Uday Singh took a very active part in almost all the battles that took place between Guruji's forces and those of Hill Rajas, from time to time. When all the Hill Chiefs mounted a combined attack on Anand Pur Sahib, Bhai Uday Singh was deputed for the defence of Fort Fatehgarh by Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

While Bhai Bachitter Singh, one of the brothers of Bhai Uday Singh, was sent out of the fort by Guru Ji to face an intoxicated elephant, who was being used by the enemy forces for breaking down the fort gate. Bhai Uday Singh sought Guru Ji's permission to engage in battle the commander-in-chief of enemy forces, Raja Kesri Chand of Jaswal Hill State. After obtaining Guru Ji's permission and accompanied by some Sikh soldiers, Bhai Uday Singh attacked enemy forces like a hungry lion attacking its prey. In the lightning attack, the Sikhs accompanying Bhai Uday Singh, killed many enemy soldiers whose bodies lay scattered every where.

When Bhai Bachitter Singh caused serious injury to the intoxicated elephant with his spear and the elephant turned back and started crushing Hill soldiers under its feet, Raja Kesri Chand got terribly upset and angry. At this very moment, Bhai Uday Singh dared Kesri Chand for a straight man to man fight. Launching a lightning attack, Bhai Uday Singh cut off the head of Kesri Chand and mounting the same (head) on his spear, returned to the Fort. With the death of their commander-in-chief, the Hill forces retreated in disgust Bhai Uday Singh was declared, the hero of that battle. He led the Guru Ji's forces against the army of Hill chiefs in the fifth battle of Anandpur Sahib and inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy forces.

Thereafter, combined forces of Hill chiefs and those of Emperor Aurangzeb laid a siege of Anandpur Sahib, lasting more than six months. Guru Gobind Singh vacated Anandpur Sahib for various reasons in Dec. 1704 A.D. When enemy forces, violating all their vows and undertakings attacked Guru Ji's entourage, Bhai Uday Singh along with Bhai Daya Singh, Bhai Alam Singh and other brave Sikh warriors, kept the enemy at bay under the leadership of Sahibzada Ajit Singh for a considerable time, facilitating crossing of flooded rivulest Sirsa by Guru Gobind Singh and others.

In the process, however, Bhai Uday Singh laid down his life as a martyr in the service of Guru Ji. He laid down his life fighting against a cruel and treacherous regime for emancipation and freedom of the oppressed. Thus, yet another renowned Sikh martyr enriched the Sikh heritage, enlightening the path of future Sikh generations.

Bhai Kanhaiya Singh

Bhai Kanhaiya ji was founder of Sevapanthi or Addanshahi sect of the Sikhs. He was born in a Dhamman Khatri family of Sodhara near Wazirabad in Sialkot District (Now in Pakistan). His father

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was a wealthy trader, but he himself being of a religious bent of mind left home when still very young and roamed about With sadhus and ascetics in search of spiritual peace.

His quest ended as he met Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621-75) and accepted initiation at his hands. Kanhaiya established a dharamsal at Kavha village in the present Attock district of Pakistan. Which he turned into a preaching centre. His special mission was selfless service of humanity with no distinction of nationality, caste or creed.

In 1705, he was on a visit to Anandpur when Anandpur was invested by a combination of hill troops and the Mughal imperial army. During the frequent sallies and skirmishes, Bhai Kanhaiya used to roam around serving water to the wounded and the dying without distinction of friend and foe. Some Sikhs complained to Guru Gobind Singh that Kanhaiya had been resuscitating the fallen enemy soldiers.

As Guru Gobind Singh summoned Bhai Kanhaiya and told him What the Sikhs had said, he spoke, "Yes, my Lord, what they said is true in a sense, but I saw no Mughals or Sikhs in the battlefield. I only saw the Guru's face in everyone. " The Guru, pleased with the reply, blessed him and told his Sikhs that Kanhaiya had understood his teaching correctly. Guru also give him medicine to be put on the wounds of fallen soldiers(Sikhs and Enemies). After evacuation of Anandpur, Bhai Kanhaiya retired to Sodhara where he died in 1718.

Battles of Banda Singh Bahadur

Banda's original name was Lachhman Dev. He was born in Kartik 1727 Bikrami Samvat, October-November 1670, four years after the birth of Guru Gobind Singh. He belonged either to Kashmir or Punjab. He was a Rajput cultivator. By the time he was just turned 20, his astonishing mind was set on its task. He had a reputation of being a great hunter. One day he killed a doe which immediately delivered itself of two cubs which expired in his presence. The sight shocked him. He renounced worldly life and became a bairagi sadhu or a wandering hermit and ultimately settled at Nander on the banks of river Godavari in Maharashtra. He won great fame as a sorcerer under the name of Madhodas and commanded thousands of followers.

Guru Gobind Singh went to his hermitage. Madhodas was away. The Guru ordered his disciples to kill a few goats of the Bairagi and cook meat there and then. The matter was reported to Bairagi. The Guru asked him who he was. Madhodas replied, he was Banda or Guru's slave. The Guru inquired, if he knew whom he was talking to. He said he was none other than Guru Gobind Singh. At that time Banda was 38 years old and Guru ji 42. The Guru encouraged him to give up his present way of living and resume the duties of a real Rajput. In few days the Guru held a durbar, conferred the title of Banda Bahadur on him and appointed him his military lieutenant to punish the Governor of Sarhind who had killed his two youngest sons, and was mainly responsible for the death of his two elder sons, his mother and thousands of Sikhs and Hindus. He was given a council of advisers of Five Sikhs who on their arrival in Punjab were to assure the Sikhs that Banda was Guru's nominee and deputy to organize them in order to lead an expedition against Sarhind.

At a durbar held at Nander about the middle of September 1708, the Guru conferred the title of Bahadur on Banda and invested him with full political and military authority as his deputy to carry on the national struggle in the Punjab and to punish Wazir Khan of Sarhind and his supporters. He was supplied with a standard arrow and a drum as symbols of temporal authority. He was given an advisory council of five devoted Khalsa: Baj Singh, a descendant of the family of third Guru, Amar Das, his brother Ram Singh, Binod Singh, who descended from Guru Angad Dev second Guru, his son Kahan Singh and Fateh Singh. Twenty five soldiers were given to him as his bodyguard. A prescript called Hukumnamah or a letter of authority in the handwriting of the Guru instructing Sikhs to join Banda Bahadur in his national war against Mughal tyranny was provided. As an insignia of his temporal authority invested in him, Guru gave Banda Bahadur his own sword, green bow and

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Five arrows from his quiver. Three hundred Sikh cavaliers in battle array accompanied Banda to a distance of eight kilometers to give him final send off.

Banda on his journey, 1708-1709

The guru was severely wounded by a Pathan set on the Guru by Wazir Khan with the connivance of the court nobles. The dispatch of Banda to Punjab had infuriated Emperor Bahadur Shah. As a result of his intrigue the Guru passed away on October 7, 1708. Banda had not gone far when he heard the sad news. This did not discourage him. On the contrary it doubled his zeal and set the fire of vengeance ablaze in his heart. Distance between Nander and Hissar in current day Haryana is 1600 KMs. At the rate of 10-16 kms per day Banda should not have taken more than 100 days during his journey, but he actually took about a year. It means that he might have been frequently in hiding. The emperor should have instructed his officers to make short work of Banda and his party. That is why Banda traveled right across Maharashtra and Rajasthan, both of which were in revolt against the Mughals.

Banda in Haryana, 1709

Narnaul:

Banda arrived at Narnaul. There he saw the complete destruction of Satnamis with his own eyes. His blood boiled on learning that entire sect of Satnamis, men, women and children, one and all had been wiped out of existence. It was here that Banda suppressed some dacoits and robbers. (this is mentioned in Shri Guru Panth Parkash of Giani Gian Singh, 345-46, 4th edition).

Hissar:

He was well received by Hindus and Sikhs as a leader of the nationalist movement and deputy of Guru Gobind Singh. Liberal offerings were made to him in the cause of the country and dharam (religion and virtue) which he distributed among poor and needy.

Tohana:

Here Banda issued letters to Malwa Sikhs to join him in his crusade against Wazir Khan of Sarhind. Never perhaps in the history of Punjab did the circumstances of the time offered so fair a field to the ambition of a leader, conscious of great talents, and called to the command of a warlike people, only too eager to support him in any enterprise he might undertake. Banda directed his attention to the east towards Delhi. He wanted to leave Mata Sahib devi in Delhi and plunder the Government officials of the fertile area of Haryana. From Kharkhauda about 50 kms north-west of Delhi, Mata Sahib devi was sent to Delhi under proper escort, to join Mata Sundari, who was acting as head of the Khalsa. She might have resented Banda's ignoring her for not having visited her at the capital before starting on his crusade.

Sonepat:

At Sonepat, 50 Kms North of Delhi, early in November 1709 Banda commanded about 500 followers. He attacked government treasury plundered it and distributed it among his retinue. This was his second success against the government and it considerably raised his prestige. By slow marches he advanced towards Sarhind.

Kaithal:

Near Kaithal, about 100 kms further North, Banda seized a Government treasury which was its way from the northern districts to Delhi. He kept nothing out of it for himself and gave it away to his rank and file.

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Samana:

Samana, 50 kms farther North was the native place of Jalal-ud-did Jallad, the professional executioner, who had beheaded Guru Tegh Bahadur, while his son had beheaded two younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh. Ali Hussain who by false promises had lured Guru Gobind Singh to evacuate Anandpur also belonged to Samana. It was an accursed place in the eyes of Sikhs. The entire peasantry of the neighborhood was now up in arms, and Banda's following had risen to several thousands. Banda fell upon the town on November 26, 1709. The inhabitants were massacred in cold blood and town thoroughly squeezed. Samana was the district town and had nine Parganahs attached to it. It was placed under the charge of Fateh Singh. Samana was the first territorial conquest and the first administrative unit of Banda.

Then Kunjpura, Ghuram, and Thaska inhabited by Muslim Ranghars notorious for rape and rapine were destroyed. People who were born out of Muslim father and Hindu mother were called Ranghars. Damla was the village of Pathans who had deserted Guru Gobind Singh ji in the battle of Bhangani, It was ravaged. Shahbad Markanda also fell to Banda.

Sadhaura:

Usman Khan, the chief of Sadhaura 25 kms distant, had persecuted Sayyid Budhu Shah for helping Guru Gobind Singh ji in the battle of Bhangani. The muslim population maltreated the local Hindus. On the approach of Banda the leading Muslims gathered in a big and strongly built mansion. They were all massacred. This building came to be known as Katal Garhi. Banda attacked the town and destroyed it.

The contemporary historian Khafi Khan wrote: "In two or three months time four to five thousands pony-riders, and seven to eight thousand warlike footmen joined him. Day by day their number increased, and abundant money and material by pillage fell into their hands. Numerous villages were laid waste and he appointed his own police officers (thanedars) and collectors of revenue (Tahsil-dar-e-mal)"

Lohgarh:

The ultimate aim of Banda was to punish Wazir Khan and conquer Sarhind. It required time to consolidate his material and territorial gains. He also wanted to study military resources of Sarhind. He was anxious to see what steps government will take against him. He therefore established his headquarters, in the beginning of February 1710, at Mukhlispur situated in lower Shiwalik hills south of Nahan, about 20 KM from Sadhaura. His fort stood on a hill top. Two kuhls or water channels flowed at its base and supplied water to it. This fort was repaired and put in a state of defense. All the money, gold and costly material acquired in these expeditions were deposited here. He struck coins and issued orders under his seal. The name of Mukhlispur was changed to Lohgarh, and it became the capital of first Sikh state.

Banda ruled over the region bounded on the north by Shiwalik hills, on the west by river Tangri, on the east by river Jamuna, and in the south by a line passing through Samana, Thanesar, Kaithal and Karnal. He abolished the Zamindari System of land prevailing under the Mughals and declared the actual cultivators as the owners of land. Thus he established the peasant proprietorship, and won approbation and support of the overwhelming majority of the population. Khafi Khan says that Banda "issued orders to imperial officers and agents and big jagirdars to submit and give up their business." So Guru Gobind Singh's dream of political sovereignty was realized within a year of his death.

Banda's name struck terror into the hearts of lawless people, and thefts and dacoity became a thing of the past. "In all the paraganahs occupied by the Sikhs," writes Irvine, "The reversal of previous customs was striking and complete. A low scavenger or leather dresser, the lowest of the low in Indian estimation, had only to leave home and join the Guru, when in a short time he would return to his birthplace as its ruler with his order and his order of appointment in his hand. As soon as he set

foot within the boundaries the wealthy and well-born went out to greet him and with joined palms awaited his orders. Not a soul could disobey an order, and men who had often risked themselves in battlefields, became so cowed down that they were afraid even to remonstrate.

Invasion of Sarhind and establishment of first Sikh state

Banda's Troops

Banda devoted three months in organizing his civil and military administration. Bahadur Shah was still away from Delhi. The Delhi Government had made no attempt to recover their lost territory from him. Wazir Khan of Sarhind was making his own preparations independently to meet the danger from Banda.

Banda's troops consisted of two classes of people. The old Sikhs who had fought under Guru Gobind Singh joined him purely to punish Wazir Khan. Eventhough Guru Gobind Singh had only sent Banda Bahadur to punish those who had committed atrocities against Pir Buddhu Shah and sane saints, it was the love of Guru Gobind singh and Sahibzade's that many Sikhs zealously to avenge the murder of the Guru Gobind Singh's young sons alligned themselves with Banda. They also wished to see the fulfillment of the Guru's prophecy for Sikh sovereignty in Punjab. They numbered about five thousands. Another class of Sikhs of about the same number comprised of young men who wanted to punish and plunder the enemies of their faith. The third group of Hindu jats, Gujars and Rajputs of about five thousand were intent on plunder alone. Most of them were untrained, raw levies, not fully armed. Banda possessed no elephants, no good horses and no guns. His followers had matchlocks, spears, swords, bows and arrows. According to Khafi Khan the number of Sikhs had risen to thirty to forty thousands.

Wazir Khan's Preparations

Wazir Khan had proclaimed a jihad or a holy war against Banda. He was joined by the Nawab of Malerkotla, all the other Muslim chiefs and jagirdars as well as Ranghars in large numbers. Majority of his soldiers were trained men. Wazir Khan's own forces were six thousand horsemen, eight to nine thousand musketeers (burqandaz) and archers, and with these about ten guns of artillery and many elephants. In addition there were about ten thousand Ghazis. The total number of their troops was about thirty thousands.

Banda advanced from Lohgarh and halted at Banur, near Ambala, 14 Kms from Rajpura. The muslims of that town used to seize cows and oxen of Hindus and slaughter them in their presence. Banda sacked it, and then went towards Sarhind.

The Battle of Sarhind, May 12, 1710 A.D.

The battle was fought at Chhappar Chiri, 20 kms from Sarhind. On the Mughal side Sher Muhammad Khan, Nawab of Malerkotla was the leader of the right wing. Wazir Khan was in command of the center. Suchanand, chief secretary of nawab was put on the left. On the Sikh side, Baj singh Bal a jutt of village Mirpur in Patti distt. of Amritsar, headed right wing. Binod Singh (descendent of Guru Angad Dev ji) headed the left wing while Banda commanded the center facing the Wazir Khan's army. Shouts of Sachcha Padishah, Fateh Darshan (Sat Sri Akal was changed to Fateh Darshan by Banda), Sat Sri Akal, Akal, Akal, and ya ali, rent the sky. Suchanand could not withstand the ferocity of Baj singh and soon vanquished and fled away.

The artillery fire of the Mughals told heavily on the plunderers in Banda's camp. They were equally divided between Baj singh and Binod singh's forces. Sher Mohammed Khan was about to overpower Binod singh's wing when he was suddenly struck by a bullet and was instantly killed. His men immediately dispersed. Wazir Khan was rushing upon Banda who stuck fast to his ground and discharged arrows relentlessly. There a bloody battle was going on. Baj singh and Binod singh now joined Banda. Banda and the Sikh leaders now converged on Wazir Khan and he was killed.

Wazir Khan's death is variously described. Khafi Khan says that he was struck by a Musket ball. Mir Mohammed Ahsan Ijad says that Baj Singh rushed upon Wazir Khan. Wazir Khan threw his spear at Baj Singh. Baj Singh caught hold of it. He flung the same spear upon Wazir Khan. It struck the forehead of his horse. Wazir Khan discharged an arrow which hit Baj Singh's arm. He then rushed upon him with his sword. At this juncture Fatah Singh came to the rescue of Baj Singh. His sword cut the Khan from shoulder to the waist.

Pursuit of fugitives:

Wazir Khan's head was stuck up on a spear and lifted high up by a Sikh who took his seat in the deceased's howdah (a seat atop of elephant). The Sikhs with one voice and in wild excitement raised the sky-rending shouts of Sat-Sri-Akal. The Sarhind's troops on beholding the Nawab's head took alarm, and trembling fled helter skelter in dismay and despair. The Sikhs fell upon them and there was a terrible carnage. Sikhs reached Sarhind by nightfall. The gates of the city were closed. The guns mounted on the walls of the fort commenced bombardment. The Sikhs laid siege to the place. They took rest in the night. Wazir Khan's family and many Muslim nobles fled to Delhi at night.

By next afternoon Sikhs forced open the gates and fell upon the city. The Government treasury and moveable property worth two crores fell into Banda's hand which was removed to Lohgarh. Several Muslims saved their lives by embracing Sikhism. Dindar Khan son of Jalal Khan Rohilla became Dindar Singh. The official newswriter of Sarhind Mir Nasir-ud-din changed his name to Mir Nasir Singh. (Yar Mohammad, Dastur-ul insha, page 37, Persian)

Province of Sarhind occupied

Entire province of Sarhind consisting of twenty-eight paraganahs and extending from Satluj to the Jamuna and from the Shiwalik hills to Kunjpura, Karnal to Kaithal, yielding 52 lakhs (1 lakh = 100,000 Rupees) annually came into Banda's possession. Baj Singh was appointed governor of Sarhind. Ali Singh was made his deputy. Their chief responsibility was to be on guard against the Mughal troops from Lahore and Jammu. Fatah Singh retained charge of Samana. Ram Singh, brother of Baj Singh became chief of Thanesar. Binod Singh in addition to his post of the revenue minister, was entrusted with the administration of Karnal and Panipat. His main duty was to guard the road from Delhi. Banda retired to his capital at Lohgarh. His era began from May 12, 1710, the date of his victory in the battle of Sarhind. The Zamindari system was abolished in the whole province at one stroke.

Banda advances towards Lahore, June 1710

Having set up administrative machinery, Banda advanced from Sarhind to Malerkotla. The town was saved for a ransom of two lakhs on the recommendation of Kishan Das Banya, an old acquaintance of Banda. From there he marched to Morinda. He chastised the Brahmins and Ranghars who had made over Guru Gobind Singh's mother and his two youngest son to Wazir Khan. Then he visited Kiratpur and Anandpur to pay homage to shrines.

He took Hoshiarpur and Jalandhar and carried fire and sword everywhere. Banda crossed the Beas and fell upon Batala. Then, he went on a pilgrimage to Dera Baba Nanak. At Amritsar Banda made large offerings. He invited young men to embrace Sikhism promising remission of land revenue and other rewards. Then many from the area of Majha joined the Khalsa. Banda marched towards Lahore. Sayyid Islam Khan, the Governor mounted guns on the walls of city. Banda laid a siege, but was unable to force upon the walls of fort. Lahore must have fallen, but Banda was in hurry to look after his government.

Thus entire city remained safe owing to its fortifications. But the entire suburbs for miles around was completely devastated. In this campaign Banda was joined by thousands of low caste Hindus who came into the fold of Khalsa.

Torture and execution of Banda Bahadur by Mughals

Banda Singh's rule, though short-lived, had a far-reaching impact on the history of the Punjab. With it began the decay of Mughal authority and the demolition of the feudal system of society it had created. Banda Singh increasing influence roused the ire of the Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah, who journeyed northwards from Deccan to punish Sikhs. Instructions were issued to the governors of Delhi and Oudh and other Mughal officers to march towards Punjab. Prohibitory laws against Sikhs were passed. Fearing that some Sikhs might not have smuggled themselves into the royal camp disguised as Hindus, Bahadur Shah ordered all Hindus employed of imperial forces to shave off their beards. Emperor Bahadur Shah's order, issued on December 10, 1710 was a general warrant for the faujdars to "kill the worshippers of Nanak, i.e. Sikhs, wherever they are found. (Nanak Prastan ra Har ja kih bayaband baqatl rasanand)" Banda was chased out of Every corner of Punjab and he took refuge in the Shivalik hills.

He got married to daughter of one of the hill chiefs and it was few years before Mughals could trace him down . He again started his campaigns against Mughals and came out of hills to the plains of Punjab. But was overwhelmed by the superior numbers of Mughal forces. As reported to emperor Bahadur Shah on April 28th 1711, (Akhbarat-i-darbar-i-mualla) , "The wretched Nanak-worshipper (Banda Singh) had his camp in the town of Kalanaur (District Gurdaspur). He has promised and proclaimed: "I do not oppress the Muslims." Any muslim who approaches him, he fixes a daily allowance and wage, and looks after him. He has permitted them to recite khutba and namaz. As such five thousand Muslim have gathered round him.

The massive imperial force drove the Sikhs from Sirhind and other places to take shelter in the fort of Lohgarh in the hilly region. "It is impossible for me," says Khafi Khan a muslim historian of that time, "to describe the fight which followed. The Sikhs in ther faqir's dress struck terror into the hearts of the royal troops. The number of casualties among the latter was so large that for a time it appeared as if they were going to lose."

Further reinforcements arrived and sixty thousand horse and foot closely invested Banda's hill retreat. For want of provisions, Sikhs were reduced to rigorous straits. They killed their horses for food, and when they could stand up to the enemy no longer, they made desperate nightly sally to escape into the hills of Nahan. Banda was far from vanquished.

The kettle and the sword (Symbols of charity and power), victory and blessing have been obtained from Guru Nanak-Gobind Singh. God is one! Victory to the Presence!! This is the order of Sri Sachcha Sahib (The great master) to the entire Khalsa. The Guru will protect you. Call upon the Guru's name. Your lives will be fruitful!. You are the Khalsa of the great immortal God. On seeing this letter, repair to the presence, wearing five arms. Observe the rules of conduct laid down for the Khalsa. Do not use Bhang, tobacco, Poppy, wine, or any other intoxicant...Commit no theft or adultery. We have brought Satyug (the golden age) Love one another. This is my wish. He who lives according to the rules of Khalsa shall be saved by the Guru.

Sikhs came out of their mountain haunts to recover their lost territories and once again occupied Sadhaura and Lohgarh. Farukh Siyar, who came to the throne of Delhi in 1713, launched against them the sternest proceedings that political authority stirred with a fanatical religious zeal could devise. They were hounded out of plains of Punjab and their main column, under Banda Singh about 4,000 men was subjected to most stringent siege at the village of Gurdas-Nangal, about six kilometers from Gurdaspur.

Gurdas Nangal was an epic of purest heroism in face of heavy odds. According to Muhammad Qasim, the Muslim author of Ibratnamah, who has given an eyewitness account of this campaign, the "brave and daring deeds (of the Sikhs) were amazing. Twice or thrice a day, some forty or fifty of them would come out of their enclosure to gather grass for their animals, and, when the combined forces of the emperor went to oppose them, they made short work of the Mughals with arrows, muskets and

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small swords, and then disappeared. For eight months the garrison resisted the siege of 100,000 Mughal troops under the gruesome conditions.

Quite apart from the daring exploits of the ordinary Sikh soldier, there were strong rumours in the Mughal camps that Banda Singh had magical powers, and could transform himself into many shapes to escape captivity. Most of the Mughal commanders were afraid of a face to face encounter with Banda, and were constantly pushing their Qazis and Mullas to the front to offer prayers to counter the spells of the enemy. Abdus Samad Khan openly prayed that Banda escaped from there, so that the whole business could be disposed off on any excuse. Only fresh orders from the Emperor to capture Banda dead or alive kept him at his task. He was taking new measures everyday to tighten the siege, to starve the defenders to submission. Qamar-ud-Din's forces were holding one half of the circle and his own forces were on the other half.

This siege dragged on for eight months. Towards the end, an unfortunate dispute arose between Banda Singh and one of his most trusted advisers Baba Binod Singh. This man along with Baaj Singh and three others made up the war council that Banda was supposed to consult in any difficult situation. Binod Singh advised the evacuation of the fortress, but for some reasons of his own, Banda wished to fight it out there. Binod Singh was senior in age, and when this difference of views flared up into an open quarrel, Banda agreed to let Baba Binod Singh take his men out of the Fortress. Binod Singh and his supporters then charged out of the fortress and escaped.

Towards the end of November 1715, the remaining defenders were running out of ammunition and food. They were trying to exist on boiled leaves and the bark of trees, and were gradually reduced to mere skeletons. Then on 17th December, 1715, Abdus Samad shouted across the separating moat, that he would not allow any killing by his men, if Banda opened the gate to the fortress. When Banda ordered the gate be opened, the Mughals rushed in to spear or stab as many as three hundred of the half-dead and helpless defenders. About 200 were captured alive and handcuffed in twos. Banda Singh had chains round his ankles and his wrists, and was then locked in an iron cage. The Mughals were still afraid that he might escape and so they placed a guard on each side of the cage with swords drawn and the cage was placed aloft an elephant, which led the procession, which paraded through Lahore, before proceeding towards Delhi. Zakaria Khan, the son of the Lahore Governor, then took charge. and in order to give the Emperor a bigger present, he ordered his men to lop off more heads of Sikhs that they caught on the way, and he loaded them on to the carts that carried the 300 from (Gurdas Nangal). The rest Sikhs around 740 Sikhs along with Banda Singh were taken to Lahore, and thence to Delhi. The cavalcade to the imperial capital was a grisly sight. Besides 740 prisoners in heavy chains, it comprised seven hundred cartloads of the heads of the Sikhs with another 200 stuck upon pikes. On 26th February, 1716, this procession neared Delhi, and Farukh Siyar ordered his Minister Mohammed Amin Khan to go out to receive them and to prepare them for a suitable display in the town. On the 29th February, the citizens of Delhi had lined the streets in full force, to get a good sight of the show. First marched 2,000 soldiers each holding a Sikh head impaled on his upright spear (so many extra had been collected on the way). Next followed Banda Singh's elephant. A gold-laced red turban was placed on his head, and to add further mockery to his plight, a bright printed scarlet shirt was slipped on his body. Then came 740 prisoners (500 had been collected on the way). These men were chained in pairs and thrown across the backs of camels. Their faces were blackened, and pointed sheepskin or paper caps were clapped on their heads. Behind this line came the Mughal Commanders, Mohammed Amin Khan, his son Kamar-ud-Din Khan, and his son-in-law Zakaria Khan. Their army men lined both sides of the streets.

However humiliating their plight, there were no signs of dejection or remorse on the faces of these Sikhs. In the words of Mohammed Harisi, author of the Ibratnama, who was on the spot that day: "The crowds were pressing forward to get a better view Many were enjoying the sight and taking hilarious jibes at them. But nothing changed the air of calm and resignation on the faces of those Sikhs. There were no signs of bitterness or dejection anywhere. They appeared to be happy with their lot, and were actually joined in groups singing their Guru's hymns. If anyone remarked that they were being punished for their sins, their retort was: 'No, it is all according to God's Will ?'" When we see

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the list of weapons captured from them at Gurdas Nangal we are really amazed at what they could do with so little. This is the list as supplied by Kanwar, the author of the Tazkrah: 1,000 swords, 217 small swords, 114 daggers, 278 shields, 173 bows, and 180 rifles. In spite of this scanty material they could have continued defying the Mughal might a long long time, if only their supplies of food had not run out.

C.R.Wilson, a Bengal civilian, has given in his Early Annals of the English in Bengal the following description of the entry of the Sikh captives into Delhi:

"Malice did its utmost to cover the vanquished with ridicule and shame. First came the heads of the executed Sikhs, stuffed with straw, and stuck on Bamboo's, their long hair streaming in the wind like a veil, and along with them to show that every living thing in Gurdaspur had perished, a dead cat on a pole. Banda himself, dressed out of mockery in a turban of a red cloth, embroidered with gold, and a heavy robe of brocade flowered with pomegranates, sat in an iron cage, placed on the back of an elephant. Behind him stood a mail-clad officer with a drawn sword. After him came the other 740 prisoners seated two and two upon camels without saddles. Each wore a high foolscap of sheepskin and had one hand pinned to his neck, between two pieces of wood.

At the end of the procession rode the three great nobles, Muhammad Amin Khan, sent by emperor to bring in prisoners, Qamr-ud-Din, his son, and Zakariya Khan, his son-in-law. The road to the palace, for several miles was lined with troops and filled with exultant crowds, who mocked at the teacher (Guru) and laughed at the grotesque appearance of his followers. They wagged their heads and pointed the finger of scorn at the poor wretched as they passed. "HU! HU! infidel dog worshippers your day has come. Truly, retribution follows on transgression, as wheat springs from wheat, and barley from barley!! " Yet the triumph could not have seemed complete. Not all the insults that their enemies had invented could rob the teacher and his followers of his dignity.

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

"Khafi Khan illustrates the resolute will and complete devotion to their cause displayed by those Sikhs by telling us about one young prisoner who was about to be called up from the line. This boy had been newly married and had been hauled in by Zakaria Khan's soldiers on the way, only to swell the number of captives for the pleasure of Farukh Siyar. He was the only son of his widowed mother, who had hurried to plead her case before the Emperor. She said that her son had been beguiled into joining the Sikh bands, but was not a Sikh at heart.

On that ground, the Emperor wrote out the order of pardon for the boy, and the mother had hurried with that note and handed it to the officer-in-charge of the executions. The officer read out the pardon and the youth shouted out, "My mother has lied. I am a Sikh of my Guru in body and soul. Do not separate me from my departed friends. Please hurry so that I can join them now." Saying that he left the guards dumbfounded and rushed away to the front of the queue again. He lowered his head before the executioner and refused to budge until the sword had descended and cut him into two.

"That gory scene was enacted for seven days until all the ordinary captives had been disposed off. According to Mohammed Harisi, their bodies were loaded on wagons and taken out of town to be thrown to the vultures. The heads were hung up on trees or on poles near the market-place to be a lesson to all rebels. Not one from the 700 odd men had asked for pardon. The jailors next turned their attention to the 20 odd sardars, including Baaj Singh, Fateh Singh, Ahli Singh and Gulab Singh (of Lohgarh fame). These men were tortured to the extreme and were asked to divulge the place where they had buried all the treasures that had been looted from Sirhind, Batala and other towns during their better days.

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"Failing to get any clues after three months, they prepared to put an end to their lives on Sunday, 9th June, 1716. Banda's cage was again hoisted on top of an elephant, and he was dressed in mock attire of an emperor, with a colourful red pointed turban on his head. His 4 year old son Ajai Singh was placed in his lap. The twenty odd sardars marched behind the elephant and this special procession then passed through the streets of Delhi, and headed for the Kutub-ud-din mausoleum of Bahadur Shah, near the present Kutab Minar. On reaching that graveyard, the captives were again offered a choice of two alternatives: conversion to Islam or death.

Needless to say all chose death. The Sikh sardars were subjected to tortures before being executed. Their heads were then impaled on spears and arranged in a circle round Banda who was now squatting on the ground. There were hundreds of spectators standing around watching this scene. Here they made him paraded around the tomb of late emperor Bahadur Shah and put him to a barbarous death.

"Banda Singh was then given a short sword and ordered to kill his own son Ajai Singh. As he sat unperturbed, the executioner moved forward and plunged his sword into the little child cutting the body into two. Then pieces of flesh were cut from the body and thrown in Banda's face. His liver was removed and thrust into Banda Singh's mouth.

The father sat through all this without any signs of emotion. His powers of endurance were to be tested still further. But before that, Mohammed Amin Khan, who was standing near spoke as follows: "From your manner so far you appear to be a man of virtue, who believes in God, and in doing good deeds. You are also very intelligent. Can you tell me why you are having to suffer all this here?"

"Banda's reply was, "When the tyrants oppress their subjects to the limit, then God sends men like me on this earth to mete out punishment to them. But being human, we sometimes overstep the laws of justice, and for that we are made to pay whilst we are still here. God is not being unjust to me in any way."

"The executioner then stepped forward and thrust the point of his dagger into Banda's right eye, pulling out the eyeball. He then pulled out the other eyeball. Banda sat through all this as still as a rock. His face gave no twitch of pain.

"The cruel devil then took his sword and slashed off Banda's left foot, then both his arms. But Banda's features were still calm as if he was at peace with his Creator. Finally they tore off his flesh with red-hot pincers, and there being nothing else left in their book of tortures, they cut his body up into a hundred pieces, and were satisfied. (These details of the torture are given in full, by the following writers: Mohammed Harisi, Khafi Khan, Thornton, Elphinstone, Daneshwar and others).

The ambassadors of the East India company, John Surman and Edward Stephenson, who were in Delhi then and had witnessed some of these massacres, wrote to the governor of Fort William: "It is not a little remarkable with what patience Sikhs undergo their fate, and to the last it has not been found that one apostatized from his new formed religion. "

On June 9th, came the turn of Banda Singh. Harshest torments had been reserved for him. His eyes were pulled out and his hands and feet chopped off. His flesh was torn with red hot pincers. The end came, mercifully for him with the executioner's axe falling on his neck. With his end Sikhism did not die on the contrary Sikhism came out strong and the torch of Banda Singh Bahadur was carried with new Warriors like Nawab Kapur Singh Virk, Sardar Budh Singh, Sardar Charat Singh, Baba Deep Singh ji Shaheed, Sardar Jassa Singh ji Ahluwalia, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Hari Singh Bhangi, etc.

Manas ki jaal sabhai ekai pehchaanbo is the Guru Gobind Singh's message. which emphatically states "men may call themselves Hindus, Muslims, Emams and Shaffies, but I see them all belonging to one raisemankind." Guru Gobind Singh had given Banda specific orders to punish those who had persecuted good saints like Pir Budhu Shah. He had not mentioned any revenge on those who had executed his own young boys at Sirhind. He had expected Bahadur Shah to fulfil his promise to

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punish those who had committed atrocities on good men, but had parted company from the Emperor completely disappointed. Banda Singh was then taught to bring to reality the Guru's own dream:

ANGLO-SIKH WAR 1,

1845-46, resulting in partial subjugation of the Sikh kingdom, as the outcome of British expansionism. It was near-anarchical conditions that overtook the Lahore court after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in June 1839. The English, by then firmly installed in Ferozpur the Sikh frontier, about 70 km from shore, the Sikh capital, were watching the happenings across the border with more than neighbour's interest. The disorder that prevailed there promised them a good opportunity for direct intervention.

Up to 1838, the British troops on the Sikh frontier had amounted to one regiment at Sabathu in the hills and two at Ludhiana with six pieces of artillery, equalling in all about 2,500 men. The total rose to 8,000 during the time of Lord Auckland (1836-42) who increased the number of troops at Ludhiana and created a new military post at Ferozpur, which was actually Past of Sikh kingdom's dominion south of the Sutlej. British preparations for a war with the Sikhs began seriously in 1843 when the new governor-general, Lord Ellenborough (1842-44), discussed with the Home government the possibilities of a military occupation of the Punjab. English and Indian infantry reinforcement began arriving at each of the frontier posts of Ferozpur and Ludhiana. Cavalry and artillery regiments moved up to Ambala and Kasauli.

Works were in the process of erection around the magazine at Ferozpur, and the fort at Ludhiana began to be fortified. Plans for the construction of bridges over the rivers Markanda and Ghaggar were prepared, and a new road link to join Meerut and Ambala was taken in hand. Exclusive of the newly constructed cantonments of Kasauli and Shimla, Ellenborough had been able to collect a force of 11,639 men and 48 guns at Ambala, Ludhiana and Ferozpur. Everywhere," wrote Lord Ellenborough, we are trying to get things in order and especially to strengthen and equip the artillery with which the fight will be."

Seventy boats of thirty-five tons each, with the necessary equipments to bridge the Sutlej at any point, were under construction; fifty-six pontoons were on their way from Bombay for use in Sindh, and two steamers were being constructed to ply on the River Sutlej. In November 1845," he informed the Duke of Wellington, "the army will be equal to any operation. I should be sorry to have it called to the field sooner."

In July 1844, Lord Ellenborough was replaced by Lord Hardinge (1844-48), a Peninsula veteran, as governor-general of India. Hardinge further accelerated the process of strengthening the Sutlej frontier for a war with the Sikhs. The affable Colonel Richmond was replaced by the abrasive and belligerent Major George Broadfoot as the political agent on the Punjab frontier. Lord Cough, the commander-in-chief, established his headquarters at Ambala. In October 1844, the British military force on the frontier was 17,000 infantry and 60 guns. Another 10,000 troops were to be ready by the end of November. Ferozpur's garrison strength under the command of Sir John Littler was raised to 7,000; by January 1845, the total British force amounted to 20,000 men and 60 guns.

We can collect," Hardinge reported to the Home government, 33,000 infantry, 6,000 cavalry and 100 guns in six weeks." In March additional British and Indian regiments were quietly moved to Ferozpur, Ludhiana and Ambala. Field batteries of 9 pounders with horses or bullocks to draw them, and 24 additional pieces of heavy ordnance were on their way to the frontier. In addition, 600 elephants to draw the battering train of 24-pounder batteries had reached Agra, and 7,000 camels between Kanpur and the Sutlej were to move up in the summer to Ferozpur, which was to be the concentration point for a forward offensive movement.

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Lord Hardinge, blamed unnecessarily by the Home government for inadequate military preparations for the first Sikh war, had, during the seventeen months between Ellenborough's departure and the commencement of hostilities with the Sikhs, increased the garrison strength at Ferozpur from 4,596 men and 12 guns to 10,472 men and 24 guns; at Ambala from 4,113 men and 24 guns to 12,972 men and 32 guns; at Ludhiana from 3,030 men and 12 guns to 7,235 men and 12 guns, and at Meerut from 5,573 men and 18 guns to 9,844 men and 24 guns. The relevant strength of the advanced armies, including those at the hill stations of Sabathu and Kasauli, was raised from 24,000 men and 66 guns to 45,500 men and 98 guns.

These figures are based on official British papers, particularly Hardinge's private correspondence on Punjab affairs with his predecessor, Lord Ellenborough. Thus Total number of British troops around Punjab were 86,023 men and 116 guns. In addition to the concentration of troops on the border, an elaborate supply depot was set up by the British at Bassian, near Raikot, in Ludhiana district. The Lahore Darbar's vamps or representatives and newswriters in the cis-Sutlej region sent alarming reports of these large-scale British military movements across the border.

The Sikhs were deeply wrought upon by these war preparations, especially by Broadfoot's acts of hostility. The rapid march in November 1845 of the governor-general towards the frontier and a report of Sir Charles Napier's speech in the Delhi Gazette saying that the British were going to war with the Sikhs filled Lahore with rumours of invasion. The Sikh ranks, alerted to the danger of a British offensive, started their own preparations.

Yet the army panches or regimental representatives, who had taken over the affairs of the Lahore forces into their own hands after the death of Wazir Jawahar Singh, were at this time maintaining, according to George Campbell, a British civilian employed in the cis-Sutlej territory, *Memoirs of My Indian Career*, "Wonderful order at Lahore..and almost puritanical discipline in the military republic."

However, the emergence of the army Panchayats as a new centre of power greatly perturbed the British authority who termed it as "unholy alliance between the republican army and the Darbar." In this process Sikh army had indeed been transformed. It had now assumed the role of the Khalsa. It worked through elected regimental committees declaring that Guru Gobind Singh's ideal of the Sikh commonwealth had been revived, with the Sarbatt Khalsa or the Sikh as a whole assuming all executive, military and civil authority in the State.

The British decried this as "the dangerous military democracy of the panchayat system," in which soldiers were in a state of success mutiny. " When the British agent made a reference the Lahore Darbar about military preparations in the Punjab, it replied that there only defensive measures to counter the signs of the British. The Darbar, on other hand, asked for the return of the estimated at over seventeen lakh of the Lahore grandee Suchet Singh had left buried in Ferozpur, the restoration of the village of Mauran granted by Maharaja Ranjit Singh to one of his generals Hukam Singh Malvai, but subsequently resumed by the ruler of Nabha with the active connivance of the British, and free passage of Punjabi armed constabulary a right that had been acknowledged by the British on paper but more often than not in practice. The British government rejected the Darbar's claims and severed diplomatic relations with it.

The armies under Hugh Gough and Lord Hardinge began proceeding towards Ferozpur. To forestall their joining those at Ferozpur, the Sikh army began to cross the Sutlej on 11 December near Harike Pattan into its own territory on the other side of the river. The crossing over the Sutlej by Sikhs was made a pretext by the British for opening hostilities and on 13 December Governor-General Lord Hardinge issued a proclamation announcing war on the Sikhs. The declaration charged the State of Lahore with violation of the treaty of friendship of 1809 and justified British preparations as merely precautionary measures for the protection of the Sutlej frontier. The British simultaneously declared Sikh possessions on the left bank of the Sutlej forfeit.

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Hesitation and indecision marred Sikh military operations. Having crossed the Sutlej with five divisions, each 8,000 - 12,000 strong, an obvious strategy for them would have been to move forward. They did in a bold sweeping movement first encircle Ferozpur, then held by Sir John Littler with only 7,000 men, but withdrew without driving the advantage home and dispersed their armies in a wide semicircle from Harike to Mudki and thence to Ferozeshah, 16 km southeast of Ferozpur.

The abandonment of Ferozpur as a first target was the result of the treachery of the Sikh prime minister, Lal Singh, who was in treasonable communication with Captain Peter Nicholson, the assistant political agent of the British. He asked the latter's advice and was told not to attack Ferozpur.

This instruction he followed seducing the Sikhs with an ingenious excuse that, instead of falling upon an easy prey, the Khalsa should exalt their fame by captivity or the death of the Lat Sahib (the governor general) himself. A division precipitately moved towards Ludhiana also remained inactive long enough to lose the benefit of the initiative. The Khalsa army had crossed the Sutlej borne on a wave of popular enthusiasm, it was equally matched (60,000 Sikh soldiers vs. 86,000 British soldiers) if not superior to the British force. Its soldiers had the will and determination to fight or die, but not its commanders. There was no unity among them, and each of them seemed to act as he thought best. Drift was the policy deliberately adopted by them. On 18 December, the Sikhs came in touch with British army which arrived under Sir Hugh Gough, the commander-in-chief, from Ludhiana. A battle took place at Mudki, 32 km from Ferozpur.

Lal Singh, who headed the Sikh attack, deserted his army and fled the field when the Sikhs stood firm in their order, fighting in a resolute and determined manner. The leaderless Sikhs fought a grim hand-to-hand battle against the more numerous enemy led by the most experienced commanders in the world. The battle continued with unabated fury till midnight (and came thereafter to be known as "Midnight Mudki"). The Sikhs retired with a loss of 17 guns while the British suffered heavy casualties amounting to 872 killed and wounded, including Quartermaster-General Sir Robert Sale, Sir John McCaskill and Brigadier Boulton. Reinforcements were sent for from Ambala, Meerut and Delhi. Lord Hardinge, unmindful of his superior position of governor-general, offered to become second-in-command to his commander-in-chief.

The second action was fought three days later, on 21 December at Ferozeshah, 16 km both from Mudki and Ferozpur. The governor-general and the commander-in-chief, assisted by reinforcements led by General Littler from Ferozpur, made an attack upon the Sikhs who were awaiting them behind strong entrenchments.

The British 16,700 men and 69 guns tried to overrun the Sikhs in one massive cavalry, infantry and artillery onslaught, but the assault was stubbornly resisted. Sikhs' batteries fired with rapidity and precision. There was confusion in the ranks of the English and their position became increasingly critical. The growing darkness of the frosty winter night reduced them to sore straits.

The battle of Ferozeshah is regarded as one of the most fiercely contested battles fought by the British in India. During that "night of horrors," the commander-in-chief acknowledged, "we were in a critical and perilous state." Counsels of retreat and surrender were raised and despair struck the British camp. In the words of General Sir Isaac Grant, Sir Henry Hardinge thought it was all up and gave his sword present from the Duke of Wellington and which once belonged to Napoleon and his Star of the Garter to his son, with directions to proceed to Ferozpur, remarking that "if the day were lost, he must fall."

Lal Singh and Tej Singh again came to the rescue of the English. The former suddenly deserted the Khalsa army during the night and the latter the next morning (22 December) which enabled the British to turn defeat into victory. The British loss was again heavy, 1,560 killed and 1,721 wounded. The number of casualties among officers was comparatively higher. The Sikhs lost about 2,000 men and 73 pieces of artillery.

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A temporary cessation of hostilities followed the battle of Ferozeshah. The English were not in a position to assume the offensive and waited for heavy guns and reinforcements to arrive from Delhi. Lal Singh and Tej Singh allowed them the much needed respite in as much as they kept the Sikhs from recrossing the Sutlej. To induce desertions, Lord Hardinge issued a proclamation on the Christmas day inviting all natives of Hindustan to quit the service of the Sikh State on pain of forfeiting their property and to claim protection from the British government. The deserters were also offered liberal rewards and pensions.

A Sikh sardar, Ranjodh Singh Majithia, crossed the Sutlej in force and was joined by Ajit Singh, of Ladva, from the other side of the river. They marched towards Ludhiana and burnt a portion of the cantonment. Sir Harry Smith (afterwards Governor of Cape Colony), who was sent to relieve Ludhiana, marched eastwards from Firozpur, keeping a few miles away from the Sutlej. Ranjodh Singh Majithia harried Smith's column and, when Smith tried to make a detour at Baddoval, attacked his rear with great vigour and captured his baggage train and stores (21 January). But Harry Smith retrieved his position a week later by inflicting a defeat on Ranjodh Singh Majithia and Ajit Singh, of Ladva, (28 January).

The last battle of the campaign took place on 10 February. To check the enemy advance on Lahore, a large portion of the Sikh army was entrenched in a horse-shoe curve on the Sutlej near the village of Sabhraon, under the command of Tej Singh while the cavalry battalions and the dreaded ghorcharas under Lal Singh were a little higher up the river. Entrenchments at Sabhraon were on the left bank of the Sutlej with a pontoon bridge connecting them with their base camp. Their big guns were placed behind high embankments and consequently immobilized for offensive action. The infantry was also posted behind earthworks and could not, therefore, be deployed to harass the opponents.

Early in February, the British received ample stores of ammunition from Delhi. Lal Singh had already passed on to the English officers the required clues for an effective assault. Gough and Hardinge now decided to make a frontal attack on Sabhraon and destroy the Darbar army at one blow. A heavy mist hung over the battlefield, enveloping both contending armies. As the sun broke through the mist, the Sikhs found themselves encircled between two horse-shoes: facing them were the British and behind them was the Sutlej, now in spate. After a preliminary artillery duel, British cavalry made a feint to check on the exact location of the Sikh guns. The cannonade was resumed, and in two hours British guns put the Darbar artillery out of action.

Then the British charged Sikh entrenchments from three sides. Tej Singh fled across the pontoon bridge as soon as the contest started and had it destroyed making reinforcement or return of Sikh soldiers impossible. Gulab Singh Dogra stopped sending supplies and rations from Lahore. Lal Singh's ghorcharas did not put in their appearance at Sabhraon. In the midst of these treacheries, a Sikh warrior, Sham Singh Attarivala, symbolizing the unflinching will of the Khalsa, vowed to fight unto the last and fall in battle rather than retire in defeat. He rallied the ranks depleted by desertions. His courage inspired the Sikhs to make a determined bid to save the day, but the odds were against them. Sham Singh fell fighting in the foremost ranks along with his dauntless comrades. The British casualties at Sabhraon were 2,403 killed; the Sikhs lost 3,125 men in the action and all their guns were either captured or abandoned in the river. Captain J.D. Cunningham, who was present as an additional aide-de-camp to the governor-general, describes the last scene of the battle vividly in his *A History of the Sikhs*: "...although assailed on either side by squadrons of horse and battalions of foot, no Sikh offered to submit, and no disciple of Guru Gobind Singh asked for quarter. They everywhere showed a front to the victors, and stalked slowly and sullenly away, while many rushed singly forth to meet assured death by contending with a multitude. The victors looked with stolid wonderment upon the indomitable courage of the vanquished."

Lord Hugh Gough, the British commander-in-chief, under whose leadership the two Anglo-Sikh wars were fought, described Sabhraon as the Waterloo of India. Paying tribute to the gallantry of the Sikhs, he said: "Policy precluded me publicly recording my sentiments on the splendid gallantry of our fallen foe, or to record the acts of heroism displayed, not only individually, but almost collectively, by the

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Sikh sardars and the army; and I declare were it not from a deep conviction that my country's good required the sacrifice, I could have wept to have witnessed the fearful slaughter of so devoted a body of men."

Lord Hardinge, who saw the action, wrote: " Few escaped; none, it may be said, surrendered. The Sikhs met their fate with the resignation which distinguishes their race.

Two days after their victory at Sabhraon, British forces crossed the Sutlej and occupied Kasur. The Lahore Darbar empowered Gulab Singh Dogra, who had earlier come down to Lahore with regiments of hillmen, to negotiate a treaty of peace. The wily Gulab Singh first obtained assurances from the army Parishes that they would agree to the terms he made and then tendered the submission of the darbar to Lord Hardinge. The governor-general, realizing that the Sikhs were far from vanquished, forbore from immediate occupation of the country. By the terms imposed by the victorious British through the peace treaty of 9 March, the Lahore Darbar was compelled to give up Jalandhar Doab, pay a war indemnity amounting to a million and a half sterling, reduce its army to 20,000 infantry and 12,000 cavalry, hand over all the guns used in the war and relinquish control of both banks of the Sutlej to the British.

A further condition was added two days later on 11 March: the posting of a British unit in Lahore till the end of the year on payment of expenses. The Darbar was unable to pay the full war indemnity and ceded in lieu thereof the hill territories between the Beas and the Indus. Kashmir was sold to Gulab Singh Dogra for 75 lakh rupees. A week later, on 16 March, another treaty was signed at Amritsar recognizing him as Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, affirming the suspicion that Gulab Singh Dogra indeed was involved in sedition against Khalsa Sarkar. Although Maharani Jind Kaur continued to act as the regent and Raja Lal Singh as water of the minor Maharaja Duleep Singh, effective power had passed into the hands of the British resident, Colonel Henry Lawrence. And thus end the First Anglo-Sikh war.

ANGLO-SIKH WAR II,

1848-49, which resulted in the abrogation of the Sikh kingdom of the Punjab, was virtually a campaign by the victors of the first Anglo-Sikh war (1845-46) and since then the de facto rulers of the State finally to overcome the resistance of some of the sardars who chafed at the defeat in the earlier war which, they believed, had been lost owing to the treachery on the part of the commanders at the top and not to any lack of fighting strength of the Sikh army. It marked also the fulfillment of the imperialist ambition of the new governor-general, Lord Dalhousie (1848-56), to carry forward the British flag up to the natural boundary of India on the northwest. According to the peace settlement of March 1846, at the end of Anglo-Sikh war I, the British force in Lahore was to be withdrawn at the end of the year, but a severer treaty was imposed on the Sikhs before the expiry of that date.

Sir Henry Hardinge, the then governor-general, had his Agent, Frederick Currie, persuade the Lahore Darbar to request the British for the continuance of the troops in Lahore. According to the treaty which was consequently signed at Bharoval on 16 December 1846, Henry Lawrence was appointed Resident with "full authority to direct and control all matters in every department of the State." A Council of Regency, consisting of the nominees of the Resident and headed by Tej Singh, was appointed. The power to make changes in its personnel vested in the Resident. Under another clause the British could maintain as many troops in the Punjab as they thought necessary for the preservation of peace and order. This treaty was to remain in operation until the minor Maharaja Duleep Singh attained the age of 16. By a proclamation issued in July 1847, the governor-general further enhanced the powers of the Resident.

On 23 October 1847, Sir Henry Hardinge wrote to Henry Lawrence: "In all our measures taken during the minority we must bear in mind that by the treaty of Lahore, March 1846, the Punjab never was intended to be an independent State. By the clause I added the chief of the State can neither make war or peace, or exchange or sell an acre of territory or admit a European officer, or refuse us a

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thoroughfare through his territories, or, in fact, perform any act without our permission. In fact the native Prince is in fetters, and under our protection and must do our bidding."

In the words of British historian John Clark Marshman, "an officer of the Company's artillery became, in fact, the successor to Ranjit Singh." The Sikhs resented this gradual liquidation of their authority in the Punjab. The new government at Lahore became totally unpopular. The abolition of tigers in the Jalandhar Doab and changes introduced in the system of land revenue and its collection angered the landed classes. Maharani Jind Kaur, who was described by Lord Dalhousie as the only woman in the Punjab with manly understanding and in whom the British Resident foresaw a rallying point for the well-wishers of the Sikh dynasty, was kept under close surveillance. Henry Lawrence laid down that she could not receive in audience more than five or six sardars in a month and that she remain in purdah like the ladies of the royal families of Nepal, Jodhpur and Jaipur.

In January 1848, Henry Lawrence took leave of absence and traveled back home with Lord Hardinge, who had completed his term in India. The former was replaced by Frederick Currie and the latter by the Earl of Dalhousie. The new regime confronted a rebellion in the Sikh province of Multan which it utilized as an excuse for the annexation of the Punjab. The British Resident at Lahore increased the levy payable by the Multan governor, Diwan Mul Raj, who, finding himself unable to comply, resigned his office. Frederick Currie appointed General Kahn Singh Man in his place and sent him to Multan along with two British officers P.A. Vans Agnew and William Anderson, to take charge from Mul Raj. The party arrived at Multan on 18 April 1848, and the Diwan vacated the Fort and made over the keys to the representatives of the Lahore Darbar. But his soldiers rebelled and the British officers were set upon in their camp and killed. This was the beginning of the Multan outbreak.

Some soldiers of the Lahore escort deserted their officers and joined Mul Raj's army. Currie received the news at Lahore on 21 April, but delayed action. Lord Dalhousie allowed the Multan rebellion to spread for five months. The interval was utilized by the British further to provoke Sikh opinion. The Resident did his best to fan the flames of rebellion. Maharani Jind Kaur, then under detention in the Fort of Sheikupura, was exiled from the Punjab. She was taken to Ferozpur and thence to Banaras, in the British dominions. Her annual allowance, which according to the treaty of Bharwal had been fixed at one and a half lakh of rupees, was reduced to twelve thousand. Her jewellery worth fifty thousand of rupees was forfeited; so was her cash amounting to a lakh and a half. The humiliating treatment of the Maharani caused deep resentment among the people of the Punjab. Even the Muslim ruler of Afghanistan, Amir Dost Muhammad, protested to the British, saying that such treatment is objectionable to all creeds."

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Herbert Edwardes, the Resident's Assistant at Bannu, having heard of the Multan revolt, began raising levies from among the Pathan mercenaries, and after summoning Van Cortlandt, the local Lahore commander, marched on Multan and called upon the rebels to submit. Although the British Resident approved of Edwardes' conduct, Lord Dalhousie was furious at the audacity of a "subaltern of ficer" to invest Multan without any authority and offer terms to Mul Raj. He was severely reprimanded and ordered not to extend his operations any further. However, Edwardes was not discouraged and ignoring these orders, he crossed the Indus on 14 June; four days later, he inflicted a crushing defeat on Mul Raj's forces at Kineri. Edwardes' action turned Sikh national sentiment in favor of Mul Raj and there was restiveness among the troops. British forces began to be moved towards the frontier. The Lahore garrison was reinforced; likewise more regiments reached Ambala and Ferozpur. By June 1848, an army had been assembled at the frontier—11,740 men in the Bari Doab, 9,430 in the Jalandhar Doab; in all 21,170 men ready to go into action against Multan to quell what was no more than a local rising. Meanwhile, Captain James Abbott, the Resident's assistant at Hazara, suspecting that Sardar Chatar Singh Atarivala, the governor of the province, had been hatching a conspiracy to lead a general Sikh uprising against the British, charged him with treason and cut off all communication with him and marched against him the Muslim peasantry and tribal mercenaries.

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Captain Nicholson who conducted an enquiry into Abbott's allegations, exonerated Chatar Singh of the charge of treason, but offered him terms which amounted to his virtual dismissal and the confiscation of his jagirs. Chatar Singh rejected these. Abbott's treatment of Chatar Singh, a chief of eminence and position since Ranjit Singh's time and whose daughter was betrothed to the young Maharaja Duleep Singh, was humiliating. Chatar Singh's son Raja Sher Singh, who had steadfastly fought on the side of Herbert Edwardes against Diwan Mul Raj, was greatly exercised, and he joined hands with the Diwan's force on 14 September 1848.

Raja Sher Singh made a passionate appeal to his countrymen warning them of the fate that awaited the Punjab and inviting them to join his standard in a final bid to preserve their freedom. Many old soldiers of the Khalsa army responded to the call and left their homes to rally round Diwan Mul Raj, Raja Sher Singh and Chatar Singh. Lord Dalhousie received the news of Sher Singh's action with unconcealed pleasure because it had brought matters to the crisis that he had for months been awaiting.

At a public banquet on 5 October 1848 at Barrackpore (Calcutta), he announced: "Unwarned by precedents, uninfluenced by example, the Sikh nation has called for war, and, on my words, Sirs, they shall have it with a vengeance....We are now not on the eve but in the midst of war with the Sikh nation and the kingdom of the Punjab....I have drawn the sword, and have thrown away the scabbard, both in relation to the war immediately before us, and to the stern policy which that war must precede and establish." The Resident at Lahore found this position legally indefensible and practically untenable. He and his staff were there to superintend and aid the administration of the Sikh State and to look after the interests of the ruler, Maharaja Duleep Singh, during the period of his minority. The Lahore Darbar and the Maharaja had supported the Resident in all his efforts to deal with the situation in Multan and Hazara.

Still the British armies were marched without an open declaration of war towards the Punjab. Lord Hugh Gough, the commander-in-chief, left his headquarters at Shimla towards the end of October and a huge army was assembled at Ferozpur in the beginning of November. The army consisted of four columns. Lord Gough personally commanded 22 infantry divisions (14,419 men), a cavalry division (3,369 horse) and an artillery division with 66 guns, including ten 18-pounder batteries and six 8-inch howitzers drawn by elephants. In addition, there were 6 troops of horse artillery and 3 light and 2 heavy field batteries. Its total strength amounted to 24,404 men (6,396 Europeans). At Lahore, General Wheeler's Occupation Force of 10,000 men held firmly the capital of the Sikhs. In front of the citadel of Multan was the 1st Infantry Division under Major General Whish. The arrival of the Bombay column under Brigadier-General Henry Dundas had augmented its strength to over 21,000 men of all arms. In addition 5,300 men of the Lahore infantry were under British control at Multan. This brought the total regular force at the disposal of Major General Whish at Multan to 26,300 men. Besides, there were irregular Muslim levies and mercenaries raised by the British to fight the Sikhs.

Taken in all these and other troops at Hazara, Peshawar, Bannu, Gobindgarh, Jalandhar and Hoshiarpur added up to the total of 1,04,666 men 61,366 of regular British army, 5,300 of the Lahore army and 38,000 irregular troops; 13,524 cavalry, 123 field and 22 heavy guns, all deployed at various points in the Punjab. The numerical strength of the Sikhs was comparatively much smaller. Lord Cough's dispatches enumerate the Sikh force at Ramnagar and Chillianvala between 30,000 and 40,000 men and at Gujrat 60,000 men and 60 guns, which figures are highly exaggerated by at least Six times the real Sikh forces. The powerful Khalsa army of Ranjit Singh was broken up after its capitulation at Sabhraon in 1849. Its soldiers had been disbanded by the British, its generals discharged or won over, and its jagirdan force reduced to starvation. A skeleton army of 25 battalions (20,000 men) and 12,000 horse permitted to the State under the treaty of March 1846 was a shadow force under British control and dispersed to far-flung districts for garrison duty- Lahore had a garrison strength of 6,500 men, Peshawar of 3,000 men, Gobindgarh Fort 2,000 men, Hazara 3,000 men, Banner and Tonk 1,300 men, Attock 700 men, and Kohat 500 men. The remaining 3,000 men of the entire force were at numerous small posts throughout the Punjab.

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The contingents of the Lahore army which joined the rebels were those of I Sahara Peshawar, Tonk and Bannu, Kohat, and Attock 9,400 men, inclusive of the force of Shem Singh at Multan (900 infantry and 3,400 horse) . Allowing that 3,000 men stationed at various isolated places throughout the Punjab could get through and join the rebels in the north, the regular Sikh force could scarcely have exceeded 13,000 men and 9,000 horse. Disbanded Sikh soldiers and the freelance who flocked round the banner did not exceed 10,000 men. The disbanded soldiery merely augmented the numerical strength of the Khalsa; it had few generals and fewer arms and no means of procurement of arms and supplies.

The total strength thus could not have been more than 23,000 men and 12,000 horse. Lord Gough crossed the Sutlej on 9 November and reached Lahore on 13 November. Moving rapidly into the Rachna Doab, he arrived at Ramnagar on 22 November. Sher Singh's entire force was on the right bank of the River Chenab. Brigadier-General Campbell with the 3rd Infantry Division (8,171 men) was ordered to move out to disperse the Sikh force in the vicinity of Ramnagar; Brigadier-General Cureton in command of the cavalry accompanied Campbell's force. On arrival at Ramnagar, Campbell found the Sikh force on the opposite side of the river. Cureton had numerous cavalry but no guns; he ordered the horse artillery under Colonel Lane to overtake the withdrawing Sikh troops through the sandy riverbed, but met with disaster.

The Sikh artillery on the opposite bank opened up with disastrous effect, and Lane hastily withdrew the horse artillery leaving behind a heavy gun and two ammunition wagons, which the Sikhs captured. Suddenly, a column of the Sikh cavalry crossed the river under cover of artillery. The commander of the 14th Light Dragoons who led a squadron in support of Lane's horse artillery was shot dead. The charge failed and the British lost 90 officers and men including Brigadier-General Cureton and Lieutenant-Colonel Havelock, and 140 horse. The action at Ramnagar was a victory for the Sikhs. Lord Dalhousie blamed both Campbell and Gough for the Assad affair" from which at here was no objective to be gained." Gough, on the other hand, claimed it as a victory. The enemy," he announced in a General Order, was signally overthrown on every occasion, and only saved from utter annihilation by their flight to the cover of their guns on the opposite bank."

For about a week after the British reverse, the two armies faced each other across the river. Lord Cough waited impatiently for the heavy guns o arrive. On 30 November, he detached a force under Major-General Thackwell across the river to take the Sikh army in the flank; another brigade of infantry under Brigadier Godby was ordered to ford the river 10 km from Ramnagar to support Thackwell's force. Across the river, at the principal ford 3 km from Ramnagar, Sher Singh's entire force, now risen to 12,000 men and 28 guns, lay strongly entrenched. Thackwell's force moved about 30 km up the river to Wazirabad and made the crossing, while Godby's brigade had crossed the river 25 km below. At midday on 3 December Thackwell arrived at Sadullapur barely 6 km from the Sikh encampment. The Sikhs realized the imminent danger to their flanks and rear. The heavy Sikh artillery opened fire at Thackwell's position, while the Sikh cavalry barred the passage of Godby's force which failed to join up with his troops. At dusk, the entire Sikh army crossed over to the left bank of the river. Sher Singh's action nullified the British maneuver; it also made it possible for Chatar Singh's force to join him.

The British General claimed a victory without a battle. He reported a meagre loss of 4 men at Sadullapur, and claimed that the army under his command had upheld the tradition of valor. The Sikhs, he reported, were in full retreat, leaving behind some 60 boats which had been captured. In British military and political circles in England, Lord Gough was severely castigated for lack of drive and initiative. Lord Dalhousie openly charged him with incompetency and blamed him for incomplete actions and enormous losses. Under the shadow of these adverse strictures, Lord Gough fought the battle of Chillianwala on 13 January 1849.

The Sikh army 12,000 strong was drawn in battle array in the dense jungle in front, their heavy guns bearing upon Chillianwala, on the River Jehlum. British preparations for encampment were rudely interrupted by sharp Sikh artillery fire. Lord Cough hesitated, but instantly drew up the order of the

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battle. In the centre were placed heavy 18-pounders and 8-inch howitzers; Major-General Gilbert's 2nd Infantry Division (5,248 men) was placed on the right, flanked by Brigadier Pope's 2nd Cavalry Brigade and 14th Light Dragoons and horse artillery. To the left was Brigadier-General Campbell's 3rd Infantry Division (8,171 men) flanked by White's 1st Cavalry Brigade and 3 troops of horse artillery.

The British guns started firing upon the Sikh centre. The density of the jungle made it impossible to preserve order and formation and the British brigades and regiments got separated from one another. The ground proved unsuitable for cavalry action, and the artillery failed to provide cover. Sikhs fought with determination and their artillery took a heavy toll. The British infantrymen were mowed down by fire from Sikh musketry, and the successive onslaughts of the Sikh ghorcharas broke the British cavalry line. While Campbell's charge failed to dislodge the Sikhs, the Khalsa horsemen swept the field like lightning raising vociferous Khalsa war cries.

In another direction, Brigadier Pennycuik's brigade moving in double time into the jungle, was routed by Sikh artillery. The brigade turned back to flee from the destructive fire of shot and shell leaving behind nearly half a regiment which faced total destruction. The most serious disaster befell Gilbert's division which halted in utter bewilderment when a large body of Sikhs surrounded the 2nd Infantry brigade. Gilbert's brigade had neither the cover of guns nor the support of cavalry. In the hand to hand fight, the brigade was repulsed and driven back with heavy loss. The battle lasted over three hours when Lord Gough ordered the whole army to retreat.

British casualties in the action amounted to 2,446 men and 132 officers killed with four guns lost. The British Commander-in-chief claimed a victory, which claim the governor-general scornfully dubbed as "perhaps poetical." "We have gained a victory," he observed ruefully, "like that of the ancients; it is such a one that 'another such would ruin us.'" There was an outburst of popular indignation in England and Gough was squarely blamed for the defeat of the British. Military experts at home described him as a Superannuated general who could not mount his horse without assistance." It was decided to retire Lord Gough and replace him by Sir Charles Napier. In the meantime, however, Multan fell and Diwan Mul Raj surrendered to Major-General Whish on 22 January 1849. Lord Gough repaired his reputation in the battle of Gujrat fought on 21 February 1849. The Sikh army had regrouped on the banks of the Jehlum. On 15 February, it arrived at Gujrat where Chatar Singh's force and an Afghan contingent of 3,000 horse under Akram Khan encircled the town. On 13 February, Major-General Whish's 1st Division (13,400 men and 30 pieces of heavy artillery) joined the British force. The Bombay column (12,100 men and 3,000 cavalry) joined a few days later. Thus assured of an overwhelming superiority of men and heavy artillery, Lord Gough ordered the entire force forward and reaching a few days later Shadival, a village 8 km from Gujrat, he found himself face to face with the Sikhs.

The battle of Gujrat must be reckoned as one of the most notable in the annals of British warfare in India. Never, perhaps, the British had amassed so many guns and men in any single battle. The British army now consisted of 56,636 men four infantry divisions, 11,569 horse, 96 field-guns, and 67 siege-guns including ten 18-pounders and six 8-inch howitzers drawn by elephants. For this obvious reason the battle of Gujrat has often been described as "the battle of guns.

On the morning of 21 February, the whole British army advanced with the precision of a parade movement. The Sikh guns opened fire, thus disclosing their positions and range. The British General brought the three divisions to a sudden halt and ordered the whole line of artillery to fire. The sustained cannonade of 100 guns, the fire of 18-pounders and 8-inch howitzers, which continued for two hours blunted Sikh artillery. When the British guns had spent up their fury, their infantry line advanced rapidly.

The Sikh infantry positions were Captured, and the Sikhs driven out of cover. The battle was over within a few hours. The advance of the whole British line completely overwhelmed the Sikhs and they fled the field in confusion. Their loss was estimated between 3,000 and 5,000 men and 53 guns the

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British casualties were 96 killed and 700 wounded. "The Sikhs," commented Lord Dalhousie, "displayed the skill, courage and activity which belong to their race. " With the decisive British victory at Gujrat the hostilities ended on 11 March 1849. Sher Singh and Chatar Singh formally surrendered their swords to Major-General Gilbert near Rawalpindi. They were followed on the 14th by the whole Sikh army. "Today is Ranjit Singh dead," sighed the soldiers as they kissed their swords and laid them down on the ever-enlarging heap of steel. Lord Dalhousie proclaimed annexation of the Punjab on 29 March 1849. His foreign secretary, Henry Meirs Elliot, arrived at Lahore to obtain the signatures of the members of the Council of Regency and of the minor king, Maharaja Duleep Singh. A darbar was held in the Lahore Fort and, with the British troops lined up on his right and his helpless sardars on his left, the young Duleep Singh affixed his signatures to the document which deprived him of his crown and kingdom.