The Divine Light of Anarchy:
A Socio-Political Analysis of Conflicting Sikh Historical Narratives

Santbir Singh Pannu
"Sarkar-Daman"

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

Graduate Program in Sociology
York University
Toronto, Ontario

September 2021

Abstract

Utilizing a hermeneutical narrative analysis, this thesis is the study of two texts. The analysis, or exegesis as I label it, is focused on exploring whether there are anarchist principles inherent in the texts in question. The first text is Rattan Siṅgh Bhangū's *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh*, an early 19th century poetic, epic, narrative history of the Sikhs. I explore Bhangū's conception of Sikh political legitimacy, the sovereignty of the K̲h̲ālsā and the self-governance models and principles that 18th century Sikhs utilized. The second text is a series of essays by 19th century German philologist Ernest Trumpp who was commissioned by the East India Company to write a translation of the Sikh scripture. Trumpp's history of the Gurūs is centred on the idea that they did not have a unique or divinely inspired message, rather their teachings were generally incoherent and that the message of the earliest Gurū was corrupted by later Gurūs. Studying these texts in juxtaposition offers us insights into the difference between pre-colonial and colonial conceptions of Sikhī.

My main assertion is the existence of what I label Anarcha-Sikhī. I discern that this form of anarchism is inherent within Sikh principles and practices and are directly inspired by Sikh scriptures. This form of anarchism is unique in several important ways; including the Sikh conception of monarchy, the warrior tradition in Sikhī and Sikh governance models. Anarchist texts, especially works by anarchist sociologists, are utilized throughout the thesis to ground this work in the larger discussion of anarchism.

Keywords: Anarchism, Sikh, Sikhism, Sikhi, Sikh history, Sikh identity, Khalsa Panth, Sarbat Khalsa, Narrative Analysis, Exegesis, Anarchist exegesis, Panth Prakash, Bhangu, Trumpp, Sovereignty, Political Legitimacy, Governance Model, Consensus

ੴ

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫਤਹ

ਜਿਤਨੇ ਸਾਹ ਪਾਤਿਸਾਹ ਉਮਰਾਵ ਸਿਕਦਾਰ ਚਉਧਰੀ ਸਭਿ ਮਿਥਿਆ ਝੂਠੁ ਭਾਉ ਦੂਜਾ ਜਾਨੁ ॥
ਹਰਿ ਅਬਿਨਾਸੀ ਸਦਾ ਥਿਰੁ ਨਿਹਚਲੁ ਤਿਸੁ ਮੇਰੇ ਮਨ ਭਜੁ ਪਰਵਾਨੁ ॥੧॥
ਅੰਗ ੮੬੧

ਹੋਇ ਇਕਤ੍ਰ ਮਿਲਹੁ ਮੇਰੇ ਭਾਈ ਦੁਬਿਧਾ ਦੂਰਿ ਕਰਹੁ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਇ ॥
ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੈ ਕੇ ਹੋਵਹੁ ਜੋੜੀ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਬੈਸਹੁ ਸਫਾ ਵਿਛਾਇ ॥੧॥
ਅੰਗ ੧੧੮੫

Dedicated to those Sikhs, full of love for their Panth, who gave everything to maintain the sovereignty of the Guru's Timeless Throne.

Acknowledgements

First to the Gurū, both Gurū Granth Sāhib and Gurū K̲h̲ālsā Panth. Without you there is nothing. Thank you to my wonderful and supportive wife, Dr. Jaspreet Kaur, without whom this thesis would not exist. Thank you to my sister, avneet, your hardwork and keen eye have been absolutely essential in producing this work. Thank you to my wonderful children Dayala Singh and Uqaal Kaur for their love. Thank you to my parents for their continuing love and support and for their last-minute assistance with translations of all kinds. Immense gratitude to my supervisors, Professor Michael Nijhawan and Professor Katherine Bischoping. Without your guidance, helpful critiques, and advice I could not have completed this continuously growing project. Also, of course, thank you to Loopy, for being Loopy.

Table of Contents

Transcription Guide

Note: Quotes from sources are presented as they appear, with or without diacritic marks.
The Punjābī plural is generally used when referring to the plural of Sikh terms.

Punjabi Phonemes	Roman Script Equivalent		Punjabi Phonemes	Roman Script Equivalent
ਅ	a		ਚ	ch
ਆ	ā		ਛ	chh
ਇ	i		ਜ	j
ਈ	ī		ਝ	jh
ਉ	u		ਞ	ñ
ਊ	ū		ਟ	ṭ
ਏ	e		ਠ	ṭh
ਐ	ai		ਡ	ḍ
ਓ	o		ਢ	ḍh
ਔ	au		ਣ	ṇ
ਸ	s		ਤ	t
ਹ	h		ਥ	th
ਕ	k		ਦ	d
ਖ	kh		ਧ	dh
ਗ	g		ਨ	n
ਘ	gh		ਪ	p
ਙ	ṅ		ਫ	ph

ਬ	b			
ਭ	bh			
ਮ	m			
ਯ	y			
ਰ	r			
ਲ	l			
ਵ	v			
ੜ	ṛ			
ਸ਼	sh			
ਖ਼	k̲h̲			
ਗ਼	g̲h̲			
ਜ਼	z			
ਫ਼	f			

adapted from Singh, H., 1995, vol.1 pp. xv-xvi

The Timeless Throne: The Akāl Takht Sāhib *(photo by author)*

Guru Gobind Singh decentralised and delegated his powers to the Khalsa,
And put them in positions of responsibility in every sphere of activity.
He sent his appointed emissaries to the South, the East and the North,
As well as his representatives to the West and the mid-west.
(Rattan Siṅgh Bhangū, *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh*, 2006, Vol. 1 p. 89)[1]

Chapter 1: Introduction

My grandfather, Avtār Siṅgh Sidhā-Jat (1900-1981), was a *kavīshrī* artist, who wrote songs and poems against the state, something akin to a protesting folk singer. He began his activist poetry career in the 1920's and continued into the 1960's, making him a part of most of the major Sikh protest struggles of the 20th century. He spoke out against both the British colonial state and the Indian neo-colonial state, while taking part in the Gurdwāra Reform Movement, the Independence Movement and the Punjābī Subā Movement. I consider my work to be inspired by his legacy. Whilst he used traditional folk Sikh literary forms to push for social and political change, I will be seeking, through scholarship, to challenge colonial and neo-colonial power structures. In this thesis, I will be doing this through the analysis of two texts, which will form the central focus of this work. I will first elucidate, partly using traditional Sikh methodology, a popular Sikh historical text, in order to begin to uncover a Sikh anarchist socio-political perspective, what I term *Anarcha-Sikhī*. I see in Sikh history and traditions, radical ideas about governance, decision-making and social organization that echo anarchist principles. It is my supposition that the analysis of this historical text will demonstrate some of these anarchist principles. In the process of studying this first text, ideas about political legitimacy, sovereignty and governance models will be explored. After looking at the Sikh text, I will then turn to a colonial text in order to compare the colonial perspective of Sikh socio-political ideology as

[1] Key terms, events and figures are explained in more depth in the attached glossary.

described by a 19th century European scholar with the traditional Sikh perspective. While this will not be a thorough examination of the myriad ways that colonialism impacted Sikhī, it will give a grounding to the larger project I am engaged in which is creating a Sikh sociological perspective rooted in anarchist principles. I will explore how the colonial conception of Sikh history had unintended consequences. I will then use this Sikh anarchist perspective in future works in order to understand historic and contemporary Sikh political movements while also offering a Sikh perspective on social issues. To put it simply, this thesis is interested in uncovering anarchist Sikh principles through the study of competing texts, one that is pre-colonial and one that is colonial.

In this introduction I consider my own background and positionality in order to root the work I am engaged in. I describe the socio-political history of the Sikhs in the 18th century before the invasion of Britain into Punjāb in the mid-19th century, in order to give a background to the analysis of the texts in later chapters, allowing those unfamiliar with the cultural and social context of the time a foundation to understand the later exegeses. This will be a brief exploration of the institution known as the K̲h̲ālsā, which in simple terms refers to initiated Sikhs. Next I turn to a brief discussion of the relationship between sociology and anarchy, before moving on to looking at anarchism and Sikhī.

A Sikh discovering Anarchy, an Anarchist discovering Sikhī

As a young man, like many in their youth I became interested in radical politics. In looking at critiques of communism I first learned about and became interested in anarchism. The anti-statist, anti-authoritarian and egalitarian nature of anarchism appealed to me. Anarchism offered the potential for a world built upon interdependent relationships, but without the

exploitation, discrimination and corruption that marked interactions in capitalist societies. The lack of hierarchy was especially appealing to me.

These principles of anarchism immediately made sense to me and animated my heart and mind. Around the same time, I was, if not questioning my faith, at least wanting to explore it more deeply. I didn't want to just be a Sikh because my parents raised me as one, I wanted to make Sikhī my own—to make it personally meaningful. As I explored Sikhī, I began to see the beauty of Gurū Nanāk Sāhib's path, and the connections between anarchism and Sikhī became apparent.

That was more than twenty years ago. Over the last two decades, as I involve myself in community organizing and education, the parallels between Sikhī and anarchism have become more palpable. Sikhī does not perfectly fulfill the tenets of traditional anarchist schools of thought. Even if one ignores the atheism of said traditions—since the Sikh idea of divinity cannot be conflated with traditional European theism, this is not a perfect match. And that is how it should be. Traditional anarchism was created by white Europeans living and existing in a world of rampant colonialism. While they were progressive by the standards of their context, inevitable differences in theories and perspectives exist.

I enter this project as a settler, a colonizer in my own right. I was born on unceded Sto:lo territory and live and have written this thesis on Wendat, Anishinabek, Haudenosaunee, Mississauga, Hiawatha, Alderville and Métis Territory which is part of the Williams Treaties land. I am a cisgender male with access to clean water, I have food security, and access to post-secondary and graduate education. I was raised in an upper-middle class family. Though my body and life hold their own trauma, I have had an incredibly privileged life. As Mucina (2019) writes in her essay on practicing Sikhī on Indigenous land, Sikhs have an obligation to

understand the impacts of colonialism, our historical role in colonization and our ongoing role as settlers. We must work towards being true allies with Indigenous folks.

Decolonization is not a quick or simple process, it is a lifelong breathing commitment that takes more than a land acknowledgment and a statement of positionality to undo and heal. I come from a history of anti-colonial activism, where the line between colonizer and colonized was clear and simple. What does decolonization mean today in the North American and modern Punjāb context? In Punjāb, where the vast majority of Sikhs reside, there have been, in recent decades, movements to assert sovereignty against neo-colonial regimes. Are protest movements and armed struggles against the Indian state an example of decolonization? In North America, settler colonialism and the role that all of us who are not Indigenous play in its maintenance must be first acknowledged and then struggled against. I grew up with a narrative of parents who immigrated to Canada in the early 1970's, and strived against discrimination and xenophobia to build a successful life for their family. This immigrant narrative, though, erases the theft of Indigenous land and the ongoing genocide, cultural or otherwise, of Indigenous peoples, that allowed for my parents' success.

Indigenous scholar Glen Coulthard describes how even well-meaning, progressive activism can replicate and reinforce settler-colonialism, and how this can be countered,

> By shifting our analytical frame to the colonial relation we might occupy a better angle from which to both anticipate and interrogate practices of settler-state dispossession justified under otherwise egalitarian principles and espoused with so-called 'progressive' political agendas in mind. (2014, p. 12)

Scholars such as Adam Gary Lewis and Richard Day have tried to unpack how anarchist activism can operate on Indigenous land and how decolonization can be practiced in a coherent and relevant manner. As Lewis writes, "there can be no resistance on stolen land without resistance to settler colonialism" (2017, p. 478). This work, and the work of Indigenous scholars

like Coulthard, Leanne Simpson and Taiaiake Alfred demonstrate how anarchist activism can operate through decolonization. As I continue future research I seek to explore the relation between this work and Anarcha-Sikhī more deeply. This thesis is in part an attempt to uncover what a pre-colonial Sikhī might have looked like. There have been moves by some scholars to decolonize Sikhī (Sian & Dhamoon, 2020). I endeavor to continue this work by looking at how Sikhī can engage in decolonization.

The Dawn of the K̲h̲ālsā: A Short Background on 18th Century Sikhī

The K̲h̲ālsā was revealed by Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib (the tenth and last human Gurū) on the harvest festival of Vaisākhī in 1699, in the North Eastern Punjābī town of Anandpur Sāhib. It was an oversimplification when I earlier wrote that the K̲h̲ālsā can be said to be the body of initiated Sikhs, those who have pledged their lives to the Gurū. The ceremony in which the K̲h̲ālsā was revealed is rich in symbolism and meaning and the events of Vaisākhī 1699 are much more profound than Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib simply creating a new category of Sikhs.

The K̲h̲ālsā ceremony echoes the Gurū-initiation ceremony that the previous nine Gurūs underwent upon becoming Gurū, and also echoes Gurū Nānak Sāhib's (the first Gurū and founder of Sikhī) mystic experience in the dark cold waters of the *Kalī Vain* (Black Canal) of the town of Sultānpur Lodhī, as described in Sikh tradition. Without entering into a deep discussion on the subject, suffice it to say that the revelation of the K̲h̲ālsā can better be understood as the coronation of the K̲h̲ālsā, what Sikhs would call the *Gurgaddī* of the K̲h̲ālsā. This enthronement of the K̲h̲ālsā represented the fulfillment of Gurū Nānak Sāhib's vision, which according to traditional Sikh understanding, was to uplift the Sikhs to ultimately the status of Gurū. To dramatically demonstrate the new power and prestige of the K̲h̲ālsā, after initiating the first five

Sikhs—the *Pañj Piārai* (Beloved Five), Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib bowed down before the *Pañj Piārai* and begged them for the gift of the *Khaṇḍai Batai kī Pāhaul* (perfection through the double-edged sword and bowl) also called *Amrit* (ambrosia/nectar). He then became the *Gur-Chaila,* meaning he was both Sikh and Gurū. The K̲h̲ālsā Panth (path/nation) was his Gurū and he was their Sikh. The K̲h̲ālsā can thus be understood as the radical empowerment of the people by the Gurū, the transformation of a people into the ultimate place of leadership within the community.

Upon Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib's *jotī-jot* (physical death of the Gurū), nine years later in October of 1708, the K̲h̲ālsā and the Sikh community at large was left without the Gurū's direction and leadership. The K̲h̲ālsā rose to the occasion. Over several decades, almost continuously, the K̲h̲ālsā engaged in warfare against Mughal and Afghan forces in a bid to rule Punjāb. These were difficult years, with periodic genocidal campaigns being launched against the Sikhs. The fierce massacres the Sikhs underwent during this time are still commemorated. By the seventh decade of the 18th century, K̲h̲ālsā Sikhs had largely freed Punjāb and Punjāb would know peace until British colonialism in 1845.

Early and mid-18th century Punjāb had been a tumultuous, chaotic, violent and unstable time. There were competing powers, changing alliances, varying tactics and shifting political structures. The K̲h̲ālsā had been just one group among many in this milieu. Though there were other Sikhs who had not become K̲h̲ālsā, they remained as allies assisting the K̲h̲ālsā in difficult times, these included *Nānakpanthīs*, *Sevapanthīai*, *Udasīs* and *Nirmala*. There were various Muslim and Hindu groups in Punjāb at the time, some of whom allied themselves with the Mughals and Afghans, such as the *Ranghar Rajputs* and *Bhattīs*, and others who did not (Dhavan, 2011, p. 48). The text I explore in this thesis, *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh,* is centred on the

Ḵẖālsā of the early and mid-18th century. Through my analysis, we will see the unique political and governance structures that the Ḵẖālsā developed, which I believe may have contributed to the success of the Ḵẖālsā. These social and political structures are the very basis of what I understand to be Sikh anarchism.

Anarchist Sociology

Anarchism is a political ideology that is "opposed to all forms of hierarchy, including the state, capitalism, religious institutions, patriarchy, and racism" (Dupuis-Dairi, 2011, pp. 72-72). However, anarchism is not purely a negation but also "a positive political project of justice, liberty, equality, and solidarity" (Dupuis-Dairi, 2011). Traditionally, anarchists have considered the state to be the primary enemy "because every state protects the privileges of the powerful" (Ward, 2004, p. 2). David Graeber starts his 2004 manifesto on anarchist anthropology by asking,

> Since there are very good reasons why an anarchist anthropology really ought to exist, we might start by asking why one doesn't—or, for that matter, why an anarchist sociology doesn't exist, or an anarchist economics, anarchist literary theory, or anarchist political science? (p.1)

Graeber here is stating that the social sciences and anarchism would objectively seem to be a good fit and it is noteworthy that there are no established schools of anarchism within these fields. As Jonathon Purkis writes, one reason for this situation may be that,

> Anarchism has never achieved more than a toehold in the academic sphere and its intellectual depth has constantly been called into question, mainly because… its concepts of history and society are seen to be too fluid and less sophisticated. (2004, p. 41)

Shantz and Williams, in their *Anarchy and Society: Reflections on Anarchist Sociology* (2013), provide a convincing response to Graeber. For Shantz and Williams, this is a "long anticipated marriage" which they go about delineating. For an anarchist sociology to develop, first of all,

sociologists need to stop conflating state and society (2013, p. 2). The idea that the state means social order "has made it very difficult for non-statist visions of social order to be heard" (Shantz & Williams, 2013, p.2). For anarchists, on the other hand, society and state are oppositional forces. The state simply represents "the formalized rule of dominant minorities over subordinate majorities," and removing the state would not equal chaos or a breakdown in social order.

As Shantz and Williams write, once sociologists are able to move past this initial barrier in understanding anarchism, anarchist sociology can develop. Anarchist sociology could be a subject, a subfield, a caucus of scholars, an ideology, or a theoretical perspective (Shantz & Williams, 2013, pp. 4-5). This is to say that anarchist sociology would not be a single faceted entity, but could mean many different things to different people, befitting the open and inclusive nature of anarchism. Anarchists could use sociology to study society in order to understand social inequality, and sociologists could use anarchy in order to cultivate scholarship that is activist oriented with the goal of changing society. This goal of changing society is, for anarchists, a project to set up a society free of hierarchy and authority, grounded in egalitarian ideals.

"Sociology is organized for the purpose of studying society, while anarchism is organized to radically transform society. As such, anarchist-sociology is the action-oriented study and theoretically-informed transformation of societies." (Shantz & Williams, 2013, p 9). It is this definition that speaks to the work at hand. This is a sociological analysis of the K̲h̲ālsā in the 18th century, using two historical texts, which examines specific social and political processes and how they are conceptualized in order to create "action oriented" scholarship.

Anarchy of Sikhī

"The word 'anarchy' comes from the Greek *anarkhia*, meaning contrary to authority or without a ruler" (Ward, 2004, p. 1) whereas the word *K̲h̲ālsā* means, that which belongs directly to the ruler. How these seemingly opposite concepts can work together is at the heart of what I label Anarcha-Sikhī[2]. What is Anarcha-Sikhī? Aside from one article that discusses the anarchist tendencies of the anti-colonialist Ghadar Party of the early 20th century (Oberoi, 2009), there is no extant work on the anarchist principles or potential tendencies of Sikhī. While rejecting the Judeo-Christian reframing of Sikhī as a deism (Mandair, 2009, pp. 179-190), Anarcha-Sikhī would fall within the field of religious anarchism. Though anarchism and religion have often been at odds, religious anarchists insist that their religious traditions actually speak to anarchist principles because they too call for

> A rejection of the state, call for an economy of mutual aid, present a denunciation of oppressive authorities that often includes religious institutions, and embody a quest for a more just society – despite, and indeed sometimes paradoxically because of, the acceptance of a god as 'master'. (Christoyannopoulos & Adams, 2017, p. 1-2)

There is evidence that such a spirit existed within early Sikh communities, with members refusing to acknowledge any earthly leader besides the Divine Gurū (Madra & Singh, 2004, p. 148). Traditional Sikh scholars state that this belief in a Divine "master" and not an earthly one, gave these early Sikhs freedom from oppressive states and empires and allowed for the creation of alternate socio-political structures (Singh, J., 2006, pp. 91-92).

At its core, "anarchism can be described first and foremost as a visceral revolt", as the French anarchist Daniel Guérin writes (1970, p. 22). This is a revolt against hierarchy and

[2] As the word Sikhī is feminine in the Punjābi language, I feel it appropriate to use the female prefix 'anarcha' instead of the male 'anarcho'.

against those in positions of authority. This conforms nicely with the old Sikh ethos of "*Baghī ja Badshāh*", meaning the only two modes of being a Sikh is to either be sovereign or to be a rebel fighting for sovereignty. Anarchism's primary revolt is with the state. As the German anarchist philosopher Max Stirner wrote, "We two are enemies, the State and I" and "Every State is a tyranny, be it the tyranny of a single man or a group" (1907). It is my contention that in the early 18th century, the Khalsa set up a society based around what could be called anarchist principles that was in opposition to a state structure. This will be explored in more depth through the anarchist exegesis of the first text in question.

Anarcha-Sikhī's most compelling difference from more traditional schools of anarchism is in its relationship towards royalty. It is not an exaggeration to say that all anarchists reject monarchism as antithetical to the principles of an egalitarian society. Anarcha-Sikhī too would reject the idea of a small, elite, privileged group based on bloodline. What Anarcha-Sikhī does, however, is recontextualize the very conception of royalty. Royalty is not exclusive in the Ḵẖālsā community, instead, it is a right that all members of the Panth enjoy.

From the traditional Sikh perspective, the Gurū is the only valid monarch, the *Sachai-Patshāh*—the true emperor. They are royal and paramount in all realms, both socio-political and spiritual. This is the principle of *Mīrī-Pīrī,* or dual sovereignty, as demonstrated by the Sixth Nānak, Gurū Hargobind Sāhib and all Gurūs after him, and according to traditional Sikh thought is believed to have been an aspect of the Sikh Gurūship since the time of Gurū Nānak Sāhib. The Gurūs were royal sovereigns, but they were not a royalty based on primogeniture; instead, the next Gurū was chosen based on merit. They also chose their successor before their death, so the Gurūs were royalty but behaved in a way that traditional royalty would not have. At this stage of

its development, Sikhī was not anarchist in structure as authority was vested almost exclusively within the Gurū.

When the K̲h̲ālsā was revealed in 1699 it was made Gurū—the Gurū K̲h̲ālsā Panth. It is understood by Sikhs that at that moment, the authority and responsibilities of the Gurū were transferred to the Sikh community, to the K̲h̲ālsā. The royalty that was once infused in a singular person—the Gurū, was now diffused throughout the K̲h̲ālsā. The paraphernalia associated with the revelation of the K̲h̲ālsā, such as the sword and the turban, are marks of South Asian sovereignty. Even the new names given to Sikhs who joined the K̲h̲ālsā—*Kaur* for women and *Siṅgh* for men, were based on Rājput royal titles. When one joins the K̲h̲ālsā, even today, one is told that they are joining the House of Nānak and that Gurū Gobind Siṅg̲h Sāhib and Mātā Sāhib Devān Kaur (a Sikh who was given the title of mother of the K̲h̲ālsā) are their father and mother. Essentially the Sikhs who become K̲h̲ālsā are metaphorically reborn into the royal house of the Gurū.

Through the textual analysis that this thesis undertakes, certain principles of what I term Anarcha-Sikhī will come into focus. In Anarcha-Sikhī, instead of monarchism being rejected, it is embraced and democratized. The people as a whole are made royal, all of them princesses and princes of the Gurū[3]. This individual and communal sense of royalty manifested itself in everything from the speech of the K̲h̲ālsā (K̲h̲ālsā *bol-balai*, is a unique form of slang where ordinary objects are imbued with terms of wealth and royalty, and objects of wealth are denigrated as useless) to the fact that the K̲h̲ālsā of the mid-18th century refused to acknowledge any earthly ruler and fought desperately, even when suffering terrible odds, to maintain their political independence. Monarchism goes from (generally) being a tool of tyranny to, in the

[3] As of yet there are no gender neutral terms for K̲h̲ālsā members, only Kaur and Siṅgh.

Anarcha-Sikhī reformulation, becoming a shared means of liberation and independence. Yet this relationship with monarchism was not a simple one for successive generations of Sikhs to navigate. What became a revolutionary and democratic institution in the early 18th century, had drastically shifted back to a traditional power structure by the late 18th century, with Raṇjīt Siṅgh as emperor in an absolute monarchy. There is an inherent tension in the Sikh relationship to monarchism through these decades, a tension that is still present within modern Sikhi, where the radical ideas of K̲h̲ālsā monarchism are lauded at the same time as Raṇjīt Siṅgh is celebrated as the Emperor of Punjāb. The Sikh conception of an expansive and inclusive monarchy will be discussed further towards the end of Chapter 4.

The main form of anarchist self-organization and self-governance that I see in the historical K̲h̲ālsā, which will be further explored in Chapter 5, is the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā. The Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā is a consensus based, legislative decision-making body that guided the K̲h̲ālsā Panth in the mid to late 18th century, and has reappeared at times in more recent Sikh history, usually after incidents of severe trauma. The Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā was a system whereby all members of the community were given a voice, and decisions made by the community as a whole were given the authority of the Gurū. In recent decades consensus making has become an integral aspect of anarchist communities and organizations, as it is seen to be the ideal for decision making that is equitable and egalitarian. It is my supposition that this form of self-governance is the Sikh ideal, based inherently on core Sikh principles developed by the ten Gurūs. The Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā methodology represents a cornerstone of what I term to be Anarcha-Sikhī.

Another essential component of what I term Anarcha-Sikhī is the concept of prefiguration. This is an important anarchist principle, that simply stated refers to the idea that the means utilized towards creating a new society must match the principles that said society will

be based upon. We will see in Chapter 5 how ruinous it is when the leadership of the K̲h̲ālsā stops engaging in prefigurative policies and instead attempts to create an ideal Sikh society using decidedly non-Sikh means. We will also examine how the idealized Sikh model of leadership and authority are grounded in prefigurative politics.

Outline of this Thesis

In the next chapter I will briefly examine the main methodologies that will be deployed in this thesis. First I will discuss the methods of analysis, then I will introduce the two texts that are going to be analyzed and explain some key aspects they contain. Some history around the publication and editorialization of the first text will be discussed as this speaks to larger issues of intertextuality and the impacts of colonialism. After that the anarchist exegesis of our first text, *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh,* will begin. This will occur in three parts, with part 1 (Chapter 3) focusing on legitimacy, part 2 (Chapter 4) on sovereignty and part 3 (Chapter 5) on organization and governance. In the chapter on legitimacy, the idea of political legitimacy will be discussed, including looking at what was considered a legitimate political rule in South Asia at the time. The reformulation by the author of the first text of the legitimacy of the ruling Mughals will be examined, and how that idea played into the author's conception of Sikh political legitimacy. The creation of the K̲h̲ālsā and the K̲h̲ālsā's right to rule, as understood by the author, will be analyzed. Chapter 4 will hone in on the concept of sovereignty, namely on what the author of the text means by sovereignty and who has the right to exercise that sovereignty. The South Asian norms at the time will be discussed, looking at how sovereignty was centred in an individual—the emperor, and how this concept is flipped by the author so that the community of Sikhs becomes the recipient of sovereignty. As stated earlier, the Sikh conception of monarchy and the

ideal of a royal people will be looked into in greater detail. Chapter 5 begins briefly with the rise and fall of Bābā Bandā Siṅgh Bahādur, looking at how the author explains this figure's rapid ascent and descent from power, and what lessons this holds, according to the author, for the community at large. The rest of the chapter will look at the era that I consider the height of Anarcha-Sikhī, when the K̲h̲ālsā utilized anarchist principles of self-governance and organization. Leadership in an anarchist society will be discussed and then some time will be given to the analysis and explanation of the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā, the main method of Sikh anarchist self-governance. After outlining the situation and anxieties of impending colonialism found in the first text, Chapter 6 will introduce the second text to be analyzed in the thesis. The bulk of the chapter will be an exegesis of the second author's history of the ten Gurūs. This analysis will critique the colonialist, orientalist narrative, while also trying to locate socio-political principles in the text to see if there is any overlap between the first and second authors' narratives. Finally, Chapter 7 will be the conclusion. Besides concluding and summarizing the main findings of the thesis, the conclusion will also engage in a discussion of issues that the analysis has brought forth whilst looking ahead at how this work can be utilized in future research.

Chapter 2: Methodology

In this chapter I will briefly explain the main methodologies that will be deployed in this thesis. The primary methodology of analysis will be anarchist hermeneutics, which involves the use of anarchist sociology and hermeneutics in a reading of both *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh* and Trumpp's essays. In which historical research is used to understand every part of a text and its relationship to its larger context (Howell, 2013), here most importantly the sociopolitical context of the Sikh state and colonialism.

Hermeneutics entered the field of sociology primarily through the works of the German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer. Using the sociological conception of hermeneutics I will explore the narratives of the two texts, as well as issues of intertextuality. Because hermeneutics emphasizes interpreting texts within their contexts, I will then briefly introduce *Panth Prakāsh*, the first text to be studied, looking at its authorship and the reasons for its creation. Then I will look at the history of the publication and editorialization of the first text, exploring how the text has been edited and why, as these too are part of the context surrounding the text. Next I will engage in a brief discussion on the issue of anarchism in *Panth Prakāsh*. I then turn to the structure of the text and the limitations of using it to understand pre-colonial life. Further, I discuss methods of studying text as a narrative, for at various points in this analysis it will be significant that *Panth Prakāsh* can be viewed not only a historical narrative, but also as belonging to the genres of polemic and epic poem, and linked—though it is a written work—to oral tradition. As, in this thesis, I am analyzing a translation of *Panth Prakāsh*, I will discuss my choice of which translation to use and the implications thereof. Last, I will turn to the second text at the core of this thesis, Ernest Trumpp's reformulation of Sikhi, and to how this thesis, overall, is of an intertextual and dialogic nature.

This anarchist hermeneutics will be paired with the form and style of Sikh exegesis to express my conclusions in chapters 3 to 6 in the form of an anarchist exegesis, namely an interpretation of a text in which anarchist principles are uncovered in it (Christoyannopoulos & Adams 2017, p.4).[4] As this is a work that seeks to explore Anarcha-Sikhī, the use of both anarchist hermeneutics and Sikh exegesis is an innovative and sensible pairing that speaks to the goals of this research.

***Prachīn Panth Prakāsh*: A Brief Introduction**

Two texts form the core of this thesis, the first being *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh* (1813) written by Sardar Rattan Singh Bhangū, more widely known as *Prachīn Panth Prakāsh*, or *Older Panth Prakāsh* (to distinguish it from Gianī Gian Siṅgh's *Panth Prakāsh,* published in 1880).

Rattan Siṅgh Bhangū, a descendant of Sikh warriors, grew up steeped in the traditional Sikh culture of the late 18th century. His paternal grandfather, Shahīd Bhāī Mehtāb Siṅgh, was one of the most celebrated martyrs of Sikh history, while his maternal grandfather, Sardār Shām Siṅgh Karoṛsiṅghia, was the founder of one of the 11 *Misls* (Sikh confederacies) of the *Dal Ḵẖālsā* (Army of the Ḵẖālsā) (Sekhon, 1995, p. 353). Around 1805 Bhangū learned that the British East India Company had hired a local *munshī,* a Muslim scribe, by the name of Butai Shāh, to write a history of the Sikhs. Bhangū believed that a Muslim, without access to traditional Sikh historical sources and oral tradition, would be ill-suited to this project. Bhangū took it upon himself to write a history of Sikhī, specifically to counter colonial-backed narratives. He went to the local British East India Company official, Captain William Murray, to give his critiques of the colonial project as well as share his own view on Sikh history. The

[4] Historically, exegesis referred to textual criticism of the Bible and other scriptures, but it is now a term utilized for the close critical reading of any text.

telling of Sikh history to the British officials at these meetings sowed the seeds of his work. Bhangū would spend the next few years finishing his monumental project (Sekhon, 1995, p. 353) using the content from his storytelling to craft his work of epic poetry.

Though Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh gave 1841 as the date of completion of *Panth Prakāsh,* and this date has been taken for granted for over a century by scholars, there is a convincing case that the work was likely written between 1810 and 1813. Bhangū's conversation with Murphy, when Butai Shāh's history was written, and the lack of references to Raṇjīt Siṅgh's rule are all factors that support this theory. For the rest of this thesis, I will write with the assumption that *Panth Prakāsh* was written between 1810 and 1813, not in 1841 as has long been accepted.

Rattan Siṅgh Bhangū states very clearly that he has written his text:

1. To correct any misconceptions in the minds of the British as to the root and validity of Sikh sovereignty and to demonstrate the illegitimacy of Mughal and Afghan sovereignty over South Asia (specifically Punjāb) (Bhangū, 2004 p. ੪).

2. To inspire his fellow Sikhs to live up to the lofty standards of their forebears through lauding and exalting Sikh heroes and martyrs (Dhavan, 2009, p. 520).

While throughout the text Bhangū refers to Murray, his British interlocutor, and speaks of correcting any British misconceptions, the nature of the text, the style in which it is written and the way in which it praises the Sikh Gurūs and historical Sikh figures, can all be related to this second aim of Bhangu's. Bhangū explicitly calls out his audience—whom he says are fellow Sikhs, at several points in the text (for example, Bhangū, 2006, Vol.1 p. 19) . The discourse with the British that begins *Panth Prakāsh* can be seen as a framing device for a Sikh audience, or as a way of adding import to what he is writing. Rather than trying to decide who the primary audience for the text was, it is more relevant for this thesis to speculate that Bhangu's sense of

his audience evolved through his interactions with the British and fellow Sikhs, becoming a treatise that was meant to be more widely disseminated.

Panth Prakāsh covers the history of Sikhī from the birth of the first Gurū, Gurū Nanāk Sāhib, in 1469 to the mid-1780's, sixty years before British colonization in 1845. *Prachīn Panth Prakāsh*[5] spends some time on Gurū Nanāk Sāhib's childhood and his famous four odysseys, briefly glosses over the next eight Gurūs, then describes the ninth Gurū, Gurū Tegh Bahādur Sāhib's martyrdom in 1675. This moment in Sikh history is seen as foundational to Sikh political sovereignty, according to Bhangū. Bhangū then describes the revelation of the K̲h̲ālsā in 1699 and details some episodes from the later life of the tenth Gurū, Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib. The bulk of the text though is spent on narrating events from the post-Gurū period, starting with Bābā Bandā Siṅgh Bahādur's invasion and liberation of Punjāb in 1710 up to the Sikh incursion into Delhi by Sardār Baghail Siṅgh Karoṛsiṅghia in 1783.

Bhangū's choice of title for the work is significant. *Sri* is an honorific and can mean 'revered' or 'most high'. *Gur* means 'Gurū'. *Panth* literally means 'path', and in the Sikh sense refers to the Path of Nānak, or the community of Sikhs. Here it refers to the K̲h̲ālsā Panth. *Prakāsh* means 'illumination' or 'light'. So the title taken together means, *The Light of the Most Revered Gurū K̲h̲ālsā Panth*. Bhangū is making clear right from the title that he conceives of the K̲h̲ālsā as the Gurū of the Sikhs. In his understanding, the K̲h̲ālsā is something very special, unique and exalted. This choice of title is Bhangū's way of telling his audience that not only is the K̲h̲ālsā worthy of praise, it is something that is worthy of an entire text being devoted to it.

[5] I will interchangeably be using the titles *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh*, *Prachīn Panth Prakāsh* and simply *Panth Prakāsh*.

Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh's Publication & Editorialization

The writing, dissemination, publication and popularization of Bhangū's work serves as a guide to the historical contexts of colonized Punjāb. The text was originally copied by manuscript writers in the late Sikh Rāj period (first half of the 19th century) and the early British colonial period (last half of the 19th century). There are several manuscripts of *Panth Prakāsh* extant, but it did not reach a mass level of popularity until it was published in the era of the printing press. It was Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh, the great Sikh savant, scholar and mystic, and one of the leading figures of the revivalist *Siṅgh Sabha Lehar*, who first published the work. Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh's family, on his mother's side, came from a long line of *Nirmala* (traditional lineage of Sikh scholarship) scholars, and he had access to many manuscripts and texts not easily accessible to the public. Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh first published *Panth Prakāsh* in 1914 and then republished a newer edition in 1939. This has become the standard edition, and the one that translators work from. *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh*'s popularity has meant that there are multiple editions in print.

Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh, operating in a colonial space, where the slow decline of Sikhī since British occupation was apparent, had his own biases and editorial ideas when publishing historical texts. While it has become popular to criticize scholars like Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh as colonized subjects who viewed Sikhī through a Judeo-Christian lens, and adapted Sikhī to fit into a more Europeanized idea of religion, the truth is far more complex. The Siṅgh Sabha scholars were not just crafting a new version of Sikhī, they were also attempting to harken back to a glorious past. The tension between K̲h̲ālsā Sikhs, who believed in the ten Gurūs and Gurū Gobind Siṅgh's *Khaṇḍai Batai kī Pāhaul* ceremony, and heterodox groups, like the *Udasīs* and *Nirmalas*, had been a persistent feature in Sikhī throughout the 18th and 19th centuries (Dhavan, 2011, pp. 4-22). By trying to standardize the *Maryadā* (guide for living) and ideology of Sikhī,

scholars like Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh were operating much like the writers of early *Rehitnamas* (18th century codes of conduct), who were driven to mark clear outlines between Sikhs and non-Sikhs (Dhavan, 2011, pp. 71-78).

All of this is to say that Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh made editorial changes in *Panth Prakāsh* when he published it. First of all, he used the popular name for the book, *Prachīn Panth Prakāsh* and not its official title of *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh*, secondly, he carefully expunged overt references to Hindu deities. Thirdly, there are places in the text where Bhangū uses the word 'Hindu' instead of 'Sikh'. It appears that there are two definitions of the word 'Hindu' utilized in *Panth Prakāsh*. The first refers to non-Islamic South Asians who were not Sikhs. In other places though, 'Hindu' takes on a wider definition that refers to any non-Muslim South Asians, Sikh or not. Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh removed all these references and instead changed them to 'Sikh' or 'Sikhs'[6]. Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh's similar editing of Kuir Singh's *Gurbilās Pātshāhī Das* when writing his *Srī Kalgīdhar Chamatkār* is remarked upon by *Braj Bhasha* scholar Julie Vig (2020, pp. 34-37).

There are also entire *sakhīs*/*prasangs* that do not appear in the standard edition. These are few in number, and it is unclear if they were not included due to an editorial decision by Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh or because the manuscripts he had access to did not contain them. It should also be noted that some sections appear in Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh's edition that are not in the scholarly edition, as they are not present in the earliest manuscripts. Again, these instances are few in number.

Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh's edition is the most well-known edition and is still widely available. There is another prominent edition that was first published by the SGPC in the 1960's, edited by Jīt Singh. Another edition is one published in 2000 by the former head of the Nihaṅgs, Santā Nihaṅg. The most scholarly edition, which has collated historic manuscripts, and corrected the

[6] For a more in-depth discussion and exploration of this topic see Harinder Singh Chopra and Surjit Hans's article: Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh valoṅ 'Panth Prakāsh" da sunpādan [Bhāī Vīr Singh's editing of Panth Prakāsh] (1988).

changes made to the text by Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh, is the one published by Guru Nanak Dev University and edited by Professor Balwant Singh Dhillon from 2004. This edition is the primary one being used for this thesis. There are two translations of *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh* widely available. The most popular translation and one that is freely available on the internet is from 2006 and was translated by Kulwant Singh of the Institute of Sikh Studies. It is this translation that is being used for the exegesis in this thesis. There is another more recent translation by prominent Sikh scholar Gurtej Singh, published in 2015.

Anarchism in *Panth Prakāsh*

What is the relationship, according to this thesis, between what I have termed Anarcha-Sikhī and *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh*? Rattan Siṅgh Bhangū does not describe an anarchist society in his text. What I argue, however, is that he does show us a community that uses anarchist principles in order to make decisions and organize itself. The K̲h̲ālsā of the 18th century did not set up an idyllic anarchist state (quite the opposite really), but in the early and middle years of that century, the K̲h̲ālsā was organized using anarchist principles of social organization and detraditionalization. It is my contention that through the study of this text, Anarcha-Sikhī principles that inspired the K̲h̲ālsā can be uncovered.

Accepting my assertion that the K̲h̲ālsā was self-organized using anarchist principles, what of those Sikhs who were not K̲h̲ālsā? Bhangū's narrative is a K̲h̲ālsā-centric one, but non-K̲h̲ālsā Sikhs are referenced in places. The most prominent example is Dīvān Kauṛā Mal, a minister in the Mughal government at Lahore.

Though Kauṛā Mal worked for their sworn enemy, he was respected by the K̲h̲ālsā, even being given the name Mithā Mal (*kaurā* means bitter and *mithā* means sweet) (Singh, B., 1995,

pp. 461-463). Kauṛā Mal went out of his way to try and assist the K̲h̲ālsā, advocating on their behalf and speaking out against atrocities being committed against them[7]. At one point, Kauṛā Mal engineered an alliance between Mughal and Sikh forces, which took on a shared enemy. Bhangū writes, "A number of Khalsa Singhs joined Kaura Mal / As they considered him a devout Sikh of the Guru." (2006, Vol 2, p. 399).

So Bhangū's definition of Sikhī was inclusive enough to include a man who was working for the Mughals, not just as some lowly official, but as a minister to the despised governor. Yet Bhangū is also clear that Kauṛā Mal was not a member of the K̲h̲ālsā, and he was outside of the Panth. The K̲h̲ālsā is thus both an inclusive and exclusive organization. It was inclusive in that there were no barriers to entry, but it was exclusive in that in order to be a part of the community and community decisions, you had to have received *Khaṇḍai Batai kī Pāhaul* and given your allegiance to the Gurū in a formal sense. Being simply a follower of the Gurūs was not enough.

If non-*Amritdhari* (those who have not received *Khaṇḍai Batai kī Pāhaul*) Sikhs were excluded from the K̲h̲ālsā, what of those who were non-Sikhs: Muslims and Hindus? It is very clear in Bhangū's text that these groups are outsiders, and they have no say in the decisions of the K̲h̲ālsā. The question then arises, can an organization so exclusive be considered anarchist?

It is not the contention of this thesis that the K̲h̲ālsā of the 18th century perfectly practiced the principles of anarchism. Just as ancient Athenians practiced democracy, as a means of decision making, while excluding large sectors of society from that process, so too, I argue, did the K̲h̲ālsā use anarchist principles in internal organization and decision making, while also being exclusionary. The K̲h̲ālsā of the early and mid-18th century used methods of detraditionalization that I interpret as anarchist in principle, but did not create an anarchist

[7] The famed Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh even traced his family's lineage back to Kauṛā Mal and wrote an autobiography of him. He is a prominent and important figure in Sikh history, even outside of Bhangū's text.

society, at a time when trans local political formations in the subcontinent were dominated by hegemonic empires and regional, mainly kinship-based structures of social organization and political authority.

Even today, such an anarchist society would seem too utopian to many. A far-flung dream that would appear to be highly unlikely at a time of heightened nationalism and identity politics. Colin Ward is a sociologist and anarchist who believes that anarchism "far from being a speculative vision of a future society… is a description of a mode of human organization, rooted in the experience of everyday life, which operates side by side with, and in spite of, the dominant authoritarian trends of our society" (Ward, 1996, p. 13). For Ward, anarchism is something that exists today, in the midst of capitalist societies, as a form of social organization that refuses to use capitalism and majoritarian democracy as its guiding principles. Anarchism is not a novel form of social organization, it is instead the default that human beings will naturally trend towards. This is because, Ward believes, humans are naturally cooperative.

Ward here leans on Pëtr Kropotkin, one of the early fathers of anarchism. Kropotkin's most prominent work, titled *Mutual aid: A factor of evolution* (1902), is a hybrid text which uses anthropology, history and sociology, all infused with the egregious Social Darwinism of the time, to support the premise that cooperation and selflessness are core human principles, ones that can be located in our earliest history as well as in other animal species.

Ward avoids the colonial and Eurocentric reasoning of Kropotkin's text and instead focuses on the premise that human beings are naturally cooperative. Ward became well-known in Britain as an advocate for everyday anarchism, especially in the realm of public urban planning (Shantz & Williams, 2013, p. 44). Ward, as a sociologist, is demonstrating the way in which

anarchism can be used here and now, in order to diminish authority and increase societal freedom.

Guérin makes the same point when he declares, “Because anarchism is constructive, anarchist theory emphatically rejects the charge of utopianism.” (1970, p. 38). What Guérin is saying here, and what Ward was working towards, is the fact that anarchism is not an idealistic fantasy but a very real method of social organization that exerts itself in spite of state oppression. As Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, the first person to refer to themselves as an anarchist, wrote,

> Beneath the apparatus of government, under the shadow of its political institutions, society was slowly and silently producing its own organization, making for itself a new order which expressed its vitality and autonomy. (as quoted in Guerin, 1970, p. 38)

Anarchism is thus almost a default state of being—what human beings would naturally coalesce to if it wasn’t for state oppression. We can see this in the K̲h̲ālsā, as when they were freed from the shackles of imperial rule, it is my belief that they self-organized along anarchist lines.

Organization is another central principle of anarchism that is often misunderstood. Many, including some anarchists, assume that anarchy means disorganization or chaos. But from the 19th century onwards, when anarchism first began to be discussed as a viable system, anarchists have pushed back against this conception. Both the Russian revolutionary anarchist, Volin (2019) and the Italian anarchist Errico Malatesta (2009) make the point that organization is essential for the functioning of society. For what I term Anarcha-Sikhī, organization is integral. The K̲h̲ālsā is ideally a united social group that works together, dynamically, for purpose. This work requires internal organization and governance. In Chapter 5 we will examine the form of social organization that the K̲h̲ālsā took according to Bhangū.

My hope in exploring the foundations of Anarcha-Sikhī in this thesis is that Sikhs of today, learning from the anarchist methodologies of Sikhs from the past, can help work towards an inclusive and egalitarian society, not just for fellow Sikhs but for all fellow beings. This thesis

is just a first step into examining the idea of Anarcha-Sikhī, not an attempt to completely recontextualize the history of the Ḵẖālsā.

Structure and Limitations of *Panth Prakāsh*

Prachīn Panth Prakāsh is a book of history that is divided into episodes, called *prasangs* (episodes) or *sakhīs* (stories). These are, in a sense, self-contained narratives that tell the story of important, according to the author, events in Sikh history in an episodic fashion. The text as a whole is not one overarching narrative but is instead composed of many smaller stories—163 to be precise. It is in analyzing these stories that hermeneutical and narrative analysis will be utilized. The analysis will be focused on descriptions of the birth and development of Sikh political culture and how they may fit into anarchist principles. Aspects of the narrative such as the imagery utilized, the choice of rhythm and repetition, the metaphors employed and the identification of who or what is the cause of events will also be studied (Bischoping & Gazso, 2016, p. 8).

Bhangū assumes that the listener/reader knows the basics of Sikh life in the mid-18th century, which leads to him not always explaining aspects of the inner workings of the Panth in ways that would be clear to other audiences. For the purpose of this thesis, this can prove problematic, as the details of how the Panth gathered and made decisions is integral to understanding the anarchist social structures of early Sikhī. While it is unfortunate that Sikh sources cannot be used exclusively, as other colonized people can attest to, sometimes early European accounts of the lives of 'native' peoples are needed to try and understand what pre-colonial life looked like. In order to fill in this absent information, the accounts of four 18th

century colonial European visitors to Punjāb[8] and the books of two British soldiers/administrators[9] from the early 19th century will be used. These works are colonialist and thus will be used critically and sparingly but there can be no hiding the fact that the information they contain is highly relevant to this thesis.

Though British colonial control of Punjāb occurred after Bhangū completed *Panth Prakāsh* there is a preoccupation with the British in Bhangū's text. Not only are the British the main characters in the framing stories he utilizes, but Bhangū in fact claims that his entire text is created to clear up British misconceptions of Sikhs. Why was the British perspective on Sikh sovereignty and the legitimacy of the community's political independence so important to Bhangū? Likely, Bhangū himself was anxious about growing British power. By the time Bhangū was writing *Panth Prakāsh*, the Cis-Sutlej states, the small, Eastern Punjāb kingdoms of Patiālā, Nabhā and Jīnd had all voluntarily become British protectorates, bringing the British right up to the borders of the Sikh empire. The British and Raṇjīt Siṅgh had famously signed the Treaty of Amritsar in 1809, which had formally set the boundary between the two powers (Siṅgh, R. 1983, p. 378).

While Bhangū's work was chosen for this project because of his focus on the K̲h̲ālsā Panth and its sovereignty, Bhangū's limitations must also be acknowledged. Chief among these is that his work erases Sikh women from history, including excising prominent Sikh women from important historic episodes, like Bebe Nānakī (Gurū Nānak Sāhib's older sister) from the sakhīs of Gurū Nānak Sāhib's childhood and early adult years and Mata Jīto (Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib's wife) from her integral role in the events of Vaisākhī 1699. Female members of the K̲h̲ālsā Panth are ignored, and their contributions to the community are glossed over. Even

[8] Francis Xavier Wendell, Antoine Louis Henri Polier, James Browne and George Forster
[9] John Malcolm and Joseph Cunnigham

prominent Sikh female figures from the time period that is most familiar to Bhangū, the mid-18th century, are neglected, such as Bībī Baghail Kaur.

Just as Bhangū emphasizes the role of men over women, the role of Sikhs from the Jat caste are given a preeminent place in his narratives over Sikhs from other castes. Bhangū was a male, land-owning Jat from a prominent Sikh family (Bhangū, 2004 p. ੳ). While Jat Sikhs were a significant part of the population of Ḵẖālsā Sikhs in the 18th century, other caste groups were equally important members of the Panth. As an example of his devaluation of other castes, the famous Mazhabi Sikh, Bhāī Jaitā (Jīvan Siṅgh), is erased from the story surrounding Gurū Tegh Bahādur Sāhib's execution. His epic journey to bring the head of Gurū Tegh Bahādur Sāhib from Delhi to Anandpur Sāhib so that his son, Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib, could see his father and carry out his cremation, is one of the most legendary stories in Sikh history (Banerjee, 1995, pp. 389-390).

Bhangū's relationship to caste in general is both complex and conflicting. The fact that Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib expressly undermined the caste system and encouraged those considered to be low-caste to join the Ḵẖālsā is eulogized by Bhangū himself (Bhangū, 2006, Vol.1 p. 79). Bhangū is also aware that both Mughal and European writers criticize the Sikhs for being a seemingly haphazard collection of low caste individuals. And there is no doubt that the early Ḵẖālsā's embracing of the 'low castes' was a radical act, and one that brought it into direct conflict with established power structures. For example, several of the Rajput Hill kings became antagonistic to Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib and attacked Anandpur Sāhib, his capital, after the revelation of the Ḵẖālsā for the express reason that they were upset about the mixing of castes and the undermining of their caste superiority. Bhangū seems to understand this heritage and appears to even be proud of it. He is also writing at a time when Jat Sikhs have taken a dominant

role in the Sikh community, and as a Jat Sikh, in spite of his claims of pride in Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib's steps to dismantling the caste structure, Bhangū maintains the boast of his Jat roots and his narrative clearly favours Jat figures.

Narrative Analysis & Genre

The line between narrative analysis and hermeneutics is a blurry one. I am addressing narrative analysis separately here because in this thesis I will seek to look into, primarily Bhangū's, but Trumpp's works as well, the narrative structure of the text, the genre of the text, and some poetic features of the text. These can all be components of narrative analysis .

Genre analysis is a way of classifying works by their form, perspective, point of view, narrator and even medium. Examples of genres are autobiographies, autoethnographies or oral histories (Kim, 2016). An analysis of narrative genres allows for a deeper understanding of a narrative. Narratives can be of more than one genre. Rattan Siṅgh Bhangū's *Prachīn Panth Prakāsh* and Trumpp's history are both of the genre of historical narrative, as they give an account of early Sikh history. Additionally, *Panth Prakāsh* is a work of epic poetry, in traditional Sikh hagiographic style

Though *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh* is commonly thought of as a book of history, it is better understood as a polemic. As discussed earlier, Bhangū writes with a very specific purpose, and neither of these purposes is the accurate telling of history. Bhangū wants to correct British misconceptions and inspire Sikhs, and therefore his text needs to be understood through this lens. As a polemic, Bhangū's historical information should not always be taken at face value. The further back into Sikh memory that he travels in his narrative, the more unreliable Bhangū becomes. His descriptions of the lives of Gurū Nanāk Sāhib and Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib do

not conform to historical narratives generally accepted by both scholars and the Sikh community. When Bhangū is discussing things that his own grandfathers did and witnessed, he is much more reliable. When he explains events that his father witnessed, he is even more so. The most recent major story he tells is that of Sardār Baghail Siṅgh Karoṛsiṅghia's *Misl's* attack and temporary takeover of Delhi, an event which occurred in 1783. His grandfathers were prominent in the community in the era after Bābā Bandā Siṅgh Bahādur (executed in 1716), and after the martyrdom of Bhāī Tarā Siṅgh of Vān village in 1726. So essentially, Bhangū can be seen as most reliable for a period of sixty years, from the 1720's to the 1780's. Bhangū himself was likely born in the 1760's and began to write his work in 1809. So while we can look back at his earlier accounts of Sikh history, we need to be careful when drawing conclusions.

It can also be classified in the genre of epic poetry, and like other epic poetry of that region and era, it is written in a mixture of vernacular Punjābī and Braj, the North Indian lingua franca of different literary and religious movements that has been used in a variety of religious and secular texts (Dhavan, 2009, p. 521). In the Sikh tradition, most Sikh histories are written in combination of Punjābī and Braj, or often just Braj, and the central Sikh scripture, *Guru Granth Sāhib*, is also composed in an admixture of Braj and primarily other North Indian dialects and languages. The use of Braj by the *Bhagati* saints and the Sikh Gurūs has led to the language also being called *Sant Bhāshā*, or language of the saints.

Panth Prakāsh also has elements of the genre of oral tradition, as Bhangū writes that the Sikh oral tradition was his primary source of information. It conforms to stylistic genres used within the Sikh tradition, such as *sakhīs*, a type of hagiographical narrative storytelling. *Sakhīs* are still the primary method of transmitting Sikh history and have become entrenched in the social fabric of modern Sikhī. Although *Prachīn Panth Prakāsh* is a book of history and does not

strictly fall into a ‘religious’ genre, the delineation between sacred and secular literature did not exist in pre-colonial South Asia (Dhavan, 2009, p. 518). *Prachīn Panth Prakāsh* therefore is both a history of the Sikhs and a text written in a religious genre. In fact, *Panth Prakāsh* is not just meant to be read, but as the author Rattan Siṅgh Bhangū himself explains, it is meant to be recited in a congregational setting (2004, p. 436). This is commonly how the text is still experienced by Sikhs today, who hear it being read and then explained line by line by traditional *Taksalī* scholars.

A Note on Translation

Kulwant Singh’s 2006 widely available translation of *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh* will be used for the exegesis of the text. Carrying out my own translation of *Panth Prakāsh* was outside the scope of this Master’s thesis. Bhangū’s text is in poetry, primarily in *chaupai* (quatrains) and *dohra* (couplet) forms. Poetry was the standard for all Sikh literature until the colonial era, when Siṅgh Sabha scholars began to write in prose. That meant that histories, like *Panth Prakāsh,* codes of conduct and genealogies were all written poetically. Capturing the essence of Bhangū’s words along with their meanings is a difficult task for a translator, especially since as poetry, much of the meaning in the text is left unsaid, and poetic devices and idioms don’t often translate well. Further, Bhangu’s language is brisk and quick, his rhymes come easily, and the language has a musicality to it. His sentences are not grammatically sound; they are poetic and certain words are left unsaid. The translator must balance the brevity of the poetry with the need to form coherent sentences in English.

Kulwant Singh’s translation is credible and an adequate one. It is not what Benjamin would call a bad translation as it does more than just “perform a transmitting function” (1968, p.

69). However, there are instances in which the simplicity and power of the original are lost. Let us look at a chaupai from stanza 40 of the 2nd *prasang*.

> Here is my transliteration first:
> *Murray kahyo hum sunāvo subaba*
> *Janak Rāj kim bajaiyo tho rabba.*
> *jim usko hum uttar dīno*
> *tis suno tum sant prabīno. (2-40)*
>
> Here is Kulwant Singh's translation:
> *Murray asked me to narrate all the events,*
> *Which led to the bestowal of Divine seal on Nanak's house.*
> *I narrate it to my devout and dear readers,*
> *The whole account as I did to Captain Murray. (2-40)*
>
> And here is my more literal translation:
> *Murray said, spontaneously tell us*
> *How King Janak was sent down by God.*
> *The way I told him,*
> *You, the wise saints also listen.*

You can see that Kulwant Singh adds much to his translation. These changes seem related to readability and narrative structure. However, like Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh (see the following chapter where this issue is discussed in more detail), Kulwant Singh has taken the use of the Hindu mythological figure, Rājā Janak, which in this stanza is used as a metaphor for the Divine sovereignty bestowed on Gurū Nānak Sāhib, and has excised it to mention only the divinity of the first Guru, whom Bhangū's original does not actually mention. Periodically in the exegesis I will comment on the translation. This is not the focus of this thesis however, and at most places, Kulwant Singh's translation will be taken at face value.

Investigating the Reformulation of Sikhi by Ernest Trumpp

The second text this thesis is based on is by Ernest Trumpp, a German philologist, who was commissioned by the Court of Directors of the British East India Company to translate the Sikh scripture in 1870 (Siṅgh T., 1994, pp. xv–xvii). In the introduction to this translation of

excerpts of *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, Trumpp wrote both a short explanation of the Sikh 'religion' (what he calls *Sikhism*) and a history of the Sikhs—the first official, colonially mandated history of the Sikhs in English (1877, pp. vii-xcvi). As Arvindpal Mandair argues, "Ernest Trumpp's basic thesis concerning Sikhs' religious system—summarized in twenty short pages—remains historically the most influential document concerning the question 'What is Sikhism' (2009. p. 185)." Mandair argues that most Sikh scholarship since then has been in some form or another a response to Trumpp's work (2009, p. 31). While I believe that Mandair overstates his point, there is no denying the fact that Trumpp's work has been foundational in the field we now call 'Sikh Studies'. Backed by the authority of the colonial administration, Trumpp's work created a pervasive orientalist reconfiguration of Sikhī into a religion in the European sense, a theism: *Sikhism*.

Trumpp's work has echoed through the decades and informs scholarship to this day. Trumpp's history of the Sikhs ends with the death of the Tenth Gurū, so the comparison will be made in how both authors describe the genesis of Sikh sovereignty in the time of the Gurūs. I contend that Bhangū's work, created as a response to a colonial narrative, and focused on the Sikh community as its audience, is a subaltern work. It represents the voice not officially mandated and disseminated by colonial authorities. The comparison between a subaltern work and an official narrative (Trumpp's) will go beyond just looking at nuances of interpretation. As Mandair points out about Trumpp's work,

> The real implication of this move was to invalidate on the basis of empirical observation and from the evidence of their own scriptures, the prevalent view that the Sikh religion was a 'moralizing deism' or that it possessed any historical or 'leavening' impulse of its own. (2009, p. 191)

While there has been considerable scholarship on Trumpp's translations, his short essays on the history of the Sikhs have been less studied. Trumpp's work represents how the colonial

authorities understood Sikh history in the late 19th century, which likely would have had an impact on colonial policies. How Trumpp interpreted and explained the socio-political aspects of the Gurūs will be of particular interest as this is the primary focus of this thesis.

Trumpp's work is important to my analysis because it offers a counterpoint to how Bhangū addressed British authorities in an effort to translate concepts of Sikh sovereignty he clearly sensed were unintelligible to them. Like Bhangū's work, Trumpp ostensibly wrote for a colonial audience. But *Panth Prakāsh* was unremarked upon by British authorities, while Trumpp's writings had a dramatic impact on the colonial structure of Punjāb. In order to better understand the anarchist ideology and tendencies demonstrated in Bhangu's text, the comparison with an official colonial text is essential. Colonialism is not just a remnant of the past. It continues to impact modern Sikhī and modern Sikhs. Sociologically understanding how Trumpp framed Sikh history will provide much needed insight into the role of colonialism in the understanding of Sikh history and how to move towards sovereign, anarchist perspectives.

A Dialogue of Texts

This thesis can best be understood as a dialogue. A dialogue between myself and you the reader (see later in this chapter under Sikh Exegesis for a further discussion), and the texts being studied, as they themselves are dialogic. *Prachīn Panth Prakāsh* is framed as a dialogue between the author—Rattan Siṅgh Bhangū and the British officer Captain Murray, and as you will see in Chapter 3, the text begins with a framing story that is a dialogue between a different British official and a Mughal emperor. Bhangū's work is also a conversation with the Sikh community, then and now. He addresses his fellow Sikhs with loving language and extolls them to live up to the example of the great martyrs of Sikh history. In this sense, Bhangū's work is also in dialogue

with the Sikh past, through his crafting of the Sikh oral tradition into a text. Trumpp, on the other hand, addresses his audience as fellow orientalist, colonial, Europeans. This is the audience he is focused on, whereas in reality, as I will demonstrate in Chapter 6, Trumpp's work was also consumed by Sikh intellectuals whose response and reframing of his work would have a dramatic impact on Sikhī. The colonized Sikh response to both Trumpp's work and potentially Bhangū's work also then in turn had an impact on the structure of British colonialism itself through the rise of the anti-colonial Gurdwāra Reform Movement.

By engaging with these two unique texts, not often studied by sociologists, I offer insights other sociological works may not be able to. For example the question of how historical truths are created and maintained through the use of works of literature in vernacular languages, amongst other research questions which will be explored as we make our way through the analysis of these two texts.

Sikh Exegesis

Though unique in its anarchist perspective, this work fits within a larger Sikh scholarly tradition. Oral exegesis is an integral part of Sikh worship, and along with the singing of poetry from *Bāṇī* (*kīrtan*) and the singing of historical ballads (*dhādī vārs*), exegesis (*kathā*) is the main activity carried out in Gurdwāras. With exegesis of Sikh scripture, there is also a tradition of oral exegesis of Sikh history texts. The most common text that is explained through oral discourse is *Mahākavī* (the Great Poet) Santokh Siṅgh's magnum opus, the *Srī Gur Partāp Sūryodayā*, commonly known as the *Gur Partāp Sūraj Prakāsh Granth*. Oral exegesis of this text is routinely performed, in an almost rote fashion, from the stages of *Gurdwāras* around the globe.

Apart from the *Sūraj Prakāsh*, the only other text that is routinely given this ritualized oral exegesis is Ratan Siṅgh Bhangū's *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh*[10]. This oral exegesis has also led to written exegesis of these texts, as already detailed in the introduction. *Prachīn Panth Prakāsh* is studied in traditional *taksāls* (seminaries) and is recited and sermonized from Gurdwāras. It has been an important source of history within the Sikh community. Increasingly a topic of scholarship, it is said to be the most studied historical Sikh text.

So, what I engage in here, a textual exegesis of *Prachīn Panth Prakāsh*, falls firmly within the Sikh tradition. However, unlike the three current exegeses of the text, I am not aiming to explain in detail the entire voluminous *Prachīn Panth Prakāsh.* Instead, I am seeking to much more closely, deliberately and precisely engage with the text to reveal the anarchist perspectives that it contains.

Based on the principles of oral delivery and genre-specific conventions in the Sikh text under investigation, I will adapt my narrative method and present a form of anarchist hermeneutics that is structurally and performatively influenced by these oral methods. In Sikh oral exegesis, there are traditionally two people carrying out the exegesis, sitting in front of the *saṅgat* (congregation). The person to the left is the reader, who reads a line of text; either *Bāṇī* or from a book like *Panth Prakāsh*. The second person is the scholar, the *Gianī*, sitting to the reader's right, who then explains and interprets that one line. The explanation may be long, may go off on tangents and may involve multiple *sakhīs*. Once the scholar is done, the reader picks up from where they were reading and reads the next line, and so on.

You are both my reader and my *saṅgat*. This dual role will mean that you are both the reader of text and the interlocutor, the recipient of my scholarship, which you will then interpret.

[10] For example, an 81 part exegesis of *Panth Prakāsh*, by Giānī Sher Siṅgh, is available (Avtar Siṅgh, 2018).

You will read sections of *Panth Prakāsh* and Trumpp's essays, which I will then analyze and explain. When I have finished my explanation, I invite you to read the next section and in this fashion, we will work through the anarchist exegesis of *Sri Gurū Panth Prakāsh* and Trumpp together. So, you are not just passive recipients of this exegesis, but are in fact critical interlocutors, engaged in a dialogue with both myself and the text. As Bakhtin and Voloshinov wrote,

> A word is a bridge thrown between myself and another. If one end of the bridge depends on me, then the other depends on my addressee. A word is territory shared by both addresser and addressee, by the speaker and his interlocutor. (1986, p. 86)

You must use your own *mat* (discernment, intellect) to parse whether my *kathā* (interpretation) which is a reflection of my *gian* (knowledge) and *vidyā* (education), is fitting and appropriate or not. This exegesis is thus a dialogue. A dialogue between Bhangū and his listeners (including both myself and you), between Trumpp and his audience, and between me and you, the reader. In traditional Sikh exegesis, the *saṅgat* expresses its approval and exhilaration for the speaker by loudly shouting *jaikarai* (victorious battle cries) and/or uttering *Vahigurū* (the 'Wondrous Divine Gurū', the most common Sikh word used for the Divine), when they are particularly moved by something said. If the saṅgat is not particularly inspired by the exegesis, the congregation remains mostly quiet. So, while I don't expect you to shout victorious battle cries, feel free to audibly respond to the text, if it so moves you.

Chapter 3: Legitimacy of K̲h̲ālsā Rule

This section of the anarchist exegesis will examine the justification and legitimacy of Sikh sovereignty over Punjāb as presented in the opening *sakhīs* of *Panth Prakāsh*. Why is Sikh rule considered just? Why is Sikh rule preferred to Mughal or Afghan rule? What is the internal logic, from a Sikh perspective, that gives Sikhs a right to rule? Trying to answer these questions can give us insight into the underlying logic that animated the political impulses of the early Sikh community and can also help explain why the specific method of governance that was utilized by early Sikhs may have developed. This is important to the larger research questions at the heart of this thesis, as Bhangū builds his argument by first demonstrating the legitimacy of the K̲h̲ālsā, and then explaining how and why the K̲h̲ālsā is sovereign. What I have labeled as Anarcha-Sikhī is premised on the idea that each individual member of the K̲h̲ālsā is sovereign and free from worldly authority. This concept flows from the idea that the K̲h̲ālsā has an inherent right to be free. In Bhangū's conception, this is built upon two central ideas or themes: that the first Gurū, Gurū Nānak Sāhib, has a special connection to divinity, and that the execution of the ninth Gurū, Gurū Tegh Bahādur Sāhib had dire consequences for the Mughal regime. Both of these ideas will also be explored in this chapter.

European monarchs relied on the principle of the 'divine right of kings' as justification for their rule (Murphy, 2014). But such a principle did not exist in the Muslim world (Kozlowski, 1995, p. 355). Mughal rule in India was legitimized over successive generations through patronage, grants and fealty to Islamic schools and the tombs of famous saints (Kozlowski, 1995, p. 356-367). This connection to saints and religious schools was essential to the legitimization of Mughal rule as it gave a form of divine authority to their command and in a practical sense, this religious connection became something very similar to the European right of

kings (Kaiker, 2020, p. 58). This connection to locality and sacred place is also important in the context of Punjāb, see for example, the Principality of Malerkotla (see glossary for further info).

The concept of popular sovereignty, as developed in France and the United States, was a foreign concept to Bhangū. In popular sovereignty there was no need for a monarch, as the people exercised their power through the structures of a government of their own choosing. In this exegesis, I will demonstrate how Bhangū shows that the early K̲h̲ālsā developed a uniquely Sikh form of popular democracy, one that was tied to sacred place and locality, as with Mughal rule, but was not centred in a king or emperor, but instead in the K̲h̲ālsā as whole.

The K̲h̲ālsā of the 18th century were not a 'nation' in the modern sense of the word. They were tied together through cultural and ethnic bonds, as most were Punjābī, but were not seeking a Punjābī ethno-national state, as some Sikhs would push for in the 1940's. The K̲h̲ālsā Panth was seeking freedom from Mughal and Afghani rule, and was focused on destroying existing power structures in the process. They were not interested in creating an exclusively Sikh state, or of the forced expulsion of, for example, Muslims (such as during Partition) from the territory they freed. Besides the symbolic use of the term *Qaum* (nation) as a by-word for Panth, the K̲h̲ālsā Panth of the 18th century cannot be qualified as a national group. What was the K̲h̲ālsā Panth then? As this exegesis will try to demonstrate, the K̲h̲ālsā does not easily fit into socio-political categories. If Sikhī cannot be easily reduced to a Judeo-Christian definition of a religion, then the K̲h̲ālsā also defies European conventions of social and political groups.

When I speak of issues of legitimacy, especially in the context of a sociology thesis, Weber's tripartite classification of political authority seems especially relevant (Weber, 2019, pp. 338-447). What category of leadership do the K̲h̲ālsā fit under? Were they charismatic, traditional or legal? The ten human Gurūs were charismatic and traditional leaders, exhibiting

characteristics of both categories. But what of the K̲h̲ālsā Panth as Gurū? The K̲h̲ālsā would seem to be a rejection of traditional power structures, be they social (caste) or political (Mughal state). But since the K̲h̲ālsā was a collection of individuals, not a singular leader, charismatic authority, while playing a role, does not neatly fit the K̲h̲ālsā's practices in the early and mid-18th century. As Weber would understand it though, the K̲h̲ālsā definitely did not fulfil the criteria for legal authority as the K̲h̲ālsā did not set up a modern legal state and bureaucracy.

There is a response to Weber's classification of political legitimacy and authority from an anarchist perspective. Weber, one of the foundational figures in sociology, is, without stating it outright, ascribing a connection between social order and state. Anarchist theorists would argue that anarchist *modern* governance structures are possible to set up, and that they would defy Weber's tripartite categorization. Most classic anarchist scholars believed in a federalized state of governance, with small scale communities united in purpose (Ward, 1996, p. 6 and Marshall, 1993, p. 36). These small-scale communities would be organized around principles of cooperation, where Weber's leadership categorization would be invalid. I believe that the K̲h̲ālsā's social and political organization in the 18th century fulfills anarchist principles, and thus is also not easily categorized into Weber's schema.

This exegesis is not just focused on political legitimacy but on the legitimacy of Sikh political *sovereignty*. Sovereignty usually refers to the supreme political authority within a given jurisdiction, though it "is one of the most contested concepts in political science" (Bartelson, 2011). Sovereignty is actually deeply connected to the issue of legitimacy. What did sovereignty mean in Mughal India? While sovereignty as a concept evolved slowly in medieval Europe, Kaiker points out that scholars in the Islamic world did not focus on the issue and idea of sovereignty that was such a focus in Europe (Kaicker, 2020, p. 57). According to Kaicker,

sovereignty was connected to the term *daulat*, which means fortune, and refers to the blessings bestowed by the Divine upon the emperor (2020, p. 58). The concept of *daulat* as understood by the Mughals developed jointly out of both the Islamic and Turco-Mongol heritages of the Mughals (Kaicker, 2020, p. 58). Essentially *daulat* referred to the emperor's authority to rule over the territory of the empire due to his divine blessings. This power was, by the time of Emperor Aurangzeb (ruled from 1658 to 1707), understood to be completely contained within the body of the emperor, meaning only the Emperor was sovereign, and the sovereignty of the state existed as a reflection of the Emperor's own blessings (Kaicker, 2020, p. 65).

If sovereignty in Mughal South Asia was understood to be something related to the Divine, a political theological concept, and something that could truly exist only within the person of the emperor, how did the early K̲h̲ālsā, living under a Mughal state, understand sovereignty? What did it mean to them? The Sikh concept of *Sacha-Patshāh*, referring to the Gurū as the True Emperor, was prevalent amongst Sikhs. Gurū Har Gobind Sāhib, the sixth Nānak, openly enthroned himself as a socio-political ruler and manifested the *Mīrī-Pīrī* powers of the Gurū more formally. So for Sikhs of the early 18th century, sovereignty also existed within a person, just that the person in question was not the Mughal emperor but the Sikh Gurū. After the *jotī-jot* of Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib, what became of the concept of Sikh sovereignty? That is a question that *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh* may be able to answer.

I will now turn to the exegesis itself, where these topics will be further unpacked and some answers to these questions may be revealed:

Vāhigurū Sāhib ji (Sikh exegeses begin with an invocation of the Divine. Here I use the *Mūl Mantir,* the Primal Formula which appears at the beginning of *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, as the first part of my invocation. The second part of the invocation is from the 10th Gurū's writings,

from his composition *Akāl Ustat*, In Praise of the Timeless One, in which he personifies the Divine as "All-Steel". After the invocation, the Gurū's presence is noted in effusive language, following which the congregation gathered, in this case, the reader, is similarly spoken of in respectful language. The congregation is asked to join the speaker, myself in this case, in loudly announcing the Sikh greeting. Then a prayer is offered to ask that the exegesis to be done is done so correctly and using the Gurū's wisdom (*Gurmat*) and not one's ego-filled thinking (*Manmat*)).

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥
॥ ਜਪੁ ॥
ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ ॥
ਹੈ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ॥੧॥

One Ever-Present All-Encompassing Divine.
Name is Truth / Creator Personified / Fearless / Without Enemy / Vision of Infinity /
Outside of birth & death / Self-created / Through the Gurū's Grace /
Chant /
True in the beginning / True throughout the ages / Is true now. /
Nānak states, "Will always be true". (1)
(*Gurū Granth Sāhib*, Gurū Nānak Sāhib, a. 1)

ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਕੀ ਰਛਾ ਹਮਨੈ ॥
ਸਰਬ ਲੋਹ ਕੀ ਰਛਿਆ ਹਮਨੈ ॥
ਸਰਬ ਕਾਲ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਰਛਿਆ ਹਮਨੈ ॥
ਸਰਬ ਲੋਹ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਸਦਾ ਰਛਿਆ ਹਮਨੈ ॥

I seek protection in the Infinite Being / I seek protection in the All Steel.
I seek protection in the All Death / Forever, and ever, I seek protection in the All Steel.
(*Akāl Ustat, Dasam Granth*, Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib, p.11)

O Gurū, protector of the helpless, knower of all hearts, treasure of blessings, Blessed Blessed *Shabad* (literally meaning 'word', it refers to the aspect of the Divine that the human heart can connect with). Gurū Sāhib Jī! In whose immaculate and perfect presence you sit, o Form of the Gurū, Beloved of the Gurū, the Gurū K̲h̲ālsā Sāhib *saṅgat* jī (congregation), join your hands

together and dignify my greeting with your full-throated response, *Vāhigurū jī ka K̲h̲ālsā, Vāhigurū jī kī Fataih*[11]!

We are blessed here today in this place, in the presence of the Divine. May Gurū Sāhib bless me with the wisdom and discernment to be able to elucidate the text here before you, with clarity, simplicity and correct thinking.

As the lines are read (by you the reader) from *Prachīn Panth Prakāsh*, I will expound upon the meaning of Sardār Rattan Siṅgh Bhangū's words.

> *Dohra:*
> *I bow my head in reverence at the lotus feet of Guru Nanak,*
> *As well as I invoke the blessings of Guru Gobind Singh*[12]*,*
> *In order to write the account of the origin of the Khalsa Panth,*
> *I beseech the revered Gurūs to empower me to accomplish this task. (1:1)*
>
> *Chaupai:*
> *Now I undertake to write the account of the Sikhs,*
> *As narrated by our ancestors and forefathers,*
> *And as heard from still earlier and ancient elders,*
> *Who had heard it from their own talented peers. (1:2)*
>
> *I also narrate it according to my own understanding and faith,*
> *A faith and devotion which eradicates all kinds of fears,*
> *I narrate it exactly as I narrated it to the British,*
> *It is just an introduction to the whole Account. (1:3)*[13]
> (Bhangū, 2006, Vol. 1 p. 3)

Just as I began this exegesis with an invocation, Sardar Rattan Siṅgh Bhangū begins his monumental text with his own invocation. He invokes the ten Gurūs to assist and bless him in this task of writing *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh.* Bhangū goes on to explain the sources for his narrative. He writes that these are stories that he has heard from his ancestors, which likely

---

[11] The Sikh greeting, it was created by Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib at Vaisākhī 1699. It means: The K̲h̲ālsā belongs to the Wondrous Divine! Victory belongs to the Wondrous Divine!

[12] Invoking the name of the 1st and 10th Nānaks is a common poetic device that the reader/listener will understand is the short form for referencing all ten of the human Gurūs

[13] For consistency, quotes from *Panth Prakāsh* will be numbered using the following system. First the *prasang/sakhī* number, then the stanza number, separated by a colon. The numbering will follow the standard text as published by Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh. Where the numbering differs with the edition edited by Balwant Singh Dhillon, the second number after the "/" will refer to the numbering in Dhillon's edition.

would not have been written down and thus have been passed down through the oral tradition, primarily through his family. Bhangū does not mention his storied ancestors, but it can be expected that audiences at the time and in Sikh congregations today are largely familiar with both of his grandfathers, which would add to the legitimacy of his oral-tradition sources.

In the third stanza above, Bhangū mentions that this text had previously been narrated to the British. The veracity of this claim is, as earlier written, impossible to substantiate, but it is important that Bhangū is choosing to introduce his text in this manner. Let us now turn to the question of Sikh legitimacy as Bhangū describes a conversation between the British and the Mughals.

> *Dohra:*
> *Which powerful enemy had they routed in war?*
> *What other accomplishments did they have to their credit?*
> *Who had bestowed sovereignty and statehood on the Sikhs,*
> *He must reveal the name of that (Divine or Temporal) Authority. (1:11)*
> (Bhangū, 2006, Vol. 1 p. 5)

After the invocation, the first *sakhī* of *Panth Prakāsh* opens with a framing story: Bhangū's imagined conversation between an official of the British East India Company and the Mughal emperor of the time, Akbar Shāh II. In the early 1800's the East India Company appointed officer David Ochterlony as the British Resident to the Mughal Court (Dalrymple, 2004, pp. 183-184). The Resident was a British colonial position which acted as a de facto ruler who through 'guidance' and 'advice' controlled the state in which they were stationed, similar to what a governor-general would later be (Chisholm, 1911, p. 183). At this point in history, the Mughal Empire was severely weakened and physically much smaller than it had been at its height during the reign of Aurangzeb (Eraly, 2000, p. 398-399). To save it from Maratha expansion, the Mughal Emperor had invited the British into his empire, making it a protectorate, or more accurately, a puppet state. In Bhangū's fictionalized conversation, Ochterlony is anxious

about rising Sikh power and demands of the Mughal emperor to know where the sovereignty of the Sikhs stems from.

Whether the British Resident and Mughal Emperor were actually concerned about Sikh political legitimacy (or how Bhangū could have known about this conversation had it actually happened) is not the issue at hand. The real question is how the text construes concepts of Sikh sovereignty and legitimacy. In Bhangū's narrative, Ochterlony and Akbar Shāh II think of the Sikhs as nothing but upstart, low caste thugs (a view confirmed by early Mughal and European accounts of the Sikhs[14]). This question of legitimacy and what gives a people the right to be sovereign and have their own land is one of the central questions to the social sciences.

The French, American and Hatian Revolutions had already occurred when Bhangū was writing this work, but he shows no evidence of having known about them or the concept of popular sovereignty. Bhangū was operating in a world in which the primary method of a state exercising sovereignty was through a monarch, whose position was in some way legitimized through divine means. How then does Bhangū interpret Sikh history, philosophy and political culture to justify Sikh sovereignty, especially if the modern concept of popular sovereignty is unknown to him? In part, the answer also references the legitimacy of Mughal rule itself.

> *Chaupai:*
> *Then the Mughal emperor answered the Britishers' query,*
> *That No Authority had bestowed any sovereignty or statehood on the Sikhs.*
> *They had neither accomplished any deed worthy of praise,*
> *Nor had they routed any powerful adversary in war. (1:12)*
> (Bhangū, 2006, Vol. 1 p. 5)

In this stanza, Bhangū is imagining the Mughal Emperor's response to Ochterlony's question. From the Mughal perspective, the Sikhs are completely illegitimate in their claims to

[14] See the early accounts of Europeans collected in Madra & Singh's *Sicques, Tigers, or Thieves* and the early accounts of Mughals collected in Grewal and Habib's *Sikh History from Persian Sources*.

sovereignty. The key phrase here is what the translator interprets as *sovereignty*, which in the original text is the word *Shah*, meaning 'sovereign ruler' or 'emperor'. Essentially, in the mind of the Mughal Emperor (as Bhangū imagines him), only a greater ruler can grant the right of sovereign rule to a lesser power. It is important to note that Punjabi society was rich in conceptualizations of sovereignty, but in this case Bhangū is writing about the state and ruling relations. The Mughal Emperor is referring to himself, and if the Mughal crown did not grant sovereignty to the Sikhs, then the Sikhs have no legitimate right to rule.

> *Chaupai:*
> *The British accepted the Mughal version and recorded it as such,*
> *That No authority had ever conferred any sovereignty on the Sikhs.*
> *Neither had any Divine power bestowed any sovereignty on them,*
> *Nor had any Temporal Authority granted them any statehood. (2:2)*
> (Bhangū, 2006, Vol. 1 p. 11)

At the beginning of the second *sakhī*, Bhangū is reiterating that the Mughals' view of an illegitimate Sikh sovereignty has clouded the minds of the British. We now turn to the second framing device of *Panth Prakāsh*. In this framing story, Bhangū becomes friends with a British official named Captain William Murray and then, to correct the earlier misconceptions created by the Mughal Emperor, Bhangū gives the 'true' version of Sikh history and political legitimacy to Murray.

In the above stanza Bhangū lays out what he believes are the two methods of gaining legitimate sovereignty. Either one is granted sovereignty by a higher temporal authority or there is some sort of Divine bestowal of sovereignty onto a people.

> *Dohra*
> *Then addressing me Captain Murray asked me the question,*
> *That I should disclose him [sic] this much of a mystery.*
> *How did the Sikhs acquire political power and statehood,*
> *And who bestowed sovereignty on the Sikhs? (2:33)*
> (Bhangū, 2006, Vol. 1 p. 17)

In the narrative of *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh*, this is the first time Murray asks Bhangū about the root of Sikh sovereignty. The rest of *Panth Prakāsh* can be seen to be an answer to this question. Let us see how Bhangū responds.

> *Chaupai:*
> *Then, I answered Captain Murray in these words,*
> *"The true Lord Divine has conferred sovereignty on the Sikhs."*
> *Captain Murray asked me who was their true Lord,*
> *I replied, "Guru Nanak is their true Lord." (2:34)*
> (Bhangū, 2006, Vol. 1 p. 17)

Here we see the primary thesis of *Prachīn Panth Prakāsh*: that Sikh sovereignty was indeed divinely bestowed. And who was the Divine authority that bestowed this sovereignty? It was none other than the first Gurū, Gurū Nānak Sāhib.

> *Murray said that Nanak was a mere mendicant,*
> *What did he know about political power and sovereignty?*
> *I remarked that Guru Nanak was the Lord of Lords,*
> *He was a Divine prophet and lord of the whole world. (2:35)*
> (Bhangū, 2006, Vol. 1 p. 17)

Just as many modern scholars and commentators assume that Sikh politics and political activity began under later Gurūs (usually stated to be Gurū Hargobind Sāhib or Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib), so too does Bhangū depict Murray as assuming that Gurū Nānak Sāhib was a mere "saintly" figure, and not someone concerned with political change or power (Siṅgh, G., 1997, pp. 151-152). In Chapter 6, I will explore how Trumpp becomes one of the first scholars to make this point, and how his claim reverberates through time. According to Trumpp, Gurū Nānak Sāhib is considered to be a 'Bhagat-type' figure, in the model of Bhagat Kabīr, lacking any political ideology (Trump, 1877, pp. xcvii).

Sikhs have long understood Gurū Nānak Sāhib as a multifaceted figure with socio-political agency, as evidenced by *Bāṇī* in *Gurū Granth Sāhib*[15], Bhāī Gurdās's writings[16], Bhāī Nand Lāl's writings[17] and Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib's writings[18] and believe Sikh sovereignty and political action to be indistinguishable from what outsiders consider to be the more "spiritual" or devotional aspects of Sikhī.

This is the foundational meaning of *Mīrī-Pīrī*. That the Gurū is the true sovereign in all realms, both in what is often construed as spiritual dimensions and in socio-political spaces. In *Gurū Granth Sāhib* in the writings of the Bards, the *Bhatts*, Gurū Nānak Sāhib is lauded in these terms:

> ਰਾਜੁ ਜੋਗੁ ਮਾਣਿਓ ਬਸਿਓ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਰਿਦੰਤਰਿ ॥
> ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਸਗਲ ਉਧਰੀ ਨਾਮਿ ਲੇ ਤਰਿਓ ਨਿਰੰਤਰਿ ॥
> ਗੁਣ ਗਾਵਹਿ ਸਨਕਾਦਿ ਆਦਿ ਜਨਕਾਦਿ ਜੁਗਹ ਲਗਿ ॥
> ਧੰਨਿ ਧੰਨਿ ਗੁਰੁ ਧੰਨਿ ਜਨਮੁ ਸਕਯਥੁ ਭਲੋ ਜਗਿ ॥
> ਪਾਤਾਲ ਪੁਰੀ ਜੈਕਾਰ ਧੁਨਿ ਕਬਿ ਜਨ ਕਲ ਵਖਾਣਿਓ ॥
> ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮ ਰਸਿਕ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰ ਰਾਜੁ ਜੋਗੁ ਤੈ ਮਾਣਿਓ ॥੬॥
>
> He (Gurū Nānak Sāhib) relished the socio-political and spiritual spheres,
> the Divine One beyond hate is enshrined within His Heart.
> He (Gurū Nānak Sāhib) saved himself through the chanting of the one Name,
> And he saves the whole world through that Name.
> Sanak, the four sons of Brahma, and the famous King-sage Janak
> have been singing His Praises, through the ages.
> Blessed, blessed, blessed is the Gurū!
> Blessed and fruitful is His birth into this world.
> Even from the darkest pits, cries of your victory are heard, so says Kal the poet.
> Gurū Nānak, you are the blessed nectar of the Divine Name,
> You have relished the socio-political and spiritual spheres. (6)

---

[15] Gurū Nānak Sāhib's political aspect and his role as the embodiment of *Mīrī-Pīrī* are written about in Bhāī Sattā & Bhāī Balvand's *Rāmkalī kī Vār*, on Ang. 966 of *Gurū Granth Sāhib*

[16] In his 1st Vār of his *Vārāṅ*, Bhāī Gurdās explains Gurū Nānak Sāhib's spiritual and socio-political ascendancy, and his triumph over both Brahminical, Yogic and Islamic schools of thought. Pauris 23 to 44 of the first Vār (Siṅgh, H. & Siṅgh, V., 1998, pp.18-36)

[17] In his *Ganjnāma*, Bhāī Nand Lāl eulogizes Gurū Nānak Sāhib's spiritual and political supremacy: Verses 22 to 53 of the Gurū Nānak's portion of *Ganjnāma* (Siṅgh, G., 2000, pp. 141 to 144)

[18] Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib's autobiography, *Bachitar Nātak*, found in *Dasam Granth*, explores the political dimensions of Gurū Nānak Sāhib and the Gurū lineage (Sections 3 and 4 of *Bachitar Nātak: Dasam*, pp. 52- 54).

(*Gurū Granth Sāhib*, Bhatt Kal, a. 1390)[19]

For Bhangū the answer is so obvious that there is a hint of rhetorical incredulity in his response to Murray. Of course, Gurū Nānak Sāhib is the true "lord" of the Sikhs! Gurū Nānak Sāhib is not just the founder of the Sikh Path, but he is seen as the fountainhead of all socio-political power in the Sikh tradition (Singh, G., 1997, p. 151)

> *Whosoever sought his Divine grace and blessings,*
> *They were imbued with power and sovereignty.*
> *His blessings made the timid sparrows pounce upon the hawks,*
> *And the meek lambs tear apart the lions. (2:37)*
>
> *Dohra:*
> *Whose armies consisted of millions of horse riders,*
> *And whose equipage consisted of thousands of canons [sic].*
> *Who were the mighty occupants of royal thrones,*
> *They were annihilated by the descendants of Guru Nanak. (2:38)*
>
> *Intoxicated with a dose of Cannabis and the Name of the Lord,*
> *His followers (The Sikhs) charged at their adversaries with such ferocity,*
> *That their enemies could not bear the brunt of their attack,*
> *And they perished instantly under their mighty strokes. (2:39)*
> (Bhangū, 2006, Vol. 1 p. 19)

In the preceding three stanzas, current and past Sikh military power and prowess is directly tied to Gurū Nānak Sāhib. Unlike contemporary Sikhs who associate themselves with lions and hawks, Bhangū sees Sikhs as more represented by sparrows and lambs that can defeat hawks and lions. This reframing of what are considered meek and helpless animals as powerful and triumphant is a common trope in Sikh imagery surrounding the revelation of the K̲h̲ālsā. It is a popular Sikh idea that Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib transformed sparrows into hawks, which emphasizes the transformative nature of the *Khaṇḍai Batai kī Pāhaul* (*Amrit*). It is interesting that while Bhangū does use similar imagery, in his poetic turn of phrase, the sparrow does not

[19] All translations from *Bāṇī* have been done by myself. The number in the bracket is the stanza number as it appears in *Bāṇī*. Where there is a "Rahao" line, which acts as a refrain when reading and as a chorus when singing, I will write (Pause) to reflect that. Page numbers for *Gurū Granth Sāhib* will be marked by (a.) for *ang* (limb) out of respect for the Ever-Living Sovereign Gurū.

become a hawk but instead attacks and destroys the hawk. This phraseology appears in another oral tradition associated with Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib, still very popular in modern Sikhī:

ਚਿੜੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਮੈਂ ਬਾਜ਼ ਤੜਾਉ
ਗਿੱਦੜਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਮੈਂ ਸ਼ੇਰ ਬਣਾਉ।
ਸਵਾ ਲੱਖ ਸੇ ਏਕ ਲੜਾਉ
ਤਬੈ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਮ ਕਹਾਉਂ

I will make sparrows attack hawks,
I will turn jackals into lions,
I will make one fight against a hundred and twenty five thousand,
Only then can I call myself Gobind Siṅgh (Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib, Oral tradition)

Whereas these expressions and imagery are usually linked to the revelation of the K̲h̲ālsā and Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib, in this stanza Bhangū sees Sikh political power as a natural consequence of Gurū Nānak Sāhib's divinity and this imagery is associated with the first Nānak. Perhaps modern Sikhs have also fallen into the Trumppian trap and consider Gurū Nānak Sāhib as more of a "religious" figure, removed from socio-political life, which is why it is much more common to associate these expressions and metaphors with Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib. Bhangū reminds the reader/listener that actual Sikh socio-political power flows from the first Gurū.

Kabit Batisa:
Dear Murray then asked me to explain,
How Guru Nanak was blessed with Divine power?
Dear pious readers, I narrated him the following account:
Responding to people's prayers, God Himself invited Guru Nanak,
And made him a sovereign on His own behalf,
And bestowed Nanak with all the Divine powers,
Thereafter with a warm hug, God sent him to the world,
Naming him Nanak, bade him to take birth in the Bedi dynasty[20].
God instructed Guru Nanak to protect the meek and the humble,
And crush all those who were evil and wicked. (2:40)
(Bhangū, 2006, Vol. 1 p. 19)

[20] Gurū Nānak Sāhib's caste is *Khatri* and he belonged to the clan *Bedī.* In his *Bachitar Nātak*, Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib goes into an explanation of the mythic heritage of the clan.

In the following stanzas Bhangū locates the cause of Gurū Nānak Sāhib's divinity, tying it to his direct connection with the Divine. This connection with the Divine is a recurring theme in Sikh literature and oral tradition. Gurū Nānak Sāhib's encounter with the Divine occurs either before he enters the world, as written about by Bhāī Gurdās (verse 23 of *vār* 1: Singh, H. & Singh, V., 1998, pp. 18-19) or occurs during Gurū Nānak Sāhib's revelatory experience in the *Kalī Vain* (Black Canal), as written about by Bhāī Nand Lāl (verses 22 to 53 of the Gurū Nānak Sāhib's portion of *Ganjnāma*; Singh, G., 1989, pp. 141 to 144) . When Gurū Nānak Sāhib was a young man with a family, living at Sultanpur Lodhī with his sister Bebe Nānaki, he one day disappeared into the waters of the ancient canal, known as the *Kalī Vain*. He is said to have emerged two days later after having a revelatory experience with the Divine (Dawe, 1995, Vol 3, p. 166). Regardless of when Gurū Nānak Sāhib encountered the Divine, before human birth or in his early adult years, this singular event is seen as the spark of all of Sikh history. It is the seed of Sikh *Bāṇī*, the Sikh path in general, and Sikh social-political sovereignty.

What the translator translates as 'God' in this stanza is the word *Rub* in Bhangū's original. *Rub* is a common, more personal and familiar Punjabi word for the Divine. There is a shift in the language here from an impersonal force to a more personal and anthropomorphic conception of divinity. Though the Infinite Divine is understood as formless in Sikhī, it is common, both in *Bāṇī* and in popular Sikh culture, to anthropomorphize the Divine. Such literary tools are understood as metaphors by the Sikh reader. So that the hug that Gurū Nānak Sāhib receives, literally being brought closer to the Divine's limbs in the original, can be understood literally as the Gurū being physically hugged but is more likely meant to be understood as a demonstration of Gurū Nānak Sāhib's special status and relationship with Divinity.

In the translation of this verse, the translator uses the word ‘dear’ twice, once to refer to Murray and once to refer to the reader. The second use of the word ‘dear’ in the translation is the word *mitr*, or ‘friend’, in the original text. The exact phrase that Bhangū uses to refer to his readers/listeners is *sant mit bhāī* which literally translates as “saintly friendly brothers”. This is the effusive language common in Sikh parlance when speaking about or to the congregation, though Bhangū’s phrase is typically male-oriented with the reader/listener being referred to as the author’s brothers, a common way of referring to fellow Sikhs identifying as male (those Sikhs identifying as female are usually called *Bībī*, meaning ‘sister’).

What are we to make of this language in relation to Murray? Is Bhangū being sarcastic or acerbic in his speech to Murray, or was this a genuine show of friendship and familiarity? The word used in the original text when referring to Murray is *Piārai*, which means ‘beloved’ and in the Sikh context is used primarily to speak of the Beloved Five, the *Pañj Piārai*. This expression of friendship is very different from the one above though in the translation, the nuance of the difference is lost, and both end up as simply “dear”. It is possible that either Bhangū considered Murray as an actual friend, and had a close relationship with him, or that the fictional Murray, the character in Bhangū’s text, is one that Bhangū wants to demonstrate a friendship with. This is in keeping with the general tone of the *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh*. While Bhangū is frequently exasperated at British misunderstanding of Sikh political legitimacy, there is never anger directed at them. Instead Bhangū seems to almost infantilize the British, to treat them with what can be read as a patronizing loving kindness, in an attempt to show them the error of their ways while not offending their ego as a great power. The complexity of Bhangū’s relationship with the British could be a fascinating topic of scholarship.

The Sakhī of Rājā Janak
(Bhangū, 2004, pp. 8-10)

The *Sakhī of Rājā Janak* does not appear in the standard Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh edition of *Panth Prakāsh* so there is no translation of it, but does appear in Balwant Singh Dhillon's scholarly edition. Rājā Janak is a South Asian mythological figure. He is seen as the epitome of divinely inspired kingly rule. In the myths associated with him, his kingdom was a centre of scholarship and learning. He is also famous for his lack of attachment to material possessions, in spite of his great wealth (Singh, P., 2015, pp. 115-116). He is, therefore, an archetype of how rulers should behave. His *sakhī* appearing here, between Bhangū's introduction of Gurū Nānak Sāhib and the telling of Gurū Nānak Sāhib's story makes it clear that in Bhangū's mind, Gurū Nānak Sāhib is a ruler in the mold of Rājā Janak, or that he was a Rājā Janak of his era. (The comparison of a Gurū to a mythological Hindu character could have been troubling to Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh, which may be why this *Sakhī* does not appear in his edition, but ironically, *Gurū Granth Sāhib* itself contains a comparison of the Gurūs to Rājā Janak (*Gurū Granth Sāhib*, a. 1391)).

The story of Rājā Janak demonstrates that piety and devotion to the divine can be paired with political sovereignty, and that these two concepts need not be in conflict. This is of course the *Mīrī-Pīrī* ideal. What Bhangū is trying to establish is that Gurū Nānak Sāhib is not *just* a spiritual figure, and that his status as a prophet/saint is no hindrance to his socio-political power.

This theme is repeated throughout the following *sakhīs* about Gurū Nānak Sāhib. It is likely reiterated because of the idea that Gurū Nānak Sāhib's dual sovereignty is embodied by the *Gurū Granth* and *Panth*. Not only is the sovereignty that the Sikhs exercise neither improper nor illegitimate, it is actually *more* legitimate than the sovereignty of other mundane forces, for this sovereignty bears the mark of the divine. Sikhs are thus transformed, in the imagination of Bhangū, from upstart rebels, to glorious sovereigns reclaiming what is rightfully theirs.

Dohra:
Some predicted that he would be a Sidh [accomplished Yogī],
Others predicted that he would be a prophet.
Still others made predictions about his being a King,
With all the regalia of an enthroned sovereign. (3:14 / 4:18).
(Bhangū, 2006, Vol. 1 p. 23)

Bhangū here is describing the scene after the birth of Gurū Nānak Sāhib. The people of Gurū Nānak Sāhib's birth village, Rai Bullār kī Talvandī (now known as Nankāna Sāhib in West Punjāb, Pakistan) have come to witness this miraculous baby. Bhangū writes about the predictions that villagers make about the child's future. Bhangū imagines that both spiritual and political fame are foreseen in Gurū Nānak Sāhib's future.

We will not be looking at Gurū Nānak Sāhib's childhood as described by Bhangū and will instead move ahead to the Gurū's *Udasīs,* his four odysseys. There are many interesting *sakhīs* about Gurū Nānak Sāhib from these journeys, but we will only be looking at one in particular that speaks to the purposes of this exegesis. This is Gurū Nānak Sāhib's encounter with the last emperor of the Lodhī dynasty, Ibrahīm Lodhī. Later, in Chapter 6, we will look at Trumpp's telling of the same episode.

Chaupai:
Guru Nanak retorted that he would enter Delhi again and again,
And predicted that another king would henceforth rule Delhi.
Guru Nanak also predicted the end of Lodhi Dynasty's empire,
And said that their royal writ would cease to run by 1878 (B.S.). (9:9 / 10:3)

Dohra:
Thus Sri Guru Nanak inflicted his curse on him,
And he died of gastroenterological disorder.
And Delhi was occupied by the Mughal king,
Who became a devout follower of Guru Nanak. (9:10 / 10:4)
(Bhangū, 2006, Vol. 1 p. 53)

This is the end of a *sakhī* about Ibrahīm Lodhī, the Emperor of South Asia before Bābur's invasion and Bābur's creation of the Mughal dynasty. After having established that Sikh sovereignty is specially blessed and divine in nature, Bhangū now turns to analyze the

sovereignty of the Islamic rulers of South Asia. In the first line, Gurū Nānak Sāhib predicts that he will enter Delhi many times. In fact the sixth, eighth, ninth and tenth Gurūs would all visit Delhi in one capacity or another. Looking at Bhangū's focus on the K̲h̲ālsā Panth, and especially the idea of the Panth being crowned as Gurū, I propose that Bhangū is actually referring to one of the last *sakhīs* in *Panth Prakāsh*. In *sakhī* 161, Bhangū describes how in 1783 K̲h̲ālsā forces, under the command of Sardār Baghail Siṅgh Karoṛsiṅghia, invaded and temporarily occupied Delhi. In my opinion, Bhangū has perhaps reformulated Gurū Nānak Sāhib as the K̲h̲ālsā Panth and in stating that the Gurū will enter Delhi again, he was predicting that 300 years after this *sakhī,* in the form of the Sikh people—the K̲h̲ālsā, Gurū Nānak Sāhib would come to destroy Mughal rule.

Bhangū then writes that it was due to a curse of Gurū Nānak Sāhib's that Lodhī rule of South Asia came to an end through the ignominiously painful death of its last emperor. Bhangū finishes this *sakhī* by stating that the Mughal ruler, Bābur, is actually a devotee of Gurū Nānak Sāhib. Bhangū seems to be conflating and confusing events. In this *sakhī* he writes that Ibrahīm Lodhī arrested Gurū Nānak Sāhib (leading to the curse), when according to Sikh tradition, it was Bābur, the first Mughal, who arrested and briefly imprisoned Gurū Nānak Sāhib[21] (Siṅgh, K., 2004, pp. 201-203). Ibrahīm Lodhī also did not die from gastrointestinal disease, literally "excess gas" in the original text, but instead died fighting on the battlefield against the Mughals. Finally, there is no evidence either in mainstream historical sources or in the Sikh tradition that Bābur was a devotee of Gurū Nānak Sāhib. In the Sikh tradition, Bābur recognizes the divinity of Gurū

[21] Bābur's dialogue and subsequent imprisonment of Gurū Nānak Sāhib are important events for Sikh ideology. Gurū Nānak Sāhib made some of his most important political statements during this episode. He also revealed four poems, which are contained in Gurū Granth Sāhib, that in wrenching detail describe the horrors inflicted on the residents of South Asia by the invading Mughals. Gurū Nānak Sāhib's imprisonment would also begin a proud Sikh tradition of being imprisoned for political reasons. The familiarity that many Sikhs have with this episode makes it strange that Bhangū so confused the narrative.

Nānak Sāhib and apologizes for his mistreatment of the Gurū, but he does not in any way become a devotee of the Gurū (Sharma, 1995, pp. 241-243).

The historicity of this event, however, is not of importance to this thesis as this is an analysis of the anarchist principles in the narrative of *Panth Prakāsh*. Thus, what matters is Bhangū's telling and his perspective. In these verses, Bhangū has done something very interesting in how he reformulates the question of sovereignty. Bhangū has turned the tables on Akbar Shāh II, the Mughal emperor from the original framing story at the beginning of the book. Let us recall that the Mughal emperor had asked what earthly or divine source had given Sikhs legitimate sovereignty. Here Bhangū responds by stating that in fact Mughal sovereignty *itself* was the product of Gurū Nānak Sāhib's blessings. In Bhangū's logic, Mughal rule is subservient to Sikh rule, and exists only due to Gurū Nānak Sāhib. Had Akbar Shah II asked, what gives Mughals the right to rule? The answer, according to Bhangū, would be, Gurū Nānak Sāhib.

Bhangū spends a minimal amount of time on the 2nd to 8th Gurūs, doing nothing more than listing their names. Where his narrative picks up again is in discussing the martyrdom (*shahīdī*) of the ninth Gurū, Gurū Tegh Bahādur Sāhib. According to the common Sikh narrative, a group of Hindus from Kashmīr came to this Gurū asking for assistance from the forced conversions their community was enduring at the hands of the Mughal regime. Gurū Tegh Bahādur Sāhib decided that an act of political protest would have the potential to stop these forced conversions, and so he traveled to Delhi, with five Sikhs, to give himself up for arrest in protest of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb's policies. Three of the Gurū's Sikhs and the Gurū himself were arrested. They were mistreated for several months, after which the three Sikhs were tortured to death and then finally Gurū Tegh Bahādur Sāhib was beheaded. Let us pick up Bhangū's narrative from that point.

Chaupai:
(After the Guru's sacrifice), Aurangzeb felt so much frightened,
That he stopped his oppression and tyranny against the Hindus.
Peace and patience came to prevail all around,
The people's outcry had rent the Divine's portals... (12:56 / 13:56)

...Thereafter, the Mughal's grip over Delhi's throne loosened,
And their political power to rule over India also declined. (12:58 / 13:58)
(Bhangū, 2006, Vol. 1 p. 71)

Bhangū sees the execution of Gurū Tegh Bahādur Sāhib as a turning point in Sikh history, a transformative incident that propelled the community forward into the sovereign power it had become in the early 19th century when Bhangū wrote his text.

Bhangū's focus has been on legitimacy: the legitimacy of Sikh sovereignty and that of Mughal rule. It is now, with the execution of the ninth Nānak, that legitimacy was taken from the Mughal empire. Bhangū has already established that Mughal political legitimacy had been due to the blessings of Gurū Nānak Sāhib. Thus, by killing the Ninth Nānak, those blessings have been reversed. The growing weakness of the Mughal Empire, especially in the years since Aurangzeb's death, was, according to Bhangū, the result of this unnatural and horrendous act, an act so evil that it had Divine repercussions on the Mughal Empire's right to exist.

The end of the Mughal Empire's legitimacy created a vacuum of political power in South Asia. According to Bhangū, with the removal of Gurū Nānak Sāhib's blessings, the Gurū's divine sovereign legitimacy was (re)invested into the Sikhs as personified as the Gurū K̲h̲ālsā Panth. The K̲h̲ālsā were now the legitimate rulers of South Asia, or at least parts of it.

Chaupai:
Guru Tegh Bahadur, by making the Supreme sacrifice at Delhi,
Had uprooted the Mughal Emperor's roots from Delhi.
Guru Gobind Singh had made a proper assessment that,
The roots (foundations) of the Mughal empire's had completely withered. (14:11 / 15:11)

But even an old tree does not fall down without its roots being cut,
Or else a mighty storm could bring it tumbling down.
Now the Mughal empire needed to be stormed with an armed attack,

This was the only way to bring this crumbling empire down. (14:12 / 15:12)

So Satguru Guru Gobind Singh himself decided to pick up the sword,
And bring about the destruction of the Mughal empire.
But then Guru Gobind Singh felt in his heart of hearts,
That he himself had no need for a worthless royal power. (14:13 / 15:13)

Sri Guru Nanak had blessed him with such a great divine seat,
That all of Temporal royal power was subservient to it.
Since he did not care for such an inferior temporal power,
He must pass on this kind of political power to his subordinates. (14:14 / 15:14)
(Bhangū, 2006, Vol. 1 p. 77)

Rattan Siṅgh Bhangū again reiterates here in the 14th/15th *sakhī* that with Gurū Tegh Bahādur Sāhib's martyrdom the Mughals lost legitimacy[22]. Yet though it had lost legitimacy, the Mughal empire still needed to be uprooted. The empire had ruled North India for centuries, and even before the Mughal dynasty, the Delhi Sultanate had been in existence since the early 13th century. A comprehensive and extensive structure of nobility, large landowners, feudal chiefs, governors and various government and army officials, were tied to the Mughal crown. So though the Mughal empire was in a rapid decline, it was still a vast and powerful state, and was not going to fade away quietly.

In Bhangū's conception, one of the reasons for the creation of the K̲h̲ālsā by the 10th Nānak was to destroy Mughal power. Bhangū's telling of this *sakhī* also demonstrates a deft explanation of why Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib didn't attack the Mughal Empire directly and challenge Aurangzeb in an outright campaign. Bhangū is compelled to explain why this was left to the Sikhs after Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib's *jotī-jot*. The explanation that Bhangū provides is

[22] This logically leads to the question, what about the fifth Gurū, Gurū Arjan Sāhib, who was executed on the orders of Mughal Emperor Jahangir? Why was his execution not enough to revoke the divine blessings of Gurū Nānak Sāhib from the Mughal empire? Bhangū ignores this seemingly obvious contradiction. For a more in-depth examination of this issue, see Fenech (2001).

that mere political rule would be below the Gurū's stature and divine nature, but instead would be worthy of his Sikhs.

Traditional Sikh historians often tie the revelation of the K̲h̲ālsā to Gurū Tegh Bahādur Sāhib's execution (Singh, T., 2001, pp. 107-108). Apparently the tenth Gurū was disappointed that his Sikhs had stayed hidden during Gurū Tegh Bahādur's martyrdom. These explanations don't always hold up to deeper scrutiny though because of the almost quarter century gap between the *shahīdī* (martyrdom) of the ninth Gurū and the Revelation of the K̲h̲ālsā. If Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sahib saw deficiencies in his people at the time of his father's martyrdom, then why did he take so long to reveal the K̲h̲ālsā? (Singh, T., 2001, pp. 107-108). Another common explanation for the revelation of the K̲h̲ālsā is the Gurū's need to transform his Sikhs into warriors. This explanation though does not bear scrutiny either (Singh, T., 2001, pp. 108-109). The majority of Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib's battles had taken place before the Revelation of the K̲h̲ālsā and the Sikhs had been a warrior people since the time of the sixth Gurū, Gurū Har Gobind Sāhib, a century earlier. While Bhangū gives both of these explanations for the revelation of the K̲h̲ālsā, his other explanation, that Mughal rule is dependent on Gurū Nānak Sāhib, is singularly his own.

From an anarchist and sociological perspective, how are we to understand the legitimacy of the K̲h̲ālsā as delineated by Rattan Siṅgh Bhangū? As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the K̲h̲ālsā defies a Weberian categorization when it comes to questions of political legitimacy. The K̲h̲ālsā in the early 18th century, as described by Bhangū, are a fascinating social experiment, composed of people from many different social backgrounds and economic levels, though primarily made up of people on the social and economic margins of South Asian society. In fact, scholarship demonstrates that the revelation of the K̲h̲ālsā led to conflict within the Sikh

community, conflict that often cleaved along caste and economic lines, with higher caste, wealthier Sikhs often refusing to join the K̲h̲ālsā (Syan, 2014). But though the K̲h̲ālsā was dominated by lower castes, it was not homogenous, with people of all castes and sub-groups being a part of the community.

The K̲h̲ālsā were a social, economic and political force. They were in charge of and established communities, had a financial structure and had an army. Simply put, they were a socio-political group, though to refine that definition further would be difficult, as they were not exactly a nation, a state or a religion. It can be said they were, as Graeber puts it in reference to revolutionary change in his influential essay on anarchist anthropology, a form of counterpower to the structures of power that existed and were the "creation of new social forms" (2004, p. 36).

From an anarchist lens, what they represented to the people, especially those marginalized, is also what offered them legitimacy as a political force. Anarchist ideology believes in the inherent rights of the individual, as Emma Goldman wrote, "True civilization is to be measured by the individual, the unit of all social life; by his individuality and the extent to which it is free to have its being to grow and expand unhindered by invasive and coercive authority" (1940, p. 7)). Goldman was of course, a committed atheist who deeply distrusted all matters religious, but she would have found common ground with the ideal of the sovereign individual who could acknowledge no earthly master, as understood by Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib. It is this belief in the power inherent in the individual that anarchist political legitimacy stems from. If one were to remove the explanation of legitimacy as understood by Bhangū, the divine blessings of Gurū Nānak Sāhib, the Sikh justification for the legitimacy of the K̲h̲ālsā is strikingly similar to traditional anarchist ideology. This is where we see the uncovering of an anarchist principle in Sikhī, through the exegesis of *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh*.

Sociologically speaking, we see in this chapter how political legitimacy can be, through the use of a vernacular text, the result of the creation of historical truth making. Bhangū, through the medium of epic, hagiographic poetry, reinterprets the events of the past, thus presenting his audience with an alternate truth claim, one that is centred around his particular conception of Sikh sovereignty. In the midst of shifting empires and splintered sovereignties, he is providing his Sikh audience with a stable grounding upon which to build a historical conception of what it means to be a K̲h̲ālsā. This work had multiple audiences, of course, and for the British colonials Bhangū's claims dramatically reinforce the idea of a stable and sure Sikh sovereignty, one that is not new and inexperienced, in spite of historical evidence, but is instead divine and inevitable. This is why Bhangu's text spends so much time on the figure of Gurū Nānak Sāhib. He provides the foundation upon which Bhangu's ideal of Sikh sovereignty is built. In Bhangū's socio-cultural imagination, it is Gurū Nānak Sāhib who acts as a conduit between divinity and the K̲h̲ālsā. Gurū Nānak Sāhib is deified and exalted in Bhangū's text, because his truth claims rest on a particular understanding of the first Sikh Gurū. Simply put, in Bhangū's conception, Sikh socio-political legitimacy is the direct result of Gurū Nānak Sāhib's divine status.

Chapter 4: The K̲h̲ālsā: A Sovereign People

With the question of legitimacy of Sikh rule resolved according to Bhangū's logic, I will now turn to the question of who has the right to exercise this sovereignty. In this chapter I will explore Bhangū's description of the aftermath of the Revelation of the K̲h̲ālsā in 1699. This will include a discussion on the tenth Gurū's attempt to eradicate social inequalities through the development of the K̲h̲ālsā. The elimination of the previous Gurūs's bureaucracy and the decentralization of the Sikh Panth will be touched upon. And the chapter will end with a significant analysis of the idea of the royalty of the K̲h̲ālsā.

As I explored in the last chapter, the concept of sovereignty as understood in Mughal South Asia was distinct and unique from European concepts of sovereignty, but there was an idea of the state's sovereignty being concentrated in the person of the king/emperor. At the time that Bhangū was writing *Panth Prakāsh*, Raṇjīt Siṅgh had crowned himself Mahārājā of Punjāb and had vested the authority and sovereignty of the Sikh nation within himself. Raṇjīt Siṅgh's conception and exercise of sovereignty was very much in keeping with South Asian norms.

Bhangū's thoughts on Raṇjīt Siṅgh appear ambivalent or even confused. He writes that a famous Sikh warrior reincarnated as Raṇjīt Siṅgh (Bhangū, 2004, p. 394). Besides this, Bhangū stops his narrative far before Raṇjīt Siṅgh's *rāj*. Ironically Bhangū wrote his text at the height of Raṇjīt Siṅgh's rule. For many Sikhs, both then and now, this was the greatest point in Sikh history and the fulfillment of all the dreams of sovereignty long cherished by the community.

But through his absence of commentary on Raṇjīt Siṅgh, his choice of when he stops his narrative, the focus of his narrative on leaders like Navāb Kapūr Siṅgh and his emphasis on how sovereignty rested in the K̲h̲ālsā as a whole and not in a single individual, it appears that Bhangū was perhaps unsatisfied with Raṇjīt Siṅgh's rule and did not believe it was in the spirit of Sikhī.

Bhangū may have thought that conflict with the British was inevitable, especially considering the response of Sikhs to large empires in the 18th century, which Bhangū himself so thoroughly describes. After all, by that time Raṇjīt Siṅgh was the "final independent indigenous Indian sovereign of the early to mid-nineteenth century" (Fenech, 2015, p. 83) so British expansion towards Punjāb must have been an obvious outcome. Maybe Bhangū thought if the British understood the legitimacy of Sikh sovereignty they would respect Sikhs and refrain from subsuming Punjāb into their growing empire.

Bhangū's work fits into a strange period in Sikh-Anglo history. It is neither a response to colonialism nor a product of colonialism but was created as a result of the rise of colonialism in South Asia. It was impacted by the British before the British officially impacted Punjāb. In fact, outside of Bhangū's literary work, it appears that the British had a wide cultural effect on the independent Sikh kingdom decades before formal colonialism was established (Fenech, 2015).

For Bhangū, it is the K̲h̲ālsā and only the K̲h̲ālsā that is sovereign; there is no legitimate place in Sikhī for a single individual supreme leader. The needs, desires and decisions of the community, as a whole, are paramount. For Bhangū, the Divine sovereignty of Gurū Nānak Sāhib, transferred to Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib, was then established in the Sikh people as a whole. To clarify, when I say 'Sikh people', I mean K̲h̲ālsā Sikhs. *Khaṇḍai Batai kī Pāhaul* (*Amrit Sanchar*) ceremony was what unlocked this radical potential of the individual in Bhangū's interpretation.

The exegesis of this next section of *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh* will clarify how Bhangū conceives of sovereignty, and how something that in the South Asian context is usually considered to be concentrated in an individual, could possibly be spread amongst a community.

In the following verses we see Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib thinking aloud to himself about his plans for what was to become the K̲h̲ālsā.

> *Dohra:*
> *The needy alone deserve to be endowed with rare gifts,*
> *What is the use of empowering those who are already powerful?*
> *The House of Nanak is known for its compassion and generosity,*
> *And known as the saviour and protector of the poor. (14:19 / 15:19)*
>
> *Chaupai:*
> *Those who belong to the various offshoots of lowly twelve sub-castes,*
> *And who know nothing about the game of power politics.*
> *Who are contemptuously known as rustic peasants, in the society,*
> *OR known as traders, small time shopkeepers and petty fighters. (14:20 / 15:20)*
>
> *Those who belong to the low castes of blacksmiths and carpenters,*
> *And the lowly placed tailors and wine-venders would receive his benediction.*
> *This fraternity will also include the low caste cattle grazers, rustics, and cow herds,*
> *And the ignoble vegetable growers (kambojs) and scheduled castes. (14:21 / 15:21)*
>
> *Water-carriers, Barbers, small vendors, potters will also join this community,*
> *Sainis, goldsmiths, sweepers and cobblers will form a part of this brotherhood.*
> *Ballad-singers, priests, and mendicants will also be the alliance partners,*
> *Salt-traders, potters and artisans will also share power. (14:22 / 15:22)*
>
> *I shall confer sovereignty on these poor and needy Gursikhs,*
> *So that they may remember my patronage and benediction.*
> *Saying this Guru Gobind Singh challenged his followers,*
> *That they should pick up swords and attack the Mughals. (14:23 / 15:23)*
> (Bhangū, 2006, Vol. 1 p. 79)

Bhangū imagines, in this *sakhī*, Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib saying that he wants to bestow his sovereignty and blessings (*kirpa*) upon the lowest and most marginalized members of society. One of the frequent critiques of the K̲h̲ālsā, both during the Gurū's time and later in the 18th century, was that members of the K̲h̲ālsā were composed of low caste groups. This was part of the argument made against the legitimacy of Sikh sovereignty by British observers and Mughal writers. Bhangū states that being marginalized is not a deficiency: rather, it is the purpose of the K̲h̲ālsā to empower the marginalized. This can be said to be a central purpose of anarchism in general (DeLeon, 2006, p.75).

The listing of various castes that Bhangū does in this excerpt is much more poetic in the original text. Bhangū makes liberal use of alliteration, internal rhyme and a clipped metre, which in conjunction creates a propulsive list that seems to move forward through its own poetic force. By specifically listing so many groups, Bhangū is demonstrating the expansiveness of Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib's vision. Someone listening to the list could imagine the list continuing, slowly encompassing all of the marginalized groups of South Asia. It is through specificity that a universal appeal is brought forward. Even if your caste is not listed, the list is so large as to feel inclusive.

Stanza 23, the last one in this excerpt, is of note because of how Bhangū's words have entered the Sikh cultural imagination. In the original, the line is as follows, with my more basic translation following:

> *In garīban hum daiya pātshāshī / ai yād rakhai hamarī guraiyī*
> I give these poor ones kingship. Let them remember my Gurūship.

which Kulwant Siṅgh translates as,

> *I shall confer sovereignty on these poor and needy Gursikhs,*
> *So that they may remember my patronage and benediction.*

I have heard and read this line, with a few small differences, spoken from Gurdwāra stages, at political rallies and at protests many times since I was a child. Before reading *Panth Prakāsh* in preparation for this thesis, I had assumed this to be a saying of Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib's that had been transmitted through the oral tradition. This may yet be the case, as Bhangū may have heard this saying from an oral tradition of his time. There are a few instances like this in *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh*, sections of the text that have become unmoored and have entered the popular Sikh consciousness. Many of them, like this quote, are statements related to Sikh sovereignty and political independence, demonstrating the intertextuality of *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh* socially and politically in Sikh history.

What does Bhangū mean by *garīban* in this quote, which literally means "the poor"? The word has connotations of being meek, helpless, powerless and humble. Bhangū is showing Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib as framing his pre-K̲h̲ālsā Sikhs as helpless and defenseless. What the translator translates as 'sovereignty' in this quote—*patshahī*, literally means 'kingship', but carries with it the weight of ideas like rule, sovereignty, and independence or perhaps simply, elevated status. Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib is personally granting this to his Sikhs in these lines. This is an intimate, personal giving. The second line of the quote has the word *guraiyī*, a word that means "of Gurūship, pertaining to the Gurū". Sikhs normally take this to mean that Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib is saying, "Let them remember my example of how to behave as a Gurū". There is an idea here of aspiration, of an attempt to live up to a legacy or perhaps to be inspired by the ways of the Gurū as a form of inclusion.

This is a simple couplet poetically. The rhyme is a straightforward one and the vocabulary is basic and easily understood by even modern Punjābi speakers. The beginning of the both lines involve short quick words, while the last word of both lines is drawn out and long, giving emphasis to those keywords: *patshahī* and *guraiyī*. These short two lines have become foundational in the conception of Sikh political theory,, demonstrating the power of a historical text rendered in poetry. In a community that literally worships the poetic word, poetry has the capacity to transmit powerful ideas across time, and through the centuries. Some poems have become an integral part of the Sikh experience; these lines are one such instance.

Next Bhangū describes the Revelation of the K̲h̲ālsā. I will not delve into his description of the original K̲h̲ālsā ceremony on Vaisākhī of 1699. Bhangū's narrative generally follows the broad outlines of the accepted modern Sikh narrative of the Revelation of the K̲h̲ālsā, though it does have some aspects that are uniquely his. For the purposes of this exegesis, I will turn to the

end of the ceremony when Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib was initiated into the K̲h̲ālsā. The Gurū has just explained the *Rehit* (code of conduct) to the first five K̲h̲ālsā, the *Pañj Piārai*. Now he bows down before them himself.

> *Dohra:*
> *Whatever ceremonial procedure Satguru had devised earlier,*
> *He repeated the same procedure once again.*
> *He begged to be initiated himself in the same manner,*
> *From those five chosen ones whom he himself had initiated. (15:20 / 16:20)*
>
> *Chaupai:*
> *After being initiated by the five initiated ones in the same manner,*
> *He came to be known as Teacher-disciple rolled into one.*
> *This has been the tradition from the very beginning,*
> *As Guru Nanak had also accepted Guru Angad as his Guru. (15:21 / 16:21)*
> (Bhangū, 2006, Vol. 1 pp. 87-89)

By bowing down to the *Pañj Piārai*, Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib had become a Sikh of the Gurū K̲h̲ālsā, essentially a *Gur-Chaila*. The *Gur-Chaila* or Gurū-Sikh, concept is central to Sikhī. Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib was reenacting the ceremony that took place two centuries earlier, when Gurū Nānak Sāhib bowed before the next Gurū, Gurū Angad Sāhib. The Gurū must become a Sikh, and the Sikh must become the Gurū. Previous to 1699, this ceremony played out between the Gurū and an individual Sikh (the chosen person who would be made the next Gurū). In 1699, the Gurū bowed down before the entire K̲h̲ālsā Panth collectively, and invested the people at large as the next Gurū of the Sikhs[23]. This radical act was almost unheard of in South Asian terms. A spiritual preceptor, whether in the Vedic, Yogic or Islamic traditions, would never lower themselves before a student. Similarly, a political ruler would never bow to anyone, especially not their own subjects. As someone who epitomized both spiritual and political authority, for Guru Gobind Singh Sahib to bow down to his own people was shocking.

Dohra:

[23] See N. Singh's "Birth of the Khalsa" for further discussion of the parallels in the relationship between Gurū Nānak Sāhib & Gurū Angad Sāhib and Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib & the K̲h̲ālsā Panth. Singh explores the narratives surrounding the transfer of Gurūship from the 1st to 2nd Gurū in the context of Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib's revelation of the Khalsa (2005, p. 67).

(Just after the Vaisakhi Day of 1699), the day of Khalsa's initiation,
The Khalsa Panth started increasing and expanding.
From the initial five, people in the bands of fifties and hundreds,
Kept on joining its ranks after queueing up for initiation. (16:1 / 17:1)

Chaupai:
Guru Gobind Singh decentralized and delegated his powers to the Khalsa,
And put them in positions of responsibility in every sphere of activity.
He sent his appointed emissaries to the South, the East and the North,
As well as his representatives to the West and the mid-west. (16:2 / 17:2)

Dohra:
Small bands of initiated Sikhs were sent to Amritsar and Patna,
As well as several other places of Guru's influence.
These young Singhs were sent with full powers to initiate others,
After assuring them of his full backing and guidance. (16:3 / 17:3)
(Bhangū, 2006, Vol. 1 p. 89)

In these verses Bhangū describes the actions of the nascent K̲h̲ālsā. There are a few issues of interest to us in these lines. From the time of Gurū Nānak Sāhib up until 1699 the Gurū had been the sole source of all leadership within the Sikh Panth. Post-1699, however, Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib was engaged in a radical undertaking. The responsibilities previously manifested within the person of the Gurū, were now distributed out into the community. The word "decentralized" in the translation is "Given all the responsibilities of the True Guru" in the original. Leadership, authority and responsibility were being shared. What Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib did in creating the K̲h̲ālsā was establish a new authoritative structure in the community, where leadership was no longer concentrated in one individual but in all of the people collectively. This can be seen as a transference from a charismatic leadership model to something less easily quantifiable.

These verses hold a sense of territoriality as well. The K̲h̲ālsā is physically spreading itself across South Asia, though more likely across Punjāb. This spreading of the K̲h̲ālsā as described by Bhangū here acts as a foreshadowing for the growth of the K̲h̲ālsā's political dominance later in the 18th century. Many modern Sikhs understand the K̲h̲ālsā in a global

context, and see a universalism in Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib's actions. Bhangū's focus is much less global and much more focused on Punjāb. Bhangū's text can be seen as a buttress in creating the tradition of Punjāb being the natural home of the K̲h̲ālsā, and it is Punjāb that the K̲h̲ālsā are, according to Bhangū, destined to rule.

Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib's revelation of the K̲h̲ālsā can also be understood as a challenge to hierarchical forms of authority in society. As Chomsky, as an anarchist, writes,

> I think it only makes sense to seek out and identify structures of authority, hierarchy, and domination in every aspect of life, and to challenge them; unless justification for them can be given, they are illegitimate, and should be dismantled, to increase the scope of human freedom (Doyle, 1995, p. 178).

The early K̲h̲ālsā was an attempt to establish an anti-hierarchical society, which is the chief concern of anarchism. As Amster states, "the centrality of an anti-hierarchical perspective is evident in anarchist theory and action alike. It might be said that a robust notion of anti-hierarchy is the *sine qua non* of anarchism" (2018, p. 15). Both anarchism and sociology have studied inequality, hierarchy and domination. For anarchists, there is a clear delineation of importance. While sociologists are often concerned with inequality, which granted, is a major societal problem, for anarchists the root culprits are hierarchy and dominance, the *consequence* of which is inequality.

> By hierarchy, I mean the cultural, traditional and psychological systems of obedience and command, not merely the economic and political systems to which the terms class and State most appropriately refer. Accordingly, hierarchy and domination could easily continue to exist in a "classless" or "Stateless" society. I refer to the domination of the young by the old, of women by men, of one ethnic group by another, of "masses" by bureaucrats who profess to speak in their "higher social interest," of countryside by town, and in a more subtle psychological sense, of body by mind, of spirit by a shallow instrumental rationality, and of nature by society and technology. Indeed, classless but hierarchical societies exist today (and they existed more covertly in the past); yet the people who live in them neither enjoy freedom, nor do they exercise control over their lives. (Bookchin, 1982, pp. 7-8)

Domination is "utterly entangled with class, gender and race inequality" meaning that it is a much more complex and stubborn phenomenon than most sociologists realize (Shantz & Williams, 2013, p. 101).

The *Nāsh (destruction) doctrin*e is the principle that Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib countered at least five forms of inequality when revealing the K̲h̲ālsā. The *Nāsh doctrine* was first delineated by Gianī Gian Siṅgh, who wrote his own *Panth Prakāsh*, popularly called the *Navīn Panth Prakāsh* (*Newer Panth Prakāsh*) in 1880. Gian Siṅgh's *Panth Prakāsh* is a direct expansion of Bhangū's text and is organized in a similar manner. Thus, while Bhangū does not directly list these five forms of *Nāsh* the general principles behind these are found in Bhangu's text.

1. *Sharm-Nāsh*: This is the destruction of shame for one's profession. In traditional South Asian culture many jobs were severely stigmatized, and even the families of those working in these jobs were socially ostracized. Jobs related to death, human waste and leather production were (and still are) particularly discriminated against. For Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib, all that mattered was whether one worked honestly and whether one shared one's wealth. Beyond that, there should be no social stigma attached to any profession. This social inequality is directly linked to caste issues as well.

2. *Kul-Nāsh:* This is the destruction of one's family lineage. This destruction of this social inequality was a great blow against the caste system. The caste system was passed down, patrilineally, and so one was always tied to one's ancestors' caste. If your ancestors were high caste you were treated as socially superior. If your ancestors were low caste, you were treated as inferior. By destroying ties to one's family of origin in this sense, Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib was trying to give his Sikhs a symbolic rebirth into the House of Nānak, into the Gurū's lineage. The K̲h̲ālsā were symbolically casteless, united as siblings. The use of *Kaur* and *Siṅgh* as new names for members of the K̲h̲ālsā also speaks to this.

3. *Dharam-Nāsh*: This is the destruction of previous creeds. Religious discrimination was ripe in early modern South Asia. *Gurū Granth Sāhib* has several poems that speak to conflict between Hindu and Muslim groups. The Gurū wanted Sikhs to be removed from this conflict, which was a source of social discrimination. Many Muslims looked down on Hindus as idol-worshiping pagans while many Hindus thought of Muslims as barbarous foreign invaders. The K̲h̲ālsā were meant to be elevated from this religious conflict.

4. *Karam-Nāsh*: This is the destruction of previous actions. This is the most personal of the social inequalities. This was freedom from one's own past. This was freedom from the mistakes one may have committed. There is a deeper spiritual component to this aspect of the Nāsh doctrine.

5. *Bharam-Nāsh*: This is the destruction of superstitions and rituals. While we may think of superstitions and rituals as perhaps old-fashioned, but not generally harmful, these were powerful tools in South Asia especially when it came to the discrimination against women and the lower

castes. Due to menstruation and child-birth, women were considered to be ritually impure. Due to their caste, the low castes were also impure, to varying levels, with the 'untouchables' the Dalit, being most impure according to the logic of South Asian ritual. Ritual and superstitions were thus a tool of social inequality and discrimination and the destruction of them was an attempt to create a more livable society for all members.
(The five forms of *Nash* are from Siṅgh, G., 1880, vol.1 p. 1660, the explanations are my own)

The reign of the Gurū K̲h̲ālsā did not begin with the *jotī-jot* of the Gurū in 1708, but instead occurred nine years earlier in Anandpur. In a sense, from 1699 onwards, Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib was co-Gurū along with his people. Evidence of this co-Gurūship, where Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib submitted to the will of the K̲h̲ālsā, is well known in Sikh tradition[24].

(Chaupai)
All the offerings made at the Gurudwaras as well as before the Gurūs,
Were transferred to the Khalsa Panth along with the right to Prayer.
The entire treasury, the custody of land along with all other valuables,
Were ordered to be handed over to the Khalsa Panth. (17:6 / 18:6

Masands were ordered to get themselves initiated as Singhs,
Else they would be deprived of both their status and life as well.
Such a decree incensed the masands to such an extent,
As if they had been bruised with a sharp-edged dagger. (17:7 / 18:7)
(Bhangū, 2006, Vol. 1 p. 103)

According to Purnima Dhavan, one of the primary purposes for the revelation of the K̲h̲ālsā was to break the stranglehold the *Masands* had on the community (2011, pp. 31-33). Who were the *Masands,* how were they tied to the financial issues of the community and what did this mean for the K̲h̲ālsā's political sovereignty?

In the 16th century, Gurū Amar Dās Sāhib, the third Nānak, had set up a bureaucracy in order to administer the increasingly far-flung Sikh community. The Sikh community was split

[24] There are traditionally understood to be three instances where Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib demonstrated the authority of the Gurū K̲h̲ālsā Panth. The first is, once while marching with his Sikhs, Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib raised his arrow as a sign of respect to the Tomb of the famous saint Dadu Dayal. It is contrary to Sikh Rehit to show respect to graves or tombs. Five Sikhs challenged the Gurū for his action and fined him a symbolic "tankah" (monetary punishment). The second time was when the Mughal and Hill King forces that had besieged Anandpur Sāhib promised to let the residents of Anandpur evacuate peacefully. Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib wanted to wait out the siege, but the K̲h̲ālsā disagreed, and five Sikhs ordered the Gurū to accept the Mughal/Hill King offer. The third time was during the Battle of Chamkaur, when five Sikhs ordered the Gurū to not go and fight and die, but instead to escape (Ashok, S. S., 1995, Vol 3, p. 284).

into 22 sections, or *Manjīs*, creating a parallel power structure to the 22 provinces of the Mughal empire, and a different Sikh was appointed to head each *Manjī* (be a *Manjīdār*) (Singh, G., 1995b, pp. 42-42). As a part of the Gurū's push to empower women and create space for women to take on a variety of leadership roles within the community, some of the *Manjīdārs* were women (Singh, G., 1995, pp. 42-42). This *Manjī* system was then adapted by his successors, Gurū Rām Dās Sāhib and Gurū Arjan Sāhib, into the *Masand* system. The *Masands* had an incredible amount of authority. They were responsible for all the needs of the local Sikh community. They had the privilege to be able to initiate new Sikhs, to collect money on behalf of the Gurū and to impart the Gurū's teachings. This was a centralized system to help coordinate a growing community and was definitely not anarchist in nature as it was directly based on a social hierarchy.

The *Masand* system started to break down quickly. The positions became hereditary and by the time of the 9th Gurū, many *Masands* had grown corrupt. One of the primary purposes of the revelation of the K̲h̲ālsā was to cultivate a direct relationship between community and Gurū. By becoming K̲h̲ālsā, and turning away from their local *Masands,* Sikh communities could become responsible for their own governance and financial decisions.

In the stanza above Bhangū explains how the financial matters of the community, both centrally and locally, were now under the purview of the K̲h̲ālsā. The K̲h̲ālsā was the community, and therefore the community was empowered. This was but the first step in the decentralization of the Panth. By placing the community directly in charge of finances, Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib removed traditional social hierarchies and authority positions—even himself, from the equation.

As we can see, the *Masands* were given an opportunity to join this system. But to do so would mean giving up their privilege and becoming one amongst equals. It is not surprising to know that the majority of *Masands* refused to join the K̲h̲ālsā (Singh, M., 1995, p.64). Bhangū's statement about the *Masands* being threatened with death is a contentious point among historians. Many Sikh scholars of the 18th and 19th centuries, state that the *Masands* who refused to give up their positions willingly and submit to the K̲h̲ālsā were killed, which is what Bhangu himself writes (2006, Vol.1 p. 105). Other historians feel these are later interpolations and that the *Masands* were not actually executed (Singh, M., 1995, Vol 3, p.64). We will also see in Chapter 6 how the *Masands* of Bhangū's narrative may have been imposed metaphorically on to the *Mahants* (non-normative Sikh caretakers of Gurdwaras) of the early 20th Century, which may demonstrate the role that *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh* played in the burgeoning anti-colonial movement.

The decentralized, and to some, disorganized and chaotic, nature of the K̲h̲ālsā from the 1720's to the 1750's was often commented on by outsiders (Madra & Siṅgh, 2006, pp. 73-74). What these commentators didn't understand was that this wasn't a deficiency in the K̲h̲ālsā, so much as an essential component and feature. What they also did not see was the small-scale cooperation at a local level that ensured that the community functioned. According to Bhangū, Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib is advocating for the local control of resources. Instead of a centralized bureaucracy, which is how Sikhī had operated for the previous two centuries, Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib wanted resources to remain within local communities. This is an early anarchist principle and a cornerstone of political anarchism (DeLeon, 2006, 85). What the Gurū had created, through the empowerment of local communities, was something in the mold of what early anarchists envisioned as the ideal society:

> Bakunin and Kroptokin and others[…] had in mind a highly organized form of society, but a society that was organized on the basis of organic units, organic communities. And generally they meant by that the workplace and the neighborhood, and from those two basic units there could derive through federal arrangements a highly integrated kind of social organization, which might be national or even international in scope. And the decisions could be made over a substantial range, but by delegates who are always part of the organic community from which they come, to which they return and in which, in fact, they live. (Chomsky, 2005, p. 133)

These early anarchists, Bakunin and Kropotkin, proposed that organization and structure are actually essential components of anarchist society. The key is what level of organization this involves, meaning local versus state, and whether people are free to choose to take part or not. This decentralized but locally organized model would go on to become one of the main attributes of early and mid-18th century Sikhī.

As stated earlier, in popular Sikh tradition there are a few incidents in the era between 1699 and 1708 that demonstrated that Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib had given sovereignty and authority to the K̲h̲ālsā Panth. Bhangū uses the events after the Evacuation of Anandpur Sāhib in 1703 as an example of one such moment as we will see in the following verses. The Evacuation of Anandpur, when the Gurū's mother, Mātā Gujrī, along with his two youngest children, Sāhibzāda (prince) Baba Zoravār Siṅgh & Sāhibzāda Baba Fateh Siṅgh[25] were separated and lost, and the subsequent Battle of Chamkaur are some of the most eulogized events in Sikh history. During the Battle of Chamkaur, Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib with 40 Sikhs, had become trapped in a small mud fort surrounded by thousands of Mughal troops. It was here that the Gurū's two eldest children, Sāhibzāda Baba Ajīt Siṅgh, aged 17, and Sāhibzāda Baba Jujhār Siṅgh, aged 13, died as martyrs in battle (Siṅgh, G., 1995a, pp. 429-430).

As we join the narrative, the number of surviving Sikh warriors was quickly dwindling in the long night. Now Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib began to prepare himself for battle. However, out

[25] The Gurū's mother and the two young children were eventually captured by Mughal forces. The children, aged six and nine, were tortured to death. Mātā Gujrī, aged 81, died due to the conditions of her imprisonment.

of the remaining handful of Sikhs, five gathered together, and acting as the *Pañj Piārai*, ordered the Gurū not to fight and potentially die in the battle but instead escape in order to keep Sikhī alive. The Gurū obeyed the command of his Sikhs, who symbolically represented his Gurū. Before he left, it was decided that a Sikh who bore a passing resemblance to the Gurū, usually named as Saṅgat Siṅgh, but here in Bhangū's telling, known as Sant Siṅgh, would dress up as the Gurū so that when the Mughals breached the walls, they would assume that they had captured and killed Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib.

> *...Now I would confer sovereignty on the Khalsa Panth,*
> *By anointing them as my true successors. (19.2:7)*
>
> *Satguru vacated the seat on which he was sitting,*
> *And made a Singh named Sant Singh occupy that seat,*
> *Removing his own turban from his revered head,*
> *He placed it on Sant Singh's head with his blessings. (19.2:8)*
>
> *Then removing his crown, he put it on Sant Singh's head,*
> *As well as he made Sant Singh wear his own royal garments.*
> *Following Sikh Guru's tradition, he appointed the Singhs as his successors,*
> *Much in the tradition of Guru Nanak appointing Guru Angad*[26] *his successor. (19.2:9)*
>
> *Asking the remaining Singhs to pay obeisance to his successor,*
> *The Guru bestowed the Singhs with a power of sovereignty…*
> (Bhangū, 2006, Vol. 1 pp. 127-129)

As Bhangū tells the *sakhī*, when the tenth Nānak tied his turban on Sant Siṅgh's head, and then placed the *kalgi* (plumed aigrette) on the front of his turban (the mark of royal sovereignty), he symbolically had given full authority of the Sikh nation to the K̲h̲ālsā. This literal crowning of one Sikh represented the coronation of the entire Sikh Panth.

It is here that Sikh anarchism differs strongly from European models of anarchy. As noted in the introductory chapter, in anarchism, as in socialism and communism, royalty and monarchies are anathema, and are a frequent target of activists. The Sikh Gurū encompasses

[26] Historically, the previous Gurū will always anoint the next Gurū and coronate them before their own death. This is a part of the *Gur-Chaila* tradition as discussed previously.

many roles, responsibilities and aspects, one of which is as a socio-political emperor, the *Sachai Pātshāh* (true king). This aspect of the Gurū was slowly developed and revealed and did not come to full fruition until the sixth Nānak, Gurū Har Gobind Sāhib. From the sixth Gurū onward, the Sikh Gurūs styled themselves as emperors, and carried themselves as royal sovereigns.

What Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib did, in revealing the K̲h̲ālsā, was not to end the monarchy of the House of Nānak, but instead inaugurate the entire Sikh Panth into the royal Gurū lineage; Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib made the people royal. The language surrounding the initial K̲h̲ālsā ceremony, and *Amrit* ceremonies since then, retain this idealism. Sikhs are given new names when they become K̲h̲ālsā, much like when a monarch is crowned. Women are given the name *Kaur* and men the name *Siṅgh*, both names for royalty in the Rājput tradition. New members of the K̲h̲ālsā are told that Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib is now their father, and Mātā Sāhib Devan Kaur their mother, and that their birthplace is now Anandpur Sāhib. This is the symbolic rebirth into the Gurū's home. New members of the K̲h̲ālsā are bestowed with a turban and a sword[27], which are also South Asian markers of royal sovereignty.

This is a system of equality and egalitarianism that seeks to uplift the individual, instead of bringing everyone down to the same level. By joining the K̲h̲ālsā, you are told that you have become like the Gurū, you belong to the Gurū, you are the Gurū K̲h̲ālsā Panth. Monarchism is thus not against the tenets of Sikh anarchism, instead, Sikh anarchism envisions a society where all are monarchs. Anarcha-Sikhī can thus be framed as a people's or popular monarchy.

In his *Religion and the specter of the West*, Mandair (2009) tries to work towards a conceptualization of Sikhī that is free from the historic tethers of colonialism. For Mandair, "the

[27] Women and men are both given swords when they join the K̲h̲ālsā, but whether women are given a turban and should tie one is a point of contention. Many Sikh women chose to tie a turban as they see the turban as a gift given by Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib to all of his Sikhs, and they feel it is discriminatory for women not to tie one (Mahmood & Brady, 2000, pp. 46-77).

teachings of the Sikh Gurūs in Sikh scripture conform neither to ethical monotheism espoused by the Singh Sabha, which reproduces the dualistic structures of Western metaphysics, nor to the Vedic theo-ideology of 'eternal Sanskrit.'" (2009, pp. 360-361). While Mandair focuses on the teachings of the Gurū as contained in Gurū Granth Sāhib, his insight is just as relevant when discussing the K̲h̲ālsā Panth. It is not just Sikh scripture that defies easy categorization into either a western ideology or a vedic one, but it is also the socio-political formations of the Gurūs that are equally unique. In her essay on a lesser known work of Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib's, *Uggardantī,* Ami Shah discusses the concept of the *Tīsar Panth,* or the Third Path (2008, p. 183). *Tīsar Panth* is a way of referring to the K̲h̲ālsā Panth that appears in some early K̲h̲ālsā works and refers to the fact that the Sikh path is unique from both the Semitic/Abrahamic traditions and the Vedic-Buddhist traditions of South Asia. Discussing the use of the phrase in the *Uggardantī* composition, Shah writes, "In addition to the presentation of the tisar panth as a religious alternative to Hindu and Turk dharam, the composition is unequivocal in identifying the tisar panth as the victorious political successor to the sovereign rule established by the Turk and Mughal canopy" (2008, p. 183). The distinctiveness of Sikh thought, both in Granth and Panth, is directly tied to the sovereign traditions of the K̲h̲ālsā.

As such the Anarcha-Sikhī formulation of a popular monarchy is unique, distinct and unquantifiable from either the Western/Islamic tradition or the Vedic/Hindu tradition. This is a method of understanding monarchy and royalty that has no precedent in other traditions. This is one of the distinct markers of the K̲h̲ālsā Panth: the creation of a royal people.

Chapter 5: Anarchist Organization & Governance

Thus far I have examined Bhangū's thoughts on the legitimacy and sovereignty of the K̲h̲ālsā. In this chapter I will briefly touch upon the case of Bābā Bandā Siṅgh Bahādur, and what his example means for the anarchist ideology of the early K̲h̲ālsā. Then, the bulk of the chapter will be an examination of the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā, the main method of self-governance used by the 18th century K̲h̲ālsā. European accounts and Sikh oral tradition will be used in this description and analysis. Then the ideal Sikh leader in the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā model will be examined. Issues of humility and the origins of the consensus model in anarchism will be explored. Finally, the chapter will end with a discussion of the possible reasons for the break-down of the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā model in the late 18th century.

We now continue the exegesis by first looking at the last few months of Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib's earthly life. With the Gurū's *jotī-jot,* the Gurū Granth Sāhib and the Gurū K̲h̲ālsā Panth became the two Gurūs of the Sikhs. The period of the Gurū as a singular, monarch-like, leader was over. Now the concept of Gurū meant something very different. The Gurū was poetic scripture, to sing, read and integrate into one's being, and the Gurū was the K̲h̲ālsā, a community of individuals. What I seek to examine in this last part of this anarchist exegesis are the methods of governance and decision-making that the K̲h̲ālsā practiced as explicated by Bhangū's writing.

Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib in the last two months of his life was encamped in the southern part of the subcontinent in what is now the city of Nanded, Maharashtra. While at Nanded, according to Sikh tradition and *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh,* the Gurū met a *sadhū*[28] whom Bhangū refers to as Narain Dās[29]. Narain Dās, according to Bhangū, was an arrogant man who used his

[28] Hindu religious ascetic

[29] In traditional Sikh sources and modern scholarship, Bandā's pre-Sikh name is given as Madho Dās. Besides the different name, Bhangū's narrative generally aligns with Sikh tradition.

religious knowledge to bully and fleece the locals. But Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib saw a spark of something greater in Narain Dās. Bhangū's text then describes how, after a series of incidents, Narain Dās recognized the Gurū's supremacy, took *Khaṇḍai Batai kī Pāhaul* and was given the name of Bandā Siṅgh, *bandā* meaning servant (of the Gurū). After a short time of training and learning with the Gurū, Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib gave Bandā Siṅgh the title of *Bahādur,* meaning 'the Brave', and gave him the mission of liberating Punjāb from Mughal rule and seeking justice for the deaths of his youngest children and other prominent Sikh figures. According to Bhangū, Bandā Siṅgh Bahādur was made the head of the K̲h̲ālsā forces.

Bandā Siṅgh Bahādur holds a unique place in Sikh history. In short, there are many contradictions surrounding him. He was chosen over many more well-respected veteran Sikh warriors to be the leader of the Sikh army, after only months or perhaps even weeks of being a Sikh. He was sent to free Punjāb but himself was not Punjābi: according to Sikh tradition he had been born in Kashmir, though Bhangū is silent on his ethnicity. He was to lead the K̲h̲ālsā, the Sikh nation, which was meant to be leaderless and was designed to be unstructured. It would appear that Bandā Siṅgh, from an anarchist perspective, represents the opposite of egalitarian and anti-authoritarian principles. Bandā Siṅgh is a demonstration of what not following anarchist principles meant for the K̲h̲ālsā.

After a rapid ascent as the leader of the K̲h̲ālsā forces in which he carved out a Sikh state from Mughal Punjāb, Bandā Siṅgh began to behave, according to Bhangū, in an authoritarian manner[30]. Soon after this he fell from grace, the nascent state he set up was destroyed, and he and his forces were captured, tortured and killed. His fall offers a cautionary tale to the Sikh community. Be careful with leadership. Don't place too much responsibility in one person. The

[30] Bhangū's contention that Bandā Siṅgh was a problematic figure is not universally accepted by either historians or modern Sikhs, for whom, he is a lauded figure responsible for the first instance of *K̲h̲ālsā Raj*

community itself must remain sovereign. Its system of organization must reflect the goals of the people. The community should utilize structures and systems that the Gurū put into place for decision making, such as the *Pañj Piāra* model. Turning away from that and placing too much power in one individual is the path to ruin, not only for the individual, but the community as a whole.

We see in the Bandā Siṅgh episode the importance of prefigurative policies. It is my contention that the Khalsa was set up for the express purpose of creating an anti-authoritarian and egalitarian society. By becoming an authoritative monarchical figure, Bandā Siṅgh twisted the original goals of the K̲h̲ālsā. The society that the K̲h̲ālsā sought to establish could not be created from a system that itself was inherently authoritative.

How did the K̲h̲ālsā operate in post-Bābā Bandā Siṅgh Bahādur? What were the anarchist principles and methods utilized by this era of K̲h̲ālsā? Let us explore this part of Bhangū's text for answers to these questions. For about a decade the K̲h̲ālsā was relatively quiet and living with the aftermath of the brutal suppression of Bandā Siṅgh in 1716. The genocidal campaigns of the Mughal emperors and the massive loss of life had pushed the K̲h̲ālsā underground, hiding from government surveillance. Non-K̲h̲ālsā Sikhs, like *Udasīs* and *Nānakpanthīs*, were still relatively free to live their lives, and assisted the K̲h̲ālsā especially in the maintenance of Gurdwāras.

In the verses that follow, Bhangū elaborates in some detail what different forms of self-governance meant for the K̲h̲ālsā at this time. This exploration of these anarchist forms of decision making and self-governance will be the focus of the next part of the exegesis. This era under analysis covers the time from Bandā Siṅgh Bahādur's martyrdom up to the *Misls*. It was

during this time that the Sikh Panth was most successful in its campaign for revolutionary freedom from Mughal and Afghan Rule[31].

> *Chaupai:*
> *After ransacking the region would the Singhs reach Amritsar,*
> *There would they hold congregations on Diwali and Baisakhi .*
> *Congregating in Harmandir would they listen to the discourse,*
> *There would they concentrate on the Guru's sacred words. (122:1 / 118:1)*
> *Thereafter, would they hold a meeting at Akal Takht,*
> *There would they pass resolutions after a congregation.*
> *All the Khalsa contingents would hold a court there,*
> *There would they decide to protect the Sikhs and destroy the wicked. (122:2 / 118:2)*
> (Bhangū, 2006, Vol. 2 p. 403)

In 1711, Bhāī Manī Siṅgh, the extremely well-respected scholar-warrior, was deputed by Mātā Sundarī and Mātā Sāhib Devan Kaur[32] to come to Amritsar and take control of the central Sikh institutions there, specifically the Harmandir Sāhib and the Akāl Takht Sāhib (Jaggi, 1995, pp. 6-7). In the absence of Bandā Siṅgh's leadership, the community had started to gather at Mātā Sundarī and Mātā Sāhib Devan Kaur's residence on the outskirts of Delhi. In 1723, they sent Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib's aged uncle, Kirpal Siṅgh, to come to Amritsar and along with Bhāī Manī Siṅgh to organize fairs/gatherings/celebrations (*jor melas*) for Vaisākhī and Dīvālī and to use those *melai* as an opportunity to have a Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā.

Bhāī Kirpal Siṅgh and Bhāī Manī Siṅgh organized, on Vaisākhī 1723, the first Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā (Chibbar, 1997, p. 214). *Sarbat* means 'completely' or 'all', so *Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā* is a gathering of the entire K̲h̲ālsā. While the entire K̲h̲ālsā Panth could not actually gather in one space due to logistical reasons, a significant portion of the community would come to Amritsar on Vaisākhī and Dīvālī in order to celebrate the Gurū and gather as a nation. These biannual

[31] As Mughal power declined in the 18th century, the Afghan emperor, Ahmed Shah Abdali, frequently invaded South Asia through Punjāb. Governors of Punjāb would swing their loyalty between the Mughals and the Afghans, depending on what best suited them. The Afghans would sometimes ally with the Mughals, other times they would attack them (Hasrat, B. J., 1995, pp. 22-25).

[32] Mata Sundarī was Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib's widow and Mātā Sāhib Devan Kaur was the symbolic mother of the K̲h̲ālsā, they both played important leadership roles within the community in the early 18th century

meetings would continue fairly regularly for the next 80 years, until Raṇjīt Siṅgh outlawed the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsās in 1805.

In the wake of the martyrdom of Bhāī Tarā Siṅgh of Vān village in 1726, who was training young Sikhs as warriors, a Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā was held in which the Panth was reorganized and an active campaign against the Mughal authorities began anew. This campaign to free Punjāb would last up to the 1770's, some five decades later.

Sarbat K̲h̲ālsās form the core of my anarchist exegesis, and are a central methodology of what I conceptualize as Anarcha-Sikhī. It is important to note that according to Kesar Siṅgh Chibbar's *Baṅsāvalīnāmā,* the oldest Sikh account of the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā written in 1769, it was first organized on the guidance and leadership of two women, Mātā Sundarī and Mātā Sāhib Devan Kaur. One of the most celebrated aspects of 18th century Sikh organization, and perhaps the greatest legacy of that time for modern Sikhs, was a result of the foresight and planning of two dynamic, forward-thinking women who understood Sikh principles and knew how to put them into practice. It appears the *Mātās* ('mothers', referring to Mātā Sundarī and Mātā Sāhib Devan Kaur) wanted to steer the community away from personal leadership and back to what Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib had intended.

Rattan Siṅgh Bhangū touches on the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā and writes about some significant instances where major decisions were taken by the community. Besides Kesar Siṅgh Chibbar's *Baṅsāvalīnāmā* (1997) which discusses the first Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā in 1723, Bhangū's work is the only Sikh source that talks about the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā in any detail. Unfortunately, his depth of detail is lacking. How this giant gathering of the community operated, how decisions were made and how they were accepted by the community are all glossed over in *Panth Prakāsh*. It is for

that reason that I will briefly turn to some European accounts of the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā, which are included in longer excerpts in the Appendix B.

The earliest European account is from 1772 and was written by François Xavier Wendell, a French Jesuit missionary. With the exception of this first account, all of the other accounts are by Europeans directly connected to the East India Company. Antoine-Louis Henri Polier was a soldier and administrator in the Company and his account is from 1776. James Browne, whose account is from 1788, was a soldier and linguist for the Company. George Forester was a civil servant for the Company and an adventurer who travelled from Bengal to England. His account of the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā is from 1783. John Malcolm was an administrator in the Company and wrote the first full book on the Sikhs, *Sketch of the Sikhs: A singular nation who inhabit the province of the Punjāb situated between the rivers Jumna and Indus*, which was published in 1810. Joseph Cunningham was also a soldier and administrator in the East India Company, and his book, *A History of the Sikhs from the origin of the nation to the battles of the Sutlej*, was published in 1849, right after the end of the Anglo-Sikh Wars.

All of these Europeans were thus contemporaries of Rattan Siṅgh Bhangū, and with the exception of Cunnningham, all of their accounts/books were written/published while he was alive. It is unclear which of them witnessed a Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā with their own eyes, and who was simply writing down accounts provided to them. Let us look at the main commonalities.

All of the accounts make mistakes, often humorous ones to a modern Sikh reader. For example, there seems to be much confusion about *Kaṛāh Parsād*. This pudding-like sacramental food is served at all Sikh Divans (formal gatherings in the presence of the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*). *Kaṛāh Parsād* is an integral part of Sikh ceremonies and has been so since the time of the First Guru. Wendell thinks that drugs are added to it, while Malcolm calls them cakes. Besides

containing trivial mistakes like this, and peculiar spellings of words whose English transliteration had not yet become fixed, these accounts' overwhelming response to the Sarbat Ḵẖālsās is one of confusion. There is confusion over the fact that there doesn't seem to be anyone in charge. There is confusion over how decisions are made. Polier, for example, assumes that votes are taken, when we know this is not the case. The Sikhs are labeled as an aristocratic regime by James Browne, but confusingly are also said to be steeped in egalitarianism, where even the most powerful "chief" is treated the same as a "minor" one. Forster writes that he is "embarrassed" to even use the word government when referring to the system of governance used by the Sikhs because of how strange and unconventional it is (Madra & Siṅgh, P., 2016, p. 148).

The Europeans do get many details correct though, when compared to the oral tradition of the Sarbat Ḵẖālsās. They all write that Sarbat Ḵẖālsās take place generally twice a year, at Dīvālī and Vaisākhī, at Akāl Takht Sāhib in Amritsar Sāhib. They all write that it is a gathering of all of the Sikhs (by this, they mean Ḵẖālsā Sikhs) and that all decisions are made through some sort of deliberative, democratic process. Decisions determine the course of action for the Panth at large and decisions must be followed by all Sikhs, without exception. Deliberations happen in the presence of Gurū Granth Sāhib and likely also what we now call the *Dasam Granth* (the writings of the Tenth Guru).

The Sikh oral tradition also remembers how Sarbat Ḵẖālsās took place. In 1920, at the dawn of the Gurdwāra Reform Movement, in 1986, after the genocides of 1984, and in 2015, amidst rising corruption and sacrilege incidents in Punjāb, Sikhs brought back the institution of the Sarbat Ḵẖālsā. In one way or another, these three instances were all deficient when compared to the original Sarbat Ḵẖālsās. However, they demonstrate historical continuity and a widely shared desire for the prefigurative practices of authentic (Anarcha-) Sikh methods of decision-

making and the profound memory the community holds—despite centuries of colonialism and oppression— for its sovereign traditions. Scholarship in Sikh studies has also considered the significance of the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā, and based on all these accounts it is possible for us to sketch in the ways the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsās represent an alternative model of governance that I deem critical to an understanding of Anarcha-Sikhi.

First of all, this model of governance relies on the institution of the *jathas*, which originated with the death of Bandā Siṅgh when the Panth was split into smaller groups. *jathas* are a unique institution. In the past, they consisted of small war parties, or armed platoons, but they were also conceived as community and congregational spaces. The *jatha* was not just composed of Sikh warriors, but also of non-combatants. Each of these small communities chose a leader to both lead them on the battlefield and to represent them at the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā. This leader was not chosen through popular democracy, but instead they were acclaimed, based on reputation. What was the criteria used to choose a leader? By looking at the biographies of some early prominent leaders, it is clear that both piety and skill as a warrior were considerations. Some early leaders were known for their skill at singing *Bāṇī* (Singh, B., 1993, pp. 57-58), others were known for their charity and humility (Singh, B., 1993, pp. 269).

Let us now turn to how a typical Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā would operate. This is a general description, not one of any specific gathering. Biannually at Vaisākhī and Dīvālī, the Panth would gather at what we now call the Darbār Sāhib Complex. There would be a large Divān where *Kīrtan* was performed and *Kaṛāh Parsād* was distributed. The *Jathedars* would then gather at Akāl Takht. There, a respected Sikh would preside over the meeting. This individual was not a leader but someone who ensured that discussions remained civil and that personal enmity did not play a role in discourse.

The meeting would be held in the presence of *Gurū Granth Sāhib* and perhaps also the *Dasvain Patshāh dā Granth* (*Dasam Granth*), so that the deliberations were not just a socio-political affair, but were sanctified in a divine space. It is in describing how decisions were ultimately made that many of the European accounts are inaccurate. As Browne writes, "in a tumultuous Diet, they choose by majority of votes, a leader to command their joint forces" (Madra & Siṅgh, P., 2016, p. 94). The Sikh method of decision-making was unique and not something that Europeans had much familiarity with, and therefore they assumed that it was a simple majority democratic process.

There are many ways to practice democracy and to give leadership and authority to the people. Popular democracies are just one (European) model. The K̲h̲ālsā also practiced democracy, but decisions were reached not through votes but through deliberation and consensus. The *Jathedars* would argue and discuss and compromise. The rest of the Panth, the masses of the nation, would wait outside the Akāl Takht Sāhib, on the *parkarmā* (walkway surrounding the *Amrit Sar*, Sacred Pool) of Harmandir Sāhib, while the *Jathedars* engaged in negotiations and decision-making processes. It is said that decisions could sometimes take multiple days, as the work of reaching consensus is not an easy one. After a decision was reached, the respected person who chaired the deliberations would come out onto the veranda of Akāl Takht Sāhib and declare to the gathered Panth what the *matta* (decision) was. At that time, anyone in the community could raise their voice and state their objections to the decision. This was rare because the congregation understood the deliberation and consensus that had taken place. But still, every member of the community was considered equal and so even those who had not deliberated, had a say in the final decision. Of course one cannot discount the fact that

existing hierarchies and mechanisms always exist that can undermine the deliberative process, as we see occurred later in the 18th century.

The *Jathedars* would reconvene and would either address the criticism/concern or change the decision as the Sikh had requested. The decision, *matta*, would then be presented again to the gathered nation. If there were no objections then the congregation would shout battle cries of victory, and the *matta* would formally become a *Gurmatta* (Gurū's decision). It was labelled the Gurū's decision because it was the decision of the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā which represented the Gurū K̲h̲ālsā Panth. In other words, this was the collective Panth's decision. And just like a *hukam* from Gurū Granth Sāhib, a *matta* from the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā was treated as the Gurū's word. Even if Sikhs disagreed with the decision, they would support it. Through the unique Sikh blending of divine and mundane, of the spiritual and temporal, decisions about where, who and when to fight, and so forth, were given divine sanction. They had to be followed by all members of the K̲h̲ālsā Panth. Those who did not follow a *Gurmatta* would be labelled a *tankhaiya* (someone who has transgressed the Sikh code of conduct) and would be ostracized until they offered themselves up for forgiveness before the *Pañj Piārai*.

Consensus is seen as the ideal form of decision-making in anarchism (Fiat, 2017). It is non-coercive, and anti-authoritarian in nature. It avoids the tyranny of the majority and ensures that decisions will speak to all members of the group. The Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā was a system of governance, either directly taught to the Sikhs by Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib or inspired by his example, that took the anarchist principles of the K̲h̲ālsā and put them into a workable model. A vast community, composed of tens of thousands of members, could make collective decisions without formal leadership structures, without a constitution, without a bureaucracy and without a

permanent elite class. It was truly democracy in action, just not in a way that would have been familiar to most Europeans of the time.

Now let us turn back to *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh*. We are joining the narrative at a point some seventeen years after the execution of Bābā Bandā Siṅgh Bahādur. At this time, in the 1730's, the Panth is generally centred in Amritsar and the Sikhs have been carrying out a large-scale rebellion against the Mughal government since 1726. In the following stanzas Sardar Rattan Siṅgh Bhangū describes a Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā. The K̲h̲ālsā is gathered at Akāl Takht, when Subeg Siṅgh, a Sikh who is a representative of the Mughal governor arrives. The K̲h̲ālsā refuses to allow Subeg Siṅgh entry into the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā, as he has sworn allegiance to the Mughal government. Subeg Siṅgh must apologize for his mistake and be re-initiated into the K̲h̲ālsā Panth if he wants to have the right to speak to the K̲h̲ālsā.

Dohra:
After this, Subeg Singh made a plea to the Khalsa Panth,
With folded hands (in complete humility).
He begged the Khalsa Panth to protect the poor masses,
After striking a (profitable) deal with the Mughals. (90a:33 / 84a:33)

Chaupai:
The Khalsa Panth accepted Subeg Singh's proposal,
Resolving to charge one crore rupees from the Mughals for the deal.
They opined why should they spurn the Mughal's offer?
Instead they should utilize the amount and demand more. (90a:34 / 84a:34)

Dohra:
The Khalsa Panth, accepting the received amount,
Disbursed it among its rank and file there and then.
(Thereafter), the Khalsa Panth approached Darbara Singh,
That he should accept the proffered Nawabship. (90a:35 / 84a:35)

Chaupai:
Responding to Khalsa Panth's proposal Darbara Singh remarked,
Why should he think of accepting Nawabship ?
Since Satguru (Guru Gobind Singh) had promised sovereignty to the Sikhs,
He visualized that the moment for fulfillment of Gurū's prophecy was fast approaching.(90a:36 / 84a:36)

Since the Khalsa Panth's claim for sovereignty was legitimate,
They would surely achieve it either in this world or in heaven.

Whatever prophetic words Satguru had said to the Sikhs,
These were bound to be fulfilled instead of going waste. (90a:37 / 84a:37)

Even if the pole star shifted its position or earth shook from its axis,
SatGuru's prophetic words would never remain unfulfilled.
Why should he barter that promised sovereignty with the wretched Nawabship,
Which was replete with subordination and harassment. (90a:38 / 84a:38)

Dohra:
Satguru had conferred sovereignty on the Khalsa Panth,
As well as on each individual Singh of that fraternity.
Wherever a Singh sets his foot and settles on earth,
He establishes his own self-reliant/autonomous sovereignty. (90a:39 / 84a:39)
(Bhangū, 2006, Vol. 2 pp. 81-83)

This is the year 1733, and the Governor of Lahore has made a strategic play to try and make peace with the Sikhs. Governor Zakriya Khan offered the Sikhs a title of nobility, a *navābī* (essentially a 'knightship'), which had land and revenue under its control. The idea was that by bringing Sikhs into the formal Mughal power structure, they would co-opt them and stop their revolutionary uprising. The nature of the title, the *navābī*, was that one Sikh had to accept it formally; it could not just be given to the community at large. The most prominent leader at the time was Dīvān Darbāra Siṅgh. He immediately refused, as we can see in the above verses. Bābā Darbāra Siṅgh's refusal is rich in poetic imagery and demonstrates the intense fervour and passion with which some early K̲h̲ālsā believed in Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib's prophetic words of future Sikh sovereignty.

Even if the pole star shifted its position or earth shook from its axis,
Satgurū's prophetic words would never remain unfulfilled.

Not only were there no doubts of the Gurū's word, the cosmos itself would be unraveled before the Gurū's words could possibly be wrong. Bābā Darbāra Siṅgh's belief is stronger than the rotation of the earth and the position of the stars in the night sky.

All the other prominent leaders of the time rejected the offer. But through the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā process, the community had decided that it would be beneficial to take the *navābī* and use

the resources from the government to continue the fight against the government. This presents us with an interesting historical scenario, in which the community decides on one course of action and the leadership of the K̲h̲ālsā seemingly disagrees. But, staying true to the principles of the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā, the leaders agree to go along with the Panth's decision. Let us look at how Bhangu dramatically describes the situation. If all the prominent and well-respected Sikhs were refusing the "honour", to whom would they give it? From the anarchist perspective, we are interested in seeing how Bhangu frames the recipient while upholding anti-authoritative ideals.

> *Chaupai:*
> *Sardar Kapoor Singh was attending upon the congregation at that moment,*
> *Moving the hand fan with quick strokes for fanning the air.*
> *He had faced the stroke of enemy's sword on his face single handed,*
> *The scar being still as fresh on his face as the scar on moon's face. (90a:42 / 84a:4)*
>
> *With the scar, still fresh and raw on his face,*
> *He had won the hearts of the whole Khalsa Panth.*
> *A thought ran across the mind of entire congregation simultaneously,*
> *As if it was a moment of coincidence for the whole congregation. (90a:43 / 84a:43)*
>
> *Dohra:*
> *At that moment, a devout Singh beloved of the Guru,*
> *Was heard reciting the following line of GurBāṇī!*
> *The honour of serving the Guru's devotees goes to those,*
> *Who become worthy of the grace of Guru's saints. (90a:44 / 84a:44)*
>
> *Chaupai:*
> *As Sardar Kapoor Singh was fanning with the hand fan,*
> *He became the focus of the gracious eyes of the congregation.*
> *As the congregation heard the sacred line of the Divine Guru,*
> *Everyone agreed to accept the message of the GurBāṇī line. (90a:45 / 84a:45)*
>
> *Since the one performing service deserved to be honoured,*
> *Sardar Kapoor Singh should be conferred with the proffered robes.*
> *As the Khalsa Panth ordered him to pick up the robe of honour,*
> *Sardar Kapoor Singh bowed down to accept Khalsa Panth's gracious offer. (90a:46 / 84a:46)*
> (Bhangū, 2006, Vol. 2 p. 83)

The community decided to offer the title of *Navāb* to the Sikh who was engaged in selfless service. Someone who had demonstrated his warrior skill (the fresh scar), but also

humility. The serendipitous reading of a line of *Gurbāṇī* sealed the deal, and Kapūr Siṅgh, who had been amongst the poorest Sikhs, was now granted a title of nobility.

The metaphor comparing Kapūr Siṅgh's face to the face of the moon is a striking one. The moon is considered to be a thing of great beauty in South Asian culture, and it is often said that the moon is so beautiful, even with marks on its face, its beauty cannot be diminished. Bhangū eulogizing Kapūr Siṅgh, remarks on his striking beauty. The scar on his face, which otherwise might be a source of disfiguration, is no different than the marks on the moon, it takes nothing from his beauty. It can also be noted that in Sikh parlance, scars received in battles are referred to as ornaments or jewelry, and are a source of pride, not shame.

Humility is not a concept that is much discussed in modern Anarchism. In fact, it appears as a feature primarily of what is termed religious anarchism. Both in Taoism (Marshall, 1993, p. 52) and in Christianity (Marshall, 1993, p. 65), humility is seen as an essential component of anarchism, as humility creates a mindset that allows non-authoritative social structure to function, by facilitating a culture of service and gratitude. Humility, in *Bāṇī* known by various terms such as *garībī* and *nimrata*, is a central concept in Sikhī, and it is said to be the primary virtue a Sikh must develop within themselves before any other virtues can be attained. In his *vārs*, Bhāī Gurdās states that the first thing that Gurū Nānak Sāhib developed within himself before he began his Gurūship, was the quality of humility (verse 24 of *Vār* 1: Singh, H. & Singh, V., 1998, pp. 19-20).

Why is humility so important in Sikhī, and what role does it play in Anarcha-Sikhī? In Sikhī, the goal of a human life is to recognize divinity both within and outside of one's self. To recognize divinity within one's self, one must be humble and understand that one's ego is not one's true form, but that one's true form is in fact Divine. To see the Divine in others, according

to Sikhī, requires selfless service. By serving others humbly with all of our hearts, minds and bodies, we begin to recognize the divinity in all beings around us. Humility is also the essential component of the relationship between Sikh and Gurū. One must be humble, in order to trust the Gurū with one's heart; to give of oneself completely. *Gurū Granth Sāhib* is full of poems that describe the humility needed in one's relationship with the Gurū. For example:

> ਕੋਈ ਆਣਿ ਮਿਲਾਵੈ ਮੇਰਾ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮੁ ਪਿਆਰਾ ਹਉ ਤਿਸੁ ਪਹਿ ਆਪੁ ਵੇਚਾਈ ॥੧॥
> ਦਰਸਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਦੇਖਣ ਕੈ ਤਾਈ ॥
> ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਹਿ ਤਾ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਮੇਲਹਿ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਈ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥
> ਜੇ ਸੁਖੁ ਦੇਹਿ ਤ ਤੁਝਹਿ ਅਰਾਧੀ ਦੁਖਿ ਭੀ ਤੁਝੈ ਧਿਆਈ ॥੨॥
> ਜੇ ਭੁਖ ਦੇਹਿ ਤ ਇਤ ਹੀ ਰਾਜਾ ਦੁਖ ਵਿਚਿ ਸੂਖ ਮਨਾਈ ॥੩॥
> ਤਨੁ ਮਨੁ ਕਾਟਿ ਕਾਟਿ ਸਭੁ ਅਰਪੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਅਗਨੀ ਆਪੁ ਜਲਾਈ ॥੪॥
> ਪਖਾ ਫੇਰੀ ਪਾਣੀ ਢੋਵਾ ਜੋ ਦੇਵਹਿ ਸੋ ਖਾਈ ॥੫॥
> ਨਾਨਕੁ ਗਰੀਬੁ ਢਹਿ ਪਇਆ ਦੁਆਰੈ ਹਰਿ ਮੇਲਿ ਲੈਹੁ ਵਡਿਆਈ ॥੬॥
>
> If someone would come to guide me to my Beloved Lover,
> I would sell myself to them (1)
> I cannot wait to see the vision of the Ever-Living Divine.
> If with your blessings, I meet the True Gurū,
> I will always remember the Name of the Ever-Living Divine. (Pause)
> If you give me happiness, I will meditate upon you,
> But even if I am in pain, I will concentrate on you. (2)
> If you keep me hungry, I will be satisfied.
> Within pain I will feel happiness. (3)
> I would cut my body and mind into pieces and offer them before You,
> I will even burn myself in fire for You. (4)
> I will fan You with a fan, and carry water for You,
> Whatever you deign to give me, I will be grateful for. (5)
> I, meek and poor Nānak, have fallen down at Your door,
> Please oh Ever-Living Divine, join me with your Greatness. (6)
> (*Gurū Granth Sāhib*, Gurū Rām Dās Sāhib, a. 757)

This humility is also essential in an Anarcha-Sikhī model of governance and decision-making. One must be able to put one's own priorities and needs aside and think about the community. In consensus discussions, one must be able to humble oneself and hear opposing points of view. Agreeing to a decision that you may not entirely favour also requires humility.

According to Blunden (2016, p. 126), consensus-building as a methodology of decision-making entered anarchism through the Quaker tradition. Blunden names two American activists, "who independently introduced Consensus into the Peace Movement in 1961". (Blunden, 2016, p. 126). Both of these activists brought this tradition from their church, the Quakers. The Quakers, since close to their inception in post-Civil War England in the mid-17th century, used consensus as a means of decision-making. Quakers believed that the spirit of the Lord could speak through individuals, but in order to receive and speak for the spirit, one needed to be humble, calm, and quiet,

> Thus every person did have direct access to the Word, but only on condition that they sought divine guidance in the humble presence of a community of believers. (Blunden, 2016, 146-147).

While silent prayer was and remains an essential aspect of Quaker meetings, these are not entirely silent spaces,

> Meetings were not just silent prayer, but entailed giving reasons and discussion, so the voice of Jesus comes to function very much like Reason. But whether you believe Reason or Divine Light is at play, decisions arrived at by participation in a group carry considerably more commitment and legitimacy than an individual intuition, and prepared the Quakers to withstand the heat of persecution with fortitude.

We see a similar mindset in the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā. As Malcolm explains it, the *Jathedars* would do an *Ardās* at Akāl Takht Sāhib and then would say, "The sacred Grant'h is betwixt us, let us swear by our scripture to forget all internal disputes, and to be united" (1812, p. 123). While it is unlikely the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā was as quiet as Quaker meetings, in the presence of *Gurū Granth Sāhib* the *Panthik* representatives felt a divine presence amongst them and they would be careful to behave in an appropriate way in the Gurū's court.

So while modern anarchism is usually quite a secular space, consensus decision-making, which has become a core component of modern anarchist self-governance has its roots, just like Sikh consensus-making, in a very spiritual and devotional practice. Humility and faith in a higher

power are central to both the Quaker and Sikh practices of consensus-making. There is the very strong sense, in both scenarios, that the meeting of representatives is something much greater than the sum of its parts, which not only assists in the practice of consensus-building, but also gives authority to the decision reached.

In light of these discussions, we can see here how Bhangu describes that Kapūr Siṅgh was chosen because of his humility. He was able to play a transformative role in the community because of how humble he was. Kapūr Siṅgh wouldn't allow the offer of *Navābī* to upend the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā. In fact, his first act as *Navāb* was to reiterate the supremacy of the K̲h̲ālsā:

> *Chaupai:*
> *Placing the robe of honour at the feet of five Singhs,*
> *He begged the five Siṅghs to put that robe on his head.*
> *With the blessings of the sacred feet of the five Singhs,*
> *Even a rabbit turns a lion and a speck of dust a mountain. (90a:47 / 84a:47)*
>
> *Even the (timid) sparrows tear apart the (ferocious)*[33] *falcons,*
> *When Khalsa Panth lends its power to these tiny creatures.*
> *Being elated the Khalsa Panth performed the ceremony,*
> *And presented that robe of honour to Sardar Kapoor Siṅgh (90a:48 / 84a:48)*
> (Bhangū, 2006, Vol. 2 pp. 83-85)

Kapūr Siṅgh only accepts the robe of nobility after placing it at the feet of the *Pañj Piārai*, who as stated earlier, symbolically embody the Panth. He is demonstrating that he is inferior to the Panth as a whole. As he takes a prominent role in the community, Sardar Kapūr Siṅgh ensures that he makes no unilateral decisions.

Of note in these verses is the language of transformation and of the meek becoming mighty. Here though, Bhangū is not tying this language to Gurū Nānak Sāhib, nor to Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib, but to the K̲h̲ālsā Panth. The K̲h̲ālsā Panth now has that transformative power, in metaphorical terms, to turn a rabbit into a lion and a speck of dust into a mountain. It is

[33] The words in brackets have been added by the translator as he believes they are implied by Bhangu.

the K̲h̲ālsā Panth that allows sparrows to tear apart hawks. Here the object of transformation is Kapūr Siṅgh. He is not being transformed because he has taken on the Mughal title of *Navāb*. He is being transformed because he has submitted himself to the K̲h̲ālsā as represented in the *Pañj Piārai*. There is a distinct contrast here to what I discussed above with Baba Bandā Siṅgh Bahādur since the latter never submitted himself to the *Pañj Piārai.* Bhangū is assuring the listener/reader that Kapūr Siṅgh will be a very different leader than Bandā Siṅgh had been.

> *As Khalsa Panth graciously honoured Sardar Kapoor Siṅgh,*
> *He displayed remarkable wisdom in his thoughts and deeds.*
> *Holding the Khalsa Panth in the highest esteem,*
> *He would never take any decision without their consent. (90b:9 / 84b:9)*
> (Bhangū, 2006, Vol. 2 p. 87)

Thus for Bhangu, it is important to portray Kapūr Siṅgh as meticulously ensuring that he followed the principles of Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā decision-making. Though he became the *Daledār* (general, head of army) of the *Dal K̲h̲ālsā* (Army of the K̲h̲ālsā), which was the combined forces of the 11 *Misls* (not including the *Phulkian Misl*), Navāb Kapūr Siṅgh was not a social or political leader. That role rested in the community at large. Even at times of national emergency, such as the imminent threat of attack from Afghan forces, Kapūr Siṅgh did not take unilateral decisions, but instead always called a Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā to deal with the situation (Dhavan, 2011, p. 65). Upon his death in 1753, Navāb Kapūr Siṅgh's apprentice, Sardār Jassa Siṅgh of the *Ahlūwālia Misl*, was appointed as his successor (Singh, B. 1993, p. 142). Sardār Jassa Siṅgh had grown up in the presence of Mata Sundarī (Jīto) and was an exemplary Sikh (Singh, G., 1990, pp. 5-8). He was chosen by the community to be their next military commander based on merit (Singh, G., 1990, pp. 73-74).

Yet towards the end of Sardār Jassa Siṅgh Ahlūwālia's time as military commander of the K̲h̲ālsā forces, a shift began to occur in Sikh society. Within twenty years of his passing in 1783, the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā would be terminated as an institution and a single autocratic,

monarchical ruler would dominate over the formerly egalitarian K̲h̲ālsā Panth. What changed? A full analysis of late 18th century Sikh national politics is out of the scope of this thesis, but a brief discussion of key points would be relevant. The move towards an elite power structure was not a sudden change but instead a gradual movement. Whereas leadership of the *jathas* in the 1730's and 40's was based on merit, by the 1760's leadership in the *Misls* became hereditary (Singh, B., 1993). This created the almost contradictory situation where the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā model was still being followed, and all members of the community were treated as equals, but *within* the subgroups of the community, the *Misls* leadership was no longer based on egalitarian principles and was instead a nepotistic affair.

The previous modes of social organization that had long been established in Puṇjāb, including the varying forms of local and place-based sovereignty, the idea of sacred territory and the ideal of the ruler as the recipient of divine blessings also likely played a role in the slow erosion of the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā model. The Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā was perhaps too radical and did not have the space or time to establish itself before previous systems of organization began to reassert themselves.

In addition, there was a change within the mindset of the leaders themselves. Whereas the first generation of post-Bābā Bandā Siṅgh Bahādur Panthik leaders, such as Dīvān Darbāra Siṅgh, refused any position that could lead to elitism, the second generation, like Navāb Kapūr Siṅgh, accepted leadership positions but kept the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā paramount, and the third generation which included Sardar Jassa Siṅgh Ramgharia and Sardar Alā Siṅgh Patiala, began to think of themselves as leaders separate or even above the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā system (Dhavan, 2011, pp. 81-84 & pp. 108-115). This complex social transformation was due to various factors.

In 1761, the Sikhs occupied the ancient capital of Punjāb, Lahore, for the first time in Sikh history (Siṅgh, G., 1990, pp. 105-106). This was a momentous event in K̲h̲ālsā history, as it symbolically demonstrated the destruction of Mughal power and the long held Sikh dream of liberating Punjāb. Upon entering the city, the Sikh forces lauded their military commander, Sardār Jassa Siṅgh Ahlūwālia, and gave him a new title to commemorate the event. He was called the *Sultān-ī-Qaum*, or 'King of the Nation' (Siṅgh, G., 1990, p. 107). The title was meant as a callback to Jassa Siṅgh's mentor, Navāb Kapūr Siṅgh, who was often called *Navāb-ī-Qaum*. In terms of the egalitarian values of the K̲h̲ālsā, though, to label Jassa Siṅgh Ahlūwālia as a king was to set a dangerous precedent.

In 1765 the Afghan Emperor, Ahmed Shāh Abdalī, invaded South Asia for the seventh time. The *Phulkian Misl* had never been a formal part of the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā leadership model and had operated independently of the rest of the K̲h̲ālsā Panth, only occasionally joining forces with the *Dal K̲h̲ālsā* (K̲h̲ālsā Army) (Siṅgh, B., 1993, p. 442). The leader of the *Phulkian Misl*, Alā Siṅgh, instead of joining with the rest of the K̲h̲ālsā forces and attacking the invaders, made a treaty with Abdalī and pledged fealty to the Afghan commander. In response, Abdalī bestowed the title of *Rājā*, or king, onto Alā Siṅgh, and recognized his territory as a state (the Patiala Kingdom) (Dhavan, 2011, p. 111). The crowning of Alā Siṅgh is an interesting event as it is understood radically differently by various scholars. For the Patiala royal family, Alā Siṅgh is portrayed as a shrewd and wise leader who used political skill for the sake of his people and land. A more traditional Sikh perspective would consider Alā Siṅgh's act to be a great betrayal to Sikh principles. That the royal family of Patiala has and continues (as of the writing of this thesis) to play a prominent role in Punjāb, adds to the complexity. For example, the current chief-minister of Punjāb is Amarinder Singh, the head of the erstwhile Patiala royal family.

Amarinder Siṅgh represents the Congress Party, and so the fraught relationship of the Congress party in Sikh history, coupled with the complicated heritage of the Paitala royal family, makes the relationship between Panthik groups and Amarinder Siṅgh a potentially fascinating subject of scholarship.

For Sardar Jassa Siṅgh Ahlūwālia to be given the title of *Sultan-ī-Qaum* and Alā Siṅgh to be granted the title of *Rājā*, opened the floodgates. Soon the other *sardārs*, who due to their nepotistic governing structure were already monarchical in their thinking, formally crowned themselves as *Rājāi*. This can also be seen as a return to the pre-K̲h̲ālsā method of governance and the pre-established social structure re-establishing itself. The next and final step of this process was that the *Misls* quickly became states of their own, with state structures (Dhavan, 2011, p. 95). By the 1780's the *Misls* were operating as separate governments and their *sardārs* were all now *rājāi* (Siṅgh, B., 1993, pp. 372-408).

The Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā had transformed into a meeting of elites, and the spirit of humility and equality that had marked the beginning of the model was lost. Bhangū unfortunately does not comment on this slow descent into elitism as he finishes his narrative in 1783. His choice to end his story at that point is a telling one. For someone so focused on the ascent and victory of the K̲h̲ālsā to not discuss this integral time period is striking. The nature of Bhangū's work needs to be kept in mind. I had written earlier that it was a polemic, more than it was a history. As argued earlier, Bhangū used genres associated with commemorative politics and social persuasion. The political machinations and backstabbing of the later *Misl* period is hardly inspirational stuff. Bhangū was focused on the egalitarian nature of the K̲h̲ālsā; the casteless, marginalized-uplifting K̲h̲ālsā of Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib. This is why he ends his narrative with Sardār Baghail Siṅgh's invasion and temporary takeover of Delhi. This is a much more fitting end to a narrative

that begins with the Mughal Emperor scheming with the British about the rising power of the Sikhs. Bhangū needed a narrative about the Gurū K̲h̲ālsā Panth that ended with a victorious Panth.

The bigger sociological question before us is how did pre-existing structures of political authority and legitimacy gain hold again? There are a few potential answers. One reason can simply be that the revolutionary fervour of the early K̲h̲ālsā was quickly diluted once political power came into play. Standing up and empowering the marginalized and breaking down social barriers is more attainable when you are all marginalized, it becomes much harder when you have political power at stake. The changes that the K̲h̲ālsā made were also not replicated at a micro level, and instead stayed at a macro level. Which is to say that the internal composition and decision-making systems of the *jathas* did not reflect those of the K̲h̲ālsā as a whole. While some might argue that a lack of a written constitution and a more formal governing structure was to blame, from an anarchist perspective, I would have to say that those were idealistic features of the K̲h̲ālsā, not deficiencies. A written constitution and a formal governing structure would have meant the creation of a state, which is counter to the whole exercise of anarchism. The deeply embedded institutionalized forms of authority and agency persisted and the revolutionary zeal of the K̲h̲ālsā model dissipated. The *Misls* grew more and more powerful, the leadership became meritless and slowly but surely the system was upended.

In the 1790's, Raṇjīt Siṅgh, *Sardār/Rājā* of the *Sukarchakia Misl,* began to consolidate his power, through force, diplomacy and marriage (Siṅgh, B., 1993, pp. 192-196). By 1801 he had united most of Punjāb and had himself declared *Mahārājā,* or emperor, since he was now a king of kings[34]. The last Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā, with Raṇjīt Siṅgh and two other *sardārs* was held in

[34] *Mahārājā* was the title he was commonly thought to hold. Actually, as a nod to Sikh egalitarian values, Raṇjīt Siṅgh was crowned simply as *Sarkar-ī-Vala*, meaning 'the government official' or 'representative' (Siṅgh, B., 1993, 198).

1805. It was a sad affair, in that the other *sardārs* simply followed Raṇjīt Siṅgh's lead, careful not to offend the *Mahārājā* (Dilgeer, 2000, p. 80). Raṇjīt Siṅgh, having realized that the system of Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā was incapable of existing within a monarchical state, ended the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā biannual legislative meetings and moved the government to Lahore, the ancient capital of Punjāb (Dilgeer, 2000, p. 81). Cunningham describes the last Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā and its impact as such,

> A formal council was held by the Sikhs, but a portion only of their leaders were present. The singleness of purpose, the confident belief in the aid of God, which had animated mechanics and shepherds to resent persecution, and to triumph over Ahmad Shāh, no longer possessed the minds of their descendants, born to power and affluence, and who, like rude and ignorant men broken loose from all law, gave the rein to their grosser passions. Their ambition was personal and their desire was for worldly enjoyment. The genuine spirit of Sikhism had again sought the dwelling of the peasant to reproduce itself in another form; the rude system of mixed independence and confederacy was unsuited to an extended domain; it had served its ends of immediate agglomeration, and the 'Misals' were in effect dissolved. (1994, pp. 132-133)

It should be noted that ironically Raṇjīt Siṅgh did still play to K̲h̲ālsā egalitarian and anti-authoritarian ideals. He dressed simply and rarely sat on a throne. He refused to be called *Mahārājā* by any Sikh. Sikhs called him *Sardār ji* or *Siṅgh Sāhib*, as traditionally, *Mahārāj* was only a title used for the Gurūs; non-Sikh subjects still called him *Mahārāj*ā. He issued coins in the names of the Gurūs and up to his death maintained that he was simply a humble servant of the K̲h̲ālsā Panth (Fenech, 2015, p. 90).

Regardless of his pretensions to egalitarian values, Raṇjīt Siṅgh created a monarchical state that, while unique in some aspects (e.g. respect for diversity, such as his multi-religious cabinet), was fairly similar to any other state led by a monarch in South Asia in that era. The Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā model, a unique and innovative governance methodology, was replaced by just another South Asian king. Raṇjīt Siṅgh cannot take all the blame for the creation of the Sarkār-ī-K̲h̲ālsā, since he was simply fulfilling the process begun by other *sardārs*. But what is often seen as the golden age of the Sikhs—a time of peace and a flowering of art and architecture, was in

fact the era most removed from Anarcha-Sikh principles. Bhangū must have been cognizant of this as his lack of commentary on anything to do with Raṇjīt Siṅgh is noteworthy. In Bhangū's narrative it was the K̲h̲ālsā at the time of Navāb Kapūr Siṅgh that most epitomized Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib's ideals.

Chapter 6: The Stifling Weight of Colonialism

In this chapter I will trace the shift in representation of Sikh history. Not only did governance deviate to British colonial rule, but with the onset of colonialism, an entirely new structure of political organization, regulation and enumeration of South Asian communities began for which representational knowledge played a legitimizing role in authorizing colonial rule. There is a shift, from Bhangū's dreaded anticipation of colonial encroachment to Ernest Trumpp's dismissive representation of Sikh history only a few decades later. Trumpp's attitude towards Sikh history is important since works like his, and those by other colonial writers, have had both major political consequences and long-term damaging effects on how key tenets of Sikh social and political institutions and concepts were understood, even among segments of Sikh society. The chapter will begin with a brief discussion of Bhangū's anxiety about encroaching colonialism. Then the rest of the chapter turns to an exegesis of Trumpp's work. This exegesis will examine issues of socio-political principles that have been attributed to the Gurūs as well as larger issues of colonial recreation of Sikh history and the Eurocentric representation of Sikh history.

Though the bulk of Trumpp's book is his translation of experts of *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, he does spend a considerable amount of time on a history of the ten Gurūs as well as an overview of the Sikh religion. Trumpp's translation has had plenty of scholarly focus, but while his overview of '*Sikhism'* (as he calls it) was thoroughly studied by Mandair (2009), there has not yet been a systematic analysis of Trumpp's history of the Gurūs. It is this history that I will be focusing on. Mandair's analysis explains how Trumpp's conception of what he terms to be *'Sikhism'*, reframed Sikhi in such a way that it was locked into theistic parameters of European thought. Early Sikh scholars of the colonial era then tried to argue against Trumpp's conception of

Sikhism, but did so using his definitions, thus locking Sikhi into a colonial paradigm. My goal is not to rehash Mandair's analysis, but in a sense to extend it to Trumpp's history of the Gurūs. The analysis of Trumpp's history will give us insight into the colonial reconstruction of Sikh history and the reformulation that occurred in the space between Bhangū and Trumpp.

This chapter will generally follow Trumpp's narrative from the first Gurū to the tenth, but as with the analysis of Bhangū's text, the focus will not be on all aspects of Trumpp's telling of Sikh history, but on specific socio-political aspects that will speak to the larger question of locating anarchist principles in Sikh historical narratives that this thesis is focused on. This analysis will use excerpts from Trumpp's text to demonstrate the issues that abound with this colonial history. The chapter will end with the consequences born of both Trumpp and Bhangū's texts. While Trumpp's text had an impact on the field that was to become 'Sikh studies', the publication of Bhangū's work in 1913 may have had a role in the rising anti-colonial movement spreading amongst the Sikh masses at the time.

The Threat of Encroaching Colonialism in *Panth Prakāsh*

Bhangū wrote *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh* in the looming shadow of encroaching colonialism. Though written decades before the British invaded Panjāb, the pressure of this mighty colonial empire bearing down on the Sikh state was impossible to ignore. There is a tangible feeling of this threat that comes to the fore in Bhangū's effort to justify the legitimate sovereignty and political independence of the Sikhs. In lionizing Sikh sovereignty, and centring his entire text around the conception of the Gurū K̲h̲ālsā Panth as a sovereign entity, I read that Bhangū was anticipating the coming loss of this Sikh autonomy. Bhangū's explanations to Captain Murray as represented in *Panth Prakāsh* seem desperate insofar as he is constantly reiterating the independence of the K̲h̲ālsā. His focus on trying to legitimize Sikh sovereignty to the British can

thus be understood as an attempt to create a culture of sovereign independent spirit amongst the Sikhs that would somehow be able to stave off the British colonial behemoth that was setting its sights on Punjāb.

At first, Bhangū meant for his work to be read by colonial elites, senior officers in the East India Company as stated in the introductory passages of the text. It is my supposition that in starting his narrative with the birth of Gurū Nānak Sāhib, and ending it with the Sikh conquest of Delhi, Bhangū is trying to translate Sikh social, political and spiritual thought to the British. Fundamental Sikh concepts like *mīrī-pīrī*, the K̲h̲ālsā Panth, and the *Gurmattā* are all explained, from a Sikh perspective, and it is reasonable to say that this was intended as a political translation in the context of shifting power relations. However, Bhangū may also have been perceiving a coming loss of continuity and solidarity, which could provide an alternate explanation for why he needs to commemorate Sikh history in the way that he does.

In one of the last major *sakhīs* in *Panth Prakāsh*, Rattan Siṅgh Bhangū vividly describes the last stand of Nihaṅg Baba Gurbak̲h̲sh Siṅgh, a Sikh warrior who along with 30 fellow Sikhs defended the Darbar Sāhib Complex from an army of 30,000 Afghanis. The battle was a lost cause, but in so whole-heartedly embracing their own martyrdom, and doing everything they could to maintain the sovereignty of Akāl Takht Sāhib, Gurbak̲h̲sh Siṅgh and his fellow K̲h̲ālsā demonstrate, what Bhangū believes to be, the epitome of the Sikh spirit. Through increasingly horrific wounds, they refused to surrender, and they all fought to the end, gloriously dying for the K̲h̲ālsā Panth. In the coda to the *sakhi*, Bhangū imagines Nihaṅg Gurbak̲h̲sh Siṅgh meeting the Divine Gurū in the afterlife. Gurbak̲h̲sh Siṅgh makes an *Ardās* to the Divine Gurū:

> *Dohra:*
> *With folded hands did Gurbakhsh Singh pray to God,*
> *On His divine lotus feet did he concentrate.*
> *Thus did martyrs Gurbakhsh Singh pray to the Divine,*
> *Who, being Omniscient, knew everything and every moment. (156-91)*

Chaupai:
The Khalsa Panth which the Divine Guru had himself initiated,
So much suffering had that Khalsa Panth gone through.
The wretched invader (Ahmad Shah Abdali) who had been called from Kabul,
Must he be done away with as had Banda Bahadur destroyed the Mughals. (156-92)

So much had he tortured the Khalsa Panth,
That he be not allowed to invade (Punjab) any more.
May God's own Khalsa be strengthened to fight,
May all the wicked invaders be decimated by the Khalsa. (156-93)

May Punjab's wealth and resources be reserved for the Singhs,
Why must invaders from the South and the west take those away?
Delighted did the Divine Guru feel at Gurbakhsh Siṅgh's plea,
"So be it", uttered the Divine Satguru at that moment. (156-94)
(Bhangū, 2006, Vol. 2 p. 651)

We see in the Gurbaḵẖsh Siṅgh's prayer, a plea to the Divine Gurū to free the Ḵẖālsā from the scourge of the invasions led by Afghan emperor, Ahmad Shah Duranni/Abdali (the Afghan emperor who invaded South Asia several times in the late 18th century). But it is not just invasions from the west (Afghanistan) that Bhangū is concerned by. Gurbaḵẖsh Siṅgh also asks for the Ḵẖālsā to be saved by invasions from the South. While this could be an allusion to the Mughals the only other possible threat from the South would have to be the British. In this dramatic prayer, which is spoken by Gurbaḵẖsh Siṅgh after his striking martyrdom, Bhangū reveals the underlying anxiety of his text—a British invasion of Punjab. Bhangū writes that this cannot be allowed to happen, as in the prayer, "Punjab's wealth and resources [are to] be reserved" for the Ḵẖālsā.

An Exegesis of Trumpp's History of the Gurūs

Trumpp begins his text with a short introduction in which he disparages both *Gurū Granth Sāhib* and Sikhs in general:

> The Sikh Granth is a very big volume… incoherent and shallow in the extreme, and couched at the same time in dark and perplexing language, in order to cover these

> defects. It is for us Occidentals a most painful and almost stupefying task, to read. (Trumpp, 1877. p. vii)

Though one of the features of *Gurū Granth Sāhib* is that it is written in the *lingua franca* of the people and was thus accessible to them in a way that old Hindu scriptures were not, Trumpp declares that *Gurū Granth Sāhib*'s language is inaccessible, and purposefully so, in order to hide defects of the text.

Trumpp dismisses Sikhs as generally uneducated, and so lacking in intellectual skills that they are not able to understand their own central scripture:

> I soon convinced myself, that though they professed to understand the Granth, they had no knowledge either of the old grammatical forms or of the obsolete words; they could only give me some traditional explanations, which frequently proved wrong, as I found them contradicted by other passages, and now and then they could give me no explanation whatever ; they had not even a clear insight into the real doctrines of the Granth. Other persons, who were recommended to me for their learning, I found equally ignorant. I went even to lay a number of difficult passages before some Granthīs at Amritsar, but was likewise sorely disappointed. Finally I gave up all hope of finding what I wanted, as I clearly saw, that the Sikhs, in consequence of their former warlike manner of life and the troublous times, had lost all learning; whereas the Brahmans, who alone would have had the necessary erudition to lend me a helping hand, never had deigned to pay any attention to the Granth, owing to the animosity which formerly existed between the Sikhs and the Hindū community. (Trumpp, 1877. pp. v-vi)

In Trumpp's estimation, the only learned intellectuals of South Asia were the high caste Hindus—the Brahmins, but because of religious conflict, they had shown no interest in *Gurū Granth Sāhib*. Trumpp then 'nobly' takes it upon himself to translate and explain *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, which, according to him, Sikhs themselves were incapable of. Trumpp writes that this was due both to their "warlike manner and the troublous times". Here we find some common ground between Trumpp and Bhangū, as Bhangū was perhaps worried about the discontinuity that could arise from colonialism, which is a potential reason why he wrote his text. Trumpp's perception of discontinuity due to the colonial invasion of Punjab is, however, an impossibility. In reality there were plenty of lineages of *Nirmala* and *Udasī* scholars who could have easily explained *Banī* to Trumpp, and his inability to find or recognize these sources is likely due to his bias.

Trumpp finishes his introduction by boldly declaring that his book will likely be little read because Sikhs are a dying religion, soon to be extinct:

> Though I can hardly expect that the Granth will attract many readers, the less so, as Sikhism is a waning religion, that will soon belong to history. (Trumpp, 1877. pp. vii-viii)

With the rising conversions of Sikhs to Christianity, due in part to the trauma of the Anglo-Sikh Wars and the onset of colonialism that were occurring in Trumpp's time, his prediction was not completely unfounded. The preoccupation in the social sciences on Social Darwinism at the time may have also played into Trumpp's prediction, as the concept of race suicide (the unfit races dying out) was, as preposterous as it may sound today, prevalent at the time.

Trumpp then begins his history of the Sikh Gurūs. The history of Sikhs had been documented by English writers before Trumpp. Cunningham and Malcolm had both written books about the history of the Sikhs[35]. Besides them, many of the European writers quoted in the last chapter also briefly touched on the history of Sikhī. But there are two crucial points that elevate the significance of Trumpp's work in the larger scheme of things. First, it was officially sanctioned by the British authorities, in this case the East India Company. Secondly, the translation was part of a larger work that included a theological examination of the Sikh faith and the translation of *Gurū Granth Sāhib*. Hence, his work inserted itself into the history of religions or, as shown by Tomoko Masuzawa (2005), the Orientalist project of 'world religions' that measured degrees of conformity and intelligibility based on Christian metaphysics.

The first issue with Trumpp's "history" results from his unfamiliarity with literary genres and commemorative forms as these have been passed on over generations in North Indian vernaculars. Interestingly, he translates two different sources of the Gurū's life, giving two

[35] Cunnighram wrote, *Sketch of the Sikhs* in 1812 while in 1853 Malcolm wrote *A History of the Sikhs.*

separate accounts in the text. As such, some background on the historical sources of Gurū Nānak Sāhib's life will be helpful for this discussion. *Sakhīs* related to Gurū Nānak Sāhib generally come from the *Janamsākhīs,* which are collected stories (*sakhīs*) of the life of the First Gurū. There are four traditions or lineages of *Janamsākhīs,* and all four traditions disagree with each other over minor and some major points. Some traditions are considered more historically reliable than others. The *Janamsākhīs* form the basis of later Sikh histories of the first Gurū and are a part of the rich oral tradition of Sikhī. Bhāī Gurdās who wrote the fifth source of Gurū Nānak Sāhib's life, was a Sikh of the 4th to 6th Gurūs and nephew to the 3rd Gurū. His *vār* contains some episodes from the life of the first Gurū, and his writings are considered part of the Sikh scriptural canon, the episodes in the *vār* are considered the most historically authentic by scholars. Trumpp seems generally ignorant of Bhāī Gurdās's writings, as he does not mention them either in his history or later in his translation of *Gurū Granth Sāhib*.

It seems Trumpp came across two different *Janamsākhī* traditions. From internal evidence, it appears the two traditions are what are known as the *Bhāī Bālā Janamsākhī* and the *Pūratan Janamsākhī.* The *Bhāī Bālā Janamsākhī* is full of magical and fantastical episodes, such as Gurū Nānak Sāhib's encounter with the giant fish incarnation of Vishnu, whereas the *Pūratan* is considered more historically reliable. Trumpp reaches the same conclusion, stating,

> We are enabled now, by the discovery of this old Janam-sakhi, which is now-a-days, as it appears, quite unknown to the Sikhs themselves, to distinguish the older tradition regarding Nanak from the later one, and to fix, with some degree of verisimility, the real facts of his life. There is no lack, even in this old relation, of many wonderful stories, as indeed might be expected from Indians, owing to their wild, uncurbed phantasy and the low standard of education among the masses of the population ; but compared with the later Janam-sakhis, which enter into the minutest details, in order to satisfy curiosity, and which have no sense but for the miraculous, however absurd, it is relatively sober. (Trumpp, 1877, p. ii)

Yet he goes out of his way to slander Sikhs for their histories of their Gurū in general:

> Close research soon convinced me that the usual Sikh tradition concerning Nānak could by no means be trusted; I had reason enough to assume that the formation of myths about their first Gurū had already progressed very far, notwithstanding that his life falls altogether within the period of historical light, as among the rubbish of miraculous and often absurd stories I could detect very few historical facts which deserved credit. (Trumpp, 1877, p. i)

In line with historicist ideas of the late 19th century, Trumpp dismisses anything mythical in nature, as his conception of historical truth is bound by purely rationalist ideas and concepts of evidence for which the material he was presented with, seemingly didn't offer anything of value. This mindset allows Trumpp to reject established Sikh history with little evidence.

Before going into his two translations of the *Janamsākhīs*, Trumpp briefly covers Gurū Nānak Sāhib's life. As could be expected, from his orientalist lens steeped in European notions of rationality, Trumpp either misses the significance of important events or rejects these narratives as being devoid of historical truth claims. For example,

> One morning he went to the canal to bathe. Whilst bathing, angels seized him and carried him to the divine presence. Here he received the prophetic initiation, a cup of nectar being presented to him with the injunction to proclaim the name of Hari on earth. After this he was brought back again to the canal, whence he returned home. He was received with amazement: for his servant, to whom he had handed over his clothes when entering the water, had run home on Nānak's disappearance, and spread the news that he was drowned. (Trumpp, 1877, p. iv)

Here Trumpp explains the incident in the *Kalī Vein*, the Black Canal, in the town of Sultānpur Lodhī, where Gurū Nānak Sāhib is said to have disappeared into the water for three days. This is one of the most important events in Sikh history as this is the revelatory experience that all of Sikhī is based on. Some Sikhs consider this to be the true start of Gurū Nānak Sāhib's Gurūship, when he formally became Gurū. The experience that Gurū Nānak Sāhib has with the Divine, which in traditional sources states that he received a cup of *Amrit* and had a turban tied upon his head, are meant to signify the Gurū's transformation and taking on of the mantle of Gurūship. This ceremony is then later replicated and reimagined by Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib when he reveals the K̲h̲ālsā, again using a sip of divine *Amrit* (ambrosia/nectar). The later Vaisakhi 1699

ceremony is meant to harken back to this earlier incident in the life of Gurū Nānak Sāhib. Trumpp completely misses this aspect of the incident and glosses over its significance.

When Gurū Nānak Sāhib exited the water, he famously repeated one sentence again and again, “There is no Hindu or Muslim”. This prophetic statement can be taken in a number of ways. One can understand it as the Gurū saying that divisions within humanity are artificial, and we are all one. Or it could be taken as a declaration that Sikhī is the third way, separate from the Hindu Vedic tradition and the Abrahamic Islamic tradition. Regardless, as his first statements after leaving the water, this is an important declaration to consider. Again, Trumpp does no such thing and simply writes that Gurū Nānak Sāhib was considered insane for his speech, which to be fair to Trumpp, may well have been the reaction of those in Sultanpur Lodhi at the time,

> His first saying, which made some noise amongst the people, was: "There is no Hindū, and no Musalmān," but this brought upon him again the charge of madness. (Trumpp, 1877, p. iv)

After this incident Gurū Nānak Sāhib is said to have begun his *Udasīs*, his four epic journeys, to the north, south, east and west. Gurū Nānak Sāhib repeatedly reiterated that the life of a householder, in marriage and engaged with society, is the ideal life. When he left on his travels, he did not abandon his wife and children nor did he leave out of a monastic goal. When we look at all the *Janamsakhian* and other historical sources that scholarship has identified as authentic, the episodes glossed over by Trumpp reveal important insights such as that Gurū Nānak Sāhib went on his *Udasīs* to meet like-minded individuals and to lay the foundation for the Sikh Panth. He made sure to return to his family between travels, and at the end of his long journeys, he founded the town of Kartarpur Sāhib and settled down with his wife, Mātā Sulakhnī. However, Trumpp frames Gurū Nānak Sāhib’s travels purely as those of a *sadhū* (Hindu) or a *fakīr* (Muslim)—an itinerant religious figure who has abandoned society and is living a monastic life. This stands in direct contradiction to how Sikh ethical precepts and socially embedded norms

have emerged. On his travels, Gurū Nānak Sāhib came across many interesting figures, and there are numerous *sakhīs* that commemorate key episodes from these journeys. Trumpp fails to see the underlying allegorical meanings of each of these episodes and does not seem to understand how basic Sikh principles are elucidated by the Gurū through these rich adventures and how these episodes are more than just traveler accounts but constitute the basis of the Sikh world-view. .

Having studied *Panth Prakāsh* so thoroughly for aspects of Anarcha-Sikhī, and for socio-political concepts in general (such as sovereignty, political legitimacy and governance) I closely studied Trumpp's history to see if any of these principles demonstrated themselves in his narrative. Trumpp's failure to understand nuances in Indic languages of memory and devotionality extends to how he reads, or fails to read socio-political impulses as integral to religious movements. Not only does Trumpp not see any socio-political impulses in Gurū Nānak Sāhib, he also actively reimagines scenarios where they are present. For example, on his long journeys, Gurū Nānak Sāhib is said to have met with both Ibrahīm Lodhī, the last emperor of the Lodhī dynasty, and Bābur, the first emperor of the Mughal dynasty. Both of these meetings are foundational for Sikh socio-political thought and demonstrate basic Sikh principles, such as ideas of sovereignty and governance. Trumpp erases this potentiality in the text, and leaves the incidents bare with no socio-political drive. For example, Gurū Nānak Sāhib's encounter with Ibrahīm Lodhī, where Gurū Nānak Sāhib, according to Sikh tradition, is said to have revived a dead elephant, loses all the power of its allegorical meaning. In the Sikh tradition, as written in *Māhākavī* (The Great Poet) Santokh Siṅgh's *Srī Nānak Prakāsh* (1823), Gurū Nānak Sāhib comes to Delhi and comes across a mahout crying over his dead elephant. Gurū Nānak Sāhib prompts his companion, Bhāī Mardanā, to throw some water on the elephant's head and to say

"*Vahigurū*". The elephant comes back to life. The mahout, who works for the emperor, goes and tells the emperor about the miracle. The emperor comes and asks Gurū Nānak Sāhib to kill the elephant and revive it again. Gurū Nānak Sāhib causes the elephant to die but refuses to revive it. He then tells the emperor that only the Divine can give and take away life, and that even he, himself, has no power. He then proceeds to lecture the emperor about the proper conduct of a ruler, that he mustn't oppress people of other faiths and must give charity to the poor. The elephant can be said to represent the Lodhi dynasty, or the idea of kingly rule in general. The story can be read as an allegory about the vagaries of life and death or the transience of royal lineages among other interpretations. Trumpp misses out on all of this context,

> At Dilli he is said to have vivified a dead elephant. But when the then emperor, who had heard of this miracle, called on Nānak to kill the elephant and to vivify it in his presence, he prudently declined. (Trumpp, 1877, p. v)

Whereas Gurū Nānak Sāhib's meeting with Ibrahim Lodhi is made irrelevant, his encounter with the first Mughal emperor Bābur is dismissed as improbable,

> As Bābar conquered the Panjāb in 1524, a personal meeting of Nānak with Bābar is not impossible, but it is not very probable. (Trumpp, 1877, p. v)

Bābur's dialogue and subsequent imprisonment of Gurū Nānak Sāhib is of utmost importance for Sikh ideology. Gurū Nānak Sāhib made some of his most crucial political statements during this episode. He also revealed four *shabads* (compositions/poems), which are contained in *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, that in wrenching detail describe the horrors inflicted on the residents of South Asia by the invading Mughals. They demonstrate fundamental Sikh principles about human rights, principles of sovereignty and legitimacy of political governance. Trumpp doesn't just miss the point when translating this *sakhī*, he actually dismisses the significance of the historical encounter.

Gurū Nānak Sāhib's encounters with Hindu and Muslim religious figures are one of the most important aspects of his travels. The venerable Bhāī Gurdās, the first Sikh scholar, focuses his narrative of Gurū Nānak Sāhib's life around these episodes. These incidents are so important that Gurū Nānak Sāhib's debates with the Yogic masters, the *sidhan* has been incorporated into *Gurū Granth Sāhib* as a composition known as *Sidh Gost*, or 'Debate with the Sidhs'. This debate and others with Islamic, Brahminic and Yogic figures are incredibly vital to Sikhī because they demonstrate the basic theological foundations of Sikhī and clearly enunciate the distinction between Sikhī and these older traditions. They establish that Sikhī is the *Tisar Panth*, or the third way. In not exploring these multiple debates in more details, Trumpp goes on to produce an understanding of Sikhi devoid of these key principles.

> The meetings and verbal contests with other Faqīrs and Shēkhs, which are described at full length, are in themselves very probable, but in other respects of no importance, except that they give some hints to the mental development of Nānak. (Trumpp, 1877, p. v)

On his journey to the south Gurū Nānak Sāhib is said to have visited the northernmost tip of Sri Lanka. On his western *udasī*, he is said to have made it as far west as Arabia, visiting both of the Islamic holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Due to their distance, Trumpp discounts both of these journeys,

> That on this excursion he should have come to Ceylon (Singhala dvīpa), as is reported, is in the highest degree unlikely. The whole story is so mixed up with the miraculous, that it bears the stamp of fable on its front. It is based on altogether erroneous suppositions, the king and the inhabitants of Ceylon being represented as common Hindūs, the Sikh author being quite unaware of the fact that the popular religious belief there was Buddhism. (Trumpp, 1877, pp. v-vi)

Trumpp here demonstrates his own ignorance as northern Sri Lanka is Tamil, and therefore was Hindu, just as the *Janamsākhī* authors had written. About the journey to Mecca, Trumpp writes,

> Owing to their [the Sikhs'] credulity and utter want of geographical and historical knowledge, no doubt of the reality of this *hajj* [Islamic word for the pilgrimage to Mecca]

> seems to have occurred to them, though it is as clear as daylight, that the whole story is an invention from beginning to end. (Trumpp, 1877, p. vi)

After his long years of traveling, at the end of his fourth and final *Udasī*, Gurū Nānak Sāhib founded the small town of Kartārpur Sāhib, on the banks of the Ravī river (today in West Punjab, Pakistan). Gurū Nānak Sāhib's founding of this settlement is seen by Sikhs as a demonstration of the manifestation of the socio-political power of the Gurū. This would also inaugurate a trend in which the ten Gurūs would found multiple villages, towns and cities over the next two hundred years. Gurū Nānak Sāhib's founding of Kartārpur Sāhib was also the beginning of standardized Sikhī as we know it today. The basic daily routine of a Sikh, the compositions from *Gurbāṇī* that are to be read, were first delineated there. The small nucleus of Sikhs that gathered around the Gurū at this time would form the core of the growing Panth.

The relationship between Sikh and Gurū, which is at the heart of Sikhī, is one based on an intense and overwhelming love. This act of love flows from a place of humility, as one is required to put one's needs, one's thinking and one's attachments as secondary to the Gurū, as mentioned previously. However, this is how Trumpp understands Gurū Nānak Sāhib's relationship with these Sikhs,

> The way, in which Nānak used the disciples who attached themselves to his person, was not very conducive to impart to them any considerable knowledge; they were in fact little more than his menial servants. (Trumpp, 1877, p. lxxvii)

Trumpp was not impressed with this heartfelt devotion to the Gurū. In fact, he was greatly perturbed by it, and spends some time in his essay exploring and criticizing the concept,

> The consequence was such a deification of man as has hardly ever been heard of elsewhere. Life, property and honour were sacrificed to the Gurū in a way, which is often revolting to our moral feelings. It was therefore a very fortunate event for the more free and moral development of the Sikh community, that, with the tenth Gurū Gōvind Singh, the Gurūship was altogether abolished. (Trumpp, 1877, p. cix)

By lowering one's own desires and putting the Gurū first, one is freed from the transient whims of a selfish mind. The act of falling in love is thus also the breaking of bonds and a moment of profound freedom. As Gurū Arjan Sāhib reveals,

> ਸੰਤ ਸਰਣਿ ਸੰਤ ਟਹਲ ਕਰੀ ॥
> ਧੰਧੁ ਬੰਧੁ ਅਰੁ ਸਗਲ ਜੰਜਾਰੋ ਅਵਰ ਕਾਜ ਤੇ ਛੂਟਿ ਪਰੀ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥
> ਸੂਖ ਸਹਜ ਅਰੁ ਘਨੋ ਅਨੰਦਾ ਗੁਰ ਤੇ ਪਾਇਓ ਨਾਮੁ ਹਰੀ ॥
> ਐਸੋ ਹਰਿ ਰਸੁ ਬਰਨਿ ਨ ਸਾਕਉ ਗੁਰਿ ਪੂਰੈ ਮੇਰੀ ਉਲਟਿ ਧਰੀ ॥੧॥
> ਪੇਖਿਓ ਮੋਹਨੁ ਸਭ ਕੈ ਸੰਗੇ ਊਨ ਨ ਕਾਹੂ ਸਗਲ ਭਰੀ ॥
> ਪੂਰਨ ਪੂਰਿ ਰਹਿਓ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਨਿਧਿ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਮੇਰੀ ਪੂਰੀ ਪਰੀ ॥੨॥
>
> When I enter the presence of the Saint (Guru) and when I serve the Saint (Guru)
> I become free of all concerns, bonds and the complications of worldly affairs. (Pause)
> From the Guru I have received the Divine name
> Which has given me peace, contentment and bliss.
> The taste of the Divine Ever-Living Name is beyond description.
> I have been turned away from the world by the Perfect Guru. (1)
> I see the beautiful Divine within all,
> there is nowhere without Divinity, throughout creation.
> The Treasure of Blessings is everywhere
> Nānak says, “I am satisfied” (2) (a. 822-823)

For Trumpp however, this loving devotion that led to freedom, was instead understood as menial bondage to the Gurū. Before he became the 2nd Gurū, Gurū Angad Sāhib’s name was Bhāī Lehnā. Bhāī Lehnā is famous for his overwhelming love for the Gurū. Trumpp reframes the significance of this devotion as corrupt:

> What Nānak looked chiefly for in his successor, were not scientific accomplishments, or a cultivated mind, *but blind obedience to the commands of the Gurū*. The stories, which are told in the Janam-sākhīs, of the total "*sacrificium intellectus*" of Lahanā, are therefore very significant. (Trumpp, 1877, p. lxxvii)

Let us move on, briefly, to Trumpp’s history of the 2nd Gurū Angad Sāhib. The Gurmukhī script, used both for *Gurū Granth Sāhib* and as the standard script for Punjābī in Indian Punjāb is, according to Sikh tradition, invented by Gurū Nānak Sāhib, and then refined and standardized by Gurū Angad Sāhib. Gurū Angad Sāhib is thus acknowledged as the father of Gurmukhī. Gurū Angad Sāhib also revealed *Bāṇī*, which is collected in *Gurū Granth Sāhib*. In

spite of the fact that Gurū Angad Sāhib was most famous for his language skills, and that he is well known for encouraging education, Trumpp claims that the Gurū himself was illiterate,

> Angad settled down at the village of Khadūr, on the banks of the Biāsā [Beas], which was very probably his native place. He gained his subsistence by his own handiwork (see p. xlvii, 1. 4) and led the life of a recluse. He was altogether unlettered and could himself neither read nor write, as may be fairly concluded from… The later tradition, which makes him the inventor of the Gurmukhī letters is therefore without any foundation. (Trumpp, 1877, p. lxxvii)

Beyond his lack of reverence, Trumpp essentially dismisses language invention and textual traditions at the same time as British colonialism was insistent on seeing such moments as the distinctive mark of Western superiority over "oriental religion" in their "reliance" on myth and orality.

Even when Trumpp compliments the Gurūs, which is rare, he first disparages them. For example, when discussing Gurū Amar Das Sāhib, he states that the Gurū's *Bāṇī* is easily understandable, but again, claims that the Gurū is illiterate.

> After the death of Gurū Angad, Amar-dās took up his residence at Gōvindvāl. He was a humble, patient and pious man, round whom many disciples assembled. Though unlettered, like his master, who could teach him only the few simple tenets he had heard himself from Nānak, he composed many verses, which were incorporated in the Granth (Mahalla III), and which are conspicuous for simplicity and clearness. (Trumpp, 1877, p. lxxvii)

Perhaps Trumpp has a different understanding of what the word 'illiterate' meant. Perhaps by 'literate' he means that in his opinion the Gurūs were not great scholars and did not have a classical education with knowledge of prominent Hindu religious texts. Though a cursory reading of both Gurū Angad Sāhib and Gurū Amar Das Sāhib's Bāṇī would make clear that they were well educated and thoroughly understood traditional forms of learning. This appears to be part of a systemic undermining of Sikhi by a colonial system which is bent on reproducing its own inherent superiority and alternate narrative.

If, according to Trumpp, Gurū Nānak Sāhib has no socio-political inclinations and does not manifest Sikh sovereignty—and neither did the following three Gurū Sāhiban, where does that tradition come from in Sikhī? Interestingly, Trumpp does not view Gurū Hargobind Sāhib as the founder of Sikh political activism as many scholars do[36], but instead locates that impulse in the fifth Nānak, Gurū Arjan Sāhib. Gurū Arjan Sāhib had built the Harmandir Sāhib, founded the towns of Tarn Tāran and Kartārpur (Jullandhar) and compiled *Gurū Granth Sāhib* (at that time known as *Ādī Granth jī*). He further developed the warrior tradition in Sikhī by training his young son, Gurū Hargobind Sāhib, in the martial arts. Sikhī flourished and grew under his time as Gurū, but the burgeoning power of the Sikh Panth brought the attention of the Mughal authorities who arrested, tortured and executed Gurū Arjan Sāhib as they saw the growing Sikh community as a potential threat. Let us look at how Trumpp writes about Gurū Arjan Sāhib,

> This state was changed considerably under Gurū Arjun, who was an enterprising and active man, and the first Gurū who meddled with politics. (1877, p. lxxx).

Note the use of the word *meddled* by Trumpp, implying a faith leader like Gurū Arjan Sāhib has no right to be involved in socio-political issues. Though it could be claimed that Gurū Arjan Sāhib "meddled" in politics for a number of reasons, all of the Gurū's activities were ignored by Trumpp who instead stated that it was greed that animated the Gurū's political involvement.

> Gurū Arjun was the first Sikh Gurū who laid aside the garb of a Faqīr and kept an establishment like a grandee; he engaged also in trade in a grand style, as he either loved money or was much in want of it, though the Sikh tradition is now quite silent about such transactions of their Gurūs. (Trumpp, 1877, p. lxxx)

What Trumpp does here, by first creating a distinction between the Gurūs and then writing that the Gurū's political involvement was more of a historical accident, would have a tacit impact on later scholarship on Sikhism. Where did Gurū Arjan Sāhib's resources come from?

[36] Gurū Hargobind Sāhib formally enthroned himself as a socio-political ruler as well as a spiritual one at Akāl Takht Sāhib and most scholars assume that the warrior tradition in Sikhī begins with him as he trained the first Sikh army and engaged in the first battles in Sikh history. For this reason he is often considered to be the founder of Sikh polity.

> We have mentioned already, that the Gurūs had no fixed income, but what was voluntarily offered to them by their disciples. Arjun saw clearly enough, that for his aspiring schemes and the extension of his spiritual authority, he required considerable sums, which should be forth coming with some regularity. He reduced therefore the voluntary offerings of his disciples to a kind of tax, which he levied by deputies, whom he nominated in the several districts, and who forwarded whatever they had collected annually to the Gurū. In this wise the Gurū was on the one hand enabled to hold a court and to keep always a strong band of adherents round his body, and to extend his authority by the not inconsiderable sums he had at his command, wherever he found an opportunity, and on the other hand the Sikhs were thereby gradually accustomed to a kind of government of their own, and began to feel themselves as a firmly organized and strong party within the state. (Trumpp, 1877, p. lxxxi)

Trumpp is not entirely incorrect in his assessment. Gurū Arjan Sāhib's creation of *dasvandh*, the tithe given by all Sikhs, as well as the further refinement of the *Manjī* system of Gurū Amar Dās Sāhib did create a centralized structure for Sikhs that helped with the development of the Panth. Later when it had outlived its usefulness, this centralized structure was abolished for the more anarchic system of the K̲h̲ālsā by Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib. So, though Trumpp is not incorrect in pointing out the innovations carried out by the fifth Gurū, he misses several key points. Gurū Arjan Sāhib created *dasvandh* to pay for large Panthik projects, like the building of Harmandir Sāhib and the hospital for people afflicted with leprosy at Tarn Tāran. He did not collect the *dasvandh* for his own enrichment. Sikh history records that Gurū Arjan Sāhib and his wife, Māta Gangā, would weave baskets and sell them in the marketplace, and would live off their humble earnings from this work. They fastidiously did not use money collected from the *saṅgat* for their own personal purposes, refusing even to eat in the *Gurū ka Langar*, the free kitchen, which still operates to this day within the Darbar Sāhib Complex.

One of the things that Gurū Arjan Sāhib is most well-known for is his martyrdom. This is an inflection point in Sikh history. He is the first martyr in the Sikh tradition and given the title 'Sovereign of Martyrs' by Sikhs. His imprisonment, torture and death are seen as acts of political defiance, and thus a demonstration of the Gurū's socio-political power. His death also represents the evolution of Sikh tradition to its next stage of development—that of the warrior tradition.

According to Sikh history, Gurū Arjan Sāhib was summoned to Lahore for arrest by the Emperor. The Gurū traveled with five beloved Sikhs and gave himself up. He was tortured over the next several days. He was made to sit on a burning hot steel plate, red-hot sand was poured over his head, and at night he was locked in a small metal box. After a few days of this torture, he asked to bathe in the nearby river, at which point his weakened body was washed away by the current. Let us now see how Trumpp describes the Gurū's martyrdom:

> Gurū Arjun was several times summoned to Lahore, where he suffered severe treatment. One day this wretch [Chandu, an antagonist of Gurū Sāhib] suggested to the Emperor, that he should sew Arjun up in a raw cow-hide, which the Hindus abhor most, and burn him. When the cow-hide was brought before him, he begged to be allowed to take first a bath in the Ravi. The Emperor granted this request; Arjun jumped into the Rāvī, and was lost in it; the people searched much for his corpse, but could not find it. (Trumpp, 1877, p. lxxxii)

Instead of an inspiring and powerful story of a Gurū who withstood inhumane torture and did not break in the face of overwhelming odds, Gurū Arjan Sāhib is portrayed as a coward, who fled into the river and by chance drowned. All inspiring powers of the episode are lost.

This is an interesting contrast to my earlier discussion of Bhangū's text, where the martyrdom of the Ninth Gurū, Gurū Tegh Bahādur Sāhib, was treated as a foundational moment in Sikh polity and the beginning of legitimacy of the K̲h̲ālsā as a political power. Trumpp, it seems, is quite conscious to strip these historical traumas from their event character and their potentiality to consolidate a faith community. According to Sikh tradition, Gurū Tegh Bahādur Sāhib was arrested along with three of his Sikhs for protesting the forced conversion of the Kashmirī Hindu community by Aurangzeb's Mughal regime. The Gurū and his Sikhs were imprisoned for a number of months. The three Sikhs were then put to death in different horrendous ways. Finally, Gurū Tegh Bahādur Sāhib himself was taken out to the street in the main intersection of old Delhi, and was beheaded. Trumpp, with no comparable evidence in Sikh tradition, writes that Gurū Tegh Bahādur Sāhib was instead arrested for no particular reason, and

was tortured over a period of months until finally, desperate, the Gurū asked one of his own Sikhs to behead him.

> When no more any hope was left for the Gurū, two Sikhs fled and only one remained with him. Despairing of life, and being weary of the cruel treatment he had to suffer, he ordered the Sikh to cut off his head. He refused at first to commit such a crime, but when the Gurū pressed him hard, he at last struck off his head with a sword. Tēg-bāhadur died a.d. 1675. (Trumpp, 1877, pp. lxxxvii-lxxxviii)

Not only does Trumpp transform the Gurū's martyrdom from a dignified and proud expression of political protest and allyship into a desperate attempt to escape torture, but he removes all social and political context to the Gurū execution and completely discounts the traditional narrative,

> The reasons alleged in the Sikh tradition for the persecution and death of their ninth Guru appear very defective and improbable. (Trumpp, 1877, p. lxxxviii)

In other words, Trumpp's narrative couldn't be any more different from Bhangū's and from accepted Sikh history.

What about the K̲h̲ālsā itself? Surely something so obviously socio-political would garner some commentary from Trumpp. In actuality, Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib's revelation of the K̲h̲ālsā is seen by Trumpp as a form of Gurū's 'goddess worship',

> He [Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib] resolved, before embarking on his great enterprise (the revelation of the K̲h̲ālsā), to secure to himself the aid of the goddess Durgā, who was his special object of worship. (Trumpp, 1877, xc).

Trumpp is not alone in this thinking, many commentators have misunderstood Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib's evocation of *Bhagautī*, the feminine energy of the Divine as personified as the archetypal sword, so Trumpp is not creating a connection out of thin air. However, the socio-political aspects of the K̲h̲ālsā, the idea of a sovereign people, imbued with the royal traditions of the Gurūship that has now been diffused within the community, are completely missing from his account.

Strikingly, Trumpp reimagines the revelation of the K̲h̲ālsā as the opposite as it is understood by Bhangū. Bhangū saw the revelation of the K̲h̲ālsā as the transformation of the meek into the mighty, of those who were victims of socio-political and economic marginalization becoming masters of their own domain. Trumpp instead viewed the revelation of the K̲h̲ālsā and the subsequent *Rehit* of the K̲h̲ālsā, which Sikhs understand to have been created as the means through which the *Nāsh* doctrine is realized, as a form of social discrimination. For Trumpp, the revelation of the K̲h̲ālsā is just a creation of a new form of inequality for the poor Indian masses, another means of exerting control on the hapless denizens of South Asia. He writes, when discussing the *Rehit* (rules & regulations) of the K̲h̲ālsā,

> We see from these minute ordinances, that the Sikh reformatory movement soon ended again in a new bondage, which was quite as tiresome as that which they had thrown off. By precepts of this kind the Sikhs, the majority of whom consisted of rude and ignorant Jats, could morally but little be improved, as no provision whatever was made to raise them to a higher standard of education and culture, Gurū Gōvind Siṅgh being only intent on rendering them subservient to his will and on kindling their martial valour and hatred against the Muhammadans. We need therefore not be surprised, that they soon surpassed their fellow-countrymen in all sorts of vices and debauchery, to which they added a rapacious and overbearing conduct, so that they became a regular scourge to the country, after they had succeeded in overthrowing the Muhammadan power. They could easily destroy by their martial fury an old weak establishment, but were not able to erect a new solid fabric upon its ruins, as they had not in themselves the necessary moral and intellectual capacities. (Trumpp, 1877, p. cxvi)

As we can see from the above quote, Trumpp goes far beyond just criticizing the *Rehit* of the K̲h̲ālsā. By claiming that the Sikhs "surpassed their fellow-countrymen in all sorts of vices and debauchery", essentially categorizing Sikhs in desperate need of civilizing by the colonizer. The K̲h̲ālsā's remarkable feat of destroying Mughal and Afghan power in Punjāb is demeaned and stated to be a result of the Mughals being "an old weak establishment". Finally, the Sikh state itself is termed as unstable, due to the limited "moral and intellectual capacities" of the Sikhs, and were therefore unable to defend themselves against the civilizing force of the British empire. What Trumpp is calling unsolid is precisely the anarchist organizing of the 18th century K̲h̲ālsā

that Bhangū lauded. Trumpp sees the lack of rigid structure, of governing documents, and of a coherent leadership system as deficiencies, when they were instead the very things that potentially allowed the Sikhs to succeed and establish themselves. The Sikh state is not even discussed as legitimate, it is instead dismissed as inherently deficient and thus it was only natural and right that it should be colonized.

Trumpp does not continue his narrative past Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib's *jotī-jot*, so our comparison cannot continue into the Bandā Siṅgh Bahādur period and after. But it is clear that Trumpp denies the K̲h̲ālsā any legitimate socio-political impulses. In Trumpp's estimation, the Sikhs can hardly be called a Panth. They are a haphazard collection of individuals barely understanding their own tradition, which itself is full of holes and inconsistencies. Their religious preceptors, the Gurūs, are themselves confused, under-educated, often cowardly and misguided. This is not a powerful social and political movement with agency. In fact, in Trumpp's writing, it appears that South Asians lack agency all together. Though he did not say so directly, Trumpp's work implies that it is only Europeans who have agency and the ability to move history forward.

For Trumpp, the "problem" of Sikhī begins at the top. Gurū Nānak Sāhib himself is not framed as a sovereign master of all realms as Bhangū describes him. Instead for Trumpp, Gurū Nānak Sāhib is nothing more than a simple follower of Bhagat Kabīr. He is a simple fakīr or sadhū, whose religious tenets were later corrupted by Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib.

> Nānak himself was by no means an independent thinker, neither had he any idea of starting a new religious sect: he followed in all essential points the common Hindu philosophy of those days, and especially his predecessor Kabīr, who was at that time already a popular man in India, and whose writings, which were composed in the vulgar tongue, were accessible to the unlearned masses….
>
> The tenth Gurū, Gōvind Singh, relapsed in many points again into Hindūism, he being a special votary of Durgā[37]. (Trumpp, 1877, p. xcvii)

[37] South Asian goddess associated with protection, destruction and war. Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib eulogizes Durga's mythic battles to celebrate the Sikh warrior tradition and the Divine's creative feminine energy.

Just as Bhangū's work is informed and perhaps even instigated by colonialism, Trumpp's work is a direct product of the British colonization of the Sikh Panth. Trumpp, a devout German Protestant Christian (Siṅgh, T., 1994, p. 39), wrote about the Sikhs through an intensely colonial and orientalist lens. His work is a moment of violence against the Sikh psyche, a rhetorical blow that came in the wake of the brutally violent takeover of the Sarkār-ī-K̲h̲ālsā.

Trumpp's account not only misrepresents the history of the Gurūs, but it can be said to performatively delegitimize the Gurūs. Prominent incidents from the lives of the Gurūs are either absent, unremarked upon or more often than not, twisted to demonstrate the inferiority of the Sikh Gurūs and by extension the Sikh people. While Bhangū was focused on the sovereignty and legitimacy of the K̲h̲ālsā, Trumpp was, through his language, translation and analysis, firmly establishing the primacy and legitimacy of British rule over the Sikhs and demonstrating the subservience of the Sikh Panth to European culture, religion and politics.

Trumpp denied Sikhī a place as a religion in the Judeo-Christian sense, countering what some earlier British writers had implied. Sikh elites and intellectuals, as well as British administrators of Punjāb had thought Sikhī as more evolved than Hinduism (Mandair, 2005, pp. 255-256). Instead, for Trumpp, not only were Sikhs below Hinduism on the Hegelian ladder of religious development, but 'Sikhism' (as Trumpp conceived Sikhī) was actually below Hinduism, on par with Buddhism as almost an atheistic tradition (Trumpp, 1877, p. cvi). As Mandair writes,

> The real implication of this move was to invalidate on the basis of empirical observation and from the evidence of their own scriptures, the prevalent view that the Sikh religion was a 'moralizing deism' or that it possessed any historical or 'leavening' impulse of its own. (2009, p. 191)

In Trumpp's estimation Sikhīsm did not contain any socio-political impulses and it lacked even the basic qualities of a coherent social movement or religion in the European sense.

Trumpp's work needs to be put into context in the larger colonial project that had been undertaken in the rest of South Asia, and was now taking place in Punjāb for the first time as he was writing it. Bernhard Cohn explores, in his influential book, *Colonialism and its forms of knowledge: The British in India* (1996), the role that language played in the colonization of South Asia. Cohn explains that the British study of South Asian languages produced three great projects. The first was "the objectification and use of Indian languages as instruments of rule" in order to understand the culture of South Asians in order to better govern them (Cohn, 1996. p. 46). The second was the discovery of the "wisdom of the ancients", or the translating and writing about ancient religious texts, in order to construct a connection between the west and South Asia but also to classify South Asian religion and culture and "locate their civilizations on an evaluative scale of progress and decay" (Cohn, 1996. p. 46). The third was to patronize traditional South Asian institutions of learning in order to "appear legitimate in the eyes of the Indians" (Cohn, 1996. p. 46).

Trumpp's work can be seen as a combination of the first and second of these British projects in regards to language. The translation of *Gurbāṇī*, and an official colonial history of the Sikhs, was commissioned by the East India Company primarily as a tool to better understand the Sikhs so as to rule them more efficiently. Cohn quotes Governor-General Warren Hastings, who wrote,

> Every accumulation of knowledge and especially such as is obtained by social communication with people over whom we exercise dominion founded on the right of conquest, is useful to the state... it attracts and conciliates distant affections; it lessens the weight of the chain by which the natives are held in subjection; and it imprints on the hearts of our countrymen the sense of obligation and benevolence... Every instance which brings their real character [i.e. , that of the Indians] home to observation will impress us with a more generous sense of feeling for their natural rights, and teach us to estimate them by the measure of our own. But such instances can only be obtained in their writings. (1996, p. 45)

As Hastings writes, the translation of the Sikh scriptural canon, and the writing down of Sikh history, was part of the project of lessening the burden of subjugation, essentially part of the campaign of colonization. The second project, that of classifying Indian religion, culture and 'civilization' and ranking it on an "evaluative scale" is also very present in Trumpp's work. By virtue of being the official British history, his allocation of Sikhī(sm) on the Hegelian ladder of civilizational development has an important impact on how Sikhī is viewed, understood and interacted with by British colonial authorities and beyond.

Trumpp's work also fits into what Edward Said described in his famous text, *Orientalism*, as the relationship between the orientalist and the oriental. Said writes,

> That a still more implicit and powerful difference posited by the Orientalist as against the Oriental is that the former writes about, whereas the latter is written about. For the latter, passivity is the presumed role; for the former, the power to observe, study, and so forth. (1979, p. 308)

The Sikhs are the subjects. They do not have agency. They are written about by Trumpp, who as the orientalist, has all the power. As Said writes, "the relationship between the two is radically a matter of power" (1979, p. 308)

Trumpp's crude analysis and explanation had unforeseen consequences, as the ways in which Trumpp framed Sikhī created a spirited response by Sikh scholars and intellectuals, who in turn crafted their argument using the very terms of Trumpp's argument as their framework. What was the outcome of this process? Sikh scholars, known as the *Siṅgh Sabhā Lehar* scholars, in an attempt to demonstrate the worth of Sikhī to the colonial powers ended up creating something new, turning away from what Bhogal calls *Gursikhi* (what I call *Sikhī*) into what can now be framed instead as *Sikhism* (2015, pp. 244-245). This *Sikhism* was monolithic, monotheistic and monocultural. Sikhī had become trapped by the colonial snare, reframing itself

into a colonial entity by falling prey to an ontotheological framing of the Sikh conception of divinity (Mandair, 2005, p. 259).

Shared Audiences and Colonial Actions & Reactions

Trumpp's work is the official, orthodox narrative to Bhangū's subaltern text that I discussed beforehand. But the response to Trumpp's work was so severe and overwhelming that the British authorities had to hire another expert, Max Arthur Macauliffe, a British administrator and scholar, to write a new history of the Sikh Gurūs with a new translation of parts of *Gurū Granth Sahib*. This decision was made to appease the collaborating Sikh elite that were incensed with Trumpp's text. Macauliffe's history, though also colonial in spirit, is almost the exact opposite of Trumpp's. In Macauliffe's writings the Gurūs are lauded and Sikhī(sm) is treated with respect and almost reverence. In Macauliffe's own words,

> A portion of the Granth Sahib was translated some years since by a German missionary at the expense and under the auspices of the India Office, but his work was highly inaccurate and unidiomatic and furthermore gave mortal offence to the Sikhs by the *odium theologicum* introduced into it. Whenever he saw an opportunity of defaming the Gurūs, the sacred book, and the religion of the Sikhs, he eagerly availed himself of it.
>
> One of the main objects of the present work is to endeavour to make some reparation to the Sikhs for the insults which he offered to their Gurūs and their religion. (1996, vol.1 p. vii)

Macauliffe is generally very well regarded by the Sikh community, even to this day, and his work is often classified along with the *Singh Sabha* scholars. It appears that Macauliffe may have even converted to Sikhi; he is said to have recited Gurū Nanak Sāhib's *Japjī Sāhib* on his deathbed. Yet, in contributing to the *Singh Sabha Lehar* ideal of Sikhism, and framing Sikhi as a theism in European terms, scholars like Mandair criticize Macauliffe for his colonial orientalism,

> The point here is that Macauliffe's response to Trumpp's *odium theologicum* is imbricated in the same ontotheological framework as Trumpp. From this perspective the only real difference between them is the position and status that each attributes to Sikhism on the ontotheological schema of the history of religion(s): either a fully-fledged theism in

> Macauliffe's case, or a pantheism/atheism in the case of Trumpp. While Trumpp denied Sikh reformists what they desired (an authentically Sikh origin, subjectivity and a 'sufficiently exalted idea of God'), Macauliffe helped them to satisfy their desire for precisely these things. (Mandair, 2005, p. 268)

While Trumpp's work played into the larger colonial project of subjugating Sikhs, by being so crude and dismissive of Sikh scripture and history, his text in fact became unhelpful for British administrators as the colonial Sikh elite were outraged by it. Macauliffe's text then, though respectful of Sikhi, was still part of the colonial enterprise of creating pliant subjects while educating administrators about the Sikh traditions.

Harpreet Singh sees another fundamental issue with colonial translations of Sikh texts, and considers Trumpp and Macauliffe as two sides of the same coin. For Harpreet Singh, both Trumpp and Macauliffe are problematic because they inherently misunderstand the nature of Guru Nanak Sāhib and of Sikhī (2014, p. 205). For Trumpp, Gurū Nanak Sāhib exists purely within the Hindu tradition. However, Macauliffe, by stating that Sikhī is an independent tradition, "lose[s] sight" of the fundamental interactions with both Hindu and Islamic traditions in its development.

By means of conclusion I want to offer a few comparative insights on Trumpp and Bhangū's works, since they both emerged in a context of Sikh society's encounter with the West. Trumpp's work was commissioned by the leadership of the East India Company, and a few decades earlier, Bhangū, in addressing British officials, intended to clear up any confusion regarding the legitimacy and sovereignty of the K̲h̲ālsā Panth. His work was also a response to an earlier commissioning of a history of the Sikhs, by the Munshī Butai Shāh. In many ways, the choice of language, phraseology, subject matter and genre style all point to a text that was intended for a larger audience, since Bhangu must have felt the need to create an authoritative work for the Sikh Panth itself (Dhavan, 2009, p. 520). In the broader context of colonialism

Bhangū's *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh* thus takes on the form of a subaltern historical narrative, insofar as it was originally conceived as a corrective to texts by the empire(s) and later functioned as an important resource for reformist and anti-colonial agendas.

As mentioned above Trumpp's work was widely published and eagerly consumed by colonial elites along with indologists, philologists and orientalists, even as ultimately his claims were debunked. However, there has been no scholarship on how Bhangū's text was received within the Sikh community in the context before it was published by Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh in 1914. Questions such as: Were manuscripts of *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh* widespread? Was it studied in traditional seminaries (*taksals, deras, sampardas*)? And while the text is well studied in these spaces today, when did that come to be? For the argument in this thesis these questions are secondary to the textual hermeneutics that from today's vantage point help us to reconstruct textual continuity between key narratives in the Sikh historical canon up to the key transitions in Sikh social and political organization in the early 20th century, thus clearly playing a role in modern Sikh political mobilizations.

Compared to other 18th and early 19th century Sikh historical texts, *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh* is unique in its focus on the sovereignty of the K̲h̲ālsā Panth. It is the text that most strongly advocates for the idea of the K̲h̲ālsā as Gurū, and not just a special category of Sikh. In fact, it was for this reason that I chose it as the primary source of this thesis.

While there has been no scholarship on this issue, I find it remarkable that *Panth Prakāsh* was first published by Vīr Siṅgh in 1914, just five years before the launch of the Gurdwārā Reform Movement. Did a text that spoke so passionately about the independence and power of the K̲h̲ālsā, inspire the K̲h̲ālsā of the 1910's to reclaim Sikh institutions? As Dhavan writes,

> Bhai Vir Singh's published edition of Bhangu's *Gur Panth Prakash*, retitled *Prachin Panth Prakash* (*An Illumination of the Historic Panth*), popularized this work, and

> Bhangu's emphasis on the primacy of the community's right to organize its own affairs would gain traction as new reform movements in Sikhism gained ground. (2009, p.521)

Dhavan does not give any sources for her statement, but it is a sensible one. It is not a far jump to equate the *Masands* (appointed heads of Sikh communities in the Gurū-era that over a few generations became hopelessly corrupt) of Bhangū's texts with the *mahants* (the *Udasī* and *Nirmala* who cared for Gurdwāras while the K̲h̲ālsā were being persecuted in the 18th century and later, due to land grants and patronage grew corrupt) of the early 20th century. Both were corrupt, nepotistic groups that controlled Sikh institutions, leaving the congregation, the *saṅgat*, out of all decision making. Both were also out of the normative definition of what a Sikh was, as neither group received *Khaṇḍai Batai kī Pāhaul*.

Where did this normative definition of a Sikh come from? Well, as written about earlier in this chapter, this was part of the complex interplay between the *Siṅgh Sabhā Lehar* with colonial forces and the response to Trumpp's work. While the *Siṅgh Sabhā* scholars were staunchly apolitical and refused to engage in any anti-colonial activity, their works and publications were an inspiration to the generation of Sikhs that were advocating for Gurdwārā reform.

The interplay between Trumpp and Bhangū can be understood in another sense. While Trumpp simply dismissed forms of distributed agency and the potency of poetic/mythic language as part of commemorative practice, both Bhangū and Vīr Siṅgh mobilized Sikh history in cogent ways to ultimately bring about a new consolidation in the social and political fabric. This normative reclamation of Sikhī in a context of colonial translation has been a key struggle pointing far beyond "just" the debate over historical accuracy

The impact of colonialism is multi-faceted and multipronged. It is not a simple cause and effect scenario, and forces can work across decades in unanticipated ways. The anarchist

methodology, so obvious to me in Rattan Siṅgh Bhangū's work, doesn't appear at all in Trumpp's colonialist, official narrative. At the same time, the anarchist sovereign traditions of the K̲h̲ālsā, written in *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh,* possibly inspired a generation of Sikhs living in very different circumstances than the ones Bhangū was navigating when he wrote the text.

Conclusion

Overview of Thesis

In this conclusion I will briefly summarize the main findings of the earlier chapters while exploring potential research questions that were not fully examined in the thesis. Next I will engage in a short dialogue on Anarcha-Sikhī, looking at ideas such as love and humility. Then I will go over interesting sociological insights gained from these analyses. I will then engage in a short personal reflection and a description of possible future research. Finally, I will end with a coda in which I tie this work back to its inception.

In this thesis I have done an anarchist exegesis of *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh* and of Ernest Trumpp's history of the ten Gurūs. Through a sociological lens, I look at the legitimacy of the K̲h̲ālsā, the sovereignty of the K̲h̲ālsā and the anarchist principles of the K̲h̲ālsā. This exegesis has been done with an anarchist perspective in mind, meaning anarchist principles like anti-authoritarianism, egalitarianism, prefigurative politics, self-governance, internal organization and anti-statism have been highlighted in the text. It is my contention that there exists a form of anarchism, one I coin *Anarcha-Sikhī*[38], and the analysis of *Panth Prakāsh* has helped to illuminate this unique model while the analysis of Trumpp's work has clearly delineated the ways in which these anarchist principles were misunderstood and delegitimized by a colonial text and power.

What is the relevance of this work today? Why isolate and explain a concept like Anarcha-Sikhī? My contention is two-fold. First, that this perspective can help make sense of Sikh social movements, both historic and contemporary. Secondly, I believe that Anarcha-Sikhī has the potential of offering a unique perspective on various socio-political issues, giving a Sikh

[38] See Appendix A for a short manifesto of what I believe to be the main principles of Anarcha-Sikhi.

point of view that is rooted in anarchist principles. For example, since autumn of 2020 there have been wide-scale protests in India against the government's agricultural policies. These protests have largely been led by and are composed of Punjabi Sikh farmers. While the protests are generally secular in nature, Sikh iconography, traditions, and history have all played a role in the movement and in the minds of many of the protesters, the movement is a continuum of a centuries-old lineage of Sikhs challenging unjust rulers. The current Farmers' protests are largely leaderless (Siṅgh, S.J., 2020) much in the same way that leadership in the early K̲h̲ālsā of the post-Bandā Siṅgh period was diffuse and not centred in one individual. While the roots of this movement can be traced back to various incidents and developments over the last century, the most previous mass mobilization of Sikhs was in 2015. At that time there were several incidents of sacrilege where *sarūpan* (copies) of *Gurū Granth Sāhib* were damaged and desecrated. The protests against these incidents quickly grew and ultimately led to the calling of a Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā in November of 2015. Like previous Sarbat K̲h̲ālsās in the last century, both in 1920 and 1986, this Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā had some serious deficiencies, and did not exactly adhere to all the principles of the 18th century Sarbat K̲h̲ālsās. However, the calling of the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā, and its attendance by hundreds of thousands of individuals, demonstrate the pull of this unique Sikh institution.

In this thesis, I have looked at how Rattan Siṅgh Bhangū reframed the question of political legitimacy and turned it on it's head, stating that Sikhs were the natural rulers of South Asia and that the ruling Mughals were usurpers. This divine right to rule is a lived reality for Sikhs to this day. Everyday Sikhs end their petitionary prayer with chants of "*Rāj Karaiga K̲h̲ālsā*" which means "the K̲h̲ālsā will rule". Since the Farmers' protests, parts of this chant that were previously suppressed by the British have started to come back to the fore:

ਦਿੱਲੀ ਤਖ਼ਤ ਪਰ ਬਹੇਗੀ, ਆਪ ਗੁਰੂ ਕੀ ਫੌਜ
ਛਤਰ ਝੁਲੇਂਗੇ ਸੀਸ ਪਰ, ਬੜੀ ਕਰੇਗੀ ਮੌਜ

> The Guru's own army will sit on the throne of Delhi
> The royal canopy will fly above their heads and they will be in a state of contentment.
> (Sikh Oral Tradition)

Images of Sikhs hoisting the Sikh flag, the *Nishān Sāhib,* above the Red Fort (the historic political centre of Indian rule) on Republic Day, January 26th 2021, have been transposed onto images of Baghail Siṅgh Karoṛsiṅghia raising the *Nishān Sāhib* there in the late 18th century. The political legitimacy that Bhangū wrote about so passionately is still felt tangibly by Sikhs today.

When we speak about issues of sovereignty, as I did in Chapter 4, the narrative is more complex. Sovereignty was not a simple concept in Mughal South Asia, and in Punjāb it was linked to ideas of territorial sacredness and traditional leadership. What Kulwant Singh, the translator of *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh,* translates as 'sovereignty', is often actually related words in the original, such as *shāh*, *rāj* and *patshāhī*. These words encompass ideas of sovereignty, but the translation is not exact. Regardless of translation issues, it is clear that sovereignty, in the way that made sense to an early 19th century Sikh like Bhangū, was something that resided in the K̲h̲ālsā. Bhangu reframed sovereignty from how it was traditionally understood in South Asia, to instead be something that resided within a collective group of individuals. *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh* explains that the K̲h̲ālsā, greater than the sum of its parts, was as a whole a sovereign, as legitimate, or even more so, than any Mughal ruler.

This reframing took place through the unique Sikh conception of royalty, whereby what was once a tool of tyrannical, monarchical rule, became a tool of liberation. The idea of the K̲h̲ālsā as royal is still very present in modern Sikhi. Every spring, in every city and town with a significant Sikh population, *Nagar Kīrtans*, or "religious parades" for lack of a better phrase, are organised by local Sikh communities. At the lead of each of these *Nagar Kīrtans,* walking

solemnly before the float that carries *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, are the *Pañj Piārai*, the five Sikhs who together represent the authority of the K̲h̲ālsā. Though they are composed of regular members of the congregation, when gathered as the Five, they are treated with the utmost reverence. While such reverence would seem counter to anarchist ideals, it is my belief that this is one of the unique aspects of Sikh anarchism, the fact that the people as a whole are made royal. The P*añj Piārai* are simply the personification of the divinity, reverence and sovereignty that the Panth as a whole embodies.

When the *Pañj Piārai* walk at the front of *Nagar Kīrtans*, they invariably carry, unsheathed, large two and a half foot *Kirpāns* (swords). This is a very physical reminder of a unique aspect of Sikhi, (one that this thesis did not allow space to engage): the warrior tradition in Sikhi. The emphasis and celebration of arms in the Sikh tradition would seem to mark a clear line with many forms of anarchism, some of which are decidedly pacifist, while those who are not would be uncomfortable with the idea of a structured army. Yet historically, to be a K̲h̲ālsā meant to be part of the K̲h̲ālsā army. Sikhī's reformulation of violence, the way in which traditions like *Dhadī vārs* (ballads) celebrate historic Sikh warriors[39], the way that violence is considered to be an honourable choice in the face of oppression, and violent imagery in *Banī* (Bhogal, 2007) are all things that I wish to explore in the future. This too is a space where Anarcha-Sikhī would demonstrate its uniqueness from other forms of anarchism.

While *Panth Prakāsh* does not describe a perfect anarchist society, and it does not meet the standards of what I consider to be the principles of Anarcha-Sikhī (namely Bhangū's text is not feminist or sufficiently anti-casteist) it is a text where the history of Sikh anarchy in practice is visible, as explored in Chapter 5. The method in which the K̲h̲ālsā of the early and mid-18th

[39] See Appendix C for a translation of an expert of a Vār celebrating a hero of the 1st Anglo-Sikh Wars

century themselves framed their sovereignty, does in fact conform with these fundamentals of anarchism. Most importantly, how they self-organized and made decisions represents anarchist values put into practice. This is especially true for the Sarbat Ḵẖālsā model of decision-making, which I explored in some depth through the colonial reports of Europeans who were baffled by a method of governance which so completely defied their sensibilities and understanding. It is my contention that the Sarbat Ḵẖālsā was so strange to these European writers because it was both a uniquely Sikh method of governance, steeped in Sikh tradition and principle, and because it was an anarchist method of decision-making, and therefore too radical for most 18th century European colonialists. I explore how the Ḵẖālsā was inherently leaderless and when a leader tried to exert authority over the Panth (Bābā Bandā Siṅgh Bahādur), they were not only unsuccessful, but were themselves destroyed. The example of Bandā Siṅgh is contrasted with Navāb Kapūr Siṅgh, a leader of the Panth who was able to put the Panth first and who did not try to usurp the community's sovereignty. Finally, I engage in a brief discussion of the possible socio-political reasons for the end of the *Misl* period and the destruction of the Sarbat Ḵẖālsā system of self-governance.

In chapter 6 I move through a comparative narrative analysis of Ernest Trumpp's essays on Sikh history that prefaced his translation of *Gurū Granth Sāhib* and Bhangū's work. I look at Trumpp's history of the ten Gurūs in some detail, noting the colonialism and orientalism ripe in his work while also commenting on how different Trumpp's conception of Sikh history is from normal Sikh accounts of our own history. Whereas Bhangū understood the First Nānak to be the source of socio-political authority in Sikhī, Trumpp conceived of Gurū Nānak Sāhib as nothing more than a simple holy man whose own confused religious ideas are later corrupted by his own successors. Trumpp sees socio-political impulses in the fifth Gurū, Gurū Arjan Sāhib, but states

that they are due to the Gurū's greed. Unlike Bhangū, Trumpp fails to recognize the brilliant conceptions of legitimacy and sovereignty in the Sikh people as expressed in the K̲h̲ālsā Panth. Instead for Trumpp, Gurū Gobind Siṅgh in revealing the K̲h̲ālsā, has created a cult of personality around himself, yet another means of controlling an oppressed and deficient people. The fact that the Gurū himself received *Khaṇḍai Batai kī Pāhaul* and submitted himself before the *Pañj Piārai* and thus considered the K̲h̲ālsā Panth to be his own Gurū is all unremarked upon.

The Gurdwārā Reform Movement began in 1919, in the aftermath of the famous Jallianwālā Bāgh Massacre (also known as the Amritsar Massacre). In the massacre over 1500 unarmed protesters were slaughtered by British police forces in a large open walled field near the Darbār Sāhib Complex. While some scholars believe that the Gurdwārā Reform movement began because the normative definition of Sikh now meant that the *Udasī* and *Nirmala Mahants* who were in charge of Gurdwārāi were no longer considered Sikhs, and thus could no longer remain in charge of Sikh institutions, that is actually only a part of the explanation for the movement. The line between the Siṅgh Sabhā Lehar and the Gurdwārā Reform Movement is not a simple or straight one.

In the aftermath of the Jallianwālā Bāgh massacre, the colonial government backed the *Mahants* in charge of Harmandir Sāhib and Akāl Takht Sāhib, and went so far as to give an award to General Dyer, the man directly responsible for the massacre. Not only was he given a *siropa* (robe of honour) from Akāl Takht Sāhib, the highest honour a Sikh can receive, he was (somehow) initiated into the Sikh faith with *Khaṇḍai kī Pāhaul,* in spite of the fact that he cut his hair, drank and smoked and was a practicing Christian. This shocking level of sycophancy outraged the Sikh community and was the impetus for the drive for Gurdwārā reform. While the

desire to get rid of what was now understood to be unorthodox practices in Gurdwārāi did play a part, it was the anti-colonial, revolutionary spirit that was much more important.

In this milieu, with the Sikh community beginning to organize and grow politically active, what role could *Panth Prakāsh* have played? Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh first published *Panth Prakāsh* in 1914, a year after the founding of the revolutionary anti-colonial Ghadar Party. Did this text, which celebrates a sovereign and powerful K̲h̲ālsā speak to the Sikhs of the time? My contention is that the Sikhs of the 1910's may have seen themselves in Bhangū's narrative. Whereas the K̲h̲ālsā of the 18th century were fighting the Mughals and Afghanis, and were exerting their freedom, the Sikhs of the 1910's were neither free nor sovereign and were explicitly under British colonial control. The Jallianwālā Bāgh massacre, linked with Sikh ideas of martyrdom, informed by *Panth Prakāsh* in which martyrs are so lauded, would have been a natural inspiration in the movement to throw off British rule and again exert Sikh sovereignty.

Did Trumpp simply not see Anarcha-Sikhī principles in the lives of the Sikh Gurūs, or did he see them and refuse to acknowledge their significance? I believe the latter to be true, Trumpp's critique of Sikhī created an official document, utilized by colonial authorities, that completely negated all socio-political impulses of the Sikh Panth. If the Gurūs had no conception of sovereignty, then the Sikhs post-Gurū had no legitimate right to sovereignty, which meant that the colonized Sikhs of Trumpp's time had no right to demand sovereignty. Trumpp's understanding of religion is also so thoroughly European, that he can't conceive of a faith tradition like Sikhī where socio-political thought is so central to the precepts of the faith. Whereas earlier European writers wrote extensively about the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā and Sikh social and political organization, Trumpp ignores this fundamental aspect of Sikhī completely. This erasure is a form of violence as it steals legitimacy from Sikhs to organize themselves in the colonial

state. The added complexity of Trumpp's own work eventually being rejected by colonial authorities because it upset Sikh elites who were collaborating with colonial powers is explored.

Even though the glory days of what I term Anarcha-Sikhī (the mid-18th century) have long passed, the basic principles of Anarcha-Sikhī do still manifest themselves in Sikh socio-political movements; from the struggle for a Punjābī speaking state, to the Khalistan guerrilla war of the late 1980's and early 90's and to aspects of the current Farmers' Protest.

Anarcha-Sikhī

The impetus for this work, for my very return to academia, was my shared interest in Sikhi and political activism. I had some familiarity with *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh* and with Ernest Trumpp's work and thought that a comparative study of the two texts would be fruitful. What emerged from this analysis was a new and perhaps alternative interpretation of key principles of past and present Sikh socio-political organization. This interpretation, through the study of these texts, solidified into the concept of Anarcha-Sikhī, a Sikh take on anarchism.

As a dynamic religious movement, Sikhī has formed and shaped principles like anti-authoritarianism, anti-statism, egalitarianism, consensus based decision making, local and collective decision-making models, and support for the marginalized into a different and unique sociocultural context. This context is outside of the purview of the Eurocentric lens, which, especially when it comes to political issues, demonstrates its incapacity to fathom the Sikh conception of certain principles. It is this uniquely Sikh world-view, rooted in *Banī*, that I term Anarcha-Sikhī.

Anarchism is at its core about freedom. The famous late 18th century & early 19th century, Black American, anarchist activist Lucy Parsons once wrote, "Anarchism has but one

infallible, unchangeable motto, ‘Freedom.’ Freedom to discover any truth, freedom to develop, to live naturally and fully” (Ahearns, 2013). Of course anarchism is not unique to be focused on the concept of freedom. A more salient point is, what is the Anarchic-Sikh conception of freedom? It was socio-political freedom that the K̲h̲ālsā of the 18th century fought so hard for, and this freedom that spurred hundreds of thousands of Sikh activists since that time through the centuries. However, it is my contention that principles of Anarcha-Sikhī are grounded in the idea that true freedom, of the body, must start from freedom of the mind and heart. This can only come about through the act of falling in love with the Gurū. It is this component, that would be considered in a European framing as a *spiritual* component, that makes Anarcha-Sikhī so unique. Anarcha-Sikhī is intensely focused on social and political egalitarianism, but more than these materially obvious forms of equality is the underlying assumption of Gurū Nānak Sāhib that the most important form of bondage that a human experiences is the imprisonment of their mind due to their ego-centred actions:

> ਹੋਂਦਾ ਫੜੀਅਗੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਜਾਣੁ ॥
> ਨਾ ਹਉ ਨਾ ਮੈ ਜੂਨੀ ਪਾਣੁ ॥੨॥
>
> O Nānak, Understand this! You will be ensnared by ego.
> Where there is no ego, where there is no “I”, you are freed from birth and death (2)
> (*Gurū Granth Sāhib*, Gurū Nānak Sāhib, a. 1289)

Bhangū spends much of his narrative valourizing the courage of the K̲h̲ālsā for their acts of bravery in fighting the Mughals and Afghans. Gurū Nānak Sāhib reminds us in *Gurū Granth Sāhib* that courage on the battlefield is just a byproduct of courage in the mind, the courage of humility,

> ਜਉ ਤਉ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਖੇਲਣ ਕਾ ਚਾਉ ॥
> ਸਿਰੁ ਧਰਿ ਤਲੀ ਗਲੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਆਉ ॥
> ਇਤੁ ਮਾਰਗਿ ਪੈਰੁ ਧਰੀਜੈ ॥
> ਸਿਰੁ ਦੀਜੈ ਕਾਣਿ ਨ ਕੀਜੈ ॥੨੦॥

> If you have the desire to play my game of love,
> Then place your head on your palm and come to my path.
> Your feet can only come onto my path,
> Once you have given me your head without hesitation. (20)
> (*Gurū Granth Sāhib*, Gurū Nānak Sāhib, a. 1412)

This evocative *shabad*, where the reader is invited to "play the game of love" with the Gurū, involves complete submission to the Gurū as the first step to walking the path of Sikhī. The removal of one's own head and placing it on one's hand is a bold metaphor for the death of ego, and the humble submission of love needed for true freedom to manifest.

Anarcha-Sikhi is grounded in ideas of freedom that are themselves grounded in cultivated practices of humility and love. What does humility and falling in love with the Gurū look like in a post-1708 world? With *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, falling in love with the Gurū is a matter of stitching one's heart to the Divine word through immersion in *Banī*. But how does one demonstrate humility to the Gurū K̲h̲ālsā Panth, and how does one fall in love with a community of adherents?

In the early 18th century, humility is practiced in *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh* when a Sikh demonstrates the ability to put the needs of the community above their own: if a person is able to develop and practice what is called Panthik *sauch* or Panthik thinking. Navāb Kapūr Siṅgh is praised as a leader because he never put his desires or needs before the community, quite the opposite of Bābā Bandā Siṅgh Bahādur. Compare how Bhangū describes Bandā Siṅgh

> *Banda Singh had written that he was, no longer, a Guru's follower,*
> *As he had been a follower of Bairagi Vaishno[40] sect.*
> *He remarked that his collaboration with the Guru was over,*
> *As he would become a sovereign with his own powers. (59:20 / 57:20)*
> (Bhangu, 2006, Vol. 1 p. 339)

With how Kapūr Singh is described,

> *As Khalsa Panth graciously honoured Sardar Kapoor Siṅgh,*
> *He displayed remarkable wisdom in his thoughts and deeds.*

[40] Followers of Vishnu, the sect of Bairagi Sadhus that Bandā Siṅgh belonged to before his conversion to Sikhī.

> *Holding the Khalsa Panth in the highest esteem,*
> *He would never take any decision without their consent. (90b:9 / 84b:9)*
> (Bhangu, 2006, Vol. 2 p. 87)

Kapūr Siṅgh, regardless of how well respected he may be, and the accolades he may receive, always puts the Sikh Panth first.

Love for community, in Bhangū's praxis, is demonstrated through sacrifice. The giving of *shahīdī* (martyrdom) is understood as the ultimate expression of love for the Gurū K̲h̲ālsā Panth. Martyrdom plays a specific role in Bhangū's work. Dhavan (2009) sees it as part of the formula of giving primacy to the K̲h̲ālsā as a whole, over the individual,

> Bhangu's narrative approach, which asked the Khalsa Sikh reader to participate in both witnessing and rememorializing the Sikh past, did so both as a form of spiritual practice and as a curb on the self-interest of the Khalsa warrior. The notion of a collective sovereignty or raj, one in which no one Khalsa Sikh would take precedence over another, was created in multiple ways. It was present both in the dissolving of caste hierarchies within the Khalsa community and in the last Gurū's bestowal of his spiritual and political authority (raj) to the Khalsa community as a whole. (p. 521)

By eulogizing the great Sikh *shahīdan* (martyrs) of the past, Bhangū is emphasizing the collective sovereignty of the Gurū K̲h̲ālsā Panth. Love for and humility towards the K̲h̲ālsā are thus manifested, according to Bhangū, either through sacrificing of one's needs for the community, or a literal sacrifice of one's very self for the Panth.

If love and humility towards the Gurū lead to a spiritual freedom, a breaking of the bonds of ego and transformation of the self, what does love and humility for the Panth lead to? According to Bhangū, it is the acts of sacrifice, both of desires and personal opinions and of lives, that leads to the flowering of the K̲h̲ālsā's potential and power. The K̲h̲ālsā grows in stature due to the acts of loving sacrifice practiced by its members. Here we see the joining of personal liberation and community emancipation fusing together.

Of course, Bhangu has presented us with a highly idealized version of the K̲h̲ālsā of the 18th century. What about members of the community that were not interested in self-sacrifice?

Members who collaborated with the government according to expediency? What about everyday folks, non-K̲h̲ālsā, living in territory that the K̲h̲ālsā liberated? Figures like Sardār Jassa Siṅgh Rāmgharia, founder and leader of the *Rāmgharia Misl*, who first worked for the government and then in the midst of a siege of his fellow Sikhs, switched sides to the Panth, complicate the narrative and demonstrate that there is a diversity of experience. While figures like Bhāī Manī Siṅgh, Bhai Tarū Siṅgh and Bhai Sukha Siṅgh are eulogized by Bhangū, and through his text we are given the feeling that perhaps all of the Sikhs of the time lived up to these ideals, the reality was different.

Sociological Insights

This thesis has relied almost exclusively on the study of two historical texts, one pre-colonial and one colonial. There is some tension in this analysis, as sociologists often look at the fluidity of everyday social processes, not historical texts. For myself, the study of these texts was important because it provides a foundation for a new understanding of Sikh socio-political principles. All historical texts are inherently flawed, just in different ways, but what *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh* and Trumpp's writings provide are the insider and outsider perspectives of Sikh norms in the early and late 19th century. The ways that Bhangu and Trumpp choose to tell their histories provide insight not only to their subject matter, but to the milieu, biases and world views of the authors themselves. Through Bhangū, we can begin to understand what the early 19th century Sikh perspective of recent Sikh history was; how a Sikh from the Raṇjīt Siṅgh-era understand the previous one hundred years. Through Trumpp, we are offered a glimpse into the colonial construction of Sikh history, of what aspects of the Gurūs were important for colonials and what could be disregarded and ignored.

The Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā, which so much of this thesis has been centred around, is a fascinating example of social persuasion and consensus making as social tethers for a community emerging in contexts of profound historical disruptions, migrations, shifting empires, splintered sovereignties and multi-religious communities. Punjāb of the 19th century was an incredibly diverse and unstable region. The Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā, though evolving out of Sikh norms and traditions, and particular Sikh principles of sovereignty and monarchy, must also be understood as the attempts of a minority community to create a stable and cohesive community. Bhangū's emphasis on the K̲h̲ālsā, over other types of Sikhs, and his general ambivalence in regards to non-K̲h̲ālsā Sikhs, demonstrate that *Panth Prakāsh* is trying to forge an identity with clear demarcations, within a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society where the boundaries between communities was not always clear. Bhangū's conception of what it means to be a K̲h̲ālsā is clear and unwavering. Even an initiated Sikh like Subeg Siṅgh, who worked for the Mughal state, had to retake *Khaṇḍai Batai kī Pāhaul* in order to just address the K̲h̲ālsā. Bhangū's perspective is one in which to be a K̲h̲ālsā means to swear allegiance solely to the K̲h̲ālsā, and any mixed loyalties, such as work for the government, was unacceptable. While Subeg Singh had to retake *Amrit* in order to address the K̲h̲ālsā, Divān Kauṛā Mal, who was a non-K̲h̲ālsā Sikh, was treated with fealty and respect, even though he worked for the government in a much more important position than Subeg Singh. Obviously the standards that Bhangū expects from the K̲h̲ālsā are different than those of non-Khalsa Sikhs.

How does Bhangū help forge this K̲h̲ālsā identity? One of the primary methods is through the dramatization of role models. These powerful and inspiring tales of Sikh warriors and martyrs help personalize truths and moral values by creating idealized versions of Sikh behaviour. Interestingly, in who he chooses to focus on, Bhangu betrays his own biases and

limitations. Sikh women are generally erased from his narrative, even prominent ones, and non-Jat Sikhs are rarely eulogized.

While the creation of historic truth claims occurred in the early 19th century, Bhangū's impact on later Sikh history is a fascinating topic that has not yet been studied in any depth. As written earlier, the publication of the text matches up historically with the development of the Gurdwara Reform Movement. The role of Bhangu's text in that movement, and amongst different groups of Sikhs is a possible avenue of future scholarship.

This thesis explored Trumpp's history of the ten Gurūs. What I did in the chapter on Trumpp was trace a shift from the anticipation of colonial encroachment that Bhangū must have perceived to Trumpp's dismissive representation of Sikh history only a few decades later. Trumpp's work had major political consequences and in the long term had a damaging effect on how key tenets of Sikh social and political institutions and concepts were understood, even among segments of Sikh society.

The analysis of these two texts offers rich ground for further sociological research. For example, the transformation of K̲h̲ālsā identity from the time of Bhangū to Trumpp could be looked at or the changing Sikh conception of sovereignty from the Raṇjīt Siṅgh era to a time of British colonialism. The application of these insights to modern Sikh populations, both diasporic and in Punjāb are also rife with potential. Does Bhangū's work resonate with young Khalistani activists in the UK, if so, how? Does Trumpp's skewed perspective on Gurū Nānak Sāhib still have an impact in modern Sikh studies, how about with Indian scholars who may bring their own biases to the study of Sikhī?

For myself, the research of these texts has been enlightening. The way Bhangū uses poetry and traditional Sikh storytelling methods to so passionately advocate for Sikh sovereignty

is astounding. The popularity of the work, and its continuing relevance are obvious. Reading Trumpp's work has been challenging. But by taking a step back from his critiques and sometimes completely uncalled for suppositions, I have gained important insights into the mechanics of colonialism, and how text, history and translation are used as part of the violent colonial project, both in the past and present.

Ending the Exegesis

> *Dohra:*
> *The Khalsa must be as autonomous and self-respecting,*
> *As the embodiment of all the Divine attributes in plenty.*
> *Never submitting to the sovereignty of anyone else,*
> *Except the sovereignty and autonomy of God alone. (14:35 / 15:35)*
> (Bhangū, 2006, Vol. 1 p. 81)

And with this verse, in which Rattan Siṅgh Bhangū reminds us of the idealized true nature of the K̲h̲ālsā, this exegesis of *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh* is completed. I have written this exegesis to the best of my ability, with the tools available to me. At the end of any exegesis, a Sikh exegete will apologize to the congregation for any mistakes that have been made. So as your exegete, I ask for your forgiveness for all of the mistakes I have made. My analysis was often simplistic and deficient. I have tried, in my limited capacity, to access *Gurmat* (Gurū's methodology, Gurū's way of thinking) and present *Panth Prakāsh* in a fair, honest and open manner. While Rattan Siṅgh Bhangū likely never heard of concepts like political legitimacy, popular sovereignty, anarchism, popular monarchy, anti-authoritarianism and consensus, I have tried not to read into his text what was not already implicitly present, at least from my standpoint as a sociologist, anarchist, and Sikh of my social context. The Anarcha-Sikhī that I have extracted from the text of *Prachīn Panth Prakāsh*, and presented to you the *saṅgat*, was, in my opinion, not a creation of my own making but an uncovering and naming of principles that have emerged in Sikhī. Rattan

Siṅgh Bhangū wrote about them as he understood them in the early 19th century. He was writing his text in the looming shadow of colonialism, at the height of the Sirkar-ī-K̲h̲ālsā (Sikh empire) with the memory of more egalitarian days of the K̲h̲ālsā in his living memory. His work must be understood in that context, just as my analysis is informed by the fact that I am a diasporic Sikh, removed from Punjāb, living on the stolen land of sovereign Indigenous nations. What ties Sardār Rattan Siṅgh Bhangū to myself, is a faith and belief in the potentiality of the K̲h̲ālsā. The spirit of Anarcha-Sikhī, though often hidden and repressed, will always seek to reestablish itself and demonstrate its effectiveness and radical transformative capabilities in a myriad of contexts.

You, dear reader, are the embodiment of the Gurū, and I ask that you bless me so that in the future I may explain and explore these texts more clearly, efficiently and creatively. I seek to explore and elucidate, with your blessings, Anarcha-Sikhī. With your blessings, I seek to create scholarship that has the potential to transform the world.

An Anarchist & a Sikh

I started this thesis describing how I first became exposed to anarchism, and the connections that seemed so obvious to me between anarchism and Sikhī. Here at the conclusion of this thesis, I hope I have given a glimpse into the connections that have long been so apparent to myself. This has not been a thorough examination of Anarcha-Sikhī, but instead an exploration of the principles of that ideology within two competing texts, both products of colonialism in their own way. As the colonial experience, and the violence of the colonial takeover has been so essential to the modern understanding of Sikhī, it only makes sense to begin to look at Anarcha-Sikhī through the lens of these texts.

Principles of Anarcha-Sikhī, though they manifest themselves through time, have often not been remarked upon, let alone studied and discussed. By beginning to explore these principles more purposefully I aim to begin the work of creating a body of scholarship that can look at Anarcha-Sikhī. As I soon embark upon writing a more expansive work for my PhD, I will explore the underlying principles of Anarcha-Sikhī, and tie them into a discussion with scholars who are exploring Anarchism through their own lenses. I also seek to more fully examine where the principles of Anarcha-Sikhī develop from, to look into *Banī* and try and understand the underlying structure of this school of thought. This will allow myself, and hopefully others, to apply Anarcha-Sikh principles to various circumstances and situations.

Coda

My grandfather, as I wrote at the beginning of this thesis, was a radical poet who wrote poems against the state from the 1920's to the 1960's. In looking through his book of poetry I came across the following poem that he wrote/performed at the height of the anti-colonial struggle, sometime in the 1930's.

ਪੰਜ ਪਿਆਰੇ

ਲੋਕ ਕਵੀ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਿੱਧਾ ਜੱਟ

ਅਮਨ ਪਸੰਦੀ ਆਦਮੀ ਸਭ ਉਠ ਖਲੋਤੇ।
ਹਰ ਜ਼ਾਤੀ ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਹੋ ਵਿਚ ਹਾਰ ਪਰੋਤੇ।
ਰੂਹ ਸ਼ਹੀਦਾਂ ਜਾਗੀਆਂ ਸਭ ਬਾਬੇ ਪੋਤੇ।
ਰਾਜ ਕਰੇਗਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਜੱਟ ਲਾਊ ਜੋਤੇ।

ਕਿਉਂ ਰਾਜ ਕਰੇਗਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਕੋਈ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਪੁਛੇ।
ਅਮਨ ਰਖਾਉਣਾ ਕਿਸ ਨੇ ਕੋਈ ਪੁਛੇ ਗਿਛੇ।
ਕਾਮੇ ਕਿਰਤੀ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੇ ਕਿਸ ਕੀਤੇ ਪਿਛੇ ।
ਲਾਲੋ ਭਗਤਾਂ ਉਠਣਾ ਹੋਊ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਪਿੱਛੇ।
ਫੇਰ ਸ਼ਹੀਦਾਂ ਮਿਲ ਕੇ ਇਕ ਕੀਤੀ ਝਾਕੀ।
ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਛੱਕ ਲਓ ਮਿੱਤਰੋ ਕੋਈ ਰਹੇ ਨਾ ਬਾਕੀ।

ਬਾਣੀ ਪੜ੍ਹਦੇ ਬੰਦਿਓ ਛੱਡ ਦਿਓ ਚਲਾਕੀ।
ਅਮਨ ਲਫ਼ਾਫ਼ੇ ਵੰਡਦੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਬਣ ਗਏ ਡਾਕੀ।
ਦਗੜ ਦਗੜ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੁਣੀਂਦਾ ਸਾਡੇ ਫਿਰਦੇ ਰਾਕੀ।
ਐਧਰ ਜੂ ਐਧਰ ਜੁਮੇਂ ਅਸਾਂ ਦੇ ਜੋ ਭਾਈ ਪਾਕੀ।
ਬੋਲ ਜੈਕਾਰੇ ਗੱਜ ਕੇ ਸਿੱਧਾ ਖੜ ਗਏ ਨਾਕੀ।
ਰਾਜ ਕਰੇਗਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਕੋਈ ਰਹੇ ਨਾ ਆਕੀ।

The Five Beloved (Pañj Piārai)
By the People's Poet, Sardār Avtār Siṅgh Sidhā-Jat

The peace[41]-loving people came together and rose up
The martyrs from many castes are like flowers on a garland
The souls of the martyrs awake the young and old
"The Ḵẖālsā shall rule[42]", now I'm free to do my work

Should someone ask, why "The Ḵẖālsā shall rule"?
Ask yourselves, who will keep the peace?
Hard workers & labourers of the nation, why have they been left behind?
Those like Bhāī Lālo[43] will rise up, their wishes fulfilled
The martyrs then gather and show us a glimpse
Consume *amrit*[44] my friends, leave no one behind!
Those reciting *banī*, don't engage in machinations (give up your hypocrisy)
The message of peace is being spread to all, we have all become messengers
The commotion of the oppressors is not heard, protection surrounds us
This is the responsibility of the pure hearted ones
Shout the victorious battle cries, oh Sidhā, get ready for your duty!
"The Ḵẖālsā shall rule", let no one be left behind.
(my translation from the original in Chahal, 1993, p. 97)

My grandfather, Avtār Siṅgh Sidhā-Jat, in this poem, is clearly expressing Anarcha-Sikhī principles. He understands the creation of the Ḵẖālsā as the rising of the "workers & labourers" much as Rattan Siṅgh Bhangū understood it as the coming together of people from many marginalized castes. The Ḵẖālsā is a promise in this poem. It is the hope for a more peaceful, fulfilled and safe life: a life free from oppression. I can imagine Avtār Siṅgh singing this poem

[41] 'Peace' here does not refer to peace from war but peace to live one's life in freedom and prosperity. This is a social peace where the needs of the marginalized are addressed.
[42] This is the last line of famous Dohirai (couplet) that are sung by Sikhs daily after their petitionary prayer (Ardās)
[43] Bhāī Lālo was one of the most prominent Sikhs of Gurū Nānak Sāhib. He was famous for being an extremely poor and destitute carpenter who worked hard and in spite of his poverty, still shared his wealth. He is seen as the epitome of honest and hard work in the Sikh tradition.
[44] *Khaṇḍai Batai kī Pāhaul*, the initiation into the Ḵẖālsā

from Panthik stages during anti-colonial protests, his voice rising as the poem goes on, *jaikārai* (victorious battle cries) ringing through the congregation. In the second last line the poet calls out to himself, "get ready for your duty". For the vision of the K̲h̲ālsā to be realized, everyone must do their part, everyone must shoulder responsibility, everyone needs to stand together. As Bhangū wrote about the K̲h̲ālsā of the 18th century. The struggles were hard and difficult, but a united K̲h̲ālsā was able to overcome any difficulty, defeat any foe, and rise up against any act of oppression. It was that spirit that Avtār Siṅgh Sidhā-Jat was trying to realize in this poem, a spirit he was trying to inculcate in his audience. As my grandfather wrote 90 years ago, *let no one be left behind*. All can join in this struggle.

References

Ād Gurū Granth Sāhib. (n.d. [1705]) Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee.

Aherns, G. (Ed.). (2003). *Lucy Parsons: Freedom, Equality & Solidarity, Writings & Speeches, 1878–1937*. Charles H Kerr.

Amster, R. (2018). Anti-Hierarchy. In Franks, B., Jun, N. & Williams, L. (ed.), *Anarchism: A conceptual approach* (pp. 15-28). Routledge.

Ashok, S. S. (1995). Pañj Piāre. In Singh, H. (ed.), *The encyclopaedia of Sikhism* (vol. 3, pp. 283-284). Punjabi University Patiala.

Avtar Singh. (2018, August 1). *01 Katha Pracheen Panth Parkash Part 01 by Nihang Giani Sher Singh Ji Ambala* [Video]. Youtube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jJ9IXdKeHWo&list=PL3BJLHI9uhSY5S4bXxWCvuyraVOfiXaaK&ab_channel=AvtarSingh

Bakhtin, M. & Voloshinov, V.N. (1986). *Marxism and the philosophy of language* (L. Matejka, & I. R. Titunik, Trans.). Harvard University Press.

Banerjee, A. C. (1995). Jīvan Siṅgh, Bhāī. In Singh, H. (ed.), *The encyclopaedia of Sikhism* (vol. 2, pp. 389-390). Punjabi University Patiala.

Bartelson, J. (2011). Sovereignty. In B. Badie, D. Berg-Schlosser, & L. Morlino (Eds.), *International encyclopedia of political science* (pp. 2470-2472). SAGE Publications, Inc., https://www-doi-org.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/10.4135/9781412959636.n573

Benjamin, W. (1968). *Illuminations : Essays and reflections* (H. Arendt, Ed.) (H. Zhon, Trans.).. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Bhangu, R. S. (2004 [1813]). *Srī Gur Panth prakāsh* (B. S. Dhillon, Ed). Singh Brothers.

Bhangu, R. S. (2006 [1813]). *Sri Gur Panth prakash* (K. Singh, Trans.). Institute of Sikh Studies.

Bhogal, B. S. (2007). Text as sword: Sikh religious violence taken for wonder. In *Religion and violence in South Asia: theory and practice, 101*. Hinnells, J., & King, R. (Eds.). (2006). https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/10.4324/9780203088692

Bhogal, B. S. (2015). The facts of colonial modernity and the story of Sikhism. *Sikh Formations*, 11(1-2), 243–265. https://doi.org/10.1080/17448727.2015.1038120

Bhowmick, N. (2021, March 4). *'I cannot be intimidated. I cannot be bought.' The women leading India's farmers' protests*. Time. https://time.com/5942125/women-india-farmers-protests/

Bischoping, K., & Gazso, A. (2016). *Analyzing talk in the social sciences: Narrative, conversation & discourse strategies*. SAGE Publications.

Bookchin, M. (1982). *The ecology of freedom: The emergence and dissolution of hierarchy* . Cheshire Books.

Blunden, A. (2016). *The origins of collective decision making*. Brill.

Chahal, S.S. (1993). *Lok Kavī Sidhā Jat: Jīvan tai rachnā* [The People's Poet Sidhā Jat: Life and Writings]. Pannu & Sons.

Chibbar, K. S. (1997 [1769]) *Bansāvalīnamā: Dasān Patshāhīān ka* [Genealogy of the ten emperors]. (P. S. Padam, Ed). Singh Brothers.

Chisholm, Hugh, ed. (1911). "Resident". *Encyclopædia Britannica. (11th ed.)* (Vol 23, p. 183). Cambridge University Press.

Doyle, K. (1995, May). Noam Chomsky on anarchism, marxism & hope for the future. *Red and Black Revolution*, 2, 178.

Chopra, H. S. & Hans, S. (1988). Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh valoṅ 'Panth Prakāsh" da sunpādan [Bhāī Vīr Singh's editing of Panth Prakāsh]. *Punjab Journal of Politics*. 12(1), 51-62.

Coulthard, G. S. (2014). *Red skin, white masks: Rejecting the colonial politics of recognition*. University of Minnesota Press.

Christoyannopoulos, A., & Adams, M. S. (2017). Anarchism and religion: Mapping an increasingly fruitful landscape. In A. Christoyannopoulos (ed.), *Essays in anarchism and religion* (pp. 1-17). Stockholm University Press.

Cohn, B. S. (1996). *Colonialism and its forms of knowledge: the British in India*. Princeton University Press.

Cunningham, J. D. (1994 [1853]). *A history of the Sikhs from the origin of the nation to the battles of the Sutlej*. Asian Educational Services.

Dalrymple, W. (2004). *White Mughals: Love and betrayal in eighteenth-century India*. Penguin.

Daiute, C. (2014). The appeal of narrative in research. In *Narrative inquiry* (pp. 1-30). SAGE Publications.

Dawe, D. G. (1995). Nānak, Gurū. In Singh, H. (ed.), *The encyclopaedia of Sikhism* (vol. 3, pp. 165-183). Punjabi University Patiala.

DeLeon, A. (2006). The time for action is now! Anarchist theory, critical pedagogy, and radical possibilities. *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, 4(2), 72-94.

Dhavan, P. (2009). Reading the texture of history and memory in early-nineteenth-century Punjab. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 29(3), 515–527. https://doi.org/10.1215/1089201X-2009-035

Dhavan, P. (2011). *When sparrows became hawks: The making of the Sikh warrior tradition, 1699-1799*. Oxford University Press. 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199756551.001.0001

Dilgeer, H. S. (2000). *Akāl Takht Sāhib: Falsafa até Tavarīkh* [Akāl Takht Sāhib: Philosophy and history]. Sikh University Centre.

Dupuis-Déri, F. (2011). Anarchism. In Badie, B., Berg-Schlosser, D., & Morlino, L. (eds.), *International encyclopedia of political science* (pp. 73-78). SAGE Publications. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412959636.n18

Eraly, A. (2000). *Emperors of the Peacock Throne: The saga of the Great Mughals*. Penguin Books India.

Fenech, L. (2001). Martyrdom and the execution of Guru Arjan in early Sikh sources. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 20-31. https://doi.org/10.2307/606726

Fenech, L. (2015). Ranjit Singh, the shawl, and the Kaukab-i-Iqbā-i-Punjāb. *Sikh Formations*, 11(1-2), 83–107. https://doi.org/10.1080/17448727.2015.1023107

Guérin, D. (1970). *Anarchism: From theory to practice*. NYU Press.

Giani Daya Singh Dilbar - Topic (2018, August 10). *Halla Boleya Sham Singh Sher Ne* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UdvkjN3cp64&t=668s&ab_channel=GianiDayaSinghDilbar-Topic

Goldman, E. (1940). The individual, society and the state. The Anarchist Library.

Hasrat, B. J. (1995). Ahmad Shāh Durrānī. In Singh, H. (ed.), *The encyclopaedia of Sikhism* (vol. 1, pp. 22-25). Punjabi University Patiala.

Howell, K. E. (2013). *An introduction to the philosophy of methodology*. SAGE Publications. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473957633

Jaggi, R. S. (1995). *Bhaī Manī Singh: Jīvanī ate rachnā* [Bhaī Manī Singh: Life and writings]. Punjabi University Patiala.

Kaicker, A. (2020). *The king and the people: Sovereignty and popular politics in Mughal Delhi* . Oxford University Press.

Kaur, N. & Sekhon, S. (2021, January 6). *Women take lead roles in India's farmers' protest*. The Conversation. https://theconversation.com/women-take-lead-roles-in-indias-farmers-protest-151981

Kim, J. (2016). Narrative research genres. In *Understanding narrative inquiry* (pp. 116-153). SAGE Publications. https://www-doi-org.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/10.4135/9781071802861

Kozlowski, G. (1995). Imperial authority, benefactions and endowments (awqāf) in Mughal India. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 38(3), 355–370. https://doi.org/10.1163/1568520952600425

Kropotkin, P. (1902). *Mutual aid: A factor of evolution*. The Anarchist Library.

Macauliffe, M. A. (1996 [1906]) *The Sikh religion: Its Gurūs, sacred writings and authors, Vol. 1-6*. Low Price Publications.

Madra, A. S., & Singh, P. (Eds.). (2016). *Sicques, tigers or thieves: Eyewitness accounts of the Sikhs (1606-1810)*. Springer.

Mahmood, C. K., & Brady, S. (2000). *The Guru's gift: An ethnography exploring gender equality with North American Sikh women*. Mayfield Publishing Company.

Malatesta, E. (2009 [1891]). Anarchy (Trans. V. Richards). The Anarchist Library.

Malcolm, J. (1812). *Sketch of the Sikhs: A singular nation, who inhabit the Provinces of the Penjab, situated between the rivers Jumna and Indus (Vol. 1)*. J. Murray.

Mandair, A. (2005). The emergence of modern "Sikh theology": Reassessing the passage of ideas from Trumpp to Bhāī Vīr Singh. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 68(2), 253–275. https://www.jstor.org/stable/20181914

Mandair, A. P. S. (2009). *Religion and the specter of the West: Sikhism, India, postcoloniality, and the politics of translation*. Columbia University Press.

Marshall, P. (2009). *Demanding the impossible: A history of anarchism*. PM Press.

Masuzawa, T. (2005). *The invention of world religions, or, How European universalism was preserved in the language of pluralism*. University of Chicago Press.

Mucina, M. (2019). Spirituality and a Search for Home: The Complexities of Practising Sikhism on Indigenous Land. In *Decolonizing the Spirit in Education and Beyond* (pp. 23–43). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-25320-2_3

Murphy, A. R. (2014). Divine Right of Kings. In *The encyclopedia of political thought*, 947-948. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118474396.wbept0284

Oberoi, H. (2009). Ghadar movement and its anarchist genealogy. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 40-46. https://www.jstor.org/stable/25663888

Said, E. (1979). *Orientalism*. Random House.

Sekhon, S.S. (1995). Prāchīn Panth Prakāsh. In Singh, H. (ed.), *The encyclopaedia of Sikhism* (vol. 3, pp. 353-354). Punjabi University Patiala.

Sekhon, S.S. (1995). Nihaṅg Bole. In Singh, H. (ed.), *The encyclopaedia of Sikhism* (vol. 3, pp. 228-231). Punjabi University Patiala.

Shah, A.P. (2008). Ugradanti and the rise of the Tisar Panth. *Journal of Punjab Studies*, 15-1&2, 181-197.

Shantz, J., & Williams, D. M. (2013). *Anarchy and society: Reflections on anarchist sociology*. BRILL.

Sharma, S. R. (1995). Bābar, Zahīr Ud-Dīn. In Singh, H. (ed.), *The encyclopaedia of Sikhism* (vol. 1, pp. 241-243). Punjabi University Patiala.

Shergill, S. (2020, December 21). *Meet the women behind the Indian farmers' protests*. Aljazeera. https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2020/12/21/meet-the-women-behind-the-indian-farmers-protests

Sian, K. P., & Dhamoon, R. K. (2020). Decolonizing Sikh Studies: A feminist manifesto. *Journal of World Philosophies*, 5(2), 43–60.

Simpson, L. (2011). *Dancing on our turtle's back: Stories of Nishnaabeg re-creation, resurgence and a new emergence*. Arbeiter Ring Pub.

Singh, Bhagat. (1993). *A History of the Sikh Misals*. Punjabi University Patiala.

Singh, Bhagat. (1995). Kaurā Mal, Dīwān. In Singh, H. (ed.), *The encyclopaedia of Sikhism* (vol. 2, pp. 461-463). Punjabi University Patiala.

Singh, Ganda. (Ed.). (1989). *Bhaī Nand Lāl Granthāvalī* [The small Granth of Bhaī Nand Lāl]. Panjabi University Patiala.

Singh, Ganda. (1990). *Sardar Jasssa Singh Ahluwalia*. Punjabi University Patiala.

Singh, Giani Gian. (n.d. [1880]) *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh* (Unknown, Ed.), 2 Volumes. www.ik13.com.

Singh, Gurtej. (1997). Political ideas of Guru Nanak. In D. Singh & K. Singh (eds.), *Sikhism: Its philosophy and history*. Institute of Sikh Studies.

Singh, Gurmukh. (1995a). Chamkaur Sahib. In Singh, H. (ed.), *The encyclopaedia of Sikhism* (vol. 1, pp. 429-430). Punjabi University Patiala.

Singh, Gurmukh. (1995b). Mañjī. In Singh, H. (ed.), *The encyclopaedia of Sikhism* (vol. 3, pp. 42-43). Punjabi University Patiala.

Singh, Harnam (Ed.). (1995). Transcription/pronunciation key for non-English words/phrases. *The encyclopaedia of Sikhism* (vol. 1, pp. xv-xvi). Punjabi University Patiala.

Singh, Harpreet. (2014) Western writers on the Sikhs. In Singh, P. & Fenech, L. (eds.) *The Oxford handbook of Sikh studies*. Oxford University Press.

Singh, Hazūra. & Singh, Vīr. (1998). *Varān Bhaī Gurdās Stīk*. Bhaī Vīr Singh Sāhit Sadan.

Singh, Jagjit. (2006). *Percussions of history: The Sikh revolution; In the caravan of revolutions*. Nanakshahi Trust.

Singh, Kirpal. (2004). *Janamsakhi tradition: An analytical study*. Singh Brothers.

Singh, Māhakavī Santokh. (n.d. [1823]) *Srī Nānak Prakāsh*. Search Gurbani.

Singh, Mohinder. (1995). Masands. In Singh, H. (ed.), *The encyclopaedia of Sikhism* (vol. 3, p. 64). Punjabi University Patiala.

Singh, Nikky-Guninder Kaur. (1993). *The feminine principle in the Sikh vision of the Transcendent*. Cambridge University Press.

Singh, Nikky-Guninder Kaur. (2005). *The birth of the Khalsa: A feminist re-memory of Sikh identity*. SUNY Press.

Singh, Pashaura. (2015). Framing the Dasam Granth debate: Throwing the baby out with the bath water. *Sikh Formations*, 11(1-2), 108–132. https://doi.org/10.1080/17448727.2015.1032149

Singh, Raghubir. (1983). Anglo-Sikh relations in the early nineteenth century: Evidence of Khushwaqt Rai's Tarikh-i-Sikhan. *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 44, 376–380. https://www.jstor.org/stable/44139863

Singh, Ranbir. (Trans.) (1996). *Sikh Rehit Maryada: Principles of Sikh living*. Sikh Educational and Religious Foundation.

Singh, Simran Jeet. (2020, November 30). *Farmers' protests against India's new agriculture laws follow long Sikh tradition*. Religion News Service. https://religionnews.com/2020/11/30/farmers-protests-against-indias-new-agriculture-laws-follow-long-sikh-tradition/

Singh, Tarlochan. (1994). *Ernest Trumpp and WH McLeod as scholars of Sikh history, religion and culture*. New Delhi: International Centre of Sikh Studies.

Singh, Tarlochan. (2001). *The turban and the sword of the Sikhs: Essence of Sikhism*. Bhai Chattar Singh Jiwan Singh.

Srī Dasam Gurū Granth Sāhib. (n.d. [c.1709]). Bhai Chattar Singh Jiwan Singh.

Stirner, M. (1907). *The ego and its own* (Trans. S. T. Byington). Marxists.org

Syan, H. (2014). Debating revolution: Early eighteenth century Sikh public philosophy on the formation of the Khalsa. *Modern Asian Studies*, 48(4), 1096-1133. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X13000632

Trumpp, E. (Trans.). (1877). *The Ādi-Granth, or: The holy scriptures of the Sikhs*. WH Allen.

Vig, J. (2020). Intertextuality and reception history: Connecting Bhai Vir Singh's Srī Kalgīdhar Camatkār to gurbilās literature. *Sikh Formations*, 16(1–2), 28–40. https://doi.org/10.1080/17448727.2019.1674514

Volin. (2019 [1925]). Synthesis. The Anarchist Library.

Ward, C. (1996). *Anarchy in action*. Freedom Press.

Ward, C. (2004). *Anarchism: A very short introduction*. Oxford University Press.

Weber, M. (2019 [1921]). *Economy and Society*. Harvard University Press. https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/10.4159/9780674240827

Glossary

(#)

- **1469:** The year of the first Gurū, Gurū Nānak Sāhib's birth. Considered to be the beginning of the Sikh tradition.

- **1699:** The year that Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib revealed the K̲h̲ālsā at Anandpur Sāhib. Considered to be the birth of the K̲h̲ālsā.

- **1708**: The year that the *Ād Granth Sāhib*, the central Sikh text, was enthroned as the 12th Gurū of the Sikhs and given the title of *Gurū Granth Sāhib*. Also the year of Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib's *jotī-jot.*

- **3 Postulates of Sikhī**: Historically the 3 pillars of Sikhī were considered to be *nām*, *dān* and *ishnān*, meaning the name, giving charity and bathing (body, mind and wealth). These were then explained by later Sikhs through the following three principles: (1) *nām japnā*: concentrate on/remember the Divine. (2) *kirt karnī*: work hard and honestly. (3) *vand kai shaknā*: share one's wealth.

(A)

- **Akālīs**: A group of Sikhs who existed from the late 18th century until the first Anglo-Sikh War in 1845. They were absolutely dedicated to the sovereignty of the Sikh nation and were strongly anti-colonial, almost xenophobic in their distrust of Europeans. In the later years of the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā, their *Jathedār* (leader) played the role of passive observer and arbitrator that Bhāī Manī Siṅgh had originally done (acting as the speaker of the legislature). The Akālīs were wiped out by the British invasion of Punjāb; the modern Nihaṅgs claim descent from them, though as they all died fighting against the British, this supposition is unlikely.

- **Akāl Takht Sāhib**: The Akāl Takht Sāhib, properly known as Takht Akāl Bungā Sāhib, is a building in the Darbar Sāhib Complex in Amritsar, across from the Harmandir Sāhib.

Originally it was a tall platform, though since the 19th century it has been a six story building built in a traditional Sikh architectural style. It is the physical manifestation of the Sikh nation's socio-political power. It is where the Sixth Gurū, Gurū Hargobind Sāhib, enthroned himself as a sovereign. He would make socio-political decisions from the Akāl Takht and would hold court from there. Later, in the 18th century, it is the location where the K̲h̲ālsā would gather for deliberative, legislative meetings, called Sarbat K̲h̲ālsās. It is still the centre of Sikh political power and as such has frequently been destroyed, most recently in June 1984, by the tanks of the Indian army.

- **Amritsar Sāhib**: (Original names include: Chak Gurū, Gurū ka Chak and Chak Rāmdāspur) Amritsar is the most prominent Sikh city. It is the location of many historic Sikh institutions and shrines, chief among them, the Darbar Sāhib Complex. It was founded by the fourth Nānak, Gurū Rām Dās Sāhib, who dug a reservoir/pool, or *sarovar,* at its centre. He named the *sarovar* the Amrit Sar, or the Pool of Nectar. The fifth Gurū, Gurū Arjan Sāhib built Harmandir Sāhib (the Golden Temple) in the middle of the Amrit Sarovar. The sixth Gurū, Gurū Hargobind Sāhib built the Akāl Takht Sāhib, the physical manifestation of the Sikh nation's socio-political power, on the banks of the *sarovar*. After the sixth Gurū, the Gurūs moved to the outskirts of Punjāb and left Amritsar. After the era of Bābā Bandā Siṅgh Bahādur, due to its historical importance, its central location in Punjāb, and the fact that Sikhs historically were most prevalent in that area, Amritsar again became the focus of Sikh devotional and socio-political activity. It has remained as such since that time.

- **Anandpur Sāhib**: A small town in Eastern Punjāb in the Sivalik Hills, the foothills to the Himalayas. It was founded by the Ninth Nānak, Gurū Tegh Bahādur Sāhib and was his capital during his time as Gurū. Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib spent the majority of his Gurūship at Anandpur. He built five forts for the defense of the town, with the central fort, Kesgaṛh (Fort of Uncut Hair), acting as his capital. It was at Kesgaṛh Sāhib that the K̲h̲ālsā was revealed in 1699. Sikhs who have become K̲h̲ālsā symbolically consider Anandpur Sāhib to be their place of birth.

- **Ang**: Literally meaning ‘limb’, it is the word used by Sikhs to refer to pages of *Gurū Granth Sāhib*. For this thesis, in citations, it will be shortened (a.).

- **Anglo-Sikh Wars**: The First Anglo-Sikh Wars took place between 1845 and 1846. The British invaded the Sikh kingdom, the Sarkār-ī-K̲h̲ālsā, by bringing troops over the Sutlej River. The Sikh kingdom was in a state of disarray, having gone through many kings and queens over the previous seven years.
  The 2nd Anglo Sikh Wars took place from 1848 to 1849. The rebellion was suppressed and at the end of the war the Sikh state was dissolved and annexed directly into the British empire.

- **Aurangzeb, properly Muhī-ud-Dīn Muhammad**: The seventh Mughal emperor, Aurangzeb is popularly known for his strict adherence to Islam, unlike his predecessors, and his persecution of Shia Muslims, Sufis, Hindus and Sikhs (and one famous Jewish mystic). Modern scholars have reassessed his legacy and believe his treatment of non-Sunni Muslims was more nuanced. Regardless, in the Sikh tradition, for his harassment of the seventh and eighth Gurūs, his torture and execution of the ninth Gurū, and his later persecution of the Sikhs during Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib’s time, he is remembered as one of the great villains of Sikh history, along with figures like the Afghani conqueror Ahmed Shah Abdali and the Indian prime minister, Indira Gandhi.

(B)

- **Bābā:** See *Honorifics*

- **Bābur the Mughal, properly Zahīr ud-Dīn Muhammad:** A central Asian, Turkic invader descended from both Timur and Genghis Khan, Bābur invaded South Asia in the early 16th century. In 1526 at the First Battle of Panipat, the Mughal forces defeated the army of the ruling dynasty, the Lodhīs, and Bābur became the ruler of South Asia and started the Mughal dynasty.

- **Baghail Siṅgh Karoṛsiṅghia, Sardār:** Baghail Siṅgh is one of the great Sikh warrior-leaders of the 18th century. His invasion and occupation of Delhi is fondly remembered and eulogized by Sikhs to this day. He was the third leader of the *Karoṛsiṅghia Misl*, a *Misl* started by Rattan Siṅgh Bhangū's maternal grandfather, Sardār Shām Siṅgh. It is likely for this reason that Bhangū spends more time writing about the exploits of the *Karoṛsiṅghia Misl* than he does of the other 11 *Misls*.

- **Bandā Siṅgh Bahādur, Bābā**: A controversial, early 18th century figure Bandā Siṅgh was made commander of the Ḵẖālsā army by Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib in 1708 and granted the title *Bahādur*, meaning The Brave. He freed most of Punjāb from Mughal rule in 1709 and 1710. He engaged in radical land reform by taking land away from the large landowners, the *Zamīndārs,* and redistributing it to the peasants who worked the land. In 1715, he and many members of the Ḵẖālsā army were captured and then executed in Delhi. In popular Sikh memory he is considered to have created the first independent Sikh state.

- **Bāṇī**: *Bāṇī* means 'utterance' or 'speech'. In Sikhī it refers to the Sikh scriptural canon, which is understood by Sikhs to refer to the compositions contained in the following texts:
    - *Ād Gurū Granth Sāhib* popularly known as *Srī Gurū Granth Sāhib*
    - The writings of the Tenth Gurū, including the *Dasven Patshah da Granth*, now called the *Dasam Granth*
    - *Vars* and *Kabit Savaiyai* of Bhāī Gurdās
    - The writings of Bhāī Nand Lāl

  Gurbāṇī literally means 'utterances from the Gurū' and generally refers to the poetry contained exclusively in the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* and the *Dasam Granth*.

- **Bhāī**: See *Honorifics*

- **Bībī**: See *Honorifics*

- **Bhindranwale Taksāl**: The *Nirmalā-Taksāl* has many branches and a whole host of contemporary and historic scholars are linked to the lineage. In the 20th century the Bhindranwale-Mehta branch of the Taksāl was most prominent. Three heads of this Taksāl played an important role in 20th century Sikhī. Baba Gurbachan Siṅgh (1902-1969), Baba Kartār Siṅgh (1932-1977) and finally, Baba Jarnail Siṅgh (1947-1984). He became one of the most prominent leaders in the community at large in the early 1980's, leading the Panthik struggle for the implementation of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution, and later, following escalating tensions between Sikh militants and the government, leading the Sikh forces against the Indian army in the Battle of Amritsar of June 1984. After Baba Jarnail Siṅgh's martyrdom the Bhindranwale Taksāl played a large role in the community, and was the main organizer of the 1986 Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā.

- **British East India Company**: The East India Company was a private company that, beginning in the 17th century, started to colonize South Asia. After the Battle of Plassey in 1757, it began to administer large parts of South Asia. By the early 19th century, the Sikh kingdom was the only remaining independent South Asian state not controlled by the Company. After the Great Mutiny of 1857, the administrative and military aspects of Company rule were taken over directly by the British crown.

- **Butai Shāh**: Real name Ghulām Muhaiy ud-Dīn Ludhīānavī, was a court scribe and historian in early 19th century Puñjāb. He was commissioned by East Indian Company Officer David Ochterlony to write a history of the Sikhs, which he completed in 1848. Titled *Tvārīkh-ī-Puñjāb,* it has never been published and is available only in manuscript form.

(C)

- **Chaupai:** One of the two most common poetical measures used in *Panth Prakāsh*. It is a quatrain.

- **Colonization of Puñjāb**: Colonization of Puñjāb was a three-step process. First, from 1808 onwards, the smaller Sikh kingdoms (known as the Phulkīān states: Patialā, Nabhā

and Jīnd) south east of the Sutlej River (cis-Sutlej) allied themselves with Britain and became protectorates of the Crown. Then in 1845, the British invaded the Sikh state, the Sarkār-ī-K̲h̲ālsā, and after a year of battles, the 1st Anglo Sikh Wars, they conquered the Sikh state. In 1848 a rebellion, the 2nd Anglo-Sikh Wars, against the British broke out. After the rebellion's defeat in 1849 the Sikh state was officially terminated and all of its territories were directly annexed by the British. The Cis-Sutlej states kept their nominal independence until the British left the sub-continent in 1947, but the majority of Punjāb, the former Sikh state, was directly ruled by the British without any intermediaries.

(D)

- **Darbar Sāhib Complex:** A complex of buildings at the centre of the city of Amritsar, the Darbar Sāhib Complex contains some of the most important Sikh institutions, including the Harmandir Sāhib and the Akāl Takht Sāhib. The Complex has evolved and grown over time.

- **Darbara Siṅgh, Divān:** Though not well known today, Divān Darbara Siṅgh was an important leader of the community in the era after Bābā Bandā Siṅgh Bahādur (1716-1730). He was given the title of Divān (minister), because of his treasury responsibilities.

- **Dasam Granth:** The majority of the compositions of the tenth Gurū, Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib, are contained in a text historically known as *Dasven Padshah da Granth*, but now known as *Dasam Granth*. At the historic Sikh Forts/Shrines of Patna and Nanded, the Dasam Granth is installed lower than *Gurū Granth Sāhib* (as a mark of Gurū Granth Sāhib's status as sovereign Gurū). Before 1920, this was likely also the case at the Akāl Takht Sāhib. This text is controversial in the community today, with some Sikhs, rejecting the *Dasam Granth* for being too mythologically focused and being too "Hindu" and others citing a wealth of historic evidence to prove its legitimacy.

- **Dasvandh**: *Dasvandh*, meaning 'one tenth', is the percent of earnings Sikhs are expected to set aside to support the Gurū K̲h̲ālsā Panth. Providing for those in need is also an acceptable alternative to supporting Panthik causes.

- **Dograi**: The Dograi were three brothers Dhian Siṅgh Dogra, Gulab Siṅgh Dogra and Suchet Siṅgh Dogra and a nephew Hira Siṅgh Dogra. They played a prominent role in the Sikh state, acting as ministers in the Sarkār-ī-K̲h̲ālsā, including as Prime Minister on several occasions. The Dograi helped defeat their own state from the inside. Gulab Siṅgh Dogra was Prime Minister during the First Anglo-Sikh War. He assisted the British to such a degree that he was made Maharājā of Kashmir by the British as a reward.

- **Dohra or Doha**: One of the two most common poetical measures used in Panth Prakāsh. It is a rhyming couplet.

(G)

- **Ghadar Party:** The Ghadar Party was an anti-colonial movement, started in the diaspora, on the West Coast of Canada and the United States in 1913. Its aim was to free South Asia from colonial rule. The Ghadar Party had certain anarchist tendencies. The Ghadars wanted to organize a mass mutiny in the Indian armed forces, but the conspiracy was discovered and most of the leadership of the movement was executed or imprisoned by the British in 1915.

- **Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib, Gurū**: The tenth Gurū of the Sikhs and the last physical Nānak before *Bāṇī* and *Panth* were made Gurū. Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib is most well-known for revealing the K̲h̲ālsā in 1699 and coronating *Gurū Granth Sāhib* as Gurū in 1708, the year of his *jotī-jot*. Born in 1666, he became Gurū upon the martyrdom of his father, Gurū Tegh Bahādur Sāhib, in 1676. Originally his name was Gurū Gobind Rai Sāhib, but after he revealed the K̲h̲ālsā, he himself was initiated into the K̲h̲ālsā and he was given the name of Gurū Gobind Siṅgh. A collection of his writings make up the Sikh canon, and is today known as the *Dasam Granth*.

- **Gur-Chaila**: *Chaila* means ‘devotee’ or ‘student’, therefore the *Gur-Chaila* refers to the concept of the Gurū as both Gurū and Sikh. Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib is lauded in Sikhī for being a *Gur-Chaila*, as after he initiated the first five Sikhs into the K̲h̲ālsā, he then

asked them to initiate him into the Ḵẖālsā, therefore he became the Sikh of the Gurū Ḵẖālsā Panth. Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib's humble actions from 1699 were a mirror of the earlier Gurūs, who bowed down to their predecessors before their own *jotī-jot*.

- **Gurdās, Bhāī**: The first Sikh scholar, he lived during the time of the 3rd to 6th Gurūs, from 1551 to 1636 and was a nephew of the third Guru, Gurū Amar Dās Sāhib. He was the scribe on the first recension of the *Granth Sāhib*. His writings, contained in two collections, the *Varāṅ* and the *Kabit Savaiyai*, were given the title of "key to *Gurū Granth Sāhib*" by the Fifth Nānak, Gurū Arjan Sāhib, and are considered to be part of the Sikh scriptural canon.

- **Gurdwāra**: Gurdwāras, literally 'the door to the Gurū', are Sikh places of worship. They are also community meeting and learning spaces, and centres of Sikh social and political activism.

- **Gurdwāra Reform Movement:** From 1919 to 1925 the Sikh community engaged in a wide-scale protest movement against the British government and British government backed *Mahants* (hereditary priests) in charge of historic Sikh Gurdwāras. The *Mahants* were the *Udasīs* and *Nirmala* who were given charge of Gurdwāras when the Sikhs were facing persecution in the 18th century. Upon the advent of the Sikh kingdom, wealthy Sikhs became patrons of the Gurdwāras and large land endowments were bequeathed to the Gurdwāras, making them a great source of wealth. As many of the Mahants did not receive *Khaṇḍai Batai kī Pāhaul* after the *Siṅgh Sabhā Lehar*, many were reformulated as falling outside the normative definition of Sikhi, known by this point as Sikhism, and started to be considered as Hindus. The Gurdwāra Reform Movement was an outgrowth of the *Siṅgh Sabha Lehar*, and was the Sikh community's attempt to recover Sikh institutions and free them from what were seen as Hindu and British control. After the failure of the Ghadar Movement a few years earlier, this was the first large-scale anti-colonial movement by the Sikhs. One of the key reasons for the start of the movement was the Jalliāṅwālā Bāg̱h massacre of 1919, especially the conduct of the *Mahants* of the Darbar Sahib Complex, who praised the British officer responsible for the massacre,

General Dyer. The Shiromani Gurdwāra Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), which currently administers all historic Gurdwāras in Puñjāb, Haryāna and Himachal Pradesh, was created as a result of the Movement. The Shiromani Akalī Dal, the main Sikh political party, which has had multiple splits over the last century, was also created to spearhead the Gurdwāra Reform Movement.

- **Gurmattā**: Literally, the 'Gurū's decision', this is the name given to the resolutions reached through consensus by the Jathedārs and approved by the congregation/nation (K̲h̲ālsā Panth) during the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā.

- **Gurū**: from the Sanskrit word for 'teacher' or 'preceptor', literally, 'the one who brings light to the dark'. In the Sikh tradition the Gurū encompasses many roles. The Gurū is seen as the perfect embodiment of Shabad Gurū, the aspect of the Divine that is accessible to the human heart. As divinity embodied, Sikhs believe the Gurūs to be all-knowing and perfect. The Gurūs were not just religious leaders but were socio-political leaders, military commanders, musical innovators and poets, amongst other functions. The Gurūs are considered to be the *Sachai Patshāh*, the True Emperor, and Sikhs are to recognize no sovereign other than the Gurū. After the ten historic, physical Gurūs, the mantle of Gurūship was passed on to the Gurū Granth Sāhib and to the Sikh community/nation, the Gurū K̲h̲ālsā Panth.

(H)

- **Harmandir Sāhib**: The first and most prominent Gurdwāra, it is commonly known as the Golden Temple, and is located in the Darbar Sāhib Complex in Amritsar. Built by the fifth Gurū, Gurū Arjan Sāhib, the Harmandir Sāhib has been the focus of Sikh devotion for centuries. It was made as a palace for the first edition of *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, the *Ād Granth*. It was twice destroyed by the Afghani invaders and damaged in 1984 by the Indian government. The tank that it sits in, the Amrit Sar, was built by the fourth Nānak, Gurū Rām Dās Sāhib.

- **Honorifics**: Because Sikhī is an egalitarian tradition, and all are considered equally the children of the Gurū, the few honorifics given to exemplary Sikhs are simple and familial in origin.
    - For women, the standard title is *Bībī* or *Bebe,* meaning sister.
    - If a woman is older, if she is the Gurū's mother or wife, or if she played a particularly important role in Sikh history, the title given is *Mātā* or *Māī,* meaning mother.
    - For men, the standard title is *Bhāī,* meaning brother.
    - If a man is older, if he is the son or father of the Gurū, or he is particularly exemplary then his title will be *Bābā,* meaning father. *Bābā* is often the title given to Gurū Nānak Sāhib
    - The rare title of *Bahādur,* meaning the Brave, has been given only to three Sikhs in history
    - The title that conveys the most respect in modern Sikhī, is that of *Shahīd,* or martyr.
    - *Sāhib* is an honorific referring to royalty. Because of Sikhī's sovereign traditions, and belief in the Gurū's absolute sovereignty, the Gurūs, and anything associated with the Gurū, is given the suffix of *Sāhib* by Sikhs.

- **Hukam**: From the Persian word for 'command', it refers to two distinct things in Sikh tradition. The first is a letter of orders sent by one of the Gurūs, or the Ḵẖālsā Panth, to a specific Sikh community. These orders were called *Hukamnamai,* meaning Letters of Command. *Hukamanamai* of the sixth to tenth Gurūs survive, as well as *hukamnamai* issued by Bābā Bandā Siṅgh Bahādur, Mātā Sāhib Devān Kaur, Mātā Sundarī (Jīto), Mātā Gujrī and the early Ḵẖālsā Panth.

  Hukam also refers to a command from *Gurū Granth Sāhib*. Generally twice a day in Gurdwāras, and whenever a Sikh reverently opens a copy of *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, a random *shabad* (composition/poem) is read from the text. This random shabad is considered to be the *Hukam* of the day/event/celebration.

Just as a *Hukam* is considered to be a command of the Gurū Granth Sāhib, a *Gurmatta* is considered to be a command of the Gurū K̲h̲ālsā Panth. Historically both were treated with equal reverence.

(I)

- **Independence Struggle**: The anti-colonial independence struggle from British control was a multifaceted movement with many different groups taking part, using varying strategies and tactics. Sikhs played a large role in the Independence struggle in spite of the fact that they were a small minority in British India's population.

(J)

- **Jathā**: A group of Sikhs. Today used to denote a group based on ideology or practice, and originally used in the 18th century to refer to groups of warriors fighting against the Mughal and Afghani empires. *Jathāi* were not just fighting bands but also community and congregational groups, composed of combatants and non-combatants. A leader of a *jathā* is called a *Jathedār*. A group of *Ragīān* (Sikh devotional music performers) and *Dhadīān* (Sikh ballad singers) are also called a *Jathā*.

- **Jalliāṅwālā Bāg̲h̲ Massacre**: On Vaisakhi day, April 13th 1919, an anti-colonial protest was organized at Jalliāṅwālā Bāg̲h̲, a large courtyard close to the Darbar Sāhib Complex. Many of the thousands of protesters were Sikhs who had come from Harmandir Sāhib, and many were veterans of the Great War. The head of the British army for Punjāb, Brigadier General Reginald Dyer, came to the Bagh with troops and without warning began to shoot into the crowd. According to the British, 379 were killed by Dyer and his troops, but Congress and Sikh sources listed the number as at least 1500. It was the largest massacre of civilians by the British in India. In the aftermath of the massacre, the Gurdwāra Reform Movement was launched.

- **Janamsākhīs**: *Janamsākhīs* are collected stories (*sakhīs*) of the life of the first Gurū, Gurū Nānak Sāhib. There are four traditions of *Janamsākhīs*, which disagree with each

other over minor and some major points. The *Janamsākhīs* form the basis of later Sikh histories of the first Gurū and are a part of the oral tradition of Sikhī.

- **Jats**: Today the most prominent caste in Sikhī, and the one that monopolizes power structures within the community, Jats used to be considered a low caste in Punjāb before the rise of Sikhī. Many Jats converted to Sikhī during the time of the later Gurūs, and thus many of the prominent warriors of the 18th century were Jats.

- **Jīto, Mātā**: Born in Lahore, Mātā Jīto came from a pious Sikh family. She was married to the young Gurū Gobind Rai in 1677. She played an integral role in the revelation of the K̲h̲ālsā when she put the puffed sugar wafers, the *patāsai*, into the water that the Gurū was preparing for the ceremony. She had four children with the Gurū, all of whom were martyred as children. After Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib's *jotī-jot*, Mātā Sāhib Devan Kaur and she played an important role in keeping the Sikh community united. In Bhangū's *Panth Prakāsh*, Mātā Jīto appears as someone who challenges Bābā Bandā Siṅgh Bahādur's takeover of the Panth, and stands up for the original conception of the Gurū K̲h̲ālsā Panth. Mātā Jīto is sometimes called Mātā Sundarī, which means 'beautiful'.

- **Jotī-jot**: *Jotī-jot* means 'the light merging into the light'. It is the respectful way in Sikhī to refer to a Gurū's physical death and speaks to the Sikh belief in the continuance of one's life essence past the physical death of the body.

(K)

- **Kaṛāh Parsād**: This pudding-like sacramental food is served at all Sikh Divāns (formal gatherings in the presence of the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*). *Kaṛāh Parsād* is an integral part of Sikh ceremonies and so is often commented on by outsiders. It is composed of just four ingredients: flour, sugar, clarified butter and water, and must be made while reciting *Bāṇī*.

- **K̲h̲ālsā**: Usually understood to be initiated Sikhs. The K̲h̲ālsā are those Sikhs who have pledged themselves and made a commitment to the Gurū. But more than a state of being,

the K̲h̲ālsā is also the community of Sikhs and understood to represent the Sikh nation. To be a K̲h̲ālsā is to be part of a bigger whole. The K̲h̲ālsā was revealed in 1699 at the Vaisakhi celebration at Anandpur Sāhib in eastern Punjāb. The first five members of the K̲h̲ālsā are known as the *Pañj Piārai*. The sixth person to be initiated into the K̲h̲ālsā was Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib, whose name prior to his initiation was Gurū Gobind Rai Sāhib.

The word 'K̲h̲ālsā' has two senses in Sikhī. The first is from the Persian word 'K̲h̲ālsāh', which refers to land or military directly under the control of the sovereign (crown land). The second is from the Arabic 'Khālis', meaning pure or undiluted. The K̲h̲ālsā are thus the pure Sikhs who are directly under the control of the sovereign, the Gurū/Divine. The word K̲h̲ālsā was used to refer to Sikhs before 1699, as evidenced by a surviving letter of the 6th Gurū. However, it became the standard word to describe a Sikh who had pledged themselves to the Gurū after 1699.

- **K̲h̲ālsā, Revelation of the**: According to Sikhī, the K̲h̲ālsā was not created by Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib, but, rather, revealed. This is because the K̲h̲ālsā is the Gurū. In Sikhī, only things that are born can die. The Divine was never born, and therefore cannot die. Similarly, Gurū Nānak Sāhib is cosmologically believed to be an aspect of the Divine, and to have existed before his birth into human form. The K̲h̲ālsā similarly always existed, but was revealed to the world in 1699. This imparts a sense of eternal timelessness around the K̲h̲ālsā.

- **K̲h̲ālsā jī kai bol balai**: The speech of the K̲h̲ālsā, is a unique form of slang practiced by historical Sikhs where among other things, ordinary objects are imbued with terms of wealth and royalty, and objects of wealth are denigrated as useless (Sekhon, 1995, Vol.3 pp. 228-231).

- **Khaṇḍai Batai kī Pāhaul (Amrit Ceremony)**: *Khaṇḍai Batai kī Pāhaul*, literally 'Perfection through the Double Edged Sword and the Iron Bowl' ceremony, commonly called the *Amrit Sanchar* (ambrosia ceremony), is an initiation ritual whereby one joins

the K̲h̲ālsā. The first ceremony, which according to Sikh tradition, occurred at Anandpur Sāhib on Vaisakhi day in 1699. The *Amrit* ceremony is understood in various ways by individual Sikhs and different groups within the Sikh tradition, e.g., as a mere initiation ceremony, a spiritually transformative experience, a secret space in which sacred knowledge is divulged, or a military swearing-in. The ceremony is rich in imagery, has depth of meaning and is one of only a handful of formal Sikh rituals. Since the only qualification is that one must freely make the decision to receive *Amrit*, there is no age qualification for the ritual, and anyone from a child to an elderly person can partake. The initiation ceremony is performed by five qualified Sikhs, who as a group represent the body of the Gurū K̲h̲ālsā Panth. This group is known as the *Pañj Piārai*.

(L)

- **Langar**: *Langar*, a central Sikh institution, started by the first Gurū, Gurū Nānak Sāhib, is the serving of free food to any who need it. It is a primary aspect of Sikh worship at any Gurdwāra.

- **Lodhī**: The Lodhī dynasty, of Afghani origin, ruled over South Asia from the mid-15th century up to 1526 when the last Lodhī emperor, Ibrahim Lodhī was defeated and killed in battle by Bābur the Mughal.

(M)

- **Malerkotla**: Malerkotla is a city in the South Eastern part of India Punjāb. It was a feudal city state that was ruled by a Navāb. It is of interest to Sikh history because of its unique status. The Navāb of Malerkotla was a sworn enemy of Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib and the K̲h̲ālsā Panth. In fact his brother was killed by the Gurū in battle. However, when the Gurū's youngest sons were captured by the Mughals, the Navāb of Malerkotla protested their arrest and sentence of death by the governor of Sirhind, Wazir Khan. Because of this, Malerkotla was given special status by the Sikhs. In the 18th century Malerkotla was allowed to remain independent and was not subsumed into the *Misls*. This was maintained by Mahārājā Raṇjīt Siṅgh. The Sikh memory of the actions of the Navāb of Malerkotla are so strong that even during Partition in 1947, Malerkotla was spared

violence and is thus the only Muslim dominant city in Indian Punjāb. Even today the Muslims of Malerkotla are generally supporters of the Sikh political party, the Akālī Dal, having crafted a close relationship with the Sikh Panth.

- **Manī Siṅgh, Shahīd Bhāī:** Bhāī Manī Siṅgh came from a long line of Sikh warriors and martyrs. He was a scholar and warrior, who helped educate the young Gurū Gobind Siṅgh. He was the primary scribe for the final recension of Gurū Granth Sāhib. He, along with the famous Babā Dīp Siṅgh, are considered the founders of the Nirmalā/Taksālī lineage. Two works attributed to him are still widely known in the community, the *Bhai Manī Siṅgh Janamsākhi* - *Gian Ratnāvalī* and *Sikhān di Bhagat Māla*. He was famously executed by the Mughal governor at Lahore by having all the joints in his body cut off in 1737. His sacrifice is remembered by Sikhs every day in their daily petitionary prayer, the *Ardās*.

- **Maratha Empire:** The Maratha Empire was an empire of Marathi speakers, a language from what is now the state of Maharashtra in the Republic of India. The Marathas severely weakened the Mughal Empire and helped to end Mughal rule. They sometimes came into conflict and sometimes allied themselves with the Sikhs.

- **Mātā:** See *Honorifics*

- **Mehtāb Siṅgh Mīrankot, Shahīd Bhāī:** Bhāi Mehtāb Siṅgh of Mīrankot village, was the paternal grandfather of Sardār Rattan Siṅgh Bhangū. In 1740 he, along with Sukhā Siṅgh of Marī Kambo village, assassinated Massā Ranghar, a Mughal official who had desecrated Harmandir Sāhib. Bhāī Mehtāb Siṅgh was martyred in 1745.

- **Mīrī-Pīrī**: The Sikh ideology of complete sovereignty of the Gurū in all realms, including what is termed the temporal realm (society and politics) and spiritual realm (religion and faith). This title was first taken on by the Sixth Nānak, Gurū Hargobind Sāhib, though Gurū Granth Sāhib makes clear that Gurū Nānak Sāhib was also the master

of *Mīrī* and *Pīrī*. Today, *Gurū Granth Sāhib* is considered to be the Master of *Pīrī* (spiritual affairs) and the Gurū K̲h̲ālsā Panth the Master of *Mīrī* (political affairs).

- **Misl**: *Misl* refers to the independent groups of Sikhs that self-organized and liberated Punjāb. In 1748 the Dal K̲h̲ālsā (K̲h̲ālsā army) was organized into 11 *Misls*, or large bands. *Misl* literally means 'file folder', and it is theorized that the *Misls* would keep track, through a filing system, of the villages they had freed at Akāl Takht Sāhib. The *Misls* would operate independently but would join together during national emergencies. Over time the *Misls* grew stronger and began to control more land, eventually evolving into mini-states. When the *Misls* worked together the joint body was called the Dal K̲h̲ālsā or the Sikh confederacy. There was a 12th *Misl*, the *Phulkīān Misl*, but it was not part of the formal K̲h̲ālsā army and acted independently. The head of a *Misl* was known as a *Sardār*.

- **Mughal**: A Turkik dynasty in origin, the Mughals ruled large parts of South Asia from 1526 until the mid-19th century. They were started by the invader Bābur, who defeated the Lodhī dynasty in 1526. The Mughal dynasty was most powerful under emperors like Akbar and Aurangzeb, but in the 18th century their power started to weaken until in 1804 they were made a protectorate of the British Empire. The Mughal kings remained as figureheads until the British formally dissolved the empire after the Great Mutiny of 1857.

- **Murray, Captain David**: An officer in the East India Company who reported to then Lieutenant-General David Ochterlony. Ochterlony had been the East India Company Resident to the Mughal Empire, and was stationed across the Sutlej river from the Sarkār-ī- K̲h̲ālsā (Sikh Empire) and was tasked with monitoring the strength and movements of the Sikhs in the early 19th century. Murray was stationed inside the Sarkār-ī- K̲h̲ālsā in the central Punjābī city of Ludhiana as an agent of the East India Company.

(N)

- **Nānak Sāhib, Gurū**: The first Gurū and founder of the Sikh tradition. He was born in 1469 in the small village of Rai Bulār kī Talvandī (now Nankānā Sāhib) in what is now East Punjāb, Pakistan. He began the tradition of revealing Divinely inspired poetry, which forms the basis of the current Gurū of the Sikhs, the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*. He went on four journeys, called the *Udasīs*. In his later years he founded the village of Kartārpur Sāhib and began the tradition of the Gurū playing a socio-political role. Before his death, he nominated Bhāī Lehnā to be the next Gurū, and renamed him Gurū Angad Sāhib. He was married to Mātā Sulakhnī and had two children, Srī Chand and Lakhmī Dās.

- **Nānak (title)**: All of the physical Gurūs referred to themselves as Nānak and the 2nd to 5th and 9th Gurūs also used the pen name Nānak in their *Bāṇī*. The *jot* (light) of Gurū Nānak Sāhib is today considered to be in *Gurū Granth Sāhib* while the body of the Gurū is the Gurū K̲h̲ālsā Panth, the Sikh community.

- **Nānakpanthīs**: *Nānakpanthīs* were those Sikhs who post-1699 did not wish to join the K̲h̲ālsā but still considered themselves a part of the community. Some *Nānakpanthīs* played an important role in Sikh history, most famously Divān Kauṛā Mal, who protected the K̲h̲ālsā from persecution when he worked for the governor of Punjāb in the mid 18th century.

- **Nand Lāl, Bhāī**: The most prominent of Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib's court poets, Bhaī Nand Lāl wrote primarily in Persian. His writings are considered as a part of the Sikh scriptural canon.

- **Nāsh Doctrine**: The concept that Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib destroyed five types of social inequality when he revealed the K̲h̲ālsā in 1699: (1) *Sharm-Nāsh*: destruction of the shame of profession, (2) *Kul-Nāsh*: destruction of family lineage, (3) *Dharam-Nāsh*: destruction of previous creeds, (4) *Karam-Nāsh*: destruction of previous actions, (5) *Bharam-Nāsh*: destruction of superstitions and ritual.

- **Nirmala**: The *Nirmalā* tradition traces itself back to the tenth Gurū and has historically had a more vedic based understanding of Sikhī. The *Nirmalas* have since branched off into many groups and prominent individuals. There are generally two kinds of *Nirmalas*, those who receive *Khaṇḍai Batai kī Pāhaul* and become K̲h̲ālsā and those who do not. The *Taksāl* or *Bhāī* lineage is related to the Nirmalā tradition. Like the *Udasīs*, they were also caretakers of Sikh institutions in the 18th and 19th centuries, and some grew powerful off of royal patronage.

(O)

- **Ochterlony, Major General David, 1st Baronet of Pitforthy, 1st Baronet of Ochterlony**: Was a prominent officer in the East India Company in the late 18th and early 17th centuries. In 1803 he was appointed Resident of the East India Company to the Mughal Empire, meaning that he essentially dictated policies to the Mughal Emperor. Sometime before 1810 he was given the assignment to check the expansion of the Sarkār-ī-Khālsā (Sikh Empire) and was stationed on the border of the Sikh state, on the southern banks of the Sutlej river. His officer, Captain David Murray, would play an important role in the creation of the *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh*. In his role as Resident to the Mughal Emperor, Ochterlony appears as a character in the first framing story of *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh*.

(P)

- **Pañj Piārai**: The *Pañj Piārai*, or Five Beloved, were the first five Sikhs initiated into the K̲h̲ālsā. They formed the core of the community's leadership post-1699. However, the *Pañj Piārai* can also refer to any group of five Sikhs who have taken on the mantle of representing the Sikh Panth. The *Pañj Piārai* symbolically represent the Gurū K̲h̲ālsā Panth as a whole.

  Five has been an important number in Sikhī from the time of Gurū Nānak Sāhib, who mentions the importance of five individuals in his most famous composition, *Japjī Sāhib*. The early Sikh scholar, Bhāī Gurdās, extolled the virtues of five Sikhs in his *vārs*. According to Sikh tradition, five Sikhs went with the fifth, sixth and ninth Gurūs when

they each gave themselves up for arrest. Five Sikhs ordered Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib out of the Fort of Chamkaur, and five Sikhs were sent with Bābā Bandā Siṅgh Bahādur by Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib to represent the will of the K̲h̲ālsā Panth.

Five member committees are standard in Punjābi culture, and villages are often run by boards, called *panchayats*. Any Sikh who is following Sikh *Rehit* can be called to serve in the Five. The Sikh initiation ceremony is presided over by the *Pañj Piārai*, as are formal Sikh events.

- **Panth**: *Panth* literally means 'path'. In Sikhī it refers to both the Path of Nānak and those who follow the Path. Overtime, especially when added to the term K̲h̲ālsā, the Panth refers to the Sikh people as a socio-political entity. Panth is also an adjective. To be Panthik is to put the Panth first, and to think of the needs of the community before one's own.

- **Patna**: Patna is the capital of the eastern Indian state of Bihar. The Tenth Gurū was born here, and spent the first five years of his life there. For this reason, it is one of the most important Sikh centres outside of Punjāb.

- **Prasang**: *Prasang* means 'episode'. It is used interchangeably with the term *sakhī* in *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh* to describe the 163 stories that the text is composed of.

- **Puñjābi Sūba Movement**: In this movement, the Sikh community carried out a massive act of nonviolent civil disobedience against the Indian government to try to secure a Punjābi speaking state. The movement began right after Independence in 1947 and continued to 1966, when modern Indian Punjāb was created. Almost 60,000 Sikhs were arrested by the government during the course of the movement.

(R)

- **Raṇjīt Siṅgh Sukarchakīā, Sardār/Māhārājā:** Born in 1780, Raṇjīt Siṅgh was the third head of the *Sukarchakīā Misl*, and took over control of the *Misl* in 1792. In his teens he

was able to, through war, diplomacy and marriage, take over most of the other *Misls*; at the age of 21, he was crowned *Māhārājā* of Punjāb (in actuality he was crowned as *Sarkār-ī-Vala*, meaning 'the government official' but was popularly known as *Mahārājā*). His reign, up to his death in 1839, is considered by many to be a golden period for the Sikhs. It was a flowering of the arts and architecture and one of the longest periods of peace that the Sikh community has experienced. With his death, the Sikh state he had created, the Sarkār-ī-Ḵẖālsā, was thrown into chaos and within less than a decade of his death, the British colonized the Sikh state.

- **Rattan Siṅgh Bhangū, Sardār**: Rattan Siṅgh Bhangū is most famous for being the writer of an epic history of the Sikh Nation, written in poetry, titled *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh,* and popularly known as *Prachīn Panth Prakāsh*. Bhangū was born in the middle years of the third quarter of the eighteenth century. Bhangū died in 1846 in the midst of the colonial invasion and takeover of the Sikh state, the Sarkār-ī-Ḵẖālsā by the British.

  Bhangū was descended from prominent Sikh families on both his mother and father's side. His mother's father was the famous 18th century Sikh warrior and founder of the *Karoṛsiṅghia Misl*, Sardār Shām Siṅgh. His paternal grandfather was the famous and still celebrated Sikh warrior and martyr, Bhāī Mehtāb Siṅgh Mīrankot, who killed, along with Bhāī Sukhā Siṅgh Marī Kambo, the Mughal noble, Massā Ranghar, who was desecrating the Harmandir Sāhib. Much of the history that he recorded in *Panth Prakāsh* was learned through oral tradition via his familial connections.

- **Rehit:** *Rehit* means a particular mode of living. It is believed that the tenth Nānak, Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib, gave a *Rehit* to Sikhs at Vaisakhi, 1699 of the things they should and should not do on a daily basis. There is much debate within the Sikh community as to the exact nature of the original *Rehit*, and historical documents are notoriously contradictory on certain points.

- **Rehitnamas**: A popular form of early Sikh literature, *Rehitnamas* were codes of conduct, written by authors claiming a close relationship to the Tenth Gurū, Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib. The *Rehitnamas* were written in prose and listed the behaviours a Sikh could do and could not do. Generally, the *Rehitnama* authors were intent on drawing lines between non-K̲h̲ālsā and K̲h̲ālsā Sikhs, and ensuring that Sikhs did not fall under Mughal or Islamic influence. There is no consistency around the rules delineated in the *Rehitnamas* and it is difficult to ascertain authorial authenticity. Modern Sikhs will often choose portions of *Rehitnamas* that suit their needs. Traditionally, the *Rehitnamas* of Bhāī Nand Lāl are considered the most authentic and least controversial.

- **Rehit Maryada:** A document created after 20 years of deliberations by the Gurdwāra Reform Movement institution called the Sikh Gurdwāra Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), responsible for the management of historic Gurdwāras in the Indian states of Puñjāb, Himāchal Pradesh and Haryana. This document collated all of the historic *Rehitname* and tried to create one standard form of Sikhī. Though a generally well respected document, and one that is the standard of practice around the Sikh world, many traditional Sikh *sampardas* (lineages) and *jathās* (groups) disagree with the *Rehit Maryada* and usually have their own *Rehit* with additions not found in the Panthik document.

(S)

- **Sāhib:** See *Honorifics*

- **Sāhib Devān Kaur, Mātā:** Aka Mātā Sāhib Devī Kaur, she is considered by Sikhs to be the mother of the K̲h̲ālsā, with Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib being the father. Mātā Sāhib Devān was a young Sikh who dedicated her life to the Sikh Panth. Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib made her the symbolic mother of the K̲h̲ālsā. Along with Mātā Jīto, she led the community through the dark period after Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib's *jotī-jot*.

- **Sakhī**: A narrative genre that is the primary means of transmitting Sikh history through the generations. It is usually a short hagiographic story or parable that tells a specific episode in the lives of the Gurūs or the lives of Sikhs post-1708. *Sakhīs* form the core of

the oral Sikh tradition and are the way that illiterate or undereducated Sikhs have been able to form a relationship with Sikh history through the centuries.

Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh is composed of 163 *sakhis*. These *sakhīs* are also called *prasangs*, or episodes.

- **Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā**: A legislative meeting of the K̲h̲ālsā Panth where decisions are reached, through consensus, on a course of action. The debate and discussion is carried out by representative leaders of smaller units of the Sikh Panth. From 1723 to 1805, the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā was regularly held, though less frequently in later years, at the Akāl Takht in the Darbar Sāhib Complex, twice a year, on Vaisākhī and Dīvālī. In an emergency a Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā could also be held elsewhere.

- **Sardār/Sardārnī**: *Sardār*, meaning 'leader', is a Persian honorific similar to 'Sir' in English. The Sikh leaders of the mid 18th century began to be called *Sardār* as they liberated more and more land. Over time this has become the standard title for Sikh men, while *Sardārnī* is the standard title for Sikh women. There is, as of yet, no gender-neutral title in Sikhī.

- **Satgurū**: The true Gurū. In Sikhī, this refers to one of the ten historic Gurūs or *Gurū Granth Sāhib*. As the term Gurū is commonly used in South Asia as a term for a saint or a teacher, the term *Satgurū*, when used by a Sikh, implies that one is talking about one of the Nānaks.

- **Sevapanthīai**: *Sevapanthīs* are a group, like the *Nirmalas* and *Udasīs*, who exist outside of K̲h̲ālsā norms. They are also a celibate Sadhu group but usually operated more in what is now Pakistan Punjāb and further west. They trace their lineage back to the famous Sikh humanitarian, Bhāī Ghanaiya, who lived at the time of the Tenth Gurū.

- **Shām Siṅgh, Sardār**: Sardār Shām Siṅgh was an early leader in the K̲h̲ālsā Panth. He was the founder of the *Jathā* that evolved into what became the *Karoṛsiṅghia Misl*. As a

founder of one of the original 11 *Misls*, Shām Siṅgh was an important figure in early 18th century Sikhī. Shām Siṅgh was the maternal grandfather of Sardār Rattan Siṅgh Bhangū. He died in 1739.

- **Sikh**: Historically, a follower of the Gurūs was referred to as a *Sikh*. The word literally means 'student', 'learner' or 'disciple'. With the creation of the K̲h̲ālsā in 1699, the community debated whether one needed to receive *Khaṇḍai Batai kī Pāhaul* (*Amrit*) in order to be considered a Sikh. This was a preoccupation of the *Rehitname* authors. Generally, it is understood that before the *Siṅgh Sabha* Revivalist movement, there was more diversity within the community, with groups like *Udasīs*, *Sevapanthīs*, *Nirmalas* and *Nānakpanthīs* all existing alongside K̲h̲ālsā Sikhs. Post-Siṅgh Sabha, the definition was more standardized and some heterodox groups, like the *Udasīs*, were not considered Sikhs by the mainstream anymore. Generally, the definition in the *Rehit Maryada* is considered to be the standard today:
    - Definition of a *Sikh*: Any man or woman who has faith in
        - One God,
        - the Ten Guru Sahibs (From Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji to Sri Guru Gobind Singh Sahib),
        - Sri Guru Granth Sahib and the Baani and Teachings of the Ten Guru Sahibs,
        - has faith in the Amrit of the Tenth King,
        - and does not believe in any other religion;
        - is a Sikh (Singh, R., 1996, p. 8)

- **Siṅgh Sabha Lehar**: The *Siṅgh Sabha* movement, much maligned in recent scholarship, was a dynamic literary and scholarly movement that had a dramatic impact on the Sikh tradition. It is reductionist to simply state that the *Siṅgh Sabha* scholars were of a colonial mindset and that they created a new type of Sikhī based on Judeo-Christian paradigms. But the colonial aspects of the movement cannot be denied, and a more balanced understanding of the movement is required. The *Siṅgh Sabha Lehar* had a dramatic impact on the popularization of Punjābī and the emergence of the Sikh *Gurmukhī* script as the standard Punjābī script.

- **Sarkār-ī-Ḵẖālsā**: Literally meaning “the Government/Authority of the Ḵẖālsā”, this was the name of the Sikh state started by Sardār Raṇjīt Siṅgh of the *Sukarchakia Misl*. In 1801, he crowned himself as *Sarkār-ī-Vala* (Government Representative) though was popularly known by non-Sikhs as *Mahārājā* (Emperor) and by Sikhs as *Sardār ji/Siṅgh Sāhib*. The Sikh state was also known by the names; the Sikh Kingdom, the Sikh Empire and the Lahore Darbar.

  The Sarkār-ī-Ḵẖālsā ruled over all of Punjāb north of the Sutlej river, all of Kashmir and over the Khyber pass on the Punjāb/Afghanistan border.

(T)

- **Taksāl:** *Taksāl* literally means ‘a mint’, where one mints coins. In Sikhī, it refers to a traditional religious school, exclusively male, where boys are trained to become Sikh scholars. There are several different taksāls, but the most prominent ones are associated with the Nirmalā lineage. The most famous of these taksāls is the Bhindranwale Taksāl, which has split into a number of smaller groups. The head of one branch, Shahīd Baba Jarnail Siṅgh, was a leader of the Sikh community as a whole in the early 1980’s and was killed in the Indian government attack on the Darbar Sāhib Complex in June of 1984.

- **Tankhaiya**: A *tankhayia* is someone who contravenes the dictates of Sikhī, or goes counter to the Panth by disobeying a *Gurmata*. Anyone who commits one of the four *ku-rehit*; cutting one’s hair, smoking tobacco, having extramarital affairs and killing one’s infant daughter would also be a *tankhayia*. A *tankhayhia* has the option to appear before the Akāl Takht Sāhib, or any *Pañj Piārai*, and be given a punishment and then allowed to rejoin the Panth.

- **Tarā Siṅgh of Vāṅ, Shahīd Bhāī:** After the execution of Bābā Bandā Siṅgh Bahādur, the Sikh community entered a politically and militarily quiet phase. During this time a Sikh named Tarā Siṅgh of Vāṅ began to train young Sikhs in preparation of a revolutionary challenge to the Mughal state. When Tarā Siṅgh was killed in 1726 in an encounter with imperial forces, the community, inspired by his death, began a new

campaign against the government. This period of conflict with the state would last until Sikhs liberated Punjāb from Mughal and Afghan rule in 1764.

- **Tegh Bahādur Sāhib, Gurū**: Gurū Tegh Bahādur Sāhib was the ninth Nānak. He was the son of the sixth Gurū, Gurū Har Gobind Sāhib, and the father of the tenth Gurū, Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib. He was born in 1621 and was named Tyāg Mal at birth. He was given the name Tegh Bahādur, meaning the 'Brave Sword', after fighting valiantly in his father's army in the battle of Kartārpur. Gurū Tegh Bahādur became Gurū in his later years, after the *jotī-jot* of his grand-nephew, Gurū Har Krishan Sāhib. In 1675 Gurū Tegh Bahādur Sāhib traveled to Delhi to protest the forced conversion of the Hindu community of Kashmīr. The Gurū and three of his Sikhs were arrested. His three Sikhs were tortured to death after which Gurū Tegh Bahādur himself was executed through beheading. The Gurū's sacrifice was called a singular act in human history by his son Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib, in his autobiography, *Bachitar Natak*. It is a seminal moment in the narrative of *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh*.

- **Trumpp, Ernest:** Was a German born philologist and a professor of Oriental Languages at the University of Munich. He was born in 1828. In the 1850's he traveled to South Asia to study western subcontinental languages. In 1869, he was recommended to the Court of Directors of the East India Company as someone who would be capable of translating the Sikh scripture, the *Ād Gurū Granth Sāhib*. Trumpp began his work in 1870 and completed his partial translation of *Gurū Granth Sāhib* in 1877, when it was published.

(U)

- **Udasīs (Journeys)**: Gurū Nānak Sāhib undertook four epic journeys, called *Udasīs*. One was to the Northern parts of the Sub-continent, one to the East to the jungles of Assam, another to the South to Sri Lanka, and the last journey was westward, to Afghanistan and Arabia, and perhaps beyond.

- **Udasīs (Group)**: *Udasīs* are a group of celibate *Sadhus*, much in the mold of traditional Hindu holy men, who trace their lineage to Gurū Nānak Sāhib's eldest son, Srī Chand. Their understanding of Sikhī is heavily influenced by Puranic myths. They do not receive *Khaṇḍai Batai kī Pāhaul (Amrit)*, and often leave their hair matted. They will often be naked or just wear a loincloth. They played an integral role in keeping Sikh institutions in working order while the K̲h̲ālsā was driven to the jungles of Punjāb in the 18th century. Later under Raṇjīt Siṅgh's kingdom, they stayed in their position as the caretakers of Sikh institutions, and were given large grants and landownings. By the late 19th century they were famously corrupt and the Gurdwāra Reform Movement, started in 1919, was primarily focused on removing them from control of Sikh institutions.

(V)

- **Vaisākhī**: *Vaisākhī* is a harvest festival, popular in Northern South Asia, especially in Puṇjāb. The third Nānak, Gurū Amar Das Sāhib, had taken Vaisākhī and the very popular South Asian holiday of Dīvālī, and transformed them into what Sikhs call a *jor-mela*, or a celebratory fair/gathering. This was an opportunity for a far flung community to gather in one central place, in the Gurū's presence. Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib used this pre-established day of gathering to reveal the K̲h̲ālsā in 1699. Today it usually occurs around April 14th but in the Gurū's time would have occurred on March 30th (the traditional South Asian calendar is a lunar calendar, so there is a date shift over time). Vaisākhī is now celebrated by Sikhs as the day of the Revelation of the K̲h̲ālsā.

- **Vīr Siṅgh, Bhāī**: Bhāī Vīr Siṅgh was an influential Sikh scholar, novelist, poet, and Sikh mystic who is considered to be one of the main members of the Siṅgh Sabha Revivalist movement. Vīr Siṅgh was born in 1882. His family has a strong heritage in the *Nirmalā/Taksālī* lineage, with his maternal grandfather, Hazūra Siṅgh being a renowned scholar. Vīr Siṅgh was responsible for the publication and popularization of many historic Sikh texts, including *Srī Gur Panth Prakāsh*, which he published first in 1914 and then again in 1939. Although, Vīr Siṅgh took no role in the anti-colonial struggle, many of his works were an inspiration to the generation that did protest against the British. He died in 1957.

(Z)

- **Zamīndār**: Large landowners that had a relation with the Mughal crown, either directly, or through local nobles and governors. Bābā Bandā Siṅgh Bahādur famously dismantled many of the *Zamīndār* holdings in Punjāb and redistributed the land to the people working it. This radical land reform was one of the core revolutionary practices of the early K̲h̲ālsā.

Appendix A: An Anarcha-Sikhī Manifesto

Anarcha-Sikhī is anti-authoritarian. While the Gurū is the master of all Sikhs, the nature of the Gurū in a post-1699 and 1708 world means that there neither is—nor should there be—any one authoritative figure in the Sikh community when it comes to social and political matters (Singh, J., 2006, pp. 111-113). Instead, the *Bāṇī* is Gurū, and the K̲h̲ālsā are Gurū. Both of these are abstract concepts and do not signify a specific individual. The *Bāṇī* refers to *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, a text that maintains its authority over Sikhs by building a loving and devotional connection with the poetry contained within. The K̲h̲ālsā, or the Sikhs who have pledged allegiance to the Panth and have been born again into the House of Nānak, is a force that is greater than the sum of its parts.

If the K̲h̲ālsā is anti-authoritarian, how does it make decisions? Sikh history and tradition point to two different models of decision-making in the Sikh tradition. The first is the *Pañj Piāra* system and the second is the *Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā* methodology (Singh, J., 2006, pp. 163-166).

Anarcha-Sikhī is feminist. Women are not just a fundamental part of the K̲h̲ālsā Panth, but as Mātā Jīto (Sundarī)'s role in the first Vaisākhī demonstrates, the K̲h̲ālsā Panth would not exist without women. Creating space and acknowledging the presence of Sikh women is but an anemic first step. Instead, Sikh history and ideology must be reclaimed and the feminist principles of Sikhī need to be highlighted (Singh, N., 1993). Stories of Sikh women have often been erased from Sikh history, as in Bhangu's text, even prominent Sikh women disappear from historical events. For example, the seventh Gurū, Gurū Har Rai Sāhib, had an adopted daughter named Rūp Kaur (sometimes written as Sarūp Kaur or Harrūp Kaur). Gurū Har Rai Sāhib ensured that his daughter was well educated, and she became a scholar. Sikh history tells us that she became a historian and wrote down early Sikh history. While we know she wrote history,

none of her texts have survived[45]. She is but one instance of the stories of Sikh women who are erased.

This historic erasure of Sikh women continues into the present day, where far too many Sikh spaces are still monopolized by men. Traditional power structures are almost all male, and leadership from the community level to the Panthik level are usually always male. The recent Farmer's Protest has demonstrated the power, vitality and force of Sikh women (Shergill, 2020; Bhowmick, 2021; Kaur & Sekhon, 2021). Anarcha-Sikhī seeks a Panth where feminism ensures that women have the space and opportunity to fulfill all roles in the community.

Anarcha-Sikhī is anti-casteist and anti-racist. Too much of Sikh history, and of current Sikhī, is dominated by a few powerful castes, with other groups marginalized in the community (Judge, 2015, pp. 63-64). This is counter to the basic principles of the K̲h̲ālsā, and of Gurū Nānak Sāhib's ideology (Dhamoon & Sian, 2020, p. 52). Anarcha-Sikhī is built on anti-casteism and anti-racism, but at the same time, the reality of caste and race and historical marginalization is not ignored.

Anarcha-Sikhī is queer positive. LGBTQ Sikhs have been erased from Sikh history, and are also severely marginalized in contemporary Sikhī (Dhamoon & Sian, 2020, p. 49). Anarcha-Sikhī seeks to build space with LGBTQ Sikhs to take their place within the community, and share their much needed perspective and opinions.

Anarcha-Sikhī is anti-colonial. It confronts the question of how to practice a sovereign tradition on sovereign land stolen from other nations (Dhamoon & Sian, 2020, pp. 54-55). It commits to being an ally and supporting respectful space for Indigenous folks to undergo resurgence on their own terms (Simpson, 2011, p. 86). It endeavours to practice anti-colonialism

[45] A small *gutka*, or prayer book, written in her hand is preserved at Kīratpur Sāhib.

on a day to day basis. It works "towards a new vision and way of being a good guest" on sovereign land (Mucina, 2019, p. 41).

Anarcha-Sikhī, like most, if not all forms of anarchism, is anti-state. Anarcha-Sikhī believes that the only legitimate state is the state created by the Gurū (Singh, J., 2006, pp. 212-213). Anarcha-Sikhī believes that this state is fundamentally non-hierarchical, anti-authoritarian and egalitarian in its practice. This is not a real physical state, but a state of mind, carried within the mind and heart of every member of the K̲h̲ālsā. If any physical state runs counter to the divine order of the Gurū it becomes a Sikh's obligation to resist it.

However, historically, the K̲h̲ālsā did create a state; the Sarkār-ī-K̲h̲ālsā (government of the K̲h̲ālsā) commonly known as the Sikh Kingdom, Sikh Empire or the Lahore Darbār. The Sarkār-ī-K̲h̲ālsā was led by a monarch[46]. So then, how can Sikhī claim to be anti-statist and anti-authoritarian? Anarcha-Sikhī would argue that Ranjīt Singh's capture of power and consolidation of the *Misls* in the late 18th century was an act that ran counter to Sikh ethics and ideology (Singh, B., 1993, p. 190-196).

The Sikh Empire was not the ideal Sikh state, instead it was the early *Misl* period (from the 1730's to the 1760's) that best exemplified Anarcha-Sikhī principles. This was an era of no formal governance systems where an anti-elitist method of decision making through the principle of consensus was utilized. Governance was not a structured affair, but instead involved a periodic gathering of the people for community-based decision making. Such a system of governance needed a strong foundation of anti-authoritarian and egalitarian principles on which

[46] From 1801, the start of the Sarkār-ī-K̲h̲ālsā to its annexation into the British crown in 1849, there were five kings and two queens who ruled the Sikh Kingdom. For the vast majority of its existence however, from 1801 to 1839 it was ruled by Māhārāja Ranjīt Singh, commonly known as Sher-ai-Punjāb, the Lion of Punjāb.

to develop from. The 240 year history of the Sikhs, from Gurū Nanak Sāhib to the K̲h̲ālsā, provided these principles.

Appendix B: European Accounts of the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā

The following are accounts of the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā by Europeans in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

The first account is by François Xavier Wendell, a French Jesuit missionary. It was written sometime around 1772:

> ... Assembling generally every year at the end of the month of April[47] near the famous Tchaic [Amritsar] in the region of Lahor [Lahore] and make there a type of sacrifice to this *pire* [Gurū Nānak Sāhib] which consists of boiling in a vast cauldron which they call a *carrah* some sugar, some flour, some butter[48] and I do not know what other drugs and eat it together and with ceremony, after having spread out on it a cloth under which they claim are invisibly imprinted the marks of a hand[49], a sign of benediction as also of consent from on high; it is also on this occasion that they deliberate their public affairs and expeditions [sic] it to undertake after the season of the rains. (Madra & Siṅgh, P., 2016, pp. 22-23)

The next European witness to the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā was Colonel Antoine-Louis Henri Polier who was a soldier and administrator in the British East India Company. It is from 1776:

> As for the Government of the Siques, it is properly an Aristocracy[50], in which no pre-eminence is allowed except that which power and force naturally gives, otherwise all the Chiefs, great or small, and even the poorest and most abject Sique, look on themselves as perfectly equal, in all the public Concerns, and in the greatest Council or Goormotta [Gurmatta][51] of the Nation, held annually either at Ambarsar [Amritsar], Lahore or some other place[52] everything is decided by the plurality of Votes[53] taken indifferently from all who chuse [sic] to be present at it. In this Council or Diet all the public Affairs are debated such as alliances, Wars and the Excursions intended to be made in the ensuing year. The Contributions collected in the last Expedition are also duly accounted for, and

[47] This is the time of the festival of Vaisākhī

[48] Wendell is describing the making of *Kaṛāh Parsād*. This pudding-like sacramental food is served at all Sikh Divans (formal gatherings in the presence of the Gurū Granth Sāhib). *Kaṛāh Parsād* is an integral part of Sikh ceremonies and so is often commented on by outsiders. No drugs are added to it, counter to Wendell's claims.

[49] The *Kaṛāh Parsād* is first sanctified by the Guru before it is served to the Sangat (congregation). This sanctification is done through a Kirpan (sword) cutting the *Kaṛāh Parsād*. Before the sword ceremony, the Gurūs used to sanctify the *Kaṛāh Parsād* by placing their palm upon it. Wendell seems to be confusing the older tradition with the newer one.

[50] Because Sikhs had small groups that chose their own leaders, and it was these leaders who deliberated at the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā, many of these European witnesses seemed to think that Sikhs had an aristocracy. The nature of this aristocracy baffled them however, as there was a spirit of equality and egalitarianism throughout the community.

[51] Polier is here confusing the outcome of a Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā, the *Gurmata*, or Gurū's decision with the name for the actual gathering.

[52] Except in times of emergency (when the Afghans were attacking for example), Sarbat K̲h̲ālsās were always held at Akāl Takht in the Darbār Sāhib Complex. There is historical evidence for Sarbat K̲h̲ālsās being held in the jungle and desert in times of emergency, but these instances were rare.

[53] There was no formal voting at Sarbat K̲h̲ālsās. The Sikhs did not practice majoritarian democracy.

> retributed [sic] among the Chiefs in proportion to their forces… (Madra & Siṅgh, P., 2016, p. 80)

The next European is a soldier and linguist for the East India Company, James Browne.

> As to their government, it is aristocratical [sic], but very irregular and imperfect; for the body of the people is divided under a number of chiefs, who possess portions of country, either by former right as Zemindars, or by usurpation.—These chiefs enjoy distinct authority in their respective districts, uncontrolled by any superior power, and only assemble together on particular occasions for the purpose of depredation, or of defence; when in a tumultuous Diet, they choose by majority of votes, a leader to command their joint forces during the expedition[54]; generally from among those chiefs, whose Zemindaries are the most considerable; his authority, is however but ill obeyed by so many other chiefs, who though possessed of smaller territories, yes as leaders of the fraternity of Sicks, think themselves perfectly his equals, and barely allow him, during his temporary elevation, the dignity of *Primus inter Pares*. (Madra & Siṅgh, P., 2016, p. 94)

George Forester was a civil servant for the East India Company and an adventurer. He traveled from Bengal to England through India, Kashmir, Afghanistan, Iran and Russia. His account of the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā is from 1783.

> I FIND an embarrassment in applying a distinct term to the form of the Sicques government, which, on the first view, bears an appearance of aristocracy, but a closer examination discovers a large vein of popular power branching through many of its parts. No honorary or titular distinction is conferred on any member of the state, and the chiefs are treated with a deference that would seem to arise only from the military charges they may at the instant be invested with, and from a self-preserving regard to the subordination necessarily required in conducting an armed body. Though orders are issued in a Sicque army, and a species of obedience observed, punishments are rarely inflicted; and chiefs, who often command parties of not more than fifty men, being numerous, its motions are tumultuous and irregular. An equality of rank is maintained in their civil society, which no class of men, however wealthy or powerful, is suffered to break down. At the periods when general councils of the nation are convened, which consisted of the army at large, every member had the privilege of delivering his opinion; and the majority, it is said, decided on the subject in debate. The K̲h̲ālsāh Sicques, even of the lowest order, are turbulent people, and possess a haughtiness of deportment which, in the common occurrences of life, peculiarly marks their character. Examples of this disposition I have witnessed, and one of them I think merits a distinct notice. In travelling through the Srinaghar [Srinagar, Kashmir] country, our party was joined by a Sicque horseman, and being desirous of procuring his acquaintance, I studiously offered him the various attentions which men observe to those they court. But the Sicque received my advances with a fixed reserve and disdain, giving me, however no individual cause of offence; for his department to the other passengers was not less contemptuous. His answer, when I asked him the name of his chief, was wholly conformable to the observations I had made of his nation. He told me (in a voice, and with an expression of

[54] The leader of the Dal K̲h̲ālsā, first Navāb Kapūr Siṅgh and then later Sardār Jassa Siṅgh Ahluwālia, was not chosen through votes, but through consensus

> countenance, which seemed to revolt at the idea of servitude) that he disdained an earthly superior, and acknowledged no other master than his prophet![55] (Madra & Siṅgh, P., 2016, p. 148)

Besides these early detailed descriptions, there are two colonial histories from the early 19th century that also mention and describe the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā. The first is John Malcolm's *Sketch of the Sikhs: A singular nation who inhabit the Province of the Punjāb situated between the Rivers Jumna and Indus* written in 1810:

> Góvind is said to have first instituted the Gúrú Mata[56], or state council, among the Sikhs[57]; which meets at Amritsar. The constitution and usages of this national assembly will be described hereafter: it is here only necessary to observe, that its institution adds one more proof to those already stated, of the comprehensive and able mind of this bold reformer, who gave, by its foundation, that form of a federative republic, to the commonwealth of the Sikhs, which was most calculated to rouse his followers from their indolent habits, and deep-rooted prejudices, by giving them a personal share in the government, and placing within the reach of every individual the attainment of rank and influence in the state. (1812, p. 52)

> Such a mode of government was in itself little calculated to give that strength and union which the cause of the Sikhs required: but the peculiarities of their usages, the ardent character of their faith, the power of their enemies, and the oppression they endured, amply supplied the place of all other ordinances. To unite and to act in one body, and on one principle, was, with the first Sikhs, a law of necessity: it was, amid the dangers with which they were surrounded, their only hope of success, and their sole means of preservation: and it was to these causes, combined with the weakness and internal contests of their enemies, to which this sect owes its extraordinary rise,—not to their boasted constitution; which, whether we call it an oligarchy, which it really is; or a theocracy[58], which the Sikhs consider it; has not a principle in its composition that would preserve it one day from ruin, if vigorously assailed. But of this their history will furnish the best example. (1812, pp. 90-91)

> When a Gúrú-matá, or great national council, is called, (as it always is, or ought to be, when any imminent danger threatens the country, or any large expedition is to be undertaken,) all the Sikh chiefs assemble at Amritsar. The assembly, which is called the Gúrú-matá, is convened by the Acálís; and when the chiefs meet upon this solemn occasion, it is concluded that all private animosities cease, and that every man sacrifices his personal feelings at the shrine of the general good; and, actuated by principles of pure

[55] This would have been the common opinion amongst Sikhs of this generation and is a hallmark of this era of Sikh Anarchism. Later under Raṇjīt Siṅgh, such an attitude would likely be rarer to find.

[56] Malcolm, like Polier before him, is confusing the name of the decision reached, the *Gurmatta*, with the name of the institution.

[57] There is no evidence, historically or in the Sikh tradition, that Gurū Gobind Siṅgh Sāhib created the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā model. But by creating the K̲h̲ālsā and training the first generation of K̲h̲ālsā in decision-making and leadership skills, he created the climate that allowed for such an institution to arise.

[58] Sikhs, who were always pluralistic in their outlook, would hardly have used a European term like 'theocracy' to describe their system of governance.

> patriotism, thinks of nothing but the interests of the religion, and commonwealth, to which he belongs.
>
> When the chiefs and principal leaders are seated, the Adí-Grant'h and Dasama Pádsháh ká Grant'h are placed before them. They all bend their heads before these scriptures, and exclaim, Wá! Gúrúji ká Khálsa! Wá! Gúrúji ki Fateh! A great quantity of cakes, made of wheat, butter, and sugar[59], are then placed before the volumes of their sacred writings, and covered with a cloth. These holy cakes, which are in commemoration of the injunction of Nánac, to eat and to give to others to eat, next receive the salutation of the assembly, who then rise, and the Acálís pray aloud, while the musicians play. The Acálís, when the prayers are finished, desire the council to be seated. They sit down, and the cakes being uncovered, are eaten of by all classes of Sikhs: those distinctions of original tribes, which are, on other occasions, kept up, being on this occasion laid aside, in token of their general and complete union in one cause. The Acálís then exclaim: "Sirdars! (chiefs) this is a Gúrú-matá!" on which prayers are again said aloud. The chiefs, after this, sit closer, and say to each other: "The sacred Grant'h is betwixt us, let us swear by our scripture to forget all internal disputes, and to be united." This moment of religious fervor and ardent patriotism, is taken to reconcile all animosities. They then proceed to consider the danger with which they are threatened, to settle the best plans for averting it, and to choose the generals who are to lead their armies against the common enemy. The first Gúrú-matá was assembled by Gúrú Góvind; and the latest was called in 1805[60], when the British army pursued Holkár into the Penjáb. (1812, pp. 120-123)

Joseph Cunningham who published his “History of the Sikhs” in 1849 (after the colonial takeover of Punjāb) also mentions the Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā in three locations in his text, but these instances do not actually detail the process of Sarbat K̲h̲ālsās but instead note when important ones were held (1994, p. 100, 103 & 133).

[59] Karah Parshad

[60] The Sarbat K̲h̲ālsā was ended as a regular institution by Mahārāja Raṇjīt Siṅgh in 1805

Appendix C: The Ballad of Sardār Shām Siṅgh Attarīvalā

Below I have translated a *Dhadī*[61] performance.[62] This *vār* (ballad) is about the last battle of the First Anglo-Sikh Wars, the Battle of Sabhrāoṅ in 1846, when the venerable Sikh General, Shām Siṅgh Attarīvalā came out of retirement to lead the Sikh army. He famously came to the battlefield dressed in all white and riding a white horse (white being the colour of death and funerals in South Asian traditions). During the battle, two generals of the Sikh army, Tejā Singh and Lāl Singh sabotaged their own army's efforts, gave the Sikh army's battle plans to the British, and left the field of battle with their troops. These generals, like many top officials in the Sikh state, had sold out to the British before the war had even begun. Knowing the battle was a lost cause, and that the Sikhs had been betrayed, Sardār Shām Siṅgh Attarīvalā mounted his horse and charged into the British lines for one last attack...

The Ballad of Sardār Shām Siṅgh Attarīvalā
by Gianī Dayā Siṅgh Dilbār Dhadī Jathā

Khālsā jī, the English took full preparations to confront the Sikh kingdom.
Sardār Shām Siṅgh Attarī said,

"We will present our heads
this is our heart's highest desire
Let us see how much strength the enemy has.
When the time comes, we will show you what we are made of.
Now, what can we say about what our hearts contain?
Oh wandering nomads, don't rest and sit still on the land (always be ready for battle).
It doesn't matter how difficult the goal is, we will not give up.
We have no doubts, nor do we have any desire left for this life
We are anxious to sacrifice ourselves for the nation"

[61] A style of North Indian folk music in which usually heroic ballads are sung. In the Sikh tradition, Dhadī performers generally sing about the martial exploits of famous Sikhs from Sikh history. This is an integral part of the Sikh tradition, and one of the three main activities that are performed from Gurdwaras stages, along with *Kīrtan* (devotional singing of Bāṇī) and *Kathā* (discourse and exegesis of Bāṇī or Sikh history).

[62] This is a short performance, the Youtube video is only 11 minutes (Gianī Dayā Siṅgh Dilbār - Topic, 2018). A Dhadī performance consists of a speaker and two to three singers who use the *dhadd*, a small hand drum, and the *sarangi*, a stringed instrument, to sing *vārs* (ballads). The speaker will narrate the story, provide background and will set up the performance. In the Dhadī performance translated below, the speaker, Gianī Dayā Siṅgh Dilbār, quotes extensively from popular Hindi and Urdu poetry. Where the speaker is quoting a poem I will put the text in italics.

Sardār Shām Siṅgh Attarī with his army was completely ready for conflict with the English. Khālsā jī, to this day, English writers write, "We did not beat the Sikhs in battle", and Sikhs are shouting, with their arms outstretched, "We did not lose to the English!" So Khālsā jī, what happened?

"The scars on my heart have begun to bleed.
The scars have started to burn within my own body.
This house has caught on fire, due to its own lamp."

Khālsā jī, these Dograi[63] enlisted in the Sikh army. Growing more and more powerful they became in charge of all of Punjab. They started off so useless but ended up in the highest positions.

We cannot forget that…

"What we thought were garlands to decorate our own necks
Became venomous black snakes that consumed us."

One Muslim poet, Shah Mohammad[64], writes,
"The enemy platoons came and placed their cannons
The Siṅghs turned the cannons back on the enemy
Mevā Siṅgh and Makhai Khan came to face the enemy
They defeated three attacks of the Europeans
Shām Siṅgh Sardār Attarīvalai readied with weapons,
came and broke and destroyed the Europeans
Oh Shah Muhammad, the Siṅghs crushed the whites like we squeeze lemons"

Khālsā jī, the Battle of Sobrāoṅ, was a vicious, bloody battle. The historians write that when the Sikh army was just about to be victorious, Tejā Siṅgh destroyed the bridge[65] on the Sutlej and left with his army. Shām Siṅgh Attarī saw that the traitor Tejā Siṅgh had engaged in treachery as did Lāl Siṅgh. And then like this, Shām Siṅgh readied for one last attack...

(This part of the performance is sung as a ballad:)
The Lion Shām Siṅgh attacked!

(invocation)
Praise be to my True Guru! (Guru Gobind Siṅgh)
Wearer of the Royal Plumed Aigrette!
Master of the Panth!
You are my support!

The Lion Shām Siṅgh attacked!

The Lion Shām Siṅgh attacked!

[63] See glossary
[64] Shah Mohammad was a Punjābī poet who wrote a popular history of the 1st Anglo-Sikh Wars, called *Jangnama* (1846).
[65] The bridge was the only route of retreat for the Sikh army. With it destroyed, thousands of Sikh soldiers drowned in the river.

His heart connected to the Ten Gurūs.
He tied a funeral shroud on his head (he welcomed death)
and the warriors got ready to go to war.
Oh my brothers, with blessings we will meet again in this world,
our footprints (destiny) will be fulfilled.

He tied a funeral shroud on his head (he welcomed death)
and the warriors got ready to go to war.
Those who desire to marry (welcome) death.
The English were hiding in their positions.

The English were hiding in their positions.
The Khālsā surrounded them.
They met each other face to face
In the midst of the battlefield.

They met each other face to face
They began to strike with their swords.
The way that sparks fly from a sparkler.
The fate of death can't be stopped.

The way that sparks fly from a sparkler.
The rifles are shooting flames.
Clouds of smoke in the sky, oh my brother,
Make the sky overcast.
The cannon shots shake the mountains.

The earth is now coloured with blood.
The earth is coloured with blood.
The blood flows like a river.

Shan[66] *writes, the warrior gave his martyrdom.*
Gave his martyrdom.
He gave his life for the nation.

People remember, oh God, remember how you stayed true to your word
and fulfilled your promise.
Your bravery, oh Shām Siṅgh!
People will sing your ballads!

I chose this *vār* (ballad) because the performance encapsulates much of how Sikhs today remember and understand the onslaught of British colonialism. The *vār* reconceptualizes the colonization of the Sarkār-ī-Khālsā as not exactly a defeat, but instead a loss due to treachery

[66] The pen name of the author of the *vār*

from within. Though objectively the Sikhs did lose the decisive Battle of Sabhrāoṅ, Sardār Shām Siṅgh Attarī's glorious last charge gives the episode a romantic, wistful feeling of a noble but betrayed Khālsā Panth keeping its dignity and sovereignty to the bitter end. Sardār Shām Siṅgh's charge represents the end of a time period of Sikh history which began with Guru Gobind Siṅgh Sahib blessing Baba Bandā Siṅgh Bahādur and commanding him to free Punjāb from Mughal rule. The long struggle for political independence, followed by decades of peaceful rule, was now at an end. The fact that Sardār Shām Siṅgh Attarī is so well remembered and that like the last lines of the performance say, ballads are still sung about him, demonstrates the power and pull the idea of sovereignty still has in the Sikh community.

ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ, ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫ਼ਤਿਹ !

Vāhigurū jī ka K̲h̲ālsā, Vāhigurū jī kī Fataih!

<><><>